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**SISTER PROPERTIES MATACHICA AND GAÏA RIVERLODGE IN BELIZE ANNOUNCE
COMMUNITY EFFORTS AND DIGITAL PROGRAMS
IN LIGHT OF COVID-19**

SAN PEDRO, April 13, 2020 – In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, award-winning hotels **Matachica** and **GAÏA Riverlodge** in Belize are implementing new community programs and digital initiatives to benefit future guests and the Belizean community at large. Though the total confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Belize remains relatively low, to ensure the safety and well-being of all guests, staff, and the local community, Matachica and GAÏA Riverlodge, have temporarily closed for the month of April.

“Making the decision to temporarily close our hotels was difficult,” said Daniel Lighter, hotelier and owner of Matachica and GAÏA Riverlodge. “However, as a participant in hospitality and tourism, we realized that we have an important role to play and an example to set. We are utilizing our resources to help both our staff and others in need during this trying time.”

Community Efforts

In an effort to provide local produce to feed their loyal staff and the Belizean community, GAÏA Riverlodge has expanded its organic garden program. What began in 2014 as a sustainability-driven project with the aim of introducing guests to natively grown fruits and vegetables has since increased in its scope to help feed those most in need, including the elderly community at the Octavia Waight Center in SanIgnacio.

Both hotels are also continuing to safely employ a select number of staff members to preserve and protect the properties during the temporary closure. Since some staff members were unable to leave the island of Ambergris Caye, where Matachica is located, to return home as planned, the hotel is currently offering free housing to several staff members during this period, including a family with two young children.

Digital Programs

Both properties are also using this opportunity to build upon their digital offerings on social media. Their Instagram channels will be offering a lively mix of weekly yoga and meditation classes, garden tutorials, and do-it-yourself food and cocktail recipes from Matachica’s award-winning Mambo restaurant, which is widely considered to be one of the best in the country.

In light of Earth Month, Matachica will also be spotlighting the eco-minded brands that were incorporated into the property's latest multimillion dollar redesign by Canadian twins Byron and Dexter Peart. Across all categories - furniture, textiles, grooming and objects - Byron and Dexter Peart's curated selection of conscious brands are dedicated to creating design solutions through the preservation of tradition and environment. Partner brands include: Tala lights, ACdO PET Lights, Filamento lighting, Coco-Mat mattresses, Tucurınca chairs, Txt-ure TXT.03 Chairs, Makaua baskets, and Haeckels natural skincare.

Daily photographs and live stream videos will also be shared with the intent of transporting viewers to the sunny and exotic island of Belize.

“Whether you are watching the sunrise over the ocean at Matachica or exploring the majestic waterfalls and jungle at GAÏA Riverlodge, we want to offer our followers an opportunity to virtually experience the magic of this place without having to even leave their home,” said Lighter.

Matachica and GAÏA Riverlodge look forward to unveiling future initiatives and hope to be able to welcome guests again very soon.

For further details and scheduled programming, please follow [@matachica](#) and [@gaiariverlodge](#).

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About Matachica

Bordering the second-largest barrier reef in the world, Matachica is located on Belize’s largest island, Ambergris Caye. Seeking to reimagine the Belizean beach experience with a strong focus on design with purpose, Matachica underwent a redesign in 2018. The modernized property boasts 30 vibrantly-colored casitas and villas, each topped with an authentic thatched roof and adorned with a private patio and hammock. Reimagined guest spaces include an upgraded lounge and dining area, outdoor tree bar, and luxurious poolside lounging.

Matachica offers visitors a getaway filled with aquatic adventures. Its location is ideal for discovering and enjoying the many natural wonders the country has to offer. For the perfect end to your day, enjoy exotic flavors at its award-winning Mambo restaurant, widely considered to be one of the best in the country.

To experience Matachica and the wonders of Belize, visitors can select from a variety of all- inclusive packages including signature romantic honeymoons, diving and fishing excursions, and combinations of sea and jungle adventures.

About GAÏA Riverlodge

Surrounded by the dramatic Five Sisters Waterfalls of the Privassion River, GAÏA Riverlodge offers an exotic jungle getaway while still maintaining the signature relaxed approach and consummate hospitality

that has come to be expected from owner Daniel Lighter. From spectacular natural beauty and over 450 species of bird and plant life, to fascinating tours and treks, the hydro-powered GAÏA Riverlodge provides an authentic Belizean experience in the most culturally rich and scenic regions of the country.

One of only five properties in Belize to be Green Globe Certified, the hotel prides itself in upholding the highest standard of sustainability and preserving Belize's natural beauty. Unwind by the river, hike the Mayan ruins, dine on fresh, seasonal delicacies from their organic garden, or discover your adventurous side with zip-lining, horseback riding or rafting.