

The Gleaner
HospitalityJamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2016



National Community
Tourism Portal
officially launched

Derrick Wright
receives two major
tourism awards

Bahamian
named Hotelier
of the Year



Winners at the inaugural Jamaica Travel Market Gala Dinner and Awards are captured in a celebratory mood with Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (far left), Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (third right) and Elizabeth Fox (second right), regional director, UK/Northern Europe, JTB, at the Luton Hoo Hotel, United Kingdom (UK). The dinner honoured Jamaica's top-performing agents and tour operators in terms of room growth. Kuoni picked up the award for top UK tour operator (centre), Sackville Travel took top UK travel agent/tour operator (second left), Expedia won top UK online tour operator (far right), while TUI collected two awards – top UK charter tour operator and top Nordic Tour operator (third left).

Inaugural Jamaica Travel Market a huge success

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

JAMAICA'S LAUNCH of its own United Kingdom (UK) trade show, Jamaica Travel Market, has been hailed as a resounding success by the country's Director of Tourism, Paul Pennicook.

His declaration has been endorsed by tourism stakeholders who attended the inaugural event at the Luton Hoo Hotel in Luton from September 29 to 30.

Some 21 Jamaican companies and 40 tour operator companies participated in the trade show. They included Sandals Resorts International, Couples, Jewels, Holiday Inn, Half Moon, Jamaica Inn and Palace Resorts.

The big three tour operators, Virgin Holidays, British Holidays and TUI, as well as Lotus Tours, Expedia UK and Diaspora experts Sackville and Newmont were busy signing contracts with the local suppliers.

Jamaica Travel Market (JTM) replaces the annual World Travel Market (WTM) held in London. "It was successful beyond imagination," Pennicook told

Hospitality Jamaica last weekend. Jamaica has been attending WTM for 25 years and making the decision to leave the premier global trade show last year was described as a bold move.

Pennicook said one of the most important benefits to come out of JTM was the fact the tour operators were able to focus on Jamaica instead of conducting business for 15 minutes and running from one country to the next, as is the norm at WTM.

JAMAICAN FOCUS

"There was no distraction, the focus was on Jamaica; and the small hoteliers and attraction operators say they were able to speak with the tour operators they were never able to meet with at WTM, despite being there," said Pennicook.

Having access to a computerised appointment system, all the Jamaican suppliers arrived at the trade show with pre-scheduled meetings.

In terms of cost, Pennicook said the tourism stakeholders were able to save up to 10 per cent on what



Round Hill Hotel's Josef Forstmayr and Kerrie Bartholomew of Clear Marketing, Round Hill's representative in the United Kingdom.

they would normally spend at WTM, while at the same time achieving more.

“The cost included accommodation, breakfast, exhibition and the gala,” explained Pennicook.

Half Moon’s director of sales and marketing, Sharon Logan, had praises for the trade show, describing it as a success. “It came at a time when the industry is looking for more meaningful interactions with our business partners. Gone are the days of focusing on the large trade shows. Of course, the majority of the trade partners were UK-based, but the long-term goal is to get existing and new markets from Eastern Europe committed, which would add the international appeal and ROI (return on investments) for suppliers,” she stated.

Hotels such as the Round Hill has already committed to attend next year, with the resort’s Managing Director, Josef Forstmayr, commending the Jamaica Tourist Board UK team for a job well done.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

“The feedback from all our travel partners and media was very positive. It is definitely an effort to be repeated,” stated Forstmayr.

According to the Round Hill managing director, JTM has the ability to fill the WTM gap for the UK market.

Round Hill, he said, will not attend WTM this year, but would participate in the ILTM Luxury Trade Show in Cannes in early December.

Laverne Walker, director, Sackville Travel Services Limited, in response to questions from **Hospitality Jamaica**, said the trade show gave the UK travel agents and tour operators a great opportunity to discuss contracts, marketing opportunities and business in a relaxed surrounding with allotted quality time.

“This is business that would otherwise not take place or would take much longer in retrospect. The JTM is Jamaica-focused and therefore ensures that all business leads towards growth for Jamaica tourism. There is also the opportunity for training for travel agents as well as networking among peers. This should have been done a long time ago and I look forward to next year.”

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From left: Half Moon’s Conroy Thompson and Sharon Logan share lens time with Jamaica Inn’s Kyle Mais.

From left: Dianne Corrie, British Airways; Marc James, British Airways; John Lynch of the Jamaica Tourist Board; Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett; Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook; Ghiselle Jones, Ministry of Tourism adviser; Elizabeth Fox; Peter Hopwood, British Airways Holidays; David Whetherson of British Airways Holidays (back to camera).



From left: Mureen James of Hyatt Ziva and Zilara and Peter Grace (United Kingdom rep for Hyatt Ziva and Zilara) meet with Joanne Ellis of Best At Travel during Jamaica Travel Market.

Tourism minister names new National Cruise Council

AS PART of efforts to boost visitor arrivals, the National Cruise Council (NCC) has been resuscitated in the Ministry of Tourism with a mandate “to guide and grow the local cruise economy in a steady and sustainable manner moving forward”.

The 13-member NCC was named recently by Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett at the Hilton Rose Hall Beach Resort and Spa.

Chaired by Michael Belnavis, the cruise council reflects a partnership between private and public sector interests.

The other members are: Harry Maragh, CEO of Lannaman and Morris (Shipping) Ltd; Marilyn Burrowes, president, Dolphin Cove; Judy Shoenbein of Braemar Tours; John Byles, CEO, Chukka Caribbean; Michael Drakulich of Mystic Mountain Rain Forest/Mystic Ridge Hotel; Stephen Facey, chairman and CEO, Pan-Jamaican Investment Trust Ltd; William Tatham, vice-president, Port Authority of Jamaica; Verna Lugg, general manager, Verna's Creation; Lee

Bailey, CEO, Caribbean Cruise Shipping and Tours; Denny Chandiram, Bijoux Jewelers Montego Bay; Denton Edwards, director of tourism relations, Ministry of Tourism, with the other member to come from the Jamaica Tourist Board.

FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT

Outlining the rationale for the council, Bartlett said the cruise industry had become the fastest-growing segment in the travel industry around the world. Jamaica's experience was in line with that as cruise passenger arrivals grew by 23.5 per cent for the month of June, bringing 110,086 passengers from 25 cruise ship calls.

Of significance is that historically, June has not been a good month for cruise shipping to Jamaica and since the opening of the Falmouth Pier in 2010, attracting mega liners, “the growth has been phenomenal”.

However, noted Bartlett, “what has not grown apace is the expenditure, even though it has

moved slightly”, from US\$74 per passenger to US\$87. He said the target was to move it to US\$100, gradually increasing to US\$200 per person at the minimum over the next five years.

Responsibilities of the National Cruise Council include advocating for the cruise business in Jamaica, monitoring global cruise shipping trends and strategically safeguarding relationships with cruise shipping lines and enhancing the experience of the cruise ship passenger.

Additionally, the council will make recommendations that will result in Jamaica's cruise shipping industry embracing principles of sustainable tourism for development through appropriate policies, also for the improvement of the onshore experience of cruise passengers.

In his first comment as chairman, Belnavis said he recognised that the cruise shipping business was very important to the growth and development of the national economy and expressed his commitment to helping to develop cruise tourism.



Michael Belnavis

Island Routes to facilitate Chinese travel to the region

ISLAND ROUTES Caribbean Adventure joined exhibitors from 42 countries, including the United States, France, Germany, Japan and Malaysia at the third Sichuan International Travel Expo (SCITE) in Emeishan, Sichuan Province, China.

The event's primary aim is to provide an international tourism trading platform for the exchange of tourism products and to foster positive industry growth.

A Jamaica-based tour and destination management company, Island Routes attended the expo alongside the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and the Caribic Group of Companies.

During the event, the trio met with Zhang Hui, co-CEO and director of China National Travel Service Group Corporation. The group is a result of a recent merger between CTS International and CITS Holdings; the newly merged company became China's and the world's largest travel group.

During the meeting, David Shields, Island Routes' vice-president of sales, and Zhang discussed ways in which Island Routes and the China National Travel Service Group can work together to better facilitate Chinese outbound travel to the Caribbean region.



CONTRIBUTED

From left: Zhang Hui, Co-CEO and director, China National Travel Service; David Shields, vice-president, sales, Island Routes; Roy Page, CEO, Caribic Group of Companies; and Dr Adam Wu, CEO of China Business Network, the China representative of the Jamaica Tourist Board.

Shields said: “There is a huge amount of potential in the Chinese outbound travel market. In 2015, over 120 million Chinese citizens travelled overseas, spending more

than US\$195 billion. The expo has been extremely productive, and we now look forward to continuing to build on our relationships with key players in China and to pro-

moting the Caribbean to the Chinese market.”

Dr Wu, who facilitated the delegation from Jamaica and a number of other destinations attending the

SCITE, said: “It is time for Jamaica to reap the benefits of the concerted promotional efforts of the JTB and private-sector companies, such as Islands Routes, that were instrumental in taking Jamaica to China.

NO VISA REQUIREMENT

As a result, the Chinese are definitely coming to Jamaica and the Caribbean in greater numbers. More and more, Chinese tour operators and actual travellers wish to visit much farther destinations such as Jamaica, which removed the visa requirement for Chinese nationals.”

Dr Wu is the CEO of China Business Network, which is the China representative of the JTB. Following the travel expo, Shields joined Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, and Paul Pennicook, director of tourism, at the World Routes and World Tourism Summit in Chengdu, the capital of the Sichuan Province.

Sichuan has a population of 87 million and more Fortune 500 companies operating in and around Chengdu than anywhere else in China. Chengdu is also a major outbound gateway for Chinese living in the south-western parts of China.

National Community Tourism Portal officially launched

AS THE Ministry of Tourism celebrated Tourism Awareness Week, officials from the ministry, its agencies, as well as tourism partners, participated in the official launch of the National Community Tourism Portal at Kingston's iconic attraction Devon House.

"It is fitting that the portal is being launched during Tourism Awareness Week, which, this year, is being observed under the theme 'Tourism for All: Promoting Universal Accessibility' as it underscores our commitment to broaden tourism's reach to positively impact the lives of as many Jamaicans as possible," said Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Jennifer Griffith.

She emphasised that "through community-based tourism, the sector will be accessible to more Jamaicans and deliver greater economic benefits to a larger percentage of the population, particularly at the grass-roots level".

The portal forms part of the Government's US\$15 million Rural Economic Development Initiative project, which is being implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), with funding from the World Bank.

"On the community tourism side, \$250 million has been invested. This is a part of the direct strategy to have both the Ministry of Tourism and JSIF really look at this business of community tourism head-to-head. What that means is direct assistance for product development, capacity-building infrastructure, and the upgrading of 11 community tourism enterprises," said JSIF's managing director, Omar Sweeney.

TOURISM HUB

The National Community Tourism Portal will act as a hub that supports community-based tourism in all its forms. A booking engine has also been integrated to not only give vendors additional exposure, but to also provide a means for the target market to conveniently procure the services of the tourism entities from the site.

"This portal is an excellent marketing tool which will help local community-based tourism enterprises keep pace with the competition by building awareness of community tourism in Jamaica; providing comprehensive and engaging information on Jamaica's community tourism



CONTRIBUTED

Executive vice-president of communication strategy at Green Team Global Hank Stewart (right) demonstrates the special features of the National Community Tourism Portal, which was officially launched at Devon House on September 28, 2016. Paying keen attention are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Jennifer Griffith (left) and Managing Director of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund Omar Sweeney.



Community Tourism Portal entrepreneur and co-host of The Innovators Yaneeek Page (second left) discusses the many benefits of the National Community Tourism Portal with Managing Director of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Omar Sweeney (second right); Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith (right); and Chairman/CEO of the Country Style Community Tourism Network and community tourism pioneer, Diana McIntyre-Pike.

product; providing an easy means for making community tourism bookings; and providing Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) with affordable and cost effective e-marketing services," said Griffith.

The JSIF is currently engaged in a three-year programme with the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) to establish the portal and conduct market-ready development and marketing for CBTEs, with the assistance of the Jamaica Tourist Board, which will market the community tourism brand. As of June 30, 2017, TPDCo will be charged with the responsibility to fully oversee the operations and maintenance of the portal.

"The introduction of this portal is a move in the right direction. It will provide quick turn-around time for payment to the operators; a clear and comprehensive policy on cancellations, thereby protecting the vendor; multi-language support for all major tourism markets; and marketing support to increase business and drive traffic to the portal," added TPDCo's acting executive director, Joy Roberts.

To access the portal, the public is being invited to log on to <http://www.moretojamaica.com/>.

Beaches and public access



A view of the Long Bay Beach in Portland.

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

EVERY NOW and again, a story appears in the Caribbean media about beach access.

Although many governments, developers, and hotel owners in the region feel that this is no longer an issue, it remains contentious in the minds of many Caribbean citizens. The feeling is that despite regulations, access to beaches in nations from Jamaica to St Lucia has diminished over the years and that the more recent acceptance of ever-larger resort developments is resulting in traditional rights being further eroded.

Three recent examples indicate that the issue remains live.

The first relates to the Grenadine island of Canouan. There, earlier this year, activists refused to accept a solution proposed by the government and a marina-related development regarding beach access. Unusually, this involved the suggestion that local residents could only access the beach through the property by a golf cart or a bus. If given prior notice, the hotel said, they would transport local people between the entrance of the resort and the beach.

A second relates to the Dominican Republic. There, in the last few



David Jessop

weeks, two senators have proposed a bill that would impose large financial penalties on companies and individuals that impede public access to beaches, coasts, rivers, lakes, and lagoons, a matter of concern in some parts of a country that still has miles of pristine undeveloped coast. In response, the National Hotel & Restaurant Association (Asonahores) expressed concern, arguing that the proposed legislation contained measures that could affect the security and commercial operation of the industry and contradicted existing regulations. What it would prefer, Asonahores told the local media, would be the establishment of comprehensive national norms to regulate public access to beaches.

And a third example can be found in a lively series of exchanges on



A beach in Portland.

TripAdvisor between a visitor to Barbados, not staying in a beachfront property, who asks for advice on how he and his family might access the public part of a beach facing a leading hotel. The sometimes wry answers from residents about the impossibility of obtaining access through the hotel, its security, and a poorly signed footpath, speak volumes about their lasting resentment.

BIGGER ISSUE OF RIGHTS

What becomes apparent about beach access is that it is about much more than legal access, or being able to take an early morning sea bath, or fisherfolk's traditional

sites. While it is now almost universally accepted that hotels bring employment and growth, there remains a lingering sense that rights are being taken away and given to foreigners and visitors.

A number of recent academic papers, in part produced in relation to the variable and often dated legislation that exists across the region, make clear the common themes.

For residents, their concerns centre on tourism's compatibility with daily life, the feeling that too much land is being given to foreigners, the impact that beachfront and tourism development is having on

real estate prices for local people, and damage to the environment. The academics also cite the behaviour of cruise ship companies bussing visitors to public beaches, annoyance that all beach traders are considered to be associated with crime, and concern about restricted views to the sea.

The responses also seem to indicate that somewhere, deep down, there is a folk memory and a sense of popular local ownership of a country's beaches and that their alienation from common use results in a lasting disenfranchisement and resentment.

In contrast, hoteliers and developers' concerns are focused on reputation, guest safety and a property's security when the foreshore is a public space. The problem for them is that while residents only want to use the beach for enjoyment, some individuals see it as point of access to visitors, to sell or suggest to them almost anything. They also point, for example, to the dangers posed by unlicensed jet ski operators who, across the region, have been responsible for a number of serious accidents.

Unfortunately, there are often no clear answers, leaving it very much up to governments, hoteliers, developers, local communities, and interest groups to try to find practical ways to resolve beach-access issues through dialogue.

THE DEVIL'S CELLAR



UnWineCPJ
with WINES

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

What a Tryall!



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

A view of the Caribbean Sea from the great house at Tryall Club in Hanover. See the old cannon between the two flags.

FROM THE coast to the hills, the Tryall Club's property near Sandy Bay, Hanover, spans 2,200 acres. The main road between Montego Bay, St James, and Lucea, Hanover, runs through it.

The story goes that it was once a Taino residential site and that at a place called Barnes Hill, there is a possible Taino burial ground.

In the 17th century, it was a pen in which a variety of animals were reared before sugar cane cultivation began. Ownership of the estate changed in the early 1800s to one Robert Allen, QC, who kept at least 329 enslaved Africans and 48 animals.

After Allen was killed in the Sam Sharpe Christmas Rebellion of 1831, which swept

across western Jamaica, the property was inherited by his son. The records also say the property was sold to a J. H. Parker in 1900. Eugene Browne is listed as a 20th-century owner, but his interest was in coconut and pimento. And in 1918, the last crop of sugarcane was reaped.

Ownership of the estate was subsequently transferred to William DeLisser, *custos rotulorum* of Hanover, who had married Ida, the daughter of Eugene Browne. On it, coconut production thrived, but the profitability declined gradually between 1935 and 1945.

To earn their keep, the Browne family transformed the much-visited great house into a small guest house. British colonial officers

and civil servants on leave from Kingston, it is said, were regular guests until the accommodation was closed in 1939 because of World War II. It reopened its doors 10 years later.

PROPERTY SOLD

In 1957, a group of American investors, led by Pollard Simons, Winthrop Rockefeller, Theodore Law, Henry Strazburger, and Buddy Fogelson purchased Tryall from the Browne/DeLisser family. Their purchase was as a result of an idea from Theodore Law, from Houston, Texas, to build luxurious villas on the property and create a private members club. When the deal was done, the estate was

renamed the Tryall Club. The first villa, called Little Hill, was built in 1959, and the golf course two years after.

Some years later, Pollard Simons secured majority control of the club. After he died in 1975, the villa owners pooled their resources and purchased the property. Each villa owner is a member. Currently, there are 89 villas, mostly owned by Americans and rented to overseas and local guests. The property is managed by a board of directors, who are themselves owners of the villas.

The Tryall property has always been a place I wanted to visit. As a man from the west, I know of its history but never got the opportunity to tour it. To me, it had to be an



A lone, rusting cannon still protects the fort at Tryall Club.



This ancient waterwheel in the sugar works ruins at Tryall Club is still spun by water from Flint River.



This aqueduct, atop decades-old brick columns, carries water from the Flint River to spin an old waterwheel.



A Taino burial ground, it is said, used to be at a place called Barnes Hill on the Tryall Club property in Hanover.

interesting place, and so when the opportunity came last week, I grabbed it with both hands.

I was blown away by the vastness of the property but not out of the golf cart in which Shaku Ramcharan, environmental and conservation manager, gave me a tour. The well-manicured lawns and golf courses, the opulence of the villas, the grandeur of the well-preserved Georgian great house, the hilltop views of the sea and land below say it all. It is happening.

But even more resonating were the historical spots. I was 'in my ackee', if you will. The area where enslaved Africans used to live is now forested. I looked to see whether my

ancestors were peeping from behind the trees. My parents are originally from the parish, my mother from nearby Pondsider.

Not far from that spot there is a huge tree with beautifully arranged surface buttress roots. It is said to be hundreds of years old. One of the churches where Deacon Samuel Sharpe preached was located near to it. Embedded in its trunk, limbs, and roots are the stories of yesteryear. If only it could talk.

SLAVE BURIAL

In the vicinity of the great house, there is a big tombstone, said to be that of an enslaved African named Robert. He died while protecting the property during the Sam Sharpe

Rebellion. The stone was built in his honour by his keepers.

The most interesting site on the property is the ruins of the sugar works, near the main road. At the centre of it is the great waterwheel, still in an excellent state of preservation. It is over 200 years old and is still spun by water from the Flint River.

The water is conveyed through an aqueduct that runs atop very tall brick columns. The wheel was used to crush sugar cane but was damaged in the 1831 riots. It was rebuilt in the 1950s. Also at the ruins are two brick chimneys, one partially destroyed by a 21st-century storm, and a metal boiler.

The tour also took me across sections of the 18-hole golf course and over a bridge that spans the Flint River where it meets the sea, to the pier and old fort, where a single, rusting cannon still points out to the sea. From that spot, the view of the great house and the hills is just as captivating as the view from above.

I stood, and I looked around, taking pictures. Many thoughts and questions formed in my inquisitive mind. I kept them to myself. I then posed for the camera as Ramcharan clicked away. I needed pictures for my posterity. As she drove me back, I said to myself, 'What a Tryall!'

Thank you, Shaku.

New hotel developments boost Jamaica's stocks significantly

Highly anticipated hotels to open in Kingston, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

JAMAICA HAS the distinction of boasting an enviable room stock of more than 28,400 rooms that cater to travellers with exceptional tastes and interests. The island is seeing impressive growth, with an estimated 1,756 rooms to open by the end of 2017.

"We continue to attract new brands as we focus on expanding our accommodation portfolio," said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's director of tourism. "The new developments that will come on stream in the last quarter of 2016 and first quarter of 2017 are good indicators of the strength of the product and a promising outlook for the future. We are constantly making room to welcome more visitors to our beautiful island."

The recently opened North-South Highway adds to the appeal of the island as travel from Kingston to Ocho Rios is now under an hour.

The following are new hotel developments that are coming on stream:

NEGRIL

■ Royalton Negril Resort & Spa and Hideaway at Royalton Negril Resort

Royalton Negril Resort & Spa, the 600-room hotel is currently under construction and is slated to be completed in the fall of 2017. The new hotel, will offer complete beach access, a stylish tropical ambience and will be open to children of all ages. The Hideaway at Royalton Negril Resort will be a 166-room adults-only resort adjacent to Royalton Negril. Each room will provide butler and concierge service, afternoon *hors d'oeuvres* in the adults-only pool and beach areas with waiter service, in-room premium amenities like aromatherapy, upgraded room service and more.

■ The Cliff Hotel

The Cliff Hotel, a new boutique



The Cliff Hotel, Negril.



Rendering of Hotel Royalton Blue Waters.



Rendering of the new Spanish Court Hotel in Montego Bay.

hotel known for its luxury suites and villas, will reopen on October 1 after the off-season break with a new yoga pavilion and fitness centre. This is the final phase of the multimillion-dollar renovation to the property located off the renowned West End cliffs of Negril. All rooms offer unhindered views of the Caribbean Sea.

MONTEGO BAY

■ Hotel RIU Reggae

Located on the beach and surrounded by incredible natural beauty, the RIU Reggae will be an all-inclusive adults-only hotel in Montego Bay. Opening in November 2016 with 450 rooms, RIU Reggae will have idyllic surroundings and a wide array of services and ameni-

ties including free Wi-Fi, infinity pools, a gym and spa. It is the perfect place for a vacation with a partner or friends.

■ Hotel Royalton Blue Waters

Located in Falmouth, Royalton Blue Waters will consist of 225 rooms when it opens in November 2016. The hotel will offer modern spacious rooms, beautiful architecture and sports and recreational activities for the whole family. Royalton Blue Waters shares access to the adjacent Royalton White Sands so guests can enjoy the unique features of each luxury resort.

■ Sandals Royal Caribbean

The much-anticipated Over the Water Villas are under construction and are projected to be completed

by November 2016. The five villas will be the first of their kind in the Caribbean with see-through glass floors, an over-water hammock for two and private infinity pool. They are perfect for couples looking for a breathtaking and memorable vacation or honeymoon.

■ Breathless Resort & Spa

AM Resorts' new Breathless Resort, consisting of 150 rooms, is under construction and is to be completed by December 15, 2016. The ultra-modern adult-only resort features luxury accommodations, a world-class spa, mouth-watering gourmet cuisine and a non-stop party with the world's hottest DJs performing. The property will be located in Freeport Montego Bay.

■ Spanish Court Hotel

Spanish Court Hotel will make its entrance in the Montego Bay area on Gloucester Avenue in the summer of 2017. Spanish Court Montego Bay will have a total of 120 rooms, most will have spectacular ocean-front views, as well as grand spa bathrooms. Roman tubs and specially designed sauna-sized showers are just some of its attractive features. The hotel will also feature a rooftop pool bar with views of Doctors Cave Beach and the surrounding crystal-clear turquoise waters.

OCHO RIOS

■ Sugar Cane

Early next year, Karisma Hotels and Resorts will break ground on Sugar Cane, a \$900-million hotel project on over 200 acres of land in St Ann, near Ocho Rios. When complete, there will be an addition of 10 hotels and 5,000 new rooms to Jamaica's hotel inventory. Three of the 10 hotels in the Sugar Cane project are expected to be completed two years following the start of construction, scheduled for early 2017.

KINGSTON

■ The Renfrew

The Renfrew will be a five-star addition to Kingston's room inventory. The new hotel will offer 32 high-end rooms and eight two-bedroom apartments. When it opens in October 2017, it will be Kingston's first extended-stay hotel.



Jerry Inzerillo (second from left) with Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Chief Marketing Officer Matt Cooper (left), First Vice-President Stuart Bowe (centre), Chief Operations Officer Vanessa Ledesma, and Chief Executive Officer Frank Comito.

Travel leader calls for urgent investment in region's human resources

GERARD 'JERRY' Inzerillo, CEO of Forbes Travel Guide, known for his innovations and relationships in the tourism, hospitality, and entertainment communities, called for an urgent investment in the next generation of Caribbean travel and tourism leaders to elevate service standards within the region.

"We have the soul to do it. This region has soul, and that is a bankable commodity, more than the beautiful turquoise waters," Inzerillo told a packed audience at the opening of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum in Puerto Rico last Friday.

"Importing (talent) is not an excuse," he contended, underscoring the importance of training local workers. "It is (our) obligation to develop our own people ... and talent," said the chief executive, who started his career as a busboy.

Inzerillo, who celebrates 50 years in the industry next year, asserted

that tourism, now 10 per cent of global GDP, is "the single, great ambassador of humanity in the world because it celebrates all the stuff that's in our soul".

"It is not growing incrementally, it is exploding ... we are in the right place at the right time. What is going to happen in travel in the next five years is breathtaking," he remarked, highlighting trends such as multi-generational family travel, women travelling in groups, and millennial travel.

GREATER DIFFICULTY

However, he lamented that it has never been more difficult to run a tourism entity, citing low margins, increased competition, the development of human resources, and a diversity of other challenges.

Inzerillo, who was instrumental in the success of some of the world's most famous hospitality brands such as Atlantis, One&Only Resorts, and Ian Schrager Hotels who has held lead-

ership roles with Four Seasons and Hilton Hotels & Resorts, underscored the importance of guest satisfaction. He encouraged attendees to wow them with gracious and anticipatory hospitality service: "Sophisticated travellers will reward you for that."

Inzerillo was president of Kerzner Entertainment Group, where he raised the visibility of the company and the profile of its properties in The Bahamas, Dubai, the Indian Ocean, Mexico, Morocco, Africa, Mauritius, and The Maldives. Inzerillo oversaw the production and launch of several legendary properties, including the opening of the billion-dollar Phase III of Atlantis in The Bahamas in May 2007, and the US\$1.5 billion Atlantis-Dubai on Palm Island in 2008, which received worldwide media coverage and was featured on the cover of *Newsweek*. He also served as chief operating officer of Sun City, the unique South African resort complex built by Sol Kerzner.

MasterCard sees sharing economy opportunities for Caribbean tourism

THE CONCEPT of the shared economy has opened up many opportunities for small business owners and individuals in the Caribbean, particularly in the service industries of tourism such as lodging, transport, tours, and dining.

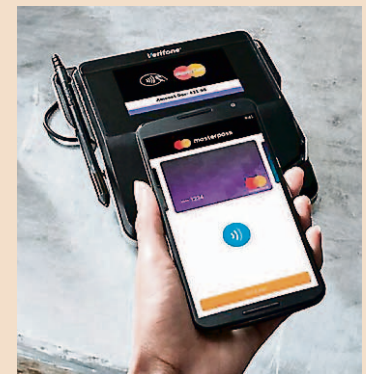
Previously, an industry may have been controlled by just a few families in the Caribbean. Now, many have the opportunity to participate as long as they are willing to take advantage of new technologies and processes.

With the fastest and best e-payment technology, MasterCard is at the heart of this technology to facilitate the "local globalisation" of products and services. At the core of the shared economy is a 'democratised' idea of selling or purchasing; the marketplace is more open; and the products aren't necessarily physical products. A prime example is Uber, which became the largest transportation marketplace without owning any cars. By simply connecting people with cars with people who wanted a ride, they 'democratised' the idea of taxis and transportation.

While the Caribbean is the site of some of the world's best hotels, the shared economy is significantly disrupting the way in which tourists select their accommodations. Thanks to companies such as Airbnb, Homeaway, and VRBO, which allow anyone to share their property, any condo, home, or even bedroom can be converted into a 'hotel room' for visitors.

These sites empower individuals to maximise housing stock and earn money on a flexible schedule, all the while providing visitors with what some say is a more authentic local experience than hotels.

There are also additional opportunities in the Caribbean for applying the shared economy to rental cars. Locals may rent their cars when they are not using them, and visitors may participate in group-rental programmes like ZipCar. Sharing can



also be applied to air travel, which would, in turn, disrupt the few airlines that control inter-island travel. The Caribbean is already participating in shared jet transport. The majority of private jets arriving into SXM or PJJ are flown by Netjets.

BOAT BUSINESS

The shared economy has also been applied to boat rentals, making it easier for people to monetise their dormant boats. Marketplaces such as Boatbound and even Airbnb connect owners, captains, and renters.

Opportunity in the area of restaurants and food delivery is also enabled by the shared economy. First is in online, recommended via review sites like Tripadvisor and through social sharing like Instagram. Second is by creating more opportunity for pop-up restaurants or by legitimising the food trucks that have always been part of Caribbean cuisine.

Local chefs and great cooks of the islands no longer need a fancy restaurant and can promote their meals via sites like Instagram, Facebook Events, or Meal Sharing. This creates an opportunity for aspiring restaurant owners to share their concepts before incurring the significant costs of an actual restaurant.

The shared economy allows individuals and small businesses to reach customers at a much lower cost of start-up than has traditionally been the case.

Seek the best market for you, in this new Caribbean economy.

Derrick Wright receives two major tourism awards

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FROM HIS school days at Bethel Primary School in Hanover, people have been calling Derrick Wright 'Teazy'. He was of slim build, what we Jamaicans called 'mawgah', just like the little bird that is known locally as 'Teazy'.

On his official name tag at Tryall Club in Hanover, where he is the income auditor, is engraved Teazy Wright. But do not take it lightly because Wright has evolved into a well-respected tourist industry employee, who has a 'big' and important job, and who has been a serious community developer since he was a 'little bird'.

Not only has he grown in physical stature, and professionally, he is the 2016 Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Employee of the Year and the 2016 Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum Association (CHIEF) award for Supervisor of the Year for the Caribbean. The latter award, coordinated by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, was announced at the forum on Sunday in Puerto Rico.

The 1983 graduate of Cornwall College in Montego Bay has been living in Hopewell, Hanover, all his life, and has no intention of leaving. But he is not just living, he has been making a sterling contribution to community development within his environs and beyond.

The 'proud father' of two, and grandfather of one, has been at Tryall Club since 1990. He started out as a night auditor, then was promoted to front office supervisor, and later, accounts receivable supervisor, before rising to his current position in 1997. He supervises five people, to whom he said he has given much guidance to make everybody's work easier.

His job is to ensure that all the revenues generated by the 89-villa property are accounted for. After he has done his job of accounting, then it is time to get his fingers out of the till and into his working gloves to participate in some non-job activity or another. He has been the president of the Tryall Sports Club since 2002, a member of



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Derrick 'Teazy' Wright displays the National Commercial Bank Nation Builders trophy which Tryall Club won for 2015 and the trophy he won for being the 2016 Jamaica Hotel and Tourism Association employee of the year.

Tryall's Green Team, and the overseer of the Tryall Hurricane Fund.

Wright told *Hospitality Jamaica* that he grew up poor and he knows that the community assisted his mother in sending him to high school as his father died just before his high-school days began. "So I made a decision, then and there, whenever I get the chance, I would give back to the community."

GIVING TIME AND ENERGY

Giving back means: being president of Hopewell Citizens Association, treasurer of the Hopewell Community Development Commission, vice-chairman of the Bethel Junior High Board of Directors, and director and public relations officer of the Hopewell Sports Development Council.

He has also spearheaded and/or participated in projects to improve the quality of life at the Lucea Infirmary, Westhaven Children's Home, Pondsides Basic School, Watford Hall Basic School, Jericho All-Age

School, Bethel Junior High School, and the Sandy Bay Police Station.

But how does he balance work and community involvement? Proper time management, he said, is the key, and choosing the right people to work with, people who respect themselves, others, and their job. He takes his hat off to Tryall Club for giving him the opportunity to strike the balance. For this he finds his job itself rewarding.

Two projects that he said he would always cherish are the establishment of a playing field for Tryall Club staff and the building of a house for an elderly woman in Cold Spring in Hanover in 2014 as a Tryall Sports Club project. He recalled the happiness he felt when the door was opened for the first time to let her in.

When asked how he reacted when he received the JHTA award earlier this year, he said, "The joy was not the award, the joy was before the award. Whenever I do something for someone, that gives me joy." But he also said, "I wel-



The staff at Tryall Club in Hanover has only good things to say about Derrick Teazy Wright. Here is with (from left) Shaku Ramcharan (left), environment and conservation manager, and Dawn Gordon, director of human resources.



As income auditor, it is Derrick 'Teazy' Wright's job to ensure that all the revenues due to the sprawling Tryall Club, consisting of 89 villas, in Hanover are accounted for.

come it," nonetheless.

His winning of both awards is great news but came as no major surprise as Wright's involvement is widely known. Dawn Gordon, human resources director at Tryall Club, said it was "significant". She also said Wright is well respected by everybody. Mark Kovinsky, board member of Tryall's board of directors, shares her sentiments, saying he has "deep respect and admiration for him".

Wright's manager, Patricia Henry, chief financial officer, called him "dedicated" and described him as "the soul

and spirit of the Tryall Club staff", while Managing Director Aram Zerunian said, "He is an employee any company would hope to have ... He is like the salt in our food ... He brings the flavours together."

Apart from the major awards, Wright was also the 2008 Ministry of Education Region Four Parent of the Year, the 2007-2008 supervisor of the year at Tryall, the 2015 managing director awardee at Tryall, and a member of the Tryall team that won the 2015 NCB Nation Builders Award.

Royalton White Sands participates in Int'l Coastal Clean-up Day



Members of the Royalton White Sands Resort in Falmouth, Trelawny, joined by volunteers for a photo before they ventured on a clean-up project at the Burwood Beach in the parish on Saturday, September 17 to mark International Coastal Clean-up Day.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: After participating in International Coastal Clean-up Day activities at the Burwood Beach in Trelawny on Saturday, September 17, members of staff of the Royalton White Sands posed with their 'catch' – several bags of solid waste, which were removed from the beach.

MEMBERS OF staff of the Royalton White Sands in Falmouth, Trelawny on Saturday, September 17 joined forces with over 150 volunteers in cleaning the coastline at the Burwood Beach in the parish as part of activities to mark International Coastal Clean-Up Day 2016.

Led by human resources director, Angeline Anderson, the workers, out in their numbers, removed hundreds of plastic bottles, foam containers, glass bottles and other pieces of garbage that were uncollected for months.

At the end of the exercise, over 100 bags of garbage were collected by the team, which community relations manager, Debbie Bailey, described as Royalton White Sands playing its role in protecting the environment.

"I am extremely pleased that despite having high occupancy at the resort, we were still able to pull ourselves away to come here to Burwood Beach and lend a hand in clearing the beach of tonnes of solid waste," she stated.

According to her, the team was determined to continue to lend support to the area, "but we ask the operators and those who utilise the facility to show a little respect for the environment and dispose of their solid waste in an organised manner".

Lauded by their human resources director, Anderson expressed delight that they achieved a greater understanding of how the improper disposal of solid waste can impact the environment.

"We have seen here a scant regard for the environment in the manner in which garbage is disposed of. It is clear that garbage is

raked from the beach into the mangrove and left there, which remains there and poses a threat to marine and human lives," she argued.

She underscored the importance of the placement of garbage bins and instructional showing persons where to dispose of garbage was needed.

RESPECTING THE RULES

"Persons who use the facility should be asked to respect and adhere to those directives," she pointed out.

The human resources director said Royalton was committed to lending a hand in ensuring that the Burwood Beach remains clean after the clean-up exercise.

"This is a very nice beach and is heavily used by both locals and tourists, including cruise-ship passengers. If we hope to have that continuous flow of patrons here at this facility, we must take care of it, and taking care of this beach is the responsibility of everyone – the operators, those who operate businesses here, as well as those who use it," she stated.

Activities to mark International Coastal Clean-up Day were spearheaded by the Jamaica Environmental Trust and saw thousands of volunteers joining forces islandwide to locate and remove solid waste from the island's coastline as part of a global initiative to improve the environment and marine life.

Reports are that during the 2015 clean-up exercise some 79,560 pounds of solid waste was collected from 122-miles of the nation's coastline.

Bahamian named Hotelier of the Year

BAHAMIAN HOTELIER Stuart Bowe was named the 2016 Caribbean Hotelier of the Year by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

Bowe, the senior vice-president and general manager, resort operations of Atlantis Paradise Island, received the coveted honour at the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF), hosted by CHTA, in Fajardo, Puerto Rico on Sunday.

Accepting the region's premier hospitality award, Bowe credited his grandmother with teaching him service and attention to detail from "cleaning up the kitchen".

Bowe's contribution to the hospitality and tourism industry spans more than 27 years, having "cut his teeth" in customer service and management working at McDonald's in his teenage years and entering the industry as a management trainee.

He subsequently worked his way up the ladder, storing and absorbing every experience to hone his leadership skills. Over the years he has worked in every department and in nearly all job categories, from dishwasher to busboy, from bartender to laundry attendant, from house-keeping to maintenance, and from front desk to landscaping.

Stuart earned a BA in accounting in 1986 from Florida State University, an MBA in marketing *summa cum laude* from Walden University in 2009 and is currently pursuing a PhD in applied management and decision sciences with a focus on leadership and organisational change.

Bahamas Prime Minister Perry Christie,

in a taped congratulatory message, described Bowe as "an exemplar" to be followed by generations of Bahamians. "He is a manager *cum laude*, one who has brought the pursuit of excellence to his work ... (and) on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, it is entirely on their behalf that I salute you for all that you have been able to do."

CARIBBEAN EXCELLENCE

"Stuart Bowe personifies Caribbean excellence. He is disciplined and innovative and a leader who inspires generations of Bahamians and Caribbean people through his accomplishments and his humanity," said Frank Comito, director general and CEO of the CHTA who previously served as executive vice-president of the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association.

Bowe was posted to Dubai from 2008 to 2010 to oversee the grand opening of the Atlantis, Palm Jumeirah, serving as vice president of resort operations in the Middle East.

Returning to The Bahamas, he became active in the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association, establishing numerous school programmes to help children understand the importance of tourism and career opportunities in the sector. The junior hotelier program he was instrumental in setting up in primary and secondary schools has impacted more than 4,000 students.

Now in his third consecutive term, Stuart Bowe is the longest serving president of the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association, and he currently serves as first vice-president of the Caribbean

Hotel and Tourism Association.

Also in winners' row on Sunday, Barbadian Heather Hinds, general cook at The Club Barbados Resort & Spa, was named Caribbean Employee of the Year, while Jamaica's Derrick Wright, an income auditor at The Tyrall Club in Jamaica was named Caribbean Supervisor of the Year. James Hepple, president and CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association, captured the Caribbean Association Executive of the Year Award.

CHIEF also presented awards in the areas of operations, sales and marketing, environmental sustainability and technology, the four themes of the conference.

In operations, Ocean Two Resort & Residences of Barbados was the winner with special mention going to Baoase Luxury Resort in Curacao and Puerto Rico's El Conquistador Resort.

For the best practice in sales and marketing, the winner was Barbados' Elegant Hotels Group with The Somerset on Grace Bay in Turks and Caicos, and Synapse, LLC, a digital marketing agency in Puerto Rico, getting special honors.

The recipient of the CHIEF Award for Environmental Sustainability was The Tryall Club in Jamaica with special honours going to Aruba's Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort and True Blue Bay Boutique Resort of Grenada.

The recipient of the CHIEF Award for Technology was the Aruba Tourism Authority and its advertising agency Concept Farm.



CONTRIBUTED

Stuart Bowe accepts the coveted award from Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association.

Regional hotelier batting for boutique hotels

BOUTIQUE HOTELS in the Caribbean have stories that visitors to the region want to hear, asserts a leading international hotelier.

Bill Clegg, regional vice-president, Franchise Services and Programmes, of Choice Hotels International, Inc, believes that good things often come in small packages, and the Caribbean's unique and historic accommodations are remembered long after their guests depart.

Clegg, who addressed this subject at the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) at El Conquistador Resort in Puerto Rico last weekend, said his company has been engaging with hotel operators to discuss ways that boutique hotels can deliver

and enhance a highly personalised accommodations experience, and to have them share best practices – in particular, what's working for them as they develop their own stories.

"Boutique hotels offer visitors to the Caribbean the opportunity to truly explore the destination," Clegg stated, explaining that "guests staying at boutique hotels can often immerse themselves in the real culture, history, beaches, and tropical amenities that make the region unique".

The hotelier, who addressed a panel entitled Experience the Intimacy – Tips for Delivering a Boutique Experience to the Caribbean traveller, said while all variety of hotels meet travellers' needs, personalised touch is a key

selling point for today's discerning visitor.

Rounding out the panel with Clegg were Lourdes Hainlin, vice president, client services of Forbes Travel Guide; Delroy Lake, general manager of Anacaona Boutique Hotel in Anguilla; and Roberta Garzaroli, owner of Graycliff Hotel in Nassau, Bahamas.

LARGEST PORTFOLIO

Choice Hotels' Ascend Hotel Collection, the world's largest global portfolio of diverse independent hotels and resorts, allows boutique hotels to align and benefit from Choice's broad distribution channels, global and regional marketing and promotion, educational opportunities, and other franchise

services that offer hotel owners and operators the chance to maximise revenues and guest satisfaction.

Ascend Hotel Collection affiliated hotels are located in Abaco, Bahamas; Willemstad, Curaçao; Georgetown, Guyana; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and in Dutch St Maarten.

The company is seeking to expand its Caribbean footprint with new Ascend Hotel Collection affiliations in key Caribbean destinations, including Anguilla, Antigua, Aruba, Barbados, Jamaica, St Lucia, the United States Virgin Islands, and others with known demand and ease of access.

CHIEF is produced by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association.

International tourist arrivals up four per cent in the first half of 2016

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST arrivals worldwide grew by four per cent between January and June 2016 compared to the same period last year. Destinations worldwide received 561 million international tourists (overnight visitors), 21 million more than in 2015, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Asia and the Pacific demonstrated renewed strength this first half of 2016, receiving nine per cent more international arrivals, the highest growth across world regions.

Led by Central and South America, which saw an increase of four per cent in international arrivals the Americas, destinations such as Europe (+3 per cent) showed mixed results, with solid growth in many countries offset by weaker performance in others.

In Africa (+5 per cent), Sub-Saharan destinations rebounded strongly, while North Africa continued to report weak results. Limited data for the Middle East points to an estimated decrease of nine per cent in international arrivals this six-month period, though results vary from destination to destination.

“Tourism has proven to be one of the most resilient economic sectors worldwide. It is creating jobs for millions at a time when providing perspectives for a better future to people of all regions is one of our biggest challenges. But tourism is also creating bonds among people of all nations and backgrounds, bringing down stereotypes and fighting fear and distrust,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

“Safety and security are key pillars of tourism development, and we need to strengthen our common action to build a safe, secure and seamless travel framework. This is no time to build walls or point fingers; it is time to build an alliance based on a shared vision and a joint responsibility,” he added.

REGIONAL RESULTS

Growth accelerated in Asia and the Pacific with international arrivals up nine per cent through June, driven by robust intraregional demand. Oceania (+10 per cent) led growth, followed by North-East Asia, South-East Asia (both +9 per cent) and



Visitors to the island enjoying the sunshine on the streets of Montego Bay.

South Asia (+7 per cent).

International tourist arrivals to Europe grew by three per cent between January and June 2016, with mixed results across destinations. Northern, Central and Eastern Europe both recorded five

per cent more international arrivals. Though many destinations posted positive results, growth in both Western Europe (+1 per cent) and Southern Mediterranean Europe (+2 per cent) was slow.

International arrivals in the

Americas were up four per cent in the first half of the year, in line with the world average. Strong US outbound flows continued to benefit many destinations across the region. Central America and South America (both +6 per cent) led

growth, while arrivals in both the Caribbean and North America grew by four per cent.

Comparatively limited data available for Africa points to a five per cent increase in international arrivals, with Sub-Saharan Africa (+12 per cent) recovering vigorously, but North Africa down by nine per cent. International arrivals in the Middle East decreased by an estimated nine per cent, with mixed results among destinations.

POSITIVE PROSPECTS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR

The first half of the year typically accounts for around 46 per cent of the total international arrivals count of the year. For the remainder of 2016 prospects are positive overall. Countries that have already reported results until July or August show continued growth in the current Northern Hemisphere summer peak season. The UNWTO Panel of Experts evaluated the period May-August also favourably and remains confident about the September-December period, in line with the trend of the first half of the year. Confidence is highest in Africa, the Americas and Asia and the Pacific, while experts in Europe and the Middle East are somewhat more cautious.

DEMAND FOR TRAVEL VARIES ACROSS SOURCE MARKETS

China, the world's top source market, continues to report double-digit growth in expenditure on international travel (+20 per cent in the first quarter of 2016), benefiting destinations in the region and beyond. The United States, the world's second-largest market, increased expenditure on outbound travel by eight per cent through July, thanks to a strong currency. Third-largest market, Germany, reported a four per cent increase in expenditure through July. Other markets that showed robust demand for outbound travel in the first half of 2016 were Spain (+20 per cent), Norway (+11 per cent), Australia (+10 per cent) and Japan (+6 per cent). Meanwhile, expenditure from the Russian Federation and Brazil continues to be weak, reflecting the economic constraints and depreciated currencies in both markets.

USAID Clean Energy Program, CHTA signs agreement to bolster energy efficiency

THE UNITED States Agency for International Development (USAID) Caribbean Clean Energy Program (CARCEP) last Friday signed a collaboration agreement with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in a landmark move to bolster energy efficiency in the Caribbean's hotel sector, the largest electricity consumer sector in the region.

The agreement, which was signed during the official ceremony of the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum in Puerto Rico, defines the joint actions to be taken to effectively address the sector's needs, primarily in the areas of energy policy reform, research and capacity development.

This initiative is largely directed at beneficiary countries under USAID CARCEP's mandate – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Hotel owners in these nations will be equipped with access to technical tools, training and other resources to help them understand and adopt energy efficiency best practices to reduce their energy consumption.

Director General and CEO of CHTA Frank Comito pledged, through the signing of this agree-



Director General and CEO of CHTA Frank Comito (seated at right) and USAID CARCEP's Energy Efficiency promotion specialist, John Marcocchio, at the signing in Puerto Rico. Standing (from left) are Jonathan Schwartz of Deloitte Consulting; Hugh Cresser, energy efficiency specialist; Denaye Hinds of OBM International; Loreto Duffy-Mayers of the Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action - Advanced Programme, and Stuart Bowe, CHTA's first vice-president and senior vice-president of Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas.

ment, to work closely with USAID CARCEP to advance the work done under the Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action (CHENACT) Program, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and conducted through CHTA and its regional public-sector counterpart organisation, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation. The agreement underscores CHTA's commitment to pro-

viding programme-specific support to USAID CARCEP regionally and with designated countries, hotels, hotel associations and public-sector tourism stakeholders.

"CHTA welcomes the support by the United States government through its clean-energy programme, to assist Caribbean hotels and countries in becoming more energy efficient. The programme brings to the table new tools,

resources and training, building upon the foundational work undertaken with hotels through the CHENACT programme," said Comito.

This agreement symbolises the start of what will become a wider catalytic benefit for sustainable growth in the region, as reductions in energy consumption will deliver environmental benefits as well as improve regional economic competitiveness. There are approximately 2,500 hotels that can profit from this initiative. "CHENACT touched more than 150 hotels in the region. Through USAID CARCEP, we will be able to significantly expand the number of hotels and countries which can benefit from the programme's resources."

BENCHMARKING TOOL

Already, the partnership has resulted in the launch of an energy benchmarking tool that followed the agreement signing at the forum. The tool, which was developed by USAID CARCEP, will allow hotel operators to analyse their electricity, fossil fuel and water usage; compare the energy and water intensity with similar hotels in their area; and learn about energy and water efficiency strategies they can employ to reduce hotel operating costs.

"The deployment of this tool in the hotel industry, the biggest eco-

nomical driver in the region, and the follow-on activities developing knowledge and awareness of energy efficiency will be a game changer. Energy consumption in the region is as much as three times higher per US\$1 of GDP generated than other regions of the world, putting this region at a real competitive disadvantage. Both for climatic and economic reasons, it is imperative that we reduce fossil fuel consumption and turn those savings into jobs and industry for the region that will drive economic development and future growth," affirmed USAID CARCEP's energy efficiency promotion specialist, John Marcocchio.

To support ease of access, the tool will be housed on CHTA's website, a strategic decision to ensure sustainability after USAID CARCEP's implementation period ends in 2020. Hotel owners who are members of CHTA, including those located in non-beneficiary USAID CARCEP nations, will be able to access this tool at no cost. The tool can highlight abnormal energy and water demands and unearth opportunities for savings and investments.

The next step is the roll-out of USAID CARCEP's training programme scheduled to take place in Jamaica in November 2016.

Kool Runnings Adventure Park introduces new rides

THE KOOL Runnings Adventure Park in Negril, with over 15 attractions, has introduced such new features as the Astronaut Ride, stand-up paddle boarding, new private cabanas, improved play and dining facilities – all to enhance the experience of its patrons, while staying open all year.

The new Astronaut Ride is one of five in the Western Hemisphere, four of which have been installed in the USA and the other in Trinidad.

According to Dr Garfield Munroe, park development director of Kool Runnings Adventure Park, the new ride consists of a human gyroscope capable of spinning four



Kool Runnings Adventure Park

people head over heels, thereby giving a feeling of weightlessness as if in outer space.

"The supplier of this new, exciting ride also provides similar rides to NASA for the training of its astronauts," said Dr Munroe.

In making the announcements, Dr Munroe said the decision to upgrade its offerings and keep the park open year long was taken because of patrons' demands for continuous access to the attraction.

"As of this month, we will be open year round on Wednesdays, weekends and public holidays. Up to this point, however, we would usually have closed the property from the end of August until May

of the following year," Dr Munroe said.

He explained that a major marketing campaign has been launched, to include new radio and television advertisements, as well as the installation of billboards in Lucea, Kingston, Mandeville and Negril, to emphasise the all-year opening.

"We promise more adventure and more 'wow' for the dollar," is the message in the new advertisements.

The Kool Runnings Adventure Park is located on the Norman Manley Boulevard, Negril. It was set up in 2007 and consists of state-of-the-art facilities with activities for visitors to the island and locals.