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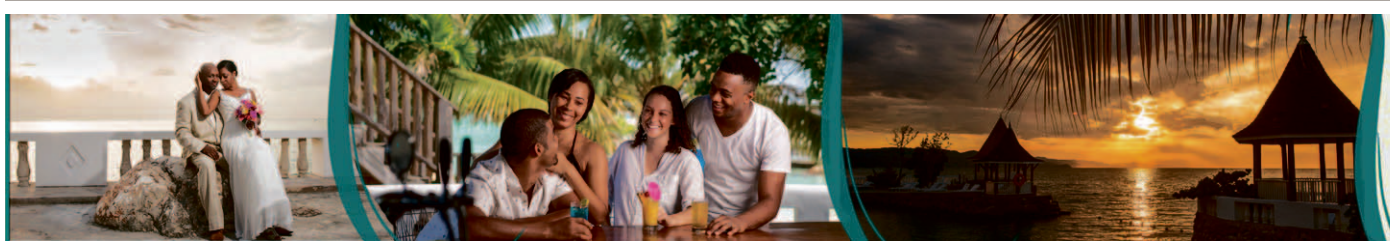
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016



# Jake's Hotel

From 'wattle and daub'  
to number one



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# Jake's Hotel

From 'wattle and daub' to number one

**Paul H. Williams**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

THERE SEEMS to be no end to the number of awards Jake's Hotel in Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth, is winning this year.

Conde Nast Traveler magazine readers voted it the sixth-best resort in the Caribbean, and number one in Jamaica recently, and the resort has been rated number five by Afar magazine in its new 'Dreamy Bohemian' category.

Add to that the Hotelier of the Year award by Caribbean Journal.

In reacting to the aforementioned prestigious endorsements, Jason Henzell, chairman of Jake's Hotel, said, "I feel God has blessed me. I really found my treasure in Treasure Beach." He also said he is grateful for the day his grandfather, Basil Densham, purchased a lot of land at Treasure Beach. Thus, he has nothing but high honours for his grandparents and mother, Sally Henzell.

Jake's Hotel has won many other top awards over the years, including environmental ambassadors awards

through BREDS, the Treasure Beach Foundation, but the recent ones are even more significant since this year marks the 75th anniversary when Basil Densham, the second 'outsider' to build a house in Treasure Beach, bought a lot in 1941, the same year Sally Henzell was born.

Basil Densham built a family beach house, called Treasure Cot, on the property, which was also a popular retreat for mainly backpackers. Densham kept Treasure Cot a secret, so he did not market it to bring attention to the area. He did not want it to be commercially developed. Thus, for decades, Treasure Cot was Treasure Beach's biggest secret. And, it is to be noted that Alex Haley spent nine months at Treasure Cot when he was writing his now famous book, *Roots*.

When the Denshams passed away in 1991, one of the daughters got Treasure Cot, while the other, Sally, got the family house in Mandeville, Manchester, which she eventually sold and bought a property near Treasure Cot. On it, there was a small 'wattle and daub'



CONTRIBUTED  
A one bedroom villa at Jake's.





structure which she turned into a restaurant called Jake's, named after a parrot. The restaurant evolved into a hotel, whose rustic environment and artsy rooms were its major pulling factors.

Fast-forward to 1993 and 1994 when business was slow. Jason Henzell got the idea that he needed to step in to assist his mother. In 1995, he resigned his position of manager for Pan Caribbean Bank in Montego Bay. "Everybody told me that I was mad," he shared with **Hospitality Jamaica**. But there was a method to his madness. He expanded by creating more rooms to accommodate British and American backpackers.

The hotel now has 65 rooms, 32 on the original property, and some 33 villas and cottages within walking distance. He resided on the property for 10 years, washing dishes and waiting on tables, among many other things, until he hired a resident manager.

Though Jake's Hotel has



A cottage at Jake's.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

luxurious accommodations, it is known for its artistic, rustic ambience by the sea, a hotel built by an artist. Yet, Henzell said he does not even consider it a hotel or resort, but an entity that is driving community tourism and sustainable development. But a gem by any other name is still a gem. And this gem in Treasure Beach is ideal for

the laid-back, adventure traveller, the Bohemian who is looking for somewhere off the beaten track.

And it also takes guest to other scenic spots, sights, and experiences in the parish. It offers spa services, kayaking, mountain biking, boat rides, and outdoor movies every Thursday night. It is also a yoga and fitness retreat,

where people can dine at the associated Jack Sprat Restaurant.

"We are in a community that is authentic, unspoiled by commercial development," Henzell said, and it also has the "warmest customer service", to complement the artistically designed rooms, perhaps. For its friendly staff, called the 'Jake's family', Jake's is the place to work, according to Henzell, what with its health and gratuity schemes, and its ongoing training programme.

#### GIVING BACK

Jake's Hotel is also not about receiving and hosting guests for profit only, of course. It has been giving back to the community through BREDS, a non-profit organisation that focuses on sports, education and conservation. That foundation has raised millions of dollars for the Treasure Beach sport park, a model for sports for social change.

Yet, Jake's is not just sitting on its laurels, watching the ebb and flow of the waves at Treasure

Beach. There is space for improvement and expansion. Thus, more rooms will be constructed. The seaside bohemia is already the home of Calabash Literary Festival, the biggest lit fest in the Caribbean. In addition to the desire to make Jake's the leader in community tourism in the Caribbean, future plans include taking over and transforming Lovers' Leap, a very popular sight in St Elisabeth.

Henzell also wants to work with government to upgrade the Lionel Denham Aerodrome to accommodate larger planes. The hosting of a food, rum and reggae festival is another idea to be brought to reality. Farm tours and cooking lessons are on the front burners.

"I see a very, very bright future for Jake's," Henzell said, "I am very excited about the fact that Treasure Beach is finally being seen as a community that is making its name in a different niche market."





Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett addressing staff at the Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios.

CONTRIBUTED

# Bartlett kick-starts winter tourist season with motivational tour

THE ISLAND'S tourism sector has signalled its readiness for what is expected to be the best winter tourist season in the country's history.

With hundreds of additional rooms being brought on stream, a significant increase in air seats out of key markets and an uptick in cruise arrivals, Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett is beaming with anticipation.

He outlined that because the sector is doing so well and growing consistently, the concept of the

winter tourist season, which runs from December 15 to April 15, will soon have little relevance to tourism in Jamaica. "This year is the last year we're going to have anything called the 'start of the winter tourist season', we have graduated beyond that," he told staff at a number of hotels during a pre-season motivational tour on the weekend.

The anticipated end to the seasonality of local tourism is based on the fact that "we will have four million visitors here next year for sure," Bartlett assured hotel staff.

*"This year is the last year we're going to have anything called the 'start of the winter tourist season', we have graduated beyond that."*

Continuing, he said, "this year we're going to end up with something like 3.7 million and when you get to four million arrivals next year, you can't talk about winter season and summer season, because every day is the season now."

To rousing applause, he further assured staff that, for them, this meant a greater degree of certainty about their jobs as they would not have to be too concerned about seasonal employment.

The tour included visits to Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in Ocho

Rios and stops in Montego Bay where he visited Riu Reggae, Sandals Royal Caribbean's uniquely created over-water suites and Royal Decameron. All four properties have incorporated levels of innovation that give them unique features which appeal to the expanding tastes of today's travellers.

"The visitor, today, is far more informed than ever before and is turning everything that we've known on its head. At one time, we had a slogan in the market that said, 'Once you go, you know'. With





CONTRIBUTED

Chief Executive Officer of Sandals Resorts International Adam Stewart (centre) shows off the new over-water suites to Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (right) and Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett.

today's technology, we have to switch that around, it has to be now 'Once you know, you go', because there's so much that's out there and such heavy content that is flowing in the social space, and people are grabbing it and responding to it," said the tourism minister.

During the tour, Bartlett also took note of the extent to which locally grown fruits and vegetables were made available to guests at the hotels and urged that greater efforts be made to infuse more Jamaican produce in meals prepared at local properties. "These are the things that identify and define a destination," he underscored, adding, "what visitors come for and what really makes them stay is the authenticity of the experience, such as our delicious Jamaican food. That is why we are

driving the process to have our properties use more local produce through our Tourism Linkages Network."

As part of the tour, Bartlett and other officials from the Ministry of Tourism and its agencies will also be meeting with workers at the island's two main international airports and ground transportation operators. The meetings with industry workers, he said, was "to underscore the importance of the human capital in driving the tourism experience, and also to motivate them and give them my commitment in terms of what we want to do to assist in building their capacity to deliver more, earn more and to become better partners in the industry".



Staff at Riu Reggae are excited to meet the minister of tourism (not seen) on his visit to the newest resort in Montego Bay.

  
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## THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

# China prepared to help with tourism development

**David Jessop**  
Contributor

LAST MONTH, China published a detailed new policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean in which it set out a new approach to its relations with the Americas.

The document, which has real breadth and ambition, potentially offers, perhaps for the first time, an agenda around which the region can develop a practical bilateral dialogue with Beijing that can take relations far beyond where they presently are.

Although a minor aspect of its whole, the paper is particularly interesting on tourism, focussing on its significance in ways that few other nations do.

It makes clear that *“China will encourage tourism authorities and enterprises on both sides to introduce tourism resources and products to each other and expand tourism cooperation.”*

It goes on to say that China will explore and increase its role in developing *“policies to promote two-way tourism, and support the negotiation for more direct flights between aviation authorities of the two sides”*. It also says that China intends working with consumer protection departments in the region and Latin America to give priority *“to the protection of consumer rights for international travellers”*.

### DOOR FOR GOVTS

What this appears to do is open a door for governments, tourist boards, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the Caribbean Hotels and Tourism Association, to pursue with the Chinese how practically they might support the gradual development of a Chinese visitor market.

In recent years, almost every Caribbean tourist board has considered how best to obtain a share of what the Inter-American



**JESSOP**

Development Bank (IDB) says involves around 117 million outbound tourists spending overseas about US\$498 billion; numbers they forecast to double by 2020. However, their progress has been limited and possibly even illusory.

While some destinations have claimed year-on-year growth in Chinese arrivals, it is far from clear that these numbers really represent tourists, as the figures appear to include the statistically significant number of Chinese people coming to the region in relation to many public and private projects the country now has underway.

At present, the biggest problem is airlift. There is not enough demand to fill direct regular flights to the region, so anyone visiting the region from China or coming to join a cruise ship, has first to fly to the nearest point. This means Houston or New York, and then travelling on, or alternatively using Air China's same-plane service from Beijing via Montreal to Havana. In each case, the overall flying time is at best around 20 hours.

This makes the only practical solution at present, when it comes to encouraging stay-over Chinese visitors to go anywhere other than Havana, is to develop, as Jamaica is now doing, multi-destination vacations for those who may



already have decided to travel to Cuba.

### BETTER OPTION

As this column has observed before, a more promising medium-term option, when it comes to numbers, may be the opportunity to work towards encouraging Chinese arrivals by cruise ship.

China has been gradually developing a cruise industry in the Pacific and plans to build its own cruise ships, offering perhaps the longer-term possibility for home-porting Chinese vessels for Chinese

visitors out of Cuba or Jamaica. Although embryonic, Chinese cruising potentially would seem to offer a practical way to bring Chinese visitors to the region in large numbers, perhaps initially out of Miami on existing services into the region.

This could help circumvent challenges that the IDB noted in its recent report, 'Chinese Rise in the Caribbean – What Does It Mean for Caribbean Stakeholders', need to be addressed. For the Caribbean to capture more of the Chinese market the bank said

significant changes in approach are required, including a streamlined or visa-exemption procedure, more five-star hotel properties, better security, Chinese cuisine, language skills, sensitivity to different cultural norms, and quality shopping.

China's new policy paper speaks to a sector in which the Caribbean has genuine advantage. It suggests that individual countries and representative regional tourism bodies should make an early start in exploring the Chinese Government's new thinking.





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Lounge area on the Italian Riviera.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The rebranded Sandals South Coast.

# Sandals Resorts announces newly renovated Jamaican hotel

**S**ANDALS WHITEHOUSE European Villas and Spa has been rebranded as Sandals South Coast, says a media release from the hotel chain.

The totally reimagined luxury-included resort unveils recent renovations that embrace and incorporate the natural beauty and bounty of the 50-acre property's stunning beachfront setting in Jamaica's south coast region.

"With this relaunch, we have brought our most innovative ideas and concepts to absolutely reimagine the guest experience," said Gordon 'Butch' Stewart, chairman and founder of Sandals Resorts International.

"The results further embody the beauty of the region, embracing the incredible beach and water this resort boasts, nestled within 500 acres of nature preserve."

This multimillion-dollar renovation project includes Sandals' first, dedicated over-the-water bar called Latitudes, where guests can enjoy their cocktails in hammocks suspended above the Caribbean Sea; a floating, ocean based swim-up bar called Bar-Tender, where guests can enjoy cocktails right in the ocean; and an over-the-water wedding chapel with breathtaking 360-



The newly renovated Jerk Shack Restaurant.

degree, panoramic water views and a glass-floor aisle.

Brides and grooms will have the option of making a grand entrance on their special day by arriving at the wedding chapel in style via boat.

Additional completed renovations include upgrades to the resort's existing five restaurants as well as four new five-star Global Gourmet dining options: Sushi on the Sand; Beach Picnic, an option for Butler guests to have a romantic picnic on the beach; Jerk Shack, an open-air seating and rustic vibe dining option that serves authentic jerk dishes; and Schooner's, which serves Caribbean fare.

All accommodations at Sandals South Coast are ocean-facing, allowing guests to maximise their enjoyment of the beach and waters, including some of the most memorable sunsets in Jamaica. The Italian Riviera, formerly known as the Italian Village, which was completed this month, houses 112 rooms and suites, featuring upgraded room categories, including:

■ **Italian Beachfront One Bedroom Butler Suite.** These newly renovated Love Nest Suites are located within the first through fourth floors of the Italian Riviera and boast a spacious master bedroom complete with exquisite

furnishings, a handcrafted four-poster king-size bed, and a large smart TV. The en-suite, spa-style bathroom features modern amenities such as dual faucets, a walk-in rain shower, a large backlit mirror, and a freestanding soaking tub for two. The suite's expansive living room boasts a fully stocked bar with premium spirits, a sectional sofa, an additional smart TV, and wall-to-wall glass doors leading to a private balcony or patio offering direct views of the spectacular south coast beach and a bistro set for two. Butler Elite and 24-hour room service are included.

■ **Italian Beachfront Club Level Walkout Junior Suite.** These newly renovated Club Level suites are located on the beach level of the Italian Riviera and walk directly out on to the pristine beach. Inside, the spacious open floor plan features masterfully crafted furnishings, a four-poster king-size bed, and a large smart TV. The adjacent spa-style bathroom is outfitted with luxe amenities such as a walk-in rain shower, a large backlit mirror, dual faucets, and a freestanding soaking tub. Outside, glass doors open to a private patio equipped with a bistro set. As an exclusive Club Sandals suite guest, a dedicated concierge is available to handle any special

requests and reservations such as spa appointments.

■ **Italian Beachfront Club Level Junior Suite.** These newly renovated Club Level suites are located on the second through fourth floors of the Italian Riviera and feature private balconies with magnificent ocean views. These suites include upgraded furnishings, a four-poster king-size bed, a large smart TV, and bathrooms with a walk-in rain shower, a large backlit mirror, dual faucets, and a freestanding soaking tub. A dedicated concierge is available for guests of these suites.

■ **Italian Honeymoon Beachfront Room.** These newly renovated beachfront rooms reside in the first through fourth levels of the Italian Riviera. Inside, the spacious room is adorned with custom-crafted furnishings, a four-poster king-size bed, and a large smart TV. A sliding barn-style door within the room leads to a luxuriously appointed bathroom equipped with backlit mirrors, dual faucets, a modern shower/tub combination, and recessed lighting. Outside, a glass door leads to a balcony or patio offering sweeping views of the beach and lush tropical gardens.





CONTRIBUTED

From left: Edmund Bartlett, minister of tourism, in conversation with Grantley Stephenson, CEO, Kingston Wharves, and Paul Pennicook, director of tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board, at the Plaques and Keys Ceremony on board the Pullmantur cruise ship 'Monarch' the largest-ever ship to dock at the port of Kingston.

# Cruise shipping history

**C**RUISE SHIPPING history was made last week when the largest-ever ship to dock at the port of Kingston sailed in at 6 a.m.

The 268m Pullmantur ship *Monarch* docked with 2,744 passengers on board. The ship sailed in from Cartagena, Columbia, and was initially expected to call on Montego Bay, but with all berths full at that port, an alternative was sought.

"All three cruise ports – Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Falmouth – were scheduled to be at capacity, so rather than lose the call of the *Monarch*, and noting that the ship was also coming from Cartagena, which is a cultural capital much like Kingston, we saw this as a great opportunity. The Pullmantur team was very positive about redirecting the ship here and by all accounts, the passengers



Captain Arkadiusz Branka (left), M/V *Monarch* makes a point to Edmund Bartlett, minister of tourism at the Plaques And Keys Ceremony on board the Pullmantur Cruise ship – *Monarch*.

themselves were pleased with the experience," said William Tatham, vice-president, cruise and marina operations, Port Authority of Jamaica.



Tourists take time out to get a memento of their visit into Kingston when the Pullmantur Cruise ship 'Monarch' the largest-ever ship to dock at the port of Kingston, sailed in recently with 2,744 passengers on board. The ship sailed in from Cartagena, Columbia, and was initially expected to call on Montego Bay, but with all berths full at that port, an alternative was sought.



The 'Monarch' sailed in from Cartagena, Columbia, and was initially expected to call on Montego Bay, but with all berths full at that port, an alternative was sought. Expectations are high for another record year for cruise arrivals. The January to October 2016 period saw 1,313,841 cruise passenger arrivals at the three major ports, an increase of 109,609 passengers or 9.1 per cent.

The visit of the *Monarch* makes the day the very first time that all four of Jamaica's major ports were hosting cruise ships on the same day.

Passengers disembarked the ship for excursions to Dunn's River Falls, Devon House, Bob Marley Museum, Kingston Craft Market,

Fort Clarence, Tuff Gong Studios, and the National Gallery. "Kingston already has an interesting range of activities for the cruise ship passenger. The feedback we'll receive from this *Monarch* visit will go a far way in helping us to refine our strategy for cruise possibilities in the

future," said Tatham.

Expectations are high for another record year for cruise arrivals. January to October 2016 period saw 1,313,841 cruise passenger arrivals at the three major ports, an increase of 109,609 passengers or 9.1 per cent.





Dantia Welcome accepts her first place plaque from Gary Davies, hotel director, Royal Caribbean. Dantia's winning poster is in the background.

# Corinaldi Avenue student wins FCCA competition

**D**ANTIA WELCOME of Corinaldi Avenue Primary School is the first-place winner in the junior division of the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Foundation Children's Environmental Poster Contest. The award ceremony took place recently aboard Royal Caribbean's *Independence of the Seas*, at the Historic Falmouth port in Trelawny.

Dantia won in the 12-year-old student category with a poster titled 'Reduce Recycle Renew the Caribbean'. Accompanied by her school principal, Hillary Foster, teachers Dane Julius and Donette Salmon and some of her schoolmates, Dantia was elated to receive her prize and experience touring the ship.

In his congratulatory remarks, Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook praised Dantia for her excellent work that copped the top prize in the region. "You have certainly made Jamaica proud. When I look at the work you have produced, I

am impressed with your talent. The Jamaica Tourist Board is happy to support a competition that brings environmental awareness to students."

He praised the teachers of Corinaldi Avenue Primary School for their consistent hard work, and the FCCA for their continued investment in educating students about good environmental practices. Also receiving recognition was Kemal Daley of Knockalva Agricultural School for representing Jamaica in the senior division.

In addition to encouraging students to be environmentally conscious, the competition also provides a scholarship reward to the first-, second- and third-place winners and their schools. As first-place winner, Dantia will receive US\$3,000. Corinaldi Avenue Primary School will also receive the same amount. The local round of the FCCA Environmental Poster Contest is organised by the Jamaica Tourist Board.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Kemal Daley (left) of Knockalva Agricultural School and his teacher, Asharee Johnson (centre), with Gary Davies, hotel director, Royal Caribbean.



With the 'Independence of the Seas' cruise ship as their backdrop, Dantia Welcome (third left) poses with her team from the Corinaldi Avenue Primary School before boarding the ship.



Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (left) and Gary Davies (right), hotel director, Royal Caribbean, celebrate with Kemal Daley (second left) of Knockalva Agricultural School and Dantia Welcome of Corinaldi Avenue Primary School.





# Tourism Linkages Networks expanded to further drive economic growth

**M**INISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett last week officially launched five new networks under its overarching Tourism Linkages Network initiative to better position the sector to generate higher growth rates in both visitor arrivals and earnings.

Chaired by renowned hotelier Adam Stewart, the Tourism Linkages Network was first introduced in 2013 with the primary goal of ensuring that tourism would be better integrated with other sectors. The initial focus was strengthening the relationship with the manufacturing and agricultural sectors as well as the creative industries.

The council has two main groups

that directly foster greater synergy between tourism and the productive sectors namely the Agriculture Technical Working Group and the Manufacturing Technical Working Group.

## NEW NETWORKS

However, the tourism linkages initiative has now been expanded to include five new networks: gastronomy, sports and entertainment, health and wellness, shopping, and knowledge.

Bartlett said the decision to expand the networks was strategic as they will have a fundamental role to play in helping the tourism sector achieve its growth targets.

"If we intend to attract five million visitors by 2021, generate

\$5 billion in tourism earnings, increase the total direct jobs to 125,000, and add 15,000 new hotel rooms, then we must put in place the framework to foster the growth of this sector. So the networks being introduced today will aid in transforming the sector, deepen linkages, and achieve significant growth," said Bartlett.

The minister also indicated that the timing of the launch was significant as recently released figures from the Jamaica Tourist Board indicate that the country's tourism sector is performing very well.

He revealed that Jamaica has registered growth of more than five per cent in both earnings and visitor arrivals. Specifically, from January to

October 2016, the island registered an increase of 5.2 per cent in total visitor arrivals over the same period last year, with 3,101,920 total visitors. For winter 2017, the destination also secured in excess of 4,000 new air seats from the United States over last winter. More than 1,000 new rooms are also expected to be added in 2017.

"There is no doubt that this is a very strong performance for the island's tourist industry. But there is still a lot of work to be done. This is why the new networks we have developed are vital," Bartlett said.

Each network, which is chaired by a member of the Tourism Linkages Council, has already

prepared detailed programmes and projects that were specifically chosen to add value to the Jamaican tourism sector, particularly as it relates to increasing visitor arrivals and spend.

Among the proposed plans for the networks are the creation of a gastronomy mobile application; the development of a top-10 events initiative to help drive entertainment locally; the development of nutraceuticals (such as ball moss, ginger, and marijuana); developing a central information repository and an online tourism knowledge portal; and identifying areas to be designated as shopping areas.





PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Rastafarians were expectedly well represented at the Smile Jamaica concert held at the Bob Marley Museum on Saturday, December 3.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

# NINE HOURS OF SWEET & SOUR SENSATIONS

**I**N MY exuberance, I lifted a crippled youngster I went to see recently. On the way up with him I heard a ‘crick’, and then that familiar sharp pain radiated from my spine. I had dislocated that disc in my spine ... again.

For the rest of the week, there was much discomfiture. By the time Saturday rolled along, the pain level was negligible. And while I remembered the Smile Jamaica concert at the Bob Marley Museum at 56 Old Hope in St Andrew, I did not remember that my situation did not lend itself to standing up for long hours.

I arrived just before 3:30 p.m. for the four-o’clock start. A small group

of people, mainly Rastafarians, were at the gate hurling derogatory words at the security officers. They had arrived early only to be told they needed a pass for the free concert to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first Smile Jamaica concert on December 3, 1976.

A security officer searched for my pass, but there was none. I was not going to be jostling for space in the gathering of the disgruntled, so I made a call. Voice message. I called again. Answer. I turned back to the gate, passed the spewing venom, and was met by the affable Debbie Bissoon of the Bob Marley Foundation.

I felt a little bad that I got in before the early birds, but I moved on, on to the property where Bob Marley, his wife, Rita, and producer Don Taylor were shot in the Marleys’ house hours before Marley was slated to perform at the peace and unity concert.

That house is now the museum to which visitors from all over the world travel. And the faces in the crowd that filled the yard to capacity said it all on Saturday. It was like a United Nations gathering, with Jamaica being over-represented. That ethnic mix enhanced the richness of the festive air. And the original fashion and styles of Rastafari were always



Taking pictures with the Marley statue was the order of the evening on Saturday, December 3. Here, master drummer Maroghini strikes a pose.



Sister Mitzy Williams was present at the first Smile Jamaica concert held at Heroes Circle on December 3, 1976.





PHOTO BY PAUL WILLIAMS

Stephen Marley performing at the Smile Jamaica concert on Saturday, December 3 at the Bob Marley Museum.

going to brighten the overcast evening and the night.

It was a night of nostalgia, reflection, revelations, hypnotic and exhilarating performances, multiple band changes, five emcees, including Sister Mitzy Williams, and Elaine Wint Leslie, who were present at the 1976 show. Wint Leslie actually introduced the defiant Bob Marley after he returned from hospital to the stage.

But it was also a night of pain from the slipped disc resting on my last nerve. I shifted my weight from one leg to another to ease the ache, but when the music of Third World hit me, I did not give, I moved and

rocked. I also enjoyed Runkus, Feluci, Dre Island, Roots Uprising, Bongo Herman, among others.

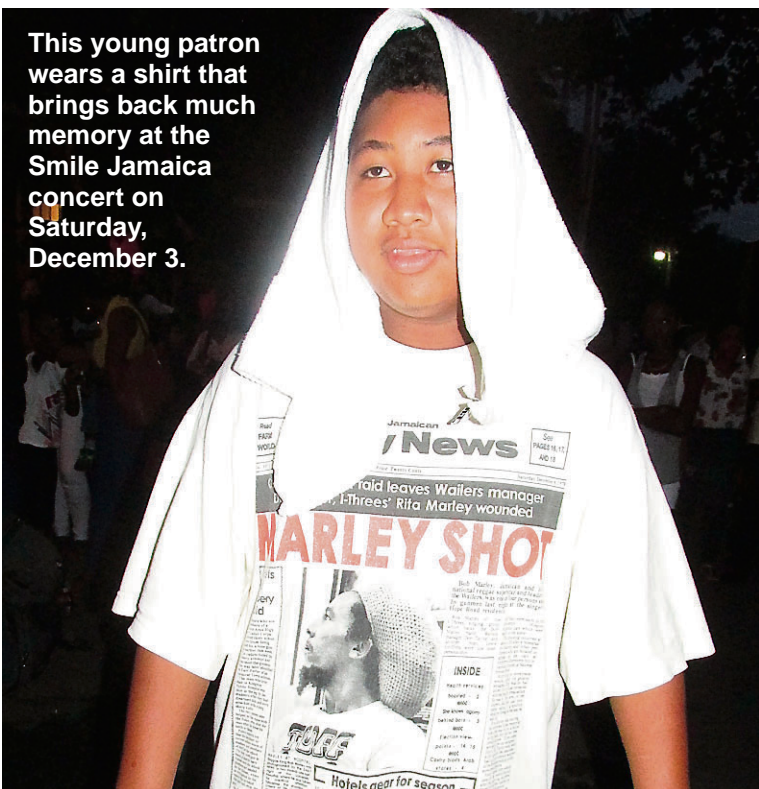
And to climax the show, three of Bob's sons – Stephen, Ky-Mani and Damian – and other relatives, appeared on stage, singing and paying homage to their late, great progenitor. It could not get better.

After more than nine hours of standing in pain, near deafening speakers, I left feeling that it was worth it. A memorable night it was, indeed, and for several hours after my slumber, I heard the rush of the sea in my ears. I made a note to self. Next time, do not stand so near in the night of sweet and sour – music and pain.



Third World and Bongo Herman onstage were among the highlights of the Smile Jamaica concert on Saturday, December 3, at Bob Marley Museum.

This young patron wears a shirt that brings back much memory at the Smile Jamaica concert on Saturday, December 3.



A section of the huge crowd at the Smile Jamaica concert on Saturday, December 3.



# Tourism key to US-Caribbean interests

THE CARIBBEAN must ensure that issues of critical socioeconomic importance are firmly addressed with the US Congress and the incoming administration, according to Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

Troubetzkoy commented on this during her presentation on the impact on the tourism industry of de-risking and correspondent banking relationships at the 40th Annual Conference on the Caribbean and Central America in Miami, produced by the Caribbean-Central American Action (CCAA) organisation.

Underscoring the common interests between the Caribbean and the United States, and the critical importance of tourism to the region's socio-economic development and stability, Troubetzkoy called for a new focus by the region's governments and private sector in support of recent legislation aimed at strengthening United States relations with Caribbean countries.

CHTA has joined CCAA in urging the US Senate to adopt the US-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 (HR 4939), which has already received bipartisan support in the House of Representatives, and just this week



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Karolin Troubetzkoy with Congressman Eliot L. Engel in Miami.

moved out of Senate Committee for consideration now by the full Senate.

HR 4939, introduced by Congressman Eliot L. Engel (D-NY) with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), would require the US Secretary of State and the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to submit to Congress a multi-year strategy focused on enhancing engagement with the countries of the Caribbean.

The draft legislation, which emphasises energy security, countering violence, expanded diplomacy, engagement with the private sector, and other priority areas, sets the stage for a new US-Caribbean relationship, declared Troubetzkoy, who met with Congressman Engel during the conference.

Before Congress adjourns, CHTA is supporting the outreach by CCAA to the US Senate to advance passage of the legislation in the Senate.

Troubetzkoy also recalled a key US policy which underscored the special relationship between the United States and its Caribbean neighbours: "We must also not forget the Third Border Initiative, and our envoys must convey to the new administration that the Caribbean's success is in the strategic interest of the United States of America."

## AIM OF THE BILL

Congressman Engel noted: "We spend a great deal of time focusing on challenges and opportunities in faraway places. But it's important that we never lose sight of our interests closer to home. Indeed, we should be working to strengthen our ties with countries in the Caribbean. That's the aim of this bill, which would prioritise US-Caribbean relations for years to come." He also addressed the need to pay more attention to the Caribbean in a recent editorial published in *The Miami Herald*.

Speaking on a panel on 'Tourism, Trade and the Unintended Consequences of De-Risking', Troubetzkoy called for continued action on priority areas such as 'de-risking' or 'de-banking', in which large US banks, sensitive to fraud and money-laundering allegations, end their business connections with smaller banks in other regions like the Caribbean.

De-risking threatens the Caribbean region's smaller banking sector, which operates in jurisdictions that host overseas banking facilities. For many hotels and tourism-related businesses in the region, there are limited banking options in their destinations.

Troubetzkoy asserted that the Caribbean is suffering more than others from de-risking, as trade is affected directly. Tourism is the largest income generator in the region, and she urged the sector to be more alert to the threat.

"The Caribbean tourism industry must pay close attention to the very serious effects the withdrawal of correspondent banks would have on our industry," said Troubetzkoy, adding that these long-standing banking relationships are vitally important to the region's survival. "If the industry is disrupted and we are unable to interact with overseas buyers and clients, the consequences will be dire."

The annual Conference on the Caribbean and Central America tackles issues which affect the region's economic growth and competitiveness. According to CCAA, the hotel and tourism industry is at the front line, and the ability to do business as usual in a competitive global market is critically important.

## HEART College of Hospitality Services receives SJF bursaries

IN LATE November, The Spanish-Jamaican Foundation (SJF) presented eight trainees of the HEART College of Hospitality Services in Runaway Bay, St Ann, with bursaries totalling \$300,000 to cover education-related expenses.

This is the latest such donation in the SJF's thrust towards making a tangible impact on the lives of young people by awarding bursaries and scholarships to tertiary-level students specialising in the field of hospitality. Earlier in November, the Foundation awarded \$500,000 in scholarships to hospitality students of the Montego Bay Community College.

### CRITERIA

In order to be awarded SJF hospitality scholarships/bursaries, students must meet certain criteria, including functional fluency in conversational Spanish; involvement in community service programmes, and attaining at least a B+ overall average. Awardees automatically become SJF youth



Heart College of Hospitality Services awardees flank SJF project manager, Ms Vanessa Meggoe (fourth from left).

ambassadors and are expected to participate in the foundation's community outreach activities.

In its continuing efforts to support

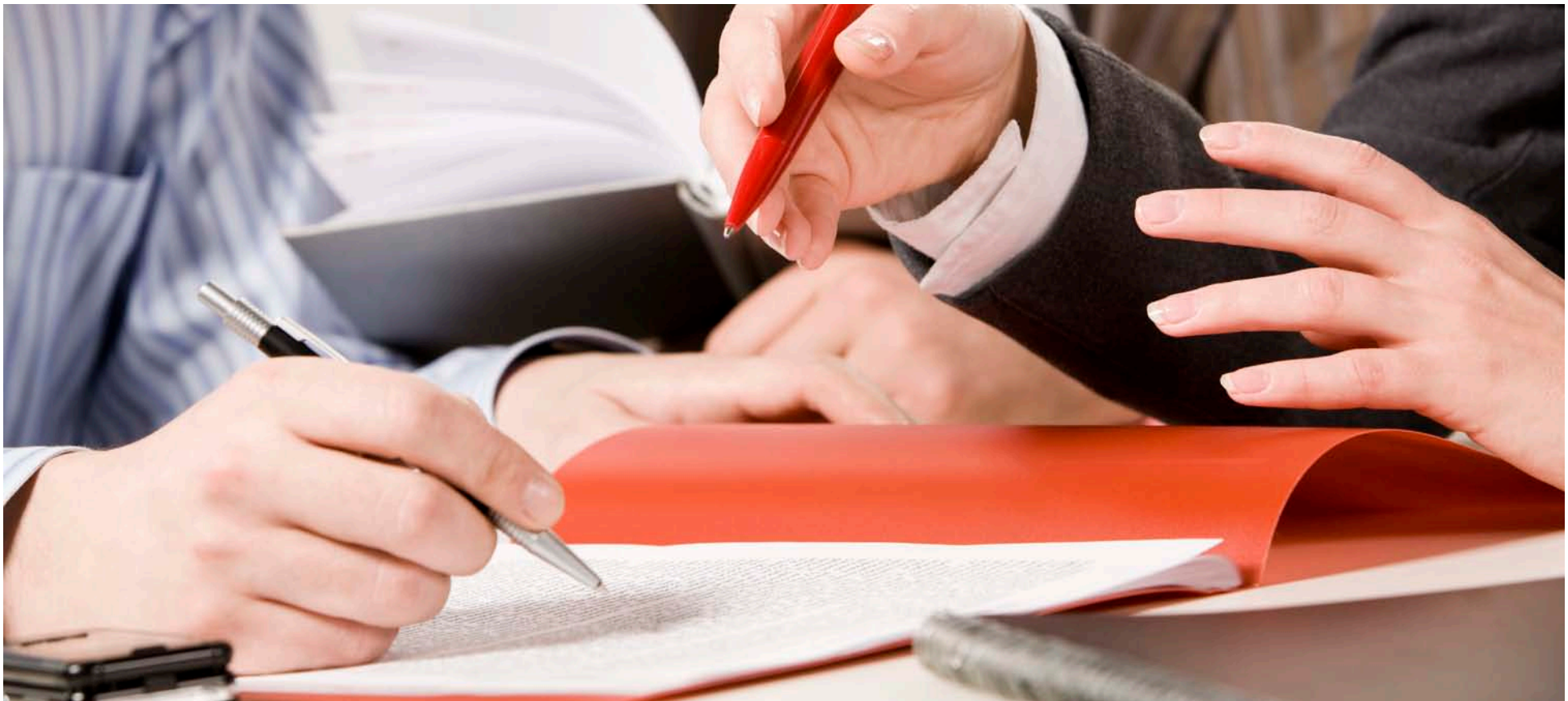
students of Spanish, the SJF has recently collaborated with Emma-June Bell of the Jamaica Spanish Language Review to stage the annual National Spanish Carol Service

in Kingston (with the support of the Embassy of Spain and missions of other Spanish-speaking countries) and, for the first time, in St Ann's Bay. Later this year, the foundation will also be paying the oral examination fees of all students in the Ministry of Education's Regions Three and Four.

At the bursary handover ceremony, SJF project manager Vanessa Meggoe encouraged the students to continue to strive for excellence in their studies, because, although faced with numerous challenges, she said they had been given a golden opportunity to pursue tertiary-level education and to advance in their chosen career paths.

The SJF was created in 2006 as a non-profit organisation of goodwill, intended to deepen the friendship between the people of Spain and Jamaica. Its mission is to ensure that Jamaican communities benefit from improved access to quality education, increased cultural awareness, and positive social integration.





# CHTA announces comprehensive approach to ‘people development’

**T**HE CARIBBEAN Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is aiming to deliver high-quality, affordable training support to its members with a renewed emphasis on ‘people development’.

CHTA President Karolin Troubetzkoy announced the creation of a ‘People Development’ initiative aimed at building upon successful educational programmes.

At the heart of the new direction is the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding with Springboard Caribbean to increase the region’s competitiveness while creating new opportunities for Caribbean people in the world’s most resilient industry.

“The Caribbean’s future is not just about sun, sand, and sea,” said Troubetzkoy. “It’s also the warmth, hospitality and professionalism of our people, which continues to attract visitors to our shores.”

The St Lucia hotelier believes that the region is standing on a solid foundation, “but we are in danger of losing our competitive edge as more areas of the world



CONTRIBUTED

Participants at a recent professional development workshop held in Puerto Rico.

aggressively invest in their people and provide elevated levels of service.”

## STRATEGY

The new initiative and the partnership with Springboard Caribbean are part of the CHTA’s strategic plan to advance the region’s bread-and-butter tourism industry.

CHTA’s People Development initiative is chaired by third vice-president, Patricia Affonso-Das, group general manager at Ocean

Hotels in Barbados. Working with the CHTA staff and other volunteers, one of her first tasks is to guide the implementation of the new strategic education partnership.

Springboard Caribbean, in partnership with a number of international accreditation bodies, has a proven track record of providing certificated services to leading Caribbean hotels and the cruise industry.

Springboard Caribbean’s partnership with the

internationally recognised Institute of Hospitality provides an opportunity for Caribbean hospitality employees to receive world-class training and professional recognition based on their experience and evidence of continuous professional development.

“CHTA has been working with Springboard Caribbean in recent months leading to the development of this MOU,” said CHTA’s CEO Frank Comito, who noted that Springboard Caribbean facilitated a leadership-development workshop for supervisors and managers, which was well-received, at the Caribbean Hotel Industry Exchange Forum, held in San Juan this past September.

Under the new agreement, Springboard Caribbean will provide CHTA members with professional development services in leadership, management, supervisory, line, and entry-level training and development. They will also launch a series of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certification workshops and food-safety training workshops.

Springboard’s Professional Development System courses will be delivered online through the Springboard Caribbean Online website, hosted on an industry-standard learning-management system; face-to-face workshops at the client’s business location; and a blended approach involving a combination of both delivery methods.

Participants in the training will be challenged to meet global standards of excellence, and graduates will be awarded certificates, and in some programmes, internationally recognised certifications.

These initiatives help to build upon CHTA’s existing education and training activities, said Comito, including the CHTA Education Foundation, through which more than 40 Caribbean nationals are currently receiving financial support. CHTA has also put in place extensive training and professional development programmes into three of its major regional events this year, with more than 600 participants attending various training sessions.





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