

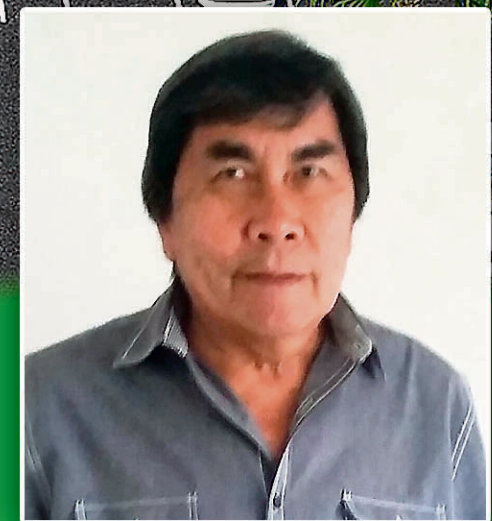
The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017



Redesigning **APPLETON**



JAMAICA'S CLIFTON YAP PUTS SPUNK INTO TRADITION



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Current Appleton Estate Rum Tour plant as it now stands without the billion-dollar expansion.



Jamaica's Clifton Yap puts spunk into tradition

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From left: Chairman of J. Wray & Nephew Limited, Clement 'Jimmy' Lawrence; K.K. Hall, director of global strategic marketing – rums; architect Clifton Yap; and Catherine McDonald, global brand PR manager – rum.



Janet Silvera

Senior Gleaner Writer

WESTERN BUREAU:

THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED \$1-billion renovation and upgrade of the Appleton Estate Visitor Centre in Shiloh, St Elizabeth, is under construction and on schedule for completion by November.

Considered one of the largest investments ever to take place on the island's southern coast, the project, designed by famed local architect Clifton Yap, is also central to the Ministry of Tourism's 2018 thrust to tap into the lucrative international gastro-tourism market.

"While I prefer to leave the finish product to speak for itself, this truly has the making of



something special,” Yap said in an interview on February 4.

“The project is truly a collaborative one. J. Wray & Nephew and its parent company, Gruppo Campari, are extremely knowledgeable about what they want to achieve and had been working for many months with the multi-disciplinary United States firm, Jack Rouse Associates, to develop preliminary concepts before I was brought in to join the team as architect.”

Yap, whose body of work includes critically acclaimed projects such as the Sovereign Centre (Kingston), Doctor’s Cave Bathing Beach, Whitter Village (Montego Bay), Melia Braco Village (Trelawny), and Couples Tower Isles (St Ann), said he is acutely aware that \$1 billion in any currency is a lot of money and that many persons are anxiously awaiting the project’s completion.

“ I have always pushed myself to do the best I can on each and every project. I do have a little anxiety sometimes, hoping that my client, and more so myself, will be happy with the end product. ”

“I don’t feel any added pressure,” he explained. “I approach this the way I do all my projects, which is to give my best effort to satisfy my client’s objectives.”

LOCAL ARCHITECTS COMPETENT

Yap said he is very much cognisant that there is a school of thought that projects of this magnitude should be reserved for foreign designers, adding that this couldn’t be further from the truth.

“Unless it is a highly specialised type of project, there is nothing that local architects can’t deal with at the highest level,” he pointed out.

“It is understandable that some overseas investors may feel more comfortable working



CONTRIBUTED

Clement ‘Jimmy’ Lawrence, chairman of J. Wray & Nephew.

with design architects from their country. I am, however, grateful that I was able to assist and contribute to the final product, which is now under construction.”

And calling J. Wray & Nephew and Gruppo Campari his “dream clients”, Yap said it has been a real pleasure working with the group.

“It is all about having the confidence that we will get the job done. Once we were brought in, the J. Wray & Nephew team has been nothing but supportive,” Yap added.

“I have always pushed myself to do the best I can on each and every project. I do have a little anxiety sometimes, hoping that my client, and more so myself, will be happy with the end product.”

For his part, Chairman of J. Wray & Nephew Clement ‘Jimmy’ Lawrence said the investment in the Appleton Estate Rum Tour is a significant one for both his organisation and also the people of Jamaica.

“An important and non-negotiable element of this renovation project is for the

redesigned rum tour to maintain an aesthetic that is authentically Jamaican and a true reflection of the Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum brand,” he pointed out.

“It is this desire for authenticity that led us to collaborate with a local designer – and not just any designer, but the one who had designed the original Appleton Estate Rum Tour. We are excited about the vision that Mr Yap brings and we know that his creativity and expertise will help to bring to life this world-class tourist attraction right here in the heart of Jamaica.”

The bar at
The Cliff
Hotel.



The Cliff wins two 2017 TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice honours

THE CLIFF Hotel has received two accolades as a result of TripAdvisor's 2017 Travellers' Choice Awards.

Out of 25 Caribbean hotels, the property was named number one in luxury (Top Luxury Hotels) and number five in the romance category (Top 25 Hotels for Romance). These annual awards, the highest honour TripAdvisor offers its hotel partners, are based on millions of reviews from travellers across the globe.

Situated on the cliffs of Negril, The Cliff Hotel is a private, tranquil setting marked by understated luxury. With its pristine sea views and magical sunsets, it is the ultimate setting for a much-needed tropical escape or a romantic getaway.

"It's an honour to be recognised by TripAdvisor as a top Caribbean hotel, especially in these two very significant categories," said assistant general manager Diandra Shand. "We are passionate about providing exceptional service and unparalleled hospitality to our guests, and we are proud to be recognised for the effort our staff puts into doing so each day."

Recognised for its upscale accommodations and modern amenities, the boutique property offers an intimate and luxurious island experience that is infused with distinct Jamaican culture and hospitality. Guests can indulge in luxurious treatments at the KiYara Spa; practise private yoga and



CONTRIBUTED
PHOTOS
Zen Restaurant
at the Cliff.



The Cliff Hotel

meditation on a new yoga deck overlooking the sea; and delight in modern culinary artistry at Zest Restaurant, led by internationally acclaimed chef Cindy Hutson.

MAGICAL ESCAPE

Meanwhile, oceanfront property surrounded by lush tropical landscapes is an easy and magical escape for lovers, a picturesque backdrop for a proposal, and the ultimate venue for a destination wedding.

The Cliff Hotel completed its

“
We are passionate about providing exceptional service and unparalleled hospitality to our guests, and we are proud to be recognised for the effort our staff puts into doing so each day.
”

final phase of a multimillion-dollar renovation at the end of 2016. The property features 33 luxurious suites and four romantic villas sprawled across five lush acres of hilltop paradise.

Additional amenities include an expansive swimming pool, fitness centre and gift shop. Watersports and off-site excursions such as cliff jumping, snorkelling and island volunteer programmes are also available.

IT'S AS early as 7 a.m. and already a quartet is hard at work saddled with a 300-pound air-conditioning unit. The Appliance Traders Limited (ATL) technicians – one female and three males – board a boat, which transports them to a boardwalk where they will continue trekking. They are taken to a locale most people dream of getting lost in, a vacationer's paradise, where they, along with other colleagues, are part of a thrust to shape history within the development of the Caribbean's first Over-the-Water Villas and Bungalows at Sandals Royal Caribbean in Montego Bay.

After months of variable weather conditions, constant manipulation of heavy equipment, and navigation of an unconventional work site, the project's successful completion makes the ATL team beam with pride.

ATL's technical supervisor, Winston Simpson, said, "It was definitely not a run-of-the-mill, day-at-the-office type of set-up."

Technician Joshua Gardner echoed his supervisor's sentiments.

"It was quite an experience working on open scaffolding over the ocean with daily direct exposure to the elements. Nevertheless, being entrusted with providing and installing a/c solutions to help advance the country's tourism sector is an opportunity for which we are most grateful."

UNIQUE PROJECT

Rather different from your conventional a/c install, Simpson explained that the Sandals project was unique in that they had to identify and source units that could withstand the accompanying environmental (sea and weather) conditions.

"We had a few critical considerations in selecting the right units. They had to be resistant to saltwater corrosion, energy-saving, have air-purification capabilities, accessible for service, which is a key determinant of the unit's lifespan, while simultaneously being aesthetically appealing, so we selected central units for the larger Over-the-Water Villas."

The villas, which were unveiled last December, are to be followed by Phase Two of the project, the Over-the-Water Bungalows, which have already taken the ATL team back out on the seas to install a dozen Panasonic Inverter units for a summer completion date.

The local retailer, which has a 50-year relationship with air-

ATL supports movement to enhance tourism product



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

ATL technicians (from left) team leader Joshua Gardner, Eric Bernard and Keleen Kameka pull together to facilitate an a/c installation in the unfinished Over-the-Water Bungalow at Sandals Royal Caribbean.



A look inside one of the Sandals Over-the-Water suites.

conditioning in the Jamaican market, is highly recognised for its partnership with Panasonic in pioneering an eco-villa at Sandals Montego Bay, now adding its work at the Over-the-Water suites.

In consideration of ever-rising energy costs, ATL's head of engineering, Mark Blair, confirms that the villa's 'green' nature would guarantee their sustainability as "the units installed at Sandals Royal



A Sandals Over-the-Water suite.

Caribbean are eco-friendly with special mechanisms designed to reduce greenhouse emissions. Additionally, through our major projects, we have seen where inverter AC models can reap up to

65 per cent in energy savings. That's a welcome boost to any company's bottom line, which, of course, will contribute in the long run to the viability of this game-changing product in the Caribbean".

David Jessop
Contributor

AROUND THE world, some popular tourism destinations are beginning to experience a backlash against visitors arriving in such numbers that local people are seeing their lifestyles changed as overcrowding creates unintended economic and social consequences.

The case of Venice is well known – a medieval city of 60,000 residents receiving 49 million visitors. But the latest much-visited destination to react to the effects of uncontrolled tourism on its inhabitants is Barcelona in Spain.

In a move designed to curb any significant expansion in the more than 30 million visitors the city already receives every year – there are 1.6 million residents – legislation has been passed that bans the construction of all new city centre hospitality facilities, and imposes strict limits on new hotel construction and related businesses on a city-wide basis.

The scheme responds to a growing number of local complaints that the streets in the Barri Gotic, and, for example, the cities essential of picturesque local open-air food markets, have

become so crowded that the residents can no longer go easily about their daily business. It also reflects growing concern among long-time city dwellers and the region's political parties that the absence of restrictions on property use and their purchase by those seeking to take advantage of the burgeoning tourism demand has made housing in parts of the city unaffordable to local people and especially the young, on whom the future depends.



JESSOP

Barcelona's response has been to divide the city into four differently regulated zones. One of these, the historic centre, has been designated an area of 'natural decrease' in which any hotel that closes will not be replaced. Elsewhere, new hotels are only to be permitted at the fringes of the city, with new tourist accommodation limited to a maximum of an additional 11,000 new rooms, or the equivalent of about seven per cent of the city's present accommodation.

LOCALS FEEL SHUT OUT

In a move related to local people being priced out of the housing market, there has been a clampdown on unregistered tourism accommodation and on commercial, as opposed to resident-provided, offerings through sites such as Airbnb.

Unsurprisingly, those connected with the industry have vociferously opposed the city's approach, arguing that it will have negative

THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

When visitor numbers become too great



AP

In this February 25, 2015 photo, tourists look for souvenirs at a shop in Trinidad, southern Cuba. The sense that detente will unleash an invasion of Yankee tourists and change the unique character of one of the world's last remaining bastions of communism is shared by many travellers flocking here.

economic consequences. However, what is happening in Barcelona represents a growing trend in cities and in some pristine locations where local people feel that what they have is being taken away from them.

It also suggests the first signs of a broader awareness among citizens that tourism's benefits require more careful social consideration by politicians and the industry, and that there are limits to tourism growth.

It is a sense that is emerging in some smaller nations in the Caribbean, although not yet on a significant scale. While the majority see the economic benefits and employment that tourism brings, the arrival of multiple cruise ships disgorging large numbers of visitors is creating concern about pressure on local facilities and the environment. There is also a

sense, so far largely unreported, that some events thought of as being local or cultural are in danger of being hijacked as tourist attractions and their nature changed.

One interesting, albeit unscientific, measure of trying to understand where overcrowding in the region is happening, or may occur, is to look at arrivals, population, and land mass. What this approach suggests is that locations such as Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten are most at risk while, for example, Jamaica and Guyana are not.

Personal experience, however, suggests that the negative cultural and social impact of large numbers of visitors is more evident in Cuba in the cities of Havana and Trinidad; is observable in the overcrowding in some historic locations and sites of natural beauty around the region;

and is being felt in the sudden influx of cruise passengers on to certain beaches in The Bahamas, The BVI, and elsewhere.

In some parts of the region, there is a different sense of alienation. In Barbados, for instance, it is not uncommon among residents and the island's Diaspora to hear complaints of being priced out of the housing market, or that older residents feel that annual events like the annual Oistins Fish Festival, which originally celebrated the true fishing culture of the area, has been lost to profit-making and entertainment.

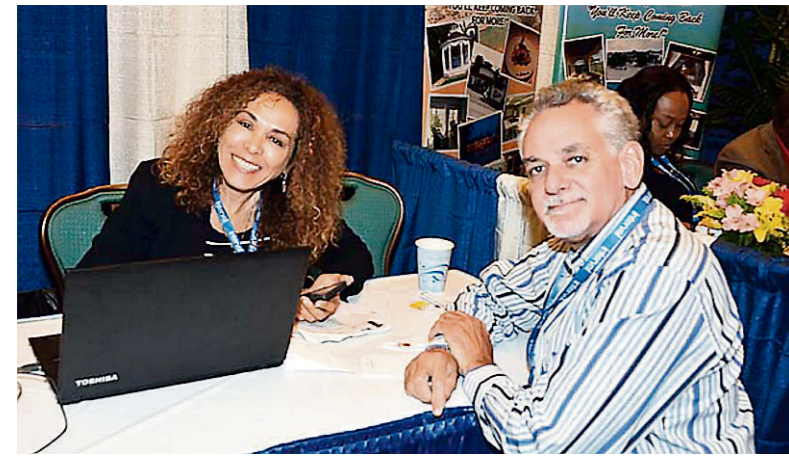
Given the centrality of tourism to future economic growth, this all suggests that better joined-up thought is required about the impact of overcrowding, and in a Caribbean context, its social dimensions.

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PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Holiday Service's Jennifer Hilton and Amstar's Richard Bourke.



Holiday Inn's Patrick Fleming has the attention of two buyers at his booth at Caribbean Travel Marketplace.



From left: Playa Resorts' Mureen James, Daysie Vargas and Hugh Goodwin.



Deja Resort's Shari Edwards and Robin Russell (right), doing business with Shri Lildharrie.



Assistant general manager at The Cliff Hotel, Diandra Shand (centre), and her sales manager, Kaylia Harrison, take time out to pose for a photo during a meeting with Sunquest's Wayne Nosworthy during Caribbean Travel Marketplace last week in The Bahamas.



From left: Jamaica Tours' Michelle Whittaker and Noel Sloley Jr in a jovial mood with Mystic Mountain's Marsha Mattos.

Caribbean tourism needs stronger partnerships, says CHTA president

THE CARIBBEAN'S tourism growth potential in 2017 and beyond is enormous, but not without continued partnerships between the region's public and private sectors.

Delivering the opening address of Caribbean Travel Marketplace at Atlantis Paradise Island in The Bahamas last week, Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), described 2016 as a year of mixed blessings for the industry, and asserted that the regional private-sector organisation was resolved to continue answering the call from Bahamas Prime Minister Perry Christie for greater collaboration among the region's key partners.

"Last year, you issued a challenge to CHTA and groups like CARICOM to work together to fully realise the potential which tourism holds for our economies and our people," Troubetzkoy said to Christie, who also addressed the gathering this year. "Prime Minister, I am pleased to tell you that CHTA and CTO have answered your call, and are advancing initiatives which we believe can help make our region and our industry realise its full tourism potential," she added.

Reporting overall growth in visitor arrivals to the Caribbean, the St Lucia hotelier of the storied Jade Mountain and Anse Chastanet resorts said tourism was challenged with forces that tested the region's fortitude. "From an unusually warm winter in some originating markets, a weak Canadian currency, Brexit, travel patterns

PLEASE SEE **CHTA**, 10



It was strictly business for The Wexford Hotel's Carlyle Allen (standing) and Richard Miller getting info from two Cable & Wireless representatives at Caribbean Travel Marketplace last week in The Bahamas.



Half Moon's general manager, Sandro Fabris (centre), in a jovial mood, as he and his director of sales and marketing Sharon Logan chats with Damion Thompson of Room Knights during a meeting with Sunquest's Wayne Nosworthy during Caribbean Travel Marketplace last week.



From left: Spanish Court Hotel's Andre Reid and Andres Cope attends to Vish Bhatia and Gunther Goldberg.



Tropical Tours' Maria Fray (left) and Sophie Chauvea share lens time with the Jamaica Tourist Board's Gregory Shervington.



From left: SuperClub's Gwenn Feliciano, Muna Issa and Zein Nakash.



Island Route's Richard Moss and Zee Higgs.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Linda Lawrence (left) and Kerisha Forbes (second left) of the Round Hill Hotel meet with Travel Click's Manny Melendez (right) and Karina Nina.



Sea Gardens Resort's Tricia-Ann Bicarie (left) and BookIt.com's Moya Johnson.



From left: Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook; regional director, Canada, Philip Rose deputy director in charge of the Americas, Donnie Dawson; and Zein Nakash of SuperClubs.

CHTA

CONTINUED FROM 9

affected by the Olympic Games, US elections and political uncertainty around the globe, to Zika and, finally, to our most unwanted visitor, Hurricane Matthew," she observed.

Reflecting on the impact of Hurricane Matthew on parts of Haiti and The Bahamas, she thanked regional hoteliers for participating in an online auction which yielded US\$70,000, US\$25,000 of which was presented to The Bahamas and US\$45,000 to Haiti for restoration efforts.

The year 2017 has been designated by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation as the Year of Adventure and the Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

CARIBBEAN APPEAL

"Adventure and sustainability well define much of our appeal, and well reflect the shifts we've been seeing in why people travel and what they are looking for As the caretakers and marketers of this global treasure that we call the Caribbean, we have not only the mandate to showcase it to the world, but also to ensure it is

protected, enhanced and sustained," she said.

"That's why issues like climate change, the development of our people, and the preservation of our natural, cultural and historical resources are intertwined with our marketing and, indeed, our marketability," she continued.

Marketing, she affirmed, ought to embrace new and changing technologies to reach customers, in addition to the changing visitor interests and expectations.

Caribbean Travel Marketplace attracted an estimated 1,000 registrants with a record number of new buyers joining tourism stakeholders on Paradise Island last week.



Coco La Palm's Andria Brown (left) and William Vassell caters to the needs of Apple Leisure Group's Gineen Gallow.



From left: Island Route's David Shields, Jamaica Inn's Kyle Mais, Amstar's Richard Bourke and Spanish Court's Christopher Issa.



The Aimbridge Hospitality team (from left): Rachel Mecca, Arianne Welch, Carol Bourke and Charmaine Deane at the Hilton/Jewel Resorts booth at Caribbean Travel Marketplace.

JTB drums up excitement for Destination Ja on air

ACCORDING TO a recent Nielsen report, radio has the number-one reach among adults, with over 95 per cent of American adults listening to AM/FM radio weekly. This is in comparison to the 87 per cent who watch television and the 70 per cent who use smartphones in a given week. This type of research is why the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) continues to have radio remotes, an important platform that reach desired market segments in the international marketplace.

Over the last three months, the JTB hosted nine radio remotes live from locations on the island, partnering with radio stations out of the northeast region of the United States as well as Toronto, Canada. These included Q101-FM and WCKG-AM out of Chicago, Boston's WMJX-FM, Philadelphia's WMGK-FM, Baltimore's WLIF-FM, WMXD-FM out of Detroit and G98 from Toronto, Canada, the largest black- and Caribbean-owned radio station in Canada.

PERSONAL CONNECTION

The participation of the radio personalities is one of the authentic elements that is critical to the success of radio remotes, as listeners have a 'personal connection' to them and tune in each day to listen to their opinions and interests. In this capacity, the radio personality is a person of influence, and when they promote a product, or broadcast live from a location, listeners are engaged and are more inclined to purchase trips to the destination.

The timing of the radio remotes are deliberate as they provide additional exposure to Destination Jamaica, especially in the winter months when travellers are looking to escape the chills of the

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD



Marcia McLaughlin

season. This medium drums up excitement as these activities whet the appetite of the listeners with a view to growing arrivals out of these markets.

BOOSTING BRAND AWARENESS

According to Marcia McLaughlin, JTB's deputy director of tourism, marketing, radio remotes are a fun way of getting people excited about visiting Destination Jamaica.

"We use them to attract hundreds of listeners to the destination as we create brand awareness about our superb offerings. When listeners are

trudging through below-zero temperatures and they hear the radio personality highlighting the tropical weather, beautiful beaches and outdoor activities that are available on the island, we want them to book their ticket to Jamaica."

Ranging from 112,000 to 650,000 per city, the profile of the listeners who tuned in to the broadcasts from Jamaica reflect a balance between male and female with an average age of 39 and with high to average disposable income. The radio personalities share vivid imagery of the vistas, attractions and eateries to a captive audience. As added bonus, listeners had opportunities to win prize trips to accommodations and attractions on the island so they, too, can create their own Jamaica experience.

JTB, JETBLUE AIRLINES GIVE COMMUTERS WARM J'CAN SURPRISE



CONTRIBUTED

The Jamaica Tourist Board, in partnership with JetBlue airlines, surprised 15 commuters at the Jamaica Station in the New York City subway system, who were willing to trade in their train tickets for a plane ticket to Jamaica. As a reward for their willingness to give up their commuter tickets, they were gifted with JetBlue Vacations package (air and hotel) to Montego Bay! Above, one of the prize winners (left) enjoys Jamaican dance moves with members of the pop-up promotion team. For persons who were not at Jamaica Station but are on board for a track change of their own, there are some exciting promotions, too. For a limited time, catch a #JetBlueFlashFares from New York (JFK) to Montego Bay with fares from US\$20 one way.

JAMAICA WINS BIG AT 2017 TRAVVY AWARDS



CONTRIBUTED

Jamaica captured the spotlight at the 2017 Travvy Awards in New York, copping four gold awards: Best Honeymoon Destination, Caribbean/Bahamas; Best Culinary Destination, Caribbean/Bahamas; Best Tourism Board Overall and Best Tourism Board, Caribbean/Bahamas. On hand to collect the awards were (from left) Donnie Dawson, deputy director of tourism, sales, at the Jamaica Tourist Board; Marcia Sinclair, district sales manager, Northeast USA; Christopher Dobson, business development officer, Northeast USA; and Kenton Senior, business development officer, Northeast USA. Mark Murphy, president and CEO of travAlliancemediamedia, also shared in the occasion.

Tourism still a major force in Ja's economic development

TOURISM IS a key driver for economic development in Jamaica and is also contributing substantially to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to Maureen Denton, executive director and head of the secretariat of the Economic Growth Council (EGC).

The EGC is the body appointed by Prime Minister Andrew Holness in 2016 to consult widely and to advise Cabinet on a collection of broad platform policies and reforms that would facilitate economic growth.

Noting that 2017 has been designated by the United Nations 'The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development', Denton said: "Tourism is a powerful and transformational force that is making a genuine difference in the lives of many people, including employees in the sector."

She, however, noted that there is room for improvement in the expenditure per tourist on the island and called on Jamaicans to provide products and services that can bring "increased value added to the industry and improve the tourist arrival multiplier on GDP".

Speaking at the launch of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for



CONTRIBUTED

Maureen Denton (right), executive director and head of the Secretariat of the Economic Growth Council (EGC), with (from left) Jason Henzell, founder of the St Elizabeth-based community development organisation, BREDS; Diana McIntyre-Pyke, founder-president, International Institute for Peace Through Tourism – Caribbean; and Rudi Page, Global Diaspora director. They were at the launch of 'The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development' and 'The Global Diaspora Engagement Plan for Community Tourism' at the Mandeville Hotel.

Development and The Global Diaspora Engagement Plan for Community Tourism at the Mandeville Hotel on January 18, Denton said that "Jamaica is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, with some of the most innovative and productive people in the world, and we should ensure that all visitors to the island have a truly immersive experience, which includes our communities, in substantive and profitable ways.

"We have much room within which to be innovative as far as to offer an authentic, gratifying, and reasonably priced and profitable experience, one that enchants our visitors, is inclusive, and dignifies our workers and our communities," Denton said.

ATTRACTIVE CULTURE

Calling on Jamaicans to reacquaint themselves with "our cultural roots", she said that Jamaica's cultural profile makes it very attractive to foreigners and "culture and creativity is our secret weapon ... as unlike a beach or a waterfall, it only exists here and cannot be easily copied."

Denton pointed out that the human element is just as critical to a successful tourism industry. In this regard, she said, treating staff with care and dignity "will increase worker productivity and innovation and that will, in turn, contribute to a positive customer experience, lower costs, and increased profit."

She stressed the EGC's commitment to "harness the power of the diaspora" – one of eight growth initiatives recommended by the EGC to the Cabinet last November.

Island Routes is No. 1 again!

JAMAICA'S PREMIER private club, The Tryall Club, has named tour company Island Routes Caribbean its number one service provider for 2016 for its outstanding service.

This marks the seventh time since June 2016 that Island Routes has been acknowledged by an independent entity for its excellent customer service.

This latest award comes just one month after the tour provider was named World's Leading Caribbean Attraction Company at the 2016 Global World Travel Awards and is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Island Routes team in providing a superior experience to its guests.

Island Routes remains committed to setting the standard in service and experience across the Caribbean attractions industry.

"It is an honour to be recognised by such a distinguished industry

player as The Tryall Club," said Adam Stewart, chief executive officer, Island Routes.

"Our dynamic team does a phenomenal job of showcasing the best of the great outdoors in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean. Combine this with our customised technology system, the industry's newest fleet of coaches and VIP private vehicles, specially developed products like our latest self-drive Mini Routes tour, and partnerships with key players such as the National, Alamo, and Enterprise Rent-a-Car brands, and you have the most complete and experienced network of service-driven professionals in the attractions industry."

As Jamaica's premier private club and home to one of the region's pre-eminent championship golf courses, which has hosted golf legends including Nick Faldo and Ernie Els, service and experience

are at the centre of The Tryall Club's philosophy. The very nature of the club's business requires the very best the industry has to offer.

Richard Ferdinand, director of guest services, The Tryall Club, commended Island Routes' knowledgeable team members, who, he said, place the utmost attention to detail, ensuring that guests always return with the most memorable experience of their time in Jamaica.

"Their full-circle operation, paired with their enthusiastic and professional team, means that they always provide the highest levels of service and quality to our discerning members and guests."

In addition to The Tryall Club, Island Routes provides exclusive tour-desk management services for all Sandals, Beaches, and Grand Pineapple Resorts, as well as for the Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara in Jamaica.



PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

From left: David Shields, Zee Higgs, and Richard Moss of Island Routes.

Saint Lucia announces a summer of festivals

SAINT LUCIA, whose global reputation for quality entertainment is built on 25 years of experience hosting the Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival, announces SOLEIL – the Saint Lucia Summer Festival, a series of six festivals taking place from May through October.

During a launch, held on Thursday, February 2, at the Bay Gardens Hotel, Prime Minister Allen Chastanet, in his remarks to the gathering, said: “Saint Lucia continues to create unique entertainment opportunities for visitors to our shores, and the launch of this festival is just the beginning of the exciting plans we have for the industry.

“This is part of our drive to continuously diversify and enhance our tourism product. The idea is, when you come to Saint Lucia you



St Lucian Prime Minister Allen Chastanet.

can stay all summer long with the extensive events calendar and no shortness of amazing places and sites to visit. We will appeal to all types of music enthusiasts from the region and internationally, whether it be jazz, reggae, R&B ... or you

can now choose which event appeals to you most.”

The Summer Festival series will kick off May 12-14 with Saint Lucia Jazz, a celebration of Caribbean and international jazz music. Events will take place across the island, culminating with a star-studded concert at Pigeon Island National Landmark on Sunday, May 14.

HEADLINERS

Star-studded headliners include Grammy-nominated singer and the actress Vanessa Williams and dynamically talented Rachelle Ferrell. Confirmed headliners such as Rupert Lay, steel pannist Victor Provost and Malavoi, hailing from Martinique, will also take the stage. Saint Lucian jazz music will also be prominently featured with the Rupert Lay Quartet, Michael

Robinson and the Caribbean band, Bluemango.

In its first year, The Saint Lucia Summer Festival will also feature:

■ Roots & Soul (June 16-18):

Dedicated to new trends in reggae, conscious hip hop, Afropunk and R&B, this festival will also mark the launch of Saint Lucia Carnival.

■ Saint Lucia Carnival (mid-June through mid-July):

A variety of musical competitions lead up to the Parade of the Bands on July 17 and 18. Throughout, Lucian Carnival gives revellers the opportunity to fête throughout the island in true Caribbean fashion.

■ Saint Lucia Food & Rum Festival (August 24-27):

This gastronomic festival invites chefs, wine connoisseurs, rum fanatics and foodies from the

Caribbean and around the globe. Inspired by chefs Nina Compton and Doran Payne, the event will feature culinary demonstrations, rum and wine tastings, dining events and experiences, and musical performances.

■ **Country & Blues Festival (September 15-17):** The festival will reflect the diversity and modernity of the genres of music that act as powerful storytellers of the past and draw strong parallels to Saint Lucian folk traditions.

■ **Arts & Heritage Festival (October):** Building on Jounen Kweyol, this month-long festival will celebrate Saint Lucia’s cultural, ethnic and artistic heritage with a variety of performances, seminars, lectures, culinary experiences, street parties and art exhibitions.

IT WILL be a landmark year for the twin-island of Antigua and Barbuda as they celebrate major anniversaries for flagship events: The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, Antigua Sailing Week, Antigua and Barbuda Carnival – The Caribbean’s greatest summer festival, and amazing, new events and exciting product developments.

FEBRUARY 2017

■ ‘Say I Do’ in Antigua and Barbuda:

This February, the Caribbean’s Most Romantic Destination as voted by the World Travel Awards for two consecutive years in a row, launches its ‘Say I Do’ Romance Campaign with a grand destination wedding in the twin-island up for grabs by couples interested in winning the wedding of their dreams.

MARCH 2017

■ John Hughes Mill Hunt Tour:

The John Hughes Community Mill Hunt Tour will be launched this March as part of the UNWTO International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The Mill Hunt Tour consists of a moderate hike to six sugar mills in the John Hughes community in Antigua.

APRIL 2017

■ 30th anniversary of Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta:

In April, the sailing capital of the Caribbean hosts the 30th anniversary of the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta from April 19-25 in the newly designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, Nelson’s Dockyard, the only working Georgian naval dockyard in the world.

■ 50th anniversary of Antigua Sailing Week:

The prestigious Antigua Sailing Week, one of

Antigua and Barbuda’s year of celebrations



the world’s finest regattas, celebrates its 50th anniversary from April 29-May 5, with nightly parties and five challenging days of

racing in some of the best sailing conditions in the world. Antigua Sailing Week attracts between 100-200 boats.

MAY 2017

■ Third Run in Paradise Half Marathon:

The third edition of the Antigua & Barbuda Half Marathon ‘Run In Paradise’, takes place on May 28.

JUNE 2017

■ Antigua and Barbuda launches Green Corridor:

The southwestern quadrant of Antigua will be declared as a Green Corridor in June. With a number of hotels along Antigua’s scenic southwest coast either green-certified or engaged in green practices, Antigua’s Green Corridor will stretch from Sugar Ridge Resort and Spa, and end in the village of John Hughes, noted for their community tourism initiatives. Antigua’s sister island, Barbuda, will be developed as a totally ‘green’ island.

JULY 2017

■ 60th anniversary of Antigua Carnival:

Antigua and Barbuda’s Carnival, the Caribbean’s greatest summer festival, celebrates its 60th anniversary from July 28-August 8. Under the theme ‘Experience Greatness’, party lovers will get swept up in the excitement of the carnival and it steelpan, soca fêtes, calypso, paganry, and costumed parades.

■ 25 years of Dance and Culture:

The Antigua Dance Academy celebrates its 25th anniversary with events taking place throughout the year. Key performances not to be missed include the academy’s major dance production on July 2, titled ‘Rising Consciousness’, which will focus on folklore through dance, drama, and the music of the country.



The inside-outside look and feel.

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

GREAT HUTS Resort, 'Paradise on the Edge', located at Boston Bay, Portland, is a clifftop property that overlooks the turquoise waters of Boston Bay and its white-sand beach. The misty mountains over yonder are also in sight.

Located three minutes from the popular Boston Jerk Centre, it is a small African-themed, eco-friendly retreat that has cliffs, a snake-shaped boardwalk, a beach, a 'meadow', and a 'jungle' in which birds sing and chirp with glee.

There is also a cliff-edge pool, a gift shop, a chill bar, relaxation and dining on the Sahara Deck, where there is a floor show of singing, dancing and drumming every Saturday night. The show is a musical kaleidoscope that reflects important elements of the African-Jamaican heritage and culture.

For a place to lay their weary bodies, visitors have several detached units of various sizes and costs to choose from. The categories include 'down to basics', 'safari chic', and 'royalty'. Each hut is uniquely designed and furnished, and artistically accented. Some have internal bathroom and toilet facilities, while such facilities for the others are communal.

SEVERAL OPTIONS

Made to look like an African grain silo, The Granary is the smallest unit, meant for one guest at a time. At the other end of the spectrum is the the multilevel, regal essence, Queen of Sheba, ideal for a family or a group of eight.

In Sea Grape, Bamboo Tree House, Almond Tree Hut, Fig Tree House, and African Sunrise, guests go to sleep listening to waves crashing and roaring. On clear mornings, from the windows of African Sunrise, the golden sun can be seen rising from the horizon. Watch as the dazzling sea changes from one hue to another.

And to add to the variety, Great Huts has recently opened the doors to Africana House, its most exquisite unit yet. The official opening will be on Saturday, February 20.

Located beside the original Great Huts property, the new unit is a monochromatic white, stylish villa, designed, built and owned by German architect Ulrike Khafif. It was recently acquired by Dr Paul Rhodes, designer and owner of Great Huts.

It has been transformed through

Great Huts opens doors to AFRICANA HOUSE



A staircase with a twist to it.



From ceiling to floor, the Great Hall is replete with art.



For a conversation between two.



African chic.

earth-brown shades and bright-coloured African geometric designs, with hand-carved organic furniture by Gilbert Nicely. It is an extension of Great Huts' celebration of the great precolonial African empires of Songhai, Mali, Benin, Ghana and Ethiopia.

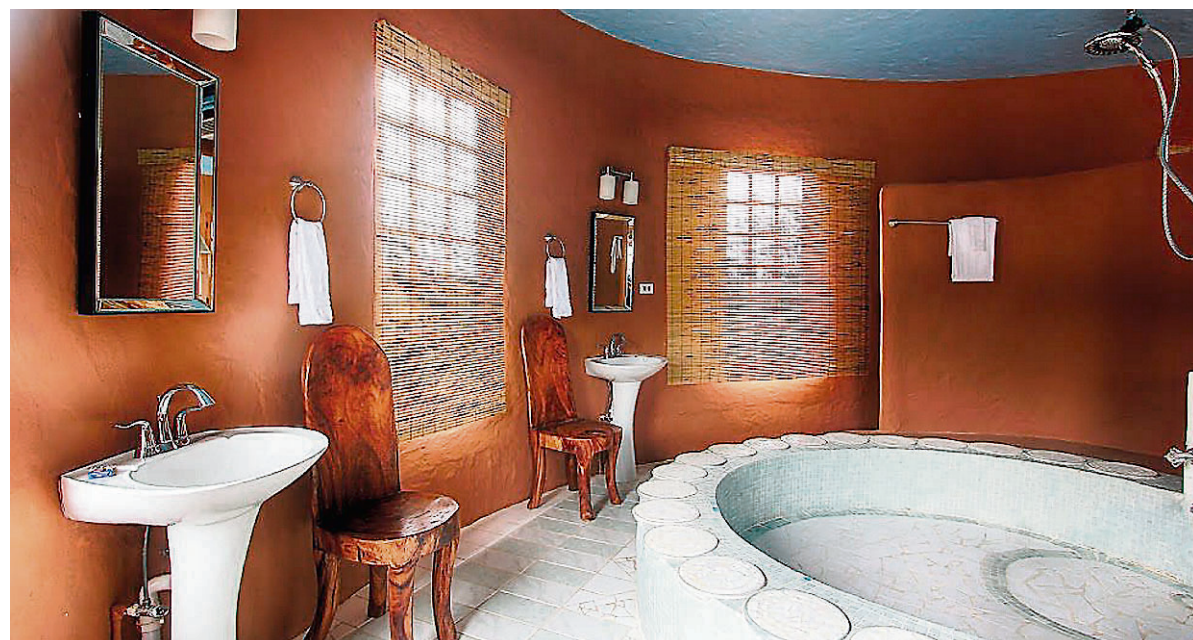
The luxury accommodation has four beautifully furnished and finely decorated, air-conditioned bedrooms. Each room is named in honour of a west and central African ethnic group, – the Igbo, Ibibio, Mandinka and Yoruba, – from which people were taken to work on slavery-day plantations in Jamaica. The themes of these premium rooms range from cosy camping, comfortably rustic, Safari chic to royal African.

Other features of the circular building are a lily-shaped pool, and a 'Great Room'. The sky-like ceiling of the Great Room is adorned with Ethiopian angels. There are also the Mandela Rooftop Deck, The Lotus Pool, a theatre and nature paths.

The mansion can be rented exclusively for weddings, corporate meetings and other events. Individual guests or a couple can rent one 'African Royal Room', or guests or a group can occupy the entire Africana House exclusively.

"This new addition further honours Jamaican ancestry and celebrates the great precolonial empires of West Africa through beautiful art, decor and murals," Vivene Levison, events planner, told **Hospitality Jamaica**. Officials from the tourist industry are expected at the grand opening of Africana House.

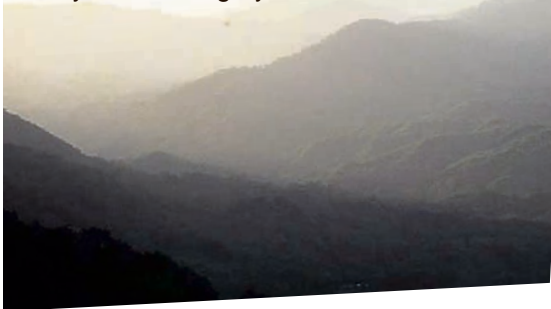
“ This new addition further honours Jamaican ancestry and celebrates the great precolonial empires of West Africa through beautiful art, decor and murals. ”



A bed for an African king.

A bathroom with an artsy essence.

The valley below Fyahplace, shrouded in many shades of grey.



Now, where is that pot of gold?



Chilling out at Fyahplace, where the weather can be very chilly.

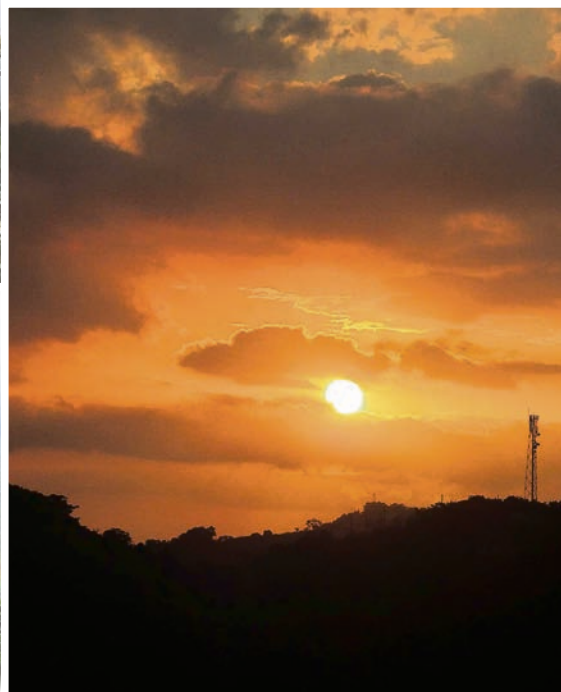
Dynamic vistas **AT FYAHPLACE**

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

The valley below Fyahplace covered with early-morning fog.



Rainbow arching across the valley below Fyahplace.



An artist's canvas?

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ONE OF the places I go to chill out is Fyahplace, and when I say chill, I mean chill. For the weather at Fyahplace can be really chilly. You see the irony?

Fyahplace is creative space in Rock Hall, on the border of St Catherine and St Andrew. From the pinnacle to the north, there is the most fantastic view of the hills of St Catherine, and the Blue Mountains, which at times are shrouded in clouds, mists, fog or the golden rays of the morning sun.

Suddenly, the golden showers can be obliterated by dark rain clouds that cover everything. They, too, might give way to misty shades or flirty white clouds. On a clear day, at two points, the clear-blue Caribbean Sea can be seen. But it is the valley that stretches way back to the hills that will certainly leave you breathless, almost.

The drop starts at Fyahplace, so you get the feeling that you are at the edge of the valley from above, being entranced and drawn into its gaping greenery. Sit on the bench, close my eyes and take it all in, floating away in my mind to forever. And through my nostrils comes the salubrious mountain air, cleansing and refreshing.

In the mornings, most of the times, the entire green valley is covered with fog, from which the tips of some of the hills protrude. It might look like a winter wonderland, a huge river of milk, or one giant cotton candy. It is the sort of landscape that an artist might find hard to replicate. And a photographer will have trouble keeping his camera still.

The air at Fyahplace is not always still. Things can get really windy – like two weeks

ago when parts of the island got some unusually windy weather. Fyahplace got about five days or more of it. The trees danced and sang continually, one big merry-making it was!

Much moisture was also in the air, making it perfect for rainbows, which appeared and dissipated with great frequency. There were some that seemed to arch over the entire valley. As the position of the sun shifted, so did they, giving a variety of photographic shots, tempting me to call the view from the Fyahplace, 'Rainbow Valley'.

SUNSET BEYOND WORDS

And if the sunrise over the mountains is dynamic, then the sunset over the Sligoville hills is beyond words. You can never tell what to expect – from bright, blinding orange and gold to shades of grey and misty blue. The presence of clouds always enriches the aura, especially when the rays streak through them.

In the last sunset, I saw the sun was white – not silvery, a dull white like the moon – surrounded by dark clouds, the illusion. Then the fog rose fast from the valley to slightly cover the white orb, creating a pinkish, dream-like picture. Then the moon-like sun vanishes as the foggy twilight heralded the coming of nightfall.

Darkness, when there is no fog, reveals what is in the valley, and over on the hills. While some structures can be seen in the daylight, when night comes, the glow of the electric lights exposes what is hidden in the day among the trees below, and the hills over yonder. One of the communities below is Above Rocks. See the irony again?

And it is my desire to go to Above Rocks, to get a perspective from below. Perhaps to see the fire blazing from Fyahplace.