

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

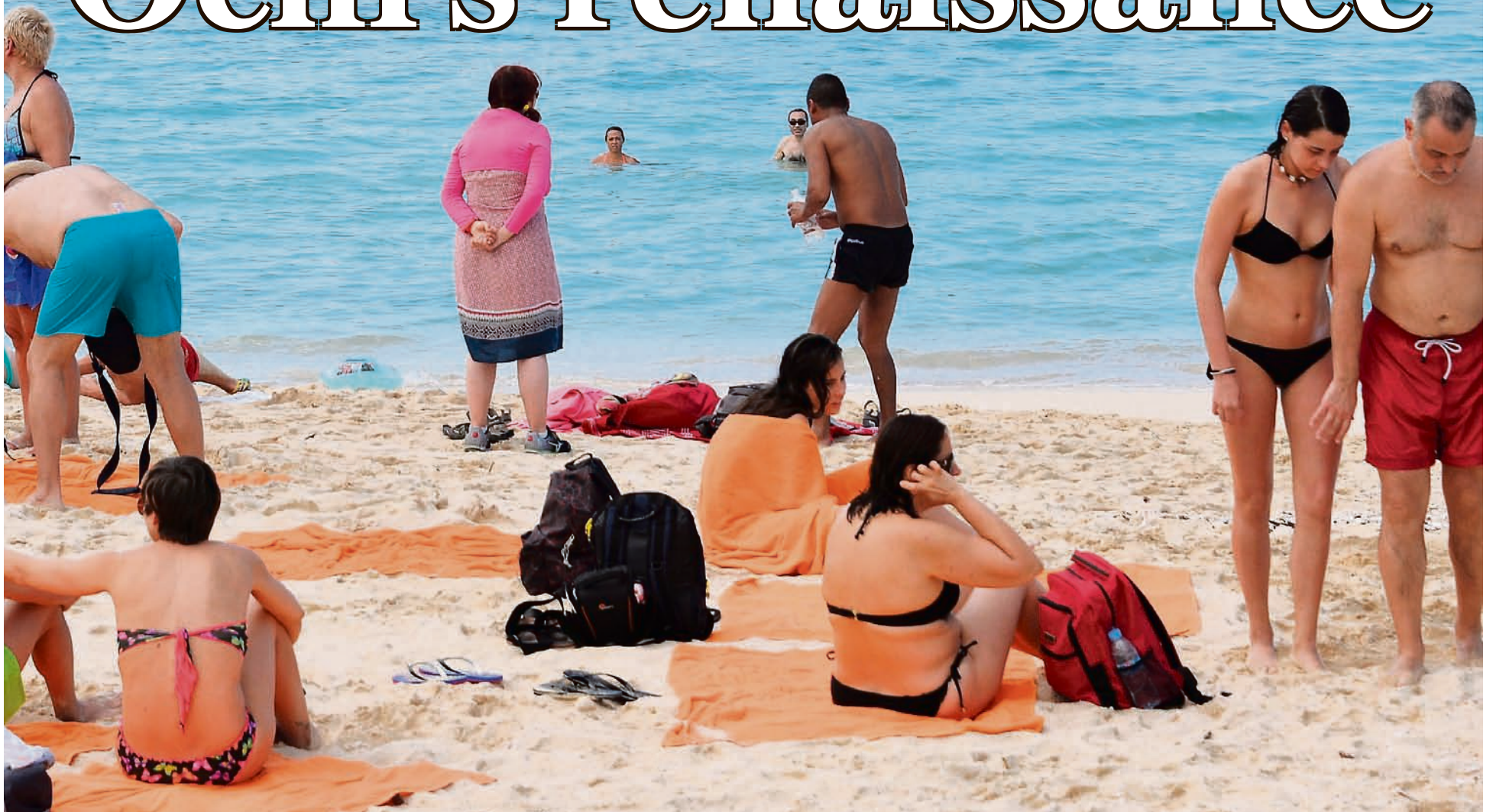
WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017

Hanover
Charities
honours 60
persons

Portland
prepares for
international
jazz festival

To Chateau
Belle for bed
and breakfast

Ochi's renaissance



Ochi's renaissance

Camille Miller

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

BOASTING THE most attractions, including the world famous Dunn's River Falls, the town of Ocho Rios is set to undergo a type of renovation that government officials say will make it the undisputed jewel of the Caribbean.

The project, which has three phases, will see an upgrade of the facilities, both marine and on land, at an estimated cost of \$260 million.

On a tour of the resort town last Friday, both the minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, with responsibility for water, works and housing, Dr Horace Chang, and chairman of the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ), Professor Gordon Shirley, agreed that all the ingredients are in place to make Ocho Rios the premiere port of call in the region.

"I think it's obvious that for more than one reasons, Ocho Rios will become the principal cruise destination in the Caribbean, and we have to make every effort to bring it to the standard it should be internationally," Dr Chang said.

Areas to be upgraded include the Ocho Rios Fishing Village, a state-of-the-art fishing village which is currently under construction and will be completed in two phases, the Reynolds Pier, and also the reclamation of the beachfront.

The minister was, however, wary of the current situation at the Reynolds Pier, a site targeted for major renovation and transformation and which currently accommodates cruise operations as well as other commercial activities such as sugar and limestone, noting that it should be more structured and aesthetically appealing.

"We have to ensure that all the logistics are worked out, where it doesn't appear as if we are in each other's way," Dr Chang cautioned.

TOURISM-RELATED ACTIVITIES

"We are all government entities, so I don't see any reason why we shouldn't be able to be better structured where when the passengers disembarked, what they are seeing are tourism-related activities."

He added: "International standards will make it very acceptable to all our visitors and also keep our local population engaged and involved in what we are doing," explained Dr Chang.

For his part, Professor Shirley said that not only will the upgrades greatly enhance Ocho Rios' appeal, but will also enable the resort town to attract multiple mega liners simultaneously.

"Unlike Falmouth, Ocho Rios can only accommodate one of those large mega liners one at a time and that is at the Urban Development Corporation Pier," he explained. "What we are putting in now will give the town that opportunity where we will have the large ships at both piers ... where we can have two at each, at the same time."

In the meantime, minister of labour and social security and member of parliament for the area, Shahinie Robinson, said the people of Ocho Rios, and by extension the entire parish of St Ann, stand to benefit from the developments, calling it timely and necessary.

"I am all about development and benefits for the people," she noted. "Ocho Rios is a very beautiful town that, once given all the required attention, will emerge as a true tourism Mecca and one that will generate a lot of foreign-exchange earnings for the country."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation Dr Horace Chang, in deep discussion with his colleague, Shahinie Robinson, minister of labour and social security, on a visit to the Urban Development Corporation in Ocho Rios on Friday, May 12.



Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Dr Horace Chang (left), and Shahinie Robinson, minister of labour and social security, looking at a development plan for Ocho Rios with chairman of the Port Authority, Professor Gordon Shirley, while on a site visit at the Reynolds Pier, Ocho Rios.

Overbooking and the airlines

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WHEN I go to the theatre, I buy a ticket that has seat number on it.

When I am there, the seat is mine for the duration of the performance. I have paid for it, and if I fail to show up, the seat remains empty and the theatre keeps my money. I know of no theatre that would sell more tickets than there are seats in the hope that they might earn more, or which might decide at the last minute that one of their staff should sit in my seat. The same holds true for every other ticketed payment-in-advance service I can think of.

It is, therefore, with amazement that I read some of the evidence given on May 2 by US air carriers on consumer issues to the US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The hearing came shortly after the online publication of the globally damaging images of a passenger being dragged from an overbooked United Airlines flight to make room, not for another passenger, but for repositioning airline employees. To add insult to the very real injury, the matter was then made worse by the airline's CEO, Oscar Muñoz, who seemed in his first response incapable of showing



David Jessop

any empathy with the customer or to understand the damage he was doing to his company's brand.

At the Congressional hearing, as you might expect, representatives of United Airlines delivered a carefully considered, and one assumes, public relations and legal counsel-drafted apology.

However, in the type of corporate double speak that has become increasingly common, but which drives customers crazy, United Airlines president Scott Kirby told the committee: "We view overbooking as something that actually helps us accommodate and take care of thousands more customers than we would otherwise be able to."

Just as astonishingly, American Airlines, in answer to questions on issues such as the swingeing ticket-change fees almost all airlines charge and the continuing incorpo-



ration of fuel surcharges into ticket prices – oil prices have been at near record lows since the end of 2015 – suggested that such matters were mostly "about our way of offering low fares to consumers" or as existing to "give customers more options and more choices".

Only the low-cost carrier Southwest recognised what customers really want. In the formal part of his testimony, the airline's chief operating officer, Bob Jordan, confirmed that beginning on May 8, "Southwest will no longer overbook flights" and that the airline had upgraded its reservations and forecasting systems to make this possible. "Simply put: discontinuing the practice of overbooking is completely consistent with our other customer-friendly policies," Jordan said.

Reading and viewing the airlines formal testimony to the Congres-

sional Committee and the responses given to the questions asked, one cannot avoid the conclusion that legacy air carriers have become arrogant, prefer the evasive language of marketing rather than plain English, and have lost track of the honesty and authenticity that most consumers want.

Judging from some of what was said, it would seem that they appear to care little about passenger anger over proliferating charges for everything from food to checking bags; paying more for seats that might have a little extra legroom but the same service level; incomprehensible fare structures that constantly change; high charges for one-way fares; or the legal caveats that appear designed to protect the airline, not the consumer.

The reality is, as William McGee, the travel and aviation consultant

to the not-for-profit US Consumers Union observed, there is no reason for airlines to overbook. "Greater market concentration, reduced competition, and state-of-the-art reservations and yield management systems allow airlines to closely manage selling all available seats."

RECORD HIGH LOADS

He also noted that airlines are carrying record high passenger loads of between 80 and 100 per cent, he told the Congressional Committee.

The hearing indicated how far apart most airlines are from the way they are regarded, particularly by those customers who sit in the back of the plane.

The congressmen spoke about angry calls from constituents, and the chairman of the committee, Bill Shuster, a Republican, threatened that if the committee did not see meaningful results that improve customer service, the airlines will not like the outcome.

Despite this, the thinking in the new US administration is to loosen consumer protection.

This suggests that the long-suffering air traveller should not expect change anytime soon unless more events of the kind recently experienced by a customer of United go viral.

Essie Gardner appointed region adviser for Toastmasters International

ESSIE GARDNER, marketing and communications manager at the Jamaica Tourist Board, has been elected region adviser for Region 8 of Toastmasters International, a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, a world leader in communication and leadership development.

A 23-year tourism veteran, Gardner will be responsible for increasing the profile and visibility of 1,312 clubs and 61,000 members in the Caribbean, Bermuda, Florida, South Georgia, as well as the Territorial Council of Brazil.

In her new appointment in this

voluntary service organisation, Gardner is the first Jamaican Toastmaster to assume this role, which will be for 15 months. She holds Toastmasters' highest honour of Distinguished Toastmaster and brings to the position 19 years of service. She has served in several roles, among them Division Governor 2006-2007; Lieutenant Governor – Marketing 2009-2010; Lieutenant Governor Education and Training 2010-2011; and District Governor, District 81, 2011-2012.

In 2007, Gardner was recognised by Toastmasters International for achieving the President's Disting-



GARDNER

guished Division and the Distinguished District in 2012.

According to Gardner: "I am passionate about Toastmasters and committed to helping members hone their skills. My experience at the Jamaica Tourist Board is definitely a plus in strengthening my marketing and relationship-building abilities, which are also required for the role."

JTB SALUTES HER

"The Jamaica Tourist Board is happy to celebrate this achievement of Gardner's. We salute her years of dedication to Toastmasters International, a service she has per-

formed with great enthusiasm," said Marcia McLaughlin, director of tourism, marketing, Jamaica Tourist Board. "We are always pleased when our colleagues excel in their individual pursuits. We have every confidence that during her tenure, Toastmasters International will benefit from her acumen and ingenuity."

Toastmasters International has more than 345,000 members who improve their speaking and leadership skills by attending one of the 15,900 clubs in 142 countries that make up the global network of meeting locations.

Chef Selwyn Richards launches ‘The Art of Cooking: Soul of the Caribbean’

RECENTLY, MORE than 200 specially invited guests gathered at The Inn at 6 in Barbican to experience tantalising delectables from Chef Selwyn Richards’ brand new cookbook, **The Art of Cooking: Soul of The Caribbean**. It was a magical evening of great food, fine wines, and refreshing Caribbean entertainment.

Colleen Pigeon, chargé d’affaires representing Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica Sylvani Fabi, spoke of the long-standing trade relationship between Canada and Jamaica over the years. Canada traded codfish from Newfoundland and Jamaica traded unprocessed rum in return. The trade was so significant between both countries that codfish (salt fish) became an integral part of Jamaica’s national dish – ackee and codfish (saltfish) – and Canada used Jamaica’s rum for ‘screaming’ visitors to Newfoundland, thereby making them honorary Newfoundlanders.

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook, representing Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, spoke of the minister’s passion, which is gastronomy tourism, as tourists usually “travel for their passion”.

GIVING BACK

It is Richards’ desire to give back to his home country, Jamaica, by imparting his culinary skills and knowledge, which he has honed while living in Canada. He has expressed interest in working with the HEART/NTA to provide culinary-fusion workshops for their students.

“The Caribbean, especially Jamaica, produces some of the most exotic fruits, vegetables, and spices in the world. Caribbean cuisine is now trending globally, and I see myself as a pioneer in exposing this culinary fusion. My vision is to move it from the Styrofoam containers to a formal dining experience,” Richards said.

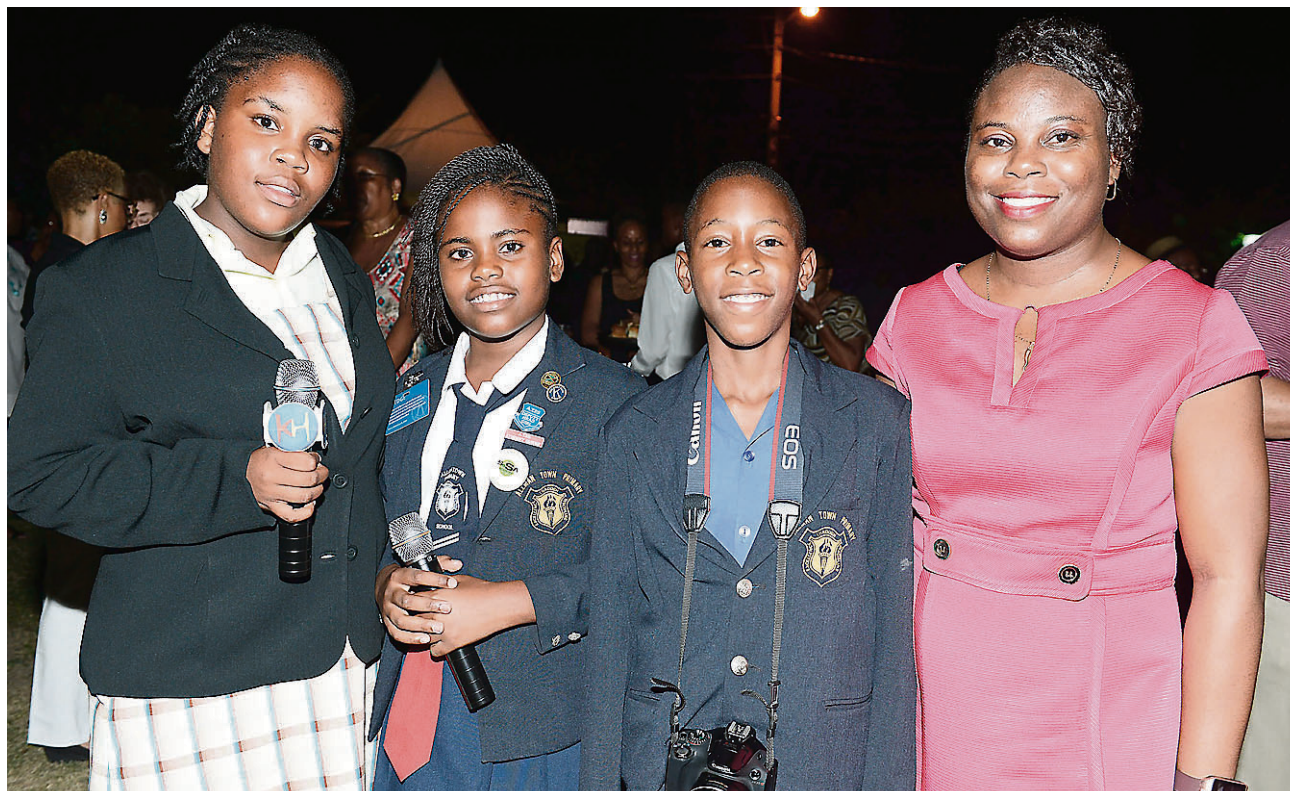
COOK BOOK

This special collection, **The Art of Cooking: Soul of the Caribbean**, evokes memories, nostalgia, and good times. Along with the classic recipes,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Chef Selwyn Richards (second left), with Paul Pennicook, director of tourism; Nicola Madden-Greig (right), chairperson of the Gastronomy network in the Ministry of Tourism; and Carolyn McDonald-Riley, head of Linkages Network in the Ministry of Tourism.



Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith (right), principal of the Allman Town Primary School and KiDz HuB Media Network ambassador for the Caribbean, with Shiloah Brock (left) of Camperdown High School; Rianna Salmon (second left) of Allman Town Primary School; and Jo-Nathan Smith of Jamaica College, junior broadcasters from the KiDz HuB Media Network.



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Colleen Pigeon (centre), chargée d'affaires representing Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, with the Embassy of Spain to Kingston's chargée d'affaires Carmen Rives (right), and Mexico's Ambassador to Jamaica, Her Excellency Martha Cecilia Jaber.



Chef Selwyn Richards (not seen in photo) prepares a signature recipe to tantalise the taste buds of those in the audience.



Chef Selwyn Richards demonstrates the flambé preparation of one of his signature dishes for the audience.

Richards shares his thoughts on food as well as a melange of mouth-watering dishes from many Caribbean islands.

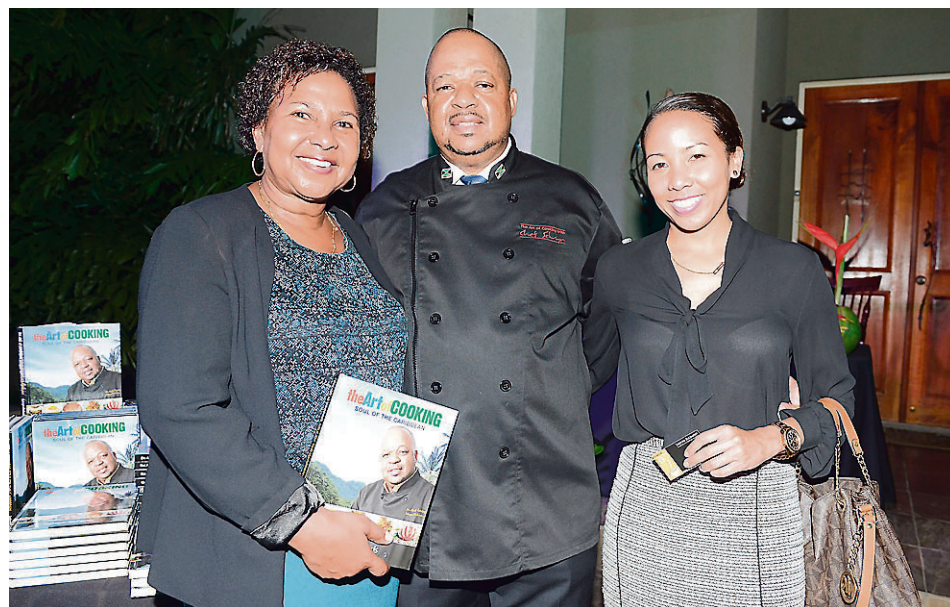
SPONSORS

Sponsors for the evening included the Jamaica Tourist Board and Jamaica55, which facilitated Richards' travel and accommodations. Wines for the evening included the premium Castillo de Daimiel Reserved (red), Las Tablas Rosado (Rosé) and Clavileno Blanco, courtesy of Spanish Wine importers, Olive International

Investments Limited.

Tourism consultant Sandra Scott was the event's project manager. Event management and production services were provided by XKLUSIV Media Group Limited, which was responsible for the execution of the event, and table decor and settings were provided by Tora's Elegant Designs. Other sponsors include JN Bank and BrandEQ, Canada.

Part proceeds from the sale of Richards' cookbook will go to the Possibility Programme for At-Risk Boys in Jamaica.



Angeline Gillings (left) and Kimberley Lue-Lyn of GraceKennedy Foods, along with Chef Selwyn Richards.



Chef Selwyn Richards speaking with Mexico's Ambassador to Jamaica, Her Excellency Martha Cecilia Jaber.

CTO, St Kitts to host Climate Smart Sustainable Tourism Forum

THE CARIBBEAN Tourism Organisation (CTO), the region's tourism development agency, is partnering with the Ministry of Tourism in St Kitts to host a sustainable tourism forum, with a focus on climate change.

Themed 'Good for Us, Better for All', the September 6-8 Climate Smart Sustainable Tourism Forum is being held in observance of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and will bring together local, regional, and international representatives from public and private-sector tourism entities, as well as development agencies that offer programming in sustainable tourism, for three days of interactive engagements.

Major elements will include best practice sharing and strategic consultations for a CTO climate adaptation project funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, in order to strengthen holistic destination management approaches in the Caribbean.

"The CTO is honoured to partner with St Kitts and Nevis to host this forum, which will explore various facets of sustainable tourism, in view of the threats and opportunities for regional tourism development as a result of climate variability and climate change," said Amanda Charles, the CTO's sustainable tourism specialist.

The winner of the 2004 CTO/Travel Mole Sustainable Tourism Award in Destination Stewardship, St Kitts is one of the first destinations in the world to be accepted as an early adopter of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's criteria for destina-

tions. It also is a founding member of the Sustainable Destination Alliance of the Americas, an initiative by the CTO, the Organization of American States, Sustainable Travel International and Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited to promote sustainable destination management in the Caribbean and Central America.

SUSTAINABILITY

Its many initiatives include the establishment of the Heart of St Kitts Foundation and Sustainability Charter, which helps businesses understand how their operations contribute to destination-wide sustainability, and to support community projects that make St Kitts a more sustainable place to live and experience.

"There is an inexorable link between tourism activity and climate change. Tourism, therefore, must play an integral role in the global response to climate change; a charge St Kitts takes very seriously. Through the investment of considerable resources into sustainable tourism, St Kitts is changing the way tourism is perceived and practised globally, regionally, and at home," Minister of Tourism Lindsay Grant said.

The Climate Smart Sustainable Tourism Forum will also feature experiential field visits, a meeting of CTO's Sustainable Tourism Technical Committee, and winning presentations from CTO's Primary School Tourism Writing Competition. The event culminates with the presentation ceremony for CTO's 2017 Sustainable Tourism Awards, which recognise regional sustainability champions.



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Le Birrette, a 10-piece all-girls band from Italy, will be performing at the Portland International Jazz Festival.

Portland prepares for int'l jazz festival

Camille Miller
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR THE second year, the International Ocho Rios Jamaica Jazz Festival has returned to Portland, giving organisers reason to believe the event has found a permanent home.

Slated for May 28 at the picturesque Somerset Falls in St Margaret's Bay, Portland, the event is being billed as an evening of a mixture of jazz and the arts and something "that patrons will be talking about for a long time to come".

It is also being seen as a welcome addition to Portland's growing tourism offerings and a prelude to next year's inaugural coffee festival, which is slated for the Buff Bay Valley and which is being touted as one of the premiere events on the Jamaica Tourist Board's 2018 calendar.

"It will be an evening that will see not only live performances, but also an art and photography exhibition by three of Portland's finest, Joavan 'Phinline' Puran, Philip 'Ambokele' Henry, and Howard Moo Young," explained chief organiser Marcia Lawrence.

"We have been pushing it in many of the hotels on the north coast so as to get our visitors to come out and enjoy an evening at one of the most beautiful attractions in this country – Somerset Falls."

Lawrence pointed out that Riddim Bank, the local quartet band led by Donnie Chin of CC Bakery, 'home of the Holey Bulla', Port Antonio, will start the

evening's entertainment at 4:30 p.m. and "is expected to set the right tone for the other performers.

"Le Birrette, a 10-piece all-girls band from Italy, will definitely be surprising the audience with their knowledge of Jamaican music, from ska to rock steady, rockers to reggae," she added. "Formed in 2014, this is a group that has two great loves: Jamaican music of the '60s and '70s, and also Red Stripe Beer!"

NO STRANGER TO SCENE

Lawrence added that headliner Harold Davis is no stranger to the jazz scene and is also "a very good friend of Portland.

"He will bring the curtain down on what we believe will be a wonderful evening," Lawrence further pointed out. "He is the perennial fan favourite who always ensures his audience is engaged and is expected to do no less at Somerset Falls on May 28."

Patrons with presold tickets, she noted, will also have the choice of enjoying a boat ride under the falls at less than half the usual cost.

The Jamaica Tourist Board, **The Gleaner**, Kool 97FM, in addition to KLAS/ESPN, Edgechem Jamaica Limited, Braham's Texaco, L.P. Azar Limited, Stewart's Automobile Group, Native Audio & Stage Equipment Services, Rio Vista Resort and St George's Funeral Home are listed as sponsors.

Pre-sold tickets are available from Lees Maxi Mart in Port Antonio and Somerset Falls.



What's on your Palate?

UnWineCPI
with WINES

Hanover Charities honours 60 persons

Claudia Gardner
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

SEVERAL MEMBERS of the agri-tourism and the accommodations sector were among the 60 persons honoured at the Hanover Charities Diamond Jubilee Awards Ceremony and Dinner, at the Round Hill hotel in recognition of their long-serving contributions to the parish's development.

Among them were 40-year veteran Samuel Edwards, operator of Edwards Dairy in Haughton Grove, Ramble, in Hanover. Edwards Dairy operates a small processing plant where milk is pasteurised, homogenised and packaged, and supplied to major hotels, including Holiday Inn, Hilton and RIU, as well as the domestic market.

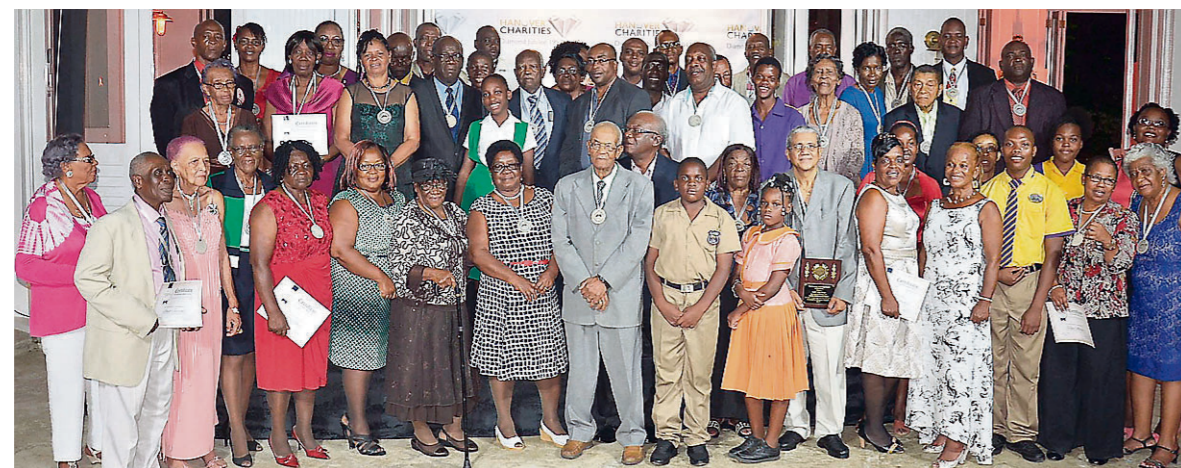
Collin Wright, a cattle farmer with 60 years of experience in that business, who also operates a cattle farm and packaging facility which supplies pork and beef to the hospitality sector, was the other agri-tourism recipient. He was lauded as a devoted cattle farmer, a justice of the peace, and as having made sterling contributions to the RADA and Knockalva Agricultural School boards.

Nerris Hawthorne of Florizel Court Villas in Lucea, former financial controller at Round Hill, Roy Tenn Fah, and environmental manager Cleveland Wright were among the other recipients from the tourism sector.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHT

Chairman of Hanover Charities Katrin Casserly, in her address, said the awards ceremony was the major highlight of the organisation's diamond jubilee year. She said the selection process was aided by both of the parish's members of parliament and the custos of Hanover, Dr David Stair.

"A very dear friend of mine asked what plans did we have for our



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Some of the 60 Diamond Jubilee awardees and winners of the essay awards.



Operator of the Florizel Court Villas and chairman of the Lucea Development Initiative, Nerris Hawthorne (left), collects her certification from Hanover Charities board member Roy Tenn Fah. At right is Chairman of Hanover Charities Katrin Casserly.



Vocalist on the hotel circuit and operator of the Day O' Plantation, Paul Hurlock, is flanked by Custos of Hanover Dr David Stair (right) and former councillor for the Lucea division, Winston Stair.

anniversary and the decision was taken that we must honour 60 Hanoverians, so here we are," she said.

Hanover Charities is the largest organisation of its kind in western Jamaica. It is a totally voluntary body which was founded in 1957 and is registered in the United States as a 501C-3 organisation. It was founded by the late custos of Hanover, Willie DeLisser, who brought together the shareholders of Round Hill and Tryall, who formed its first directors.

Its mission is to improve the health, welfare and education of persons in the parish of Hanover. Through its fundraising efforts, chiefly the Sugar Cane Ball, the organisation finances programmes to feed schoolchildren and the elderly; and upgrade and construct facilities such as clinics and schools.

The organisation, via the Morris-Watkins Scholarships, also assists with funds towards promising tertiary students who are unable to fully finance their tuition fees. Last year, the organisation handed out a record \$37 million for projects and scholarships from funds generated at its Sugar Cane Ball and other activities, to more than 200 recipients.



Cleveland Wright (left), president of the Hanover Parish Development Committee, and environmental manager at Round Hill, receives his certificate of appreciation from Hanover Charities board member Roy Tenn Fah.



Gwendolyn Lawrence (left) receives her certificate of appreciation from Hanover Charities Chairman Katrin Casserly.



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From left: Clovis Metcalfe, chairman of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission (BGLC), reviews information about the 7th Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit presented to him by Elizabeth Leiva of CGS Group LLC, organisers of the event. The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission are the local hosts for the two-day conference and trade show to be held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, June 14-15, 2017. Sharing the moment is Carole Martinez-Johnson, acting executive director, BGLC.

Jamaica to host Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit

THE SEVENTH Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit will be staged in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on June 14-15.

"After an exhaustive market analysis and evaluation, it is clear that Jamaica is emerging as an important new market in the Caribbean region's gaming industry. Having the Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit in Montego Bay provides the opportunity to better understand the country potential of Jamaica, learn about the developments in the Caribbean's gaming industry, and forge new partnerships between the region's operators and global service providers," said Elizabeth Leiva,

CEO of CGS Group, LLC, who are producing the event in Jamaica.

CGS Group has confirmed a partnership with Jamaica's Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission for the staging of the Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit. "We are delighted that Jamaica has been selected from among a group of highly competitive Caribbean countries for the seventh Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit.

"This event builds on our own annual Gaming Industry Summit which we have hosted for the past three years for local industry stakeholders," said Carole Martinez-Johnson, acting executive director of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Com-

mission (BGLC). "The BGLC team looks forward to welcoming gaming industry executives from the region and beyond to Jamaica. It is our intention that CGS 2017 provides invaluable networking opportunities and is a platform from which new strategic alliances and cooperative agreements can emerge."

KEY ISSUES

The programme of activities at CGS 2017 includes conference plenary sessions exploring key issues for the region's gaming industry such as de-risking and anti-money laundering, security, responsible gaming, as well as trends in the global gaming

industry.

For the first time, the Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit will include a special Regulator's Forum at which representatives of gaming regulatory organisations from around the region will explore issues related to regulating online gaming and sports betting.

The exhibition will link operators of gaming establishments with industry suppliers of products and services.

The Caribbean Gaming Show & Summit 2017 has international sponsors, including Aristocrat, Spin Inc, Golden Race, and Signature Gaming.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Karl Hale (right) and some of the participants in the tennis clinic visit Salt Marsh Infant School, a Helping Hands Foundation project that was built in collaboration with Serena Williams, the world's number one women's tennis player. The event creates a buzz for Montego Bay as children and tennis fans get to play and watch the professionals in action. At 79 years old, Elizabeth Horwood (second right) has travelled the world to tennis clinics and many Grand Slam tennis tournaments, but her love for Jamaica has not waned. 'The clinic is fantastic,' she remarked. 'The instructors give information in a way that you can absorb, I feel invigorated.' She has already made plans to be back in 2018.



Karl Hale (left) instructs players during the tennis clinic. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) Jamaica Cup was recently held at Half Moon Resort in Montego Bay, and it was a great blend of the best of tennis and the ideal destination.

Come to play tennis – enjoy the Jamaican experience

THE INTERNATIONAL Tennis Federation (ITF) Jamaica Cup was recently held at Half Moon Resort in Montego Bay, and it was a great blend of the best of tennis and the ideal destination. Over the six days, participants engaged in tennis clinics, exhibition and ITF matches.

For this year's event, tennis celebrities Johan Kriek, former Australian Open Champion, and Jesse Witten, former United States tennis professional, were on board to impart their knowledge to the over 50 persons who travelled to the island for the event. The two also played a thrilling doubles exhibition match against Kevin Chow of Tennis Academy and Biltmore Tennis Center and Marcus

Malcolm of Half Moon Resor, to the delight of the spectators. Overseas coaches Geoff Bower, director of Tennis Bayview Golf and Country Club, Toronto, and Andrew Chmura of Grand Slam Tennis Tours and Topnotch Tennis Tours taught the players the fundamentals of the game.

CLINIC MIXED WITH CULTURE

The International Tennis Federation Jamaica Cup is organised by Jamaica-born Canadian tennis professional Karl Hale. The allure of the event continues to be that Destination Jamaica is an excellent fit for tennis with exciting experiences for the participants to enjoy. Coach Geoff Bower explained, "I

love the island and the people. I've been coming here for 12 years and the trip is the highlight of my year. The tennis clinic exposes the participants to Jamaican culture. In fact, before they arrive, I send them Patois phrases, Jamaican dance videos and pictures of the food. When I do the warm-up sessions, I use Jamaican dancehall and ska music."

The Helping Hands Foundation, a philanthropic organisation started by Hale, benefits from proceeds of the event, and while there is no denying the appeal of the island, the cause has an equally magnetic pull for the participants. Through building of schools and the donation of school resources and expertise, the foundation has been improving the lives

of Jamaica's children and their communities.

Johan Kriek said this of Hale's initiative, "I am proud of what Karl does in communities through the clinics. Tennis has allowed me to explore the world, create lifelong friends and have rich experiences. It allows you to do the things that Karl is doing for Jamaica's schools. Sports has made a huge difference. As a South African, I saw how rugby literally saved South Africa from anarchy".

Jesse Witten expressed similar sentiments when he said, "Karl's drive and passion make you want to do things in your community. He gives of his time helping with the clinic, and people respect him and love what he does."

Jamaica named among world's top honeymoon destinations

FLIGHT NETWORK has selected Jamaica as one of the top honeymoon destinations in the world and best in the Caribbean. Of the 76 total destinations in the running, only 22 were selected for the final list – with Jamaica being the single Caribbean destination named.

Jamaica was selected for its diver-

sity of options for couples in search of experiences beyond sun and sand, as well as the destination's many years of experience making honeymoon desires a reality.

Flight Network is the largest Canadian-based online travel company with over two million customers and millions of web visitors



each month. To help newly-weds better navigate the honeymoon destination market, Flight Network

spent months researching and interviewing the best of the best to curate the ultimate list of top luxury honeymoon destinations.

"We are thrilled that Jamaica was selected for this list and the only Caribbean destination included in the group," said Paul Pennicook, director of tourism. "The romance

market is an incredibly important one for us in Canada. In fact, almost 30,000 Canadians visited Jamaica for a wedding or honeymoon in 2016. Word of mouth and lists such as Flight Network's continue to make an impact on travellers selecting Jamaica as their number one honeymoon destination."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Portia Simpson Miller (left), former prime minister, and Desmond McKenzie, minister of local government and community development, applaud presentations from JCDC winners at the launch function.



Desmond McKenzie (third right), minister of local government and community development, with directors of the Kingston and St Andrew Development and Homecoming Foundation (from left) Morin Seymour, Robert Hill, Jean Lowrie-Chin, Custos Patricia Dunwell, Custos Steadman Fuller and Donna Parchment Brown.

KSA Development and Homecoming Foundation launches in time for Jamaica 55

THE LAUNCH of the Kingston & St Andrew (KSA) Development and Homecoming Foundation took place on Wednesday, May 3, at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel, witnessed by a number of government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, residents of both parishes, and the business sector.

The foundation is an initiative of Custos of Kingston Steadman Fuller, who chairs the committee; Custos of St Andrew Dr Patricia Dunwell, and former Custos of St Andrew Donna Parchment Brown.

It was established to implement plans and projects for the economic, social, educational, cultural and environmental development of Kingston and St Andrew, aimed at enhancing the quality of life of its people.

Among the projects to be undertaken by the foundation, are the establishment of a 'Skills Bank' with residents and members of the diaspora, who are willing to contribute to the development of the



From left: Robert Hill, town clerk, KSAC, and director of the Kingston and St Andrew Development and Homecoming Foundation; Morin Seymour, director, Kingston and St Andrew Development and Homecoming Foundation; and Steadman Fuller, custos of Kingston and chairman of the foundation.

parishes and the setting up of a database of persons currently living in Kingston and St Andrew, and those who were once residents but now live in the diaspora. In addition, the foundation intends to

implement community development projects and establish an education development fund to provide scholarships and grants for needy students in both parishes.

Chief executive officer of the

foundation, George Watson, paid tribute to Kingston Bookshop and its chairman, Custos Steadman Fuller, for their sponsorship of start-up funds for the establishment of the foundation. He also thanked the CHASE Fund for its sponsorship of office equipment, and JN Bank for providing the office space.

HOMECOMING WEEK

One of the major projects of the foundation this year will be the hosting of an annual Kingston and St Andrew Homecoming Week celebration, with the inaugural event planned for December as a major part of the 'Jamaica 55' calendar.

According to Watson, the Homecoming Week is expected to provide national and international exposure of Jamaica's business capital and such outstanding offerings as its cuisine, music, art, sports and entertainment.

"We are pleased that the Kingston and St Andrew Homecoming Week 2017 has received the

special designation of 'major endorsed event of Jamaica 55' and the distinction of being listed among the premier events to celebrate this significant anniversary in the life of our nation. We will also be collaborating and participating in the 145th anniversary of Kingston as a city," said Custos Fuller.

The event has been endorsed by the Government, through the minister of culture, gender, entertainment and sport, Olivia 'Babsy' Grange, who congratulated the founders of the foundation and initiators.

In addition, the mayor of Kingston, Senator Delroy Williams, said he was pleased that, for the first time, residents of Kingston and St Andrew, and those living in the diaspora, will have their own Homecoming Week.

The Homecoming Week activities will run over eight days, from Saturday, December 16 to Saturday, December 23, and will showcase the achievements of the people of the nation's capital.

I went to Mix and Mingle

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

W E JAMAICANS, especially the pretentious among us, are accustomed to say, for whatever reason, that we don't mix and mingle. It's an irony of ironies. For, who love to rub shoulders more than any other nation in the world, but Jamaicans? Having said that, how much of a mix-and-mingle person am I?

I can be a solitary soul, which I am most of the time. I travel alone around the island a lot. I love to explore and discover at my own pace, and in my own time. I do not want a 'director' or 'producer' telling me to hurry up, slow down, run, walk, slide, sit, stand, etc. Free spirits do not take instructions very well.

My social life consists mainly, of, but not limited to, attending indigenous cultural events. I rarely go to house parties, rum bars I have banned myself from, my carnival revelry ended when my UWI days expired, stage shows start too late, dances are a no-no, jazz concerts are too expensive, memories of the Mandela Concert shootings keep me away from National Stadium events, and lounge-suit socials, like the Israeli Independence celebrations I write about in this publication today, are not what I live for.

Yet, writing for this newspaper has presented me with opportunities to attend shoulder-rubbing events. So, I, the 'aloner', really am not missing out. I mix and mingle for professional reasons. And recently I attended a social called Mix and Mingle put on by My Jamaica Travels (MJT) as part of its networking efforts.

COLLECTION OF BUSINESSES

"My Jamaica Travels is a collective of diverse micro, small and medium-sized Jamaican businesses, including tour operators, bed-and-breakfast operators, hotels, attractions, villas, support services and others dedicated to promoting the best of Jamaica's non-traditional tourism products," the registered company, which is an offshoot of the Tourism Cluster, says.

The objective of Mix and Mingle,



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Some of the My Jamaica Travels' board members: (From left) Paul Cole (treasurer), Sandra Scott (tourism consultant), Neverle Knight, Juliet Gordon (president), Michelle Neita (secretary), Audrey Anderson and Donaldson Bernard.



And what would a Mix and Mingle be without food?



Master drummer Maroghini and his son Amri at My Jamaica Travels' Mix and Mingle.



Some guests arriving as others are already way into the networking at My Jamaica Travels' Mix and Mingle, on Thursday, May 4.



Their faces and the embrace seem to say, "Long time gal mi never see yuh."



Barry 'Baritone' Williams thrilling the audience at My Jamaica Travels' Mix and Mingle.

thus, is for players in the hospitality and travel industries to meet, get acquainted with each other, and to share useful information about their businesses. The one I referred to above was the second in recent times, and was hosted by Audrey Anderson at Chateau Belle Bed and Breakfast, perched on a hillside in Smokey Vale, St Andrew.

I wondered why the place is called Smokey Vale. It is not in a valley, and from it there are the most fantastic views of the mountains in the northeast and the Corporate Area to the south. I saw no smoke, only clouds caressing mountaintops over yonder.

In addressing the gathering Juliet Gordon, president of MJT, said the members of MJT need not worry about competing with one another, as the tourism pie is big enough for everybody to get some of it, and

each business has a unique offering. And true to form, there were entrepreneurs from different subsectors of the industry in attendance.

The networking was great, but for me the high point of the evening was the performance of the versatile Barry 'Baritone' Williams. I was meeting Williams for the first time, and could not help talking with him about my own intention to sing professionally those great jazz standards and show-stopping numbers. Williams was accompanied on keyboards by Godfrey Taylor.

I shall be calling upon Williams, whose entertainment partnership with Taylor is called Voice and Ivory, for some performance therapy in the very near future. So, you see, mixing and mingling is not so bad after all. Choose the right crowd, such as the one that gathered at Chateau Belle on Thursday, May 4.



Juliet Gordon, president of My Jamaica Travels, addressing the gathering at Mix and Mingle.



The view from Chateau Belle where My Jamaica Travels' Mix and Mingle was held was part of the evening's delight on Thursday, May 4.

Israelis celebrate their independence at The Pegasus

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FINE WINES flowed freely, there were fruit juices aplenty, decadent pastries tantalised and sated taste buds, and the Israeli and Jamaican foods created a gastronomic stir. It was Tuesday, May 9, and the Israelis in Jamaica were celebrating the 69th anniversary of the State of Israel on the 17th floor of The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.

The event was organised by the honorary Israeli consul in Jamaica, Ainsley Henriques, and hosted by the Israeli ambassador to Jamaica, Daniel Saban, and his wife. Ambassador Saban is based at the Israeli Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

In addressing the gathering of just under 200 guests from various spheres of the Jamaican society and the diplomatic and consular corps, Ambassador Saban, who was introduced as a “true friend of Jamaica” by Honorary Consul Henriques, spoke of the economic cooperation that Jamaica has had with Israel over the year, including the bilateral talks.

“Over these past months, the increase in visitations, in delegations moving between us, is remarkable. Do not think that this is a one-sided experience. While from Israel we can offer technical advice, we, too, are learning what you here are experiencing. The experiences are also for our benefits as the knowledge assist us to research and solve problems for the benefit of mankind as we go forward together,” Ambassador Saban said, among other things.

LONG FRIENDSHIP

In bringing greetings on behalf of the people and Government of Jamaica, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Kamina Johnson-Smith, said she was happy with the decision by the Israeli ambassador to commemorate Israel’s independence anniversary in Jamaica. Israel and Jamaica have enjoyed a “great and long friendship” since 1962.

Minister Johnson-Smith, too, spoke on the current bilateral talks between Jamaica and Israel. In mentioning Prime Minister Andrew



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

From left: Spanish Ambassador Josep Maria Bosch, his wife Teresa Gonzalez, and United States Ambassador Luis G. Moreno.



Jamaica Pegasus Pastry Chef Justine Nelson displays some of her creations.

Holness’ visit to Israel earlier this year, she said Holness’ engagement with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “signalled Jamaica’s strong interest in expanding our bilateral cooperation”.

“Jamaica looks forward to greater collaboration with Israel in areas of mutual interest, including water resource management, security, technology, health and agricul-

ture,” Minister Johnson-Smith added. Work has already begun in education, security and water management.

The Jewish state of Israel was established in May 1948, and since then, it has experienced significant growth and development and has been a world leader in many areas, many reasons to celebrate.



Rabbi Yaakov Raskin moving prayers at the 69th anniversary celebrations of Israel’s Independence last week Tuesday at the The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.



From left: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Senator Kamina Johnson-Smith in conversation with Israel’s Honorary Consul to Jamaica Ainsley Henriques and Israel’s Ambassador to Jamaica Daniel Saban, who is posted in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

To Chateau Belle for bed and breakfast

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IN FRENCH, it means 'beautiful castle', and from Chateau Belle, nestled on a hillside at Smokey Vale in St Andrew, there is a lovely view of parts of Kingston and St Andrew, a delightful addition to the bed-and-breakfast accommodation that it provides.

The magic of Chateau Belle is its location. It's not in the heart of the hustle and bustle of the greater Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR). The environment is cool, laid-back, and surrounded by nature. Then, there are the mesmerising vistas of the mountains, and the gaping valley below. Yet, it is not very far from the KMR, sections of which are visible in the distance.

Guests can easily get to the city to do business and/or have fun, and be back without spending much travel time. Personalised tours and trips are offered. Guests have the option of getting their personal drivers, or they may be given access to registered taxis, whose drivers know the area very well.

TOURS OFFERED

Manager, Audrey Anderson, who has over 30 years' experience in the tourist industry, is a Jamaica Tourist Board-designated meet-the-people ambassador. She said she is "equipped to guide" guests "through a never-to-be-forgotten inner-city reggae music tour, or a Kingston beach trip". After the tours, the sightseeing, the shopping, the fun, it's back to two private suites, which has free Wi-Fi, cable TV, and other essentials.

Combined, the well-furnished suites can accommodate six guests at any one time. There are three bedrooms and two bathrooms. And while the operators will make themselves available to guests, total privacy is what they, the guests, will enjoy. They have their own private access to the property, including the common living area, which is also suitable for small receptions, weddings and retreats.

And though the name is of French origin, the hospitality is undoubtedly Jamaican, warm and welcoming, with birds chirping and an authentic Jamaican breakfast to start the day.

A votre sante (to your health)!



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

A section of one of the cosy bedrooms in Chateau Belle.



The bar at the upper level in Chateau Belle.



A place to dine in style.



One of the fantastic views from Chateau Belle.



Manager Audrey Anderson relaxing in one of the suites.

MoBay City Run 2017 highlights



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Canadian travel agents for the third year participated in The MoBay City Run. Sharing the occasion with them are Mayor of Montego Bay Homer Davis (second left) and Hospitality Jamaica coordinator Janet Silvera (right).



Courts Unicomer's Glendon Lowe (left) presents a 40-inch television to a representative of the largest corporate team, RIU Resorts' Frank Sondern.



Seventy-seven-year-old Gerline Nelson, the oldest participant in the MoBay City Run, enjoying herself with Kiwanian volunteers from the Junction Club in St Elizabeth.



For the second year, the team from the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency cops the prize for being the first corporate group to register for MoBay City Run.



PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA
MoBay City Run's Ashley Anguin (right) presents the 5K Walk plaque to winner Tanika Morris-Sterling of the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency.



Members of the Hilton Rose Hall Resort team having a ball in the Old Hospital Park.