

# Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

## BOSTON JERK CENTRE UNDER THREAT



European  
levity meets  
Jamaican  
culture



Royalton  
Negril:  
3 resorts  
in one

## THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM



FILE

Tourists taking pictures of the popular 'Redemption Song' statue by artist Laura Facey Cooper which stands outside Emancipation Park in New Kingston.



FILE

Devon House.

# Tourism, Kingston and a Caribbean renaissance

**M**OST CARIBBEAN cities have seen better days. Many harbour a mix of faded and ill-maintained colonial architecture, a plethora of modern concrete blocks, tired government buildings, and a hinterland of low-cost and informal housing.

However, there are signs that some governments, the private sector, and those in academia are coming to recognise that with the right stimulus, mix of external factors, and thoughtful urban planning, it is possible to create new opportunities, and imagine a very different Caribbean in which cities stimulate development and new thinking.

To this end, multiple developments are now taking place in Kingston's midtown and downtown locations. They include the redevelopment of Kingston's waterfront with government, private-sector and Chinese support; the relocation of the headquarters of several leading commercial enterprises; and the creation of a range of new tourist facilities. In parallel, the Government is in the process of relocating ministries and government departments to the midtown and waterfront areas.

From the perspective of tourism, the idea is to attract regional travellers, the diaspora, and millennials



JESSOP

from overseas who want to participate in the city's vibrant music and party scene, or to experience Kingston's many culinary, sporting and cultural offerings.

### AGGRESSIVELY POSITION KINGSTON

Earlier this year, Edmund Bartlett, the minister of tourism, told me that to achieve this, Jamaica will "aggressively position" Kingston as a major city tourism destination and is developing its surrounding areas to offer mountain, cultural and entertainment experiences.

This will involve, he said, new hotels, the development of downtown cruise ship facilities; the active encouragement of more cruise ship calls; and seeing Devon House take on the role of the



FILE

Bob Marley Museum.

country's leading centre for gastronomy.

But more significantly perhaps in the context of development, other programmes will place their emphasis on broadening stakeholder ownership and the opportunity for those living in Kingston and its environs to earn more from the sector, for example, by increasing the number of Airbnb properties, and through support for tourism-related cultural enclaves in Trench Town and other parts of the capital.

Put another way, the city's rebirth is about more than com-

mercial opportunity. To succeed, tourism, whether it is in Kingston or any other capital or large city, must bring benefit to a wide group of residents, including those living in disadvantaged communities.

In a fascinating and important adjunct to all of this, the University of the West Indies (UWI) is to hold an international conference, titled 'Imagine Kingston', at its Mona campus from November 9-12 this year, in collaboration with the Institute of Jamaica.

The event, which focuses on the regeneration of the city, aims to

encourage interested parties to look past the derelict and historic, to a future Kingston, in sessions that seek to reimagine the city.

Its organisers hope the conference will explore how change might, for example, cultivate pride and civic feeling about the city's future, through its architecture, parks, gardens, food, music, governance and sense of community.

They believe that apart from the city being 'a global cultural icon' based on its music and creativity, Kingston 'is waiting to be the catalyst for a fundamental expansion of tourism in Jamaica'. "Kingston", they write, "is beckoning us to imagine tourism differently to reflect the creative and cultural ethos it birthed ... . Imagine Kingston as the cultural capital of the Caribbean, a centre of innovation, creativity, design, arts, culture and attendant services".

Space does not permit more, but this inspirational approach is exactly what is required across a region that has grown tired of hearing about itself and its future in the same old ways.

Repositioning Kingston for tourism requires a belief that the city, despite its grittiness and sometimes challenging reputation, has a central role to play in Jamaica's future economic development.

What is being planned by the Government and UWI offers not only opportunity for Kingstonians to reimagine their city and their place in the world, but the possibility that creative new ideas may emerge that spur a Caribbean renaissance.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A look at a stall at the Boston Jerk Centre in Portland.

**Gareth Davis Sr**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**W**ORLD-RENOWNED BOSTON Jerk Centre in Portland is under serious threat of imminent closure as a result of repeated incidents of tourist harassment and lack of adequate sanitary convenience. The problem is further compounded by complaints of the unhygienic practices of some vendors.

The crisis has sparked the intervention of chairman of the Ministry of Tourism's self-styled Destination Assurance Council (DAC) Errol Hanna, who is reportedly racing against time to save the iconic attraction which has a rich tradition, dating back to the days of the Maroons.

"The level of harassment is quite alarming and the stalls are in a deplorable condition," Hanna said.

He added that reports from some jerk stall operators are that the situation needed immediate attention.

"It is a situation where everyone does as they please without any organisational structure or any form of leadership. This kind of willy-nilly approach is bad for business, growth, and the success of this major attraction," Hanna said.

According to the DAC chairman, Boston Jerk Centre represents the vision of Minister Edmund Bartlett to having gastronomy play



A jerk vendor cutting up pork for his customers.



Chairman of the Destination Assurance Council, Errol Hanna (centre) in dialogue with David Atkins a stall owner at the Boston Jerk Centre.

a major part of the tourism product for Jamaica. "So it is essential for this icon to be protected."

Hanna told *Hospitality Jamaica* that it was absolutely necessary for the overhauling of this product to come to fruition for the benefit of the stakeholders and visitors to the parish.

#### IN NEED OF ATTENTION

"I am under no illusion that Boston Jerk will take care of itself. I am cognisant that this product is in dire need of attention, and therefore, in keeping with the vision that Minister Bartlett has for resort areas, I am duty-bound in my

tenure as chairman of the DAC to get the job done," he said.

"I have every intention of invoking the Government's well-touted public private partnership initiative by engaging the well-established companies that provide (distribute) goods and services to the jerk centre, including Wisynco, Wray and Nephew, Red Stripe, Celebration Brand, Digicel, FLOW, Lifespan, Copperwood, Best Dressed, and Caribbean Broilers, among others, to buy into the initiative," he added.

Last year, Boston Jerk Centre was ordered closed by the Ministry of Health after failing to meet the minimum standards set by them. However, it was later reopened after certain conditions were met.

In the meantime, the vendors are anxious for the start of the initiative and are pledging their full compliance.

"This was what we have always wanted," said David Atkins, a stall owner at the jerk centre.

"We want to uplift the standard of this brand-name facility. We have to start acting the part of professionals who are operating a business, while providing a valuable service to the local people and visitors. I am happy that the DAC has intervened, and we want to keep this product in a good light, as we are showcasing this to the world," Atkins added.



# TPDCO STAFF SERVICE AWARDS 2017

*"Harvesting Excellence, Unveiling The Treasure"*



# TPDCo Staff Service Awards 2017

## *Harvesting excellence, unveiling the treasure*

UNDER THE theme 'Harvesting Excellence, unveiling the treasure', the Tourism Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo) and its board of directors recognised 109 team members at their Staff Service Awards Luncheon. The selected individuals were acknowledged for the significant contributions they made to the organisation for the period 2013-2016.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Marline Stephenson Dalley (front row, left), Manager of the Year 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, shares lens with TPDCo long service awardees.



Minister Bartlett gives a warm embrace to Violet Crutchley, TPDCo craft development coordinator.

### Tourism Minister Lauds TPDCo

Edmund Bartlett, minister of tourism, who was the keynote speaker at the awards luncheon, expressed his gratitude to the team members for the major role they have been playing in helping to advance the tourism sector. He reminded them that "it is TPDCo that stands in the gap between the promise we make to the visitors in the marketplace and the experience they have when they get here. That makes you critical to the tourism process."

With arrivals up to a record level for the month of July, Bartlett went on to commend the organisation. "I just want to say that TPDCo shares in the very positive growth that Jamaica is enjoying today."

PLEASE SEE **AWARDS**, 5



Essie Gardner, region adviser for Toastmasters International, giving a well-received motivational speech, titled 'Autograph your work with excellence'.



Bernadette Maxfield (right), Star Performer 2015-2016 for the Montego Bay region, accepts her award from Joy Roberts, deputy executive director, TPDCo.



Suzanne Hinds, Innovator of the Year 2015-2016, accepts her award from Duane Nelson, executive manager, human resources.

# AWARDS

CONTINUED FROM 4

## ED & chairman's remarks

Dr Andrew Spencer, executive director of TPDCo, gave a hearty welcome and reminded the team to continue performing at its best. "I firmly believe that TPDCo is the entity that works in the trenches. We do the grunt work, where soil gets in your fingernails; we do the foundation work, we ensure that the product is where it should be, and it's always a work in progress."

Ian Dear, chairman for the organisation, encouraged the team to persevere, as they collectively impact the industry. He said: "As you receive your respective awards, feel proud of your accomplishments and let these awards continue to motivate you to increased levels of productivity and stimulate you to unveil the treasure that lies within you."



Executive Director, TPDCo, Dr Andrew Spencer gives a warm welcome to the staff and special guests at the TPDCo Staff Service Awards.



Minister Bartlett and TPDCo financial controller, Georgeia Robinson-Wong pause for a photo at the awards luncheon.



Dr Andrew Spencer (back row, right), executive director, TPDCo, poses with the 20-year-and-over long service awardees.



Ronald Rankine (right), Star Performer 2013-2014 for the Ocho Rios region, accepts his award from Ian Dear, chairman of TPDCo.



Julian Thompson (right), Manager of the Year 2015-2016, accepts his award from Duane Nelson, executive manager, human resources, TPDCo.



Michelle Bowen (right), Star Performer 2014-2015 for the Ocho Rios region, accepts her award from Joy Roberts, deputy executive director, TPDCo.



Doreen Forrester, Employee of the Year 2013-2014, accepts her award from Duane Nelson, executive manager, human resources.



Clayton Brown, Star Performer 2015-2016 for the Kingston region, accepts his award from Deron Dixon, director, corporate services.

## TPDCo team members encouraged to continue to 'Autograph their work with excellence'

The staff received a motivational speech by the region adviser for Toastmasters International and marketing communications manager for the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), Essie Gardner, who said: "You have served well and are deserving of the accolades you will receive. Enjoy every moment of today, bask in the limelight ... and tomorrow, start a brand new chapter, a brand new page, where you will autograph your work with excellence." She went on to encourage the staff. "Colleagues, we work in an industry which is Jamaica's bread and butter. We may be employed to TPDCo or the JTB, but we are truly working towards national development, for the very survival of our children and our children's children. We have to rise above ... to motivate ourselves to offer excellent service every day. We cannot afford to wait on others to validate us ... we must autograph our work with excellence, because Destination Jamaica needs excellence."



Erica Brown-Whittingham (right), Star Performer 2014-2015 for the Montego Bay region, accepts her award from Joy Roberts, deputy executive director.



Lorna Newsome, Employee of the Year 2015-2016, accepts her award from Duane Nelson, executive manager, human resources.

## 20-year veteran responds

Allasandra Chung, 20-year long service awardee and director of product development and community tourism, responded on behalf of the awardees. She congratulated all awardees and thanked the board and management for their show of appreciation and recognition to what may be its most important factor of production – its human resource. "I think that at TPDCo, we are a team because we respect each other and we care for each other. These are traits which are always evident in TPDCo on a daily basis," she said.

Joy Roberts, deputy executive director, closed the event with a vote of thanks. Entertainment was provided by Warm & Easy, much to the delight of the staff. The event was held on Tuesday, July 18, at the Caymanas Golf and Country Club in St Catherine.



Doreen Forrester, Star Performer 2014-2015 for the Kingston region, accepts her award from TPDCo Chairman Ian Dear.



Shauna Carnegie, Star Performer 2015-2016 for the Ocho Rios region, accepts her award from Deron Dixon, director, corporate services.



Lorna Newsome, Star Performer 2015-2016 for the Montego Bay region, accepts her award from Deron Dixon, director, corporate services.



Marline Stephenson Dalley, Manager of the Year for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, accepts her award from Duane Nelson, executive manager, human resources.



FRONTERA

SIMPLY DELICIOUS  
WINES





CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The all-inclusive package includes all non-motorised water sports, so get ready to set sail at RIU Reggae Hotel.



This entertainment team is filled with flexibility: Top – (Marian Hoilett); sitting on shoulder (KacyAnn McLean (left) and Sherae Clarke); standing, from left – (Kyash Rose, Jermaine Dixon, Jason Brown, and Athol Lewis) – on the ground (Monnique Clarke).



The choice is yours when it comes to relaxing by the poolside or enjoying the sea and sun during your vacation.

## RIU REGGAE HOTEL European levity meets Jamaican culture

Lalara Boodie  
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WITH VIBRANT tropical hues against contemporary architecture, the RIU Reggae Hotel brings the essence of European levity unto the beachfront of Jamaican culture.

RIU Reggae was opened on November 19, 2016, and is a gem within the RIU Hotels franchise. It is the only combination of the RIU Palace and the RIU Club/Classic selection in Jamaica.

“RIU Hotels created a new concept which most would consider a hybrid. This has been doing very well in other countries, so why not bring it to Jamaica,” said assistant general manager Lidonel Bent. “With each destination like this one, we have used a name specific to the country. The RIU Reggae is unique to Montego Bay, Jamaica, and is a name that will not be forgotten,” said Bent.

The reggae theme of the hotel can be felt through the activities, meals, drinks, and the top-of-the-line staff employed at RIU Reggae, which is over 90 per cent Jamaican. The theme has allowed the hotel to consistently have an over 70 per cent per cent occupancy rate since opening.

The RIU Reggae is an adult-only hotel. The age of its occupants range from mid 20s to mid-50s. “There are only adults at this hotel, and you can really feel the vibe of it mainly through the activities provided.

However, we are not a raunchy hotel. The activities here are still PG-16,” said Bent.

Being an all-inclusive hotel, there are several features that would suit anyone wishing to visit the RIU Reggae. However, the top features offered by the hotel include its five gourmet restaurants, which offer a wide range of culinary delights such as Jamaican, Asian, Italian and European cuisine. “You do not have to make a reservation. It is first come first

serve. Everyone can get an opportunity to enjoy the different themed food that we have here,” explained Bent.

Hospitality Jamaica’s top pick is the Asian Restaurant, which comprises of a large buffet of various Asian dishes. Lidonel Bent recommends the jerk chicken and the oxtail, which we agree are very tasty options.

The hotel also has three swimming pools, four bars, the Renova Spa, and is less than five minutes from the Sangster International airport in Montego Bay. A guest at the RIU Reggae will have open access to the RIU Club Montego Bay Hotel to enjoy

more entertainment and extended features. “RIU Club Montego Bay is our sister property, which is just walking distance from RIU Reggae and we have an internal road for safety purposes,” said Bent.

The top activities at RIU Reggae are, beach/pool volleyball and the hamster ball.

The main aspect of the hotel that sets it apart from the rest is the amicable staff, who are warm and welcoming. “Each staff member is carefully hand-picked for their ability to socialise with our guests who come from all over the world. It is good to employ people that love what they do and represent the company well,” said Bent.

At the moment, the rate for the summer is US\$134 per person per night in double occupancy. However, RIU Reggae offers triple occupancy, which charges the third person only US\$114 per night.

RIU Reggae Hotel is actively involved in communities in Montego Bay. It is a part of the Spanish Jamaica Foundation. The hotel also sponsors the local football clubs in the area and is one of the main sponsors of a community primary school in Green Island and a clinic in Negril. “We know the community needs a lot of help, and we at RIU Reggae go as far as we can possibly go. Social responsibility is a theme that is very important within our company, and we have a specific department that is in charge of managing it,” said Bent.

### Strengths

- Staff are very friendly and team oriented
- Strong WI-FI signal throughout the property
- Lively and vibrant feel

### Areas to work on

- More adult theme night entertainment
- Better selection of reggae music throughout the day.



The management team is all about fun and enjoyment. From left: Henry Bernard, executive chef; Julette Sumerseth, executive housekeeper; Elaine Hylton, front desk manager; Laur Ann Daley, health and safety controller; Christopher Chamberlain, pool and beach manager; Lisa Shipp, receivables manager; Alton Salmon, restaurants maitre d’ Adrian Gonzalez, production manager; Tanesha Campbell, bar manager; Darren Myles, maintenance manager; Monnique Clarke, entertainment manager and Niurka Garcia, sales manager and Hospitality Jamaica Writer, Latara Boodie.



The soothing blue and white decor will not only induce a good night’s sleep, but provides an atmosphere of peace.



RIU Reggae provides a mixture of Jamaican and European cuisine such as scrumptious jerked chicken appetisers, juicy steaks, and seafood fusions.



The entertainment centre comes alive at night with guest artistes, live performances, and dramatic pieces from the entertainment team at the RIU Reggae.





CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A shot of visitors to the Experience Jamaica Village.

# Experience Jamaica campaign excites Caribbean audience

**JAMAICA**  
TOURIST BOARD

“I’VE WANTED to come to Jamaica for some time now.” “I have to take a trip to Jamaica soon. My friends have been there and came back with amazing stories.”

These are some of the sentiments that were echoed repeatedly during the Jamaica Tourist Board’s (JTB) recent launch of Experience Jamaica Caribbean at the Trinidad Invest Convention (TIC) trade show earlier this month. As the JTB pursues the Caribbean in a bid to grow arrivals out of that market, the TIC was an ideal forum to interact with thousands of exhibitors, buyers and consumers.

For four impactful days, the JTB, along with tourism partners participating in the Experience Jamaica Caribbean 2017, brought the sound, look, feel, taste, vibe and energy of Destination Jamaica via the Experience Jamaica Village at the Centre of Excellence in Trinidad.

Visitors came in droves to interact with representatives from Couples Resorts, Melia Braco Village,



Michelle Gordon (left) of Couples Resorts shares lens with two visitors to the Experience Jamaica Village.

The Courtleigh Group, Dream Entertainment and Grand Palladium Resort and Spa.

“I want to go back to Jamaica again ... six months away is too long,” said one of the visitors.

“I want some Devon House I’Scream, did you bring any?” joked another.

People were interested in experiencing dancehall and reggae music in the land of their birth. They want to eat ‘jerk’ from the jerk vendor, to walk the miles of beaches and plunge in the invigorating waters, or simply hang out with Jamaicans and soak in the contagious vibe. There was no shortage of stories about their last Jamaica

experience and eager anticipation for the next trip.

## ENCOURAGE VACATION

“The Experience Jamaica Caribbean campaign is designed to encourage Caribbean residents to vacation in Jamaica,” said Marcia McLaughlin, JTB’s deputy director of tourism, marketing. “We know that we have an amazing tourism product, and we want our Caribbean neighbours to come and enjoy. Our research has shown that they are already travelling to Jamaica, primarily for business. Through this campaign, we are inviting them to stay a little longer for pleasure.”

The offerings during the Experi-



Toni-Ann Dias of Grand Palladium Resort and Spa engages Jamaica High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago David Prendergast.

ence Jamaica Caribbean are alluring. Launched on July 8 at the Village, Caribbean nationals will benefit from deep discounts of up to 50 per cent on accommodations, attractions, events and ground transportation from over 40 participating tourism partners. These reduced prices can be enjoyed up to December 15, 2017.

Giveaways of airline tickets, hotel stays and tickets to hallmark events added excitement. “My children saw the interviews on television about Jamaica and insisted that we have to come here,” said Olivia Ramkissoon.

“Now that they are here, we can’t get them to leave,” she exclaimed. This experience was quite memorable for Ramkissoon and her family and to top it off, she

walked away as the winner of a family vacation.”

When the curtain came down on the 15th staging of TIC, over 11,000 persons from countries across the region attended the show. Of the 275 exhibitors and 210 booths, the Experience Jamaica Village was voted the Best Booth in the large category, second only to Tobago. “Our booth exhibit was exceptionally done and stood out as one of the best we have had over the years,” said Shanna-Marie Israel, marketing/exhibitor coordinator, Trinidad Invest Convention.

“The life and genuine Jamaican vibe that were brought to the convention was undeniable and unforgettable. Congratulations on being second in the running for winning Best Booth in the large category.”



CONTRIBUTED

Dedra Brown (left), training and quality manager, and Issia Thelwell, executive office manager at the Hyatt Ziva.

# Hyatt Ziva and Zilara staff on 'Cloud 9'

**Janet Silvera**

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

MONTEGO BAY'S Hyatt Ziva and Zilara has launched two out-of-the-box programmes geared at positioning themselves as the centre of human capital development for Jamaica's tourism sector.

A celebration of education, which is spreading like wildfire throughout the Playa-operated resort, has resulted in some 205 members of staff enrolling in courses ranging from certificate to first degrees and doctoral programmes, aimed at lifting their educational standards.

Of the 205, seven have been hand-picked for a special 'Cloud 9' programme by the resort, which offers them cognitive psychology and the use of critical thinking, said General Manager Diego Concha.

"This special group consists of managers selected to excel in managerial growth. They will redo themselves so they use critical thinking at all times, because the idea is for me to become a support process and not a leading process," explained Concha, who has been leading the American-owned resort for two years.

He said the initiatives they embark on today will dictate the future of Hyatt Ziva and Zilara, "A celebration of education and the intellect. It is our position to be the centre of Jamaica's tourism human capital development".

The Colombia-born general man-



Diego Concha

ager, who has taken the concept outside the walls of the hotel and is working in one of the volatile St James communities, used the opportunity to showcase their corporate social responsibility project, 'Granville 404', which is now active at the Granville All-Age School.

Four hundred and four students were at the institution when the hotel started the project a year and a half ago. "The project encompasses five dimensions – a farm to – table initiative, education, environment, sports and a library," says Betty-Ann Brown, director of human resources.

Arlott Campbell, internal audit manager at the resort, is one of the seven employees selected for Cloud 9. According to her, "We are encouraged to undo ourselves and expand our horizon beyond what we think we know. We are acquiring new skills to become rounded professionals in



Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook at Hyatt Ziva and Zilara.

the evolution of the all-inclusive."

The initiative has been hailed by Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook who lauded the resort for recognising the importance of building the people in the country, "particularly, owing to the fact that many are studying in fields not related to tourism. Playa is thinking of the future, we need to see more of this in Jamaica".

Regional director in the Ministry of Education, Dr Michelle Pinnock, concurred, stating that she was a firm believer in lifelong learning. "It is the engine of modern living."

She lauded Playa for its investment through guided assistance. "I am sure it will be returned in increased productivity, worker loyalty and retention," said Dr Pinnock.

[janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com](mailto:janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com)

## PART TWO

# Abe Issa – The realist

**Diana McIntyre-Pike**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

HOSPITALITY JAMAICA continues the feature on Abe Issa, who was appointed chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) in 1955, at a time when the JTB was reorganised from being the Jamaica Tourist Trade Development Board.

Abe Issa was considered the godfather of Jamaica's tourism industry.

"Now and then we wake up and scratch the surface, then we go back to sleep."

With this truthful mouthful, Abe spoke for every member of his board and some of the new members blamed the government for letting the old group go to hell while tourist business went to other places. For two years, the board was half in, half out, never quite knowing whether it was going or coming. However, Abe blamed no one, even though he felt things could have been managed better but, instead, wanted everyone to concentrate on the future as this was all he was concerned about. Abe defined the future into short- and long-term planning and promotion, the latter to benefit from the cumulative effects of the prior term.

The short-term or immediate plan was to make the next season bigger than the last. The long term was to build up foreign and local organisation which would snowball the increased seasonal take into a lusty year-round trade, drawing heavier portions from North America and Europe and tapping new sources like Latin America. The new chairman realised, though, that he had to assemble some facts and figures on the tourist trade for the Jamaican public as quickly as possible. Why did he feel this way? His response was, "For years, the people of Jamaica have been asking for information to tell them what the tourist trade is all about – exactly how much



Abe Issa



Diana McIntyre-Pike

it brings in, fact on accommodations and allied services. There has been plenty of general talk about the benefits derived, but in what directions these benefits flow?"

The public, he said, had been given no convincing information, not even as a courtesy. And being left in the dark, they have formed many erroneous and damaging impressions. He argued that no one had tried to sell tourism at home, to break through the barrier of psychological lack of sympathy and resistance which existed.

He went on further to say

PLEASE SEE **ISSA**, 14

# Royalton Negril – three resorts in one

## Latara Boodie

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ROYALTON NEGRIL is a picturesque estate within a tropical oasis built with hues of beige, browns and creams, which is brought to life by a calming mixture of azure and white. It has a seemingly impeccable ambience of tranquility backed with luxurious service from a well-trained staff.

“Royalton Negril is actually three resorts in one,” explained Courtney Miller, general manager for Royalton Negril, Hideaway Negril and Grand Lido Negril.

The combination of resorts opened on March 31, 2017, with a total of 573 rooms divided among the three resorts. “There are 407 rooms in Royalton, 140 rooms in Hideaway and 26 in Grand Lido Negril.”

Located in the midst of the Bloody Bay beach in Negril, the geographically iconic location is deemed by many to have the best beaches within the region. “We have around 1,000 feet of white-sand beach by the Bloody Bay side and an amazing sunset near the cliffs.”

Miller explained that all three hotels have distinct niches. The Royalton Hotel is for fun-loving families that want to get away, reconnect and spend some quality time with each other. Hideaway is for adults only and caters to those who would want to have some fun without children around. The Grand Lido is for others who want a more liberal experience.

## An activity for everybody

The Royalton Hotel has designed its entertainment and activities to be family-oriented and offer an enriching cultural experience. “We have a congo and kette drumming course which families can partake in. We have a local Rastafarian instructor that not only teaches how to play the drum, but includes detailed lessons on its history. We also have a steel pan academy, where pan experts come in and teach the kids how to play,” said Miller. The aim of the Royalton hotel, he noted, was to get par-

ents and children together. Other family-themed activities include cooking demos, which will teach both children and adults how to make a typical Jamaican meal.

Between the three resorts there are 10 restaurants. Of the 10, only eight are available to families; the other two are for adults only. The restaurants available to Royalton guests are Chef Experience, Armadillo Tex Mex, Calypso Caribbean, Hunter’s Steak House, Zen Asian Cuisine, and Grazie Italian Restaurant.

The Royalton Hotel also has a Teen’s Club and a Kid’s Club. “We try to make our programmes both entertaining and educational. In

the Kid’s Club, we have the young scientist club, arts and crafts, and environmental club, where the children can learn about the Negril wetland and marine life,” said Miller. On the other hand, the Teen’s Club is structured for young adults that would like some alone time. “We have everything in there, from video games to virtual DJ tutorial sessions,” said Miller.

In each of the three resorts, guests can experience the Diamond Club programme. “This means that each room is serviced by a butler. This team of people is there to enhance our guests’ vacation. They are exceptionally intuitive, friendly and helpful. Whatever your heart’s



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

An example of a double bedroom.



All Diamond Club rooms come with a balcony.



The kiddies’ pool has a large bucket that turns over, spraying large amounts of water randomly.



All department managers gathered for a team picture in the kids’ play room.



You are free to lounge by the poolside or in the water.

desire, the Diamond Club butler service will do its best to fulfil it. They enhance the luxurious feeling of the Royalton Hotel and allow you to feel like the king or queen you truly are," said Miller.

The local rate for this summer at the Royalton Hotel runs from June to October 31, 2017. "This summer, we have the \$140 per person per night special for double occupancy," explained sales manager Kimika Beckford.

### Must try activities:

- Kids' Drumming Academy and cooking experience.
- Kids' water park and non-motorised sports.

### Must try restaurant:

■ Calypso  
From taking a stroll with Max and Ruby or enjoying some alone time on the Bloody Bay beach, one will surely get a chance to recalibrate and escape the real world as you delve into the Royalton fantasy.



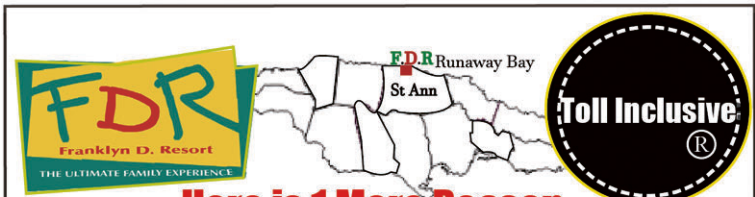
Each treadmill in the gym has access to a TV.



The chef prepared a special meal for the Hospitality Jamaica team.



Diamond Club jacuzzi.

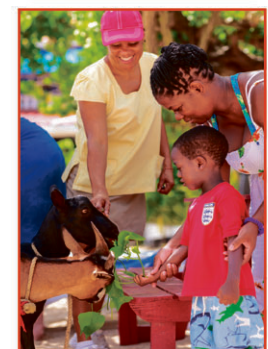
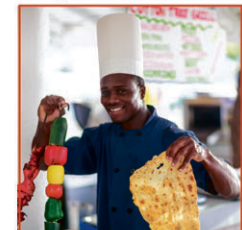


## Here is 1 More Reason to Come to FDR! Its Toll Inclusive

Take the highway and we will reimburse your toll or gas voucher on check in-up to JA\$3000 (show receipts on arrival)

**Now its Easier To Get To! And Just As Easy To Love!**  
\$140 per person-double occupancy, \$160 per night-single occupancy, \$30 per child 2-13 \$50 per teen 14 -17.

Complimentary Vacation Nanny from check -in to check-out ,Spacious Suites Premium Bar Complimentary wifi Nightly Live Entertainment, Supervised Kids and Teen's Center, Great Jamaican food and drinks, Snorkeling, Glass bottom Boat ride, Kayaking, Cycling, Gym, Four Restaurants, Full Service spa on the water.



Reservation: (876) 973 4124  
visit: [www.fdrholidays.com](http://www.fdrholidays.com)  
[res@fdrholidays.com](mailto:res@fdrholidays.com)

Minimum 2 nights stay  
Travel now- Aug 31,2017

Follow us

**The Best Little Family Resort In The World!**



# Melia Braco Village trains and fêtes local agents – all in one weekend

MELIA BRACO Village Resort hosted the 'Best of the Best Local Agents' at their specialist workshop weekend recently.

Selected based on their production for 2016, only the best agencies were invited, says Angella Bennett, Melia Braco's director of sales.

"The agents experienced our famous Friday night Street Dinner and Dance party with curbed side buffet and live show cooking and authentic reggae entertainment," she told *Hospitality Jamaica*.

The two-day workshop saw the agents focusing on product update and sales strategies, followed by an awards luncheon, recognising the best of the best agents.

Outstanding Leisure Sales was awarded to Leisure for Pleasure; Outstanding Group Sales was awarded to Luxury Connections and MBV Rising Star for 2017 - Nova Events & Travel.

It was definitely not all work and no play, as the agents participated



From Left: Judith James-Watts, managing director, Leisure for Pleasure; Angella Bennett, director of sales and marketing, Melia Braco; Denise Thomas, office manager, Leisure for Pleasure; and Ann Marie Burke, human resource director. Leisure for Pleasure was voted Outstanding Leisure Sales 2017.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



From Left: Kellesah Thomas, Melia Braco Village reservations agent; Novlet Minott of Nova Events & Travel. Novlet Minott was recognised as Melia Braco Village Rising Star for 2017.

in a session tagged fun and games', by Bennett.

"The entire team participated in a series of activities, including rock wall, obstacle course, at our Adventure Park, with Team Level and Team Villagers battling for the ultimate prize."

The weekend culminated with a special celebratory dinner and more prizes and surprises. Some of the agents who attended had glowing remarks about the weekend.

"It was an awesome familiarisation trip. The Melia Braco sales team is amazing. I could not have

asked for a better weekend. It will be my pleasure to sell Melia Braco," said Natalie Palmer of Iconic Travel.

Judith James-Watt of Leisure for Pleasure described her time at the resort as "excellent. Thank you Melia for the training; the prizes and surprises. It was great. We will sell, sell, sell to attain our position as outstanding Leisure Sales."

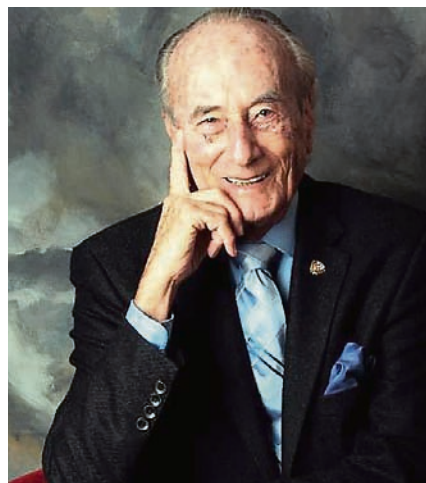
For Steven Kerr of Trafalgar Travel, it was indeed one of the best local familiarisation trips he had experienced. "It surpassed my expectations," he concluded.

## Heinz Simonitsch first recipient of prestigious Icon of Hospitality Award

LEGENDARY CARIBBEAN hotelier Heinz Simonitsch, who defined luxury hospitality and environmental sustainability, is the recipient of the first Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Icon of Hospitality Award.

Simonitsch, of Jamaica's famed Half Moon resort in Montego Bay, was conferred the high honour on his 90th birthday recently, for his tireless and innovative contributions to the region's hospitality industry. Simonitsch is credited with pioneering the pairing of luxury resorts with ecological sustainability and community benefit approaches.

"Your countless contributions and achievements of your outstanding career have inspired CHTA's leadership to create the CHTA Icon of Hospitality



Heinz Simonitsch

CONTRIBUTED

Award. We believe it entirely appropriate to bestow the inaugural award upon you," CHTA Director General Frank Comito stated in a communiqué to Simonitsch.

"The depth and expanse of your work has forever shaped Caribbean hospitality. As a pioneer in luxury tourism, you set a new standard for others to emulate. Your commitment to the professional development of your employees and the health and welfare of your surrounding community has elevated local lives and the position of tourism in the region. CHTA and the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association are forever indebted to you for selflessly giving your time, talent and treasure to the greater good," he continued.

PLEASE SEE **HEINZ**, 16

## ISSA

CONTINUED FROM 11

that "it's the public's money the board has been spending. The public has a perfect right to know how it is spent. The first thing we are going to do is to tell them".

For if this new board was to succeed as the country hoped, the people had to be behind the industry.

"We must get them as interested in the tourist trade as they are in the Australian cricket tour," he stated.

Abe wanted to sell and market Jamaica as he had been doing on a smaller and successful scale for his own Tower Isle and Myrtle Bank hotels. He was known for being a smart and effective salesman. For example, he talked his successful dry-goods trading family into buying Myrtle Bank Hotel. At that time, Jamaica was hardly known as a tourist resort.

■ **Diana McIntyre-Pike is president/founder - Countrystyle Community Tourism Network/Villages as Businesses. Email: village-sasbusinesses@yahoo.com**



# DISCOVER! EXPLORE! ENJOY!

When was the last time you truly explored Jamaica? This summer, plan a vacation right here at home and discover a Jamaica you've never seen before.

*C'MON, GET OUT THERE!*

[WWW.VISITJAMAICA.COM](http://WWW.VISITJAMAICA.COM)

**JAMAICA**® HOME  
OF ALL  
RIGHT

# Palladium Hotels & Resorts rebranding the Royal Suites

**P**ALLADIUM HOTELS & Resorts is rebranding its adults-only luxury resorts known as The Royal Suites by Palladium to TRS Hotels. The initiative includes a fresh and elegant look on property as well as an updated marketing campaign and logo.

TRS Hotels will become independent of Grand Palladium Hotels & Resorts while remaining true to the mission of offering the best adults-only luxury experience and personalised service at the current properties in the Dominican Republic and Mexico as well as the new Costa Mujeres property, set to open in fall of 2018.

TRS Hotels revamp will include an increase in staff and an in-depth training programme, along with upscale amenities like guest rooms with swim-up rooms, dinner-and-a-show-themed restaurants and world-class beach clubs to highlight this elevated concept. The evolved TRS Hotels brand is designed for those looking for the ultimate adults-only experience and customised service and attention from all levels of staff.

“As the adults-only market in the Caribbean and Mexico continues to grow and expand, Palladium Hotels & Resorts looks to differentiate itself by evolving its adults-only brand, TRS Hotels,” said Jacques De Paep, Palladium Hotel group commercial director for North America.

In addition to the rebranding, TRS



CONTRIBUTED

## Grand Palladium

Yucatan in Riviera Maya has been undergoing various upgrades and renovations since July 1 until November 15. These upgrades include completely renovated guest rooms, swim-up rooms, additional exclusive a la carte restaurants, a new infinity pool, and integration of the entire room stock of the former Grand Palladium Riviera Resort & Spa, along with a Signature Beach Club. TRS Turquesa in Punta Cana will also be undergoing changes with the addition of a signature Beach Club, which is scheduled to open by December 1.

Along with attention to upscale amenities, luxury hospitality and

desirable offerings like accommodating beach clubs, the redesigned brand boasts an ultimately guest-centred experience where every service is designed specifically to fulfil each individual guest’s needs. As Palladium Hotels & Resorts continues to evolve, TRS Hotels strives to keep ultimate guest satisfaction at the forefront of this initiative.

TRS Yucatan and TRS Turquesa will begin their rebranding online in July, featuring a simple and refined logo to represent the new and improved adults-only hideaways. On-property rebranding will be completed by late Fall 2017.

## HEINZ

CONTINUED FROM 14

Karolin Troubetzkoy, CHTA’s president, explained that the ‘Icon of Hospitality’ title celebrates the careers and lives of extraordinary leaders whose work in Caribbean hospitality has stood the test of time and left its mark on CHTA and the region. “The association’s new ultimate recognition honours legendary professionals who have not only achieved phenomenal business success, but have also mentored and moulded those aiming for excellence in this industry,” she explained.

Simonitsch moved to Jamaica in 1963 and leapt to prominence when he expanded the Half Moon Club into a 400-acre resort where luxury became synonymous with environmental sustainability and community benefit innovations, which included local access to the resort’s, medical facilities.

Prior to his iconic innovations in the region, Simonitsch enjoyed a distinguished career in the Caribbean tourism industry, earning many distinctions since he began in 1953 as dining room captain at the Elbow Beach Surf Club in Bermuda before he became the managing director of Half Moon Golf, Tennis and Beach Club in 1965 until his retirement in 2002. Today, he splits his time between Jamaica and his home country of Austria, where he owns the Grandhotel Lienz, which opened in April 2009.

The former CHTA Caribbean Hotelier of the Year received many accolades, including the Honorary Order of Distinction, Commander Class conferred by the governor general of Jamaica for outstanding contribution to tourism in Jamaica and the Caribbean; the Golden Cross from the Austrian government for his long service as honorary consul general in Jamaica; the International Humanitarian Award from the American Friends of Jamaica for his commitment to helping the Jamaican population; the title of professor, awarded by the Austrian president for services and outstanding contribution to Austria; and the Blue Mountain Award, conferred for exceptional contributions to the continued growth and development of Jamaica’s tourist industry.

His communication acumen and commitment to transparency was recognised by the Caribbean Media Exchange for Sustainable Tourism, which gave him its top award.

In addition to his work in tourism, Simonitsch has played an active role in developing programmes to assist the people of Jamaica. He is the founder of SOS Children’s Village in Montego Bay and Kingston and the founder of the Heinz Simonitsch School in Montego Bay.

# Sandals Foundation, Scholastic Book Fairs bring the joy of reading to the Caribbean

IN A continued effort to improve literacy across the Caribbean, Scholastic Book Fairs has teamed up with the Sandals Foundation to donate 25,000 brand new children’s books to schools and libraries in the region.

The islands to benefit are Antigua, The Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia, and Turks & Caicos.

This initiative will ensure that a larger number of children have access to the newest and most popular titles to keep their minds engaged this summer and prepared for the school year ahead.

“Providing students with access to engaging books is the best way to ensure that reading becomes a habit at an early age,” said Larry Wissinger, director of business

development, Scholastic Book Fairs.

“Children who develop a love of reading at an early age grow to become lifelong learners with critical attention and comprehension skills which serve them in school, the workplace, and nearly everywhere else for the rest of their lives. The work between Scholastic and the Sandals Foundation creates

a lasting legacy of literacy and learning for young readers in the region,” he added.

Principal of the Black River Primary School, Sharon Whyte, had high praises for the Foundation, noting that the books will assist greatly in enhancing the literacy skills of her students.

On receiving their books, Louise Foster, senior librarian at the St

Elizabeth Parish Library, said they were thankful for the donation, which would provide reading material for participants in the National Reading Competition, as well as books that could be used as prizes for participants in various programmes. “Donations are always welcomed by the Jamaica Library Service and we look forward to continued support for public libraries from the Sandals Foundation.”

The Sandals Foundation continues to innovate and engage in opportunities that will lead to the improvement of literacy for all ages in the Caribbean.