

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2017

A celebration of success



See more inside



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

RJRGLEANER Communications Group's CEO Gary Allen (second right) presents the Best All-Inclusive Over 300 Rooms to the Royalton White Sands team.



Jamaica Tours' Ricardo Henry looking swell at Hospitality Jamaica Awards.

IN A night where the *crème de la crème* of tourism came out to celebrate their own, the winners of the six new categories were among the many highlights at Saturday's RJRGLEANER Hospitality Jamaica Awards.

Held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, St James, the new categories that were introduced for the first time since the show's inception three years ago saw Sandy Haven, Negril winning the Best European Plan Hotel (under 100 rooms); Treasure Beach for Best Resort Town Experience; Go Jamaica Travel for Best Destination Management Company; Falmouth Food Tour for Jamaica's Most Authentic Attraction; Royalton White Sands, Best Family Resort, and the Pioneer Award, which was won by Gordon 'Butch' Stewart.

For judge Marcia Erskine, the new categories were a welcome addition to an awards ceremony she described as "a growing success and a fitting tribute to those who have contributed to a sector which



A bevy of beauties representing Remax-Elite Montego Bay (from left): Taihia Becker, Tamrah Pryce, Debra Haughton, Ophelia Sinclair, Joan Lee and Coleen Samuels.

is the mainstay of the country's economy".

"I am even happier to tell you that this year's competition has seen overwhelming support from all

stakeholders in the tourism industry – from those who run or work in the business and those who patronise them," said Erskine. "These highlights, as evident by

the six new categories, have enjoyed growing success since their launch in 2014 to underscore best practices in tourism."

Erskine also noted that the



PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

Businesswomen Gay Moodie (left) and Sandra Molyneaux.

awards are a celebration of success, leadership and innovation in the tourism industry and also serve to raise the sector's competitiveness by motivating organisations and individuals to create compelling experiences for their guests.

"In a contest like this, the court of public opinion is loud and clear, as Jamaica is replete with scores of tourism leaders, groups and individuals," she added.

"Innovative ideas abound and they collectively contribute to economic growth, employment, the continuous improvement of the hospitality and tourism sector and the overall prosperity of Jamaica."

This was evidenced by the two awards won by Royalton White Sands, which was named Best Family Resort and Best All-inclusive Over 300 Rooms, and Sandals Royal Plantation and Sandals Royal Caribbean and Private Island, which both copped

PLEASE SEE **SUCCESS**, 4



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

Chief executive officer, Sandals Resorts International, Adam Stewart (left), chats with executive chairman, Mediamix, Lennie Little-White.



Acrobatic genius Akino performing at Hospitality Jamaica Awards.



From left: Dr Horace Chang, minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Job Creation and Economic Growth, converses with Opposition Spokesman on Tourism, Dr Wykeham McNeill, and hotelier Jason Henzell.



Roxanne Roach-Lee, promotions and events coordinator – West, Grace Foods & Services, presents the Best Business Hotel award to Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa's Daine Golaube, business development manager, John Miles, hotel manager, and Oral Heaven, director of sales.



Freight Handlers' Sonya Clarke-Bowen (left) and the Port Authority of Jamaica's Gloria Henry.

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PHOTO BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

RJRGLEANER Communications Group's Deputy Business Development Manager Terry-Anne Wilson (centre) presents the Best Nightlife Experience award to the team at Margaritaville.

SUCCESS

CONTINUED FROM 3

Best Boutique Hotel and Best All-inclusive under 300 Rooms, respectively.

Lauding the recipients, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith, said all of the 19 winners of the prestigious awards "are the shining stars of tourism for which the entire sector is grateful".

"I want to congratulate you all on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism," she noted, adding that Jamaica was currently experiencing dynamic growth in the tourism sector and "you are an integral part of it".

"When we demand nothing but the best

from our tourism partners, it is important that we have incentive programmes like The Gleaner Hospitality Awards that recognise excellence in service delivery in all facets of the industry," she added.

Griffith added that while the ministry is well aware that "our appetising food, excellent attractions and our culture are major drawing cards, it is an undisputed fact that the Jamaican people, including our outstanding tourism workers, are our most iconic attraction.

"That is why Jamaica, today, has the enviable record of being the destination with the highest percentage of repeat business in the entire Caribbean – enabling us to start every season with 42 per cent of visitors who have been here at least once," she noted.

The Ministry of Tourism, she said, was

proud to collaborate with the RJRGLEANER Communications Group on this important initiative, through its marketing agency, the Jamaica Tourist Board.



CONTRIBUTED

Josef Forstmayr (second left), past president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), presents the Best in Transportation award to Knutsford Express' (from left) customer service agent Cassandra Bartley, CEO Oliver Townsend and Jermaine Hemmings, customer transport officer.



PHOTO BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

There was no containing the Royalton White Sands team after they were named Jamaica's Best All-inclusive over 300 Rooms during the Hospitality Jamaica Awards. Pictured are: Kerry-Ann Quallo-Cassery (second left), director of sales and marketing, and her team, Stayce Ingram (left), groups and meetings manager; Daniele Galligani (second right), hotel manager; and André Hudson, sales executive, USA and Canada.



PHOTO BY MARK TITUS

From left: Christopher Barnes, chief operations officer, RJRGLEANER Communications Group, presents the Best EP Hotel (under 100 rooms) to Sandy Haven's Anne Chen, Jason Lynch and Tyrone Guthrie.

John Byles and Marc Melville – Hospitality Jamaica Personalities of the Year 2017

Camille Miller

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

AT FIRST glance, the mild mannered pair of Marc Melville and his childhood buddy, John Byles could be excused as your typical nine-to-five guys with hardly a care other than the chores at hand.

A closer look, however, tells a different story ... a far different story. They are a stickler for perfection and Melville and Byles are not your ordinary Joes.

They are the leaders of one of the biggest and most successful tourism enterprises in the region – a quality attraction of the highest order and better known to the world as Chukka or by extension, Chukka Caribbean Adventures.

But how did it all start?

“The inspiration for Chukka sprang from my father’s passion for polo,” Melville, the company’s director of group revenue and new development, explained.

“In the early 1980s, my father, Danny Melville, hosted polo matches on Saturdays at his polo field in Ocho Rios while on Sundays. To help the horses relax, the polo players took the horses swimming in the clear saltwater of Mamme Bay. International polo players loved the tradition, as did John and my other two brothers, Alexander and Daniel, and an idea was born.”

Melville said that when his father opened a polo and equestrian centre for locals in 1983, he also decided to complement it with an opportunity for tourists to encounter horses.

“The combination of the scenic ride along a spectacular coast and a thrilling swim on horseback proved to be a launching pad for the company,” he added.

FIRST ADVENTURE OF ITS KIND

“The Horseback Ride ‘N’ Swim was born – the first adventure tour of its kind in Jamaica, and 34 years later, still one of our signature tours.”

Byles, the company’s CEO, who describes Chukka as an attraction that captures the spirit of adventure and excitement inherent in the game of polo and the childlike wonder inspired by a swimming



PHOTO BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

John Byles (left) and Marc Melville pose with their ‘Hospitality Personalities of the Year’ award.

horse, fondly remembers an incident he shared with Melville.

“I still can recall our first jeep tour,” he noted. “It was a carefully planned, exciting off-road ride into the jungle, over rivers, and into the wildlife. As the jeep ventured across one river, we realised, just a moment too late, that the recent rains had left the water level a bit too high. The jeep stalled mid-river, and with water reaching the doors. Marc and I were forced to climb out the jeep windows to push the jeep and passengers to the far shore. The guests, however, loved it and thanked us for a truly exhilarating tour.”

Today, Chukka operates over 60 tours in Jamaica, Belize and Turks & Caicos. It is also one of the largest employers of persons in the Caribbean, employing over 700, including over 500 in Jamaica alone.

“We pride ourselves on our meritocracy where we provide everyone with opportunities for education and advancement,” Melville added.

The two were recognised at the annual RJRGleaner Communications Group, Hospitality Jamaica Awards at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on Saturday, November 11.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart and his family celebrating his achievement

Pioneer Awards Winner



Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart (right) in a jovial mood with friend Tony Hart.



RJRGLEANER Communications Group’s Chief Operations Officer Christopher Barnes (left), converses with chairman and founder of Sandals Resorts International, Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart, who won the Hospitality Jamaica Pioneer Award.

THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Time to embrace tourism's wider possibilities

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

A WEEK ago, the mayor of Venice announced that the city will stop all cruise ships above 55,000 tons from entering its ancient central waterway, the Giudecca Canal. Instead, they will have to dock in the industrial port of Marghera, which is to the north-west of the city's medieval centre.

The announcement, which was supported by 99 per cent of local people and taken in conjunction with Italy's transport ministry, comes after years of anti-tourism protests and petitions. It was opposed by the cruise industry which, according to the travel trade media, had also objected to a plan to build a floating sea dock outside the Venetian Lagoon.

The ban forms part of a growing movement in the city to try to limit the overall number of visitors.

Although cruise ship passengers make up around five per cent of city visitors, local officials are now planning to go further by charging for ticketed access to the city's most popular areas. In this way, they hope to reduce the city's 21 million visitors a year – its historic centre has just 55,000 inhabitants – who have made its ancient streets and alleyways absurdly overcrowded in the main tourist seasons.

The approach reflects a growing international belief, not only among residents of uncontrollably popular cities like Venice, but of governments and citizens around the world, that tourism has to become sympathetic, sustainable and be seen to bring wider benefits for all.

To this end, from November 27 to 29, Jamaica will host in Montego Bay a major international conference to consider how tourism as a sector might become, internationally, a global driver of national development.

Unlike other industry-related events, 'Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism' is expected to explore how international financial institutions, governments, donors and leading industry players can create new



A tourism village in Belize City.

tourism-related partnerships that foster social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction.

The conference, which is co-sponsored by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the Jamaican Government, the World Bank Group, and the Inter-American Development Bank, will also involve newer global industry players such as Airbnb.

EXPLORING OPTIONS

The intention, according to Jamaica Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, is to enable those involved in policy formulation to explore how the industry might deliver more to wider groups in society.

Minister Bartlett also hopes that the discussions and overall outcome of the conference will result in the industry becoming a driver of beneficial change that touches everyone, and a vehicle for delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For some in the industry in the Caribbean, the idea of a wider role



DAVID JESSOP

of this kind may be challenging.

In the past, the sector has tended to be freewheeling, bottom-line oriented, and at times less than socially aware. So much so, that a commonly heard criticism is that tourism's impact on social development in the region has

been limited.

In contrast, the Montego Bay conference reflects a view gaining traction internationally: that tourism can have a much wider role; can deliver sustainable gains to groups in rural and urban areas; and can be developed in ways that more closely link it to agriculture, education, training and culture in its broadest sense.

In Montego Bay, participating governments, international financial institutions, and development agencies are expected to consider how new and innovative approaches to investment might now grow tourism's economic contribution and share its benefits more equitably and sustainably.

Put more simply, tourism as a sector needs to be seen not as something apart, but as having the potential to stimulate the many inputs, services and skills that modern economies require.

For example, it requires

governments and the industry translating the changing requirements of visitors for experience and the authentic in ways that support the development of rural and urban areas; developing new forms of tourism away from the beach; finding ways to sustain the region's vernacular architecture; and more generally fostering culture and history if destinations are to be unique.

For this to happen, a country's tourism product will have to stimulate sustainable economic growth in the domestic economy by creating linkages and convergence with other sectors in ways that positively touch citizens' lives.

Put simply, in future, tourism will have to do more than generate prosperity for large hotel owners and the cruise ship companies, or be about encouraging huge numbers of arrivals, irrespective of the consequence.

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photographe Iris Veighe

'Tangerudbakken' comes to Jamaica

Norway's hit reality series is shot in Ocho Rios



A Dutchie with plantain being fried captured by the camera crew.

Carl Gilchrist
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE FILM crew, producers, and actors in one of Norway's top-rated reality series, 'Tangerudbakken', spent a day at the Rio Nuevo Beach on the outskirts of Ocho Rios last week, shooting scenes for Season Six of the show.

'Tangerudbakken', which has won a Norwegian Emmy, is a documentary about six people with special needs. The show features a character with Down's Syndrome, one with autism, and another with cerebral palsy, explained producer Kari Wale.

"They all live together in the same condo in Norway, where they have help 24 hours. The purpose of the TV programme is to increase tolerance of people with special needs. In Norway, the six of them are big celebrities," she added.

The team arrived on the *Allure of the Seas* and spent over three hours on the beach taping and enjoying the warm Jamaican hospitality, food, and reggae music.

It was a typical Jamaican setting with the Point of Interest band and Drop Di Bass sound system, with cooks preparing fried fish, roasted breadfruit, fried plantain, and other Jamaican favourites, while the visitors played dominoes and drank Red Stripe



A member of the team enjoying fried fish and roasted bammy.



Andrew and Moy's, where most of the action took place.

PHOTOS BY CARL GILCHRIST

beer.

"It's the first time in Jamaica, and we love it. Everyone is excited," Wale said. Hege-Anette Havik, one of the stars of the series, is a huge fan of Bob Marley and was delighted to be in the land of the reggae king.

"I like the reggae music, rocks, shells. I like Bob Marley and 'Laid Back' (a reggae band from Denmark), which did *Sunshine Reggae*," Havik said. She said that she hopes to be back in Jamaica. Wale said that the group's stop in Jamaica was made possible by Sean 'Contractor' Edwards, whom she praised for the work he did.

"Me and my colleagues came here four weeks ago to meet Contractor, and after a couple of hours, we were, like, OK, what about this beach? You know what he said? That's not been done before, so it will be perfect. I can fix that. After that, we spoke on the phone a couple of times and we come back now and everything is fixed. Perfect."

For his part, Edwards told *Hospitality Jamaica*: "I was sanctioned to do this work because I worked with Norway TV before. I broke Norwegian reggae artiste Nico D a few years ago, and Norway TV came here to film his journey here in Jamaica. We took him to the radio stations, so they recommended me to do this project."



The TV crew chilling with a Jamaican.



A member of the Person of Interest reggae band being interviewed.



Enjoying a game of dominoes



Shooting for the TV documentary series 'Tangerudbakken' at the Rio Nuevo Beach.



Two of the cast members of 'Tangerudbakken', Hege-Anette Havik (left) and Bjorn Terje Axelsen.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Jamaica Tourist Board Canada team poses with Canadian and Jamaican partners in Toronto, Canada, during the Destination Product Showcase event.

JTB hosts Destination Product Showcase events in Canada

AS THE peak 2017-2018 Jamaica travel season approaches, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) recently hosted over 586 travel professionals during six Destination Product Showcase events for retail travel partners in Canada.

Jamaican partners representing tour operators, resorts and attractions companies participated in sessions held in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, with two sessions in each city. The activities comprised destination update presentations and one-on-one meetings with suppliers. Participants were treated to Jamaican cuisine, a spa retreat cabana with massages, as well as live entertainment with a Caribbean flair.

“Travel agents are one of our most important partners,” said Philip Rose, regional director for the JTB in Canada. “In fact, in 2016 we saw 54 per cent of Canadians book their Jamaica trip through an agent. The JTB Canada team is always working with Canadian travel agents, as we build relationships by providing our agents with product updates at sessions like these, and hosting them on familiarisation tours on the island so they can best sell Destination Jamaica.”

Participating Jamaica partners included Caribbean Airlines, WestJet Vacations, Air Canada Vacations, Transat, Travel Brands, Sunwing/



A representative of Hyatt Ziva & Hyatt Zilara (right) talks with travel partners at one of the Destination Product Showcase events in Canada.

Signature Vacations, Jewel Resorts/Hilton Rose Hall, Relax Resort, The Cliff Hotel, Deja Resort, Decameron Hotels & Resorts, Sandy Haven Resort, Real Tours Jamaica, Dreamer Catamarans, Sandals & Beaches Resorts, Hyatt Ziva & Hyatt Zilara Rose Hall, Moon Palace Jamaica, Jamaica Inn, Hedonism II, Couples Resorts Jamaica,

Royalton Luxury Resort, Bahia Principe Hotel & Resort, Grand Palladium Jamaica & Lady Hamilton, Rooms Jamaica, Sea Garden Beach Resort, Karisma Hotel, Holiday Inn Resort, Courtleigh Hotel and Suites, Knutsford Court Hotel, The Jamaica Pegasus hotel, AMResorts, Tryall Club, and Iberostar Hotels & Resorts.

IDB to use outcomes of UNWTO conference to shape policies for the region

THE INTER-AMERICAN Development Bank (IDB) is anticipating that the outcomes of the United Nations World Tourism Organization

JAMAICA
TOURIST BOARD

(UNWTO) Global Conference on ‘Jobs and Inclusive growth for Sustainable Tourism’ in Jamaica later this month, will provide the data and context that will shape the bank’s future policies in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Therese Turner-Jones, general manager for the IDB’s Caribbean country department, revealed that following the conference, the bank expects “to be in a better position to adjust and tailor our technical assistance and development lending services, which will in turn feed into our future corporate sector strategy”.

The conference will be held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre from November 27 to 29.

The IDB is a conference partner, along with the Government of Jamaica and the World Bank Group.

According to the bank official, Alexandre Meira da Rosa, vice-president for countries, IDB will participate in the discussion on ‘Global Overview: Setting the Framework’, with president and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council, Gloria Guevara; global director, World Bank Group, Cecile Fruman; and other international presenters.

James Scriven, CEO of the Inter-American Investment Corporation, a member of the IDB Group, will also participate in the plenary four session, ‘Technical Assistance to Financing – The Multiple Dimensions of Tourism at MDBs’. As a follow-up to the conference, next year the IDB will host a regional policy dialogue with Caribbean tourism ministers.

GREAT OCCASION

Therese Turner-Jones underscored that this conference is a great occasion for the IDB. “Being a UNWTO conference partner also affords us the opportunity to engage with and support a diverse group of primary industry and wider stakeholders in dialogue about challenges, priorities, and strategic actions in the tourism sector”.

The IDB representative pointed out that her organisation is specifically interested in discussions during the conference that will address the identification and development of fiscal incentives for the tourism sector, tourism product development and the growth of natural and cultural public goods that are attractive to tourists.

Turner-Jones says the IDB will also be focusing on consultations about tourism promotion and marketing; the development, of regional tourism circuits; the fostering of improved linkages and social inclusion at local levels; as well as the improvement of infrastructure and services for the sector.

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett said that the Montego Bay conference will be the first time in the history of the UNWTO that the private and public sectors will be working together, in collaboration with multilateral financial institutions, to stage an event of this nature.

More than 500 international and local participants will be engaged in plenary sessions and workshops on a wide range of subject matters pertinent to tourism during the Montego Bay conference.

Tourism is still key to growth, says PSOJ president

Carl Gilchrist

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IMPRESSED WITH tourism's progress, The Private Sector Association of Jamaica (PSOJ) President Paul Scott, said, while the business sector remains conducive to investment, the country must never lose sight of the fact that the industry is its key engine of growth.

Scott said he is pleased to see the serious attention being given to tourism, noting that Jamaica is ideally poised to become the top destination in the region.

"I really love what I am seeing with tourism. When you look at the plans that are in place for towns like Ocho Rios, you can see why tourism is the key to Jamaica's future," Scott noted in

a recent interview.

Ocho Rios is currently benefiting from an Urban Development Corporation multi-billion dollar improvement project that includes the Reynolds Pier, a section of Main Street and other areas.

Work on a section of the latter was slated to begin on Monday, and is expected to last eight months, during which the area from Island Village to Ocean Village will be impacted with \$160 million earmarked for that segment of work.

Repaving of the road, upgrading of the drainage and water mains, widening of sidewalks and landscaping work will be undertaken.

The PSOJ president said it is imperative that advantage is taken of "our natural attributes, our

beautiful country and our people", adding that those in charge should never lose sight of the fact that tourism is a sector that must remain inclusive.

"Clearly we are only scratching the surface of the opportunities. When you consider how well the industry has done despite the challenges it has faced, we can only wonder what things would be like if we didn't have the kind of impediments we have had. As the environment improves, I can see this sector transforming even further."

Scott also emphasised the importance of bringing the crime situation under control, stating that it was the main thing holding the country back.



CONTRIBUTED

Paul Scott, PSOJ president



CONTRIBUTED

During their recent orientation at Sandals Ochi Beach resort, the 2017 cohort of Sandals Resorts International's signature Management Trainee Programme pause for a photo with various members of the company's training and development team including Heather McDonald (front row, left), group operations manager – training, development and service standards and Julian Pink (front row, right), training manager at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort. In back row (from left) are: Andre Campbell, E-learning administrator at the Sandals Corporate University; Dr Phillip Brown, principal of the Sandals Corporate University and Tamara Blackwood, learning and development administrator – Sandals Corporate University.



JAMAICA'S MOST AWESOME GARDEN

Part 1

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Fragranced Japanese iris

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FROM RASNATANGO'S garden, nestled on a terraced incline in Camrose, St James, there is an enthralling panorama of parts of Trelawny as well. It is a view to die for. But forget death, turn around, and there is more magic.

What started out as a garden for RasNatango's wife, Tamika Williams, has now evolved into a gem

of an attraction called 'Ahhh RasNatango Gallery and Garden Tour Ltd'. It has a wow factor that most gardens in Jamaica simply do not have and an arresting appeal that might just take you breath away. And the story of this hillside paradise is as redemptive as it is romantic.

When RasNatango, born Ian Alexander Williams in Kingston, bought the quarter-acre piece of mountainside, people derided him. "People laughed at us," RasNatango recalled, smiling, for he knows who really has the last laugh now.

His wife herself was livid. The "male chauvinist" had bought the piece of "useless" land without her consent. It was a "jungle" of tall trees and "dense undergrowth". When those were cleared, boulders and loose rocks on a cliff that dropped 30 feet were exposed.

RasNatango, an intuitive artist, was undaunted when two builders told him that no house could be built on the land because it was too steep. Yet, the wise man that he is, he built his house upon the rocks on 14 columns on the edge of the 30-foot drop. It is now a two-storey work of art, which also houses a gallery.

So he was successful in getting his house built, but what about his wife's love of flowers? Where would the "avid gardener" plant her flowers on that rocky land? RasNatango came up with the idea of building terraces with the loose stones thereon and filling them with dirt



Through the 'door of faith' on to the road to eternity.



Rare purple anthurium

and compost.

“I did this just for my wife ... I had to find a way to make her enjoy herself and plant her flowers ... and this is the best I could do,” RasNatango said. His best was good enough. Terraces were indeed built with the assistance of Ian Reid, who has been working there for 20 years. Over time, Tamika Williams planted many flowering and non-flowering species, and a few just grew naturally. Some of the stand-outs are the rare purple anthurium and the fragranced Japanese iris.

Original cedar trees are still on the property. Joining them are fruit and food trees, planted by RasNatango and his wife. And the idiom, which says ‘bush has ears’, did not say that some of the trees in the garden have eyes, nose, and mouth. RasNatango’s imaginative mind has given them an identity, if you will. At the base of one of them is a ‘door of faith’. Open it, and there is a road that leads to eternity.

But it is not only some of the trees that have a face. Upon some of the rocks, especially the ones that are peculiarly configured, RasNatango has painted the visage of a tiger, a lion, a pharaoh, a shark, and a turtle. And, of course, there is Eve, the biblical first woman, with green, dishevelled, bushy hair. However, where is Adam in all of this?

All over the place there are chill spots to unwind, to take in the rarefied air, and to embrace the views. Yet, the *pièce de résistance* is the



RasNatango and his wife, Tamika Williams, showing some love for the world.

and compost.

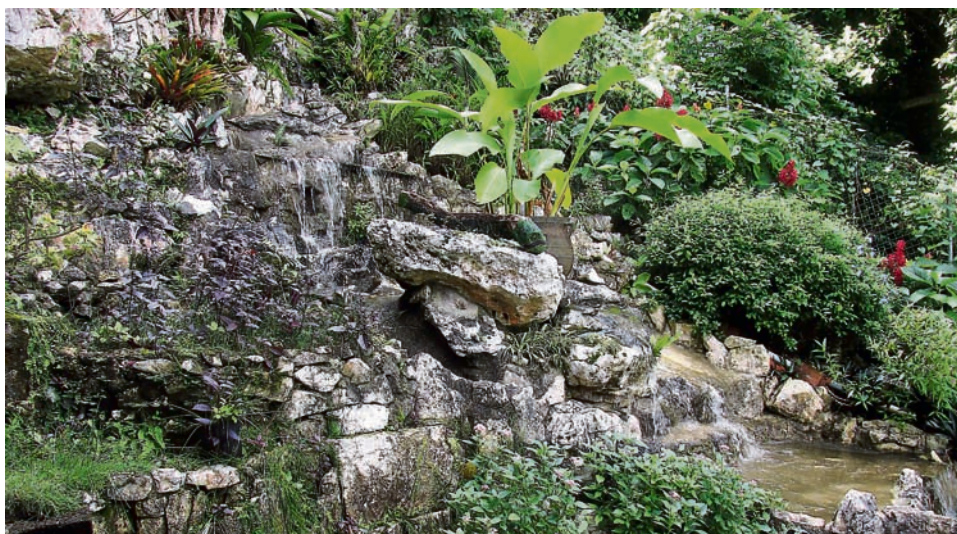
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especially the ones that are peculiarly configured, RasNatango has painted the visage of a tiger, a lion, a pharaoh, a shark, and a turtle. And, of course, there is Eve, the biblical first woman, with green, dishevelled,



And with a waterfall, the *pièce de résistance*, the garden is complete.



Eve, the first woman of Ras Natango’s Garden.



Marcia Eulette feeding Rudy, a swallowtail hummingbird.

bushy hair. However, where is Adam in all of this?

All over the place there are chill spots to unwind, to take in the rarefied air, and to embrace the views. Yet, the *pièce de résistance* is the waterfall, which seems to be coming from a cave. The rocks in it are real, but the cascading water is pumped from below. RasNatango certainly has outdone himself with that one. He has enhanced and embellished what nature has provided.

Now, after almost 29 years of hard work, the terraced garden is a lovely space that makes visitors gawk, not only at the interesting variety and beauty of the plants, but at the creative layout and fantastic features. It is also a bird sanctuary in which many species of birds, including the swallowtail hummingbirds, thrive.

In the heart of nature, RasNatango and Tamika Williams have infused, but the excitement is not yet over. What about Flat Bridge, Giddy House, Jurassic Era, the Fairy Garden, and the wishing well? In two weeks, more reasons why RasNatango’s garden is the most awesome in all of ‘Jam Rock’.



From left: Workers Patrick Green and Ian Reid stand beside a tree with a ‘face’.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Begonia is one of the cosy accommodations on the property where Skybourne Great House is located at Kempshot, St James.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

Skybourne Great House

– refreshing throwback hospitality

SHOULD I get the chance to buy Skybourne Great House from its owner, attorney-at-law Clayton Morgan, I would do so without hesitation. But alas, he is not selling, and I can't afford it.

The mountainside in Kempshot on which it perches can be seen way above from the western end of Montego Bay. The communication antennae pointing towards the sky gives an excellent indication of how high up it is.

The climb starts at Granville, but it is gradual until the road gets

narrower and steeper. It is so narrow at certain points that some vehicles have to reverse, allowing others to pass. The farther up you go the cleaner the air gets, and the views more enchanting. St James!

I visited recently, and it was such a joy to be in my birth parish again. All my youthful days I have heard of the communities in this region, but I have never been there.

When we got to the turn-off to Skybourne from the main road, I could see huge and secluded properties all around. The story is that Skybourne is part of the -



Imagine a table laid out with all these brass cutlery.



A tea set from an era that has long passed.



Still glowing after all these years.

former Kempshot Pen, an estate for cattle rearing. It is actually on top of a mountain, not far from the antennae seen from below.

As we travelled down the very narrow path towards the great house, the fantastic view of the valley and parts of St James appeared. I wondered aloud how the first owner found that piece of land, when at the time it was obviously covered with trees and bushes.

The land below sprawls from the Montego Bay coastline all the way to Trelawny. Parts of the Cockpit Country are also visible. We identified many of the communities in St James, including Mount Salem where the massive structure that Cornwall Regional Hospital is stands out.

Johns Hall, where my father used to go do some farming, is nestled in the valley directly below the property. Memories of the scent of Number 11 mangoes that he would take home soared up to my nostrils on the back of a cool mountain breeze, which the massive cut-stone wall around the property could not keep out.

Yet, the wall that make up the house keep the cold air out of 'Anthurium', the name of the great house. The weather can get very cold, thus the very thick walls, and fireplace are also made of stones.

ANOTHER TIME AND SPACE

At the entrance there is a cabinet full of things from the past, a prelude to what I was to behold within. When I stepped into the living room, I felt like I had entered into another time and space; in a time warp I was caught up. Only a few items belong to this age and day. The place smelled like yesterday, ironically not damp and mouldy, just aged.

The board floor, the fireplace, the record player, the furniture, the paintings, the brass chandelier, and the decor welcomed me to the past when people took pride in the things they made. The details are mind-boggling. There is a silver goblet that no longer shines. On the bottom is stamped: 'Patented by JA Stimpson 1854 Extended by seven years'.

The brass cutlery and drinking vessels, wine glasses, chinaware, and enamelled utensils betray the



Attorney-at-law Clayton Morgan relaxes in the living room of Skybourne Great House at Kempshot in St James.

taste and style of the people who resided therein. Morgan and his family lived on the property for 10 years, and it is now used to accommodate short-term guests.

Apart from the spacious great house, there are two other decades-old buildings, 'Heliconia' and 'Begonia', with their own array of things from the past, and modern amenities. 'Fern', built by Morgan, is the much newer accommodation. This two-bathroom unit is farther down the hillside, from which the views are even more mesmerising.

Inside them all cosiness lingers, ready to embrace the next guests into this refreshing throwback hospitality on the top of St James.



A cabinet of things from the past.



A fireplace to keep you warm atop the mountain.



A breathtaking view of part of St James from Skybourne Great House at Kempshot.



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