

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018

TRELAWNY'S RESURGENCE

Excellence Oyster
Bay Resort set to
open on June 1

PG 10

Make plans
to discover
Jamaica

PG 12

What's
up with
Titchfield Hill?





The Jewel Resorts and Hilton Rose Hall team, led by the human resources manager of Jewel Paradise Cove, Alicia Lynch (centre right), is pleased to officially hand over a cheque to Rosalee Gage-Green, CEO, Child Development Agency, along with items donated to the Walker's Place of Safety. Team members from all five resorts are (second row, from left): Chrystal Moxam (Miss Jewel/Hilton Resorts), Rajuan Angus, Kayla Hinds, Shanice Tulloch and Mawia Clarke. Back row (from left): Rolel Dyce (Mr Jewel/Hilton Resorts), Orrett Edwards, Romaine Earle and Garth West who donated non-perishable goods along with other items from the resorts.

Walker's Place of Safety gets help from hotel workers

Jewel Resorts and Hilton Rose Hall staff answer the call for help

WHEN ONE hears of tragedies besetting children, especially those who are already having a difficult start to their young lives, it can be devastating.

The news of the fire at Walker's Place of Safety in Kingston and the subsequent death of two children were no less so for all who heard it.

When a detailed account appeared in news reports from the Child Development Agency (CDA), giving specifics of what occurred, as well as the impact it had on the children – their new housing arrangements and the items that they would require to move forward – it hit a cord in the minds of many.

This was so for the Jewel Resorts and Hilton Rose Hall staff, and so when the charge was led by human resources manager at Jewel Paradise Cove, Alicia Lynch, to do something about it, her counterparts at the four other resorts were enthusiastic to get involved and

support this worthy cause.

Without hesitation, they jumped on board and a flyer was created and distributed to associates. The CDA was contacted and they advised of the items required, which included not only clothing and school supplies, but personal effects, especially for the girls.

FRIENDLY COMPETITION

"As a group of companies, the Jewel and Hilton Resorts have an annual friendly competition as part of our Staff Recognition Programme. This gives our associates the opportunity to showcase their talents, as well as their knowledge and skills in diverse areas other than their current profession," Lynch told *Hospitality Jamaica*.

The subsequent winners, she said of the individual properties, are crowned the kings and queens of their property and part of their duty is to be ambassadors for the resorts. With the initiative having the support of leaders, the current winners

all wanted to do their part in this effort and so they were instrumental in organising the items at the property levels, and were also integral in delivering the items last month when the handing over was done.

"All items were collected and in the end, the support was so overwhelming that the resorts' delivery truck was not sufficient. Help was solicited from Jamaica Tours Limited and they also came on board and provided the complimentary transportation for both associates and goods," said Lynch.

The arrival of the team at the CDA, she added, was met with excitement and formalities that included the handing over of the items as well as a US\$2,500 cheque presented to the organisation's chief executive officer, Rosalee Gage-Green.

The children and their caregivers were subsequently invited to enjoy Jewel Runaway Beach & Golf Resort for day passes which they will take up at a later date.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Hands and hearts together Miss Jewel Runaway Bay Kayla Hinds (centre back) and 2017 overall winner Chrystal Moxam (foreground), Miss Jewel/Hilton, are ably assisted by Christopher Webb, driver of Jamaica Tours Limited, who facilitated the transfers, as they unload boxes of goods.



Manpower, the team led by Mr Jewel/Hilton Rolel Dyce (centre with glasses), organises the team which participated in the donation of non-perishable goods and sundry items to the CDA on behalf of the Walker's Place of Safety for children who were displaced by the recent fire at the facility.

Trelawny the ideal place for Excellence Oyster Bay

MAKING THEIR first foray outside of Mexico and the Dominican Republic, the Excellence Group Luxury Hotels and Resorts now has Jamaica firmly in its cross hairs as a prized destination for the rich and well-to-do.

Following a much-publicised groundbreaking last March, which included Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, the hotel is expected to open its 315-suite Excellence Oyster Bay in the resurging Trelawny parish on June 1.

“This is a project of great excitement for us, as it is both a proof of evolution to deliver the best Excellence product to date, and our first foray outside of the Dominican Republic and Mexico,” the group’s vice-president for sales and marketing, Domingo Aznar, explained.

“With Excellence Oyster Bay, we raise the standards to offer a whole new, all-inclusive, luxury experi-

ence for adults, and we are confident that Jamaica is the perfect choice for it.”

Aznar added that the property, which was built at a cost of US\$110 million, will be the first of its kind in Jamaica and will set a new “standard for all-inclusive luxury and romantic travel.

“Those familiar with the highest standards of the Excellence Group will find the latest adults-only resort in their expansive portfolio to be another idyllic retreat offering smartly designed accommodations, gourmet dining, and unparalleled amenities,” he added.

“Stretching over two miles of Jamaica’s most pristine powder-sand beaches, Excellence Oyster Bay is also the ultimate serene destination where privacy, intelligent design, stunning surroundings, and Excellence Group’s signature, a brand of romance and all-inclusive luxury, seamlessly combine. As

leaders in romance and luxury travel, the Excellence Group’s expertise and experience are evident in every thoughtfully designed detail of Excellence Oyster Bay.”

FIRST PHASE

The property is also said to be the first phase of a larger development that will increase Jamaica’s room stock by over 2,000 upon full completion.

For his part, senior adviser and strategist in the Ministry of Tourism, Delano Seiveright, who toured the property on Saturday with Bartlett, as well as new Director of Tourism Donovan White and executives of Excellence, noted that “the resort is set to dramatically heighten the eastern Falmouth coastline into one of the Caribbean’s most luxurious couples-only all-inclusive resorts.

“The Victorian-style resort will have 315 suites with private pools

or rooftop terraces. The oceanfront beach houses are set in close proximity to the beach, just steps from the water. Excellence Oyster Bay, built on a peninsula bordered by the Caribbean Sea and a lagoon, will feature eight restaurants, nine bars, two beachfront pools, a lounge with a rooftop pool and the Miile Spa,” Seiveright further pointed out.

In the meantime, Mayor of Falmouth Colin Gager said he is “extremely happy” that Trelawny will once again be the beneficiary of a major tourism development.

“The opening of the Excellence resort in Oyster Bay comes at a time when billions of dollars will be pumped into the town of Falmouth by the Port Authority of Jamaica for infrastructural development,” Gager pointed out.

“It also comes at a time when cruise shipping is starting to once again gain traction and when

there are plans to clean and beautify our historic buildings, including our famed Water Square area, and where we are ready to take on the mantle as the premier destination anywhere in the Caribbean.”

Excellence Group Luxury Hotels is a family-owned and operated resort group specialising in hotel management and worldwide real estate development, with a primary presence in the Caribbean.

The group owns and manages five-star, award-winning resort properties in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Jamaica under three brands which encompass the concept of ultimate all-inclusive luxury: AdultsOnly Excellence Resorts in Cancun, Riviera Maya, Punta Cana, and Montego Bay; Boutique AdultsOnly All Inclusive at Beloved Hotels; and Modern All Inclusive Luxury at Finest Resorts.

Excellence Group Luxury has been the recipient of the AAA Diamond Award, Condé Nast Travel Readers’ Choice Award, and Travel & Leisure’s Best Award. Recently, the property received TripAdvisor’s Traveler’s Choice Award for the No.1 All Inclusive Resort in the World.



CONTRIBUTED

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and Excellence Group officials, along with his team from the ministry, on a visit last week to the Oyster Bay hotel in Trelawny.



CONTRIBUTED

Sunset at the Palms pool

Sunset at the Palms wins 2018 TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award for Hotels

SUNSET AT the Palms, an all-inclusive, adults-only resort in Negril, has been recognised as one of the 25 Top All-Inclusive Hotels in the Caribbean category of the 2018 TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice awards for Hotels. Travelers' Choice award winners were determined based on the millions of reviews and opinions collected in a single year from TripAdvisor travellers worldwide. In the 16th year of the awards, TripAdvisor has highlighted the world's top 8,095 properties in 94 countries and eight regions worldwide.

This year, the awards celebrate hotel winners in 10 categories: Top Hotels Overall, Luxury, Bargain, Small, Best Service, B&Bs and Inns, Romance, Family, All-Inclusive, and Value for Money. The hallmarks of Travelers' Choice hotels winners are remarkable service, value, and quality.

"We're thrilled and honoured any time we're recognised in this highly competitive industry," said Ian Kerr, managing director of the resort. "That said, what makes us most proud is when our guests truly set us apart by enthusiastically telling others how impressed they



The exterior of one of the rooms at Sunset at the Palms.

are with the level of service and hospitality they receive at Sunset at the Palms. For that reason, the Travelers' Choice awards are especially gratifying for our entire team."

"This year's Travelers' Choice awards for Hotels recognise thousands of exceptional accommodations that received the highest marks for overall experience, including service, amenities, and value, from travellers worldwide,"

said Brooke Ferencsik, senior director of communications. "The global TripAdvisor community provides list of winners that will inspire and help travellers find the hotel that's right for them as they plan and book their next amazing trip."

Travellers can read the latest reviews and compare prices from more than 200 sites to find the lowest prices on the right hotel for their trip at www.TripAdvisor.com.

Sandals breaks records in environmental sustainability

SANDALS RESORTS International continues to make its mark as a leader in environmental sustainability, earning its place as the only hotel chain in the world to have six resorts currently holding Master Certification from EarthCheck, the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification, and advisory group for travel and tourism.

In addition to its six resorts holding Master Certification, the hotel chain also boasts six resorts with Platinum Certification, three certified Gold, and three holding Silver Certification.

Achieving EarthCheck Master Certification is confirmation that the resorts have consistently measured and benchmarked their annual environmental performance against their peers over a 15-year period and have had their systems and data independently examined and verified by a third-party auditor. To achieve Platinum Certification, resorts would have maintained this standard for 10 years.

MASTER AND PLATINUM CERTIFIED RESORTS

Sandals Montego Bay, Sandals Royal Plantation, Sandals Ochi Beach Resort, Sandals Negril, Beaches Negril, and Sandals La Toc currently hold Master Certification, with Sandals Negril in its 18th year of successful audits and Sandals Ochi Beach Resort in its 16th.

The resorts currently holding Platinum Certification are Sandals Halcyon, Sandals Grande St Lucian, Sandals Royal Bahamian, Sandals Royal Caribbean, Beaches Ocho Rios, and Beaches Turks and Caicos. Sandals Halcyon and Sandals Royal Caribbean are both in their fourteenth year of audits.

Gold and Silver Certified Resorts Sandals Carlyle, Sandals Grande Antigua, and Sandals South Coast currently boast Gold Certification, while Sandals Barbados and Sandals LaSource Grenada join Sandals Emerald Bay as the resorts currently holding Silver Certification.

COMMITTED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sandals Resorts International has long held environmental sustainability as part of its core vision and mission and has implemented numerous



Adam Stewart, CEO of Sandals Resorts International

environmental programmes to better streamline and manage its operations. These include energy-conservation initiatives and waste- and water-management programmes, all of which fall under the remit of the company's Environment, Health and Safety Division. Each resort has a dedicated environment, health, and safety manager charged with implementing and managing sustainable programmes and ensuring that the resort adheres to internationally accepted operating standards.

EarthCheck's founder and chief executive officer Stewart Moore lauded Sandals' efforts and achievements, hailing the company as a standout sustainability hero in the Caribbean and Americas.

"Sandals has confirmed its position as a true worldwide leader in responsible tourism and a genuine source of inspiration to the international tourism community," Moore said.

"The group and its passionate staff play an integral role in motivating their guests and community to make a difference, from embedding programmes into local schools to celebrating novel ways to reuse trash."

Chief Executive Officer at Sandals Resorts International Adam Stewart, expressed pride at the company's latest achievements. "We take environmental preservation very seriously at Sandals, and these certifications are testament to this. To be consistently audited and examined by an independent body and continuously maintain and exceed standards is no easy feat but we are driven by our commitment to the environment, and we leave no stone unturned when it comes to implementing and maintaining sustainable programmes and practices."



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.

Tourism, education ministries to launch tourism certification programme

MINISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett said a tourism certification programme for secondary students will officially be launched, in association with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information on March 15.

The joint initiative will provide certification from the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) in their Hospitality and Tourism Management Programme to students in grades 10, 11, 12 and 13.

The minister made the announcement during a special welcome meeting for the newly appointed Director of Tourism Donovan White, at the Jamaica Tourist Board's New Kingston office on February 16.

"This certification programme will close the loop in terms of our strategy to build the human capital and to create professionalism within the industry. High-school students can use this certification as the first step, before going to HEART or universities of their choice," he explained.

He also shared that it would then be recommended that students apply to the Jamaica Centre for Tourism Innovation (JCTI), an assessment institution driven by the Tourism Product Development Company, which offers AHLEI world-class training and certification over a three-month period.

"Once you have completed your training at the tertiary level, then you can come to us at the JCTI for certification. Also, if you didn't go to any formal institution but you have competence in different tourism-related fields, like as a sous-chef de cuisine or a supervisor in food and beverage, you can come to the JCTI and get certified. So you also are able to move up in your profession," said the minister.

The JCTI and high-school certification programme forms part of the Ministry of Tourism's Human Capital Development Plan, and will facilitate the certification of Jamaicans working in tourism and better prepare them to serve the sector.

The pilot programme for the certification programme for secondary students will begin this summer, when facilitators will be trained. The official roll-out of the programme in schools should begin in the Christmas term.



DIFFERENT CONDITIONS MEAN A DIFFERENT EXCHANGE RATE

Getting used to anything new, like driving a new car with more gears, takes time, so getting used to a newly bi-directional foreign exchange market is no different.

For unfortunate historical reasons, we are very accustomed to being concerned about sustained bouts of depreciation, not at all familiar with sustained bouts of appreciation, and we are certainly not yet used to an exchange rate that fluctuates in both directions.

But our macroeconomic conditions have changed for the better, and as long as those conditions are sustained, we can calmly start getting used to a two-way exchange rate, while market participants get used to new market innovations like B-FXITT.

Despite all the fuss about depreciation last year, the exchange rate ended up appreciating overall, and for calendar year 2017, the exchange rate appreciated on 146 days and depreciated on 103. In 2016, when the rate depreciated overall, the exchange rate appreciated on only 66 days and depreciated on 183.

What this new trend means is that there is no need to panic if the rate depreciates a little, while conversely, there is no need to get overly excited when it appreciates a bit. Either way is completely normal, and it is actually supposed to move in both directions.

In fact, we really want you to eventually start watching inflation more than you watch the exchange rate – and to feel calm about that, too.



B-FXITT
FOREIGN EXCHANGE
INTERVENTION & TRADING TOOL



THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Encouraging the multigenerational vacation

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE CARIBBEAN tourism industry has recently become fascinated by what more it can do to attract and sustain the high-value millennial market the category of visitor that is defined by a desire to travel to find the authentic and to have new experiences.

However, having lunch recently with two somewhat older former colleagues and discussing what they would be doing this year when it came to their vacations, it became apparent that there is another closely related high-spending market that the region is not giving enough attention to.

Both of my contemporaries have travelled widely in the Caribbean and are now either grandparents or have great nieces and nephews. What they spoke about was how, at least once this year, they will travel with their extended family to long-haul destinations where they will share a 10-day to two-week vacation.



David Jessop

Their comments encouraged me to explore further this very different segment of the visitor market, which most Caribbean countries have not yet fully understood, let alone developed a recognised marketing strategy for.

Put simply, there is a rapidly growing opportunity for the industry that is led by post-second World War baby boomers who have retired on good pensions, who have

sons and daughters who are professionals and who have young children, and who want once a year, to vacation together to cement family bonds.

OLDER TRAVELLERS

Although there are relatively few statistics on this trend, some recent reports suggest that such multigenerational vacations are being driven mainly by older travellers, usually over 60, who holiday frequently – a category some reports suggest are responsible for 47 per cent of all vacation-related spending.

Although the statistics are imprecise, it appears that a significant amount of their annual spend is now on multigenerational travel and that for wealthier baby boomers, this has become a top priority.

The suggestion is that although professional families are often scattered across the countries where they live, and in some cases, across continents, the older generation has maintained a close attachment to their children and grandchildren, often facilitated by social media.

This is a circumstance that translates into a desire not just to spend time with their extended families, but to be able to facilitate life-long memories for the youngest family members, especially if such travel is tied to the celebration of a significant occasion.

It is a market that has very special requirements. Time-wise, it is limited to periods when school holidays and the absence of work commitments coincide. It requires either properties that can offer accommodations that are closely located or multiple-

occupancy villas situated on a single hotel property. There must also be facilities from restaurants to activities that can cater to the mixed tastes and interests of multiple generations, as well, of course, beaches, pools, and play areas.

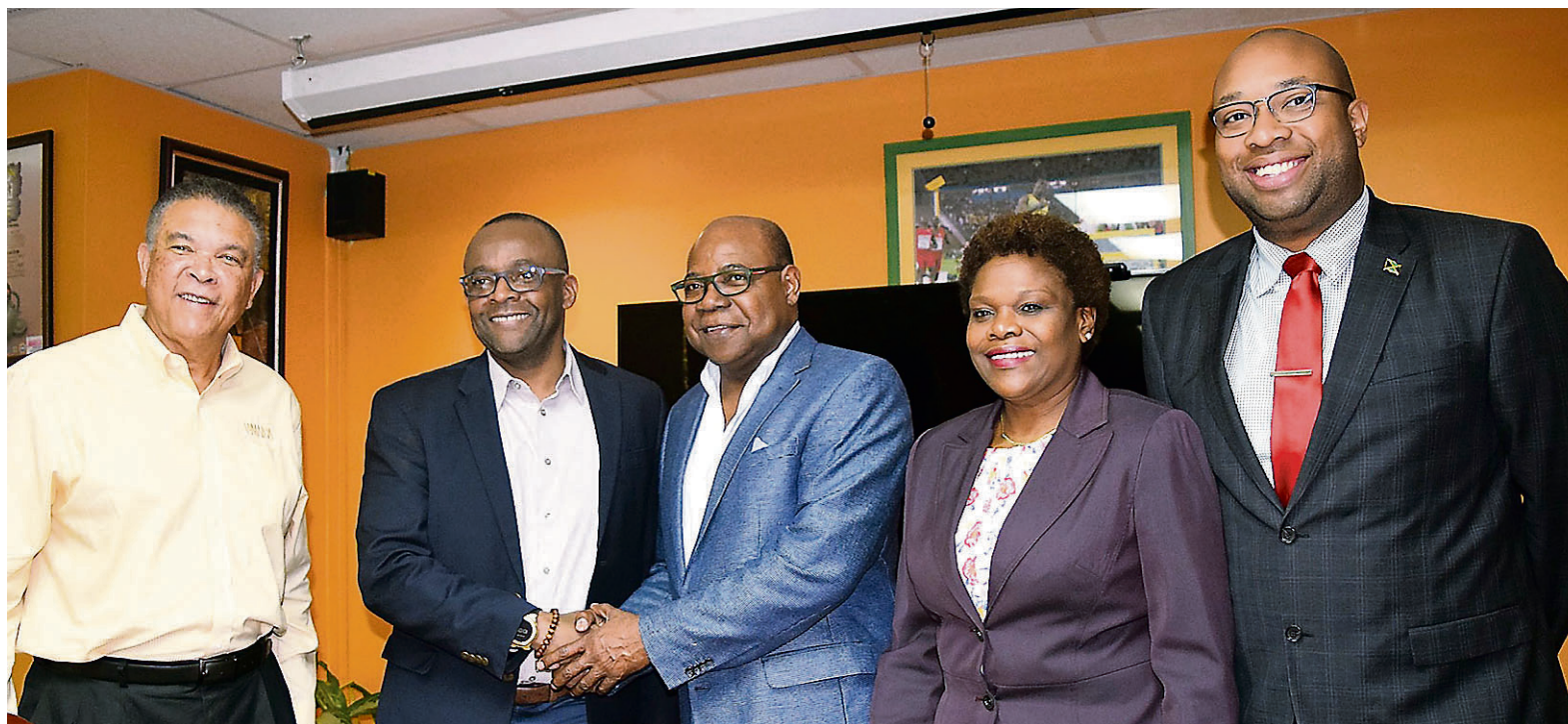
Other essential requirements include the provision of enough bandwidth to enable adults and teens to stay connected, while children can play games online. This means that Wi-Fi for multiple devices is expected to be free.

The little research that exists on this market segment also suggests that the higher-spending end of the multigenerational markets is very sophisticated and expects a high level of service to be offered to every member of their party.

Interestingly, web sites are now appearing promoting multigenerational destinations in the Caribbean. Unfortunately, most confuse the concept with group travel, failing to understand the very different and often sophisticated motivation behind such visits or that it is often the grandparents with significant disposable income who are driving the decision.

All of which suggests that there is a strong case for Caribbean tourism, tour operators, and property owners to do more to develop multigenerational marketing programmes. Not only is this a growing and important market segment, but in time, it is likely that the fond memories that such visits foster will cause the children to return as adults, hopefully, later replicating their experiences down the generations.

Welcome on board!



CONTRIBUTED

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (centre) greets newly appointed Director of Tourism Donovan White during a special welcome meeting at the Jamaica Tourist Board's New Kingston office on February 16. Sharing in the moment are (from left) outgoing acting Director of Tourism Donnie Dawson; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith; and senior adviser to the tourism minister, Delano Seiveright.

high tide



low tide

Relax responsibly!





From left: Ted Schimacher, Marilyn Wise and John and Debbie Taylor.



From left: Damar Gordon, Georgia Harris and David Wilson (bar team).



Stan and Melba Sharpe.



From left: Peter Morrow and Eric Morrow, owners of Jamaica Inn, present a gift to repeat guest Ann-Marie Boardman, who has been visiting the Inn for more than 30 years.



From left: Tina Smith (sales – group and events), Sheree Adams Jackson (spa manager) and Emmanuella Owens (sales manager).

Jamaica Inn celebrates its 60th with another AAA Four Diamond ranking

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

ON THE night Jamaica Inn celebrated its jubilee, the Ocho Rios-based resort, once named among the Elegant Resorts of Jamaica, received another AAA Four Diamond

ranking for guest services and physical attributes.

Sixty years strong, Jamaica Inn again joined the ranks of just 120 hotels and 63 restaurants that earned AAA's (the American Automobile Association) highest rating over the past year.

"This represents 0.3 per cent of the nearly

59,000 AAA-approved and diamond-ranked restaurants and hotels," said AAA in its letter to the hotel.

The travel company's rating system covers the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. The recognition was unveiled during

what the hotel's general manager, Kyle Mais, tagged a momentous occasion, as the resort hosted an 007-styled James Bond cocktail on its West Roof.

The event, attended by a full house of guests, many of whom now call Jamaica Inn their home

away from home, honoured and celebrated a number of "amazing guests" and staff, such as Teddy Tucker, who have dedicated their lives to the property.

Tucker has been with the resort for 60 years. "We could not have done it without our

incredible staff," Peter Morrow told the gathering, as he announced that the hotel's croquet lawn had been dedicated to the late Rupert Davis.

Hospitality Jamaica brings you highlights of the cocktail reception.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

From left: Kyle Mais, general manager; Peter Morrow (in background), owner, Jamaica Inn; Patrick and Rita Vaughn (repeat guests), and Eric Morrow, Jamaica Inn owner, at the hotel's 60th-anniversary cocktails party last week.



From left: Olivia, Eric and Belinda Morrow.



From left: Olive Hacking (first-time guest), and Patrick and Rita Vaughn (repeat guests).



Brothers Eric (left) and Peter Morrow, owners of the Jamaica Inn, hoist their latest AAA Four Diamond award during the resort's 60th-anniversary cocktails.



Dalton Hickling (singer/entertainer).

Make plans to discover Jamaica one adventure at a time

IT IS undeniable that Jamaica is the Home of All Right. The magic of Jamaica is all wrapped up in the fact that the island cannot be described by just any one thing – the offerings are too wide and too deep – small enough to be intimate, yet big enough to fulfil all expectations.

The magnetism of Jamaica is attracting people the world over as the vibe, the tasty meals, the “bredrin”, and the family atmosphere are second to none. Yet, what continues to be amazing is that locals are equally in awe and continue to enjoy the diverse tourism product.

There is plenty to do and see as more treasures are hidden in every nook and cranny of the island. There are many unexplored adventures, numerous vistas to behold

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

and countless photography-worthy moments to last for many lifetimes.

The invitation is to vacation where you live, and like the over four million visitors who tasted, touched, visited, saw, and felt the unmistakable vibe reverberating across the island in 2017, you, too, can feel Jamaica’s energy through new experiences.

Make a promise to see more, experience more, and fall in love with Jamaica again and again. There need not be a resolution. Just get up and go. The best invitation you will receive is the sound of cascading waterfalls, the chirping of endemic birds in the rushes, the panoramic views from one of the island’s countless lofty peaks, the savoury aroma of meals done on the woodfire or in restaurants, and the inviting warmth and friendliness that oozes out of every encounter along the way.

To entice your sense of adventure and curiosity, here are some activities for consideration:

- Montego Bay Resort Area – boat ride at the Luminous Lagoon; Greenwood Great House Tour; Burwood Beach
- Ocho Rios Resort Area – Lunch at Stush in the Bush; Yaaman Adventure Park – Dune Buggy Ride; Blue Mountain Bike Tour
- Portland Resort Area – Boat ride on the Blue Lagoon; Surf at Boston Bay Beach
- Kingston Resort Area – Dub Club music experience; Port Royal Walking Tour; Kingston on the Edge Urban Arts Festival
- South Coast Resort Area – Joy Spence Appleton Estate Rum Experience; YS Falls, Calabash Literary Festival
- Negril Resort Area – Lunch at Zimbali Retreat; Jackies on the Beach Spa experience

This is just the beginning. The menu of adventures will take you



Taking in the vibe at Calabash Literary Festival.



Taking in the majestic YS Falls.

across the length and breadth of the island. Where age is no limit, the fun is unending and time is not restrictive. Just be present and live in the moment. It is guaranteed that the vibe will be so addictive

that as soon as one adventure ends, planning for the next will begin. So pack your bags, pile into the car, hit the road, and begin to live out the irie vibe, here in Jamaica, the Home of All Right.



Taking in the scene along the Blue Mountain Bicycle Tour.

SILVERA'S PICKS

My journey of positive vibes

I AM exhaling, having spent the last four days, celebrating what is great about Jamaica.

My journey of positive vibes commenced last Thursday, February 15, during the premiere of **Black Panther**, where I was greeted by some of the most beautiful African brothers and sisters, who had donned creatively crafted costumes depicting the motherland.

Black Panther's popularity resulted in the takeover of two cinemas at the Palace Multiplex cinema at the Fairview Complex in Montego Bay by over 470 persons celebrating their rich cultural heritage.

It was a sight to behold. Kudos to owner of Naturally You, Sitara Byfield; Corporate U's Gavin Bennett; Dionne Waugh of Bridal Dreams Jamaica, and the rest of the team. I know they made much-needed money for 'My Father's House' and the Pregnancy Resource Centre charity.

On Friday, we all wore red, celebrating the 'Day of Love', organised by the 'I Love Foundation', an initiative that has been embraced by Jamaicans all over the world. Their #ilovemobay campaign has garnered attention from over 100,000 persons so far.

Day of Love was officially launched at the Old Hospital Park, with blessings from new Custos Rotolorum Pastor Conrad Pitkin.

On Saturday, we rubbed shoulders with fashion mogul Ralph and Ricky Lauren; a congresswoman; at least one US senator; several ambassadors, including the UK's, Canada's, and the European Union's; a count and countess and some of Jamaica's most committed donors, at the annual Hanover Charities Sugar Cane Ball.

Sunday afternoon, we played (well, John Byles, Tammy Hart, the Vernons, and Chin brothers), James Robertson, and many others, came out in support of Chukka Foundation's charity event in Sandy Bay.

Overall, last week was becoming one of my more positive weeks in months until I met a man who arrived in Jamaica via a cruise ship.

"They told us to be careful of Montego Bay on the ship. They say it's dangerous and bad things are happening," he told us during lunch at Margaritaville.

Apparently, he took a boat from the ship, which was docked at the cruise ship pier, because of the fear of even getting into a cab.

At the end of his stay, he said: "I came off the boat and started meeting people. The people are beautiful. What a beautiful place! I will be coming back, but not on a cruise. I will be back with my friends soon. I really like Montego Bay."

Cruise ship passengers are loss leaders. Our aim is to transform them into land-based visitors, but if the cruise lines discourage and plant fear into the minds of these visitors, they will never come back for a longer stay.



Janet Silvera



#ilovemobay



CONTRIBUTED

A family that supports the annual Sugar Cane Ball.



ASHLEY ANGUIN

Kimberly England at 'Black Panther' premiere.

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What's up with Titchfield Hill?

PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

A view of a section of Port Antonio Harbour and the Errol Flynn Marina from Titchfield Hill.

THE TITCHFIELD peninsular separates Port Antonio's twin harbours. From the hill, there are magnificent views of the turquoise Caribbean Sea and the hills north of Port Antonio. From the right, you are looking down on Errol Flynn Marina and across the storied Navy Island.

Titchfield High School, where the remnants of Fort George (built 1728) are, sits on the head of the peninsular, which is a very quiet neighbourhood. When I visited recently, I saw more derelict buildings than people on the road. But, many decades again, the opposite was true.

It was a bustling place, the stomping and playing grounds of the rich and famous of the land, and those from overseas. It had many guest houses and a few hotels, and is said to be integral to the beginning of tourism in Jamaica as we know it.

Some of these accommodations are still there, crumbling, perhaps occupied by the ghosts of guests from the past. The foundations of others are just ruins and there are some empty lots. It is said that a big fire in the 1960s destroyed some of the buildings.

I also passed a few operating



Some of the older structures on Titchfield Hill.

guest houses, the most noticeable being the artistically designed DeMontevin Lodge, which has been around for quite a while. Imagine the stories that the walls of this red standout holds.

But before DeMontevin there was the Titchfield Hotel, built by Lorezo Dowe Baker. It was the most popular hotel to be built on the hill and the first to be built in Jamaica. The 400-room structure, constructed in 1905, was regarded the most elegant on this side of

the Atlantic.

The guest list included several famous people, some of who arrived on banana boats, others on their own vessels. American screen actor Errol Flynn bought the hotel in the 1950s, but died before it was restored. Parts of its ruins, too, are on the grounds of the high school.

Now, who will climb the hill to inject activities into the place that once oozed so much life on Port-land's tourism landscape?



De Montevin Lodge Hotel is perhaps the oldest surviving hotel on Titchfield Hill.



Homecoming honoree Sir George Alleyne, chancellor emeritus, and Barbadian student Aliyah Briggs have something to laugh about.

After all the revelry, A Z Preston Hall students relaxes during the formalities.

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

UWI celebrates 70th with Homecoming 2018

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR TWO consecutive days, Thursday, February 15 and Friday, February 16, the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies was abuzz with a festive air, pomp and pageantry, parades and unadulterated Caribbean vibes. It was Homecoming 2018, a celebration of the Mona campus' 70th anniversary.

The celebrations kicked off with a commemorative church service on Sunday, February 11, and ended with the 70th Anniversary Homecoming Public Lecture on Friday. There was a UWI@70 Time Portal exhibition in the assembly hall from the 13th to the 17th, while the 70th anniversary honoree was Chancellor Emeritus Sir George Alleyne, chancellor from 2003-2017.

On Thursday, there was much excitement, a carnival perhaps, with a homecoming parade, which culminated in a brief flag-raising



From left: Masqueraders Abigail Clarke, Rochelle Morgan, Ericka Coke (medical sciences student) and Chris-Ann Gordon (social sciences student).

ceremony. Students from different faculties, halls of residence, clubs and societies threw away the rigours of scholarship and turned parts of the campus into a celebratory sea of colours.

Friday's activities, more subdued, were carried out under the banner of Caribbean Day Festival of Food

and Culture. Yet, it was an afternoon chock-full of fun, food and live entertainment. The history, colours, food and other cultural elements of the contributing territories were there for the taking, and patrons did indulge themselves.

The University of the West

Indies has evolved out of the University College of West Indies (UCWI), London, which was established in 1948 with 38 medical students. On February 16, 1950, the UCWI installed its first chancellor, Princess Alice of Athlone. Since that time, February 16 has been set aside to observe the first stage of the college's attainment of full university status.

Mona homecoming celebrations, formerly called Commemoration Celebrations and Alumni Week, started in 2001, and "provides an opportunity to celebrate the founding of the university and recognise its regional nature, while assisting to engender a greater sense of belonging and develop a feeling of camaraderie among staff, students and graduates," the university said.

Commonwealth of Dominica calypso queen and law student Janae Jackson performing one of her numbers.

2018 off to a record-breaking start for arrivals into the Cayman Islands

FOLLOWING 2017's record-breaking year for air and cruise arrivals into the Cayman Islands, arrivals for 2018 are off to a record-breaking start. A total of 39,185 stayover visitors were recorded for the month of January, an increase of 23.87 per cent over 2017. This represents the best January in recorded arrivals history and is the eighth consecutive month (June 2017 through January 2018) that the Cayman Islands have had record-breaking growth.

The 23.87 per cent growth is the highest per cent growth increase for a January in 12 years and is 13.9 per cent higher than January 2015, the previous highest January in recorded history.

January figures can be attributed to growth predominantly in key markets such as the United States, which saw increases in all regions. Of significant note, the West Coast saw the highest growth, recording a 63 per cent increase over 2017. The Southwest recorded 1,270 additional stayover visitors, or 46.98 per cent increase over 2017, while the Midwest region recorded 1,770 additional stayover visitors, or 27.40 per cent increase over 2017. Canada also recorded growth of 13.47 per cent growth over January 2017. This represents the best January in recorded



Friends having a great night as they pose for our camera at Taste of Cayman Food and Drink Festival in January.

history for Canada with a total of 3,353 stayover visitors. Efforts to tap into the Latin American market continue to be fruitful as



PHOTOS BY RICARDO MAKYN

Filipino tourists enjoy the Taste of Cayman Food and Drink Festival 2018, celebrating its 30th anniversary in Grand Cayman in January.

both South America and Central America increased by 25 and 35 per cent, respectively. A total of 218,430 cruise passengers visited the Cayman Islands in January, an increase of 20 per cent over January 2017.

Sustained growth is expected in the coming months as residents and guests alike prepare to celebrate the island's colourful and spirited national carnival, Batabano, as well as CayMas and Braccanal. The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism has launched its 'Summer Only in Cayman' promotion, which this year seeks to leverage Cayman's position as the culinary capital of the Caribbean.

The promotion invites families to savour the endless array of cuisines available on-island by an impressive roster of local chefs and includes curated epicurean experiences

for even the youngest of authentic culinary seekers. With accommodation partners offering a fourth-night free stay, the Department of Tourism says it is poised to support this robust promotion through strategic, multi-media marketing across the United States.

"Continued increases in visitation are evidence that the state of our tourism industry is strong," commented Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism Moses Kirkconnell. "I am optimistic that if we continue this path, 2018 will be another record-breaking year for arrivals and that the Cayman Islands will benefit from economic growth that all can be proud of. I applaud the Department of Tourism and all tourism partners for their continued contributions to this vibrant industry."

Celebrating the flavours of Barbados in Year of Culinary Experiences

FRESH FISH grilled under the open night sky, perfectly paired with the world's oldest rum, are just two of the authentic Bajan experiences that will be touted around the world as the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc (BTMI) brands 2018 the Year of Culinary Experiences. Keeping with tourism trends and targeting the ever-growing movement of foodie travellers, the company's marketing efforts will be focussed on tantalising the taste buds with the diverse assortment of unique Bajan flavours.

INNOVATIVE MARKETING

CEO of the BTMI, William

'Billy' Griffith, shared the rationale behind the strategic move. "On the surface, naming 2018 the Year of Culinary Experiences sounds light and fun – tasty even, but it's also a very intentional marketing tactic we've conceptualised to really hone in on the differentiating factors of brand Barbados. Everyone understands the competitive nature of the current business environment and in response to that, Barbados' unique selling propositions are what continue to drive the BTMI's marketing efforts year after year.

"We successfully grew interest in destination Barbados with the Year of Sports in 2017; we saw several journalists and visitors eager to

travel here to experience this phenomenon we'd generated by simply packaging those elements of Barbados we already have, and do well, in a fun and exciting way," Griffith added. "So, when we looked to 2018, we once again thought about those unique experiences our island has to offer, experiences that boast both quality and longevity."

The calendar for the Year of Culinary Experiences aptly reflects the breadth of gastronomic fare available in Barbados. It comprises opportunities to partake of everything from the most famous ham cutters to the best seafood on the island, but even beyond the food are festivals and other cultural events

that one simply cannot separate from the true Bajan experience.

KICK OFF WITH THE BARBADOS SUGAR AND RUM SEASON

Officially launched last year, the Barbados Sugar and Rum Season was conceptualised by the BTMI's sister company, the Barbados Tourism Product Authority, and was inspired by the time-honoured tradition of the King and Queen of the Crop. From January through March, this season provide a memorable tribute to Barbados' world-renowned indigenous spirit and its rich history built on centuries of sugar production, through a series of events steeped in Bajan history.

OISTINS FISH FESTIVAL

Over the years, Oistins has become a culinary and cultural fusion of flavours enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. The annual fish festival, held over the Easter weekend, will be one of the highlights of Barbados' culinary calendar. Fresh fish and other delicacies, grilled and drizzled with the unique tastes of Barbados, are a must for any food lover.

THE BARBADOS FOOD AND RUM FESTIVAL

Once again, this will bring together some of the best local, regional and international chef and mixology talent for a unique festival of flavour. Local foods and the island's famous spirit – rum, will be the highlight of this period of festivities – coupled with beach parties and other exciting cultural experiences that mark the annual festival.

Stacy Cox elected president of hotel association executives

Caribbean tourism industry professional Stacy Cox has been elected president of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE) for the next two years.

Cox, who unexpectedly took the top job early last year following an unscheduled leadership change, received a full two-year mandate at the association's annual general meeting, which preceded this month's 36th Annual Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Caribbean Travel Marketplace event in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The CSHAE is an independent organisation aimed at advancing professional development and strengthening networking among Caribbean hotel and tourism association executives.

The association's 2018-20 executive board will be chaired by Gilda Gumbs Samuel, executive director of the Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association, while Brian Frontin, CEO of the Trinidad Hotels, Restaurant & Tourism Association, will serve as vice-president. Miles Mercera, president and CEO of the Curaçao Hospitality & Tourism Association, will serve as

treasurer, while Clarisa Jiménez, president and CEO of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association, has been appointed secretary.

Other elected CSHAE board directors include Avril Alexander, executive director of the British Virgin Islands Chamber of Commerce & Hotel Association; Tessie Duran Tonaco, marketing director of the Belize Hotel Association; and Lisa Hamilton, president of the US Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association.

Cox asserted that her mandate includes increased engagement on issues such as education and training, advocacy, airlift capacity, disaster management, and the sharing economy: "It is an honour to continue to serve the region's hotel and tourism associations and their members and focus on the many pressing issues facing the Caribbean's sustainability."

While in San Juan, hotel association executives attended their annual leadership conference, sponsored by American Resort Development Association - Resort Owners' Coalition and facilitated by Adriana Serna, the Centre for Association Leadership facilitator and communications manager of CHTA.



CONTRIBUTED

The new CSHAE Board (from left): Tessie Duran Tonaco, marketing director of the Belize Hotel Association; Avril Alexander, executive director of the British Virgin Islands Chamber of Commerce & Hotel Association; Gilda Gumbs Samuel, executive director of the Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association; Stacy Cox, CEO of the Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association; Brian Frontin, CEO of the Trinidad Hotels, Restaurant and Tourism Association; Lisa Hamilton, president of the US Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association; Miles Mercera, president and CEO of the Curaçao Hospitality & Tourism Association; and Clarisa Jiménez, president and CEO of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Jordi Pelfort, managing director, Blue Diamond Resorts (centre), and Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (to his right) flanked by the Royalton White Sands team and Ministry of Tourism executives.

At Royalton, we care

IN AN effort to strengthen the confidence in Brand Jamaica within the island's hotels, Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and his senior adviser/strategist, Delano Seiveright, met with the managing director of Blue Diamond Resorts and his team last Wednesday to discuss the effect of the Enhanced Security Measures currently taking place in the resort city of Montego Bay and the collaborative strategies implemented by the Jamaica Tourist Board in an effort to increase stopover arrivals to Royalton Luxury Resorts.

See photos highlighting the visit.



TOURISM TALKS: Managing Director of Blue Diamond Resorts Jordi Pelfort (left) in deep conversation with Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.



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Fire House Crew & Friends
(Sizzla, Luciano, Mikey General, Lukie D)
+More

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Peace | Love | Reggae

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