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Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Pink 'Pound'

LGBT travel now exceeds US\$218 billion per annum



Jamaica recognised
as Caribbean's
**BEST SPA
DESTINATION**
by World Spa Awards

CHINA
will overtake France,
says Euromonitor
International

**JAMAICA
CAPTIVATES
RUSSIAN
VISITORS**

PINK POUND

LGBT travel market: annual spend now exceeds USD\$218 billion

THE ANNUAL value of total spending on travel and tourism by lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) people was revealed last Monday by LGBT consulting specialists Out Now at the World Travel Market (WTM) London.

Presented by Ian Johnson, chief executive officer of Out Now, during a masterclass at the global travel industry event, statistics showed the annual spend as at 2018 by LGBT residents.

Over 130,000 persons from 26 countries participated in the research, Johnson told the gathering.

The data included spending on domestic and international travel and include analysis of travel, accommodation, holiday dining, sightseeing, and other tourism expenditure.

The data also showed the annual spend as at 2018 by LGBT residents of key countries. This includes spending on domestic and international travel and included analysis of travel, accommodation, holiday dining, sightseeing, and other tourism expenditure.

Johnson said the findings demonstrate the resilience of this diverse global market.

“Out Now has worked for 27 years to better understand and meet the needs of LGBT people globally,” he said, adding that a fundamental aspect of Out Now’s work is research.

“So we are very pleased to continue our 15-year partnership with World Travel Market by releasing these findings at WTM in London. This new



Chief executive officer Ian Johnson

global LGBT2030 research data reveals a market that is robust, diverse, and growing.”

He noted that it was also

important, though, that travel industry suppliers understand that they need to focus past the strong value of the market to make sure that their products and services are well-tailored to meet the specific needs of this market.

This includes training and education for customer-facing staff as a minimum – to make sure the potential of the large LGBT travel spend can be fully realised by individual destinations and hotels.

Out Now also released details of their new global education resource Learn.LGBT (<https://www.Learn.LGBT>) during the masterclass.

The findings cover key markets based on a range of factors including size, potential, and reach.

“India is a market with strong and growing potential,” Johnson said. “The recent removal of anti-gay laws sees this market demonstrating the strongest annual growth rate in 2018 of more than seven per cent over the past 12 months.”

Simon Press, senior

COUNTRY	TOTAL (USD\$bn) 2018	AV ANN. GROWTH RATE (%)
USA	63.1	1.9
Brazil	26.8	0.8
Japan	20.7	0.9
Germany	13.8	2.0
UK	11.7	1.6
France	11.4	1.0
Mexico	11.4	3.3
Italy	9.0	0.1
Canada	7.1	1.7
Spain	7.0	1.4
Australia	6.9	2.8
Turkey	6.6	3.0
Colombia	5.1	2.4
Poland	4.7	3.3
India	4.7	7.2
Argentina	4.3	1.6
Netherlands	3.0	1.4
Israel	1.4	3.0
TOTAL	USD\$218.7	2.2%

director, World Travel Market said: “We’ve worked with Out Now for a number of years, and we would like to think that the educational sessions have contributed to the industry having a better understanding of the needs of the LGBT community. Society has become

more accepting, generally, of LGBT people but there are still pockets of discrimination and prejudice, and the travel industry needs to be part of the drive to change entrenched views. It’s not an issue of LGBT rights. It’s about human rights.”



Wellness Tourism growing TWICE AS FAST as the regular industry

WELLNESS TOURISM is growing twice as fast as the tourism sector overall, accounting for around 830 million trips a year, and is worth an estimated \$639 billion, according to figures released at World Travel Market London.

It can encourage people to travel beyond overcrowded destinations, spend more, and enjoy new experiences.

According to a report by the Global Wellness Institute, tourism expenditure grew 3.2 per cent in the two years to 2017, but wellness tourism was up 6.5 per cent, which was more than global GDP, and it is growing in every region of the world. Europe accounts for the highest number of wellness trips, but spend is highest in North America, which accounts for over a third of the world's total. Asia is the fastest-growing market, due largely to the expanding middle class and explosion of tourism in the region.

Speaking during an hour-long Wellness and Wellbeing Hour at WTM, the authors of the Global Wellness Tourism Economy report, senior research fellows Ophelia Yeung and Katherine Johnston, said that the sector had already generated more than 17 million jobs worldwide.

As wellness tourists are generally better educated, well-travelled, and willing to try new experiences, they typically spend 53 per cent more than the typical international traveller and 178 per cent more than the average domestic tourist, they said. However, those who aren't necessarily travelling for wellness but want to maintain their health while travelling, or simply want to take part in wellness activities during their trip, typically spend eight times more than those travelling primarily for wellness.

Wellness tourism is defined by the institute as travel to maintain or improve health, and Yeung warned the travel industry not to conflate this with medical tourism, which is travelling specifically to seek treatment. "There are some grey areas between the two such as travelling for a medical check-up, but talking about them together can confuse potential

customers, and that might dilute the appeal of either segment, so we don't recommend destinations talk about them together because it might damage their efforts to reach the market," she said.

Examples of wellness tourism range from boot camps in the UK to spiritual ceremonies in India to medical check-ups in Malaysia and Thailand.

Many travel brands are starting to integrate wellness products such as Hyatt, which has acquired the fitness brand Exhale.

Next year, fitness brand Equinox will open a hotel in New York's new Hudson Yard district, and it has 75 more in the pipeline. Delta Air Lines has also partnered

with Equinox to create in-flight exercises, and Singapore Airlines has partnered with wellness brand Canyon Ranch to create on-board exercises and healthy menus. Other collaborations include cruise line Seabourn's tie-up with Dr Andrew Weil, Holland America with Oprah, MSC with Technogym, and Weight Watchers – now rebranded as WW.

"These partnerships help people to bring their fitness brands with them when they travel," said Johnston. "You are going to be seeing more of these collaborations going forward. Westin was an early mover in adopting wellness products, and I predict every hotel is going to start paying attention to wellness because that is what the consumer wants. They might not always use them, but they want those options."

To capture this expanding, lucrative market, some destinations such as Bhutan in Asia and Costa Rica in Central America have chosen to focus heavily on wellness tourism, while others are creating wellness products such as in China, where hot springs are adding traditional Chinese medicine treatments. "We believe that wellness tourism can offer relief to destinations that suffer from overcrowding and the problems this brings," added Johnston. "It has the potential to attract people off season and take them away from the most well-known, overcrowded destinations and into less well-known areas."



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Over 100 St Ann residents receive free laser eye surgeries

SELECTIVE LASER Trabeculoplasty (SLT) became a reality for over 100 St Ann residents this past month as the Sandals Foundation and Great Shape! iCARE programme offered the procedure free of cost to the community.

Valued at a cost upward of US\$1,000 per patient, SLT helps to prevent or delay blindness in persons suffering from open-angle glaucoma.

A total of 255 residents in St Ann and surrounding areas were seen at the free eye clinic set up at the Steer Town Methodist Church.

For the last nine years, the Sandals Foundation and Great Shape! Inc. partnership has created access to eye care and dental services for over 207,000 Caribbean residents. As both organisations move into their 10th anniversary, they have expanded their offerings to, for the first time, include free SLT surgeries for needy residents.

Executive Director of the Sandals Foundation Heidi Clarke said that the clinic gives residents access to basic health services and procedures, some of whom have never seen an eye specialist before.

“When you have a community member who has been suffering for years with a condition finally being able to see clearly for the first time, you’ll understand why it is so important for us to continue supporting and offering these clinics. For the past nine years, this eye care clinic, as well as the free dental clinics, have provided critical services to thousands of residents across the region, a feat that we are very proud of and something that we hope to continue for years to come.”

Seventy-four-year-old Carmen Jones traveled from Islington, St Mary, to make use of what she called ‘a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity’.

“I was so happy when it was announced in my church. All it cost me was taxi money. There were lots of people, but the team of volunteers was extremely organised, friendly, and professional, and I was able to get my surgery and sunglasses.”

She added, “I could not afford to pay for this service as I am retired, with minimal income. Before, I was told I had to go to the doctor and pay plenty of money for the treatment. I am still saving and



Dr Daniel examines a patient during a free eye care clinic at Steertown Methodist Church organised by Sandals Foundation and iCARE Care Great Shape Inc.



Free eye drops on display.

can’t reach the amount yet. I am glad I went to church and found out. My God is always on time.”

According to Steven Stern, executive director of Great Shape! iCARE, the programme has served over 37,658 patients and distributed over 71,000 pairs of glasses to residents in Jamaica and The Turks and Caicos.

“This is our first year providing Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty for open-angle glaucoma using a YAG laser. This will prevent glaucoma sufferers from going blind and eliminate continued optic nerve damage. We are thrilled to offer this SLT laser surgery as a new treatment for iCARE’s 10th anniversary. This is also our five-year anniversary of providing free cataract surgeries in local hospitals. To date, we have performed 142 surgeries, often restoring vision to those who had completely lost their

sight.”

The clinic has also performed screenings for diabetes and hypertension for several thousand residents over the years, providing goods and services valued at over US\$8.7 million.

Since its inception in 2009, the Sandals Foundation has supported the Great Shape! Inc to provide free eye care, dental services, and literacy and teacher training programmes to residents in several Caribbean islands, with Sandals Resorts International providing accommodation and the foundation covering meals, transportation, communications, and logistical support to all volunteers to make these missions possible.

This year, the clinic expanded outside of Jamaica for the first time, conducting a clinic in Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, where volunteers served 2,482 patients.

Outlook Airline Industry

THE AIRLINE industry could face more failures due to higher oil prices and rising consumer compensation payouts, according to a leading aviation consultant.

The sector has seen a string of collapses in recent months, including Danish low-cost carrier (LCC) Primera, Cyprus-based Cobalt Air, and Switzerland’s SkyWork Airlines.

Aviation consultant John Strickland, from JLS Consulting, told an Industry Outlook session at the just concluded World Travel Market London: “I think there will be more failures. One of the challenges for the airline business has been the fuel price rising dramatically in the last 12 to 18 months.”

Two years ago, aviation fuel was priced at around US\$30 per barrel but it has risen by 40 per cent in the past 12 months to reach US\$70 to US\$80 per barrel.

“The big one to watch is whether a deal is concluded to buy Norwegian by IAG (International Airlines Group). If that doesn’t happen, the challenges are going to become even greater for Norwegian,” said Strickland.

“But if a deal is concluded. This could make Norwegian an even more powerful low-cost long-haul airline.”

IAG, which owns British Airways, Iberia, Aer Lingus, and Vueling, has already made several bids for Norwegian this year.

“Low-cost long-haul has been the flavour of the month as a business model. It’s all about offering a low price and a simplified service, with passengers buying the extras they need,” said Strickland.

LOSSES AND LOW PROFITS

“Nobody has made significant money doing this. Air Asia has only had limited profits and Norwegian has not been cutting it financially either.

“Norwegian had large losses last year although they had an improved Q3 profits for the peak summer months. They are a very sizeable airline, especially on the Atlantic, where demand tends to fall off in the winter. We’re going to see a lot of red ink this winter.”

Despite these financial pressures, Norwegian continues to increase capacity, with a planned 20 per cent rise during 2019.



Aviation consultant John Strickland

Strickland added that regional European airlines were also struggling in the wake of higher fuel costs, with VLM another carrier to fail this year.

Another problem for airlines is the high level of compensation they are required to pay for delayed and cancelled flights by the European Union law, known as EU261.

“For some airlines, particularly regional carriers, this has pushed them over the edge because of the amount of compensation they have to pay,” said Strickland.

“What was meant to protect consumers now leads to less competition as airlines fail or decide not to operate on certain routes.

“One airline said they are not going to enter new routes in France because of it. [EU261] has to be changed if we’re not going to see more airlines fail.”

Strickland added that he expected Emirates to remain the “leading” airline in the Middle East region – ahead of rivals Etihad Airways and Qatar Airways.

He said that these carriers were able to use state-of-the-art aircraft, including A380s and Dreamliners, to offer non-stop or one-stop flights around the world.

“They are powerful airlines – Emirates will remain the leader. Governments are seeing the economic advantages of having a strong airline,” Strickland added.

“They will remain a big part of the picture. They have been trailblazers in a number of markets. They have taken entrepreneurial risk and seen the fruits from the traffic they have developed.”

But Strickland said that “second tier” airlines faced a more difficult future than the big three of Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Etihad.

“More governments are beginning to recognise they need to have efficiency in their airlines,” he explained. “Gulf Air has a remit to turn that airline around. There are some hard realities being faced up to.”

Jamaicans drawn to tranquillity of SEACREST BEACH HOTEL

But owner says unfair competition stifling small hotels

Carl Gilchrist

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

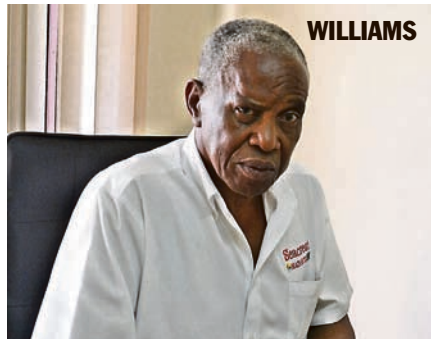
SEACREST BEACH Hotel, a small property of 35 rooms, located on the ocean front at Priory in St Ann, has all the attractions of a large hotel such as air-conditioned rooms, free Wifi, good food, complemented by friendly staff offering excellent service.

However, the main drawing card at this hotel over the 18 years since it has been in operation is the tranquil nature of its existence.

“Well, it’s the tranquillity that pulls people here because it’s a quiet, peaceful, laid-back hotel. People like it because it’s out of the mad rush and they can come here and relax and unwind,” explained owner Leopold “Steely” Williams.

“People always tell me they pass Ocho Rios to come down here because they like it because it is peaceful and secure.”

A peculiar feature of Seacrest Beach Hotel is the absence of alcoholic beverages on the property. “We don’t



WILLIAMS

sell liquor. We just have a juice bar,” Williams confirmed.

Like other small properties, Seacrest offers the European Plan (EP), which consists of bed and breakfast. However, other meals are available upon request.

The hotel has done “fairly well” over the years and thrives mainly on the support of Jamaicans. It hosts weddings and conferences and can accommodate 60 people seated.

“We give good-quality service. That’s what people have been saying over the last 18 years. We haven’t advertised as we really should, but people tell others, and they come. Based on our surveys, most of the people who come, it’s their friends who tell them because we don’t have a big advertising campaign.”

The truth is, the big

advertising campaign isn’t affordable. According to Williams,

unfair competition from properties not being affected by the Government’s high taxation policy is stifling the hotel.

“We’ve done fairly well over the years. We could have done better, but the playing field is not level because you have a lot of people who are renting a hotel but don’t have to meet the strict Tourist Board requirements that we have to meet, and it costs money to keep the standards,” Williams pointed out.

“And then the advent of bed and breakfast. A lot of people are renting rooms. Places that were normally housing residents are turning into hotel properties, so we have a lot of unfair competition because we have to pay the tax, and people are getting the same benefit without paying the tax.”

He said that he pays three different types of tax: annual room tax of US\$1 on every room rented, plus 10 per cent GCT; income tax; NIS, NHT and Heart Trust.

“By the time you

deduct all of those, it makes it very uncompetitive.”

Williams admits that the Government gives some concessions on things like loans, but there are drawbacks.

“What I find with these loans is when they give you the concessional interest, the institution takes it out in other fees, so it comes back to the same thing.”

Williams is imploring the government to find a way to take the middle man out of the transactions because they take too much in fees. He gave example of an instance where he got a loan from a financial loan institution that charged him almost \$600,000, “For things that were not necessary in order me to get the loan, but that’s how they get their kickback”.

He is calling on the Government to level the playing field, owing to the unfair practices against persons adhering to the law.

Williams said that the problem he faces is common among small hotels.



THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Jamaica set to emerge as regional centre for tourism innovation



DAVID JESSOP

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

JAMAICA IS rapidly emerging as the leading regional centre for new thinking about tourism. In the last few weeks, it has become clear that its proposed Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre now has enough international and domestic support to enable it to develop a prospectus to take to international donors.

This is welcome as an international centre of this kind, located in the Caribbean, will do much to help the region better understand what is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry that now dominates most regional economies.

In outline, the centre, which might benefit from having a more user-friendly name, is to be housed at the University of the West Indies – Mona Campus. The intention is that it will become the world's leading institution for research, advocacy, training, and policy development on issues related to sustainability in tourism.

Initially, it will focus on delivering a 'barometer' that will identify the preparedness, management capacity, and ability of every tourism destination globally to recover from crises from hurricanes and monsoons to terrorism.

In the longer term, however, the centre is expected to do much more.

According to a document produced earlier this year, the intention is that it will provide a wide range of advice as new issues arise in the complex value chains that enable the industry to prosper.

The idea is that the centre will develop multiple activities and outputs: a monitoring and evaluation unit able to identify problems that have the potential to change or damage the industry; publicly available and interrogatable statistics, studies, and reports; a think tank;



Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett (at podium), and interim chair of the resilience centre, Taleb Rifai, in Europe last week.

and an international role in developing awareness of the economic importance of the industry's sustainability. To help achieve this, its initial sponsors have agreed to fund a Chair on innovation and resilience at the UWI who will be tasked with overseeing the operational, organisational, and institutional direction of the centre.

It is envisaged that as the institution's activities and output develop, it will also provide tourism-related inputs for implementing some or all of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals (the SDGs) agreed in 2015, especially those relating to employment, economic growth, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and gender equality.

In the last two weeks, the centre

took an important step forward. Several leading industry figures and international groups influential in developing global policy towards tourism met in London in the margins of the World Travel Market. There, they agreed to establish a board and how the new body should move forward over the next three months.

Those involved in the discussions were, according to Jamaica's Ministry of Tourism, the Pacific Asia Travel Association, the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, the Jamaica National Group; The UWI; the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage; the Travel Corporation; the Japan National Tourism Organization; as well as

others, including the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, the World Travel & Tourism Council, and the US Department of Commerce. The names of other supporting bodies and governments are expected to emerge soon.

According to Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, this now paves the way for the official launch, which will take place when the country hosts CHTA's annual Caribbean Travel Marketplace at the end of January 2019 in Montego Bay.

Although not specifically Caribbean related, the centre and its establishment come at an important moment for the region. The tourism sector in the Caribbean is increasingly mature, and as an industry, should be

thinking less about visitor numbers and more about delivering lasting nation-wide social and economic growth. It should also be spending more time undertaking a detailed analysis of Caribbean tourism's long-term viability and encouraging new thinking, all issues the new institution will be able to help the region address.

Although some in the industry remain sceptical about the value of the centre, once established, it is to put Jamaica, the Caribbean and The UWI on the global map as the leading centre for new thinking, research, and information dissemination about the issues and requirements of an industry that is still not widely understood by policymakers.

Throughout the years, the craft development initiative involves the monetization of the talents and capabilities of our people, encouraging the perpetuation of our hand-made cultural relics for generations; in turn, providing a source of income for these artisans as well as a sense of national pride.



TPDCo CRAFTS A PATH FOR LOCAL ARTISANS

The first formally documented indication of craft was found decades ago in St Elizabeth within 100 Villages, where individuals came together to create straw products and soon realized its economic value. As time went on, few local organizations took on the task of tapping into the industry through training and connecting local and international buyers with producers, to improve their livelihood.

As the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) continues to thrive within its mandate of fostering socio-economic growth by constantly developing and improving the tourism product, it is pertinent to highlight the growth of our service to Craft Development.

TPDCo's Coordinator of Craft Development, Mrs Violet Crutchley describes the organization's involvement with the Craft Industry as means of "facilitating inclusivity and ensuring that the tourism dollar is improving the livelihood of Jamaicans."

TPDCo has managed to sustain the craft industry through targeted training, based on the accessibility of raw materials to the respective communities. For example, Portland utilizes river stones, Westmoreland utilizes thatch of various types, St. Mary utilizes bamboo, and Kingston primarily utilizes coconut shells and paper. Among the diversity of products that each market offers, the most commonly purchased craft form to date is textiles. The colourful nature of our T-shirts and sarong wraps are very attractive to tourists.



The craft development sub-sector boasts the island wide spread of sixteen (16) craft markets, across the parishes of Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, Port Antonio, Negril, Kingston and our newest development in Falmouth.

TPDCo continues to impact the lives of approximately 4,000 producers and traders, as we raise the awareness of the talents and capabilities of our Jamaican people.



TPDCO JA



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Jamaica captivates Russian visitors

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

THE ISLAND of Jamaica, and particularly the resort town of Negril, has captivated the hearts of Russian travel agents and could become a destination of choice for Russian tourists, according to Elaterina Lyubivaya, a Moscow-based travel agent.

Lyubivaya, who is the general director of a travel agency attached to Russian airline Pegas Fly, was on her first visit to Jamaica and was part of a familiarisation trip for 30 travel agents, hosted by RIU

Resorts, which spanned the resort chain's properties from Ocho Rios to Montego Bay and culminated at the RIU Negril resort in Hanover.

Pegas Fly made its inaugural trip to Jamaica on October 26 and will take approximately 5,400 new tourists to Jamaica's shores up to May 2019.

Lyubivaya told **Hospitality Jamaica** that the travel agents on the trip were wowed by not only the people of Jamaica, but by the natural beauty of the island, which she says, in her eyes, is unsurpassed. "The people are so friendly. There is fantastic nature. I have never



Sophia Haughton (left) shares lens time with Nicola Roberts.

seen nature like this, believe me. The Caribbean Sea, everything is fantastic!" she said during a recent reception at the resort.

"Definitely, definitely, the Russians will want to come to Jamaica! Definitely! For Russians, it is a new destination. A lot of Russians haven't seen Jamaica, and they want to see it, believe me. A lot of (Russian) people will come to Jamaica. I will tell them they must see it. It is a fantastic country; a fantastic island!" she emphasised.

General Manager of RIU Negril, Cristina Fernandez concurred, stating that Jamaica was one of the destinations Russians would find interest in due to the island's good weather and rich culture, for which people from that country have a high appreciation. She told **Hospitality Jamaica** that

attractions and tour operators stand to benefit greatly from their continued presence on the island.

"They like to taste the fruits, the local dishes, to get involved with the culture. So they look not only for the beach, but they also want to learn about Jamaica. They are interested in discovering the country," she said.

"I am positive that they will visit the different locations, attractions in Jamaica. It is a good promotion for the country because Jamaica is a little land, but everyone around the world knows about Jamaica," she added.

Fernandez said that RIU Negril would host most of the Russian tourists on any given flight to Jamaica by Pegas Fly. As a consequence, she said the hotel's staff members are working to



Yulia Savelyeva (left) and Nekeisha White rocked the dance floor.



Anastasia Egorova (left) is all smiles with Irina Soludano.

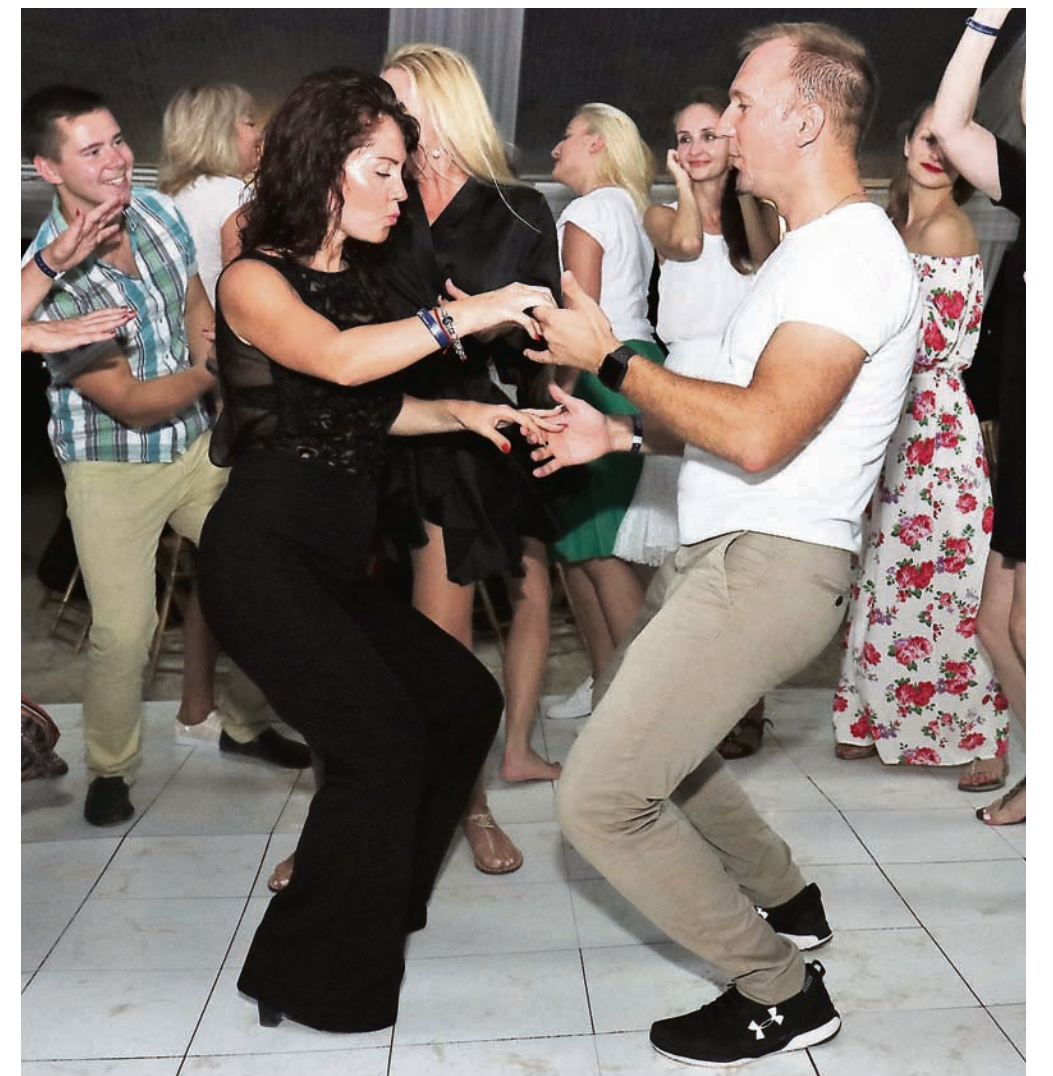
ascertain their tastes in order to "try to meet their expectations".

"Of the people that they (Pegas Fly) are going to be sending, we have 30 per cent of the market because it is the main destination they have chosen to send the major number of Russian guests. For example, the next flight is for 200 passengers, and the RIU Negril will get 75," she explained.

"They started with a charter flight, which they are going to be sending clients from now until May, and it is a new market so we want to cause a good impression for them to expand business with the Russian market, because it is a market with a lot of potential. Eventually, if this goes good – as this year is like the trial – we will have a Russian market coming to Jamaica with more frequency. It is beautiful to have people who are interested in learning the culture of such a beautiful country like Jamaica," she said.



Russian travel agents Maria Konstantinova (left) poses with Kirill Sormanov and Katrin Gavrilova.



Russian tourists having a great time at RIU Negril last Thursday night.

RIU Resorts' Tina Dunbar (left) takes a quick selfie with Cristina Fernandez (GM of RIU Negril).

Jamaica named Caribbean's Best Spa Destination



BY WORLD SPA AWARDS

JAMAICA HAS been recognised by the World Spa Awards as the Caribbean's Best Spa Destination for 2018. The award was bestowed on the destination at the fourth annual World Spa Awards which, recently took place at The St Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort. The star-studded gala ceremony brought together pioneers, influencers, and leading figureheads of the global spa and wellness industry.

Jamaica's leading properties also received top awards that evening, including 'Jamaica's Best Hotel Spa 2018', given to The Ocean Spa at

Jamaica Inn; 'Jamaica's Best Resort Spa 2018', given to FieldSpa at GoldenEye; and 'Jamaica's Best Wellness Retreat 2018', given to Jewel Grande Montego Bay Resort & Spa.

"On behalf of Jamaica, we are honoured to be awarded the Caribbean's Best Spa Destination this year," said Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. "This much-sought after accolade demonstrates the destination's success and our ongoing commitment to offering our visitors a world-class array of spa and wellness experiences."

This award follows a string of recent accolades won by Jamaica. In September, at the

25th annual World Travel Awards, Jamaica snagged the Caribbean's Leading Destination and Leading Cruise Destination designation. In June, the island earned the TravelAge West's Wave Award for Best Caribbean Destination by Canadian Travel Agents for the seventh consecutive year, and in the UK, the World of Cruising Wave Award for Favourite Destination. In March, Jamaica was the overall winner in the 2018 TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice awards for Caribbean Destinations, ranking #1 out of 10. It also ranked #14 Best Destination in the World.

World Spa Awards is the sister event to World Travel Awards,



Director of Tourism Donovan White addresses the audience at the VIP cocktail reception.

currently celebrating its 25th anniversary. For more information about the 2018 World Spa Awards, visit worldspaawards.com.

spaawards.com.

For more information about Jamaica, please visit www.visitjamaica.com.

Destination Jamaica takes to the seas *Fêtes travel specialists aboard the Spirit of Baltimore*

OVER 100 travel professionals set sail recently aboard the Spirit of Baltimore Cruise as part of the Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) Join Me In Jamaica Travel Agent Tradeshow and Winter 2019 Product Launch. The series is one of 18 events taking place across the Northeast to promote Jamaica and to provide updates on what is new in the destination. Director of Tourism Donovan White thanked the travel agents for their unwavering support over the years.

The Join Me in Jamaica campaign connects travellers to Jamaica through various programmes, including a digital video series, a summer sweepstakes offering a trip to the destination, and events similar to the dinner cruise aboard the *Spirit of Baltimore*.

Jamaica continues to experience strong growth in stopovers. The US market saw a 7.5 per cent growth, with the Northeast region experiencing a six per cent growth.

The JTB is hosting other trade shows throughout November in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Arkansas.



Over 100 travel professionals in Baltimore awaited registration and eagerly waited to board the Spirit of Baltimore Cruise of the Inner Harbor for an update on Destination Jamaica.



These travel agents enjoy themselves aboard the Spirit of Baltimore cruise. From left to right are Sarah Klein, Time For Travel; Yvette Shaqir, Travel Tom Agency; Doris Graham, Time for Travel and Top 50 Jamaica Travel Specialist 2016, and Julie Cary, Suite Dreams.



From left: Victoria Harper, Jamaica Tourist Board's Northeast business development manager based in Baltimore; Garfield Collins, regional sales manager of Couples Resort; Cindy Amin, owner of Colesville Travel in Silver Spring, MD; and Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. During the Spirit of Baltimore cruise, Cindy Amin was the lucky winner of a four-day-three-night stay at any of the Couples Resorts in Jamaica.



Jamaica's Director of Tourism Donovan White addressing travel agents aboard the Spirit of Baltimore Cruise.

ARTISAN CORNER

FROM JAPAN TO JAMAICA

Takeyama takes on the craft industry

IN A quest for adventure after retirement, through the assistance of the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA), Kyoji Takeyama has landed opportunities in some of the world's leading tourist destinations like our very own Jamaica.

Takeyama, a Japan native who hails from a town known as Mitaka City in Tokyo, has joined the members of the craft department of the Tourism Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo).

A former warehouse supervisor at a company known as Tokyo Hands, for the next two years, he will lend his expert advice on merchandising and effective ways to market craft products. He also has plans to introduce craft producers and traders to the digital space and will impart knowledge on how to add websites such as E-bay and Amazon to their selling strategies.

Adventurous at heart, Takeyama, with his trusty electronic translator, was elated to speak about his Jamaican experience. He also used Spanish to aid in his expression of his stay and vision for the department and craft sector as the craft department has to ensure that the Jamaican craft industry stays on top of the game by developing strategies geared at improving the sub-sector, which provides employment for nearly 10,000 craft producers.

The zealous merchandiser spends most of his days brainstorming,



Kyoji Takeyama

Kyoji Takeyama, newly assigned member of the Tourism Product Development Company's (TPDCo) craft department, stands in front of a local craft market.

researching, and planning his presentations. He often recounts his visits to the craft markets when he discusses how he develops his teaching strategies, describing the aura of the people and how different it seems in comparison to the Japanese craft industry.

"Craft in Japan is very different. Jamaica

still incorporates a lot of hand-crafted items, while Japan relies on machines, creating factory items in bulk. I love how [Jamaica's] craft markets are brought alive with the representation of Rastafarian colours and life-inspired handcrafted items."

Takeyama has so far delivered presentations to the craft training team at TPDCo on merchandising, promoting Jamaican craft, and how to display items to catch the eyes of

buyers. He has been instrumental in a workshop in using dye plants such as ackee leaves to create tie-dye items.

Like any other traveller, Takeyama speaks about his love for the tropical nation of warm people.

"I have been enjoying the country and the people. I especially love seeing the many rasta colours because of my love for reggae music. I hope before I leave I will be able to visit a reggae concert."

His favourite craft items, he says, are the reverse stone paintings, and he is quite impressed with the local artisans, citing Peter Peart's innovative paintings on light switch covers and 'Chups', who creates accessories using fish scales.

Takeyama, however, still holds Japan close to his heart, and after a day of planning and presentations, he enjoys going home to his wife to enjoy a bowl of miso soup, rice, vegetables, and meat.



Johan Lundgren,
easyJet chief
executive

China will overtake France, says Euromonitor International

CHINA WILL overtake France as the world's largest tourist destination by 2030, a leading research firm has predicted at the Europe Inspiration Zone at last week's World Travel Market in London, 2018.

Euromonitor International says demand from visitors from countries surrounding China and rising middle class prosperity in Asia will see France lose its position as the world's most popular holiday spot.

Speaking at WTM London, the event where ideas arrive, Caroline Bremner, Euromonitor International's head of travel, said that in addition, Thailand, the US, Hong Kong and France would be the chief beneficiaries of growing demand.

The UK outbound market faces the uncertainty of Brexit, she said, while another concern was the ageing UK population with less disposable income, with the proportion of the population in the lower social classes set to increase by 2030.

She predicted there would be 22 million in social class D and 18 million in class E, which would have a knock-on effect.

"The industry will suffer from price competitiveness and a search for value," she said. Bremner said young people in the UK also had less money than in the past. "Whereas it is the opposite in Asia."

Euromonitor said a no deal Brexit would boost inbound tourism to the UK by pushing down the value

“The industry will suffer from price competitiveness and a search for value. Whereas it is the opposite in Asia.”



Caroline Bremner, Euromonitor International's head of travel

of the pound by around 10 per cent. In another session, Johan Lundgren, easyJet chief executive, dismissed suggestions that aircraft would be unable to fly once the UK left the EU if no air services agreement was reached.

"I am confident there will be a deal on aviation," he said. He added that in a worst case scenario of 'no deal', "a bare bones agreement would kick in".

"The detail of it remains to be seen, but we are assuming bare bones connectivity, nobody disagrees on that," he said.

Caribbean airlines achieves operating profit for year-to-date, September 30, 2018

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES reported a summary of its unaudited financial results, for the nine months ended September 30, 2018, which show the airline has moved into an operating profit and is net income positive for the year-to-date.

The unaudited accounts for the nine months to September 30, 2018 show Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT) of positive TT\$96m – this is comprised of TT\$118m on international and other operations and negative TT\$22m on the domestic air bridge.

The airline's total net income of TT\$48m is comprised of TT\$83m on international and other operations and a loss of TT\$35m on the air bridge.

Year-to-date total revenues showed a 15 per cent year-on-year improvement of TT\$291M. Fuel of TT\$450.4M was a major expenditure for the same period, compared to TT\$345.5M in 2017 resulting in a year-on-year increase of TT\$104.9M.

Caribbean Airlines' improved performance has been achieved despite the aforementioned losses on the air bridge which continue to occur. Since 2005, the adult fare on the air bridge has been fixed at \$150 one way, irrespective of rising fuel costs, for which the airline receives no subsidy. The actual breakeven fare on the air bridge is \$300 one-way. Of that sum, the passenger currently pays \$150, the Government subsidy to the adult passenger only is \$50 (children receive no subsidy from the Government) and Caribbean Airlines absorbs the loss for the remaining \$100 or \$150 depending on if the passenger is a child but occupying a seat.

GREAT NEWS

With respect to the improved performance, S. Ronnie Mohammed, chairman, Caribbean Airlines, states: "This is an exceptional achievement for Caribbean Airlines, particularly against a headwind of higher oil

prices and our increased support of the domestic operations. We consider this to be great news for the Caribbean Region, driven by the team's high level of professionalism, efficiency and customer focus".

Garvin Medera, chief executive officer, Caribbean Airlines adds: "This success is testimony to the commitment of our employees and to the loyalty of our customers, who support us throughout the network. There is still more to do to build on this foundation, particularly as we enter a traditionally challenging time of year."

Other highlights for the period January to September 2018:

- Improved cargo and freighter revenue and profit
- Increased passenger numbers and load factors on many key routes
- Launched new products, features and services including: Caribbean View, Caribbean Upgrade, Caribbean Plus, Caribbean Explorer, online Caribbean Miles redemption, Online Webchat, WhatsApp Chat, and Caribbean Café.
- Introduced New services from Port of Spain to Cuba and from St Vincent to New York
- Developed New Cargo website
- Executed interline ticketing with Hainan Airlines
- Introduced online interline bookings with three Regional Partners
- Caribbean Airlines has ranked 25th out of 164 global airlines for September 2018, for on-time performance by the OAG (Official Aviation Guide) Star Ranking.
- Voted as winner of 'Caribbean's Leading Airline' for the eighth consecutive year and was also selected as the 'Caribbean's Leading Airline Brand 2018'
- Air-Bridge Performance: Total Flights Operated: 11,372; Total Seats Provided: 805,233 and Total Passengers carried: 716,299

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AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

THE HILLS ARE FULL OF

Art

IMET Hubert Wizart in the market district of downtown Kingston earlier this year. He was travelling with a youngster who had a very interesting-looking basket, which I thought was made of natural straw. I was wrong. It was composed of man-made fibre. I was crestfallen. Wizart said it was his handiwork and that he had been making them for quite a while. He said that he was also a farmer and a

A view from Hubert Wizart's house near Above Rocks in St Catherine.



Hubert Wishart as he talked to Hospitality Jamaica about the baskets he makes from plastic fibres.

singer from Above Rocks in St Catherine. He cultivates watercress. I promised to go see him. I was interested in how the watercress was cultivated and how the baskets were made.

Shortly after that meeting, I decided to make the trip to Above Rocks by public transport. Adventure time again. And it certain was. For the ride in the JUTC bus from Half-Way-Tree was one of the most uncomfortable in my life, competing with that from Montego Bay to Mandeville, and I am no spring chicken.

From the bus got into the hills, the ride was just rough and bumpy. It was mostly on winding narrow roads atop ridges, and strips of lands that connect hills. What eased my discomfiture were the

fantastic views of the verdant hills and valleys and quaint, little houses.

I alighted the bus at St Mary's College, for I was using one stone to kill two birds. The school buildings are perched on a hillside, truly above the rocks. After doing my business, I called Wizart. He gave me certain instructions, but it turned out that I had passed the point where we should have met.

It was when I started to 'buss' a sweat that I called again, only to find out I was way past the meeting point. When I got back to that point, he showed me where we would go. It was way, way down. He was not living in Above Rocks proper. Why rural folks always do that?

I asked about walking along precipices and ledges. He said that



Hubert Wizart the singing watercress farmer has many stories to tell.

we might be, but there was another way, but much longer. I opted for it. It was really long, and rough, going, going, going down until we reached a little stream running under a bridge without rails. I walked through the water, not on the bridge.

After that we went up and up and up, walking and chatting and sweating. There were not many houses to see. We were in a forest. Near to Wizart's house, there were about two more, and that was it.

After meeting his parents and brothers, we spoke about his artistry, basket-making, and singing, and other stories of his life, one in particular that he cannot get over. Yet, I did get to see the watercress. Rain has affected the crop.

THE WINDING ROAD

I left with a promise to return, but in order to avoid the long, rough road back to Above Rocks, I opted to walk the shorter route on the steep hillside from which there is the view of a gaping valley. I struggled up the incline, cursing my adventurous spirit to myself. Shortly, I was back on the main road, the winding narrow road to Kingston.

I always find myself on those roads. Yet, unlike the trip to Wizart's yard, I did not plan to go see Samuel Clemmings in Eden Hill, Jacks River in St Mary. I was on my way elsewhere when I chanced upon him and his family.

They, too, are living on top of a hill with a winding road. Phew! I sat on their veranda chatting away as if I had known them for years, when I learned of Clemmings' skills in making items from strips of dried banana trunk fibres. He then showed me several items that he were made from such before going on to demonstrate how the strips are processed before he turned them into artful, but useful pieces.

In between the demos, we spoke about how 'blue draws' are made. I shared some of what I had made the night before me. They liked my stuff but laughed at how misshapen they were. I felt so at home with these perfect strangers, especially a little boy, who did not stop staring at me. I left them with another promise to return, and I will.

Back home, I used the strips that Clemmings gave me to properly tie my blue draws. LOL! No pun intended. Now, I heard he has a hat made of dried banana trunk fibre for me. But, will it fit my big head?



Those were the days when things were blue.

Antiques and collectibles evoke memories

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica

FOR THE first time in 27 years, Ainsley Henriques is not managing the Antiques and Collectibles Fair held at the Lindo Hall at Campion College, Matilda's Corner in St Andrew. He has passed on the reins to Wayne Nasralla and Kimberly Kong, but his memories of the popular event he co-founded will perhaps last forever.

"People from all walks of life



Of music and the memories it evokes.

have visited, and there have been some fascinating stories," said Henriques. And the enthralling narratives will continue to be told.

This year's installment was held on Saturday, November 10, and Sunday, November 11, and the memories that antiques and collectibles evoke came rushing back. It is the sort of event where you see something that reminds you of another thing, another event or of someone, and by the time you know it, it is gone, never to be seen again.

And then there are the pieces that you have seen over and over again, yet to be acquired by new owners. They are the constant reminders of the sensibilities and tastes of yesteryear, keeping the memories alive. Outside of the antiques and collectibles, there is artwork, clothes, jewellery and accessories, handbags, footwear, etc, also making it the place to shop for current items.

The idea for the event was born out of the hosting of the British Broadcasting Corporation British Antiques Road Show held at Devon House 27 years ago and out of an antiques fair that Henriques visited in Ontario, Canada, shortly after the BBC show. Over the years, it has evolved into a 'must-go' for many



For a connection to the recent past please dial a number.

vendors and patrons. The turnout this year continues to be encouraging.

Apart from the memories they evoke, many of the items are bought for practical purposes because they are not all conversation pieces to be resold at another time and place or to be put down to gather dust. A female patron told **Hospitality Jamaica** that she actually eats from the fancy dishes she has bought over the years. It's about eating with style.

It is also a place where people can go to learn about the value of some of the things they own.

Henriques told the story of a former tractor driver and his wife who



Marie Baillie's rural Jamaican scenes are replete with nostalgia.



Some memories are as precious as this stone collection.

took a bottle that the man had unearthed with his tractor. He said that the man nearly dropped the bottle when he heard how much its value was.

"Then his wife looked at the displays on the stage and reminded him that there was a bed that was similar to theirs. When they were told of the value of the bed, the value of the bottle paled in comparison. They

left two of the most delighted people that had ever been to the Antiques and Collectibles Fair in all my years," Henriques said.

To the new operators and patrons, he also said, "Long may it last! Goodbye and good luck." And there are, without doubt, many good luck charms at the fair waiting to be possessed and caressed.