

The Gleaner  
**Hospitality** Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2019

Performing arts centre should bridge woeful disconnect between tourism and theatre

Hilton Associate of the Year award

Half Moon hotel on top at Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018



Tourism meets

**THEATRE**



Members of the cast of Jesus Christ Superstar perform during the event's launch at the Hard Rock Cafe Montego Bay last Thursday.

# Performing arts centre should merge **TOURISM AND THEATRE**

**M**EMBERS OF Montego Bay's performing arts movement are hopeful that the proposed performing arts centre for the city, which was recently announced by Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, will help to bridge the woeful disconnect between the tourism sector and that industry.

Producer and founder of First Dance Studios Jody-Marie Smith says Montego Bay, in particular, has been home to "astounding and noteworthy talent" which only needed the requisite support and facilities to enable young performers to fully benefit from tourism dollars.

"With tourism as one of Jamaica's greatest contributors to GDP [gross domestic product] entertainment playing such a critical role in tourism, and Montego Bay being the tourism capital of Jamaica and central to the location of the majority of our major hotels and attractions, we are so well poised for this to happen in the west," she said during her address at last Thursday's launch



From left: Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffiths; Director of Corporate Communications Fiona Fennell; and personal assistant to the minister of tourism, Anna Newell, at the launch of Jesus Christ Superstar last Thursday at the Hard Rock Cafe, Montego Bay.

of **Jesus Christ Superstar** at the Hard Rock Cafe in Montego Bay.

"We have spent countless hours in meetings, lobbying and raising awareness of our mission and seeking support because not only

do the performing arts contribute to physical and cognitive development, but the socio-economic benefits and positive spin-offs from investing in this industry are limitless," Smith added.



Francois Medley (as Jesus) delivers an emotional rendition of the song 'Gethsemane' in an excerpt from the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

She said continued partnerships with the Government and private-sector entities must be formed in order to allow the industry to bring other performances akin to **Jesus Christ Superstar** to Jamaica which, with an all-Jamaican cast, will "showcase the talents of Jamaican performers and expand our cultural offerings".

Smith, however, lamented the inordinate amount of time the relevant authorities have taken to provide an enabling environment for the performing arts, even

though it has been proven worldwide to be highly sustainable with remarkable returns.

"First-World countries have already identified the restorative power, and lucrative nature of the arts and have adopted a model allowing them to tap into this multi-billion dollar industry. Our hotels are also building theatres equipped with near Broadway-quality stages, lighting and sound components, as they realise the value of entertainment for guests," she said.

"International musicals such as

**The Lion King** come to Jamaica to seek talent, yet we seemingly continue to marginalise our local performers and remain at the mercy of others for an opportunity to use the few premium facilities in our own country,” she argued.

For businessman and executive producer of **Jesus Christ Superstar** Andre Dixon, the revival of the theatre movement in Montego Bay is not just a venture to satisfy a self-serving need for accolades and accomplishments, but to fill a void in the west for high-quality theatre presentations.

According to Dixon, more shows mean more money, particularly for micro and small businesses.

“Something of this magnitude also ignites what we call trickle-down economics for many businesses. We are keeping Sun Island busy; Di Photo Shop is busy with videography and photography, although they are providing some sponsorship to us as well; the seamstresses are busy with making costumes; the craftsmen are busy with providing stage props; the food establishments are busy providing refreshments for all of our cast,” he explained.

“We are putting the cart before the horse to get people’s attention, and I appreciate that. This is a multibillion-dollar industry, and we are doing our part to continue to lead the highway to success in entertainment,” Dixon noted.

In February, Bartlett had announced that the centre, which will complement the rebirth of theatre in Montego Bay, would be constructed on a plot of land



Organisers and members of the cast of ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ who will perform next weekend at the Iberostar Suites, share lens time with Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.

at Bevin Avenue in Montego Bay, which will be cited on lands which will make up a ‘Government campus’.

At Thursday’s event, he said he was expecting to receive the preliminary designs for the facility, which, he says, will be built with the capacity to accommodate 1,000 persons seated, and equipped with

the accoutrements to create excellent world class productions of any kind.

“I want it to happen because it enhances the tourism product also. Not only is it an important part of building civility in our city, but because no city can truly operate and be truly regarded as a city without a performing arts theatre,” Bartlett said.



From left: Andrew Nelson, Jahieme Stennett, Andre Williams and Rory Frankson in an excerpt performance from the musical ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ at the official media launch.



Singer Michael David (as ‘Judas’) surrounded by dancers and singers in an excerpt from the musical ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’.



From left: Jody-Marie Smith share lens time with Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett; her sister Sheri-Lee Smith, communications manager; and Andre Dixon, executive producer, ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’.

# Half Moon Hotel tops Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018



Members of the Stella Maris Dance Ensemble perform an item at the Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018, held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St James on Saturday, March 30.

## CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**T**HE HALF Moon Hotel in Montego Bay shone brightly at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on Saturday night after topping the Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018 at the national and regional levels in both the individual and organisational categories.

Half Moon came out ahead of nine other organisations on the national level and also copped the leading award for the Montego Bay region. Conroy Thompson, the resort's training manager, beat out eight other finalists to receive the national individual award and Montego Bay's regional individual award.

"I am over the moon, and I'm just so happy for the entire team," Thompson told **Hospitality Jamaica** following the awards ceremony. "We have worked hard, and it is really a testament to the work we do that we are finally recognised tonight, so I am just ecstatic."

The other regional winners included:

- VIP Attractions (Kingston region, organisation)
- Coleen Powell, general manager of Jakes Treasure Beach (South Coast region, individual)
- The Joy Spence Appleton Rum Experience (South Coast region, organisation)
- Yanike Brown, animations supervisor at Beaches Negril (Negril region, individual)
- Beaches Negril (Negril region, organisation)



Conroy Thompson training manager at Half Moon Hotel in Montego Bay, receives the Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018's Montego Bay regional individual award from Joy Roberts, board member of the Tourism Product Development Company Limited.

- Paul Norman, sales and marketing manager at Dolphin Cove (Ocho Rios region, individual)
- Jamaica Inn (Ocho Rios region, organisation)

The event was hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) to recognise and reward tourism entities that excelled in training and



Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett (right) poses with Conroy Thompson (centre), training manager at Half Moon Hotel in Montego Bay, and other members of the Half Moon team as they showcase their national and regional awards.

motivating their staff to achieve excellence in customer service delivery. The event also served to honour individual workers who exemplified and surpassed high customer service standards.

Dr Andrew Spencer, TPDCo executive director, congratulated all of the individual finalists and organisations which were selected for the ceremony out of 107 nominations from across Jamaica.

"We are heavily opinionated that all of you in the finals are indeed stars, and it's because of you that Jamaica remains the place of 'one love'," said Spencer. "We think these national awards are the Oscars of the tourism industry, and we're elated and also humbled to have been given the opportunity to host such a programme."



From left: Dr Andrew Spencer, executive director of the Tourism Product Development Company Limited; Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett; and Dr Carole Guntley, chairperson of the Tourism Service Excellence Awards, mingle at the Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018.



From left: Clark Lobbon, general manager of Holiday Inn in Montego Bay; William Massias, chief executive officer of Brawta Living in Kingston; and Wayne Habib of the Cardiff Hotel and Spa in Runaway Bay, St Ann, chatting during the Tourism Service Excellence Awards 2018.

# Reggae Sumfest takes flight with Caribbean Airlines

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES last week showcased its partnership with Reggae Sumfest as presenting sponsor by unveiling the festival's logo on one of its 737 aircraft. The aircraft will fly across the airline's network of 20 destinations.

"As one of the world's best reggae events, Reggae Sumfest is a perfect match for our new brand story, 'The Caribbean Identity', which is an affirmation of our shared heritage and culture. Music is a big part of the Caribbean, and our partnership with Sumfest is a perfect way for us to demonstrate how deeply we understand the passion points of the Caribbean," said CEO of Caribbean Airlines Garvin Medera.

"As Reggae Sumfest continues to chart a new course for Jamaican music, culture and festivals, we couldn't be happier to have a partner like Caribbean Airlines who will help take this brand to a new level," said Josef Bogdanovich, CEO, Downsound Entertainment, the festival's producer.

Over seven days, from July 14 to 20, more than 40 of reggae and dancehall's most celebrated performers will take the Reggae Sumfest stage at Catherine Hall and other venues in Montego Bay. Caribbean Airlines is offering a discount of 10 per cent off flights to Montego Bay and Kingston from select destinations for customers who book by April 15, 2019, for travel between the 12th and 22nd of July.



Caribbean Airlines showcases its partnership with Reggae Sumfest as presenting sponsor by unveiling the festival's logo on one of its 737 aircraft. From left: Gabrielle Gonzales, flight attendant; Josef Bogdanovich, CEO, Downsound Entertainment, and producer of Reggae Sumfest; Garvin Medera, CEO, Caribbean Airlines; and Nychelle McNish, flight attendant.

## Heightened participation from yet-to-be-built hotels at Tourism Linkages speed networking

**Janet Silvera**

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

THE TOURISM Linkages Network (TLN) has said that its speed networking session that took place recently at the Montego Bay Convention Centre was characterised by heightened participation from larger hotels, as well as some others that are yet to start construction in Jamaica.

"We have hotels here that have not even broken ground yet, and they are here looking for business. One hotelier's remark was, 'Look, you have saved me 40 per cent by simply being here. I don't have to go looking for people. I have everybody here under one roof'," director of the TLN, Carolyn McDonald Riley, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

Pointing out the amount of commerce TLN

had generated since 2016, she said that that year, over \$181 million worth of business was generated from the networking event, which moved up to over \$200 million for 2018.

She said that in 2019, that figure increased to a whopping \$250 million worth of business. "This year, we are on a roll, and at least one individual has got a \$30-million contract with a new hotel," she revealed.

According to McDonald-Riley, the thrust of this year's event was also geared towards promoting access to information technology service companies, as well as promoting the Jamaica Centre for Tourism Innovation, which will be able to train workers to ensure that there is a cadre of staff before new properties open for business.

Some farmers who were in attendance expressed satisfaction with the inroads they

made in terms of striking deals with some hoteliers during the event.

Lexon Bennett, sales representative of Vegetopia, the marketing arm of Manchester-based Adams Valley Farm, said there was tremendous interest from members of the hospitality sector, particularly in the strawberries it cultivates but also in vegetables such as bell peppers, romaine lettuce and exotic herbs grown within its 80,000-square-foot greenhouse space.

He said the event provided an excellent opportunity to fulfil the company's market-security strategy through direct selling as opposed to going through middlemen "as sometimes sales are not consistent".

He noted that there was a lot of potential and that his company was looking forward to doing great business. "The feedback we got is that

they (hotels) are lacking in top-quality products, consistency and volume," he explained.

Director of sales and marketing for Broughton Foods, Pamela Lyle, who **Hospitality Jamaica** also spoke with, said there were overwhelmingly positive responses to her agro-processed sweet-potato French fries and pudding mix, which, along with her colleagues, she sought to promote.

Lyle said she had the opportunity to meet with direct buyers from hotel chains across the island and was able to showcase samples of their products.

"We have some requests for samples and for potential deliveries. Not only did we have the opportunity to meet with potential buyers; we also met some other local businesses from the island that have some great products and services that we may also take advantage of. So not only is it a great opportunity for us to promote our products; we were able to network with some other small-business owners that have authentic Jamaican products as well," she added.

# More Caribbean professionals required in tourism management

**T**RY TO discover the number of Caribbean citizens working in higher-management roles in hospitality in the region, or discover how many among them are women, and you will likely be frustrated.

It is possible that someone, somewhere has managed to discover the numbers, or research why so few Caribbean people rise to the highest levels of hotel management, but if it does exist and could be shared, it would be welcome among those who believe in the transformational nature of the industry.

This is not to suggest that employment should be on anything other than merit, but to question why an industry that is now relatively mature should have, or so it appears, so many expatriates still working in management positions, particularly in the increasingly ubiquitous international hotel chains that now dominate room numbers in the region.

To be clear, this is not to argue against the presence of talented expatriates, but to indicate that if the Caribbean and employers truly want to benefit fully from the region's premier industry, they need to do much more in a well-considered way to train, encourage and promote an able, experienced cadre of Caribbean professionals capable of managing the industry.

As with so much else in the Caribbean, this needs the closer engagement of educational institutions at all levels, and the willingness of teachers to understand the industry and inspire. However, it also requires all international hotel chains to provide training across their global portfolio, greater awareness by the international development agencies that fund training, and of course, those already in the industry to know that a pathway to the top genuinely exists.

## GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

What is striking is that unlike tourism – there are some notable exceptions – almost all other large private- or shareholder-owned enterprises in the region now have able Caribbean men, and significantly less women-running them. Unlike their predecessors, this



BARTLETT



JESSOP

generation of Caribbean senior executives usually have higher degrees in management, have worked overseas, and represent a significant part of the future capacity of the region to achieve positive corporate and national outcomes.

For this reason, it was heartening to see The University of the West Indies hold a groundbreaking ceremony for a new facility on its western campus in Montego Bay



which, the pro vice-chancellor and principal of the Mona campus, Professor Dale Webber, says will offer studies in tourism within a world-class school of management, among other disciplines.

Hopefully, this will mean that when it comes to tourism, the UWI will not only amalgamate all tourism studies there, but as Jamaica's Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett, has suggested, give serious thought to the regional role a faculty of tourism might play in delivering a greater number of industry professionals who will be able, eventually, to manage and provide

all of the skills the sector needs.

In his remarks at the ceremony, Minister Bartlett noted that there was much more to do when it comes to developing the region's expertise in tourism.

Speaking specifically about the challenge of developing individuals' ability to take advantage of the emerging opportunities that exist, he made clear that at present, many of the opportunities the industry offers those from the region require low skill levels and offer limited prospects for economic mobility.

This, he suggested, needed to change, as the industry, the nature

of the services it provides, and visitor demand are no longer as they were in the past. The global tourism market, he said, "is becoming increasingly differentiated and segmented, and its continued growth in the region will depend on having the right people with the right skills".

What is evident in the industry in the region, and internationally, is that a very different group of skills are now required to respond to changing lifestyles and consumer demand, not least in relation to the use of artificial intelligence in hotel management and a data-driven approach to marketing. Likewise, there is a pressing need for wider competencies in foreign languages and the creation of a research capacity able to analyse trends and to predict future patterns and trends in tourism.

If the Caribbean is to benefit fully from its hospitality industry and product, it needs to do much more to ensure its citizens are equipped with modern managerial skills so that many more of tourism's top jobs are occupied by the men and women of the region.



MINISTRY OF TOURISM

# Congratulations To Our 2018 SERVICE EXCELLENCE Champions



**TSEA 2018 Individual Winner:** Conroy Thompson – The Half Moon Hotel with Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP – Minister of Tourism.



*Tourism Service  
Excellence Awards  
2018*



**TSEA 2018 Organization Winner:** The Half Moon Hotel, represented by Brand and Communications Manager, Laura Redpath with Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP – Minister of Tourism.



**Resort Winners:** Back row (left-right) Petra Harris of sponsors Caribbean Airlines, Paul Norman – Dolphin Cove, Dr Andrew Spencer Executive Director TPDCo, Guy Stuart III, Chairman - Half Moon Hotel, Noel Issacs – Beaches Negril, Kyle Mais – Jamaica Inn, Oshane Ellis – Joy Spence Appleton Rum Experience, & David Latchimy of Sponsor Sandals. Front Row (left to right) Yanike Brown – Beaches, Colleen Gordon Powell – Jakes, Hon Edmund Bartlett – Minister of Tourism, Laura Redpath – Half Moon Hotel, Conroy Thompson – Half Moon Hotel, Charmaine Franklyn - VIP Attractions.

## Congratulations

from **Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP**  
Minister of Tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism and its agencies joins the wider tourism community in extending our warmest congratulations to the 2018 winners of our Tourism Service Excellence Awards.

Great organizations within the hospitality industry, are powered by amazing individuals who have the ability to create unique experiences for our visitors. Your extraordinary passion and professionalism have ensured that your organizations maintain consistently high standards of excellence, which have become synonymous with tourism in Jamaica.

Thank you for your outstanding contribution to local tourism and congratulations again on receiving what is certainly a well-deserved honour.

This year's awards ceremony was a resounding success. I therefore have to give special commendation to our tourism partners, sponsors and the organizers for not only believing in our vision, but for also ensuring that the evening was extraordinary and memorable.

As we forge ahead to transform our tourism product, only the highest ethical standards, the best technical standards and the utmost professional standards, will be good enough. I therefore salute all our nominees, for exceeding these standards. You are all winners and we are certain you will continue to make us proud.



All 19 Finalists in the 2018 Tourism Service Excellence Awards posing with their certificates along with Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism and Dr. Andrew Spencer, Executive Director, TPDCo.



Dr. Andrew Spencer (left) Executive Director of TPDCo and Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism poses with the 2018 Tourism Service Excellence Awards National Organization Champion, Half Moon Hotel, represented by Brand and Communications Manager, Laura Redpath and National Champions for the Individual category, Conroy Thompson (right).

## Congratulations

from **Dr. Andrew Spencer,**  
Executive Director, Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo.)

Hearty congratulations to the 2018 winners of the Tourism Service Excellence Awards (TSEA). This year's national champions and resort area winners were impressive in person and on paper that of out the 107 nominees, they were selected as the winners. Congratulations to Half Moon Hotel for taking both the individual and organization categories of the major awards categories; it was well deserved and we are proud to know that your excellent service has been recognized.

These individuals and organizations are the reason we can celebrate in tourism, they have defied the odds, and wake up every day with the spirit to deliver the service that our guests deserve. At the Tourism Product Development Company Ltd (TPDCo), we are privy to the behind the scenes activities of the sector and can attest that it takes consistency, drive and hard work for the outcome of the product to be presentable and appealing to our guests.



The service providers are the life blood of the sector; they are the ones to whom we owe our success, hence the creation and implementation of the awards programme. TPDCo has been executing the programme since its inception in 2008, and can say, undoubtedly that the industry is filled with people of passion, vigour and vitality. Their performance is almost unmatched, and their interest in the wellbeing of the guests is quite inspiring.

We are overjoyed to know that this product that we strive to make high performing and sustainable is in capable hands, and we foresee a trend of growth and expansion for at least the next decade.

It was Aristotle who said excellence is not an act but a habit. So, I encourage you to keep shining your light and be excellent in the service you give habitually. Well done and once again, congratulations!



The Stella Maris Dancers in performance



*Tourism Service  
Excellence Awards  
2018*



TSEA Committee Chair - Dr. Carrole Guntley, CD, JP greets the President and CEO of Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) Mr Emanuel DaRosa and his wife Sherry and Ms. Winsome Callum, Corporate Communications Manager, JPS and one of TSEA's adjudicator.





Hon. Godfrey Dyer – Chairman TEF, Jennifer Griffith - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism, Ian Dear - Chairman TPDCo, Stafford Burrowes - Dolphin Cove, Marilyn Burrowes Board member TPDCo and Dr. Andrew Spencer Executive Director TPDCo.



Dapper gentlemen ...TPDCo's Executive Director - Dr. Andrew Spencer, Tourism Minister - Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Vice President of Marketing, Airport Authority of Jamaica - Mr. Alfred McDonald and the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Executive Director - Dr. Carey Wallace.



**TSEA Committee members:** (left to right) Kenya Keddo Laing, Nicole Haughton Wright, Sheryll Lewis, Committee Chair Carrole Guntley, Kimberley Blackwood, Dahlia Dwyer, Renee Johnson, Tonijay Bent, Marline Stephenson Dalley, Ann Phillpotts and Fiona Fennell.

## Thanks to Our Sponsors:





Jewel Runaway Bay: Department of the Year, Housekeeping.



Jewel Runaway Bay: Manager of the Year, Delhalon 'Don' Minto.

# Jewel Resorts staff rewarded for excellence



Jewel Runaway Bay: Associate of the Year, Jamar Stewart.

## Carl Gilchrist

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**T**TEAM MEMBERS of the three Jewel Resorts properties in St Ann – Runaway Bay, Paradise Cove and Dunn’s River who went the extra mile – in exceeding expectations and ensuring that guests were satisfied during their vacations were recognised recently.

Acknowledging their efforts, the resort chain went the extra mile in thanking them for their outstanding service over the past year.

At three different ceremonies, the best-performing team members were honoured at what the chain dubbed ‘Excellence Awards’ and were showered with loads of goodies ranging from cash to appliances and vacations locally and overseas, among other gifts. Sponsors played a huge part in the events, donating a large percentage of the prizes offered to the workers.

Managing director for the three properties, Carol Bourke, while hailing the awardees, noted that the awards ceremonies represented a sense of accomplishment, dedication and passion to deliver on the promise “that as a resort company, we promote the act of exceeding expectations, sharing Jamaica’s culture and unique product and services that have become the hallmark of our brand”.

She remarked that with the resorts being owned and managed by Playa Hotels and Resorts since last year, their mission was to honour the past while embracing the future. “The sky is the limit for what we can achieve when we



Jewel Paradise Cove: Associate of the Year, Angella Henry (centre), with General Manager Barbara Burton (right) and Dalbert Nembhard.

work together,” Bourke noted.

“We continue to strive for excellence, knowing that we cannot rest on our laurels in this competitive environment. But with the committed associates that we have, nothing

is impossible,” she added.

The season of awards started with Jewel Runaway Bay selecting Jamar Stewart as

PLEASE SEE **JEWEL**, 16



Star performers celebrating their staff awards as they perform for their peers.

# Hilton Associate of the Year Award

## Janet Silvera

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

**H**OLDING HERSELF and her team to the values of humility, integrity, respect, diversity, responsibility and love,

Hilton Rose Hall Resort's General Manager, Carol Bourke, says the way forward is to build a legacy for long-term success.

"Delivering with a crisp and clear customer-focused approach,

which speaks to the core of who we are today," was the emphasis of her speech at the recent Excellence Awards at the Montego Bay resort.

Staged under the theme



Hilton Rose Hall's Associate of the Year Devon East (centre) is flanked by first and second runners-up, Veronica McKay, housekeeping, and Christopher Howell, banqueting.



Carol Bourke (third from right), general manager, Hilton Rose Hall is thrilled to hand over a cheque and many other prizes to the Associate of the Year 2018, Devon East (third left). Sharing in the occasion are (from left) Kerrian Gardner, Associate of the Year 2017, Sagicor's Wendy Bernard, Hilton's John Miles and Nadine Reid.



Night Manager Zephaniah Montaque was pleased to accept the 2018 Manager of the Year award from John Miles, the hotel manager.

'Honouring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Embracing the Future', the hotel recognised over 50 of its associates at the annual awards which has become a major

attraction for some of the biggest names in show business each year.

This year, the smooth crooner Grammy nominee Beres Hammond made a guest appearance, joining

the impressive list which has included the likes of Tarrus Riley and Tony Rebel.

Hammond, renowned as the romantic front man, songwriter, and collaborator, 'conscious' roots-reggae chart-topping performer, had the resort staff, particularly the ladies, swooning as he delivered hit after hit.

When the dust settled, and it was time to announce those who had succeeded in turning dreams into reality, Devon East of room service was named Associate of the Year 2018; Norma Clarke from the laundry was crowned Supervisor of the Year; and Zephaniah Montaque, representing administration, took home the coveted Manager of the Year title.

They shared the spotlight with a number of outstanding team members, such as Veronica McKay and Christopher Howell, Adrian Garth, Clover Hanson, Arlene Foster, Orval Clarke, Preston Bernard and Denise Belvett.

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The best of the best of Hilton's over 500 associates smile for the camera after winning top awards and prizes at the annual Excellence Awards held recently.



Hilton Rose Hall Supervisor of the Year 2018 Norma Clarke, from the laundry department, is celebrated by members of her team after accepting her award at the annual Excellence Award at the Montego Bay resort recently.



Hilton Rose Hall staff entertaining their colleagues.



Guest artiste Beres Hammond was a joy to these two Hilton associates, who couldn't get enough of him during their staff awards ceremony.



In keeping with the theme of Hilton Rose Hall Resort's annual Excellence Awards, former employees Joe Hylton (centre) and Jimmy Wright (right) were in attendance, along with Custos Conrad Pitkin, who also has a long history with the resort. They are pictured enjoying the awards ceremony.

# MAKING CASTOR OIL A FAMILY MATTER



Melda Harris of Newland, Yallahs, St Thomas, has been producing castor oil for about 15 years, and has absolutely no intention to stop anytime soon.

“**H**OW LONG do you think you can continue with this?” was a question I asked Melda Harris about her extraction of oil from castor beans. Miss Melda looked down on the mortar and pestle she was sitting over for a few seconds.

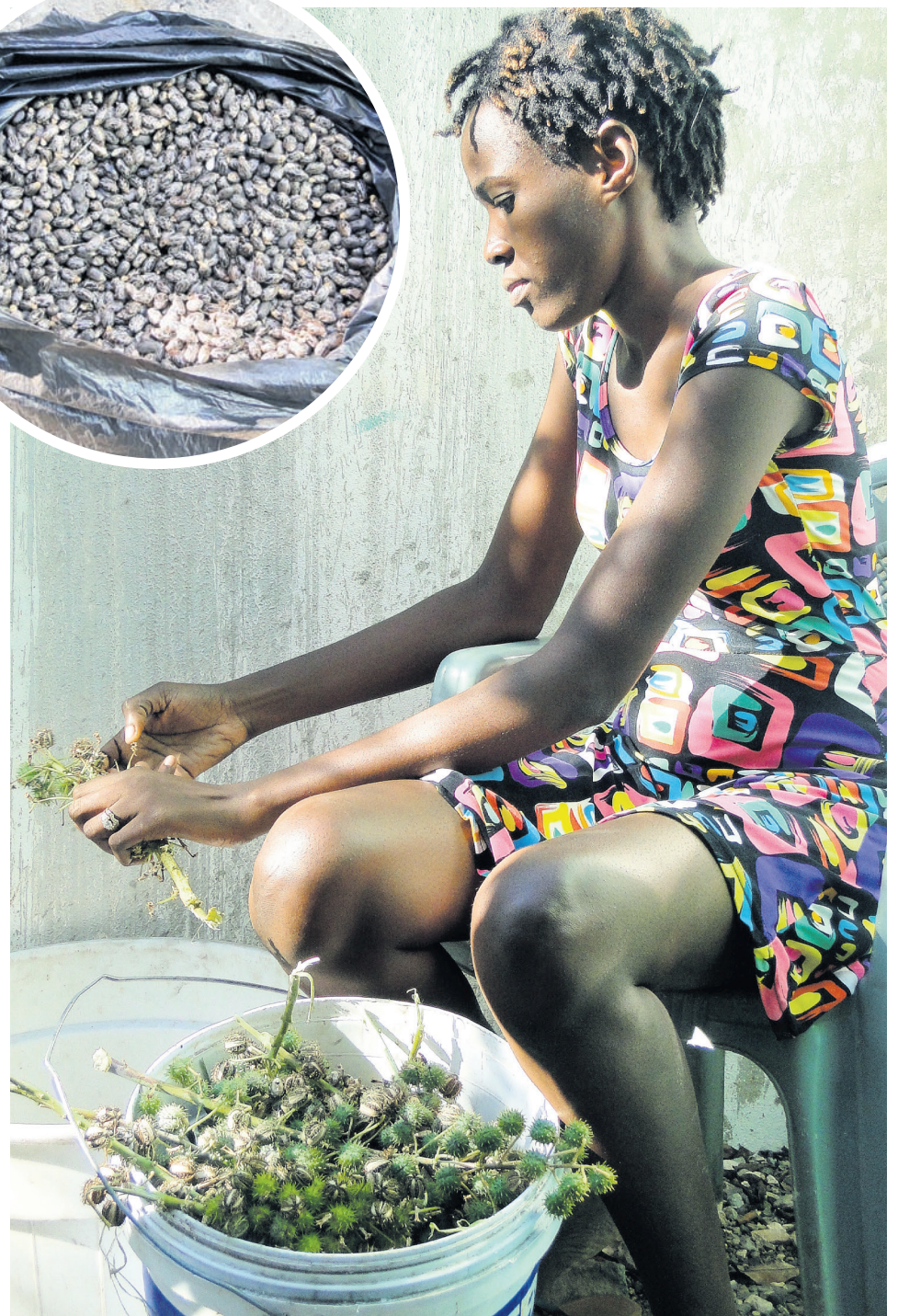
Before she could reply, her granddaughter, Chevelle Foster-Cornwall, said she is not going to stop. She knows her grandmother very well, apparently. When Miss Melda raised her head again, tears were rolling down the right side of her face as she said, “A true, mi not stopping, mi love fi look bout it, is a shame.”

Also looking on were her husband, Lewie Foster, who was around the pot over the wood fire, and another granddaughter, Sebrina Foster.

It was Chevelle who had told me about her grandmother’s business of extracting oil from castor beans the traditional way. She is one of my art of public speaking students on the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies. In one of her speeches, she spoke about the process that her grandmother uses to extract the oil from the beans.

I had seen the cold-press process some years ago, but I have never seen the traditional and tedious way. And so, I expressed my desire to see how her grandmother does it, being an eternal student myself.

Two Saturdays ago, I headed to Newland district in Yallahs, St Thomas, to see Miss Melda making castor oil. It took me a little while to find her, though she was not very



Inset: Castor beans before they are crushed.

Above: Chevelle Foster-Cornwall removing castor beans from their stems.

far from the main road. Long story. When we reached her yard, she and Sebrina were tidying up the entrance to the premises, a familiar scene. I reminisced briefly.

As soon as introductions and greetings were exchanged, the wood fire to bring the water to boil was lit. Lewie was in control. Sebrina was asked to get the mortar and the pestle. She went reluctantly.

Upon Sebrina’s return with the decades-old wooden mortar, Chevelle poured some castor beans into it, after which Miss Melda pounded them to a pulp with all her might.

When the water was hot enough, Lewie put the pulp into it and stirred. Soon, white foam formed on top of the water. It was the oil coming from the pulp. After much more stirring, and foaming, he used a cup to remove the foam and pour it into another

container. The foam was placed over fire a few more times before it became oil. I didn’t wait to see the process complete because it takes quite a while. It is tedious work, based on what I saw and was told.

As Lewie went through the process, he talked about how much of an expert he had become at extracting the oil, having learned it from Miss Melda. She has been doing it for approximately 15 years.

She said she saw a woman extracting the oil and became interested in the process, but the woman refused to show her how, saying it was hard work. Since hard work does not faze Miss Melda, she went elsewhere to inquire about making castor oil. That was how she met the man who showed her how to do it.

With her newly acquired knowledge,



The first stage of the oil-extraction process is on. PHOTOS BY AFREE KAN



From castor beans to castor oil.

Miss Melda embarked upon the challenging endeavour, and her family became involved. Chevelle recalled having to sit and help out while her peers play. She said she would ‘bawl’ and ‘wring up’ her face, because she did not see the value of it.

She does now, especially with the ‘natural hair movement’ going at full speed. She is even thinking of it as a business she could set up. As she was chatting with **Hospitality Jamaica**, she was picking beans from the stems, because, despite her tertiary studies, she still helps her grandparents from time to time.

Sebrina, who said she wants to be a lawyer, also plays her part, gathering the beans, acquiring wood for the fire, washing the pots, etc. It is a family affair, a most admirable one, and should the time come when Miss Melda really cannot make her castor oil, “Mi woulda feel like mi not inna dis world,” she said. “When mi no have it mi fret.”

And to all those who want the much sought-after traditional Jamaican castor oil,



Lewie Foster removing the first-stage formation of castor oil into another pot.



The Foster family of Newland, Yallahs in St Thomas, is united in producing castor oil from castor beans.

step into Miss Melda’s world and see why you should pay her what she is asking for a bottle. Also, remember that it gets so hot around the pot that sometimes Lewie has to ‘tek wh eh’ himself.

I took myself away from Miss Melda and her family’s space, while reflecting on how unpretentious and united they are.



Sebrina Foster shows the castor beans after they were pounded in a mortar.



Jewel Paradise Cove: Excellence Award winners with managers seated in front (from left): Alicia Lynch, human resources manager; Judith Hill, hotel manager; Dwayne Henry, food and beverage manager; Maygon Allen, financial controller; and Barbara Burton, general manager.

Associate of the Year. Other notable winners included Manager of the Year, Delhalon 'Don' Minto; Supervisor of the Year, Kenya Campbell; Chef of the Year, Shauna-Gaye Anderson; Most Recognised, Renford Plunkett; Smile Awardee, Noel Allen; Jewel Ambassador, Deidre Kelly and Department of the Year, Housekeeping.

Dr Janet Dyer, managing director, HEART Trust/NTA, was the guest speaker, offering an inspiring discourse.

Over at Jewel Dunn's River, Nigel Davis from the Grounds Department was recognised as Associate of the Year.

Other winners were Manager of the Year, Irvin Raymond, the restaurant manager; Supervisor of the Year, Gregory Richards from kitchen; Department of the Year, Housekeeping; Jewel Ambassador, Romaine Earle; Chef of the Year, Dwayne Davis; Bartender of the Year, Uton Hoilett; Best Smile, Shalice Taylor of the kitchen; and Most Recognised, Oshaine Cheeke.

After Jennifer 'Jenny Jenny' Small delivered a motivating speech to the team members, it was left to Richie Stephens to entertain the delighted team members.

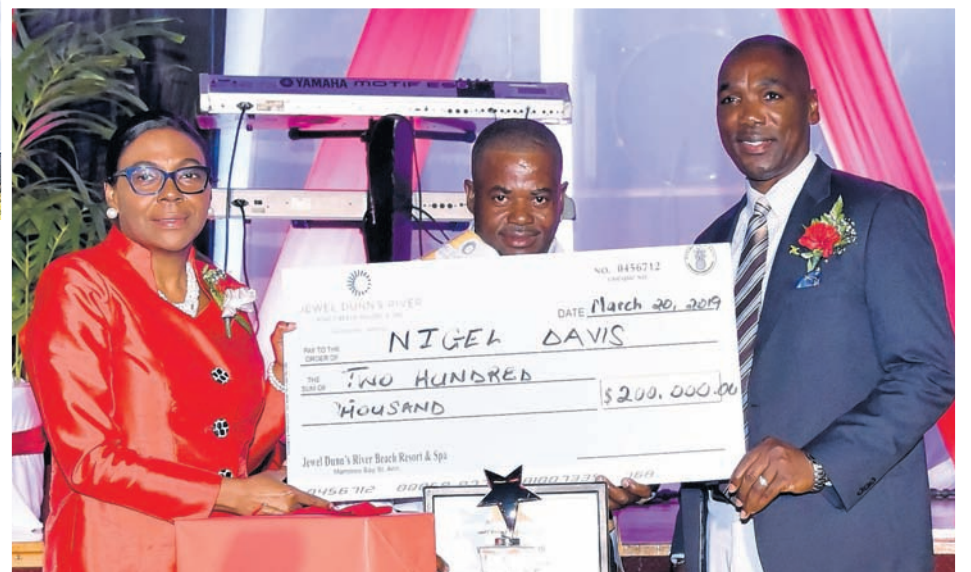
Finally, Angella Henry of the Stewarding Department was selected Associate of the Year at Jewel Paradise Cove, picking up her award from General Manager Barbara Burton.

Manager of the Year was Huntley Fisher, and Supervisor of the Year was Steadman



Jewel Dunn's River: Supervisor of the Year, Gregory Richards, with some of his prizes.

Wynter, who received the biggest round of applause after the announcement was made. A delighted watersports team accepted the Department of the Year award from Sharon Purser, while TJ Brown from the bar was the Most Recognised team member.



Jewel Dunn's River: Associate of the Year, Nigel Davis (centre), is flanked by General Manager Ann-Marie Goffe-Pryce (left) and hotel manager Gary Holgate.



Jewel Dunn's River: Chef of the Year, Dwayne Davis, collects an award from Andrew Allen, client relations manager, Best Dressed Chicken.