

The Gleaner

# Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019

Time for tourism's  
voice to be heard on

# CLIMATE CHANGE

Denise Brown: Shipping guru in the making

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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

# Time for tourism's voice to be heard on CLIMATE CHANGE

Ferocious waves crash violently against this abandoned house in Caribbean Terrace in St Andrew. IAN ALLEN/PHOTOGRAPHER

## David Jessop

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**C**LIMATE CHANGE is an issue on which the Caribbean's tourism industry has every reason to be vocal.

In 2016, the world agreed to work collectively towards ensuring that global temperatures do not rise to more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in order to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The signs are, however, that this will not occur.

This is because in many countries, populist politicians, backed by powerful companies, lobbyists, and wealthy individuals who profit from denial, continue to reject such data-backed scientific evidence.

To make matters worse, the United States is not only withdrawing next year from the Paris global climate-change accord, but is also working to weaken the global



David Jessop

institutions that have previously enabled a consensus to be reached on mitigation and adaptation.

Last month, new evidence

emerged. A research letter published in the scientific journal **Nature** from scientists at the University of Bern demonstrated that not at any time in the last 2,000 years has there been a period when temperatures have changed so rapidly or widely. Using evidence taken from ice, sediment, and trees, they indicated that the current pace of warming is unique on a global scale, and in recent decades, has accelerated as a result of industrial emissions.

For the Caribbean and tourism, the issue is existential.

Science suggests that if governments fail to deliver what has been agreed, the coral reefs will die; the beaches and the foreshore will be swept away or submerged; and tourism, which mostly takes place on the coast, will see the infrastructure that supports it and even hotels meet a catastrophic end.

Put another way, the industry, and the very large numbers of people who work in it, will come to feel the effect of ever more intense hurricanes, rising sea levels, and economically damaging natural phenomena like sea surge, beach erosion, and sargassum, the latter alone costing the region US\$120 million to clean up in 2018, according to Jamaica's Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett.

All of which suggests that tourism, the one Caribbean industry which has the most to lose, should be doing more to develop a higher profile regionally and internationally with its many partners to support the case that governments are making.

To its credit, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has from its own limited resources made a start. It supported the position of Caribbean government's

and the global community in Paris in 2016, arguing that the socio-economic consequences of not acting would be devastating. Since then, its members, together with CAST, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) have embarked on a programme of practical action to make the industry more aware and sustainable.

It has provided training and information on how to manage the negative economic impact of Sargassum, advanced hurricane readiness and response practices, and will shortly develop a joint work programme with the Washington-based Nature Conservancy on protecting the natural resources of the region.

In addition, working with the Inter-American Development Bank, CHTA has assisted over 150 hotels





Officials photograph sections of highway A1A that were washed away by Hurricane Matthew, Saturday, October 8, 2016, in Flagler Beach, Florida. The damage from Matthew caused beach erosion, washed out some roads and knocked out power for more than one million customers in several coastal counties. AP

to become more energy efficient and provided the entire industry with the tools and resources to reduce their carbon footprint while encouraging national policies that support greater energy efficiencies and use of renewables. It has also embarked on a coral reef restoration programme by providing training in three of the destinations that suffered significant hurricane reef damage in 2017 and is supporting online hotel environmental management systems.

Despite this, CHTA's Chief Executive, Frank Comito, willingly accepts that there is much more to be done. "In an ideal world, CHTA should have dedicated resources committed to working on influencing company, destination, regional, and global policies and practices to mitigate the rapidly growing impact of climate change," he observes. He warns, however, that the industry only has a limited ability to do so and to absorb the resource-heavy consequences of climate change.

For this reason he welcomes the recent words of the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, to CARICOM heads in St Lucia and the leadership on climate change and tourism, which the country's prime minister, Allen Chastanet, is bringing as CARICOM chairman and holder of the region's sustainable development portfolio.

Speaking last month, Guterres observed that the destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria had made abundantly clear that vulnerability "should be recognised by all" and that climate change was more urgent than any other time for small island developing states.

There is a strong case for CHTA and CTO to bring together the industry's many regional and international stakeholders to publicly endorse the views expressed by Guterres and Caribbean governments on climate change, vulnerability, and the need for global support.



A hot pepper crop being ravaged by the drought in Highgate, St Mary. PHOTO BY CARL GILCHRIST



The UN building in New York.

# UN and Global Resilience Centre to tackle sargassum threat, says Bartlett

**M**inister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, says the United Nations (UN) is fully on board to improve coordinated action and share expertise and resources with the Global Resilience and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCM) as it relates to the threat of sargassum to the region.

“This agreement follows fruitful discussions with the UN and the GTRCM recently. Both entities recognise that the effects of this sargassum are becoming more and more severe and concerns of the UN and the GTRCM include impacts on tourism in the region as well as

impacts on fisheries, human health, and the environment.

“Jamaica is taking the lead on this matter given the threat of this phenomenon on our main economic activity in the region – tourism,” said Bartlett.

The minister, who serves as co-chair of the GTRCM, was instrumental in bringing the United Nations to the table when he met with the UN Office of Partnerships in New York recently.

The UN was represented by the Head of the Caribbean Subregional Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

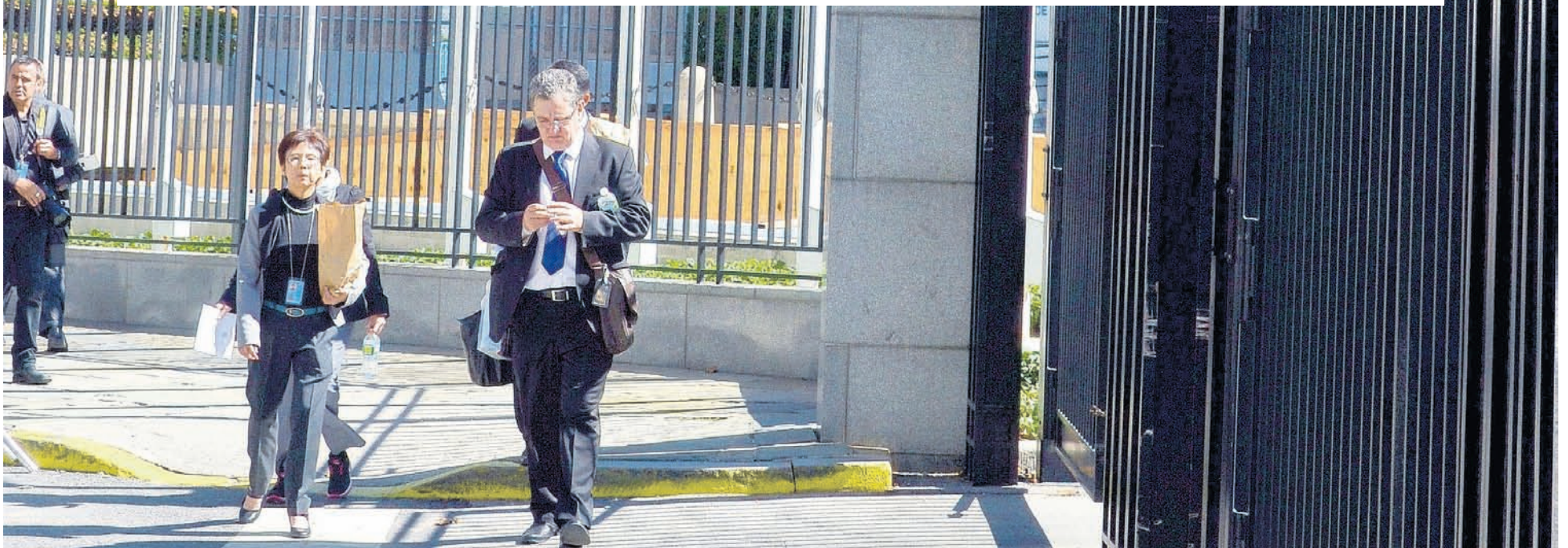
and the Subregional Coordinator for the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The meetings, which included Professor Lloyd Waller of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Renata Clarke (FAO), Vincent Sweeney (UNEP), and Ileana Lopez (UNEP), discussed the relevant work taking place at The UWI and across the UN and considered options such as the sinking of the sargassum to prevent it from coming ashore.

Bartlett, through the GTRCM, recently spearheaded a regional sargassum forum that included mechanical engineers from

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Precision Engineering Research Group; and noted researchers from The UWI and the GTRCM. The objective of the forum was to share knowledge and best practices as it relates to sargassum, specifically the type that originates from the coast of Brazil.

“We are still in the exploratory phase to bring together the best minds so as to collaborate on the best method to mitigate the threat of these phenomena and will be continuing these discussions to decide on the way forward,” Bartlett concluded.





# Come experience Caribbean tradition

*Contributions of indigenous people to tourism to be celebrated*

**A** SESSION at Sustainable Tourism Conference in St Vincent and the Grenadines will demonstrate how indigenous communities are embracing entrepreneurial opportunities through tourism

Today's travellers are booking experiential vacations that allow them to immerse themselves in the culture, people, and history of a destination. Recognising this, indigenous communities across the Caribbean are accessing tourism markets and welcoming visitors to encounter their traditional ways of life.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) will highlight this important development in a general session at the upcoming Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development taking place August 26-29, 2019, at the Beachcombers Hotel in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The panel titled 'Indigenous Conversations – Celebrating Our Past, Embracing Our Future', is scheduled for 27 Aug. The session will look at the changing composition of local livelihoods and demonstrate how the region's indigenous people have a tangible role and stake in the Caribbean tourism value chain. Indigenous communities are utilising tourism markets to embrace expanded entrepreneurial opportunities, adding new dimensions to their sources of income and creating niches that are increasingly sought after.

Session speakers include Uwahnie Martinez, the director of Palmento Grove Garifuna Eco Cultural & Fishing Institute in Belize, a private island retreat owned and operated by local Garifuna people; Colonel Marcia "Kim" Douglas, colonel of Jamaica's Charles Town Maroon Community;

a representative of the Indian Creek Mayan Art Women's Group of Belize; and Rudolph Edwards, the toshao (chief) of Rewa village in Guyana, a small Amerindian community of about 300 people, mostly from the Makushi tribe, who founded the Rewa Eco-Lodge in 2005 in an effort to protect their land for generations to come.

#### **DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS HERITAGE**

The session will be led by Dr Zoila Ellis Browne, who was born in Belize and is the head of the Garifuna Heritage Foundation in St Vincent and the Grenadines, where she is committed to the development of her indigenous heritage. A magistrate by profession, Browne also volunteers as technical programme consultant to the foundation, a Vincentian non-governmental organisation promoting Garifuna heritage and culture.

The conference, otherwise known as the Sustainable Tourism Conference (#STC2019), is organised by the CTO in partnership with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority.

Under the theme "Keeping the Right Balance: Tourism Development in an Era of Diversification," industry experts participating in #STC2019 will address the urgent need for a transformational, disruptive, and regenerative tourism product to meet ever-rising challenges. The full conference programme can be viewed <https://www.caribbeanstc.com/program/>

St Vincent and the Grenadines will host STC amid an intensified national thrust towards a greener, more climate-resilient destination, including the construction of a geothermal plant in St Vincent to complement the country's hydro and solar energy capacity and the restoration of the Ashton Lagoon in Union Island.



Colonel Commander Marcia Douglas of the Charles Town Maroon community shows the usage of an old iron. GLADSTONE TAYLOR/MULTIMEDIA PHOTO EDITOR



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# Caribbean tourism stakeholders urged to rethink direction of the industry

**L**EADERS IN the Caribbean tourism industry have been advised that a rethink of the direction of the tourism industry to maximise the value of its natural and intrinsic assets is needed to create better selling points for destinations.

The maximisation of these assets means that those who work in the industry must be empowered to keep driving it forward.

The suggestion came from the acting secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Neil Walters, who was speaking at the Grenada Tourism Authority's inaugural awards ceremony held at the Spice Island Beach Resort in Grenada. Walters stressed that stakeholders must embrace and develop the strengths of their people to keep the industry among the most competitive in the world.

"Yes, we can have the most beautiful properties, the best airports, the best seaports, but it is the people who make the Caribbean tourism product what it is. It is your welcoming and hospitable spirit that encourages visitors to return," said Walters.

The acting SG said that demands from visitors for experiences beyond the traditional 'sun, sea, and sand' only served to enhance the need for the industry to equip the hospitality workforce to perform at the highest level.

"If we took a snapshot of tourism at this point in time, we will see that one of the strongest reasons for the continued growth in the number of persons visiting our shores is the spirit exuded by the amazing individuals who get up and go out and work on the front line every day. The individuals who don't just see it as a job, but see the value of the service they are giving. That is the thing success stories in this industry are made of," said Walters.

He said that the trends towards experiential tourism call for the industry to shift away from excessive standardisation and embrace the unique culture of the destinations in the Caribbean.

The acting SG encouraged tourism leaders to leverage the natural beauty

and infrastructural edge the region has to develop emerging areas such as community-based tourism.

"In all the examples of community-based tourism I have seen, the key selling point for the visitor has been the chance to come and be in that community, to experience that community, to experience the people of that community. These communities create the unified voice necessary to market and sell the product, and, in turn, sustain the community's project," said Walters, who emphasised that such an approach must build on the existing model of hotels, which form the bedrock of the thriving Caribbean tourism industry.

## EMBRACE EXPERIENCES

"What we have to strive for is stronger links between this model with its sea and sand and the experiences which lie sometimes unlocked, away from the sea shore. As we change to match the demands of the times and embrace the treasures of experiences which exist inland, we must re-educate ourselves to see the value that we often overlook. Facets of traditional life that we may see as less than noteworthy, visitors may see as fascinating," said Walters.

Walters said the Caribbean must embrace its identity and take pride in elements of its culture that can also serve to boost the attractiveness of destinations to the modern-day visitor.

"I know that in recent times, across the Caribbean, we have seen food festivals emerging that promote indigenous cuisine, which are popular with visitors. Well, let's not hold back on the traditional delicacies which we are sometimes hesitant to unleash on visitors. I am sure many of our visitors would love those experiences. Some of our countries have communities skilled in pottery. We may need to move away from just selling pottery to giving pottery lessons. These are just a couple examples of the ways the things we do and how we live can become added value as we enhance our tourism industry," said Walters.

# Taste of Jamaica



Tourism Minister Hon. Edmund Bartlett (centre) pauses for a photo-op with members of the Culinary Federation of Jamaica who recently participated in the 2019 Taste of the Caribbean culinary competition in Miami. Sharing in the moment is the Chairman of the Tourism Enhancement Fund's Gastronomy Network, Nicola Madden-Greig (7th from left). The occasion was a courtesy call at the Jamaica Tourist Board's Kingston office on July 31. To date, the Gastronomy Network has supported the Culinary Federation of Jamaica in the execution of its annual Taste of Jamaica competition and expo as well as the Team Jamaica delegation to the Taste of the Caribbean competition in Miami, Florida. During this year's competition, the team successfully earned five bronze medals, two silver medals, and one gold medal.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (left) engages in conversation with Executive Chef Mark Cole (right) and Chairman of the Tourism Enhancement Fund's Gastronomy Network Nicola Madden-Greig during a courtesy call at the Jamaica Tourist Board's Kingston office on July 31, 2019. During the meeting, the minister offered his support and congratulations to the members of the Culinary Federation of Jamaica who recently participated in the 2019 Taste of the Caribbean culinary competition in Miami. **CONTRIBUTED**





In this February 5, 2018 file, photo, plastic bottles and other plastics, including a mop, lie washed up on the north bank of the River Thames in London. European Union officials agreed on Wednesday, December 19, 2018, to ban some single-use plastics such as disposable cutlery, plates, and straws in an effort to cut marine pollution. The measure will also affect plastic cotton buds, drink stirrers, balloon sticks, and single-use plastic and polystyrene food and beverage containers.

# Focus on marine pollution increasing

## *Tourism industry has discussions to rectify growing issue*

**B**Y NOW, almost everyone should be aware of the negative effects of plastic waste on the environment and the oceans. Only recently, the international press reported a sad find: plastic at the deepest point on the planet in the Mariana trench.

This alarming problem was the subject of numerous discussions at the ITB Berlin Convention, which had in attendance several Jamaican hoteliers, tour operators, and Destination Management Companies (DMCs).

On the ITB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Day, the founder of the organisation Travel Without Plastic pointed out how older hotel owners in particular are still conditioned to using plastic tableware and cutlery. The

sustainability officer of the cruise operator Costa also explained the enormous impact that cigarette ends has on plastic waste. According to this expert, many people wrongly assume that cigarette filters are made of harmless paper or cotton.

Those attending the discussion rounds pledged to reduce the amount of plastic in the future. Thomas Cook, for instance, has been in close contact with destinations for some time to push for a noticeable reduction in plastic waste. For a long time, TUI Cruises has been making sure that nothing goes overboard that does not belong in the sea. Next year, the company is already aiming to ban plastic on board.

Within the tourism industry,

overall awareness of the problem has increased significantly. In the world's major cities, many cafés no longer serve disposable cups and ask customers to purchase reusable items. More and more restaurants and hotels are taking a stand against plastic straws and offering alternatives made of metal or bamboo.

### **BOLD EXAMPLE**

California recently attracted attention with its future plan to ban small plastic bottles of shampoo and shower gel in hotels. In Asia, the boutique hotel chain Akaryn is boldly setting an example. It recently opened Bangkok's first hotel to completely ban plastic.

Things are changing in the air, too. On a flight from Abu Dhabi

to Australia marking Earth Day, the UAE's national carrier, Etihad Airways, completely dispensed with disposable items.

Worldwide, the oceans are absorbing the main burden of plastic production. They are fed by rivers that often disgorge vast amounts of waste into the sea as well as into areas and on to beaches popular with holidaymakers. It is only logical then that the tourism industry should have a vested interest in avoiding plastic waste.

And it is not only the oceans near developing countries that are badly affected. The situation is very serious in the Mediterranean, too. Rivers such as the Rhone in France and the Po in northern Italy are making headlines for the wrong reasons, which is why southern

European countries are increasingly supporting avoiding plastic waste.

The World Wildlife Fund has launched an interesting initiative in Southeast Asia. The Mekong, which flows through several countries in Indochina, is responsible for releasing large amounts of waste into the sea. The organisation's aim is to take measures much further upstream in order to create an awareness among the rural population for their actions.

One thing is clear, however: the debate surrounding coastal pollution and plastic waste in tourism has only just begun. As a result, it is certain to also be an important aspect at ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention in the future.



# AC Hotel offers **BIGGEST** meeting spaces in Capital City



Exterior of AC Hotel Kingston CONTRIBUTED



The Cays (Pelican Cay and Lime Cay) separate, identical meeting rooms which may be joined into one.

**T**HE DESIGN-LED lifestyle hotel, AC Hotel Kingston, which recently opened its doors, is revamping the meetings and events scene in Jamaica's capital city. With over 18,000 square feet of cutting-edge meeting and event spaces, this is the largest facility of its kind in the city.

"WE ARE happy to be able to fill a gap in Kingston by catering to our corporate guests who are in need of ample meeting spaces all while in a chic, comfortable, and sophisticated setting," says Adam Stewart, deputy chairman of the Sandals Resorts International and ATL Group of Companies, operator of the hotel.

Describing the setting, Stewart said the hotel was thoughtfully curated to meet the needs of design-savvy business and leisure travellers, and he and his family couldn't be prouder to introduce this game-changing addition to their hometown, Kingston.



AC Hotel Kingston Lobby Boasting Jamaican A

Located next to the BMW and MINI showrooms in the heart of the city's metropolis, AC Hotel Kingston is the ideal spot to conduct business, said the hotel in a media release.

The meeting rooms, which draw inspiration from iconic Jamaican landmarks,





AC Hotel Rocky Steady Banquet Hall, which accommodates up to 600 people for dining events. CONTRIBUTED



The entrance to the all-new AC Hotel Kingston CONTRIBUTED

independent meeting room and can accommodate up to 50 people at once. For intimate, private meetings, the Cays – Pelican Cay and Lime Cay – are identical rooms which can each accommodate up to 10 people and may be joined to double the occupancy. Each meeting space includes the latest audio-visual technology complete with seamless hospitality services.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness, during a recent visit to the hotel, admitted that he anticipated that the AC Hotel would elevate the capital city and, by extension, Jamaica as the regional destination of choice for visitors and corporate events.

“We have always said that it is our dream to make Kingston the centre of the Caribbean – the centre of culture, the centre of arts and lifestyle, and entertainment – so we need facilities like these,” he stated.

Guests staying at AC Hotel Kingston may earn and redeem valuable Marriott Bonvoy Loyalty Points during their stay at the property. Marriott Bonvoy is Marriott’s new travel programme launched in February



The Blue Mountain meeting room which accommodates up to 50 people.

2019 to replace Marriott Rewards, The Ritz-Carlton Rewards, and Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG).

The programme offers its 130 million members an extraordinary portfolio of 30

global brands and 7,000+ hotels located in 131 countries and territories, an expansive list of experiences allowing members to pursue their passions while travelling or during a staycation and unmatched benefits and rewards.

can accommodate up to six meetings simultaneously. The spacious conference room, named Rock Steady, is able to welcome up to 600 guests for dining events, and may be split into three different conference rooms.

Blue Mountain, named in honour of Jamaica’s highest peak, is the second-largest



# Jamaica Tourist Board partners with Round Hill to showcase the latest luxury offerings

**T**HE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) partnered with Round Hill Hotel and Villas to showcase Jamaica's luxury offerings at the Brunch & Concours Event hosted by Ferrari Maserati of Long Island in collaboration with RAND Luxury, Inc.

Round Hill Hotel and Villas, a high-end resort and celebrity favourite nestled in Montego Bay, was on hand-along with the JTB, to showcase its luxury offerings. The hotel is one of the leading resorts in the Caribbean, boasting sprawling hill-side villas, private white-sand beaches, and world-class service. The resort's guest list comprises world leaders, cultural icons, and Hollywood A-listers, attracting sophisticated and discerning jetsetters from around the globe.

Hors d'oeuvres and signature cocktails were served while guests previewed the latest from Ferrari & Maserati, along with high-end jewelry, private aviation, luxury destinations, apparel, fashion, and more. The private charity brunch



From left: Victoria Harper, business development manager – Northeast USA, Jamaica Tourist Board; Tara D'Agostino-owner of Wanderlux Destinations, representing Round Hill; and Kenton Senior, business development manager, Jamaica Tourist Board – Northeast USA. **CONTRIBUTED**

benefited The Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation & Southampton Hospital. The mission of the Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation is to eradicate cancer by funding collaborative cross-institutional research to

identify and correct abnormal gene function that causes cancer. This research is the basis for developing minimally toxic treatments for all patients with cancer.

The event was held at a private estate in the Hamptons, New York.



Jamaica travel specialists and invited guests visit the Jamaica Tourist Board booth. **CONTRIBUTED**

## Travel Pulse names Jamaica Tourist Board Best Tourist Board in Canada ... again

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) was named 'Tourist Board of the Year' at Travel Pulse Canada's Readers' Choice Awards gala for the second year in a row. Angella Bennett, JTB's regional director for Canada, along with her team, was on hand to accept the award.

The JTB has set a trend by copping the coveted prize since the inception of the award. "We are proud of the team in Canada for continuing to represent the destination with such distinction," said Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. "This skilled and dynamic team has worked well with our valued travel industry partners to ensure they are equipped with the requisite product knowledge to best sell Destination Jamaica."

Travel Pulse Canada is one of the top online resources in the country for Canadian travel agents and the travel industry. The survey is one of the largest of its kind in Canada. More than 4,300 travel professionals nationwide voted for industry suppliers in more than 20 categories, including 'Tourist Board of the Year.'



Angella Bennett, regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board Canada (right), with members of the Jamaica Tourist Board team in Canada at TravelPulse Canada's Readers' Choice Awards Gala in Toronto. Others pictured from left: Judy Nash, Jacqueline Marshall, and Dan Hamilton. **CONTRIBUTED**



DENISE BROWN:

# Shipping guru in the making

**P**RIOR TO joining the Sandals Resorts International family as the group shipping clerk, Denise Brown had worked in purchasing at another resort.

She thought she had mastered the art of coordinating and navigating the many intricacies of purchasing and shipping, but it wasn't until her journey with Sandals began in 2015 that she tapped into her true potential in the field and realised that there was much more to learn.

"Being at Sandals is a different ball game," she said. "It has truly been a learning experience – and a very good one. I can say I've become an expert in the field thanks to my experience at Sandals, and I love it."

As group shipping clerk, Brown is responsible for calculating costs and processing all documents pertaining to the clearing of all company shipments that arrive in Jamaica by sea or air. The Procurement Division, of which Brown is an integral part, handles all of Sandals Resorts International's purchasing and shipping needs, and it is Brown's responsibility to ensure that all shipments are received and cleared according to plan and that all relevant paperwork is prepared and processed.

This requires her to be fully versed in shipping laws and regulations, duties, and waivers and sees her in continuous dialogue with Government officials, customs brokers, and buying agents. Though she studied business administration, Brown quickly fell in love with shipping and logistics. "I love getting results," she said, "When I'm presented with a challenge, and I can work through it, find a solution, get it done, and everyone is satisfied, I love that."

Though the job is a

demanding one, Brown would have it no other way. "This job allows me to think outside of the box and keeps me on my toes, and that's what drives me. I always say I could never sit at my desk and do the same thing every day, and in shipping, no two days are the same. It gives me a sense of satisfaction."

Brown would receive an even greater sense of satisfaction in May when she was named the top team member, or Diamond Team Member of the Year (2018), for Sandals Resorts International. Still in awe of the achievement, she said: "I don't even think I've fully wrapped my mind around it yet. It was really a surprise. I was up



Denise Brown



Denise Brown winning: Obviously overwhelmed, Denise Brown (centre) reacts to being named Sandals Resorts International's Diamond Team Member of the Year and is applauded and supported by her fellow team members at the company's recent Annual Prestige Awards. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

against two very strong contenders, so I had no idea that my name would be called, but I am really grateful. I challenge and push myself. Not that I expect a reward, but it's just my nature."

#### ABOVE AND BEYOND

Brown's manager, Stephen Kerr, the company's group shipping manager, agrees that going the extra mile is in fact in her nature. He said: "Denise is a no-nonsense person as it relates to her work. She takes her job very seriously, and she will definitely go above and beyond. She is extremely knowledgeable about shipping and is one of our go-to persons here. Denise is always one step ahead of the game. She is diligent, meticulous, and always has the company's best interest at heart."

Motivated by her 19-year-old daughter, who is about to begin tertiary studies in computer science, Brown is hungry for even more growth. "I would say about 90 per cent of what I do is for my daughter or even more than 90 per cent. Everything I do is for her. I just want to motivate her and ensure that she knows that anything is possible."

Brown continued: "When I told my family that I was a nominee for the Diamond Team Member Award, they believed that I would be named the winner. My daughter said, 'Mommy, you are going to win this'. The dress I wore on that night is actually her dress. She saved and bought that dress for her graduation, but she gave it to me to wear on that night. She always



SRI Winner: Denise Brown, Sandals Resorts International's Diamond Team Member of the Year and the company's group shipping clerk, is presented with the winning trophy and prizes by the company's Deputy Chairman, Adam Stewart, at the recently held Annual Prestige Awards Ceremony.

encourages me."

Having been named Diamond Team Member of the Year, Brown will now go on to compete against the top team members for all resorts and companies in the Sandals/ATL Group for the title of Ultimate Team Member of the Year. If she wins the Ultimate title, she will walk away with US\$20,000, an acrylic trophy, and an upgrade to her previously won five-night trip for two to any Sandals/Beaches Resort in the Caribbean. This upgrade will include luxury return transfer from her home to the airport as well as first-class airline tickets to her destination of choice.

As she looks forward to heading off to the Ultimate Award ceremony, Brown is also planning for

the future – a future that includes intentions to pursue studies in shipping and logistics at the Caribbean Maritime University. "I believe I have mastered the practical side of shipping, so now I want to learn more of the theoretical aspects," she said. She is also desirous of learning more about the shipping laws and regulations in the other islands where Sandals and Beaches operate in order to assume a more regional role in the company's shipping and procurement operations.

"I am not looking to go anywhere else," she said. "I want to stay here and grow in the company. I want to learn more and take on more responsibilities, all in the name of the company."





Camille Needham (third right), executive director of the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association (JHTA), presents Michael Ricketts (second left), president of the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF), with the 'Abe Issa Award for Excellence', designated for the Reggae Girlz at the JHTA 2019 Awards of Excellence. Sharing the moment are (from left) JHTA Councillors Prudence Simpson and Christopher Jarrett and JFF General Secretary Dalton Wint. **CONTRIBUTED**

## JHTA presents awards of excellence

**T**HE REGGAE Girlz have been lauded by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) for their performance in the recently concluded FIFA World Cup.

The team was awarded the 'Abe Issa Award for Excellence' at the JHTA's 2019 Awards of Excellence at the Hilton Rosehall Resort, Montego Bay.

The JHTA noted in the citation to the Reggae Girlz that "they did not win, but they were never daunted. They were victorious in their demonstration of true grit.

Against all odds, they played with all they had within them – courage, strength, skill, and determination".

The JHTA said that the Reggae Girlz copped the Abe Issa Award "for breathing new life into the hopes and dreams of Jamaicans for women's football; for resilience, formidable talent, drive and determination to represent their country internationally; and for bringing glory and honour to the nation, enhancing the image of Brand Jamaica and contributing to the development of tourism."

## Leisure for Pleasure's head honcho – expect challenges but never give up!

JUDITH JAMES Watts, managing director of Leisure for Pleasure Holidays and Tours Ltd, one of Jamaica's leading tour companies, advises business persons to expect challenges but to never give up.

She was speaking recently at one of the events held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of her company.

"Examine yourself to see if you have a passion and talent for the business you are in. Learn to believe in God, in yourself, your gifts, talents, and abilities. Push through, hold on, work hard, and pray, and surround yourself with positive persons who believe in you," James-Watts further advised.

Scores of hotel and tourist industry players came out to celebrate with their associate at both the church service held at Fellowship Tabernacle in the morning and the awards luncheon held at the Knutsford Court Hotel in the same afternoon, where industry partners, staff, and clients were recognised.

There was an atmosphere of gratitude as everyone gathered to congratulate Leisure for Pleasure Holidays and Tours for reaching the historic milestone.

Director of Product Quality and Training at TPDco Deanne Keating-Campbell, who spoke on behalf of the industry, lauded the organisation for maintaining high standards over the years.

"We have had the privilege and pleasure of working with you from the start. I can stand here confidently to say that as an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, we thank Leisure for Pleasure Holidays & Tours Limited for holding exemplary principles."

The reason why Brand Jamaica succeeds is because we have companies like yours," Keating Campbell added.

Her endorsement of the 20-year-old company was mirrored by president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association



Judith James Watts, managing director of Leisure for Pleasure Holidays and Tours Ltd, is pleasantly surprised when she was presented with an award from operations manager and director Derrick Watts. **CONTRIBUTED**

(JHTA), Omar Robinson, who also spoke at the luncheon.

"For two decades, Leisure for Pleasure Holidays & Tours Limited has invested their time and resources in delivering once-in-a-lifetime experiences. The company has been recognised twice before for its outstanding service by the industry through the Ministry

of Tourism and the Tourism Service of Excellence Award, so congratulations."

Guest speaker Donna Duncan Scott, in her presentation, likened the managing director to herself, commending her for the tenacity with which she has held on to her dream and brought it to fruition for 20 years.

The company was conceived in 1999 out

of the managing director's affinity for travel. Since then, it has gone through multiple trials and tribulations, triumphs, and successes, cutting and carving its way into what is now known as its niche, providing both locals and foreigners with tours and cruises that suit their pockets.





## JUDINE THOMPSON HAS THE SECRET TO **GREAT SERVICE**

Judine Thompson shows off her towel-art skills that beautify rooms and which are appreciated by guests who vacation at Sandals Royal Caribbean.

**A**MERICAN CIVIL rights activist Martin Luther King Jr once said, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music ...”

Perhaps no one embodies this belief more than Judine Thompson, a jaunty room attendant at Sandals Royal Caribbean Resort & Private Island in Montego Bay. Her day-to-day duties may confine her to rooms at the five-star resort, but she is popular among guests and team members for her caring nature, friendly greetings, and the bright smile she shares even with those she sees several times each day. This quality has earned her the respect of her colleagues and frequent mentions from guests who leave reviews on the resort’s TripAdvisor page.

According to Thompson, the joy she spreads emanates from within, and this is the secret to the great service for which she is known.

“To give great service, you have to be happy with yourself, accept yourself, and then you will be able to pass on all of that to the people around you. People ask me why I am always smiling and greeting others. I tell them it’s because I am happy on the inside,” Thompson



For her work ethic and commitment to Sandals Royal Caribbean, Judine Thompson receives the Pacesetter Award from Hotel Manager of Sandals Royal Caribbean Lancelot Lebert, at the resort’s annual staff awards this year. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

said confidently.

Yet she admitted that she wasn’t always a happy individual.

The vivacious 31-year-old said that she went through a period when self-love seemed unattainable due to many disappointments she had faced in life.

“There was a time when I felt like none of my dreams would come to pass, and this really took a toll on me. I wasn’t happy on the inside, and I had destructive tendencies towards myself as a way of coping,” Thompson said.

She said that she found joy in

spending time with her parents and siblings, and this helped her to overcome her struggles. She also found strength in the friendship of a young woman with similar experiences. But according to Judine, complete healing came when she accepted all the disappointments and failures in her past and took charge of her own happiness.

“I decided that only I can make myself happy. No one or no position in life could do that for me. That’s when things really began to turn around. That’s why I say that service first comes from what

you are feeling on the inside. I got better at my job because I was motivated from within,” Thompson stated.

That improvement in her work caused Thompson to win big at Sandals Royal Caribbean’s recent staff awards. She copped the Pacesetter Award for 2018, a prize bestowed by a resort’s general manager on a team member who has shown outstanding contribution and commitment to the resort.

“This award is proof that I am improving as an individual. It has motivated me to continue doing what I am doing because things can only get better for me at Sandals,” she added.

The perception that things will get better was confirmed by Tracie Shortridge, learning and development manager at Sandals Royal Caribbean. She said that Thompson has also been placed on a development plan, where she is currently taking courses through the Sandals Corporate University (SCU) that will prepare her to take on leadership roles within the Sandals group.

She has already completed courses in supervisory management and professional communication, among others, which are enhancing the skills she already possesses.

“Judine is a highly self-motivated individual who is always looking at the positive side of things. No matter what delay or disappointment comes, in her desire to achieve success, she always just shakes it off and tries again. That’s a characteristic that Sandals likes in its leaders,” Shortridge said.

### **MOTIVATING OTHERS**

Although she is seen as a rising star, Thompson continues to look out for those around her. Because of her past struggles, she now makes it her duty to uplift others.

“Some of the younger team members see me as a mentor. I make sure I am always available to listen,” she stated, adding that though she is proud of her professional growth at Sandals, she remains humble as she still has a lot to learn.

“Yes, I do believe I will become a manager at Sandals one day, but in the meantime, I want to learn as much as I can. I am doing courses with the SCU that will prepare me to take on leadership roles. I am in no hurry. I just want to take advantage of all the training and experience at Sandals because the opportunities here are endless,” Thompson said confidently.



# IATA report shows growing AIR CONNECTIVITY

**T**HE IATA World Air Transport Statistics (2019 WATS) confirms that

- 4.4 billion passengers flew in 2018.
- record efficiency was achieved with 81.9 per cent of available seats being filled.
- fuel efficiency improved by more than 12 per cent compared to 2010.
- 22,000 city pairs are now connected by direct flights, up 1,300 over 2017 and double the 10,250 city pairs connected in 1998.
- The real cost of air transport has more than halved over the last 20 years (to around 78 US cents per revenue tonne-kilometre, or RTK).  
“Airlines are connecting more people and places than ever before. The freedom to fly is more accessible than ever, and our world is a more prosperous place as a result. As with any human activity, this comes with an environmental cost that airlines are committed to reducing. We understand that sustainability is essential to our licence to spread aviation’s benefits. From 2020, we will cap net carbon emissions growth. And, by 2050, we will cut our net carbon footprint to half 2005 levels. This ambitious

*‘The freedom to fly is more accessible than ever, and our world is a more prosperous place as a result.’*

climate-action goal needs government support. It is critical for sustainable aviation fuels, new technology, and more efficient routes to deliver the greener future we are aiming for,” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s director general and CEO.

Highlights of the 2018 airline industry performance:

#### **PASSENGER**

- System-wide, airlines carried 4.4 billion passengers on scheduled services,

an increase of 6.9 per cent over 2017, representing an additional 284 million trips by air.

- The development of the low-cost carrier (LCC) segment continues to outpace that of network carriers.
- Measured in ASKs (available seat kilometres), LCC capacity grew by 13.4 per cent, almost doubling the overall industry growth rate of 6.9%. LCCs accounted for 21 per cent of global capacity in 2018, up from 11 per cent in 2004.
- When looking at available seats, the global share of LCCs in 2018 was 29 per cent, reflecting the short-haul nature of their business model. This is up from 16 per cent in 2004.
- Some 52 of IATA’s 290 current member airlines classify themselves as LCCs and other new-model airlines.
  - Airlines in the Asia-Pacific region once again carried the largest number of passengers system-wide. The regional rankings (based on total passengers carried on







*'It is critical for sustainable aviation fuels, new technology, and more efficient routes to deliver the greener future we are aiming for.'*

scheduled services by airlines registered in that region) are:

1. Asia-Pacific-37.1 per cent market share (1.6 billion passengers, an increase of 9.2 per cent compared to the region's passengers in 2017);
2. Europe – 26.2 per cent market share (1.1 billion passengers, up 6.6 per cent over 2017)
3. North America – 22.6 per cent market share (989.4 million passengers, up 4.8 per cent over 2017);
4. Latin America – 6.9 per cent market share (302.2 million passengers, up 5.7 per cent over 2017);
5. Middle East – 5.1 per cent market share (224.2 million passengers, an increase of 4.0 per cent over 2017);
6. Africa – 2.1 per cent market share (92 million passengers, up 5.5 per cent over 2017)

#### **AMERICAN AIRLINES EATS UP THE MOST AMOUNT OF KILOMETRES**

The top five airlines ranked by total scheduled passenger kilometres flown were:

1. American Airlines (330.6 billion)
2. Delta Air Lines (330 billion)
3. United Airlines (329.6 billion)
4. Emirates (302.3 billion)
5. Southwest Airlines (214.6 billion)

The top five international/regional passenger airport-pairs were all within

the Asia-Pacific region again this year:

1. Hong Kong – Taipei Taoyuan (5.4 million, down 0.4 per cent from 2017)
2. Bangkok Suvarnabhumi – Hong Kong (3.4 million, increased 8.8 per cent from 2017)
3. Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta – Singapore Changi (3.2 million, decreased 3.3 per cent from 2017)
4. Seoul-Incheon – Osaka-Kansai (2.9 million, an increase of 16.5 per cent from 2017)
5. Kuala Lumpur–International – Singapore Changi (2.8 million, up 2.1 per cent from 2017).

The top five domestic passenger airport-pairs were also all in the Asia-Pacific region:

1. Jeju – Seoul Gimpo (14.5 million, up 7.6 per cent over 2017)
2. Fukuoka – Tokyo Haneda (7.6 million, an increase of 0.9 per cent from 2017)
3. Melbourne-Tullamarine – Sydney (7.6 million, down 2.1 per cent from 2017)
4. Sapporo – Tokyo-Haneda (7.3 million, decreased by 1.5 per cent from 2017)
5. Beijing Capital – Shanghai Hongqiao (6.4 million, up 0.4 per cent from 2017).

#### **THE UNITED KINGDOM TOPS THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC**

The top five nationalities traveling (international routes) are:

1. United Kingdom (126.2 million, or 8.6 per cent of all passengers);
2. United States (111.5 million, or 7.6 per cent of all passengers);
3. People's Republic of China (97 million, or 6.6 per cent of all passengers);
4. Germany (94.3 million, or 6.4 per cent of all passengers);
5. France (59.8 million, or 4.1 per cent of all passengers).

#### **CARGO**

Following a very strong year in 2017, air freight volumes grew more modestly in 2018 in line with global trade volumes. Globally, freight and mail tonne kilometres (FTKs) showed a 3.4 per cent expansion as compared to 9.7 per cent in 2017. With capacity increasing by 5.2 per cent in 2018, the freight load factor fell by 0.8 percentage point to 49.3 per cent.

The top five airlines ranked by scheduled freight tonne kilometres flown were:

- Federal Express (17.5 billion)
- Emirates (12.7 billion)
- Qatar Airways (12.7 billion)
- United Parcel Service (12.5 billion)
- Cathay Pacific Airways (11.3 billion)

Airline Alliances

Star Alliance maintained its position as the largest airline alliance in 2018 with 21.9 per cent of total scheduled traffic (in RPKs), followed by SkyTeam (18.8 per cent) and oneworld (15.4 per cent).



# GoJamaica



From left: The GoJamaica Travel team Dreon Harrison, Michael Chin Tung, Shandice Cammock, Bryan Clayton, Robert Ferguson, and Dave Chin Tung cut their 20th-anniversary cake recently at The Knutsford Court Hotel in Kingston.



Guests who won prizes at the GoJamaica Travel 20th anniversary celebration at The Knutsford Court Hotel recently. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

## Caribbean Airlines launches mobile app

**C**ARIBBEAN AIRLINES recently launched the latest of its digital products, the Caribbean Airlines Mobile App.

The app is designed for use by iOS and Android devices and features an array of tools to enhance the customer's travel experience. It is available for FREE download for Android and iOS users on the Google Play Store or the Apple App store.

The new mobile application enables customers to use their mobile devices to

- book flights to all destinations serviced by Caribbean Airlines and its interline partners.
- pay for Caribbean Plus seats or extra baggage.
- check in and select seats via an interactive seat map.
- book a domestic flight between Trinidad and Tobago and pay in Trinidad and Tobago dollars.

On the occasion of the launch of the mobile app, Caribbean Airlines, CEO Garvin Medera stated: "At Caribbean Airlines we are focused on improving our customers' overall travel experience. Having all the information and options you need at your fingertips definitely helps, which is why we developed your all-in-one travel partner, the Caribbean Airlines Mobile App.

"The app makes booking and managing the travel experience

easy and dynamic. I am also pleased that one of the features of the app is the ability for our customers to pay for flights between Trinidad and Tobago in Trinidad and Tobago dollars. With the Caribbean Airlines Mobile App added to our digital tools, we will further revolutionise how we communicate and interact with our valued customers."

The launch was held at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus, Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering (DCEE), and was attended by Professor Brian Copeland, pro-vice chancellor and campus principal, Dr Fasil Muddeen, head of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and other senior University officials.

### INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

At the event, Caribbean Airlines also welcomed several UWI DCEE students into its Summer Internship Programme, where they have the opportunity to work on IT-related projects alongside the airline's IT teams.

Commenting on the event, Muddeen said: "For the past two years, Caribbean Airlines has participated in our Engineering Internship course. Electrical and computer engineering students were offered summer internships with the CAL team and were



Caribbean Airlines executives (from left) Trudy Chin, acting general manager; Garvin Medera, chief executive officer; and Alicia Cabrera, head of marketing, stand with marketing specialist Zachary Harding at the launch of 'The Caribbean Identity' campaign launch. PHOTO BY STEPHANIE LYEW

assessed and then given credits in the final year. Caribbean Airlines has even continued to mentor the students post-internship and has agreed to co-supervise final-year projects in big data, data analytics, and software development."

Aneel Ali, Caribbean Airlines, chief information officer, added: "Today's launch is aptly held at the UWI's Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering, a hub for learning and innovation. We are happy to strengthen alliances which will see young, aspiring minds

collaborate and innovate which are critical to the development of our entire Caribbean region. We look forward to a mutually beneficial learning and working experience with our new UWI DCEE summer interns."

The functionality of the Caribbean Airlines Mobile App will be rolled out in phases.

Some of the features that are immediately available include:

- Home screen that shows your upcoming flights, where you can view your trip details easily

and check in 24 hours prior to departure;

- In app notifications, once customers subscribe at booking or check in, you can receive notifications for any irregularities that may come up during your flight journey with us (gate changes, flight delays etc.);

- Easy-to-access home screen icons to check in, manage your booking, and view flight status;
- Ability to create and store a local profile. This personal data is stored locally on your device for easy filling in during booking. Profile information can be entered once, to be used at any time when booking - first name, last name, Caribbean miles number, travel document details, etc.

- Menu for quick access to book a car, book a hotel, access flight schedules, services, and info providing quick links to other unique Caribbean Airlines products and services such as Caribbean Upgrade, Club Caribbean, Caribbean Vacations, duty free, Caribbean Flight Notifications, and more!

- Live chat facility to be able to web chat with an agent digitally during our call centre hours.

- Help centre quick-link access to be able to access FAQs;

- Ability to book a domestic flight between Trinidad and Tobago and pay in TTD currency.