

The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2019

Kingston

**A TALE OF TWO
MUSIC CITIES**

Negril

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TALE OF TWO MUSIC CITIES Kingston

WHILE KINGSTON'S counterparts such as Bogota and Amsterdam have been similarly designated as Creative Cities of Music, and have capitalised on the designation, boosting their music tourism, four years on, Jamaica's capital appears to be suffering from inertia.

This is the opinion of some industry experts.

Kingston was designated a Creative City of Music by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in December 2015.

However, at present, musicians, performers and other players in Kingston's music industry continue to struggle with 'access to spaces and places' for staging musical events, which is one of the five essential elements of Creative Cities of Music, cited by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), and which would boost its global appeal as a music tourism destination.

"Music needs a home; in fact, it needs many homes. From education to rehearsal to recording to performance, music cities require a variety of quality spaces and places to succeed. To meet this need, the first step is to take inventory so that gaps can be identified," the IFPI researchers said in a recent global study, dubbed The Mastering of a Music City.

"For live performances, a full range of venues is essential to support artistes... everything from small basement venues to stadiums and all points in between," it noted.

The essential elements of Music Cities as outlined by the IFPI are: artistes and musicians; a thriving music scene; access to spaces and places; a receptive and engaged audience; and record labels and other music-related businesses.

Over the last several weeks, complaints have not only resurfaced, but have heightened over the woeful lack of entertainment zones, an issue which has been a key source of

discontent for players in the industry, who have argued that the music and its earning potential including its impact on Kingston as a tourism destination, is not being taken seriously.

"In my humble opinion they are not capitalizing on Kingston being a creative space and the capital of reggae. Kingston itself is significant in the art of music. Bob Marley coming out of Trench Town highlighted the area as the genesis of this Rocksteady, Reggae Street dance type of set up. And Jamaicans have

Peter Tosh



FILE PHOTOS
Bounty Killer



Kaestner Smith shows the positioning of bass boxes by sound engineers to contain sound. PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

not to date capitalized on that as a creative space," President of the Entertainers of Jamaica Association (EJA), Kaestner Smith, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.
"There are a lot of car parks, a big waterfront in downtown Kingston. Downtown Kingston in itself has so many spaces to host dancehall, anything that has to do with music and sound business, and as it gets to 6 p.m., Kingston technically lock down," he added.

Smith's sentiments have been echoed by veteran dancehall artiste Rodney 'Bounty Killer' Pryce, who argued recently on a local television entertainment programme that night-time entertainment is virtually dead in

Kingston, with only three nightclubs considered truly active.

The development of music tourism was highlighted by the IFPI as being among the key strategies for being a successful Creative City of Music. It also identified tourism assets as including a city's 'year-round live music scene, music festivals and historical music landmarks' and noted that 'music tourism benefits cities to the tune of billions of dollars each year'.

This observation has not been lost on Pryce, who also expressed dissatisfaction with the level of treatment dancehall music in particular has been getting from state entities. He said tourists who go to the traditional resort towns on the north coast are seen as more 'respectable', as opposed to



the adventurous visitors who visit Kingston to experience its nightlife and musical offerings such as street parties, who, in his estimation, are seen by the Government as ‘careless people’ and not really tourists.

The UNESCO Cities of Music Network cites Kingston as a world-renowned centre of musical excellence, with a unique sound system culture; the largest number of music recording studios per capita in the world; the birthplace of six distinct musical genres: mento, ska, reggae, rocksteady, dub and dancehall and the careers of the legendary Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, Peter Tosh and Jimmy Cliff.

The network says Jamaica’s objectives proposed for Kingston as a Creative City of Music includes, among other things, using the creativity of Kingstonians as a driver for sustainable urban development and using music and the arts to redevelop and revitalise its inner-city communities, through the



Bob Marley

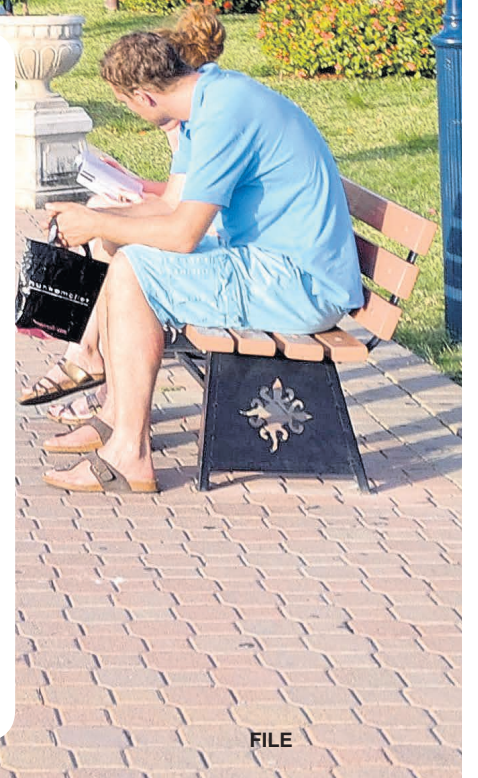
“conversion of derelict buildings, for use as creative incubators and performance venues to promote appreciation for creativity and provide outlets for creative expression”.

The Inter-American Development Bank

(IDB), in a 2016 article titled ‘Music Cities: Why music is a tool for urban development,’ highlighted the progress of cities such as Amsterdam which was the first to choose a night-time mayor, responsible for coordinating and strengthening the Dutch capital’s nightlife and music scene.

It noted that Bogotá, Columbia’s capital, used its Creative City designation to engender an active and prosperous music scene and promote the creation of policies dedicated to make music the epicentre of city life, including a joint public-private Music Plan, which addresses issues such as training and the protection of spaces dedicated to live music.

“Bogotá has developed and implemented a series of public policies to foster greater intercultural dialogue by using music as a tool for social transformation and to overcome some of the city’s main challenges,” the IDB noted.



FILE



The stage at Bourbon Beach, formerly DeBus.



Veteran Negril musician Paul 'Sly' Francis has seen the genesis, upsurge and the decline of live reggae in Negril spanning more than three decades. PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

NEGRIL HUNTS LIVE REGGAE REBIRTH

ASIDE FROM its legendary seven-mile beach, the success of Negril's tourism in the 1980s, particularly on the West End, was predicated on the abundance of live reggae music every night of the week.

The biggest names in reggae were frequent headliners for shows in the resort town in those days, and nightlife thrived. Negril was so popular with dancehall and reggae artists in the '80s that Tyrone Taylor even penned his masterpiece **Cottage in Negril** and General Trees voiced the dancehall classic **Gone a Negril** during that period. But today, live reggae events are few and far between and reggae superstars hardly visit the town.

One of the pioneering musicians in the town, Paul 'Sly' Francis, witnessed reggae music's blossoming in the resort town and its subsequent decline owing to factors he said, such as dilapidated roads, exorbitant performance fees by roots-reggae artistes, complaints about noise pollution and the lock-off time for events. For him, Negril is

ready for a musical rebirth.

The 53-year-old, who became a bass player and sound engineer in the early 1980s, said the flourishing of live reggae was triggered in a bid to satisfy the musical tastes of the hippies from the United States who camped on the rocks or in thatch cottages on the West End.

MAIN HOTSPOTS

The main hotspots were the Yacht Club, Kaiser's Café, Sam Sara and an open-air venue known as Central, which was frequented by artistes such as Jimmy Cliff, Yellowman and the House of Dread, Beres Hammond, Yami Bolo, Sammy Dread, Louie Lepkie and Tenor Saw.

"All the big shows – with Daddy U-Roy, Big Youth, Marcia Griffiths, Roots Radics with Gregory Isaacs – used to be held there. West End was the Hip Strip. You had live reggae seven nights per week until even daylight. You had a few little gigolos who would fool 'round tourists, but you could walk Negril street any time of the night," he explained.



Kaisers Café on Negril's West End was one of the original live reggae music hotspots.

"Kaiser's is where you could see artistes like Third World, Dennis Brown, Melody Makers and Judy Mowatt. Sam Sara then started keeping some big shows. There you could see some big stars like Charlie Chaplin, Luciano, all the roots-reggae artistes," he said.

The decline of live reggae in Negril, according to Francis, stemmed from the

deterioration of the West End Road, which got to such a state that people refused to travel there. As a consequence, the Norman Manley Boulevard took over as the venue for music, with places such as DeBus (now Bourbon Beach) and Roots Bamboo reigning supreme.

"And when they finally fixed the road, it already take a hold on the beach road with

DeBus where you could see Culture and Joseph Hill, sometimes four times for the month performing at the one place,” he said.

Issues of noise pollution began to surface; events had clashing dates, causing tension between some promoters in addition to promoters; undercutting musicians’ payment, spurring what he described as a rat race. The advent of Kingston-based promoters staging multiple parties in Negril saw the town’s own promoters adapting that trend and dispensing with live music, partially because it proved cheaper to pay a sound system as opposed to a band.

But Francis believes if the artistes desist from charging promoters what is commonly referred to as ‘tourist prices’ then the Negril music scene would return to its former glory.

“They would really want to keep big shows but they can’t do it, because the man dem have a style now from the Kingston side. From a man a come a Negril, the price weh him a charge fi come ya suh, there is no way the promoter can make back his money when police come lock it down certain hours, when food no sell, and the bar no sell. And it never used to be like that. It is one of the biggest breakdown because you have promoters who would like to do a nice show, but once the artistes hear Negril, the price gets bigger. That alone will build back the thing, if they could come down with the price,” he argued.

A revival of the live reggae scene, he said, would be beneficial for people from Hanover and Westmoreland similarly to the 1980s, as tourists are not interested in watching artistes perform on tracks. He said many schoolboys from the two parishes, including himself, were hired as musicians for backing bands such as Jah Children from Savanna-la-Mar, and Roots Explosion from Negril, which emerged during that period.



Hotel Samsara on Negril’s West End was one of the live music hotspots in the 1980s to early 1990s. PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

What might Brexit mean for Caribbean tourism?

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IT IS likely that in the coming days we will learn how and when Britain will leave the European Union (EU). Although the consequences remain uncertain, even the best-case scenarios suggest a significant economic impact that will affect United Kingdom (UK) outward-bound tourism.

It raises the question, what action should the region be considering especially if, as is quite possible, Britain crashes out of the EU without any transitional arrangement being in place?

The first point to make is that for many Caribbean nations, the UK remains a significant source market for leisure, diaspora and business travel. This means that whatever happens to the UK economy will have an impact on the region.

The UK is the Caribbean's third-largest supplier of visitors after the US and Canada, with the majority of British visitors travelling to Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica and Eastern Caribbean destinations, including Antigua and St Lucia.

Despite this, the potential overall impact of Brexit on the Caribbean tourism economy is



David Jessop

hard to assess. This is because some nations are proportionately more dependent on the UK for arrivals than on other major source markets. In Barbados, for example, in 2018, 222,519 or 33 per cent of its 681,197 visitor arrivals came from the UK, representing about US\$400m in visitor expenditure to the island annually.

Moreover, the available statistics fail to indicate the ways the UK visitor market is segmented by income, purpose of travel, or category of hotel stayed in. Apart from pointing to the absence of any reliable regional figures about

the region's leading industry, this makes the economic forecasting that governments, central banks and industries have to undertake, when faced with new challenges, very difficult.

It is possible, however, to speculate on some of the factors that may affect visitor arrivals from the UK in the event of Brexit.

The most obvious impact will be on the cost of a holiday and airlift because of the rapid downward movement in the value of the pound. Just before June 2016, when the UK electorate narrowly voted to leave the EU, sterling stood at US\$1.47 to the £1. Since then, it has experienced significant fall to a present figure of US\$1.23 to £1, with many forecasters suggesting that without a deal on leaving the EU, it will fall to parity with the US dollar.

NOT THE PREDOMINANT FACTOR

Although price is not necessarily the predominant factor when buying a Caribbean vacation, the implications of sterling's being weaker are likely to be fourfold.

Firstly, the dollar-sterling relationship will likely have a diversionary effect. If potential visitors see Jamaica or Barbados as having become too expensive as destinations, they will choose

the Dominican Republic, Cuba or destinations elsewhere in the world that offer better value for money. They may also decide that an all-inclusive property or a cruise is preferable, as they know that such vacations can contain the cost.

A second factor may be a short-term downturn as a 'wait and see' attitude takes hold. There are already signs in the UK that its own premier holiday destinations in the South West and in Scotland are benefiting considerably from 'staycations' and decisions by the upper end of the UK market to rent holiday homes. While this is no substitute for tropical sun, if some of the worst-case Brexit scenarios occur and this coincides with a global economic slowdown as a consequence of the trade war between China and the US, 2020-21 may see a significant overall fall in UK arrivals into the Caribbean.

And a third outcome could be increased competition from other destinations that will equally be affected by any possible downturn in visitor arrivals from the UK. For example, the South African Tourist Board is already beginning to consider what measures it needs to enhance its marketing

spend, post-Brexit, to ensure visitor arrival numbers remain strong.

The value of sterling will also likely impact the Caribbean's diaspora market in the UK. While there are now many UK Caribbean citizens who are high achievers with significant disposable income, this cannot be said of the still large numbers of less well-off friends and family who return annually, or more frequently, to the anglophone Caribbean.

Rapid falls in sterling could also hit the commercial relationship between travel companies and suppliers, whether hotels or ground transfer operators. Although most UK companies hedge their foreign exchange costs and absorb small currency fluctuations, a significant fall in sterling could result in supply contracts not being met and even, in some cases, being broken. The likely upshot is that when new contracts are negotiated, they will be at the lowest conceivable exchange rate, either forcing retail prices upwards or hoteliers seeing their revenues fall.

None of which is to say that British travellers will not continue to want dream holidays in the Caribbean.



Kenny's Italian Café on Norman Manley Boulevard in Negril. PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

PRESIDENT OF the Entertainers of Jamaica Association, Kaestner Smith, is adamant that the entertainment venues and the tourism accommodations sector can peacefully co-exist, and the noise-abatement issue can be resolved without large amounts of government spending.

Smith, who studied music and sound

engineering at the Royal School of Music in the United Kingdom, said his organisation has made several recommendations during the recent series of meetings staged by the entertainment ministry to discuss amendments to the Noise Abatement Act. Chief among the recommendations are the use of decibel meters and upgrading of the sound system technology,

including the use of short-throw boxes and repositioning of speakers.

"We had suggested it be renamed the Noise Regulation Act. We had also said that to alleviate this noise complaint, what should happen is that we introduce decibel meters, and before any function is put on 24 hours worth of noise level checks should be done in that area so you know what is expected; you know what you can't play above, and you set up the environment to feel the same vibe. But that is still yet to come," Smith said.

He said a simple splitting of the speaker boxes instead of grouping them in one area would contain the sound, which would not emanate beyond the desired range.

"So instead of you setting up 16 boxes in one corner, you set up one box every five feet around the environment, and I guarantee you that you feel the same amount of vibe as you would want to feel. All you have to now do, is buy some extra cord so that it can reach to wherever. If you are in one little corner, trying to sound the entire space, of course it is going to be loud," he explained.

This expensive fix, he said, that is on the horizon is not necessary when the tools are

at the fingertips. It's about encircling the environment, so the music is not played loudly, "but all who are within that space feel the specific vibration that they are trying to achieve. So all this fuss and all this thing about noise abatement and police want lock off this, we not looking for the fix. I think we are more about the debate than seeking out the fix," Smith said.

He cited Kenny's Italian Café and Island Lux Beach Park as examples, in Negril, where the strategic placement of music boxes along the property has prevented any noise-pollution issue from surfacing.

"Azul has never complained of noise next door and trust me, they are fence to fence with Island Lux," he said. "It does not matter where you go on the property, you get the same feel; the same vibe."

He noted that Kenny's Italian Café has live entertainment and people live just left and right of the property. "It's about 30 square feet and they are filled to capacity every night and the music is blaring inside, but if you come out on the road you cannot hear. If you stay right at the front door, you cannot be disturbed by the music," he said.



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From left: Catherine Handa; Abraham Issa, chief operations officer, Couples Resorts; and Tarun Handa at the 21st anniversary celebration of Couples Negril. PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN



Brad and Amanda Walter, on their honeymoon, are visiting Jamaica and Couples Resorts for the first time.

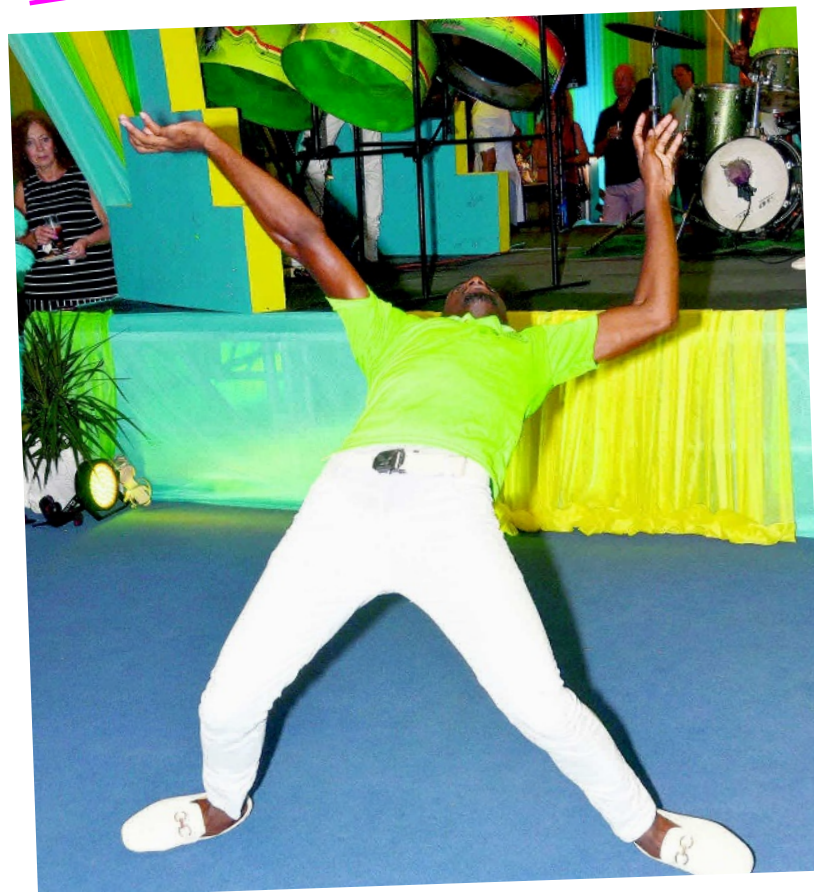


Isabela Fernandez sitting high on the environment.



From left: Kirk and Jan Broussard shares lens time with Michelle and Randal Nelson.

Positive Vybrationz at Couples' 21st



A Positive Vybrationz dancer gets down and shows off his flexibility.

FALMOUTH-BASED STEEL-FUSION band Pozitive Vybrationz worked up a storm and effectively stole the show at the Couples Swept Away 21st anniversary party on Friday night in Negril. Guests were enraptured by the octet's musical skills, which were even sweeter with the fusion of pan, bass guitar, and bass drums, as they churned out Afrobeats reggae, and even hip-hop instrumentals. From the outset, the group of youngsters was the centre of attention, but the performance rose to fever pitch when members of the group, one by one and two by two, pranced offstage and engaged the hotel's own entertainment coordinators in a spur-of-the-moment dance-off. The flurry of cell phones that were whipped out and the smiles that etched the faces of the delighted tourists was living proof that authentic, contemporary Jamaican music performances and dancehall moves are well appreciated by the island's international visitors. It was also testament to the reason the group copped five gold medals and the instrumentalist Champions of the World Award at the 2016 World Championships of the Performing Arts in Los Angeles. The biggest uproar occurred when one of the group's female members, Victoria Smith, did a split and then moved across the dance floor in that position. As the 19-year-old performed her other dance moves, the audience cheered with wild abandon. When the group's three-hour stint was over, the band's supervisor and bass player, Roxroy Reid, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that the band which was established in 2015, was the brainchild of Chief Executive Officer Clive White, a music arranger and builder of steel drums who was also a member of a popular steel band before branching off on his own and functioning as a one-man band for a year

before recruiting new members. "We have eight members in Jamaica because we are local and international. The other members tour, but they also work in hotels like we do in other countries," Reid said. "At first, we started as a one-man band, and then he added drummer and another steel pan player, and they got a professional keyboard player. So each of the musicians taught the younger generation," he added. Reid said that the name of the band was coined from a "known Bob Marley quote". The Jamaica-based half of the group is contracted to play at Couples Negril every other Friday and is made up of young adults from across the island ranging from ages 19 to 26. The band also performs at a plethora of other hotels and major corporate functions across the island.



Garvin and Cindy James got engaged 22 years ago at Couples Tower Isle and are now celebrating their 20th anniversary at Couples Negril.



Below: Pozitive Vybrationz musicians dancing up a storm.



Tourists capture the Pozitive Vybrationz dance moves on their smartphones.



From left: Catherine Handa; Abraham Issa, chief operations officer, Couples Resorts; and Tarun Handa at the 21st anniversary celebration of Couples Negril. PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN



Brad and Amanda Walter, on their honeymoon, are visiting Jamaica and Couples Resorts for the first time.

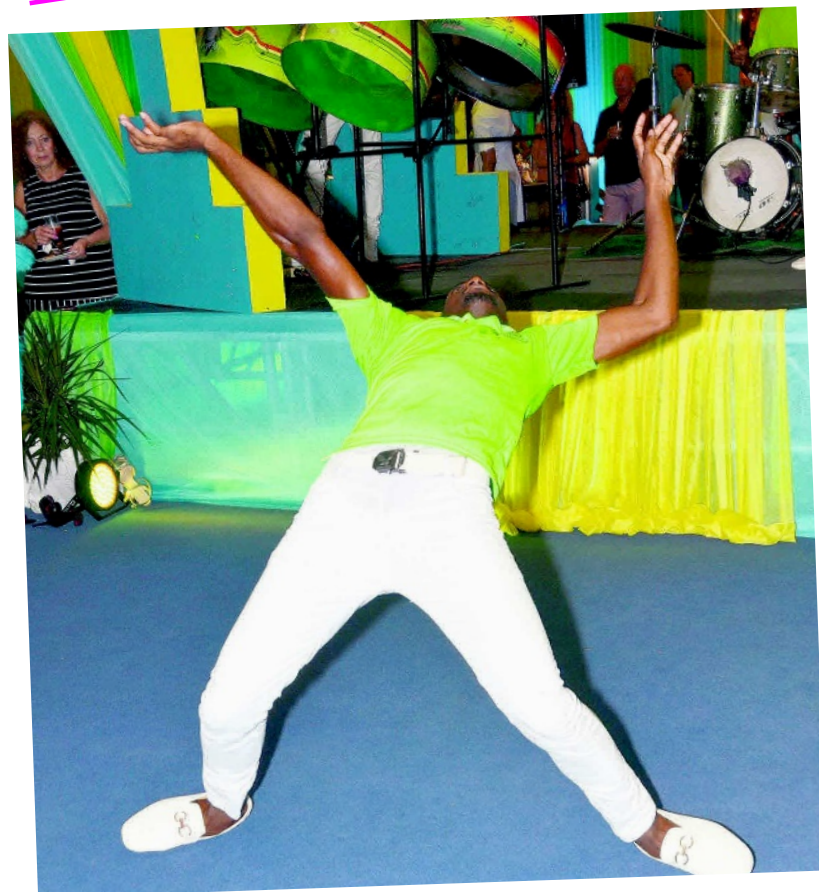


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JTB participates in the Wedding Salon Luxury Bridal Showcase in Washington, DC

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) was one of the featured participants during the Wedding Salon Washington, DC, Showcase at The Liaison Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The luxury bridal show attracted over 200 soon-to-be-married couples as well as top wedding planners, providing an excellent opportunity for the JTB to showcase Destination Jamaica's ability to cater to the wedding and honeymoon market.

The Trident Hotel offered a prize giveaway of a four-day-three-night stay to attendees, which brought additional visibility to Jamaica's wedding and honeymoon offerings.

Situated along Jamaica's northeast coast, Trident Hotel is in the resort area of Port Antonio, which has been dubbed the 'Jamaican Riviera' for its natural glamour and rich history.

The Wedding Salon is an exclusive showcase for engaged couples, celebrities, socialites, and industry professionals to find the top tips and trends from the best in bridal, lifestyle, health, and beauty.



Attendees visiting the Jamaica Tourist Board booth Wedding Salon at 2019 Luxury Bridal Showcase in Washington, DC. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Travel Consultants of Island Breeze Vacations Dennis and Barbara Blake providing information to an attendee at the Wedding Salon 2019 Luxury Bridal Showcase in Washington, DC.



The Cedar Bar at the fabulous Half Moon in Montego Bay. CONTRIBUTED

Half Moon recognised with Condé Nast Traveler's 2019 Readers' Choice Award

#13 top 50 Resorts in the Caribbean

THE WORLD'S Best Hotels, Resorts, Countries, Cities, Islands, Spas, Airlines, Airports and Cruises

Condé Nast Traveler announced the results of its annual Readers' Choice Awards with Half Moon recognised as #13 of the Top 50 Resorts in the Caribbean and the top Jamaica resort.

More than 600,000 Condé Nast Traveler readers across the globe submitted a record-breaking number of responses rating their travel experiences to provide a full snapshot of where and how we travel today. The Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry and are commonly known as "the best of the best of travel".

"Half Moon is humbled and honoured to be voted as one of the Top 50 Resorts in the Caribbean," said Guy Stuart III, chairman of Half Moon, one of the Caribbean's most iconic destinations. "Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards are particularly distinctive to us as the recognition stems directly from our beloved guests' experiences at Half Moon."

Half Moon provides guests the opportunity to indulge in luxury, adventure, and culture, curating unforgettable experiences on a daily basis. The pristine 400-acre beachfront oasis is situated against the crystalline Caribbean Sea and features world-class facilities, including Fern Tree Spa, an award-winning spa oasis in Jamaica, a private equestrian centre, and an 18-hole par-72 championship golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr.

Guests also receive the luxury of their own private in-suite staff at the breathtaking Rose Hall Villas, comprising a cook, housekeeper, and butler to cater to their every need. Furthermore, guests are privileged with access to the award-winning Sugar Mill restaurant, recognised as Jamaica's best, and the property's Ital Café, featuring a vegan-friendly spa cuisine concept created for Half Moon by Aris Latham, considered to be the father of gourmet ethical raw cuisine in America.

The 2019 Readers' Choice Awards are celebrated in the November issue of Condé Nast Traveler US and UK print editions. They are also published on Condé Nast Traveler's website at www.cntraveler.com/rca.

Bartlett congratulates local hotels on New Condé Nast Traveler Best Hotels Rankings



The Sky Bar Pool at the new S Hotel in Montego Bay. CONTRIBUTED

LUXURY AND lifestyle travel magazine **Condé Nast Traveler**, has ranked S Hotel in Montego Bay and the Kanopi House in Portland as #1 and #6 best hotels in the Caribbean and Central America, respectively, in its 32nd annual Readers' Choice Awards survey.

The Half Moon luxury hotel in Montego Bay was ranked best property in Jamaica and #13 of 50 Resorts in the 'Caribbean Islands' category. The 120-room S Hotel, owned and operated by the Crissa Group, was also ranked the 39th Best Hotel in the World.

Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett extended congratulations to the hoteliers, whose accolades will further promote Jamaica as the destination of choice for the region.

"I wholeheartedly congratulate the management and staff of the S Hotel, the Kanopi House, and Half Moon

Hotel for being listed in the 2019 Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards list. These accolades will go a far way in helping us to promote Brand Jamaica to new audiences," said the Minister.

He further noted "I am particularly proud of the S Hotel, which has ranked #1 after being operational for less than a year. The S Hotel is Jamaican owned and Jamaican managed, and we are exceptionally proud of Christopher Issa's undivided commitment and dedication to the tourism sector and to his country. We look forward to hearing more about the many other accolades to come."

Condé Nast Traveler's Top 50 Resorts in The Caribbean Islands list also notes Rockhouse Hotel as #14, Couples Tower Isle as #21, GoldenEye Resort as #23, and Jamaica Inn at #24.

Also listed are Couples Negril, Couples Sans Souci

Resort, Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa, Couples Swept Away, Hyatt Ziva Rose Hall, and Round Hill Hotel and Villas.

"I am extremely proud of the impact that our Jamaican properties have made on the readers of this magazine. We will commend our hoteliers for their contributions to making Jamaica a come-to-mind destination with their incredible customer service and world-class facilities," said the minister.

The Best Hotels in the World list ranked the 50 best hotels in the world according to 600,000 registered voters from the **Condé Nast Traveler's** site.

The Condé Nast Traveler Reader's Choice Awards is the longest running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry and commonly known as 'the best of travel'.

Jamaica recognised with Condé Nast Traveler's 2019 Readers' Choice Award

CONDÉ NAST Traveler announced the results of its annual Readers' Choice Awards, with Jamaica recognised as one of the Best Islands in the World ranking as #4 in the Top Five in the Caribbean & the Atlantic category.

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submitted a record-breaking number of responses, rating their travel experiences of where and how we travel today. The Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry and are commonly known as "the best of

the best of travel".

"We are so pleased that the readers of **Condé Nast Traveler** have chosen Jamaica as one of their favourite islands," said Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. "This award is particularly special to us as it is our visitors who have spoken for us. Their

interaction with our people, our music, and our culture positively impacted them, and they took the time to vote for Jamaica. On behalf of all our partners, we say thank you."

A year-round vacation destination, Jamaica features accommodations ranging from luxury resorts to charming cottages and inns, all focusing on top-notch service, and restaurants to fit any taste and price point. Some of Jamaica's diverse activities include golfing

at one of the eight championship golf courses, river rafting, hiking the Blue Mountains, caving in the Cockpit Country, zip-lining, horse-back riding, cliff diving, rainforest bobsledding, deep sea fishing, and much more.

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The Go! Jamaica Travel team at their travel expo at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in Kingston recently. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The team at the Copa Airlines booth had their hands full.



From left: Executive Director of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Camille Needham; Regional Director, Jamaica Tourist Board, Odette Dyer; Business Development Manager Trudy Dixon; and Deputy Director of Tourism Camile Glenister.

GO!

Jamaica Travel revelling in success of first expo

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ON FRIDAY, October 4, inside The Jamaica Pegasus hotel, Go! Jamaica Travel, a tour and travel agency located along Trafalgar Road in New Kingston, held its very first travel expo, which saw many stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as prospective clients, in attendance.

In speaking with **Hospitality Jamaica** about the reason for hosting such an ambitious event, Dave A. Chin Tung, the man at the helm at Go! Jamaica Travel, who has been involved in tourism for over 40 years, said, “Our clients keep asking, ‘Which hotel you think is good for us?’, and we basically said, ‘... let’s bring them together so that they can meet the individual hotels, ask the questions, and choose which hotels to book their vacations.’”

So he brought the “top

suppliers, top hoteliers, ground transportation, and airlines” together, he said, to take advantage of a “huge market” in the traditional way of doing business – face-to-face conversations.

“Instead of people going on the Internet trying to confirm a lot of their rooms, a lot of these people have questions. They need to speak with somebody. They want a live voice, they don’t want an Internet thing,” he explained.

Chin Tung, who has had much experience in hosting Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) events over the years, was right, for people went to talk in the Talk of the Town suite. And the feedback?

“Well, the hoteliers have told us that they love it, that they think it’s doing extremely well. The sponsors at JTB, they are amazed that we were able to do all of this in such a short space of time,” Chin Tung said. In reference to the people



Rose Hall Great House manager Angele Nunez (left) and Kyesha Randall, social media specialist at Rose Hall.

who participated in the face-to-face format, Camille Needham, executive director of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, said that these people were an extension of their marketing pool as they tell their friends and family in the diaspora and beyond about the many beautiful properties in the accommodations sector in Jamaica.

Noting that the expo, which featured booths by several local hotels, “gave attendees the opportunity to shop vacation options in Jamaica”, Needham said that “technology notwithstanding, the face-to-face interaction – the opportunity to ask a question and receive an immediate response, the enjoyment of the person-to-person interaction – is only achievable” in a setting like the expo.

“Our visitors are always amazed at the number and variety of resorts all in this one island, each with defining characteristics that make it unique. Our tourism product is also probably one of the most integrated in the region, where overseas and local guests mingle freely and enjoy what this beautiful destination has to offer,” Needham said.

There was much mingling at the expo itself, and when asked what he would be saying at the end of the day of hosting his own travel expo, Chin Tung replied, “I would be saying ‘I think I have done what I set out to do’ because the response, not only in terms of the hoteliers, but even in terms of those people who have walked through, is that they are enjoying it, that they love it, and they have learnt a lot.”

And he has big plans for the second staging. “Next year is going to be tremendously larger, and when I say ‘tremendous’, I mean it’s going to be three or four times larger,” he revealed.



Go! Jamaica Travel’s Dave Chin Tung (third right) poses with the VIP Attraction Club Kingston crew at the Go! Jamaica Travel Expo at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Juliet Gordon of Olde Jamaica Tours (left) and community tourism expert Diana McIntyre Pike of My Jamaica Travel (center) providing information to a visitor to their booth.



The SeaGarden team giving their undivided attention to a group of guests visiting their booth.



The Life Yard Itai food crew shares lens time with Go! Jamaica Travel’s Dave Chin Tung (second right) during the Jamaica Travel Expo.



InterCaribbean Airways providing information on their various routes to visitors to the expo.



Zipline guides pose for Hospitality Jamaica's camera.

Zipline Over Dunn's River Tour officially opens



CARL GILCHRIST

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ATTRACTIONS AT Dunn's River Falls and Park in Ocho Rios just got a bit more diversified with the official opening of the Chukka's Zipline Over Dunn's River Falls tour last Friday.

In operation since November 2017 and proving to be a hit with visitors to the park, the 'Zipline Over Dunn's River Falls Tour' adds to several other exhilarating experiences available at the famous venue, according to Heather Pinnock, Urban Development Corporation's (UDC) general manager.

Speaking at the launch, Pinnock said the partnership with Chukka, St Ann Development Company (SADCo) and the UDC Group signifies three main things:

"That tourism in Jamaica continues to hold its importance as a major driver in economic growth; the recognition that our market has become more sophisticated and constantly ask the question, 'What else? What more?'"

"In joining with Chukka, we answer this question by diversifying our guest experience even further with the addition of our splash slide in 2017. Dunn's River is now more than just an exhilarating experience



Minister of National Security Dr Horace Chang (forth left) assisted by Minister of Labour, Shahine Robinson (forth right) and Opposition Spokesman on Tourism Dr Wykeham McNeill (third right) in cutting the ribbon to officially launch the Chukka Zipline over Dunn's River Falls Tour. Others from left: Chukka's John Byles, Paola Byles, Marc Melville, Urban Development Corporation's Heather Pinnock and SADCo's Joey Issa share in the occasion. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

of climbing our world-famous falls. It also includes a beach, the activities in central gardens, the quiet lush nature of tranquility gardens and, of course, now the adrenalin rush of the Chukka Zipline."

Pinnock added that the partnership reminds us of "how very big

and important the brand Dunn's River is."

She added that during the coming months, persons can expect to see and feel the renewed spirit of Dunn's River Falls and Park through its "brand refresh" which is currently under way.

Marc Melville, director at Chukka Caribbean Adventures, hailed the partnership, saying the big deal about the tour is not that it's a zipline but rather, a zipline over Dunn's River Falls.

"We've been here for a while, we've got some great advice and

Ziplining across the world-famous cascading Dunn's River Falls must be the most exhilarating thing that anyone could do.

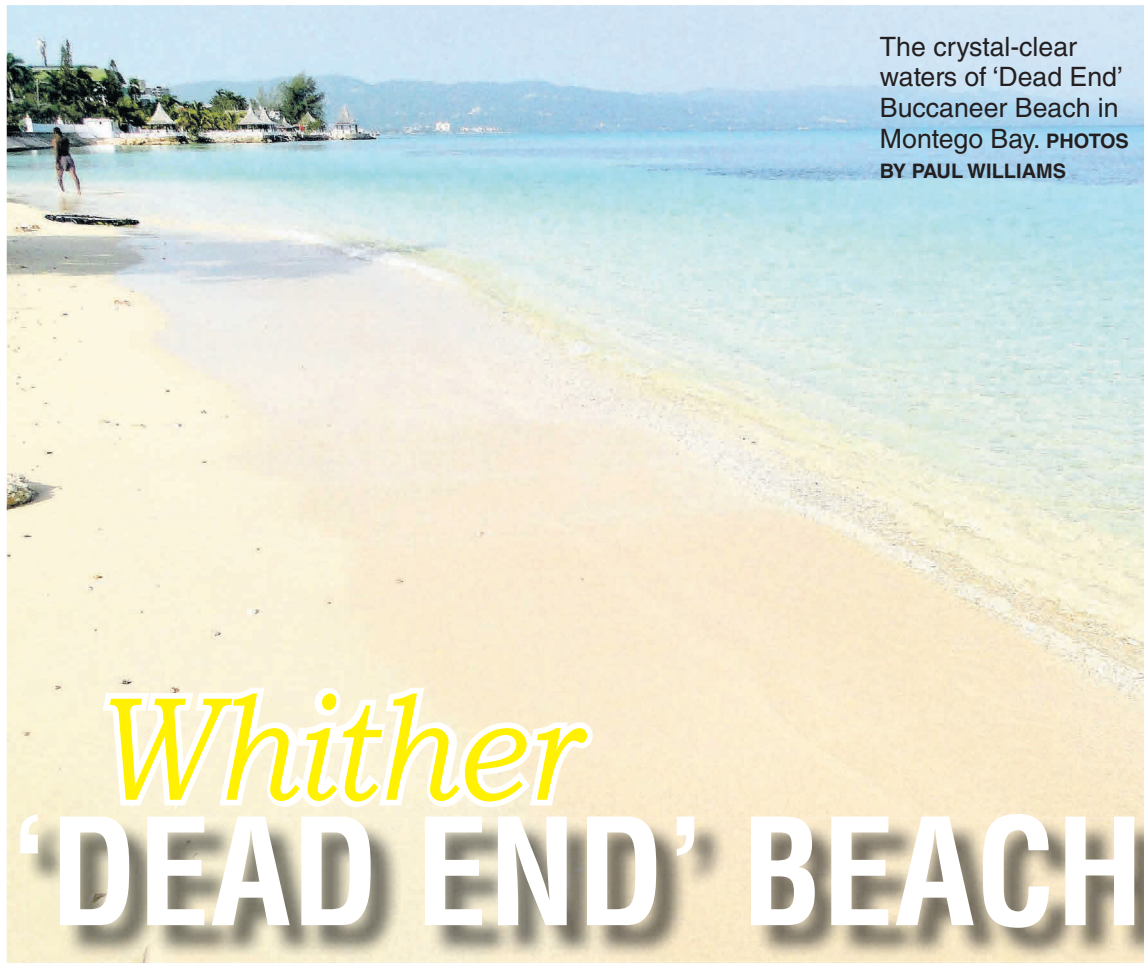
listened to a lot of good things. It's a big joy to open this tour in partnership with UDC and SADCo," Melville said.

"This place is not just a special attraction, but it has a beautiful environmental footprint, so one of the challenges to open this tour here was to make sure it was an environmentally sound investment and development. We want to thank UDC and SADCo, both board chairmen for their support and partnership, and we appreciate it."

Meanwhile, Manager of Chukka Foundation Sheona Muschett took the opportunity to offer some assistance to the White River Marine Association in its effort to preserve marine life in the White River area.

Muschett handed over a cheque for \$150,000, which was collected by Belinda Collier-Morrow of the association and Noel Francis, president of the White River Fishermen Association.

In thanking the foundation for the cheque, Collier-Morrow disclosed that efforts by the marine association is bearing fruit as there was a noticeable improvement in marine life in the designated area.



The crystal-clear waters of 'Dead End' Buccaneer Beach in Montego Bay. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

Whither 'DEAD END' BEACH

AT THE end of Kent Avenue in Montego Bay, there is a little beach that was called Sunset Beach when I was growing up. Sometime ago when I mentioned it, a reader said it was actually Chatham Beach, and that Sunset is the smaller beach at the other end of the sea wall.

Yet, my generation did not ever call the one at the upper end Chatham. For us it was Sunset, a place where we played and frolic on the whitish sands, collected seashells, and watched tourists covered in suntan lotions turn from white to dark brown. Across the road was Buccaneer Inn hotel, and I would wonder about what it was like inside.

The road used to go around the airport, and one of the things we looked forward to was the sight of an incoming airplane, which would fly just above the road and the beach. However, for safety reasons, I was told, the section of the road that went around the airport was cut off where it connected to the beach. There was to be no more vehicular traffic around the airport. It was now called Dead End Road, and the beach, eventually, 'Dead End' Beach.

Over time, the visitors disappeared from the beach as the all-inclusive properties gobbled them up. Dead End became a chill spot, with the beach being the major pull. In one of my articles last year, I bemoaned the fact that garbage was strewn about the place. Yet, the water was still crystal-clear, clean and fresh.

Recently, when I revisited the beach, I saw the place dug up and men working, building



One of the newly constructed groynes in the vicinity of 'Dead End' Beach in Montego Bay.

a wall, separating the beach from the road. It seemed like an extension of the sea wall. Garbage was still at some spots. I also noticed that the road surface was being prepared for asphaltting. There are also two new 'groynes' (stones encased in thick wires) extending from the sea wall.

On a subsequent visit, I saw that the wall that was being built was in fact an extension of the sea wall, and that the road was being re-asphalted at night. In my effort to know exactly what was going on, I was told that the extension of the sea wall was being carried out by a resort right there on

the stretch, and the road upgrade by the Government.

'Dead End' Buccaneer Beach and the Kent Avenue are far from being dead, I thought. They are poised for livelier times with these recent developments. And the fire-red sunset seemed to agree.



A wall being built to separate 'Dead End' Buccaneer Beach in Montego Bay from the main road.



Duke of Earle (seated) pose with his 20th homecoming group during their celebration at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort recently. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Duke of Earle celebrates 20th homecoming at Sandals Ochi

DUKE OF Earle (Bevan Earle), radio host of WAVS-AM in South Florida recently celebrated his 20th return to the Sandals brand in fine style at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort.

Earle, accompanied by a group of 70 persons consisting of his family, friends and fans, were fêted to a weekend of true Sandals hospitality.

The group's activities kicked off with a welcome cocktail at the beach club, followed by a catamaran cruise on Saturday, and a gourmet, five-star dinner at the resort on Sunday. Kaye Chong, one of Earle's long-standing friends and travelling partners who has never missed a homecoming trip, was also thrilled to have the opportunity

to enjoy the Sandals Ochi resort.

"By far, this is one of the best Sandals/Beaches properties we have been to. For the past 20 years, Duke has taken us back to the Sandals brand and we have truly enjoyed our stay here. I have been friends with Duke for over 20 years and the work that he has continued to do with Sandals and the Sandals Foundation is commendable. I thank him for giving us the chance to come home and be a part of this wonderful experience."

Wayne Messam, mayor of Miramar, South Florida, who was a part of the group, highlighted that this was one of the best vacations he and his wife, Angela, has had. "The resort is lovely, we thoroughly enjoyed it.

The staff is amazing and we are planning to come back. I thank my good friend Duke for giving me the opportunity to experience this property, as well as other Sandals and Beaches resorts. His homecoming group grows each year, and we are proud to be able to share in his giving back to Jamaica."

"I have been doing this for many years now. Coming back to a Sandals or Beaches property is always a great experience. I enjoy giving back and partnering with Sandals. So coming back to the brand every year is just one way to show our love. My family and friends enjoy it. So I thank Mr Stewart for allowing us to enjoy his resorts," Duke of Earle said.



From left: Kevin Clarke, general manager, Sandals Ochi, Duke of Earle (Bevan Earle) and Wayne Messam, mayor of Miramar in South Florida, pose for a photo at the Duke of Earle's 20th homecoming celebration, held at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort recently.

Cayman travel professionals praise 'awesome Jamaica'

TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS from the Cayman Islands, including representatives of Cayman Airways and travel agencies, have given top marks to Jamaica as a tourism destination.

The group, hosted by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), in association with Cayman Airways, participated in a familiarisation tour of the island from October 4-6, which saw them touring various hotels and attractions, and sampling the island's cuisine and culture.

Trudy Dixon, Caribbean sales manager of the JTB, explained that this familiarisation tour was "the latest in a series of education tours for agents across the Caribbean designed to update them on what Destination Jamaica offers".

Dixon noted that "the room stock in Jamaica is constantly expanding across large and small hotels,

international and local brands, all-inclusive and EP, coupled with Jamaica's growing reputation for the best food, engaging culture, music and entertainment, our popularity is at an all-time high."

She highlighted that the Cayman group, in addition to experiencing hotels and restaurants, attended the Go! Jamaica Travel Expo at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel, where they met over 30 hotel operators and suppliers from across the island. They also toured the Kingston waterfront, the Blue Mountain Coffee Café and the UCC Coffee Estate, and Mystic Mountain in Ocho Rios

Gary Bromfield, marketing programmes coordinator – commercial, Cayman Airways Ltd, described the visit as "awesome, enlightening and informative". He noted that he was particularly impressed by the new, expanded and refurbished hotels in Kingston, including the 'R', Spanish

Court, Courtleigh and Strawberry Hill. The Red Bones Restaurant in Kingston and Miss T's in Ocho Rios also received high praises.

Lillian Bodden of Cayman Travel Services said that she was excited to return to Cayman and put her updated knowledge of Destination Jamaica to use. She said: "I sell a lot of tickets to customers coming to Kingston and some travelling to other Caribbean islands via Kingston. Having seen the properties first-hand, I can now give even better recommendations, depending on my customer's interests."

Bodden noted that one of the attractions she will definitely be recommending to her customers is Kingston's Bob Marley Museum, where she learnt a great deal about the reggae icon as well as the country's musical heritage. "The tour was brilliant, the tour guides well informed and on point," she said.