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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2017

**Kingston's
Renfrew hotel
construction**

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Times names
Kingston a 'must-
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Mojoa Tours optimistic this winter season

MOJOA TOURS Destination Management Limited and VIP-World Travel, one of Jamaica's top destination management companies (DMC), is voicing optimism for what it says could be one of Jamaica's finest winter seasons in years.

According to the company's Chief Executive Officer Orville Brown, there are promising signs the season, which started on December 15 and will run through to April, will see an increase in air connectivity out of areas which were once considered out of reach.

"I can speak directly to the December 12 non-stop direct chartered flight out of Austria and Switzerland into the Sangster International Airport, Montego Bay," Brown pointed out.

"I can only say that this will be a prelude to bigger and better things to come as the season goes along. It was also the first time ever that Jamaica has had a direct flight out of Austria and Switzerland."

The trip, he said, was organised by his company as part of "a test run", where tour operators from Austria and Switzerland came here for a sample of the Jamaican experience to take back to sell in their respective markets.

"They came in on a high-level World Travel chartered jet and what I can tell you, without any fear of contradiction is that they had a wonderful time visiting the south coast, Ocho Rios and some of our beautiful attractions," Brown beamed.

MORE FLIGHTS TO COME

Brown further noted that the flight was the first in a series of planned flights out of Europe for the winter, and that it was both a positive and promising sign that the Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) venture into new markets in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as Latin America, is starting to reap dividends.

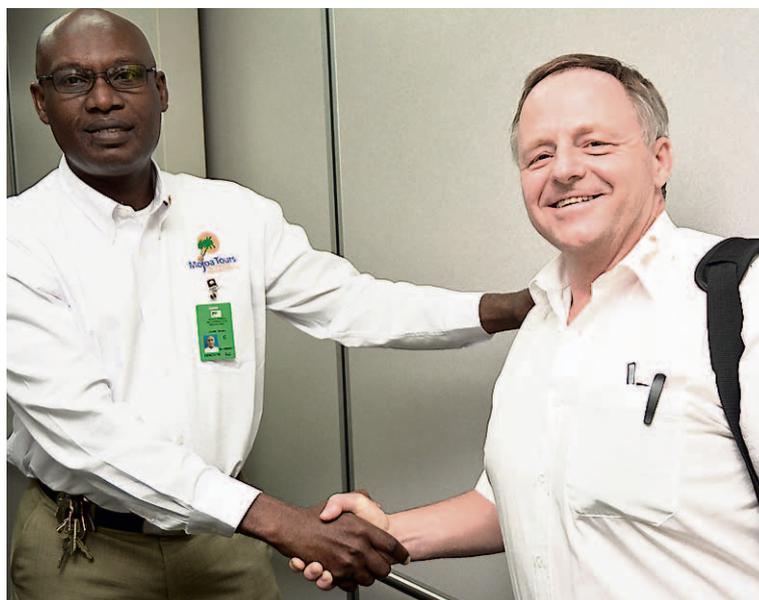
Brown said Mojoa Tours stands ready to play a significant role in the future of Jamaica's tourism, saying "we continue to work with all our international travel partners to get this right".

He added that Jamaica continues to be an easy sell: "What we have is a destination par excellence and which continues to be an attractive draw for our visitors."

"It will be our job to continue to get as many chartered flights into Jamaica as possible," Brown said.



Passengers disembarking the Swiss World Travel chartered jet.



President and Chief Executive Officer of Mojoa Tours Orville Brown (left) greets the owner and operator of the high-level Swiss World Travel chartered jet, Richard Fruehwirt, on arrival at the Sangster International Airport, Montego Bay, on a recent chartered flight out of Austria and Switzerland.



A passenger arriving on a recent chartered flight from Switzerland.

He continued, "It is not a stretch to suggest that Jamaica is poised to dominate the region in both stopover and cruise arrivals for years to come.

"We have all been sold on the Government's growth agenda and its quest for economic prosperity for all," Brown further added. "This is, and will continue to be, our contribution to the growth agenda as we do see tourism as that real engine of growth."

For his part, Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett said he is happy to see the DMCs doing their part in engaging the international partners in getting flights out of markets that were once considered unreachable.

"With this kind of approach and forward thinking, Jamaica will indeed meet all its projections for the winter and beyond," the minister said. "We have been pushing the connectivity argument for a while, as we know how important it is."



Kingston's Renfrew hotel construction ahead of schedule

CURRENTLY RUNNING six weeks ahead of schedule, the Renfrew hotel construction project will deliver 32 exclusive rooms and eight two-bedroom duplex apartments to Jamaica's hotel room inventory and make a valuable addition to the exclusive-accommodation niche in the nation's capital.

Being developed to target corporate guests with a long-stay requirement, the new hotel is being targeted for an October 2017 opening.

Developer Ewill Ltd expects the hotel "will attract frequent business travellers, who require a higher level of personal service and recognition than can be experienced at competitive properties in Kingston.

"However, unique among the hotels in Jamaica, the Renfrew offers the investor a chance to participate in ownership by purchasing a unit, of which they would have seven days per year."

Features of the Renfrew hotel will include 24-hour doorman/concierge, secure underground parking on property; 24-hour manned and electronic security, including video



An artist's impression of a bedroom at the Renfrew

surveillance and access control systems.

The guest rooms will have deadbolt and electronic Vingcard front door locks and video/intercom lines to security.

While great emphasis has been placed on security considerations, equal attention has been paid to convenience and comfort, in

anticipating the needs of a longer-staying guest, said the investors.

These include laundry facilities on select guest room floors and washer/dryer in deluxe guest rooms and duplex apartments, garbage chutes and trash compactor features, double-glazed windows throughout to reduce external noise, individually controlled air

conditioning and pre-wired telephone and cable TV outlets.

The business needs of guests will be addressed by wireless Internet access, videoconferencing and adequate meeting room facilities.

The environmental sensibility is evident in the design of solar-powered public-area lighting and solar-heated water to guest rooms.

The use of double glazed windows also serves to create greater efficiency in air conditioning.

However, it is in the guest's experience that the hotel is expected to truly deliver an experience that is "a cut above". A stylish, modern environment is being created for the guest rooms. Walk-in closets, luxurious bedding and woodgrain floor tiles being the elements around which various Jamaican interior designers have been retained to create unique treatments that lend unique character to each unit.

Rooftop dining in a full-service restaurant with a view of the city's business district, a swimming pool, a fully equipped gym and a gift shop/commissary complete the range of features that have been planned to meet the needs of guests, whose stay could extend into weeks.

The Renfrew was designed by Design Collaborative, whose portfolio of architectural successes in the hotel sector includes Sandals, Couples, Half Moon, The Jamaica Pegasus, Hedonism II, Grand Lido, and the Shaw Park Beach Hotel.

'CHEF ON TOUR' HIGHLIGHTS



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

The team that complemented the 'Chef on Tour' dinner at the Iberostar Grand.



Two of the waitresses at the Iberostar Grand serving guests at the 'Chef on Tour' event.



Delius Shirley (second right), food and beverage director at The Cliff Hotel, presents one of executive chef Cindy Hutson's award-winning books 'From The Tip of My Tongue' to Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett during a recent tour. Looking on are (from left) Permanent Secretary Jennifer Griffith, chef de cuisine Jonhoi Reid, Assistant General Manager Diandra Shand, and Joy Roberts from the Tourism Product Development Company.

Some members of the A-team at the Iberostar Grand, who served guests at the 'Chef on Tour' event last Saturday night in Montego Bay.



Assistant General Manager of The Cliff Hotel Diandra Shand (front left) leads Minister Bartlett and members of the Ministry of Tourism from the cliffs.

JAMAICA LAND of Film is the first guided movie location tour to appear on the attractions scene in Jamaica, bringing fresh life to the tourism product.

Commercial Services, a Cayman-based organisation, has partnered with local destination management company **Caribic Vacations** for the tour, which officially began on Tuesday.

The visit has already seen great momentum with not only cruise and overnight visitors, but locals as well.

Developed from extensive research by author Peter Polack whose book, **Jamaica Land of Film**, will be published by Cambridge Publishing in 2017, the visit and book will chronicle new and previously unavailable information on more than 100 years of film production in Jamaica. The visit will showcase movie locations throughout Jamaica, highlighting some iconic films with interesting behind-the-scenes stories.

Vanessa Polack of Commercial Services stated that their signature tours will escort visitors through locations that showcase some of the most famous movies and stars connected to Jamaica.

“The tour is directed at cruise ship passengers and overnight visitors seeking an alternative experience in Jamaica outside of the adventure and nature attractions. **Jamaica Land of Film** will be an enduring tribute to a long history of successful film production of many famous movies in Jamaica,” she said.

There are also plans to establish a multimedia operation locally and internationally, as well as a



‘Jamaica Land of Film’ reels into action with Caribic Vacations

First-time movie location tour to begin in Montego Bay this week

documentary to be submitted to film festivals.

Location stops include Falmouth, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, with highlights of well-known films, including **Papillion**, **Live and Let Die**, **Cool Runnings** and **How**

Stella Got Her Groove Back.

Excited about the prospects, Caribic Vacations’ Chief Executive Officer Roy Page described the partnership as a milestone for his organisation and Jamaica.

“What we are offering is a new

and compelling historical and cultural tour that will draw visitors not only on the island, but the large number of film fans interested in past and present movies with a connection to the ultimate film production

destination, Jamaica.”

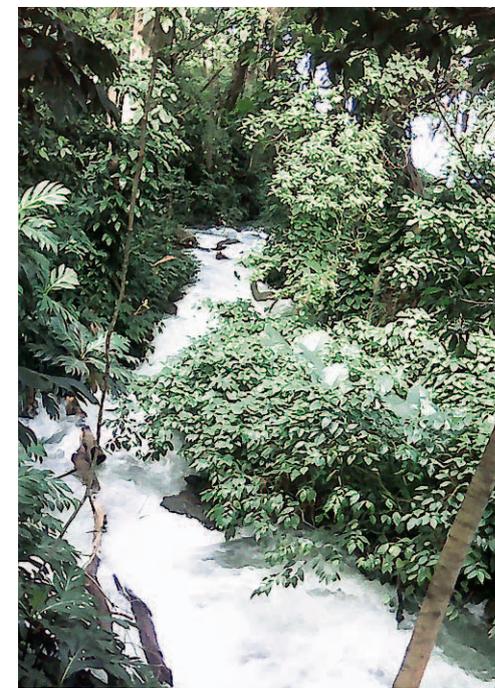
For more information on **Jamaica Land of Film** visit www.jamaicalandoffilm.com and to book tours contact Caribic Vacations at info@caribicvacations.com or 953-9895.



Caribic Vacations staff members.



Jamaica Inn, one of the stops on the ‘Jamaica Land of Film’ tour.



Laughing Waters.



THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

A single word says it all

David Jessop
Contributor

ONE OF the oddities of country branding is the desire by those responsible for marketing, or for promoting a destination, to require a short descriptive catchline to appear in all advertising and promotional material. The idea is that these few well-chosen words will encourage a potential traveller to investigate further the possibility of visiting.

At their best, such expressions sum up a nation or what it offers, remain in the memory, last for decades, and can encapsulate how a country feels about itself. At worst, they can be puzzling, unhelpful, changed too frequently, or become unintentionally amusing.

EXAMPLES

At a recent tourism industry trade fair at which the industry in the Caribbean and Latin America was well represented, there were multiple examples of the good, the bad, and the hard to understand.

Some, like that being used by Aruba, 'A Happy Island', were outstanding, able to encapsulate in a few short words a sense of fun, safety, relaxation, and a people at peace with themselves. Others, such as the slogan employed for many years by the Dominican



JESSOP

Republic, 'the Dominican Republic has it all', unfortunately stated the obvious, and had become tired from overuse.

There was also the puzzling on display. For instance, Cuba continues to use the line 'Authentic Cuba', suggesting somehow, in relation to what has arguably become the hottest destination in the world, that there is an inauthentic Cuba, perhaps meaning Miami. The expression, which has been used for many years now, seems outmoded given the surge in visitor numbers the country is experiencing from the US, Europe and elsewhere.

In contrast, other countries chose the descriptive: Guatemala the 'Heart of the Mayan World' and, in a similar vein, Guyana used the words 'South America Undiscovered'.

Tellingly perhaps, given the currently difficult to describe



experience of visiting Venezuela, the country chose to say nothing, just using the word 'Venezuela'. In contrast, Ecuador seemed to be playing on lyrics of a Beatles song, using the words; 'All you need is Ecuador'; more enigmatically, Bolivia proclaimed 'Bolivia awaits you'; while El Salvador – 'Impressive' – and Nicaragua – 'Unica' – had decided that all that was needed was a single word.

What is far less clear is whether the effort and money that went into developing these expressions are worth it, or whether such descriptors have value with potential visitors.

Understandably perhaps, marketing experts say that such slogans remain important and point

to the most successful destination branding ever, that of the US State of Virginia.

Its slogan, 'Virginia is for lovers', was created in 1969 and has been in constant use for the past 45 years. So successful has it become that it has crossed over to the state's overall branding and has been licensed for merchandising. Not only has recent market research shown that it has significant brand recognition among an older generation who have grown up with the words, but that it is also recognised by millennials.

However, others are not so sure. They note that brand relevance requires destinations to be able to differentiate themselves by

suggesting that the experience of visiting will somehow be different or more pleasurable than if visiting their competitors. They observe that whatever is used, a descriptor must be inspired, succinct and convey the unique essence of a country. They question, too, whether consumers really care, and if, in a digital age, the issue and message is now more about driving a potential traveller to view online images of a destination that are likely to have much greater impact.

This has become particularly apparent at trade shows in recent years where destinations, including Jamaica, have hosted promotional events to launch their latest online offering, albeit still containing a catchline.

Despite this, and unsurprisingly, the region's best slogan and brand remains the word 'Caribbean'. A logo saying just that, developed jointly by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, is outstanding and says it all. Although used with the strapline 'Life needs the Caribbean', an expression that, for me at least, is of uncertain meaning, the warm, fun and welcoming multicoloured stylised typeface used for the word 'Caribbean' says it all in a single word when appended to any promotional material.

FRONTERA

Chile

CABERNET
SAUVIGNON

CONCHA Y TORO
DECE 1883

FRONTERA

SIMPLY DELICIOUS

WINES





A section of the Opening Ceremony of the hospitality students food and wine expo at the Montego Bay Community College.



Students sampling culinary delights at the Montego Bay Community College wine and food festival.



A live food-prep demonstration.



The German booth at the Montego Bay Community College wine and food festival.

Montego Bay Community College hospitality expo

A SUCCESS

THE MONTEGO Bay Community College's 'Wine, Meat and Seafood Expo 2016' was a true testament to the dedication and excellence in training future movers and shakers in the Jamaica's hospitality industry. The event took place recently in the school's auditorium.

The moment you entered the auditorium, you were transported into a kaleidoscope of colour, scent, and energy. Eager students welcomed excited patrons into their tents that were named according to the major wine producing regions of the world.

The countries represented were France, Chile, Spain, Italy, USA and Germany. The hospitality and tourism students were elegantly dressed in the colours of the various regions that they represented. Each tent was designed to provide patrons, some of whom travelled from neighbouring high schools and colleges, with a taste of the culture of the assigned wine-producing

regions. The students functioned as wine ambassadors intricately detailing for judges and their patrons the history of wine making in their assigned regions and present practices concerning such.

Important too, the morning session of the event also included cooking demonstrations and a cake display. This provided zealous high-schoolers with the opportunity to witness and sample the work of budding master chefs, who dished out some tasty offerings.

And as if that was not enough, the afternoon segment saw patrons treated a fashion show featuring the absolutely impressive pieces that were designed by the clothing and fashion students. Their designs were simply awesome. All in all, one thing was certain, the faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Creative Studies at the Montego Bay Community College has its finger on the pulse of providing world-class training in the field of hospitality and tourism.



The Chilean booth at the expo.



A food carving display.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



A wine display at the Montego Bay Community College wine and food festival.



The expo's Mexican booth.



Anchovy High School students viewing the exhibits.

Warm welcome for Ja's first winter tourists

MINISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett, Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook, Mayor of Montego Bay Homer Davis and tourism stakeholders were on hand at the Sangster International Airport to meet the first visitors to the island at the start of the winter tourist season.

The lucky couple, Celeen Rodriguez and her husband Wayne, arrived from the United States via JetBlue Airways and were met at plane side. They received VIP treatment upon arrival, along with several special gifts from various tourism entities. Mrs Rodriguez, a Jamaican, migrated from the island over 30 years ago. She and her Trinidad-born husband were here for a wedding.

Jamaica's winter tourist season runs from December 15 to April 30; however, Bartlett has warned that as a result of the consistent growth in the industry, the concept of the winter tourist season will soon have little relevance to tourism in Jamaica.

"This year is the last year we're going to have anything called the 'start of the winter tourist season,' we have graduated beyond that," he told staff at a number of hotels during a pre-season motivational tour recently.

The anticipated end to the seasonality of local tourism is based



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Celeen Rodriguez (centre), Jamaica's first visitor for the winter tourist season, receives complimentary accommodation from Sandra Nesbeth, sales executive RIU Hotels and Resorts. Sharing in the occasion is her husband Wayne Rodriguez.

on the fact that "we will have four million visitors here next year for sure," he stated then.

Continuing, he noted that this past year the country would end up with approximately 3.7 million and then will get to four million arrivals next year.

"You can't talk about winter season and summer season, because every day is the season now," argued Bartlett.



Leslie C Brown (second left), general manager of JetBlue Airways Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, presents Celeen Rodriguez (third left) with complimentary airline tickets. Rodriguez was the first visitor to the island for the 2016-2017 winter tourist season. Also sharing in the occasion are (from left): Paul Pennicook, director of Tourism; Wayne Rodriguez; the Hon Edmund Bartlett, minister of tourism; and Homer Davis, mayor of Montego Bay.



New York Times names Kingston a 'must-visit' for 2017



PEALS OF celebration are ringing throughout Jamaica's tourism sector as tourism partners and stakeholders celebrate **The New York Times** designating Kingston among the top 52 best places to go in 2017.

The New York Times, one of the leading newspapers in the United States made the announcement today, listing Jamaica's capital at No. 24. This enviable designation comes on the heels of the first anniversary of Kingston being named a UNESCO Creative City of Music.

In highlighting the attributes of Kingston, **The New York Times** article cited the city's cultural offerings such as the One World Rocksteady Music Festival, the newly opened Peter Tosh Museum and the dub club music parties. It named



local spots Usain Bolt's Tracks & Records and Chateau 7 Gourmet Jerk Centre as must-go places to eat, while Courtyard by Marriott and Spanish Court hotels were recognised as ideal places to stay.

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook was elated at the news. "I am beaming with pride that Kingston was singled out by such a respected publication. This highlights the new

additions being made in the city as well as Kingston's cultural offerings and exciting nightlife," he said.

Kingston's added appeal as a preferred destination is further cemented by its accessibility to the north coast via the new North/South Highway that allows visitors to enjoy the best of both worlds – the pulsating energy of city life and the relaxation of a beach vacation.

Sandals announces new 6-star resort

PROMISING A level of luxury never before seen on the island of Saint Lucia, Sandals Resorts International has announced its plan to add a fourth resort to its award-winning list of properties on the Eastern Caribbean island.

The Sandals brand has enjoyed tremendous success in St Lucia since 1993, when it made its first foray there, and the newest resort, to be named Sandals LaSource Saint Lucia will by all indications be a game changer.

Groundbreaking for the new resort, which will be nestled on 19 acres of land next to the existing Sandals Grande Saint Lucian Resort, is set to begin in spring 2017.

With the addition of this new

resort, guests in St Lucia will now have the option of 'staying-at-one, playing-at-four'.

EXOTIC OFFERINGS

Building on the concept of unparalleled luxury and innovation, which has come to be synonymous with Sandals LaSource Grenada and, indeed, with the Sandals of the future, Sandals LaSource Saint Lucia will boast an exotic infinity-edge sky pool bar offering picturesque views of the island's beautiful north coast; 350 rooms, and suites inclusive of the exotic SkyPool Butler Suites, and all-butler signature swim-up RondoalSuites, a first in the chain. The new resort will also feature an electrifying entertainment package to include a main stage with a 20-foot LED screen and a mobile DJ party scene.

"We pride ourselves on continuously raising the bar and Sandals LaSource Saint Lucia will completely re-energise the tourism market in St Lucia," promised Sandals Chairman Gordon 'Butch' Stewart. "Since we first opened Sandals Regency La Toc in 1993, we have consistently invested millions of dollars to reimagine our offerings to ensure our resorts and the St Lucian destination is among the best in the world and thereby boosting the local economy."

In addition to the luxury-included amenities and the more quality inclusions that have come to be associated with the Sandals experience, guests at Sandals LaSource Saint Lucia will be wowed upon entry with a contemporary open lobby featuring and a

multipurpose 'living room' with specialty piano bar, bowling and games, all state-of-the-art. The resort will also boast St Lucia's first Café de Paris, Sandals' signature French patisserie as well as an exquisite Butler Lounge, convenient for guests with a late departure.

LUXURY EXPERIENCE

To complete the luxury experience, Sandals LaSource Saint Lucia will offer the luxuries of a full-service Red Lane Spa, exciting shopping options in a European-style plaza, featuring indulgent stores and exhilarating entertainment. Guests will also have the opportunity to dine at any of the resort's nine exclusive 5-star Global Gourmet restaurants offering authentic dishes from international culinary perspectives.

"We are very excited about the addition of this 6-star resort and what it means not just for Sandals but for St Lucia", Stewart added. "We are thankful for the support we have received in St Lucia throughout the years, and we look forward to revolutionising the hospitality industry and to giving our guests a new level of luxury. This resort will set the stage for the continued revolution of the tourism product in the Caribbean", he concluded.

The new resort will join the existing Sandals Regency La Toc, Sandals Halcyon and Sandals Grande Saint Lucian properties and bring Sandals' room count in Saint Lucia to more than 800, confirming its place as the largest hotel operator on the island, directly employing more than 1,300 people.



Carole Beckford launches sport tourism book

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

TOURISTS FROM all over the world come to the Caribbean islands for their beaches, sunshine, food, music, history, heritage, and flora and fauna, among other things. Some people feel that one important reason is missing from that list, and it is sports.

Among those people is Carole Beckford – educator, journalist, marketer, broadcaster, sports-management expert, former Usain Bolt publicist, and the current manager of marketing and communications for the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

The Caribbean, and Jamaica in particular, has the potential to evolve into a sport tourism destination, Beckford believes, and has published a book, *Jamaica Is In – Sport and Tourism*, which looks at how the Caribbean can maximise its potential as a sporting destination. The 99-page paperback, with a foreword by Michael Hall, was launched at JAMPRO Jamaica Trade and Investment Ltd on Thursday, December 29.

The affable Dahlia Harris was the compère for the evening. Other presenters were John Lynch, chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board; Dave Cameron, president of the WICB; David Edwards, assistant professor at Johnson and Wales University, North Miami campus; Attorney-at-law Milton Samuda; and Beckford herself, who explained how the idea for the book came about, among other things.

COMPILATION OF ARTICLES

It is a compilation of articles written over a seven-year period. “The articles chronicle Carole’s journey on and off the field/track in her pursuit to demonstrate how sport, tourism, and sport tourism have evolved in developing countries like Jamaica,” the notes on the back cover say, while among the author’s notes, Beckford writes, “The articles speak to some of what I would consider important to sport and tourism in the Caribbean and should include the work of all the practitioners in the industry.”

Much about the book and marketing the Caribbean as a sport tourism destination was said at the launch. Harris said the book “was likkle, but tallawah” and it gives an “interesting insight”. She suggested that Jamaica could be a beach



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Carole Beckford was delighted to see singer Nadine Sutherland at the launch of her book.



Carole Beckford addressing the gathering at the launch of her book, ‘Jamaica Is In – Sport and Tourism’, recently.



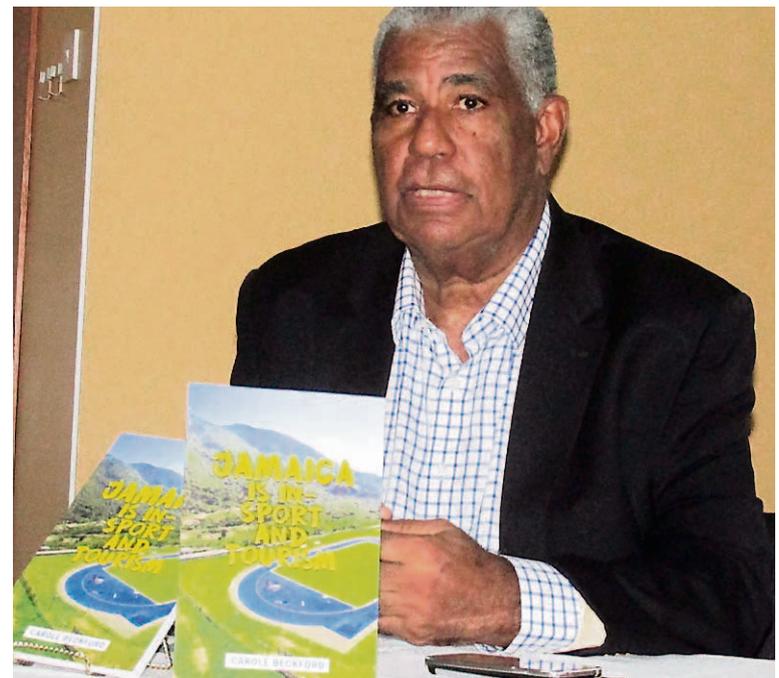
A section of the audience that was present at the launch of Carole Beckford’s book, ‘Jamaica Is In – Sport and Tourism’, recently.

volleyball destination and that the country should lead the way in the training of other Caribbean athletes.

The latter suggestion was endorsed by Lynch, who said that the book is “an eye-opener”. He also said that with Jamaica’s ‘tremendous history’ in sports, it should reach out and take the sport tourism market.

And while Cameron wants more support for sports, especially in the training of athletes, and sees the need for the country to embrace what sports has done for it, Edwards and Samuda want sports in the Caribbean to be treated as a business.

Sport tourism, Edwards said, is not a new phenomenon: “We just need to look strategically at the next step.



Chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board John Lynch says that Carole Beckford’s ‘Jamaica Is In – Sport and Tourism’ is ‘an eye-opener’.

Sports must be seen as an entertainment product in a public-private sector partnership which bridges the gap between sports and entertainment,” he stated.

In speaking with *Hospitality Jamaica* after the formalities about the objective of her self-published

book, Beckford said: “I want them (readers) to be aware of what’s happening, and what the prospects are for Jamaica, and, by extension, the Caribbean. But also that Jamaica is a step ahead in most aspects of certain things, and we ought to capitalise.”



From left: Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Jennifer Griffith and Tourism Product Development Company's regional manager Kenya Keddo.



From left: Alvaro Duenas, regional manager DeCameron Jamaica; Lee Young Sinclair, general manager, DeCameron Cornwall Beach, Armando Caceies, corporate entertainment director, DeCameron international.



From left: Louis Campbell, managing director, DeCameron Caribbean; Edmund Bartlett; Juan Pablo Franky, commercial vice-president, DeCameron International, at a reception at the new DeCameron Cornwall Beach recently.

Soft opening of DeCameron Cornwall

ONE OF Montego Bay's newest resorts, DeCameron Cornwall Beach, recently hosted Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, industry stakeholders, including the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Omar Robinson, and the media at a reception.

The 146-rooms adjoining the existing Royal DeCameron Montego Bay also have four suites and boast the famous Cornwall Beach as its veranda.

For DeCameron executives, a

third resort in Jamaica is a dream come true and is an endorsement that the group's Jamaican managing director, Louis Campbell, is doing an excellent job, said Bartlett.

"Louis, the man on the ground, has made a great name for Jamaica," said Bartlett, adding that the DeCameron family had placed confidence in Campbell.

The resort opened its doors in December 2016 to its first guests, more than a year after commencing construction.



From left: The Jamaica's Tourist Board's Janice Allen in conversation with the Ministry of Tourism's David Dobson and Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook.



From left: Jairo Berrio Zelez, commercial director, DeCameron Central America and the Caribbean, converses with AMStar's Richard Bourke.



From left: Robert Headley, Richard Bourke, and Omar Robinson.



Global airline industry to rake in US\$736 billion

THE INTERNATIONAL Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that it expects the global airline industry to make a net profit in 2017 of \$29.8 billion. On forecast total revenues of \$736 billion, that represents a 4.1 per cent net profit margin. This will be the third consecutive year (and the third year in the industry's history) in which airlines will make a return on invested capital (7.9 per cent) which is above the weighted average cost of capital (6.9 per cent).

IATA revised slightly downward its outlook for 2016 airline industry profitability to \$35.6 billion (from the June projection of \$39.4 billion) owing to slower global GDP growth and rising costs. This will still be the highest absolute profit generated by the airline industry and the highest net profit margin (5.1 per cent).

"Airlines continue to deliver strong results. This year, we expect a record net profit of \$35.6 billion.

Even though conditions in 2017 will be more difficult with rising oil prices, we see the industry earning \$29.8 billion. That's a very soft landing, and safely in profitable territory. These three years are the best performance in the industry's history – irrespective of the many uncertainties we face. Indeed, risks are abundant – political, economic and security among them. And controlling costs is still a constant battle in our hyper-competitive industry," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director general and CEO.

PERSPECTIVE

"We need to put this into perspective. Record profits for airlines means earning more than our cost of capital. For most other businesses, that would be considered a normal level of return to investors. But three years of sustainable profits is a first for the airline industry. And after many years of hard work in restructuring

and re-engineering the business, the industry is also more resilient. We should also recognise that profits are not evenly spread, with the strongest performance concentrated in North America," said de Juniac.

According to him, connectivity continues to set new records.

"We expect nearly four billion travellers and 55.7 million tonnes of cargo in the coming year. And almost one per cent of global GDP is spent on air transport – some \$769 billion. Air transport has made the world more accessible than ever and it is a critical enabler of the global economy," said de Juniac.

He expressed concerns regarding governments, criticising them for what he termed as not making aviation's work easy.

"The global tax bill has ballooned to \$123 billion. Over 60 per cent of countries put visa barriers in the way of travel. Billions of dollars are wasted in

direct costs and lost productivity as a result of inefficient infrastructure. These are only some of the hurdles which confront airlines. Our aim is to work in partnership to help governments better understand and fully maximise the social and economic benefits of efficient global air links," the IATA CEO argued.

2017 REGIONAL ANALYSIS

North American carriers: The strongest financial performance is being delivered by airlines in North America. Net post-tax profits will be the highest at \$18.1 billion next year, although down slightly from the \$20.3 billion expected in 2016. The net margin for the region's carriers is also expected to be the strongest at 8.5 per cent with an average profit of \$19.58/passenger. In 2017, capacity offered by the region's carriers is expected to grow by 2.6 per cent, slightly outpacing expected demand growth of 2.5 per

cent. Recent consolidation continues to underpin the region's strong profitability, even as the region faces upwards cost pressures which include the price of fuel.

Latin American carriers: Latin American airlines are expected to post a net profit of \$200 million, which is slightly lower than the \$300 million forecast for 2016. Profit per passenger is expected to be \$0.76 with a net profit margin of 0.7 per cent. Capacity offered by the region's carriers is forecast to grow by 4.8 per cent, which is ahead of expected demand growth of 4.0 per cent.

Despite some signs of improvement in the region's currencies and economic prospects, operating conditions remain challenging, with infrastructure deficiencies, high taxes, and a growing regulatory burden across the continent. Venezuela continues to block the repatriation of some \$3.8 billion of industry funds in contravention of international obligations, says IATA.



A tabletop at Café Africa, with the Adinkra symbol, Nkyimkyim, the 'twisting' pattern, hand-painted on it.

Dining with a cultural purpose at **CAFÉ AFRICA**

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

IN A country where the great majority of the people have African ancestry, there might just be a few eateries that specialise in African food. Café Africa is one of them. Its menu is listed on a blackboard shaped like the continent of Africa. On the menu are African dishes, for 'a taste to remember' who you are and where you are coming from, if you are a descendant of Africans who were enslaved in Jamaica.

Located at the Small Businesses Association of Jamaica (SBAJ) headquarters on property once owned by National Hero Marcus Mosiah Garvey, at the corner of Trafalgar and Lady Musgrave roads in St Andrew, Café Africa serves 'authentic' African cuisine from 27 African countries so that patrons "can remember the richness of the cultures of Africa", Steven Golding, manager director, told *Hospitality Jamaica*, recently. "So cooking African food is a way to recapture our identity and our culture, and to explore our cultural identity through food," Golding said.

Golding, who operated an Ethiopian restaurant in New York City for three years, is also the chef who researches the dishes served. In his research, he selects the dishes that are more suited for the



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Café Africa serves food from 27 African countries.

Jamaican palate. Food from all regions (east, west, north, south and central) of the continent, including the Magreb (Arab areas of Tunisia, Mauritania, Morocco) is represented. Every day there is a beef, chicken, fish and vegetable option, and Ethiopian food is served 13 times for the year.

BLACK POWER BRUNCH

The café also hosts a black power brunch through which networking is done on the first Sunday of the month.

This dining place, which is not a Rastafarian restaurant *per se*, started out at Regal Plaza in Cross Roads, St Andrew, in 2011 and



A patron at Café Africa getting some unprecedented customer service from managing director and executive chef Steven Golding.



Peri Peri chicken, one of the popular dishes at Café Africa.

moved to its current location in 2015. It is operated by the Universals African Restaurants, which is a part of the African Communities League, the business arm of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). "The director and the staff at Café Africa are all members of the UNIA, so we have

a mission of redeeming Africa, particularly in the culinary arts; but we also pursue it through the performing arts, through education and various other methods," Golding said, "People are educated, they learn about their history through food."

And through movies, as every Wednesday night there is dinner

and a movie, a movie which focuses on the black diaspora. Even the background music is Afro-centric, and there are hand-painted Adinkra symbols on the table-tops. Adinkra symbols are visual symbols, originally created by the Ashanti people of Ghana, which convey traditional messages.

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett announced that a cultural centre will be built in the town to develop the cultural talents of young people such as these performers from the Accompong Youth Culture Group and provide them with opportunities in the tourism industry.



Maroon festival to be promoted under new tourism marketing initiative

ACCOMPONG TOWN, Cockpit Country:

MINISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett has revealed that the 279-year-old Maroon community of Accompong is to have pride of place as the first cultural heritage location to be promoted worldwide as part of a new marketing initiative being driven by the ministry's Tourism Linkages Network.

"We will make Accompong the first destination and we will now place the anniversary festival on the calendar of events and market the community alongside the destination when we go abroad to market experiences in Jamaica," said Bartlett. He noted that "we are satisfied that the authenticity of this experience will enhance Jamaica's presence in the global arena".

PLANS FOR ACCOMPONG

The ministry's plan for the community was outlined by the minister as he gave the keynote address at last Friday's festival commemorating the 279th anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty by the Maroons and the British. "We are going to work with Colonel Ferron Williams and his cultural committee to build out this festival experience to make it a calendar event that is promoted to all visitors who come to



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (centre) flanked by Chief of the Accompong Town Maroons Colonel Ferron Williams (left) and Mayor of Black River, Councillor Derrick Sangster.

Jamaica," the minister said.

Since assuming office in 2016, Bartlett has been laying the foundation for the growth and diversification of Jamaica's tourism industry through five new networks; sports and entertainment, gastronomy, health and wellness, shopping, and knowledge. They operate under the ministry's overarching Tourism Linkages Network, which seeks to drive the development of these sub-sectors to further diversify our tourism offerings, create business opportunities, and increase the use of local goods and services within the tourism sector. The new marketing programme is being developed

by the sports and entertainment network in collaboration with the Jamaica Tourist Board.

INTERNATIONAL EVENT

He said that the festival on January 6 had become an international event which "opens the door for many thousands of locals and visitors who flock to the mountain settlement each year and immerse themselves in the rich life, culture, and history of the heroic Maroons through their music, dance, storytelling, craft, and food."

As Bartlett spoke, many international visitors sat comfortably on the ground listening while savouring meals of freshly jerked chicken

and pork.

From as far back as the late 1990s, the Ministry of Tourism, through the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) has been working with the Maroons to develop the tourism product from which they have been benefitting through tours.

Some of the physical works such as signage and improvements to the community centre in the area have since deteriorated. Bartlett announced that in addition to \$9 million recently provided by the Tourism Enhancement Fund to repair the roadway from New Holland to Accompong, an additional \$20 million would be allocated to repair the roadway to the area.

Signage which had been erected by TPDCo is to be improved and public facilities repaired. Col Williams was tasked to ensure that these amenities would be maintained and kept in pristine condition.

To further enhance the scope of Accompong's cultural offerings, the tourism ministry will also collaborate with the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission in building a cultural centre for the young people to develop their talents, enhance their capabilities, "but more importantly, provide the basis for public education and cultural development," said Bartlett.

National Cruise Council chairman sees positive 2017

Carl Gilchrist
Gleaner Writer

CHAIRMAN OF the National Cruise Council (NCC) Michael Belnavis is painting a positive outlook for the island's cruise shipping industry for 2017.

Speaking to **Hospitality Jamaica** last Friday, Belnavis, who is also mayor of St Ann's Bay and councillor for the Ocho Rios Division, said that the NCC is targeting 10 per cent growth for the industry.

With the NCC being given the mandate to ensure sustainable growth and development of the cruise shipping industry, Belnavis sounded upbeat at the prospect, and when asked what his outlook was for the sector in 2017, his response was: "Absolutely positive."

According to him, the NCC was looking for further growth: "We plan to move the product to unprecedented levels. I believe we can achieve 10 per cent growth year-to-year. We are looking at getting 1.5 million more passengers annually to our shores years to come."

PROJECTED INCREASE IN ARRIVALS

Jamaica welcomed 1.7 million cruise passengers in 2015, and it is projected that figures for 2016 arrivals should be 1.8 million.

One strategy to get more cruise passengers to disembark vessels when they dock, Belnavis explained, is a holding back on the proposed increase in head tax in exchange for an agreement from the cruise liners to get more passengers to disembark.

There is also an effort to get visitors to spend more money when they visit Jamaica. This means that there should be more attractive products to entice the visitors to spend more, Belnavis argued.

"(We should) get passengers and crews to spend more, such as buying water, buying food ... increase the level of our attractions so visitors can feel our culture – reggae music reverberating on the pier, an attractive food market, school children on the ships dancing. People love to see Jamaicans; they love the people. Those are some of our strengths."

The NCC chairman said that he was dealing with the negative issues dogging the sector such as harassment and the poor condition of resort areas.

"We have to ensure that we improve the look and the feel of the resort areas and that attractions remain up to standard," he pointed out.

Belnavis heads the 13-member NCC that comprises individuals from both the private and public sectors.

The council members were named by Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett last October.