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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2017

Hope
Gardens
loses its
magic

Guestserve,
JTB partner
to support
small hotels

JEWEL PARADISE COVE:

A REJUVENATING

experience

Jewel Paradise Cove: a rejuvenating experience

Ariane Hammond
Contributor

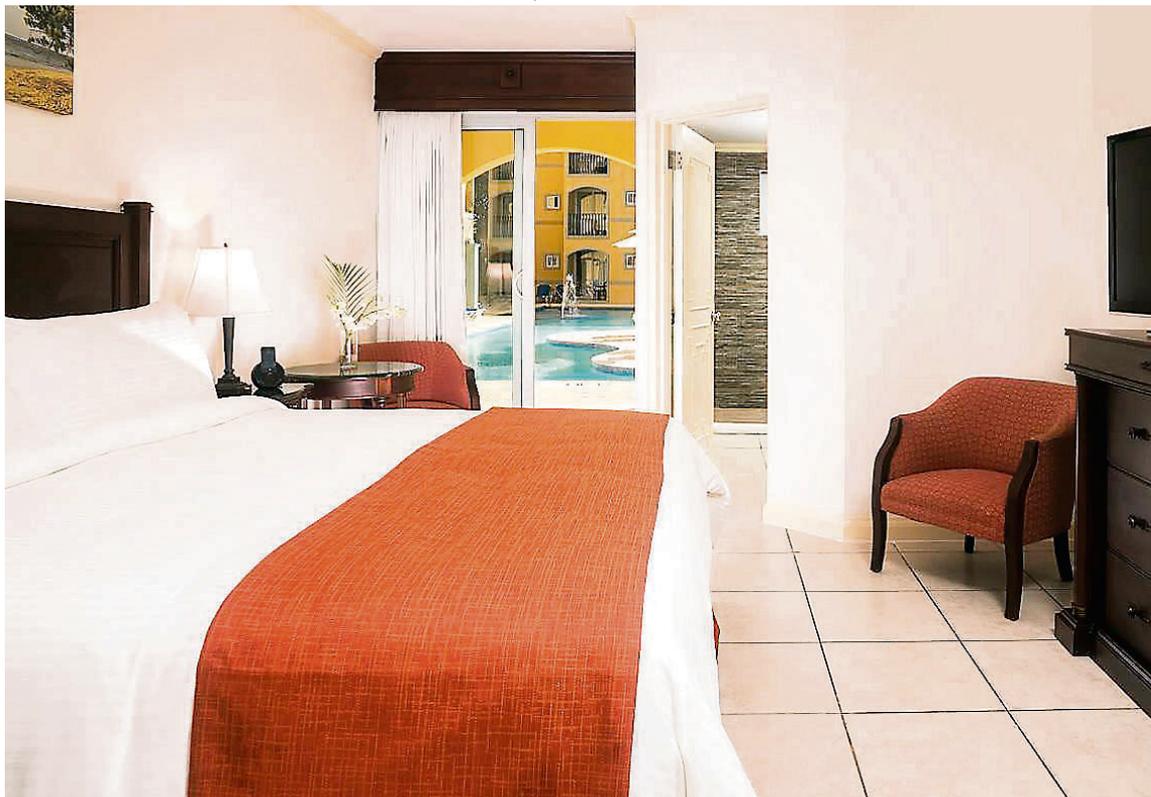
WORKING A 40-hour week, five days

per week, can become a little taxing and overwhelming for some people. Jewel Paradise Cove Hotel, which is literally tucked away in a cove, is the perfect therapy for working adults who need some time to rejuvenate their bodies and replenish their spirits.

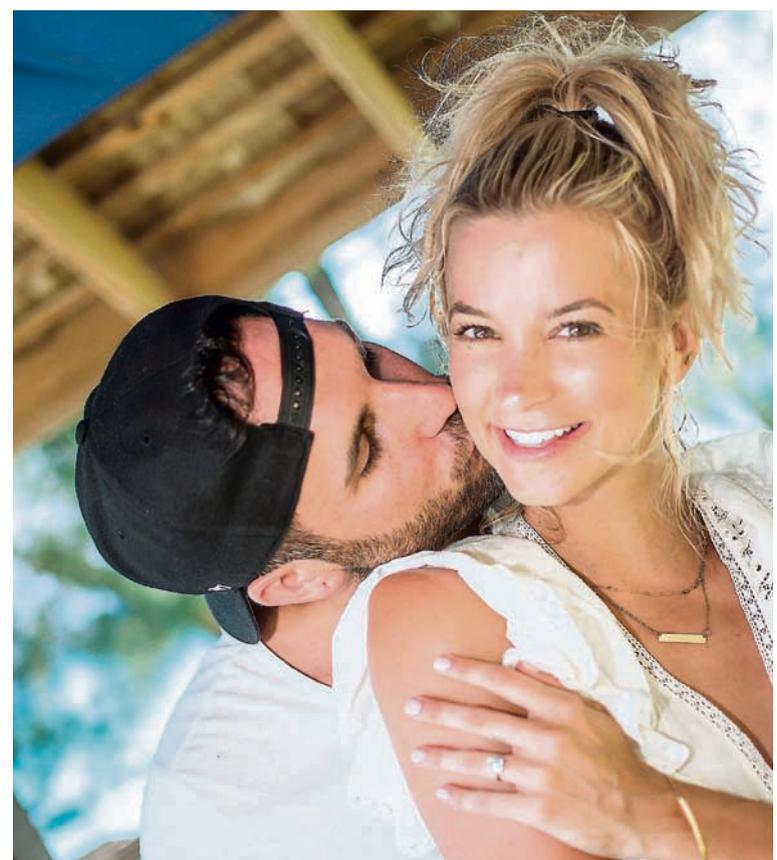
The Radiant Spa is the epitome of serenity and peace, with two steam rooms and saunas and 11 massage rooms with the beautiful backdrop of the azure waters of the Caribbean Sea. Hands of certified and capable masseuses work to take the stress away as they

knead deep to unknot muscles.

The spa also has the Vichy Experience, where the water does the work as you lay on the massage table and adjustable shower heads



One of Jewel Paradise Cove's Pool View Room. There are a total of 225 rooms from which guest can choose either a Premier, Pool view, ocean view, oceanfront concierge, garden view with butler service (Junior suite) or oceanfront butler service (junior suite).



Sabina Gadecki and Tyler Rich.



Chef Albert Lawrence shows us how he makes his famous jerk chicken.



Left: For the lovers who want to unwind together in the couple massage room. Right: try the Vichy Massage Experience while relaxing at the Radiant Spa.



Two of Jewel Paradise Cove's many cabanas.



Four children of Jewel Paradise Cove staff did exceptionally well in their GSAT examination and were treated to lunch and a prize-giving reception, where the general manager, Barbara Burton, got a chance to meet them because she believes they are a part of Jewel Paradise Cove's extended family.



Jewel Paradise Cove's water sport activities.

are placed at the perfect spots on your body with the right pressure and temperature to soothe those aching muscles.

Dining

There is always something to tempt guests' pleasure palates at the Jewel Paradise Cove with seven restaurants to choose from. For those who like to see a night show, try the Coral Café and enjoy the live entertainment.

To go to the Jade Samauri Bar, you first make your appointment and then enjoy live cooking as your chef prepares your meal. Guests can also be treated to dinner under the stars while enjoying the weekly beach party as food and alcohol flow lavishly.

For the night owls, Bling nightclub is a great place for guests to let down their hair and dance the night away while enjoying generous amounts of libations as the deejays keep the energy up with various sets of dance music.

The piano bar is also a fun spot, think karaoke but instead of a computer playing the music, a pianist sits at the piano and takes requests from the songbook, and everyone is welcomed to join in and sing along.

Paradise Cove also has great water sports that bring out the kid in you, with three swim-up bar pools as you luxuriate in the sun with your drink of choice. There is also a 202-foot water slide that you must try at least once.

PLEASE SEE **JEWEL**, 4



Sabina Gadecki an American actress and model, and Tyler Rich, a country and western artiste and songwriter currently residing in Los Angeles, got engaged at Jewel Paradise Cove on July 10.



Guests enjoying an early workout with water aerobics to get the day started the right way.

JEWEL

CONTINUED FROM 3

The beach

The Caribbean Sea is there for you to explore. You can go sailing on the *Hobie Cat* with a captain to guide the sails in the right direction. There is also kayaking, if you can handle the waves and get a biceps/triceps workout. There is also the opportunity to paddle board, which really helps your core; or you can just relax and look at the adventure under the sea in the glass-bottomed boat.

There are 225 beautifully furnished rooms that come equipped with standard flat-screen television, a comfortable bed, a balcony offering views of

the perfectly manicured garden, or looking out into a pool or the ocean.

If you are planning to visit the Jewels Paradise Cove for your next vacation, keep in mind it has an 80 per cent occupancy rate, hence reservations must preferably be done in advance.

Great service

One thing that stands out from the moment you arrive is the service and hospitality of all members of staff. Barbara Burton, general manager of the resort, knows this quality of service that each member provides sets Jewel Paradise Cove in a class by itself. As she opines, "It's the genuine Jamaican hospitality that our guests want that gives us repeat business from local and foreign guests." This statement is backed up with several

international awards, including the Service Excellence Award and Outstanding Quality in Service from Apple Vacation, MLT Vacation and Booking.com and Trip Advisor's Travellers Choice Award.

Must-try food:

THE JAMAICA PIZZA FROM COURT JESTER/MOONSTONE RESTAURANT

MADE FROM JAMAICAN JERK SAUCE, MOZZERALLA CHEESE, SWEET POTATO CRISPS, COCONUT SHAVINGS AND JERKED PORK; THE CRUST IS GLAZED WITH A MIXED-HERB SPECIAL.

Must try activity:

SAILING ON THE HOBIE CAT.



Staff members of the Jewel Paradise Cove getting a workout while posing for our cameras.



(From left) Chef Lemor Thomas, Oshane Thompson and Omar Turner pose with sushi meals they prepare for us at the Golden Sabre, a sushi restaurant.



A section of the Hip Strip, Montego Bay, St James.

TEF \$1.2b for MoBay, says Bartlett

HAVING SPENT \$2.8 billion from the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) in the Montego Bay area over the last 10 years, the Ministry of Tourism is ploughing an additional \$1.2 billion over the next four years to enhance the physical appearance of the resort town.

The ministry's commitment to support Montego Bay as the island's largest resort area and the fastest-growing city in the Caribbean was spelt out by Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett on Friday, July 28, at the Royal Decameron Hotel. The 'Invest MoBay' breakfast forum, hosted by the Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce and industry, looked at 'Unlocking the Opportunities in Tourism – Reviving the Hip Strip.'

With the money being provided by TEF, through development agencies such as the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), "we're going to be reconfiguring the entire area from Dump Up Beach straight through to Dead End, which includes the Hip Strip," said Minister Bartlett. The area



PHOTO BY ASHISH JHINGRAN

The sun sets over Caribbean Sea seen in this photo taken from Gloucester Ave (Hip Strip), Montego Bay, on January 7.

earmarked spans the coastline from Pier 1, going east along Howard Cooke Boulevard, Gloucester Avenue and Kent Avenue.

Underscoring the importance of partnerships, he said "the private and public sectors together have combined to create a new-look experience that is going to define a new attraction and, indeed, a new presence of Montego Bay in the global tourism market," said the minister.

Among the projects to be funded

by TEF are \$600 million for the creation of a closed harbour park, \$35 million to resurface the road from the Summit Police Station on Sunset Boulevard to Dead End on Kent Avenue. Also, utility wires along the Hip Strip will be relocated underground.

Montego Bay's streets are also receiving attention, with \$60 million provided by TEF to be spent by November through the municipal corporation. As part of this pro-

gramme, further attention will be given to the airport roundabout.

CENTRE OF BEAUTY

Underlying what is being done, Minister Bartlett said that "Jamaica and Montego Bay must become the centre of beauty and aesthetic in the Caribbean". To further this cause, landscaping of the Elegant Corridor, east from the airport to Greenwood, will be done at a cost of \$252 million. The Flanker community is also listed among projects to be undertaken with a special \$40-million programme on the drawing table.

At the same time, the Montego Bay Convention Centre is being refurbished at a cost of \$200 million "to make it fit for purpose" in time for the UNWTO World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, November 27 to 29 this year, and further afield, water distribution for communities around Montego Bay is to be improved with \$120 million provided by TEF. A contract was signed on Thursday July 27 with Rural Water Supply, to expand the Canaan source to improve distribution to

communities such as Orange, Irwin Heights, Johns Hall and Amity Hall. Also, the communities of Lilliput, Grange Pen, Greenwood and Barrett Hall will be able to access electricity supply legally with the implementation of a \$125-million squatter upgrading and rural electrification programme.

Minister Bartlett said that although all this effort augured well for the improvement of social and physical infrastructure, while building out the economic framework for the development of the Montego Bay community, more needed to be done and the Ministry of Tourism was working with the Ministry of National Security on addressing penal reconstruction along safety and security.

Minister Bartlett informed the forum that as the most important tourism city in the English-speaking Caribbean, Montego Bay represented some 35 per cent of the national tourism product, and with a national target of the industry earning US\$5 billion by 2021, Montego Bay should be providing 20 per cent of that.

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is us




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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

TOURISM is a force for good



In this May 2, 2016 photo, Carnival's 'Adonia' cruise ship arrives from Miami in Havana, Cuba. The ship's arrival marked the opening up of cruise tourism under the easing of relations between the United States and Cuba.

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

TOURISM IS a globally important industry playing an essential economic role in almost every nation in the world.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2016 travel and tourism generated US\$7.2 trillion or 9.8 per cent of global GDP, and employs at least 284m people, a figure equivalent to 1.1 per cent of all work in the global economy.

In the Caribbean, the industry is vital. Its total economic contribution has been growing year-on-year and is forecast by the WTTC to rise by the end of 2025 to US\$73.6b or 15.4 per cent of GDP, providing 14.4 per cent of all employment.

It is also a unique generator of growth. As Cuba and the Dominican Republic realised in the late 1980s, it can be scaled up rapidly, has almost immediate economic benefits in the form of foreign exchange, broadens the tax base, offers a wide range of employment, and attracts foreign investors.



David Jessop

It can also help finance infrastructure, and has been shown to enhance the lives of very large numbers of people.

Unfortunately, its worth can cut both ways.

Recent events indicate that once a tourism industry has become of national economic importance, it has the potential to be used as a political weapon that can be turned on or off at will by states wishing to change the views of, or punish other nations they disagree with.

The consequence is that some powerful governments now see the

industry and their visitor flows as offering, if required, a coercive tool.

Two recent examples suffice.

In mid-June, the US president announced measures aimed at reversing President Obama's Cuba policy which had all but ended most restrictions on US citizens wishing to visit Cuba on an individual basis.

NEW REGULATIONS

The new approach, the detail of which will not be available until September, will see new regulations that will end individual travel and restrict all new US business activities involving Cuban military enterprises, many of which are engaged in tourism through subsidiary companies. Together, the measures are expected to have the effect of restricting US visitor spending and make it difficult for the average traveller to visit on anything other than an organised educational tour, or on a cruise ship.

Although Cuba's highly diversified overall tourism market is still expected to continue to grow rap-

idly this year – arrivals are forecast to reach 4.2m by the year's end – the likely impact that the new US policy will have will be to significantly reduce visitor spend within Cuba's economy.

Russia, too, is weaponising tourism, appearing to see its visitor flows to nations around the Mediterranean as a function of its foreign policy. For example, a 2015 ban on charter travel to Turkey following the shoot down by the Turkish military of a Russian jet near the Syrian border, was reversed earlier this year as the two countries restored relations.

Much less well known is the case of Montenegro in the Balkans. Following the country's decision to join NATO – the western mutual defence organisation – and as one of several retaliatory measures, Moscow sought to retaliate by suggesting that the 0.2m Russians who previously have visited annually, and the 80,000 Russians who have property there, should 'reconsider' their travel plans.

Thankfully, it is hard to imagine, beyond Cuba, anything similar hap-

pening in relation to the Caribbean, other than adjustments to the travel advisories that governments in visitor source markets issue when they are concerned about their nationals' personal safety or any public health risk.

Nonetheless, the use of tourism as a politically driven economic weapon appears to be spreading, not least because it is widely recognised as potent, given the immediate economic impact a sudden reduction in arrivals or airlift can have on host nations. For example, recently the German foreign minister suggested that German citizens were no longer safe from arbitrary arrest in Turkey following the arrest of one of his country's human-rights activist in that country.

This is a dimension of tourism that has been little considered and requires more debate, especially among those tourism professionals, governments and organisations who believe that travel and its ability to spread wealth and create understanding of others' lives and culture is an important force for peace.

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AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

MORE FIRE

as Rastas celebrate Selassie's birthday

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

The Scotts Pass Nyabinghi Centre in Clarendon, located on that parish's border with Manchester, is one of the Meccas of Rastafari in Jamaica. And on the weekend of July 22-23, hundreds of people, some from abroad, descended upon the complex to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the birth of His Imperial Majesty (HIM) Emperor Haile Selassie I. The centre has long been on my list of places to go, and, perhaps, it took HIM's milestone to finally push me across the bridge, along a rough road, through some colourful gates, up a path lined by vendors, to the top of the hill where the tabernacle is.

I arrived some minutes after nine on the Sunday morning and was mesmerised not only by the peaceful atmosphere, but also captivated by the colours – reds, greens, and gold dominating, juxtaposed against white and shades of black and khaki. It was not a fashion explosion or a parade. They were a sartorial symbolism of the Rastafari movement. The clothes loudly said who they were and what they were about.

It was the sort of occasion that made me scratch my head because there was so much to process and interpret, but it was also about embracing and absorbing the richness of the narratives of a people who have created their own space in which to espouse their perspective on their existence.

Though the tabernacle was the epicentre of the celebrations, outside the compound, littered with sleeping tents and vehicles, was a hub of commerce. Amid the sales were the reasoning, the argument and counter-arguments, claims and refutations.

Classes were in sessions, and the teachers were the students, the students the teachers. And of course, there were the grandstanders, the ones interested in spewing out only their 'truths', refusing to listen to others.

And things got a bit tense back inside the tabernacle when it was time for the talks, 'word sounds'. Two dreadlocked men were threatened several times with removal from the tabernacle for constantly interrupting the speakers with utterances that had nothing to do with what the speakers were saying, or that were contrary to what was being said.

Amid the threats of removals, there were rebukes, and shouts of "Fire!", "Jah! Rastafari!" and "Lightning!" But the hecklers would not back down. This led one man to start the recitation of the long Rasta prayer. Everybody stood still and attentive, and when it was over, they shouted, "Jah! Rastafari!"

Upon the resumption of the talks, the heckling continued. It was countered by a woman, who, for several minutes, shouted passionately, from the depth of her gut, "Lighning!", "Fire!", "Thunder!", etc. The speeches continued, but the lightning, fire, and thunder

stayed away.

While the moderator, Ras Ivi, was making a comment, the main heckler approached him and waited for his turn to speak. Ras Ivi handed him the microphone subsequently. The heckler spoke his mind, saying things that received nods of approval but also things that drew more calls for fire.

When he was finished, he was challenged, and condemned by many for contradicting himself, making statements for which he had no evidence, and for uttering unsavory words in the tabernacle. He might as well have kept quiet, and that's what he did when the speakers after him talked.

It was a very entertaining and thought-provoking session, a platform not dominated by any one person. But, alas, I had to go!

I wish I could have stayed for the night session, the real 'Binghi', when there would be more fire, from the bonfire outside, from the 'round' in the tabernacle, and from the fervent chanting and drumming.



A different take on the red, green, and gold.



There is no doubt about which movement these elders belong to.



From left: We are family – Shakara, Iana, Ita, Kheeba, and Sylvia.



The fire altar inside the Nyabinghi Tabernacle at Scotts Pass in Clarendon.



Ras Ivi (left) is the organiser of the 125th birthday celebrations for HIM Haile Selassie I. To his immediate left is UWI lecturer Michael Barnett.



A young 'prince' and 'princess' cut the birthday cake to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the birth of HIM Haile Selassie I.



From left: Sister Mitsy Williams and Mama Fire exchanging words.

Jamaica Tourist Board and GuestServe partner to support small-accommodation properties

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) has embarked on a special initiative, the Jamaica Inns & Hotels Programme, for the island's small-accommodation sector. The arrangement is a partnership with GuestServe Inc, a Canadian-based provider of online reservations services for businesses of all sizes to engage and improve their brand presence online.

This JTB initiative with GuestServe provides smaller with 100 rooms or less with digital assets similar to those of larger properties. The initiative is informed by research, which indicates that many of Jamaica's small properties do not have the necessary digital footprint to compete in the current marketplace.

The platform is housed at www.jamaicainnsandhotels.com and close to 300 properties are live on the site. The Jamaica Inns & Hotels Programme is designed to benefit the small-accommodation provider with amplified online marketing support, thereby creating greater visibility. The platform includes a robust reservation system, which allows clients to make direct bookings for their selected property.

BENEFICIAL

The Jamaica Tourist Board is funding the development of the GuestServe platform, making it free for property owners to use GuestServe. This makes it even more beneficial for small properties to take advantage of this marketing resource.

Through this extranet platform, each property will be able to manage, among other things, their own content, room inventory, property images, discounts, and offerings in real time to the consumer.

Marcia McLaughlin, deputy director tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board, said: "I am pleased that we are able to empower our small hoteliers by offering them this invaluable support through this service. The Jamaica Tourist Board's goal is to have a rich site that is representative of Jamaica



Rondel Village a participant in the Jamaica Inns and Hotels Programme.



Zimbali Retreat serves up a mouthwatering menu. The retreat is a participant in the Jamaica Inns and Hotels Programme.

and the vibrant small-accommodations sector. We are confident that using the GuestServ platform will augment their product offering and attract visitors to their property. This is a strategic decision that we anticipate will be extremely beneficial to our accommodation sector." Ms McLaughlin emphasised, "Properties that are interested in participating in the programme can still benefit by contacting our regional office in Montego Bay."

Trends in the hospitality and travel industry indicate that travellers are opting for intimate experiences such as those offered by small properties. Empowering this sector of Jamaica's accommodation portfolio is critical for the destination to maximise the benefits of this growing market. It is anticipated that from the increased online exposure, Jamaica's small properties will experience significant growth in their occupancy levels.



Raft captains sailing near Rafter's Rest in Saint Margaret's Bay, Portland.



A raft captain putting the finishing touches to a newly constructed raft.

Illegal rafting plaguing tourism

Gareth Davis Sr

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

Rio Grande Valley, Portland

ILLEGAL RAFTING is once again plaguing Portland's fragile tourism sector, triggering renewed calls for more to be done on the part of the organisation that heads the attraction, the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), so as to stem the illicit activity.

The illegal activities, which is being undertaken by raftsmen assigned to Rio Grande rafting, Portland's premiere tourist attraction site, also involved raft captains, who are reportedly involved in the act of jostling for passengers, in an arrangement that is threatening to derail and cripple the industry.

"This is not good for the tourism sector," commented Errol Hanna, chairman of the Destination Assurance Council (DAC) in charge of Portland and Saint Thomas.

Hanna added that reports of illegal rafting have been confirmed by raftsmen, who have admitted that they themselves have participated in the illicit activity.

"As a matter of fact, there are reports of at least three hotels in the parish posting notices about rafting while offering to guests a special package, which is clearly illegal and a breach on their part. Such activities will cripple the livelihood of this industry."

During a visit to the Berrydale raft stand last year, Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett



Destination Assurance Council Chairman Errol Hanna and council member Annmarie Vaz greet Lawrence Chisholm, president of the Raft Captains Association.

warned raft captains to desist from any participation in illegal rafting activities which could seriously compromise the integrity of the industry, and could lead to a possible shutdown.

Last month, operations at Rio Grande rafting were brought to a halt after the police reportedly damaged three rafts that were suspected of being used for illegal activities. That move resulted in raft captains with-

drawing their services for two days; however, following the DAC's involvement, rafting has resumed.

In the meantime, John Marsh, a consultant with TPDCo, told *Hospitality Jamaica* that illegal rafting is not only threatening to seriously affect Rio Grande rafting, but the entire country, as it is an integral part of the tourism product.

"I am the one that uncovered the illicit

rafting scheme being undertaken by the raftsmen," commented Marsh.

"Since then, my presence at Rio Grande rafting has been viewed as sour in the eyes of those involved in the illegal activities and they no longer want me around. Several district constables have been trained and assigned to strategic locations so as to monitor and stem the illicit activities. Minister Bartlett, to the best of my knowledge, has every intention to provide the resources necessary to revive this industry to its full potential."

But president of the Raft Captains Association, Lawrence Chisholm, has sought to justify their participation in the illegal activity by claiming that TPDCo is not doing enough to attract persons to rafting, which diminishes their ability to earn more, and, as a result, gives rise to the illicit activity.

"Rafting is being sold for US\$90, which is approximately \$11,520 Jamaican," said Chisholm.

He continued, "We get from that amount \$5,500. Out of that, we have to pay \$1,500 to have the raft drawn back up the river to the raft stand. In addition, we have to pay \$300 dollars to get back from Port Antonio on a taxi. It therefore means that all we end up with is \$3,700, and on most occasions we (65 raft captains) only get one trip per week. Yet still, we have to maintain the raft and provide for our families."



Build seafood festival into tourism product – *Bartlett*

ORGANIZERS OF the Ocho Rios Seafood Festival have been challenged to grow the event into a gastronomy product that will attract visitors to the island.

Throwing out the challenge as he officially opened the festival on Emancipation Day (August 1), Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett said, “The seafood festival is really a celebration of the cuisine of our people and it’s an important element of our culture that helps to define us.”

He described the seafood offerings at the festival as “the making of a true gastronomy product, an element of our culture that will



cause us to bring millions of people to Jamaica and make many of our people richer and better”.

He said Jamaica was unique in how it prepares seafood, peppered shrimp, curried chicken, goat and fish “and in building out that special offering, we’re inviting the world to have a special taste of us”; and having tasted Jamaican delicacies, they go back to their countries and spread the word of their experience.

The tourism minister said he envisaged the Ocho Rios Seafood Festival being replicated across the island as a product that is available consistently and not just an event staged once a year.

He pointed out that gastronomy was a big industry with US\$150 billion spent on food every year and 88 per cent of world travellers doing so for “food experiences”.

The tourism minister commended the organisers for bringing back the seafood festival to Ocho Rios and praised the highly choreographed dances presented by Hah-R-Mony Entertainment Production. However, he expressed a desire to see “more of our music being utilised at special attractions and also at major products that drive not only our own delight, but also the delight of visitors and friends who come to our country”.



AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

Hope Gardens loses its magic

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

MAJOR RICHARD Hope, an officer in the British Army which took Jamaica away from the Spanish in 1655, was rewarded with hundreds of acres of land on the Liguanea plains of St Andrew. The property was eventually called Hope Estate.

In 1881, the colonial Government of Jamaica bought 200 acres of the Hope family estate. The intention was to create an experimental park and garden in which new varieties of sugar cane, cocoa, banana, pineapple, yam and sweet potato would be developed for distribution.

To commemorate the 1953 visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Jamaica, the gardens were named the Royal Botanical Gardens. It consisted of a great variety of plants, some imported, others endemic to Jamaica; some flowering, others not.

John Crocker, in his 1968 book, *The Caribbean and El Dorado*, wrote, "There are lawns with ornamental flower beds and borders, sunken gardens, plant houses, an aquarium, a maze, a bandstand, a tea garden, an artificial lake and a cactus garden. There is also a zoo." An extremely attractive place the gardens must have been then.

There, many a romance bloomed, many wed-

ding petals fell, hope flourished, and hearts shattered and blown away by the wind like fragmented leaves. Over time, the name was changed to Hope Botanic Gardens, an oasis, a place to get away from the din of the concrete jungle of Kingston and St Andrew.

It is still a retreat from the drudgery of life, but when *Hospitality Jamaica* visited recently, it could clearly be seen that Hope Gardens has long lost its magic. Where is the wow factor, where is the oomph?

The biggest irony of the place is the lack of stunningly beautiful gardens, as described by Crocker, all over the entire property. The nursery might have flowering plants for sale, but where are the vibrant, well-manicured clusters of flowers arranged creatively? And why is the fenced-off Chinese Garden donated by the People of China to the people of Jamaica still not generally accessible to the public?

The 2011 website of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fishery says, "Nature Preservation Foundation is now undertaking major redevelopment programmes. Major projects being carried out include rehabilitation of the

Shell bandstand – redesigning of the fountain garden – the construction of an entry plaza

PLEASE SEE **HOPE**, 15



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Even the title signage at Hope Gardens needs some sprucing up.



Elegant royal palms still representing the essence of Hope Gardens.



A standpipe of yesteryear.



Hope Gardens is a very popular meeting spot for small groups.



A section of the Chinese Garden located at Hope Gardens.



This fountain has been without water for years.

HOPE

CONTINUED FROM 14

to the zoo, along with bathroom and stalls.”

The website also says, “Plans are afoot to restore the sunken garden and to establish a pavilion garden, a parrot cage, and a crocodile exhibit. There are also plans to construct a hardening-off shade house for the purpose of growing tissue culture plants. Funding of approximately J\$2.8 million was secured from the European Union

through JAMPRO.”

So, what happened to this money and all those grandiose plans? Are the gardens going to remain dull and parched under the Jamaican sun, or will they be resuscitated like the zoo and Funland?

Hope Zoo, which occupied 17 acres of the land, was very popular years ago, but was closed for quite a long time. It has been reopened for some time now, and is attracting patrons to the property. The once-popular Funland ran out of laughing material and fell into ruins. It, too, is now on the rebound.

The Jamaica National Heritage Trust’s website says, “During the last 50 years, Hope Gardens has been through periods of care and neglect. During the period of care, the Garden became a place for pleasure, recreation, sightseeing, and picnicking.”

When **Hospitality Jamaica** visited, there were people seeking pleasure, having fun, sightseeing and picnicking, but all around were many signs of neglect. So, imagine how much more hospitable the place would be if it were going through a period of care.



Hope Gardens is a popular spot for photo shoots.

Jamaica Tourist Board spreads the Jamaican vibe across London

LONDON IS abuzz with the sights of Destination Jamaica as the Jamaica Tourist Board spreads the Jamaican vibe across the city with 150 wrapped taxis.

For the month of August, the city of London will be decorated with colourful Jamaica-themed taxis wrapped in images depicting an inviting scene of the island in rainy London.

The timing of this promotion coincided with the beginning of the IAAF World Athletic Championships, where the island’s athletes produced world-leading performances. These attractive spectacles are driving conversations about Jamaica across the city. Emblazoned with the moniker ‘Less Traffic and more Jammin’, the taxis whet their discerning appetite to visit the



Jamaica Tourist Board staff pose with one of the Jamaica-themed taxis that is showcasing the island across the city of London. From left are: Torrance Lewis, district sales manager; Antoinette Charles, personal assistant to regional director UK/Northern Europe; Elizabeth Fox, regional director UK/Northern Europe; Yollette Scarlett, accounts/sales support executive; and Donovan Donaldson, business development officer

island for more of its infectious vibe.

During this promotion, the Jamaica Tourist Board has partnered with Virgin Holidays and Breathless Montego Bay Resort and Spa, who are offering special deals for all-inclusive holidays to the island.

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook and Minister of Tourism Hon Edmund Bartlett are in London to give support to the Jamaican team at the World Championships as well as amplify the Jamaican presence. “Visitor arrivals out of the United Kingdom have been doing exceptionally well. For the period January to May 2017, we experienced a 5.7 per cent increase over the corresponding period in 2016. This promotion will increase the visibility of Destination Jamaica in the United Kingdom and among persons from around the world who will ride in these taxis as we capitalise on the successes of our athletes on the track,” said Pennicook.

TRIPADVISOR lists St John as a top honeymoon destination

US VIRGIN ISLANDS (July 28, 2017)

THE HIGHLY influential TripAdvisor travel review site listed the island of St. John in the US Virgin Islands as one of the “15 Best Honeymoon Destinations in the United States”.

The 15 destinations were chosen by an algorithm that analyzed all of the property reviews on TripAdvisor Rentals to select the honeymoon destinations that have the highest-rated rental accommodations. St John, in particular, was praised for its “world-class beaches, unspoiled forest and blissful solitude”.

TripAdvisor Rentals is the vacation rentals branch of TripAdvisor. Rental properties include beach houses, ski cabins, private islands, treehouses and downtown apartments.

Known as ‘Love City’, St John’s isolation is an attraction for honeymooners. According to TripAdvisor, “this secluded destination has no airport or cruise ship dock ... to reach this side of paradise, fly into neighboring St Thomas and hop on the public ferry (or splurge on a private water taxi).”

Two-thirds of the island is part of the Virgin Islands National Park, which in addition to the hiking trails, hills, valleys and beaches on land, also encompasses thousands



St John offers honeymooners a tranquil getaway.

of acres underwater. St John’s pristine waters offer honeymooners

the option to snorkel, scuba dive or participate in water sports

activities.

“You’ll be lounging on

Honeymoon Beach, hiking the Reef Bay Trail, or snorkeling at Trunk Bay in no time. Later, you might find yourself shopping in Coral Bay or enjoying the nightlife in Cruz Bay before returning to your tropical retreat or cliff-top villa rental,” TripAdvisor relayed.

“It’s great to see the US Virgin Islands positioned among the top honeymoon destinations across the nation,” Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty said. “We would like to thank all our visitors who wrote and continue to write reviews online and share their experiences with this online community of global travelers.”

An added incentive for US citizens is the fact they do not need a passport to visit the USVI. Also, with \$1,600 in duty-free allowances for US residents, visitors and honeymooners can enjoy some extra shopping.

TripAdvisor, one of the world’s largest travel sites, enables travelers to unleash the full potential of every trip. With more than 500 million reviews and opinions covering the world’s largest selection of travel listings worldwide – more than seven million accommodations, airlines, attractions and restaurants - TripAdvisor provides travelers with the “wisdom of the crowds” to help them decide where to stay, how to fly, what to do and where to eat.

US Virgin Islands launches new advertising campaign

US VIRGIN ISLANDS (August 1, 2017)

THE UNITED States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism has debuted a new advertising campaign, named “Real Nice”.

In partnership with its advertising agency of record, J. Walter Thompson Atlanta (JWT), which is responsible for creative design, and local Virgin Islands company FilmVI, the popular “Virgin Islands Nice” campaign

was revised to give consumers insight into Virgin Islanders’ lifestyle, while capturing the attention of visitors who seek to experience a unique vacation rich in interactive cultural offerings.

With more than 80 percent of the campaign development budget spent in the Territory, the production resulted in the hiring of more than 100 on-island talent and crew, as well as wardrobe, props and

equipment to achieve a new level of authenticity.

The refreshing new phase of the campaign, which involved creating print, television and digital assets, focuses on authentic Virgin Islands experiences, highlighting food, culture and people, along with the natural beauty of the destination. The voice-over talent of Virgin Islands artist Pressure Busspipe is featured in the television anthems, while his music can be heard in some of the

digital videos, which will be shared online.

“To a Virgin Islander, ‘real nice’ is more than a phrase; it’s a feeling of positivity that speaks to the way we live and embrace each other as a people,” said Beverly Nicholson-Doty, the US Virgin Islands’ Commissioner of Tourism. “These advertisements dive deeper into showcasing the authenticity of our destination.”

To capture the true essence of the islands visually and emotionally, JWT and FilmVI worked seamlessly to ensure there was a local feel to all aspects of the production - from locations to props to sound design. All lighting was natural and the production team followed local

talent for three weeks, capturing genuine responses to Virgin Islands experiences.

Virgin Islands co-director of the project Dwight Winston of D. Winston Media said: “It is an honor to have been selected by the US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism to direct their 2017 ‘Real Nice’ promotional campaign. I am humbled by this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and appreciate USVI Tourism’s commitment to supporting local talent.”

The “Real Nice” campaign includes three television spots (**State of Mind, Live How We Live and Free To Explore**), as well as 16 digital videos and more than 10 print ads.