

The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2018

The next level of
healing
art comes to Jamaica



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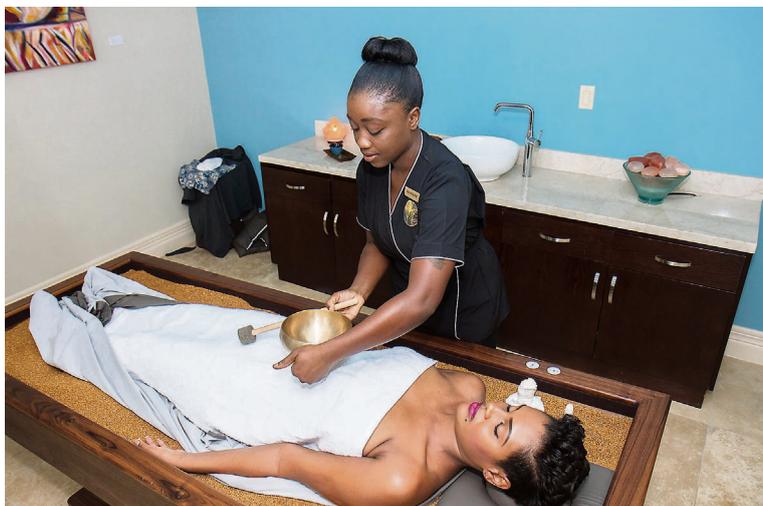
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Spa director at Jewel and Hilton resorts, Sienna Creasy, in one of her yoga positions.



Shannique Milling, massage therapist, provides Nadia Smith with a metaphysical centring with Himalayan Singing Bowl Sound Healing during her Quartz massage.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

Mineral pools filled with magnesium, with an ocean view to relax before or after your spa ritual.

Next level of HEALING ART comes to Jamaica

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

CARIBBEAN SPA of the Year, the Grande Spa, at the Jewel Grande Montego Bay, has created a space where Jamaicans can experience the healing aspects of health and wellness.

Opened in December 2017, Grande Spa has brought in world-class tables to the island, including the Gharieni MLX Quartz from Germany, and the Ayurvedic treatments from India.

Staying true to native Jamaican remedies and ingredients, the two-storey 30,000-square-foot island villa-inspired Grande Spa also boasts locally based Jamaican bush bath treatments.

“The whole idea of our menu is out of many, one treatment; out of many, one experience; out of many, one healing,” says Sienna Creasy, group spa director at Jewel and Hilton resorts, adding that in our overbuilt, overworked, overly technology, infused community ... this is the space she invites others to decompress, “to be you, to relax and to indulge”.

Creasy, who first came to Jamaica as a Peace Corps volunteer over 11 years ago, says that that journey helped her to understand a lot about the healing arts of Jamaica.



The MLX Quartz sand bath spa table.

Today, the Reggaealates founder and yoga instructor tells you in, no uncertain terms, that she doesn't believe in the word 'pampering', "I believe healing is needed across the board, on a mental, physical and emotional level."

That healing, she says, starts in the Himalayan and salt therapy

room, which she describes as having gone beyond a room. "It's an experience – Himalayan and salt massages, Himalayan and salt reflexology treatments – which have proven that this is the next level in

PLEASE SEE **HEALING**, 3



A ritual room that is set up for the next client.

HEALING

CONTINUED FROM 2

the world of healing art, and to bring Jamaica to that level was one of my dreams.”

The MLX Quartz bed takes on the shape of the body, enabling an ideal lying comfort. The beneficial effect: deep relaxation of mind and body.

The Quartz Therapy Suite’s state-of-the-art Gharieni Spa table is filled with a mixture of quartz

sand and Baltic amber and heated to 108 degrees. The vibration of the bed and healing assists in mental harmony, detoxification, and boosting the immune system, while simultaneously fighting inflammation. The Caribbean’s first and only Himalayan Salt Halotherapy Lounge with the first saltability halotherapy is known to relieve sinus pressure, helps with insomnia, reduces stress, relieves skin ailments such as acne, and improves energy. The tables at the



Lemon grass and fresh lemon with cerasee bath.



The herbal garden with lemon grass, pimento, rosemary, peppermint, moringa and Chinese thyme.



Nadia Smith is cocooned in warm Baltic amber and golden quartz heated to 108 degrees, while warm quartz-filled poultices compress the meridians of her back before her lemon grass massage.

Grande Spa, Creasy says, all tell a story.

Her idea of spa ritual is to experience that feeling of top-tier wow.

Another encouraging thing about the Grande Spa is the fact that the therapists are all handpicked. “We have an amazing team and we have been working hard together, from building the furniture to create the experience together.”

All the roots used in the rituals are planted on

Spa Services and Amenities:

- 14 treatment rooms, a relaxation lounge, and hydrotherapy pools.
- Two VIP suites hosting thermal massage tables with zero gravity comfort, waterfall showers, and whirlpool tubs.
- Signature spa journeys with local products and rituals inspired by Jamaican folk remedies.
- Full-service salon, featuring award-winning products for manicure, pedicures, make-up, hair and more.
 - Yoga, Pilates and barre studio.
- Gift shop with yoga apparel, salon products, and more.
- Ortanique Cafe & Juice Bar for pre- or post-treatment smoothies, tea, and other healthy fare.

the property. “We plant what we use, the flowers are actually the names of the treatment room.

So we invite everyone to come and experience a treatment, to include yoga classes ... and a wide range of other life-healing treatments.”

The spa services round out its offerings with facials, haircuts, make-up, waxing, and more. As a family-friendly establishment, Grande Spa caters to kids and teens alike with an offering of natural facials, massages, manicures, pedicures and braids.

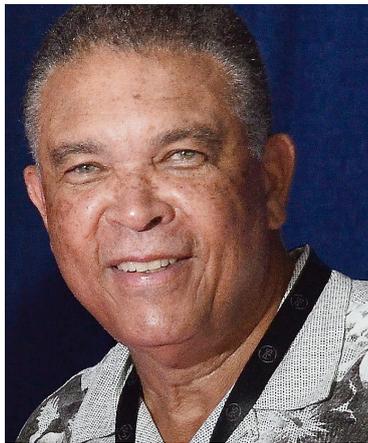


The relaxation room, where clients await their ritual.

OUR WISH FOR TOURISM IN 2018

“MY WISH is to see us eradicate that dark cloud of criminality in Jamaica, especially in the parish of St James; continue our work on expanding new markets to Jamaica ... Latin America, Eastern Europe and China; continue to build on our successes in the US, Canadian and UK markets; and try to find a more effective way to communicate to ALL Jamaicans the importance of tourism to our island and the potential benefits to ALL!”

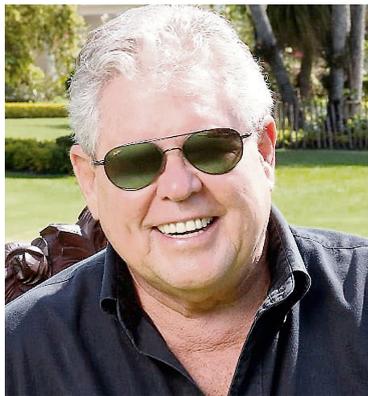
– Donnie Dawson, interim director of tourism



Donnie Dawson

“Jamaica continues to be the benchmark for Caribbean tourism. With the US economy on the rise, my wish for 2018 is to see a continued cohesive regional integration alongside an increased investment in human and capital resources, thus leading to inclusive and sustainable growth for the Caribbean and its people. A rising tide, after all, lifts all boats.”

– Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart, OJ, CD, Hon LLD



Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart

“Tourism is the Caribbean’s biggest earner, so I would like to see the industry’s resources used to strengthen the region’s resilience not only to the physical assaults destinations face from weather events, but also the social and economic damage natural and man-made disasters leave in their wake.”

– Bevan Springer, president, Marketplace Excellence



Bevan Springer

“May 2018 be a year of rebirth for the Caribbean – a year in which we turn devastation into determination and our focus to rebuilding every aspect of our lives and industry better and stronger. A year in which all recognise that ‘tourism is key’ to ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, and in which all are fully invested in making sure, as a region, that we are the best we can be.”

– Patricia Affonso-Dass, president-elect, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association



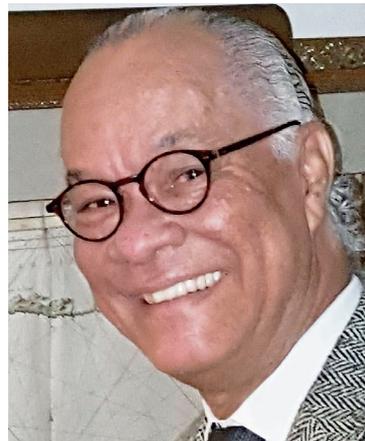
Patricia Affonso-Dass



Omar Robinson

“While tourist arrivals continue to increase, we must make the necessary improvements to ensure greater product appeal while removing other impediments to growth. We must continue to deliver exceptional vacation experiences while ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared across the society.”

– Omar Robinson, president, Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association



Noel Mignott

“2018 brings a host of opportunities for Caribbean tourism. Islands that were impacted by the last hurricane season will emerge with an updated and completely renovated product. The unaffected islands have benefited from a new clientele that may not have previously considered them. As a consequence, with adequate airlift, the region is poised to have an extraordinarily successful year.”

– Noel Mignott, The PM Group



Marc Melville and John Byles

“Our wish for 2018 is a reduction in crime. We appreciate the complexity of the problem, but without a reduction, the crime rate will negatively affect the tourism industry further, having a severe impact on its stakeholders and the country.”

– Marc Melville and John Byles, Chukka Caribbean Adventures



Delano Seiveright

“My wish is to see way more Jamaicans benefit from the growing industry and its many linkages. It’s important that our people take better advantage of the democratisation of tourism and the income-earning opportunities that some are already benefiting from.”

– Delano Seiveright, senior adviser and strategist to the minister of tourism

2017

A BIG YEAR FOR TOURISM

WHILE TOURISM has long been considered the main engine of growth of the Jamaican economy, 2017 will long be remembered as the year when the industry finally realised its true potential, sector players said.



FILE PHOTOS

Omar Robinson, president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.

They point to the record number of stopover and cruise arrivals, in addition to investments in new hotels as well as a level of confidence within the industry that has never been seen before.

"It was truly a banner year for tourism," explained Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) President Omar Robinson.

"Having four million visitors in a single year, by any stretch of the imagination, is a remarkable feat. What, is worth noting, however, is the level of optimism we now have within the sector ... investor confidence and a belief that things can only get better."

Robinson's view is also openly shared by Chukka Adventure Tours' Marc Melville, whose company recently pumped US\$4 million into its Good Hope, Trelawny, facility.

HIGH INVESTOR CONFIDENCE

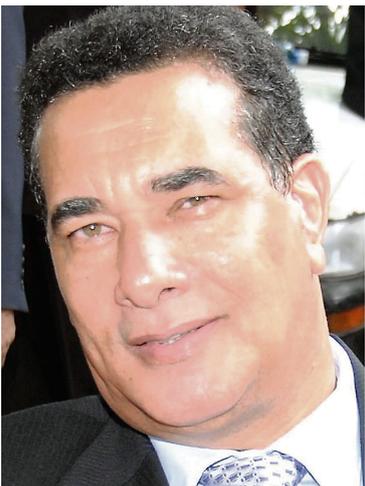
"Investor confidence is indeed high, and we at Chukka feel the industry is on the right track," he said.

"2017 was a phenomenal year for both stopover and cruise arrivals, and we are very comfortable with our upgrade at Good Hope, especially in our adventure water park."

In the meantime, mayor of Montego Bay Homer Davis, while acknowledging the phenomenal gains made by tourism, noted that it



Ravi Daswani



Homer Davis

was also important to bring the crime situation under control where "the numbers can even be better."

"Even with all our problems, it has been an amazing year for tourism," he noted. "We just staged the biggest tourism conference ever here in Montego Bay, and we have also opened a number of high-end properties, further enhancing our role as the tourism capital of the region."

Kudos are also being meted out to tourism minister Edmund Bartlett whose "leadership and vision" are being hailed as a real turning point in a sector that has



Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett.

consistently demonstrated a level of profitability and dependability. "Say what you want to say, but the tourism minister must be commended for his vision, hard work, and dedication," explained Garfield Dussard, a water sports operator with operations in Ocho Rios, Falmouth, and Montego Bay.

"When you look back at tourism in 2017, it will be remembered as the year when Jamaica achieved what many of us didn't see as possible. We saw records in both arrivals and revenues, we saw an increase in retention where more of the tourism dollars are now staying

in the country, and we saw the opening of a number of luxury hotels and investments in a number of high-profile attractions."

For his part, Ravi Daswani, a senior director of the Royal Shop chain of duty-free stores, said that it is important for Jamaica to build on the 2017 momentum, noting that it would be very sad, "if not tragic" to allow complacency to reverse "all the wonderful gains."

"We have to continue to be proactive and to double our efforts going into 2018," he urged. "We have seen what is possible and the lofty heights we can reach."

This is us




With praise from reviewers including Lonely Planet, Frommer's and Fodor's, Franklyn D Resort & Spa is one of the highest rated hotels in Jamaica on TripExpert.com

2017
RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

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Learning lessons for tourism from 2017

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

NO ONE involved in Caribbean tourism will easily forget 2017. It was the year in which Hurricanes Irma and Maria demonstrated not only climate change's ability to negatively affect much of the Caribbean economy, but also made clear that tourism and its sustainability have become central to the region's future.

Arriving in quick succession, the two intense Category Five storms devastated, variously, Anguilla, the BVI, Puerto Rico, the USVI, St Maarten and St Martin, Barbuda, Dominica, St Barths, and the north coast of Cuba and many of the country's central provinces. They also caused extensive damage to other nations, from St Lucia to the Turks and Caicos, causing death and injury, displacing visitors, severely damaging tourism infrastructure, and raising doubts internationally as to whether the region was open for business.

In the short term, they made the point about the importance of immediate realistic messaging on social media, the importance of establishing information protocols with tour operators and governments in source markets, and the provision of regular online recovery



FILE PHOTOS

Damaged buildings and fallen trees litter downtown Marigot, on the island of St Martin, after the passing of Hurricane Irma on September 9, 2017.

updates in the months following hurricane damage.

They also demonstrated that not only is climate change real and likely to be lasting, but that the economic growth, employment, and the taxes created by tourism are particularly vulnerable.

The two hurricanes emphasised,

too, how dependent the industry is on both the built and natural environment and that sustaining tourism's economic contribution requires governments to invest in and seek external support to build resilience.

More generally, the two weather events underlined the need for a joined-up public-private approach to making the case internationally for increased support for the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility. They also emphasised the need for the region's vulnerability to be recognised by international financial institutions and for concessional funding for recovery and adaptation to continue to be made available.

It was also the year in which it became apparent that commercial insurance premiums for storm damage were set to rise dramatically to levels at which smaller players in the hospitality sector are likely to require industry associations and governments to find new, creative solutions if national product diversity is to be maintained.



DAVID JESSOP

effect of ending individual travel to Cuba by US citizens, making visiting more complex, while creating uncertainty and risk for the average US traveller. The winners in this will undoubtedly be the US cruise and the specialised US tour operators able to offer such travellers regulatory certainty. The losers and those most likely to suffer in 2018-19 are cruise destinations distant from the US, if as expected, the cruise lines adapt their itineraries to spend longer sailing around Cuba.

IMPACT OF INDUSTRY GROWTH

In 2017, Jamaica hosted a conference in Montego Bay that could have long-term implications for the way in which the industry is regarded internationally. Together with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, the Jamaican government hosted an event that explored how the industry's growth might drive future economic development and social change and come to play a central role in delivering the UN sustainable development goals that aim to end poverty globally.

It was also the year in which it largely came to be recognised that visitor motivation was changing.

At numerous industry events in the region and internationally, there was something close to a consensus that the growing international demand for the authentic and experiences, rather than a homogenised product, would necessitate reorienting tourism in ways that brings benefits to communities away from the beach.

The year marked the return to prominence of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, partly through its proactive response to events such as the two hurricanes, but more important, through its thoughtful and strong positions on public policy issues from climate change to taxation.

Space does not permit more, but let us hope that the lessons of 2017 are not just well learnt, but are acted on by governments and the industry.



President Donald Trump

Beyond this, 2017 was the year in which changing US policy had both a direct and indirect influence on Caribbean tourism.

In particular, the decision by President Trump to reverse his predecessor's policy on travel by US citizens to Cuba created some surprising winners and losers, creating new scenarios for regional tourism.

The new US regulations had the



Homes lay scattered after the passing of Hurricane Maria in Roseau, the capital of Dominica on Saturday, September 23, 2017.



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Sandals South Coast

THE BEST

thing to hit the west

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica
Coordinator

FOR YEARS, visitors to Jamaica have been paying premium rates for oceanfront views from various resorts. Today, their needs are being met by overwater suites as Sandals Resorts International becomes the Bali of the Caribbean.

The pioneers have again separated themselves from the pack with the unveiling of 12 overwater bungalows on the island's south coast.

Each bungalow at Sandals



A fish dish served in an intimate setting at Sandals South Coast.

South Coast in Westmoreland comes dressed with personalised service from a dedicated butler, whose unparalleled pampering

ensures that, on leaving, you are booking your next trip.

Hospitality Jamaica had the opportunity to make what could be tagged an 'ambulance visit' to the resort last month. It was an ambulance visit because of the fast turnaround time.

However, once checked in, it was difficult to leave the room, because the charm and amenities were all that was needed to bring the short vacation to perfection.

In-room check-in; welcome drinks on arrival, a well-stocked bar, in-room dinner and breakfast, all combined to give the feeling of being on a private island.

Accessible via a heart-shaped pier, Sandals' first dedicated overwater bar called Latitudes months ago, where guests can enjoy their cocktails in hammocks suspended above the Caribbean Sea, and an overwater wedding chapel with breathtaking 360-degree panoramic water views and a glass floor aisle.

The new bungalows deliver complete immersion of the fine turquoise waters and rich marine life below. Glass-vision floor panels and lit water ensure guests can enjoy undersea views at any time. Couples can also admire



Another view of the new overwater bungalows at Sandals South Coast in Westmoreland.



An outside JaCuzzi for two in one of the new overwater bungalows at Sandals South Coast in Westmoreland.

the beauty of the sea from their private outdoor Tranquility Soaking Tub for two, or from their overwater hammocks.

Every bungalow captures the heights of luxury with hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, custom crafted king-size beds adorned with soft linens and plush pillows for the ultimate sleep experience. Inside, each bungalow is equipped with a smart TV and a large ceiling fan to stay cool while enjoying fresh Caribbean breeze. The bathrooms are equipped with his and hers sinks, a large backlit mirror

adorned with mosaic tile, and a walk-in rain shower. Outside, the private patio is equipped with an extended sun deck, outdoor shower, sun loungers, and a bistro set for two.

Beyond the views, guests staying in the newly debuted bungalows have access to 24/7 butler service. The butlers are trained in accordance with the exacting service standards of the Guild of Professional Butlers.

Exclusive in-room dining and room-service menu and direct resort access are available via a Royal Duffy luxury boat.

Additional bungalow features include: personal airport greeting with expedited immigration; private luxury resort transfers; welcome gift, including a branded towel set; Molton Brown bathroom amenities, free Wi-Fi and more.

See highlights of the best thing since slice bread to hit the island's south coast in our pictorial by photographer Ashley Anguin.

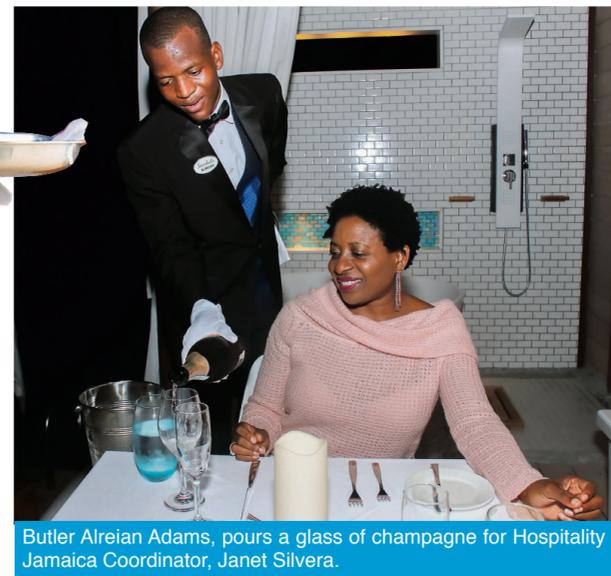
janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

The new overwater bungalows at Sandals South Coast in Westmoreland.

Rohan McIntosh greets guests of the overwater bungalows with welcome beverages.



Butler Alreian Adams, pours a glass of champagne for Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator, Janet Silvera.



King-size bed for two in one of the new overwater bungalows at Sandals South Coast in Westmoreland.

Jamaica voted World's LEADING Cruise & Wedding Destination



- Destination (Jamaica)
- World's Leading Cruise Destination (Jamaica)
 - World's Leading All-Inclusive Company (Sandals Resorts International)
 - World's Leading All-Inclusive Family Resort Brand (Beaches Resorts)
 - World's Leading Caribbean Attraction Company (Island Routes Caribbean Adventures)
 - World's Leading Luxury Hotel Villa (Ian Fleming Villa @ GoldenEye, Jamaica)
 - World's Leading Villa Resort (Round Hill Hotel & Villas)
- To learn more about the World Travel Awards, go to www.worldtravelawards.com. For more information about Jamaica, please visit www.visitjamaica.com.

JAMAICA WAS again recognised as the World's Leading Cruise Destination at the 24th Annual World Travel Awards during a black-tie event at the JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay Resort & Spa in Vietnam in December.

Additionally, the Jamaica Tourist Board was recognised as the Caribbean's Leading Tourist Board. The World Travel Awards was established in 1993 to acknowledge,

reward, and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries.

"We're honoured to be recognised as the World's Leading Cruise Destination 2017," said Donnie Dawson, Jamaica's acting director of tourism. "This award is an affirmation to our tourism partners that our collective efforts to promote destination Jamaica have proven to be successful. We

will continue our tireless efforts to grow our tourism product to enable our visitors to have memorable experiences in the 'Home of All Right'."

The island was also voted World's Leading Wedding Destination for the third time since the category began in 2014. A list of awards, including those won by tourism partners are as follows:

- World's Leading Wedding



JTB welcomes large travel agent group at the Ocho Rios Pier

MORE THAN 60 travel agents and their spouses were treated to warm Jamaican hospitality by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) as they disembarked the Eurodam cruise ship as it docked at the Ocho Rios Pier on December 6.

Aboard the vessel were travel agents from the Avoya Travel Network, who had earned this incentive, prize trip for bookings worth over US\$100,000. As the agents and their spouses disembarked, they were greeted by the music of a live mento band and presented with welcome beads by Carlene Moore, inside sales support, and Jerron Britton, business development manager, both of the JTB.

Along with the agents, the group included nine members of the executive

body of Avoya including the vice president of group sales, the senior vice president of sales, the associate vice president of group travel, and other marketing executives.

The group enjoyed a full day in the Ocho Rios resort area, visiting the Rio Nuevo battle site in St Mary, climbing the iconic Dunn's River Falls, and participating in a highlight tour of Ocho Rios. The experience was exhilarating for both the repeat and first-time visitors.

Avoya Travel Network is recognised as the best and most-awarded host agency with the most successful independent agencies in the industry. Last year it was named Royal Caribbean's Online Partner of the Year, and also received Celebrity Cruises' Chairman's Award.

Jamaica Tourist Board team members Jerron Britton (white shirt), business development manager and Carlene Moore (stooping in blue blouse) with members of the executive of the Avoya Travel Network in front of the welcome banner as they enjoy the music of the welcoming mento band at the Ocho Rios pier.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Avoya Travel Network travel agents at the Ocho Rios pier with Carlene Moore (right), inside sales support, Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), and Jerron Britton (left), business development manager, JTB.

Sandals debuts second resort in Barbados

Introducing the all-suite Sandals Royal Barbados

SANDALS RESORTS International, the Caribbean's leading luxury all-inclusive resort company, announces the grand opening of its second resort, the all-suite Sandals Royal Barbados.

Featuring 222 concierge and butler-level suites, including Sandals' signature Rondoval, Millionaire Butler, Skypool, and Crystal Lagoon Swim-Up suite concepts, the all-new build also introduces three new restaurants, the brand's first rooftop infinity pool, a gentlemen's barber shop, and a four-lane bowling alley.

"Every new resort we develop stands on the shoulders of what came before. We keep getting better and better and for us, right now – Sandals Royal Barbados is a game changer," said Gordon 'Butch' Stewart, chairman and founder of Sandals Resorts International. According to Stewart, Sandals Royal Barbados was designed to complement the adjacent Sandals Barbados, with guests staying at either property having the opportunity to enjoy the amenities of both.

NEW SIGNATURE RESTAURANTS

Recognising the importance of food and beverage to the vacation experience, Sandals Royal Barbados introduces three new 5-Star Global Gourmet signature restaurants – American Tavern, for casual dining in an industrial, modern setting; Asian-fusion Chi, with design inspired by traditional tea rooms, and Butch's Steak and Seafood, a traditional a la carte steak and seafood house. Along with Caribbean, Mediterranean, and the French restaurants, Sandals Royal Barbados offers six new restaurants in total, bringing the number of unique dining options available for Sandals Resorts' guests in Barbados to 17.

The resort also introduces Sandals Resorts' first rooftop entertainment complex. An oasis featuring



CONTRIBUTED

Sandals Royal Barbados General Manager Fernand Zievinger (right) welcomes Shaunagh and Thomas Anderson as his very first guests as the resort opened its doors on December 20, 2017.

stunning 360-degree ocean views, an infinity edge pool with chaise lounge seating, live music, great food and drink including La Parisienne for French bistro fare, and the incredible cantilevered cocktail lounge, 'Raising the BARbados', the expansive space says Stewart, "was designed to delight". In all, Sandals Royal Barbados will feature five bars, including the first beer garden, the Lover's Lane Bar, featuring a selection of international,

local, and craft beers.

Opportunities available to guests up on the roof are matched by a new, on-demand approach to entertainment at the ground level, with the introduction of an all-new entertainment pavilion, featuring a four-lane bowling alley, living room, and game room. Other exclusive amenities here include the brand's very first gentlemen's only barber shop, a full-service 15,000 square foot Red Lane Spa,

and for guests in select top-category suites, Sandals Royal Barbados will also provide private chauffeured Rolls-Royce airport transfers.

Also new to Sandals Resorts and debuting here is The Beach House Resort Shop, a new retail brand curated to bring together the elements of the Caribbean featuring sophisticated resort wear, home goods, local craft, and provisions.

For meetings, events, and special celebrations, Sandals Royal

Barbados offers extensive outdoor and indoor space, including The Royal Lawn and a 6,000-square foot conference facility with state-of-the-art technology and in-house catering and event-planning services.

Rates for Sandals Royal Barbados start at \$251 per person, per night based on double occupancy. For more information, call your favourite travel agent, 1-800-SANDALS, or go to www.sandals.com.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACKS WE GO

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

A PART FROM the well-known and much-publicised resorts, Jamaica has many places and attractions that offer excellent and exquisite hospitality off the beaten tracks. They are all over the country, and **Hospitality Jamaica** visited several over the past year.

The ones trending include Go Natural, Ital Rest, Reggae Hostel, RasNatango's Gallery and Gardens, Kanopi House, Skybourne Great house and Sea Hanger.

Sea Hanger Resort and Spa Ltd at Ross Craig in Kensington, Portland, is a three-storey, 15-room, concrete, stone and wood structure. All rooms have a balcony facing the sea, and each balcony has a hammock. The breezy, shiny, board-floor rooms are furnished and decorated with local wood accents, and offer different types of accommodation.

Also in Portland and beside the sea, at Long Bay, is a nature retreat called Go Natural. Here, the air smells clean, and the general marine vista is a picturesque one. While guests may visit for a day, accommodation packages are mainly residential, with a minimum of three days recommended. Going to sleep to the sound of the roaring waves adds to the charm.

In the hills of St James is Skybourne Great House at Kempshot, where you step into the



A rock painting in RasNatango Gardens at Camrose in St James.



PHOTOS BY
PAUL H. WILLIAMS
The entrance to
Sea Hanger
Resort and Spa
Ltd at Ross Craig
in Kensington,
Portland.



Reggae Hostel is leading the way in hostel hospitality in Jamaica.

living room and you feel like you have entered into another time and space. Home to things of the past, Skybourne is fitted with modern amenities. Apart from the spacious great house, there are two other decades-old buildings, 'Heliconia' and 'Begonia', with their own array of relics. Inside all of them cosiness lingers, ready to welcome the next guests into this refreshing throwback hospitality.

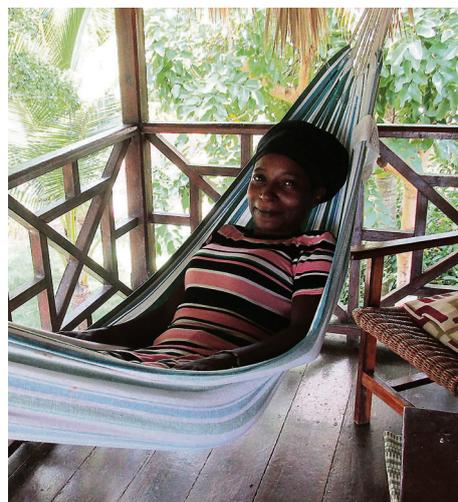
Leading the way in hostel accommodation is Reggae Hostel, located at 8 Burlington Avenue, St Andrew, and Main St, Ocho Rios, St Ann. The chain offers shared rooms at both locations for travellers existing on low-cost budgets. Dormitories with bunk beds, therefore, are the main types of accommodation. However, there are 16 double-occupancy private rooms in Reggae Hostel Ocho Rios, St Ann.

PERFECT CHILL SPOT

If you want to get away from the city, the town, noise, and crowd, the perfect chill spot exists in the west. Surrounded by trees, the cool breeze will embrace and caress you night and day at Ital Rest Cottages, located at Great Bay in Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth. As the name implies, it is 'ital', and as rustic as they come.



Two of the bungalows at Kanopi House near Blue Lagoon in Portland.



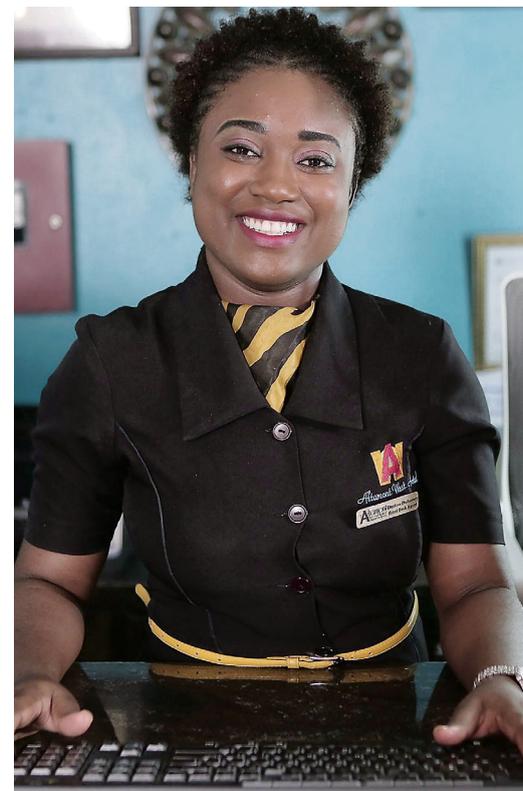
A satisfied guest relaxing at Ital Rest at Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth.

Still in the west, St James in particular, on a hillside at Camrose is the most fascinating garden in all of Jamaica. The terraced masterpiece was built by RasNatango for his wife Tamika, who has planted many species of flowering and non-flowering plants. Among the plants, RasNatango and his son Ayali have created some very amazing features. There is also an art gallery, and guests may be served authentic Jamaican food.

Back in the east, on the hillside overlooking the Blue Lagoon, there is a jungle through which concrete steps meander up and down the slopes leading to six fabulous bungalows, nestled among the greenery. Together they are called Kanopi House. The mostly board structures are exquisitely designed, decorated and furnished with hand-crafted pieces, truly jungle chic hospitality, a must-go, if you will.



Spanish Court Hotel.



Front-office agent at the Altamont West, Dezion Duhaney, with her winning smile.

SILVERA'S PICKS

Janet Silver

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

HAVING SPENT The last 32 years in the hospitality sector, I think I am in a position to know the good, the bad and the ugly.

Starting today, **Hospitality Jamaica** will carry 'Silvera's Picks', which will highlight the things that make this country famous for its repeat business, and also the areas where we need improvement.

It is important to note that even with the crime situation, Jamaica remains one of the hottest destinations in the Caribbean.

So, who are the people behind Jamaica's success?

Some of the best, if not *the* best, front-desk staff you will find at any hotel in Jamaica are at Spanish Court in Kingston. Not sure what it is that Christopher Issa and the team do, but once you get to this hotel, forget your troubles, because you are home away from home.

Not only is Spanish Court a favourite of mine, but many persons from the international community swear by this property.

My favourite lobby, which is eclectic and energising, is The Jamaica Pegasus's, also in Kingston. This is the only lobby in Jamaica where people-watching is a joy. On any given day, you can expect to meet upon a celebrity as well, whether in music, sports, film or any other genre.

The bellhops at The Jamaica Pegasus are



The Jamaica Pegasus hotel

also among the best on the island, and are an asset to the property. They remember your name and are rich on customer service.

Of course, there are many hospitality workers in the island who care about service and never once worry about the word

'servitude', and this is evident at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa. Their security personnel are the best in the business.

They are not of the opinion that all who try to enter the property, particularly locals, are gatecrashers or harassers. I would say



JANET SILVERA

they are the most pleasant and, probably, the most intelligent.

There is a small hotel on the Hip Strip, Gloucester Avenue, called Altamont West. Its tagline is 'Home in the Hub'. An international photojournalist stayed there recently, and I had the opportunity to work with him for a few days. This was what he said: "The staff at Altamont West understands the importance of going the extra mile. I was leaving for an early assignment and was about to leave without breakfast and they said, 'We will pack you a carry-out bag, but you must eat,'"

He promised to speak about the stellar service on TripAdvisor. I hope he did.

One of the my favourite places to eat is Sugar Mill Restaurant at Half Moon, not only because the food is excellent, but because I am going to leave feeling like a queen. Sugar Mill has mastered the art of service and so has the Half Moon spa, Fern Tree.

It is safe to say that Half Moon remains first class in every aspect of the word.

Talk soon!

FILE



'Campers' eating sugar cane just before breakfast.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

From left: Optimists Sonia Johnson and Elaine McKen handing out gifts to children who attended the pre-Christmas treat at Kew Park School in Westmoreland on Saturday, December 16.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

Three parties, 14 parishes in three days

MY LAST trek around the island for 2017 saw me going through all the 14 parishes of this island in three days, one of which was a party binge.

It started on Friday, December 15, when I travelled with a group of charitable Optimists, including entertainer Roy Rayon, of the Optimist Club of Harbour View in St Andrew. Being the chatterboxes that we are, imagine what happened along the way.

The chatting was so intense that I didn't get a chance to sleep, as I am wont to do in moving vehicles. By the time we knew it, we were in western Jamaica. The journey from my home parish of St James to our destination parish of Westmoreland took us to places I have not been to for quite a while.

These are places I have gone to in my youth, but some I have not been to for decades, since high-school days perhaps. I also recalled travelling through some of them the day after the Jamaica Labour Party won the October 30, 1980 general election.

I told the Optimists of my experience and



Turned cornmeal and fried fish done by entertainer Roy Rayon.

of how when we reached Lambs River Square in Westmoreland, the convoy was attacked by PNP supporters, and how my brother and I jumped through the bus windows and took refuge in a supermarket. When we emerged after the police came, there was blood and broken glass all over the place.

Fast-forward to December 15, just as Rayon, the driver, was entering Lambs River Square en route to Rap Trap district, where I saw no rat and no trap, the building in which my brother and I hid 37 years ago came into view.

I got excited and shouted, "See the building deh, see the building deh!" Alas, Rayon was driving too fast for me to get a picture of it. But I did the following day, when we stopped to get some food.

But, I am running the story too fast myself, as I must say we spent a major part of Friday afternoon preparing for the first party, a pre-Christmas treat at Kew Park School at Rat Trap, from where we travelled to Amity/Scarlette Field.

That was where the fun began. When we arrived, a young man approached us. His black skin is perfect, no bleaching, no blemishes. He seemed to be coming from work. But 'Roller', as he is called, made me laugh loudly.

I thought he was in a pair of white tights under his short pants, which created a stark contrast against his black skin. So, when I looked harder it was dust – thick, white dust, thus the laughter. Where was he coming from?

For the three days that we were around, Roller



Renardo 'Roller' Grey, a helpful youth of Scarlette Field, Westmoreland, showing some turmeric that he reaped.



Entertainer Roy Rayon helping his mother Daphne 'Miss Dor' Cox to cut her birthday cake.

had been a tower of strength, literally. He worked very hard helping us without complaining, even turning up Saturday morning with green plantains and bananas, which I peeled for breakfast. He carried my suitcase the night before when my ageing body failed me along the rugged path from the main road to 'Tambrick Hill', where there is an abundance of turmeric.

For two very dark nights that was where we camped, chatting and laughing, bathing in rain water, listening to people snoring and disturbing the nocturnal creatures with their own brand of cacophony. The country food was great, Rayon made the best turned cornmeal ever. A young lady called 'Sister' was also integral in making us comfortable.

But it was Saturday when we outdid ourselves. We travelled to Kew Park School where there was

fun and games, where young and old got bags of goodies and refreshments. There were many happy faces around. We found ourselves again in Lambs River, where I photographed my 1980 refuge, before going back to Scarlette Field to host another well-received treat, at night.

The day climaxed with a post-birthday party for Daphne Cox, Rayon's mother, on her Tambrick Hill land. There were more food and good cheers, and at daybreak there was sugar cane just before the mackerel 'run dung', yam, dumpling, roasted breadfruit, etc.

We took the south coast on the way back, on Sunday the 17th, parties and memories aside; but what I cannot get over is the fried fish and bammy that I got at Scott's Cove in St Elizabeth.



The building at Lambs River, Westmoreland in which Hospitality Jamaica writer Paul H. Williams hid after a bus in which he was travelling after the October 30, 1980 general election.



A section of the people who attended the Optimists' Christmas treat on Saturday, December 16, at Kew Park School, Rat Trap district, Westmoreland.

REFLECTING UPON a year which many of would rather forget, particularly, the month of September, when two Category 5 storms tested the region, president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association (CHTA), Karolin Troubetzkoy is calling for resilience building.

“We need to build resilience into our infrastructure and communities in the months ahead. Indeed, adaptation to climate change is no longer an option, but an urgent necessity. We will use the knowledge gained from dealing with these unprecedented storms and flooding to make us better prepared for whatever weather-related events the future holds,” Troubetzkoy said in her New Year message.

The CHTA president said the hurricanes spared most of the region’s tourism destinations, but a number of reports, some of which continue to gain publicity, unfortunately, conveyed the impression the entire Caribbean was shut down.

“But, as we know, even the minority of destinations hit by the storms are now welcoming visitors for the winter season. And many travellers understand the best way to help the affected destinations is to visit them and allow their tourism dollars to go straight to the local populations who are working hard to restore services,” she added.

She used the opportunity to urge the tourism authorities and governments in the Caribbean, about the importance of a regional marketing initiative.

She said, many are unaware that a Caribbean brand exists. “I feel

Some islands struck by hurricanes reopen for business

Build resilience says CHTA president



Marta Sostre Vazquez reacts as she starts to wade into the San Lorenzo Morovis river with her family after the bridge was swept away by Hurricane Maria, in Morovis, Puerto Rico on September 27, 2017.

compelled to note that the press coverage after the hurricanes has shown us that we are being identified as a brand whether we believe in such a brand or not. Therefore, we must be able to act and, more important, react when that brand is threatened.”

According to her, there has been

talk about public-private partnerships to promote tourism and make it the main economic driver for years, but it was time to put some sustained funding behind these well-meaning words and finally make it happen. And while the discussion is currently centred on

CARICOM (Caribbean Community) jurisdictions, she and the CHTA call for this to become a pan-Caribbean effort.

“Our previous failure to act on this front was evident when we saw the damage caused when some members of the international media



Karolin Troubetzkoy

were unable to recognise how much of the Caribbean was not affected by the September storms,” she warned in her message.

Resolved to strengthening regional marketing efforts and continue to appreciate that a rising tide lifts all boats, the woman who has another five months in the CHTA chair as president, said the region’s collective work ahead includes:

- Raising our voice and our readiness to mitigate the impact of the effects of hurricanes, climate change, mosquito-borne diseases, political uncertainty, and other challenges facing our region;
- Focusing on the development of our people, including formally integrating the voice of the region’s youth through a new CHTA governance mechanism;
- Putting in place a regional tourism communications and marketing initiative, which by example will convince more of our public and private sector stakeholders of the value of a sustained regional tourism marketing and development initiative;
- Unveiling our new strategic outline, which focuses on concerted action in the years ahead.

FILE

Nomination deadline extended for Tourism Service Excellence Awards

THE TOURISM Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo) has announced that the deadline for submission of nominations for the Tourism Service Excellence Awards (TSEA) has been extended. The new date, Friday, January 12, 2018 will allow even more persons to nominate tourism organisations and individuals who they believe have gone beyond the call of duty to provide exemplary service within the tourism industry.

According to Dr Carrole Guntley, chairperson of the TSEA committee, the original deadline of December 22 coincided with the start of the busy winter tourist season, which was the main focus for tourism entities and

professionals. “Based on numerous requests from our tourism service providers, most of whom were preparing for the winter tourist season, we had to extend the deadline, as nominations were coming in after the December date. With the extension, even more persons will gain the chance to nominate individuals and tourism entities that are deserving of this prestigious award,” she said.

Dr Andrew Spencer, executive director of the agency in battling for the extension of the deadline said “the TSEA is another means by which we strive to promote the development of the human capital which is one of the five pillars of tourism growth. The recognition of our exemplars as well as the fine prizes they receive



will, we expect encourage service excellence which distinguishes our destination.”

The TSEA programme, which was first staged in 2008 is geared towards promoting performance excellence within the sector, as excellent customer service is integral to the growth of Jamaica’s tourism sector. Stakeholders and major players within the sector have recognised that one of the most important components of the visitor experience is the quality of the interface between the visitor and the tourism worker. The programme therefore was established to encourage and motivate those who exemplify these attributes and to uphold

DEADLINE EXTENDED
NOMINATION DEADLINE
JANUARY 12, 2018
DOWNLOAD A NOMINATION FORM TODAY!
WWW.TPDCO.ORG/TOURISM-SERVICE-EXCELLENCE-AWARDS/

awardees to the service sector as those to emulate.

Those organisations and individuals who emerge as resort winners will be named beacons of tourism excellence. The National Champions will receive a trip for two courtesy of Caribbean Airlines, accommodation at any Sandals Resort outside of Jamaica and spending money, which will provided by the National Export-Import Bank of Jamaica.

Nomination booklets can be accessed from TPDCo’s corporate website, www.tpdco.org, or any of the organisation’s regional offices in Kingston, Mandeville, Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril.