

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019



Jamaica Rum Festival

Co-branding
two great
products

Jamaica Inn Receives
Trip Advisor Award

Fat start to
'Year of the Pig'

Rum and Tourism

Jamaica Rum Festival: Co-branding two great products

Janet Silvera
Senior Gleaner Writer

WESTERN BUREAU:

A HISTORIC celebration of Jamaica's liquid gold, is how Jacopo Borsa, J. Wray and Nephew Limited's marketing director, described the inaugural staging of the Jamaica Rum Festival set to take place March 9-10, 2019, at Hope Gardens in Kingston.

J. Wray & Nephew Limited's Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum brand is the presenting sponsor for the event in partnership with the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), but all six rum distillers in the country have come on board.

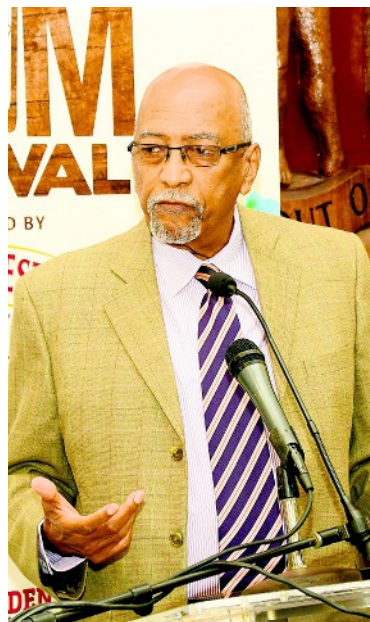
This industry-wide partnership is through the initiative of the 87-year-old Spirits Pool Association Limited, which represents all distilleries in Jamaica.

So as Jamaica welcomes the world to its newest tourism product through the co-branding of two internationally acclaimed Jamaican assets – tourism and rum – it is a good time to reflect on the history of this unique beverage and its role in the nation's development. Fortunately, a wealth of information on this subject was shared at the media launch at Jamaica House by R. Evon Brown, chairman of the Spirits Pool Association.

FROM SUGAR TO RUM

Brown told a rapt audience that sugar cane was introduced to the Caribbean, first in Hispaniola, by Christopher Columbus, and it quickly spread throughout the region due to the high demand for sugar in Europe. Although no one is sure about how the brew was first discovered, there is a legend concerning the natural fermenting of the molasses that was often thrown away during the processing of sugar.

The story is that a slave on a Caribbean plantation, perhaps out of thirst, drank some of the liquid



R. Evon Brown, chairman of the Spirits Pool Association, addressing attendees.

that was naturally fermenting in the heat of the sun. When he began acting in ways that indicated inebriation, he was questioned by the planter, who saw value in this new alcoholic beverage. Soon after this, every estate factory was producing the brew, called 'rum', which is believed to come from the English word 'rumbullion', which means 'great tumult'.

By the 1830s, Brown said, Jamaica was the biggest producer of rum, and every estate had a distillery that converted molasses to rum. In fact, so much rum was being produced by the 148 distilleries on the island that by the early 1900s, there was an oversupply. This resulted in many distilleries ceasing operations, and those that continued decided to form the 'Rum Pool' (which became the Spirits Pool Association in 1932) to self-regulate the rum industry and prevent over-production. By 1948, there were only 25 distilleries in Jamaica, and since then, the number has dropped to six, yet with improvements in



A bartender serves up white and red rum



From left: Winston Harrison, CEO National Rum; chairman of J. Wray and Nephew. Clement 'Jimmy' Lawrence; and Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett check out the various rum brands.

technology, the quantity of rum produced has grown.

The Appleton Brand dates back to 1749 and is said to be the world's second oldest rum brand. J. Wray and Nephew Co. Ltd, the largest producer and bottler of rums and spirits in Jamaica, began in 1825 when John Wray opened the Shakespeare Tavern on the north side of the city square in downtown Kingston. The partnership with

Charles Ward and his nephew began in 1862.

Wray & Nephew and the Appleton Estate and Distillery were linked in 1917 when Wray and Nephew were purchased by the Lindo Brothers Company, which the previous year, had bought the Appleton Estates.

WHAT IS RUM?

The Jamaican Excise Duty Law, No. 73 of 1941 defines rum as

"spirits distilled solely from sugar cane juice, sugar cane molasses, or the refuse of the sugar cane, at a strength not exceeding 150 per cent proof". Rum is produced from sugar cane fermentation by yeast. The resultant 'wash' has approximately five per cent alcohol, which, after distillation, produces rum as a clear colourless liquid with about 80 per cent alcohol and a sharp taste. White rum is essentially



From left: Tourism Enhancement Fund Executive Director Dr Carey Wallace; Marketing Manager, J. Wray and Nephew, Nadia Kiffin-Green; and Jacopo Borsa, J. Wray and Nephew, marketing director.

this product diluted to 40 per cent alcohol. Gold rum requires ageing in small 40-gallon oak barrels. The process of ageing is very complex, involving evaporation of some of the pungent, volatile components, reaction of the rum with the oak, and perhaps even the absorption of the oxygen through the barrel to convert some of the alcohol to aromatic esters.

JAMAICA'S RUM INDUSTRY TODAY

Jamaica currently produces the widest varieties of rum in the world. In fact, the island has the capacity to produce up to 50 million litres of rum annually. Sugar, the main ingredient for rum, is the largest employer of labour, directly employing more than 50,000 workers.

Brown noted, however, that the industry has faced serious challenges that include competition from countries whose rum industry is heavily subsidised and supported by their governments and from trade restrictions. On the positive side, he revealed that liberalisation of the international marketplace and the movement away from "bulk-quality rum" to "branded quality rum" has placed a premium value on the Jamaican product.

Today, J. Wray & Nephew Limited is a subsidiary of the Campari Group, a major player



R. Evon Brown, chairman of the Spirits Pool Association (left), and senior adviser to the minister of tourism, Delano Seiveright.

in the global branded-beverage industry, with a portfolio of over 50 premium and superpremium brands marketed and distributed in over 190 countries worldwide. Appleton is one of these superpremium brands – a global leader that is also beneficial to other Jamaica rum brands.

With regard to the rum industry's contribution to Jamaica's economy through employment in agricultural, manufacturing, tourism and a variety of service industries, J. Wray & Nephew Limited's chairman, Clement 'Jimmy' Lawrence, said, "The rum industry is one of the most integrated industries in

Jamaica, touching every aspect of Jamaican life."

THE JAMAICA RUM FESTIVAL

The J. Wray & Nephew chairman noted that the Jamaica Rum Festival provides a platform to showcase this, educates the populace about Jamaican rums and creates a signature tourism event that will show the world another example of Jamaican excellence. Lawrence stated, "It is a part of Brand Jamaica, and we have the opportunity to set the standards globally and position Jamaica as the Caribbean's equivalent to the Champagne region of France."

Lawrence continued: "This



Chairman of J. Wray and Nephew, Clement 'Jimmy' Lawrence, greets Hampden Estate's Christelle Harris.



Felicia Wong, programme manager at Mystique, and J. Wray and Nephew public relations and digital media specialist, Dominic Bell.

festival isn't about pushing consumption. Instead, it is about growing an appreciation for the premium nature of Jamaican rum brands such as Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum and encouraging persons to savour and enjoy them responsibly. Additionally, this is a natural extension of the gastronomy experience which Minister Bartlett has been championing worldwide. There is so much history between Jamaican rums and food, and we want to show this off."

Chief Executive Officer of National Rums of Jamaica Limited, Winston Harrison asserts that "the Jamaica Rum Festival presents the Monymusk brand and other players with an exceptional opportunity to showcase the full variety of rums that are on offer. It also creates a platform for all the purveyors to highlight the distinctive qualities that have allowed Jamaican rums to be held in such high esteem internationally".

Harrison is of the view that showcasing Jamaica's rums while

educating consumers about the products is an important part of further developing the industry and underlines the reason for Monymusk Rums being integrally involved in the event.

Hampden Estate's Christelle Harris concurs with the other rum distillers and adds, "As someone who has travelled extensively to international rum and spirits festivals, I am pleased to see Hampden Estate's brands, which include Rum Fire White Overproof Rum and Hampden Gold Rum, have the opportunity to participate in the Jamaica Rum Festival."

Harris continued "I also hope: that the Jamaica Rum Festival will further boost our hugely successful tourism product through rum-tourism! With the participation of JTB and the TEF, I anticipate that the Jamaica Rum Festival will not only garner the attention of the local press, but also that of the international media."

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



Edmund Bartlett (third from left), minister of tourism, enjoys a light moment with nadia Kiffin-Green (from left) marketing manager at Wray and Nephew; Mr Jacopo Thorpe, director of marketing, J Wray And Nephew; Mrs Joy Spence, OD, master blender; Dr Carey Wallace, executive director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund; and Mr Clement 'Jimmy' Lawrence Chairman of Wray and Nephew Jamaica, at the launch of Jamaica Rum Festival, held at the Office of the Prime Minister.

Tourism minister hails Jamaica Rum Festival as co-branding for tourism growth

MINISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett has described the inaugural Jamaica Rum Festival as a major effort at co-branding Jamaica's attractions as key selling, or passion points, in order to

bring more visitors to the destination.

He said the festival, which will be held at Hope Gardens in St Andrew from March 9-10, 2019, is in keeping with the promotion of the varied cuisine and gastronomical excellence of Jamaica, that is a significant attraction for visitors to the country.

"We are truly talking about an 'out of many one experience' that has a piece for everybody. The passions of the world can be experienced here in Jamaica."

WORLD-CLASS ASSET

Presenting the feature address at the official launch of the Jamaica Rum Festival at Jamaica House on Tuesday, February 5, Minister Bartlett described Jamaican rum as a world-class asset to be promoted for the development of the tourism value chain.

In endorsing the festival, Dr Carey Wallace, executive director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), said the public-sector entity enjoys partnering with the rum industry for the event that is in keeping with showcasing all Jamaica's assets. He pointed to the significant collaboration between the tourism and the rum industries, noting that the Jamaica Rum Festival serves to solidify the public-private sector partnership.

"It makes sense that the tourism sector spends energy and resources on building the capacity of all the brands in Jamaica to part of the tourism offering."

Dr Wallace disclosed that the TEF is

as the oldest sugar estate and distillery in Jamaica in continuous production, was proud to see the vision of the rum festival come to life. He described it as a platform for local distillers of the various brands of Jamaican rums to collaborate in celebration of the heritage and excellence of Jamaican rums.

He added that "Appleton Estate has had the honour of earning a distinct place in the aged-rums category, producing a line of variants that are world-class. Participating in this inaugural Jamaica Rum Festival is another showcase of our commitment to building our communities and Brand Jamaica. Our hope, through our participation in the Jamaica Rum Festival, is to further propel our rums as a tourism product, taking persons from around the world on a journey, from cane to cocktail."

The launch event was attended by other tourism industry officials, including TEF Chairman Godfrey Dye; chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board, John Lynch, and executive director of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Camille Needham.

In addition to presenting sponsor Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum and Monymusk and Hampden Estate, other rum brands that will participate include Wray & Nephew White Overproof Rum, Charley's JB Rum and Sangster's Rum Cream. Other key sponsors include the RJRGLEANER Communications Group, Digicel Jamaica, Main Events Entertainment Group, WATA, True-Juice, CB Foods, Wisynco and Kia Motors.



Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett speaking at the Jamaica Rum Festival launch.



Dr Carey Wallace

investing \$10 million towards the hosting of the festival, including an artisan village showcasing Jamaican-made art and craft.

Director of Marketing for J. Wray and Nephew Limited Jacopo Borsa outlined the role of the Appleton Estate and other Wray and Nephew brands in the Jamaica Rum Festival. He pointed out that Appleton Estate,

Kingston City Marathon is less than five weeks away

WHEN YOU think of the city of Kingston, a marathon is not the first thing that comes to mind.

Well, in 2019, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Kingston chapter and its partners will host its first-ever marathon on Sunday, March 17.

What is even more interesting is that the IAAF/AIMS have certified the route. That is historical in every context. The 480 square kilometre city is home to sporting and cultural history that surpasses any city its size. And the marathon will add flavour to this already exciting

‘UNESCO Creative City.’

The marathon will take you through the curves and turns of Kingston (twice), and although it may not be an ideal run for marathoners globally, it paints a new picture of the city.

After six years of hosting a 5K, 10K-and-half marathon, “adding the full marathon” was a dream come true for Nicola Madden Greig, co-chair of the Kingston City Marathon team.

“This year, we would like to have over 5,000 participants to top last year’s numbers. We also will have up to 500 children participate, a



Partners from the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Kingston and St Andrew Municipal Corporation, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, and the organising committee at the Kingston City Marathon launch recently.

special programme we have with our sponsor partners. This is significant for us as we intend to make this a family event where every member has a race they can fit in,”

emphasised Madden-Greig.

The Kingston City Marathon will become popular like all other top marathons in cities across the globe. What will this mean for Kingston?

Well, the Ministry of Health, in the last few years, started the ‘Jamaica Moves’ campaign, and that makes health and fitness a worthy practice for the people of Jamaica. That is all part of an initiative to encourage people to get involved in physical activities.

The Kingston City Marathon will help to drive the ongoing development of Kingston, which is all about building reputation and popularity while helping to use sport, in this case, a marathon event, as one key element to the city’s soft power.

Director of Tourism Donovan White, at the press launch last month (January 16), said: “Jamaica now hosts two marathons almost four months apart. This is a clear opportunity.” The director also pointed out that with the already established products of Kingston

– great music, food, and other exciting sporting events the city will be enhanced by the Kingston City Marathon. He added that “marathons are a huge draw for sport tourists and have the potential to generate millions of dollars for the host city of Kingston.”

Kingston remains a relatively small city; however, the partnership with the local authorities, businesses and people, is an important one, aimed at overall growth, while enhancing the city’s status.

Participants may log on to <https://www.kingstoncityrun.com/v2/registration/> to register for individual and team/group participation. Key to this event are the charities that benefit from the support of patrons, this year, they are Alpha Boys Institute, Open Arms Development Centre, Marie Atkins Night Shelter and Food for the Poor.

The Kingston City Marathon is the second official marathon being hosted in Jamaica. The other being the Reggae Marathon in Negril in December.



Ambassadors for the 2019 staging of the Kingston City Marathon at the press launch in January.

THE PLACE TO STAY IN MONTEGO BAY

HOTEL

876-979-0000

shoteljamaica.com

Sunset at the Palms wins several Travel Industry awards

Resort is recipient of awards from TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, Apple Vacations and HotelsCombined

A couple at Sunset at the Palms.

THIS YEAR is proving to be a banner year of awards for Sunset at the Palms, an all-inclusive, adults-only resort in Negril. The resort is celebrating several industry accolades, including winning two categories of the 2019 TripAdvisor, Travellers' Choice awards for hotels; the Loved by Guests award for 2018 by **Hotels.com**; the Golden Apple award from Apple Vacations; and the 2018 Recognition of Excellence from HotelsCombined.

■ TripAdvisor recognised Sunset at the Palms in two categories: one of the 25 Top All-Inclusive Hotels in the Caribbean, and one of the 25 Top Hotels for Romance in the Caribbean. As the brand's 17th year of the trusted Travellers' Choice awards, these are the highest honours TripAdvisor can give and are based on reviews and opinions collected from millions of TripAdvisor travellers



The exterior of a room at Sunset at the Palms.

worldwide.

■ **Hotels.com**, a leading online provider of global hotel accommodations, has named the resort a Loved by Guests 2018 award winner for delivering exceptional customer service in the All-Inclusive category. These awards are based on tested guests' reviews and are given to the "best of the best" properties analysed by millions of verified guests reviews and ratings.

■ Leading full-service tour operator Apple Vacations has awarded Sunset at the Palms the prestigious Golden Apple award for outstanding quality and service. The annual award is bestowed upon hotels that earned exceptional ratings from Apple Vacations' satisfaction questionnaires, which are given to travellers upon their return home.

■ Top travel website HotelsCombined has awarded the resort its esteemed Recognition of Excellence for 2018. This award is given to properties that consistently achieve high standards of customer satisfaction worldwide. Through a variety of websites, forums and social media research, Sunset at the Palms earned a high score of nine out of 10 possible ratings, meaning that the resort represents the top three per cent of accommodations worldwide for customer satisfaction.

"We are very honoured to be recognised by these valued travel industry partners," said Ian Kerr, managing director of the resort.

"These recognitions honour our talented and hard-working staff, who are fully dedicated to providing the best, most personalised service to our guests. It's this intuitive service that has always, and will continue to, set us apart. Thank you to everyone who cast a vote for us."

Security dept takes honours at Moon Palace Foundation's cancer expo

MOON PALACE Foundation's recent cancer expo brought out the best in the organisational and presentation skills of the various departments at the hotel which participated. In the end, though, it was the security department, with its focus on bladder cancer, that walked away with the top honours, much to the delight of the team.

There was no prize for the winners, but all participants came away with increased knowledge on the subject of cancer.

General Manager of Moon Palace Foundation Natalie Boreland said the foundation first had a cancer expo two years ago and decided to stage another this year.

"Recently, we had a number of staff that we have had to assist, who have had cancer touch their lives in very significant ways. So we decided to bring a broader awareness this year, and so we got all the departments involved. They were up for it, and so we decided to go ahead," Boreland explained.

The various departments at the hotel focused on 20 types of the disease, including bladder, breast, bone, testicular, colon and ovarian cancers.

Head of surgery at St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital, Dr Ian Titus, who judged the exhibits, hailed the overall quality of the expo, especially the presentations that were made by each department representative.

Kudos also came from Marilyn Williams, branch manager, Jamaica Cancer Society St

Ann/St Mary branch, and Michelle Whyte, health education and promotions officer, St Ann.

"The expo was really great; the presentations on cancer were fantastic. They really did their research and done a fantastic job, and it's educating them," Williams noted.

Meanwhile, Whyte hailed Moon Palace's continuing support of the health ministry's effort at initiating corporate wellness programmes in St Ann.



The home-sharing community in Jamaica continues to thrive

THE HOME-SHARING community in Jamaica continues to thrive as a growing component of the local tourism industry. In 2018, Airbnb hosts in Jamaica welcomed approximately 89,500 guests, with an average trip length of approximately five days.

These travellers were accommodated by 4,100 hosts who opened their doors to offer locals and foreigners alike a diverse, inclusive and sustainable travel experience in urban destinations such as Kingston, but also in rural areas or areas that typically benefit less from tourist visits.

Home sharing democratises the tourism industry, providing the opportunity for thousands of Jamaicans to share their country with guests from all over the world, and benefit directly from it.

Jamaican hosts are a diverse group; 59 per cent of hosts are female. The average host age is 50, with 70 per cent of hosts in Jamaica between the ages of 30 and 59.

“Undoubtedly, Jamaica is an important destination in the Caribbean and thanks to Airbnb, and a strong partnership with the tourism minister, Edmund Bartlett, and the Jamaica Tourist Board, more and more local travellers,

2018 AIRBNB FIGURES

- Total Airbnb guests arrivals in Jamaica: 89,500.
- Number of hosts: 4,100
- Percentage of female hosts: 59%
- Money received per year by a typical host: US\$2,600.
- Total listings on the platform: 7,600.
- Total departures of guests through Airbnb: 14,100.

Typical host earnings represents the median income of hosts in Jamaica during the period January 1 and December 31, 2018.

and travellers from the rest of the world, are able to visit Jamaica and travel in an authentic way. This sustainable way of travelling generates a positive and significant impact within the country, and helps to economically empower our Jamaican hosts and their communities,” said Carlos Munoz, Airbnb campaign manager, public policy and communications for the Caribbean and Central America.

In Jamaica, Airbnb is able to connect travellers

to more than 7,600 places to stay throughout the island. For sharing their home, a typical host in Jamaica earned revenues of up to US\$2,600 in the last 12 months. This figure is a sample of how Airbnb allows hosts to become hospitality entrepreneurs by earning extra income, which, in many cases, allows homeowners to offset expenses and stay in their home.

At the same time, Jamaicans also choose Airbnb when travelling. In 2018, there were 14,100 Jamaican guests who stayed at Airbnb listings both in Jamaica and abroad, eager to experience what it is like to live like a local wherever they travel.

In this way, “Airbnb contributes to the development of the Jamaican tourism sector, which shows great potential for growth in 2019,” Munoz concluded.

Airbnb looks forward to building its relationship with Jamaica to help grow the tourism sector. With its strong partnership with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Airbnb is steadily working to drive tourism in the region and grow economic opportunity by promoting authentic travel throughout the Caribbean.



**PROPERTY
CONSULTANTS LTD.**
12 TRINIDAD TERRACE,
NEW KINGSTON
Email: pclja@yahoo.com
DL-0139
TEL: 929-5462, 929-6062,
929-7113
FAX: 929-7139

**JAMAICA'S
PREFERRED
APPRAISER OF
LARGE HOTELS**

SIA named Caribbean's **LEADING AIRPORT** for 11th consecutive year



SANGSTER INTERNATIONAL Airport (SIA), Jamaica's leading gateway to the world, was named the Caribbean's Leading Airport for the 11th year in a row at the World Travel Awards (WTA) hosted at Sandals Montego Bay on January 28.

Operated by MBJ Airports Limited, SIA emerged as the winner from a pool of 13 Caribbean competitors nominated for the prestigious award. The accolade was first bestowed on SIA in 2005. It won again in 2009 and has won the title every year since.

"We are honoured to be named the Caribbean's Leading Airport for the 11th consecutive year. This prestigious award validates our ongoing efforts to deliver world-class service and showcase Jamaica's rich culture at Sangster International Airport," commented MBJ CEO Rafael Echevarne.

"The fact that our dedication to improving the infrastructure of the airport and providing outstanding service has been noticed by the global travel industry and travellers using SIA is gratifying, and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for voting us number one in the region year after year for more than a



The future food court at the Sangster International Airport.

decade. Our entire staff, our airport partners, and every citizen of Jamaica can be proud of this tremendous achievement," Echevarne added.

MBJ has led a number of initiatives over

the past four years to improve the passenger experience within the arrivals and departures terminals while upgrading the taxiways and aprons on the airside. Several transformational projects are now under way to bring further



Travellers checking in at the Sangster International Airport.

upgrades to the airport, including a redesign of the ticketing hall, an expansion of the commercial concourse, and the introduction of automated parking facilities.

ABOUT MBJ AIRPORTS

MBJ Airports Limited connects Jamaica

to more than 60 international destinations. A record 4.5 million passengers used the airport in 2018. MBJ operates SIA under a 30-year concession awarded in 2003, and the airport provides employment to more than 7,000 persons.

The great Minto

GREAT WOMEN stand on stages and speak in front of thousands of people, they sit in cubicles and churn out figures or words intended to change minds and lives, or they could be a former postal worker from Bunkers Hill, Trelawny, who sold crafts during her lunch time to help supplement her income.

Fay-Ann Minto is the epitome of a strong, innovative woman, and she speaks extensively about her love for craft. The Trelawny native swears by the motto that she can and she will, no matter the efforts and challenges that present themselves. She recounts her craft journey like a storyteller who has been gifted with warmth as comforting as a bonfire, and one can only leave with a sense of drive and motivation, so much so that one might ask themselves, 'Am I really doing enough?'

Minto's craft journey started when she was about 10 years old at 4-H club, where she showed off her skills and won many prizes and awards. She talks about the elderly lady that allowed craft to take her into its welcoming arms and opened her eyes to a world of creativity that knows no limits.

"I was only 10 when I met a relative who



Fay-Ann Minto's work of art.

only agreed to share her craft skills and secrets because she was my father's cousin. I saw her performing the art of tatting, and when she refused to teach me, I journeyed to Woolworth and bought a book titled, **Learn to Tat**. She eventually taught me tatting, and I sold my first piece of item for \$50. Eventually, she formed a group and taught girls to tat," she says

How in-depth she goes on to talk about this skill of tatting shows how much passion she has for craft and creating quality items.

"Tatting takes time. It has to be perfect, and your hands have to be clean, or the dirt from

your fingers will ruin your work. Sometimes when I tat, I sit in one place until I'm done."

In addition to tatting, she does smocking, crocheting, embroidery, pillow covers, and even participated in a basketry training session put on by the Tourism Product Development Company Ltd. Her real love, however, is crocheting and making doilies, and with enthusiasm and pride in her voice, she describes how she gets up early to crochet, only taking a break to eat.

Minto is always eager to learn and maintain a high standard. She details how she buys books, participates in trainings where she once did a record-breaking crochet design on 12 towels. She talks with admiration of a video she saw on YouTube of a woman making a flower using a fork, which has inspired her to dream up her own ideas, one of which is intended to make the environment safer.

She hopes to create reusable bags to support the recent ban on certain plastic, putting her own unique touch on it. Her goal is to bring in sales and to help others to appreciate craft through quality and sustainable items.

"Craft is lasting; a crochet item can last up to 15 years and still be intact!" she says with a hint of frustration, brought on by challenges that mass importation of craft items present to a craft producer.

This hard-working and committed artist, who has done whatever it takes to make life better with craft, reminds us, "Whatever your mind can conceive, it will achieve."

Fay-Ann Minto can be contacted at 876-819-7515.



Minto's work.



Tatting work done by Fay-Ann Minto.

Jamaica highlights hotel developments, festivals at New York Times Travel Show

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board's Marcia Sinclair, district sales manager Northeast USA, was a featured



Marcia Sinclair, district sales manager, Northeast USA, Jamaica Tourist Board makes a presentation during the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's Focus on the Caribbean seminar.

presenter at the 16th New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS) in January. Her presentation happened during the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's Focus on the Caribbean seminar.

Sinclair highlighted the destination's many events and festivals being celebrated this year, including Reggae Month and Bob Marley celebrations, the heavily buzzed-about Buju Banton concert, the Jamaica Food & Drink Festival, and the Rastafari Rootz Festival.

To provide a taste of the authentic experiences to be gained from these events, Braata Productions performed traditional Caribbean folk songs that brought attendees to their feet.

The New York Times Travel Show is the ultimate travel and tourism event in North America with close to 600 exhibitors from



Persons await attendees of the New York Times Travel Show.

across the globe. Over 30,000 consumers and travel professionals attend the three-day weekend extravaganza in hopes of being

informed and excited about the next destination they plan to visit. The travel and trade conference also provided the Jamaica Tourist

Board with an opportunity to promote the destination's alluring accommodations and exciting attractions portfolio.

Preparing for the Chinese traveller

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) hosted 19 Chinese tour operators during the recently concluded CHTA Caribbean Travel Marketplace trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre. This is the first time that such a large number of Chinese tour operators is participating in a trade show in Jamaica and are part of the JTB's effort to tap into the large Chinese outbound tourism market.

During the trade show, the group engaged in business-to-business sessions with tourism supplier companies from across the region as they negotiated partnerships. Their weeklong trip to the island also included time for relaxation and exploration, with a carefully curated itinerary that saw the group experiencing diverse aspects of the island's tourism product, including visits to the Blue Mountains, the Bob Marley Museum, Greenwood Great House, Dunn's River Falls, Usain Bolt's Tracks and Records,



Representatives from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Jamaica, Jamaica Tourist Board, Ministry of Tourism, JAMPRO, and private-sector organisations pose for a group shot with the Chinese tour operators at a welcome dinner at the embassy's Kingston office.

and shopping excursions.

Following the trade show, the JTB along with the Ministry of Tourism and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, hosted the Chinese delegation for the Tourism Opportunities Workshop.

A knowledge-sharing event, the workshop aimed at seizing opportunities to woo Chinese travellers to the island. Various government and private-sector entities participated, with key presentations led by China Business Network, an organisation specialising in business consultancy and targeted marketing services.

For Donovan White, director of tourism at the JTB, "Jamaica has

to understand and be ready for the Chinese market if we are going to benefit." He continued, "The Chinese are now travelling further afield with direct airlift and relaxed visa policies." This he said is as a result of the China Belt and Road Initiative, giving the citizens more opportunities to visit off-the-beaten-path destinations.

Providing data on the travel trends of this Asian market, White explained why the time was right to pursue the Chinese traveller. He said: "In 2008, there were 43.8 million Chinese outbound travellers. This number increased to 164 million in 2018, with a projection of 400 million by 2030. In 2017, these

trips resulted in US\$257 million dollars spent, which represents 8.5 per cent of the total spend globally by outbound travellers."

Not only are the Chinese venturing to distant places and have the largest spend among outbound travellers, but Jamaica ticks a number of their must-do vacation activities including one-of-a-kind tours and attractions, scenic views, their love for high-quality coffee, and unique gastronomic experiences.

Dr Adam Wu, CEO, China Business Network, provided the profile of the Chinese traveller. Among his key take-aways is the fact that China has the world's largest online population of social

media users, making continuous WiFi connectivity a must-have. This connectivity facilitates online payment, the only payment option available to the Chinese traveller through Alipay, WeChatPay, and UnionPay. According to Dr Wu, the Chinese traveller is not deterred by cost. He said that they like buying high-value products made overseas and are willing and able to pay for unique products, spending the most at duty-free shops.

These attributes herald good news for Jamaica, and White is optimistic and points to continued flight negotiations to move Chinese travellers to visit Jamaica.

Mainland China hosts reception for Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett

MONTEGO BAY businessman Lachu Ramchandani recently hosted a reception for Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, but took it all the way to the fabulous Mainland China Restaurant in Ocho Rios, owned by Danny Galani.

By the time Bartlett arrived at the restaurant, the atmosphere was alive with a long list of guests drawn from all across Jamaica and representing a wide area of interests.

After arriving in a suit, Bartlett was able to change into something

more relaxing to match the occasion.

The diplomatic community was well represented, with high commissioners from Nigeria, India, South Africa, Spain, Britain, and Venezuela's chargé d'affaires all in attendance.

Also present were Kamina Johnson Smith, Marlene Malahoo Forte, Delano Seiveright, Delroy Chuck, Michael Belnavis, along with Godfrey Dyer, Winston Dear, Joe Issa, Custos Norma Walters, Radcliffe Walters, Senior Supt Michael Smith, Jim Lakhwani, Tyrone Robinson, Bobby Thakurani, Lorna Escoffery, Frank Sondern, Paula Llewellyn, Sonja Simms, Billy Heaven, John Lynch, Graham Cooke, Peter Townsend, Aubyn Hill, Nastashia Mitchell, and of course, Lachu Ramchandani and Danny Galani, among several others.

Maliaka Bryce was MC for the occasion.



From left: Danny Galani, Lachu Ramchandani, Ed Bartlett, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamina Johnson Smith.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and Nastashia Mitchell, Miss Global International, at a luncheon in his honour.

Local artisans strengthen link with high-end tourism industry

THE CONVERSATION surrounding the marketing and sale of authentic Jamaican-made products in the high-end tourism retail industry is taking a promising turn.

The Sandals Foundation, with part funding provided by the Jamaica Business Fund, is executing a supply-chain programme to train and empower Jamaican handicraft businesses to upgrade the quality and market-readiness of their products.

This will increase their ability to steadily supply products to the island's gift shops, including those at Sandals and Beaches Resorts.

The yearlong programme, which started in July 2018, includes hands-on training and support in production planning and management, designing and finishing, marketing and packaging, and principles of business strategy, with active participation from the procurement team of Sandals and Beaches Resorts gift shops. Their participation ensures that a focus is placed on the purchasing needs of the high-end tourism retail industry.

Executive Director of the Sandals Foundation Heidi Clarke said that strengthening the linkage between local craftsmen and the tourism sector would be beneficial

for all involved, however, local artisans must be able to supply products in the quantity and quality required.

"With intervention and the necessary training, we want to see an upgrade in the quality of the products of the craftsmen. With very minimal capacity-building interventions in the last quarter of 2016 into 2017, we have seen where there was a 30 per cent increase in the revenue of five artisans that we initially supported, so we are very confident in the success of this programme," Clarke said.

BUILD TRUST

With a focus on aromatherapy, ceramics, wooden products, and natural fibre, Clarke hopes that the success of the project will build the trust and confidence of hotel buyers and procurement staff of gift shops in the capacity of the artisans to deliver high-quality products consistently and on time.

"There is no doubt that here in Jamaica we have the talent to produce beautiful craft items that visitors will love. However, our research has found that the fallout in the handicraft industry over the last decade or two has largely been the result of the challenges to source consistent supply of quality, competitively priced craft items locally. The success of this programme will see members

of the supply chain working more efficiently and collaboratively, improving colour and finishes, and the ability of the artisans to expand and sustain business linkages in the medium term," Clarke said.

For the past nine months, the artisans have participated in several training and consultation sessions in areas such as quality and production management, design, business strategy, costing, and cash flow.

Frazers Ceramics is among the nine businesses participating in the programme. Production Manager Christine Reid said that the almost 33-year-old company is expanding its product line based on direct consultations done with the Sandals procurement team and workshop members.

Frazers Ceramics has been in operation since 1986, manufacturing ceramic products such as vases, figurines, cups, and pots. In addition to resorts in Jamaica, Frazers Ceramics also export craft items to resorts in Barbados, St Lucia, and Turks and Caicos.

Affiliate artisans have also benefited from the interventions to such an extent that they have developed new and exciting products that were approved by Sandals Resorts Gift Shops. These include products created by straw weavers based in St Elizabeth.

Fund Manager at the Jamaica Business Fund Ronald Dubrishing said that the JBF recognises the important role a quality craft sector plays in creating entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for Jamaicans while serving to enhance the tourism product and increase visitor spend.

"We view the Sandals Foundation Supply Chain project as a critical intervention that will boost local artisans' ability to sustainably participate in the tourism industry. Recognised weaknesses in the sector have been poor quality and unreliability of supply and designs that do not meet the needs of buyers."

He continued: "This Sandals Foundation project addresses all of these weaknesses. It will enhance the capacity of local artisans and increase the local production of high-quality and innovative products that are representative of Jamaican culture while meeting the aesthetic and functional needs of buyers."

The nine businesses currently in the programme are McIntosh Craft, Frazers Ceramics, Monex, SN Kraft, Treasure Beach Women's Group, Bartley's All-in-Wood, Starfish Oils, Superior Craft & More, and Banyan Creations.



Some of the Inside Reggae Entourage inside the Bobby Digital Studio.



Participant Marissa Lelogeais (right) having a whale of a time with performers at the recent Bob Marley birthday celebrations at Bob Marley Meseum, Hope Road, St Andrew.

Reggae enthusiasts on a musical journey

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FROM SATURDAY, February 2, to Sunday, February 10, a group of reggae enthusiasts from the USA were in the island on a mission called 'Inside Reggae Music - The Ultimate Journey into a Jamaican Cultural-Musical Immersion'.

It was a result of collaboration between Jamaican master percussionists Maroghini; Matt Jenson, music professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts; and ultra-experiential travel professionals at 'Travel To Do Good', whose chief experiences officer and travel maven, Roslyn Parker, was part of the touring party.

Maroghini, who was instrumental in arranging the itinerary for the group, lives in Kingston. The author, lecturer, sound

therapist, and vocalist, a former percussionist for Jimmy Cliff, has played for numerous studio recordings for a long list of internationally acclaimed musicians including Lauryn Hill, Eddy Murphy, Ziggy Marley, and Stephen Marley, to name a few.

Matt Jenson is a professor of piano at Berklee College of Music, where he has created the Music and Life of Bob Marley course/ensemble. He has worked with Rita Marley, Judy Mowatt, and members of Steel Pulse. He leads his reggae group, The Liquid Revolution, and is touring with reggae band, 'Grounation'. He is currently developing a reggae educational platform called The Art of Reggae.

This trip came out of Jenson's previous visits to Jamaica, after which he would go



The Inside Reggae entourage having fun with the Charles Town Maroons Drummers and Dancers, in Portland.



There is something to smile about. Is it the food?

back with great stories about the birthplace of reggae. His friends/associates/former students then requested that he take them along, and that is exactly what he did through 'Travel To Do Good', which described the tour as a celebratory journey into reggae music intertwined with history, culture and what would be the 74th birthday of reggae icon Bob Marley.

Some of the places, people, and events they visited in the Corporate Area and St Catherine were Hope Botanical Gardens; Pinnacle, former home of the founder of Rastafari Leonard Howell; the Institute of Jamaica; Mystic Revelation of Rastafari rehearsal in Rockfort, with Count Ossie's son;

Sizzla's Judgement Yard; the Jessie Ripoll Primary School; the Edna Manley College; the Bobby Digital Studio; the Bob Marley Museum; and the Trench Town Culture Yard.

En route to Portland, the entourage witnessed the drama and spiritedness of kumina in St Thomas. In Portland, they stayed at Great Huts Resort, where they had a bonfire, and dined at the Cliff Hanger Restaurant at Ross Craig, Soo Soom Ba Vegetarian Restaurant at Hope Bay, and Boston Jerk Centre. It was a cultural explosion at Charles Town Maroon village and the Rastafari School of Vision in the Blue Mountains.

Hospitality Jamaica caught up with the group of 16, including Maroghini, Jenson,



The Inside Reggae entourage posing with Pauline 'Sista P' Petinaud (third left at front) and her Chef, Renard Davidson (in white hat at back), in front of the Soo Soom Ba vegetarian Restaurant in Hope Bay, Portland.



From left: Master drummer Morighini, Maroon elder Gloria 'Mama G' Simms and grand-daughter, music educator Matt Jenson, and Roslyn Parker, CEO at Travel To Do Good onstage at The Asafu Yard in the Charles Town Maroon village in Portland.



Drumming inside the Tabernacle at Pinnacle, St Catherine, the former home of Rastafarian pioneer Leonard Howell.

and Parker, while they were soaking up some of the culture in Portland on Friday, February 8. In reflecting on the mission, Maroghini said, "I am hoping participants left further convinced that Jamaica, despite its small size, is culturally and spiritually a force to be reckoned with on this planet ... I am also hoping that the participants' reggae performance instilled

a sense of national pride, assuring the Jamaican audience that Brand Jamaica is large abroad."

Parker, who said she is a social entrepreneur, said, "The bigger picture is for me to support small social enterprises that are for the greater good. When you are promoting understanding and helping people to really understand that at the end of the day we are all one, I

think there is so much value in it."

In his assessment, this time around, Jenson said, "It was a blessed trip, coming from a professor."

As for the participants, the youngest of the lot was Leila Goodrum, who majors in professional music, with a focus on vocals and dance, at Berklee. She said, "So far, it's the most spiritual



Some members of the Inside Reggae Entourage in rapt attention as vegetarian restaurateur and radio host Pauline 'Sista P' Petinaud, talks about her radio show.

place I've ever been. I have never felt so much energy, and I feel like I am coming away much more conscious of the story of humanity on this planet."

Kevin Paris lives in Los Angeles but is from Milwaukee. The

professional musician of about eight years said it was a pleasure to be here to see the roots of the music (reggae) that he loves. "All around it is so positive. It's been such a blessing to be here ... The food is my favourite part," the reggae enthusiast said.

FAT START to 'Year of the Pig'

PAUL H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE CHINESE have a history of associating each year with an animal. This year, it is a pig, as it was in 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, and 2007. And the reign of the porcine started on Tuesday, February 5, the official start of the Chinese New Year.

But what does the pig represent in Chinese culture? The 12th of all Chinese zodiac animals, according to research, symbolises wealth and good fortune. All its features – big eyes, ears, mouth and gut – are saying just that.

And in a media statement, Robert C. Hew, president of the Chinese



The Chinese Benevolent Association Children's Choir singing the Jamaican national anthem.

Benevolent Association (CBA), right here in Jamaica, said, among other things, "The Year of the Pig (Gung HeeFatt Choi) is regarded as very auspicious and a good opportunity to prosper and accumulate wealth. And as we know, pigs are well fed, happy-go-lucky, and have large families. May you enjoy these traits as much as you desire."

To observe the year, and to accumulate some wealth, the CBA held its Annual Spring Festival by way of a Chinese New Year Garden Party at the association's headquarters located along 176 Old Hope Road in St Andrew on Sunday, February 17.

It was the association's biggest annual fundraising event, but it was also the preservation of Chinese culture. "The CBA strives to preserve Chinese culture among the Chinese community and to promote that culture to all of Jamaica," said Hew.

"As part of that, we maintain a Chinese Museum and offer tours to everyone, including school groups, and conduct Mandarin classes for all ages," he added.

And on Sunday, the Chinese rich culture was very much on show. **Hospitality Jamaica** was there to capture the sights, scents, and sounds of the start of the Year of the Pig. The sampling of Chinese food, the sale of handcraft and other items, and the live engaging entertainment transformed 176 Old Hope Road into a little piece of China. It was the beginning of the road to prosperity.



It is the Year of the Pig, but it is the lion that dances.



Dr Jessica Yapp in her reggae element.



And what would a Chinese New Year celebration in Jamaica be without the presence of Miss Chin Shop? The 'shopkeeper' is Jean Lue from Montego Bay, St James.



A section of the capacity audience that turned out for the Chinese New Year celebrations at the Chinese Benevolent Association along Old Hope Road in St Andrew on Sunday, February 17. PHOTOS BY AFREE KAN

It must **NEVER** happen again

Lashaonda Edwards of Barbados in all her grandeur.



Jamaican Jonkunnu revellers kicking up a rumpus.

THE UNIVERSITY of the West Indies Mona campus' annual Homecoming celebration is an event I always drop in on. It is a showcase of sort of Caribbean cultures, especially those of the territories that contribute to this regional university, and I know that many students look forward to it.

This year it took place from February 12 – February 15. On the Thursday, I attended the parade and flag-raising ceremony, which was threatened by rain. I heard the master of ceremony, the registrar herself, telling people to pray so that the rain could stay in the skies. The prayers, including the Jamaican anthem, seemed to work. It did not rain on their parade.

When it was time for the judging of the groups, faculties, associations, etc, my camera got ready. To me, most of the performances were lacklustre up to the point when the association from Trinidad and Tobago was announced. The revellers from carnival country were coming. And they came with some vibe, yes, including pungent pink party smoke, which came before the fire, the torch fire lit by two students dressed as horned devils.

LOST SYMBOLISM

And then my mind went berserk. In order to represent the devil well, the two young men painted their bodies jet black and wore black masks! And then I said to myself, I might as well get two horns and join them. I needed no paint and mask. The symbolism and message portrayed by these university students were lost on them.

I turned up the following day for the Caribbean Day Festival, expecting not to see anything that was going to get me berserk as the day before. Upon arrival, I heard Jonkunnu



Flags representing some of the contributing territories of The University of the West Indies. PHOTOS BY AFREE KAN

music. Yes! And there they were, onstage and on the lawn kicking up rumpus.

While they were carrying on, the compère described the different characters, giving a historic backdrop to their costume in the process. At one point, a big woman/girl screamed and ran across the space as she was pursued by Pitchy Patchy.

And though it was a day to sample food from all over the Caribbean, I wanted some Jamaican potato pudding. I searched for the Jamaica booth, to no avail. When I went to where I bought the tickets, I was told there was none this year.

My memory went back to the day before, and I recalled the registrar saying there are

over 17,000 Jamaicans students registered at Mona. And two of them could not come up with even some flour and butter, the favourite dish of many DJ before they became 'stars'?

Unacceptable! That and the two black devils must never happen again at the region's premier university's cultural showcase.



Airlines upbeat about US Virgin Islands, tourism chief reports

THE US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism reports that airlines serving the territory are satisfied with their route performance and some are looking forward to increasing capacity to the islands in the months ahead.

Speaking at the conclusion of the 12th Routes Americas conference in Québec, commissioner designee Joseph Boschulte said the conference presented the destination with an opportunity to update airline partners on the progress the islands have made since the hurricanes of 2017.

Airline executives were especially interested in learning of the reopening of several hotels as well as the uptick in Airbnb accommodations and villa rentals across the territory as part of the wider accommodations landscape in the Virgin Islands.

“We also had an opportunity to speak about our larger accommodations properties which are expected to come back on line later this year, as well as next year,” the commissioner designee reported, explaining that as the destination positions itself for the next winter season, “at a minimum, we must maintain pre-hurricane airlift into both St Thomas and St Croix”.

During the three-day route development forum for the Americas, the commissioner designee met with carriers currently serving the territory, including American Airlines, Cape Air, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, LIAT, Spirit Airlines and



Commissioner Designee Joseph Boschulte met up with LIAT's Scheduling Manager Jabari Jemmott (left) and chief commercial officer Audra Walker.

United Airlines, and held discussions with Sun Country Airlines about its potential return from Minneapolis. He also connected with Allegiant and Southwest

Airlines to begin the dialogue about potential future airlift development.

“This was an extremely important and cost-effective meeting to connect with so many airline

partners,” said the commissioner designee, who, along with fellow conference delegates, was subjected to sub-zero temperatures and back-to-back winter storms during



Commissioner designee Boschulte (right) meets with Andrew Bonney, Cape Air's senior vice-president of planning.

his travels. “It was important to be here because our competition is here; and in order to be an effective player in the tourism space in 2019, you have to be visible, and you have to promote why people should choose to visit the US Virgin Islands over any other place in the world.”

Routes Americas connects senior decision-makers from the region's leading airlines, airports and tourism authorities to discuss new market opportunities and the evolution of existing services, and encourages the building of high-value relationships with some of the most influential aviation professionals from across the region.

The commissioner designee said the Department of Tourism plans to embark on a strategy to drive greater business from cities in the Midwest region of the United States, including Chicago and Minneapolis, and will update the industry and the community on strong capacity scheduled for the destination over the summer from cities such as Atlanta, Houston, New York and Washington, DC.

Jamaica Inn recognised in TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards

JAMAICA INN has been recognised in four categories in the 2019 TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards. The beachfront property was awarded first place for Romance and Service in Jamaica, it came in second place out of the top 25 hotels in the Caribbean for Service, third for Romance and also achieved third place in the Top 25 hotels in the Caribbean in the 'overall' category.

The TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Awards acknowledge the very best in airlines, beaches, family holidays, hotels and

destinations, chosen directly by millions of real travellers. This year's Travellers' Choice Awards for Hotels and Resorts recognise thousands of exceptional accommodations that received the highest marks for overall experience, including service, amenities and value, from travellers worldwide. Winners will inspire and help travellers find the hotel that's right for them as they plan and book their next amazing trip.

Jamaica Inn has also been recognised as the Caribbean's Leading Luxury All-Suite

Hotel 2019 at the prestigious 26th Annual World Travel Awards that took place last month at Sandals Montego Bay. This esteemed award further enhances the reputation of Jamaica Inn as one of the leading hotels in the Caribbean and as one of the finest all-suite hotels in the world.

The World Travel Awards acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel tourism and hospitality industry. The awards are divided into a series of regional awards which recognise

individual and collective achievements within each geographical region.

Commenting on Jamaica Inn's success, Kyle Mais, general manager, said, “We are delighted to have been identified, yet again, as one of the Caribbean's very best hotels. These achievements are a testament to the entire team who work at the Inn. We really do believe we offer our guests a unique, luxury experience, and these award wins certainly validate that. We would like to thank everyone who voted for us.”