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Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2019

POLKERRIS BED AND BREAKFAST

A piece of Heaven



A night fit for royalty

AC Hotel Kingston now open for reservations

Heritage and Poetry Fest has potential



Another bedroom at Polkerris CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Polkerris Bed and Breakfast A PIECE OF HEAVEN

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

IF THERE is one piece of advice visitors who have stayed at Polkerris Bed and Breakfast would have for potential guests to the property, it would be: ‘prepare to be wowed!’

In fact, if ratings by guests equated to academic marks, then Polkerris would graduate with first-class honours.

Based on the more than 455 excellent reviews of the 470 guests who commented on TripAdvisor about the property, it comes as no surprise that Polkerris won that travel site’s 2019 Travellers Choice Award, eclipsing its counterparts across the Caribbean and Latin America.

Polkerris is not the traditional bed and breakfast to which many are accustomed. Instead, Polkerris is the epitome of island luxury, reminiscent of its high-end compatriots in neighbouring Rose Hall, and Hanover’s extreme north, but without the much higher price tag.

The quaint villa-type guest house is ranked in the Top 25 Bed and Breakfasts and Inns in the Caribbean, and its guests have been seduced by not only the ambience of the property, but the warm reception



Peter Scudamore, manager of Polkerris PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

and treatment of the staff and owners who have made them feel that they have come to a second home.

The two exquisite luxury villas, enveloped within lush, tropical foliage, are neatly tucked away atop Jimmy Cliff Boulevard, nestled against the hillside, away from the hustle and bustle of the Hip Strip, offering a spectacular view of the Montego Bay Harbour and the western coastline.

‘Perfect, personal, picturesque Polkerris’, ‘place of perfect peace



Entrance to the Polkerris

and harmony’, ‘amazing place’, ‘awesome hosts’, and ‘the definition of sunshine living’ are a few of the descriptive phrases visitors have used to describe their experience there.

To say that the grounds and the rooms are immaculately kept by the staff would be an understatement. Polkerris is impeccably maintained, and TripAdvisor testimonials depict them as perfectly awesome.

According to manager Peter Scudamore, it started as a hobby of his mother and stepdad, approximately 10 years ago, and then blossomed into a product that has earned global recognition.

“With extra space, my parents would take in some guests that they



Polkerris Verandah view

knew and they would come back as repeat guests. They would tell

others, and with the advent of the Internet and more people getting to



An outer view of Polkerris PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA



A view of the ocean from Polkerris



Another section of Polkerris.

know about us, we took it a little bit more seriously and formalised the business," he explained.

The Internet and word of mouth advertising by guests attracted interest from travellers across the globe, not only in Jamaica's traditional markets, but as far as Eastern and Central Europe, the Far East, and South America. A large part of the clientele is Jamaicans visiting from abroad who trek to the island to reconnect with their roots.

"By staying here, they have all the nice feel of a luxury hotel. We only serve breakfast, so they are able to roam about and enjoy food in local restaurants and visit with family," Scudamore said.

Centrally located, Polkerris is three minutes from the airport,



Ackee and saltfish at Polkerris. CONTRIBUTED

a stone's throw from Doctors Cave Beach, and the rooms and the other amenities are very high end, owing to the fact that there is no

compromise on quality and comfort.

Each villa has its own swimming pool, and while both are self-contained, guests are free to visit



Polkerris vista pool CONTRIBUTED

the other if they choose. The upper villa has a games room, which is equipped with a pool table, a card table, and a computer console, among other things.

All the rooms are tastefully decorated and furnished with either a king- or queen-sized bed or two queen-sized beds. Rooms are air-conditioned, equipped with Wi-Fi, a television, telephone, a refrigerator, an in-room safe and all the basic amenities of luxury properties.

"Each room has its own character, its own feel to it. We use a lot of local tradespeople. A lot of our bedding is done locally because where possible, we try and integrate with our local suppliers," Scudamore said.

There can be no bed and breakfast property without breakfast, and according to Scudamore and his guests. This is huge.

"The breakfast is a big part. The guests really love the breakfast, which is typically fresh fruit,

coffee, and a choice of teas, and then you have a Jamaican-style breakfast, which can range from ackee and saltfish, escoveitched fish, mackerel, liver, stew chicken, callaloo, and salt-fish, served with fried dumplings, plantains, boiled banana, yam, roast breadfruit, whatever is in season, likewise the fruits," he said, adding that there is the option of omelettes, pancakes, and toast for those who opt out of the Jamaican breakfast.

Scudamore is particularly pleased that the property, which could be considered off-the-beaten-path, has managed to outrank so many other properties in the Western Hemisphere to cop a major TripAdvisor award.

"That is a big deal because you are talking about being on top of hundreds and hundreds of other places. So it promotes our business, but it also puts Jamaica up there as well," he said.

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Bartlett commmits \$300 million to strengthening community tourism

COMMUNITY TOURISM islandwide will receive a major boost following the commitment of approximately J\$300 million by Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.

The money will be disbursed to 63 communities across the country to have small events and activities to attract more visitors and increase the potential earnings of small tourism suppliers.

“The building out of more

tourism products under our Linkages Network forms part of our overall growth strategy to attract more visitors by adding value and enhancing their experiences. Adding value has become a benchmark in the highly competitive tourism industry, and when you are able to give more, you will have a better value proposition for visitors than your competitors.

These community-tourism

projects will provide authentic Jamaican experiences, whether it be food or entertainment, for our visitors and increase earnings for our suppliers,” said Bartlett.

The announcement was made today during the official launch of the M-Academy at the Chinese Benevolent Centre in Kingston. The M-Academy is a Jamaica Social Investment Fund and Main Events partnership that will provide alternative livelihood and skills

development. The main objective of the initiative is to provide demand-driven skills in event production to 100 students from seven parishes across Jamaica.

In endorsing the move, Bartlett added, “I am pleased that this initiative will help build the capacity of our young people who will, in turn, be able to earn and meet the demands in the entertainment sector, which is inextricably linked to tourism.

“This means that we will be able to rely more on local talent to seamlessly execute mega-productions such as festivals and conventions which attract thousands of people.”

The M-Academy training programme will initially certify 100 at-risk youth in various aspects of world-class event management and production skills by one of the leading entertainment companies in the Caribbean.



Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett (second left) in dialogue with Alando Terrelonge (right), minister of state in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (right), and Solomon Sharpe (second right), CEO of Main Event Entertainment Group Ltd, at the official launch of the M-Academy. Joining in the moment is Delano Seiveright, communications strategist at the Ministry of Tourism. M-Academy is a Jamaica Social Investment Fund and Main Events partnership providing alternative livelihood and skills development.

Jamaica carnival revellers invited to give back before taking to the road

COURTLEIGH HOSPITALITY Group 'Pack for a Purpose' programme enables Carnival guests to donate to local Jamaican charities.

Carnival in Jamaica counts as more than just a party for revellers staying at any Courtleigh Hospitality Group property this year.

Kingston's leading hotel collection is inviting guests visiting for carnival in Jamaica to donate needed supplies to local charities through its 'Pack for a Purpose' programme. The effort is being organised in conjunction with a United States-based nonprofit organisation aimed at having a positive impact on communities around the world by assisting travellers who want to make meaningful contributions to the destinations they visit.

"Carnival in Jamaica is all about fun, and, certainly, our hotels are ground zero for all the action here in Kingston," said Nicola Madden-Greig, group director of marketing and sales, Courtleigh.

"At the same time, though, we're always mindful of the needy within our community who struggle to enjoy even the basics in life. We're

asking guests staying with us over the carnival period to save a little space in their luggage to bring down supplies benefiting some truly wonderful local charities. Even the smallest donations can help a lot and make the carnival in Jamaica experience more meaningful and rewarding."

All three Courtleigh Hospitality Group properties – The Courtleigh Hotel & Suites, The Knutsford Court Hotel, and the Jamaica Pegasus – are participating in the Pack for a Purpose programme. Beneficiary charities include The Alpha Boys' Institute, Missionaries of the Poor, the Open Arms Development Centre, and the Marie Atkins Shelter.

"Several of the charities we sponsor offer care and temporary housing for the homeless, so basic grooming items like soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, and toothpaste are highly valued," said Madden-Greig. "School supplies for the Alpha Boys' kids are also always appreciated."

Donations can be made at the front desk of any of the Courtleigh Hospitality Group properties.



The Courtleigh Hotel & Suites, sales and Reservations Manager Maurice Bryan (second right) and Knutsford Court Hotel Front Desk Supervisor Duane Phillips collecting donation of shoes from a guest at the hotel for the homeless. **CONTRIBUTED**



The team at Cayman Airways **CONTRIBUTED**

Cayman Airways named the best airline in the Caribbean by TripAdvisor

THE AIRLINE was also named a top 'Specialty and Leisure Airline' in North America.

The world's largest travel site, TripAdvisor, has named Cayman Airways Limited (CAL) the 'Best Airline in the Caribbean' and a top 'Specialty and Leisure Airline' within the entire North America region.

The announcement comes as part of TripAdvisor's 2019 Travelers' Choice Awards results for airline categories, issued April 2, 2019. The results identified travellers' favourite airlines around the globe, with the hallmark of Travelers' Choice award winners being outstanding service, quality, and value.

Cayman Airways has been the national airline of The Cayman Islands since 1968.

"Cayman Airways, including its subsidiary, Cayman Airways Express, prides itself on embedding the very best of Caymanian hospitality into its service, which is reflected by the airline receiving these two important TripAdvisor awards," said the airline's president and CEO, Fabian Whorms.

"For over five decades, Cayman Airways has been focused on ensuring that our promise of 'those who fly us, love us' rings true. In delivering on that promise, the Cayman Airways family goes to great lengths to provide a pleasant and safe travel experience, filled with the best of our warm Caymanian hospitality. The board of directors, management, and staff of Cayman Airways are, therefore, very proud and appreciative of these TripAdvisor awards, which recognise our efforts to deliver an unparalleled level of service and Caymanian hospitality, making us unique amongst all airlines."

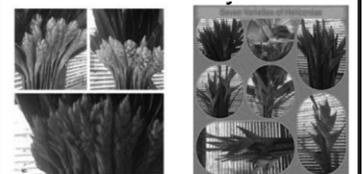
TripAdvisor notes that the Travelers' Choice award winners for airlines were determined based on the reviews and opinions collected from TripAdvisor travellers worldwide and took into account the quantity and quality of airline reviews and ratings submitted over a 12-month period (January to December 2018).

Now in its third year for airline categories, the organisation noted that the prestigious 2019 award categories honour 57 airlines, out

of a total of 91 awards, that provide exceptional value and service across the world. In addition to the world list, the Travelers' Choice awards recognises the winning airlines in eight regions: Africa and the Indian Ocean, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, and South Pacific and Oceania.

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Sandals Resorts named UK SUPERBRAND for 11th consecutive year

Sandals Latitude,
one of the newest
addition to the
superbrand.



Hotel chain receives high ratings from British public in latest rankings of UK's strongest consumer brands

THE RESULTS of the United Kingdom's latest superbrands survey are in and for the 11th year in a row, Sandals Resorts has been awarded the enviable superbrands status for 2019 – one of just nine travel companies in the world to receive this distinction.

The Consumer Superbrands survey has been tracking the perception of a wide range of brands in the United Kingdom since 1995. This year's survey featured 1,596 companies across 78 different categories, ranging from 'automotive products' to 'vitamins & Supplements'. The research process, managed by The Centre for Brand Analysis (TCBA) and Dynata, one of the world's largest survey and market research companies, follows a voting process involving a national representative sample of 2,500 British consumers.

Sandals Resorts joins Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, Premier Inn, Holiday Inn, Travelodge, Centre Parcs, Radisson Hotels and Crowne Plaza as the other travel companies to receive this designation in 2019. Managing director of Unique Vacations UK Ltd., representatives

of Sandals Resorts in the UK and Europe, Karl Thompson, said of the achievement, "We are extremely proud that our Sandals Resorts brand has maintained the coveted superbrands status for another year. This is a testament to our innovative product and strong brand values that we strive to continually build on."

His sentiments were echoed by Adam Stewart, Sandals' deputy chairman, who said, "It is indeed an honour to receive this accolade for the 11th consecutive year. Our UK market is very important to us and it is rewarding and exciting to know that our consumers there think highly of our brand. We are truly humbled and remain committed to continuously providing the products and unmatched service that our brand is known and loved for."

Brands do not pay or apply to be considered for superbrands status, but, instead, all the key players in each sector are voted on. Voters were asked to judge brands against the three core factors inherent in a superbrand: quality, reliability, and distinction. Additionally, a range of both short- and long-term factors influence the



Adam Stewart, deputy chairman, Sandals Resorts International **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

way consumers vote. This includes the brand's current profile, its latest marketing activities, and new product and service developments.

In addition to the British public vote, which was weighted to reflect the breadth of opinion across the whole country, all brands awarded superbrand status were also highly rated by an objective and voluntary council of senior industry experts to provide a secondary quality-control mechanism.

Stephen Cheliotis, CEO of TCBA and chairman of Superbrands comments: "UK consumers have a rich, abundant choice of brands for almost everything they might wish to purchase. The commercial success of a given brand is therefore highly correlated to consumer sentiment, perception and desirability. Being highly regarded and deemed a superbrand by the public is an important indicator of a brand's market strength, competitive position and prospects. As we enter increasingly unsettled times, possessing a strong superbrand provides businesses with a vital and valuable asset."

Shayon Wilson is Hyatt Ziva and Zilara's **SUPERSTAR OF THE YEAR 2018**



Superstar of the Year Shayon Wilson 'struts' his way to the centre stage to accept his award from General Manager Omar Rivera and Human Resources Director Betty Ann Brown during the recent Eminence Award at the resort.

SHAYON WILSON'S enthusiasm created several amazing experiences for Hyatt Ziva and Zilara guests, and the result saw him copping the Superstar of the Year title for 2018 at the resort's recent Eminence Awards.

"An associate who has displayed outstanding work ethics, unparalleled, dedicated service and continues to deliver 'service from the heart' was how Wilson was described by his bosses.

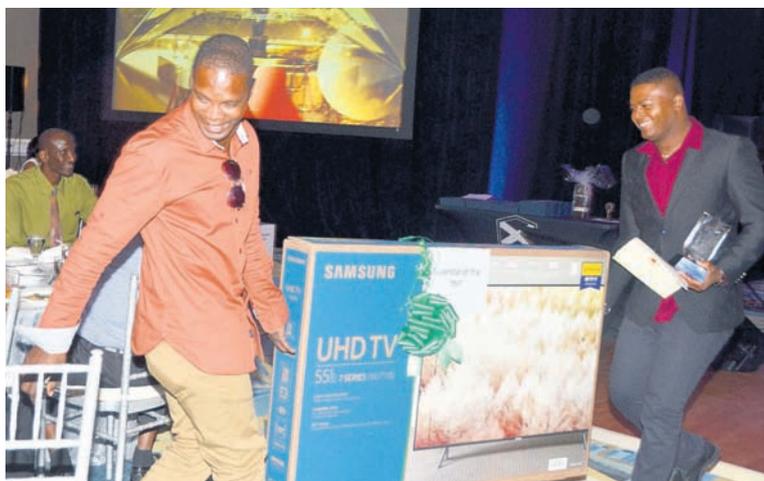
Words such as 'brilliance' were easy to accord Wilson, who works in the Culinary Jerk Centre at the Rose Hall property.

For surpassing his peers, he walked away with an engraved award; a 55" Samsung television; US\$1,000, and a weekend for two at the Grand Palladium in Hanover.

Wilson shared the spotlight with Wentworth Taylor, Supervisor of the Year, whose excellent contribution to the 2018 Employee Engagement Scores single-handedly moved the employee dining room scores by double digits.

"His work ensured the property moved from 72 per cent to 82 per cent. He was rewarded with an engraved award, a 49" LG television, US\$1,000 and a weekend for two at the Grand Bahia Principe in St Ann.

Manager of the Year Rawle Shortridge of the Finance – Systems Department joined the



Superstar of the Year Shayon Wilson (right) of the Culinary – Jerk Centre at the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara gets help carrying one of his many prizes from a colleague during the Montego Bay resort's annual awards ceremony.



Redhelia Gordon (centre) of Housekeeping accepts the General Manager's Award for the Year 2018 from Betty Ann Brown, human resources director, and Omar Rivera, general manager, Hyatt Ziva and Zilara Rose Hall. **PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA**



Wentworth Taylor (centre), Supervisor of the Year 2018, accepts his award from Betty Ann Brown, human resources director, and Omar Rivera, general manager of the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara Rose Hall.

top two stars, having shown great leadership skills as chairman of the sports committee.

Shortridge was recognised for his 'supportive role' in the hotel's Granville All-Age School



Manager of the Year Rawle Shortridge of Finance – Systems Department is accompanied by his wife, Tracey, as he collects the coveted award.

community initiative.

"He also oversees several projects on property that include securing the company's electronic assets" were among the accolades read in the citation in his honour.

The other employees recognised for their outstanding contribution in 2018 included Phillip Hazle, who received a Special Award, and Redehlia Gordon of the Housekeeping Department, who copped the General Manager's Award.

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Employee of the Year (front of house) – Award presented by Shawn Moses, junior general Manager (left), to Ann-Marie Longman, bartender (right).



Jeffrey Malcolm, fitness manager (right), receiving the Most Mentioned of Trip Advisor Award from Terron Hewitt, financial controller.



Employee of the Year Award presented by Angeline Anderson, director of Human Resources (right) to Amanda Longman, bartender.



Quality Department Recipients CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

ROYALTON White Sands and Blue Water Resorts' recent staff awards were fit for royalty and will go down in the hotel's archives as a night not to be forgotten.

The ambiance and tone of the event equated to a grand gala where kings and queens were the attendants. With matching décor depicting the monarchy, the resort which prides itself on excellence, rewarded its staff for their outstanding contribution in 2018.

Several members of staff walked away with an array of prizes and surprises, and those accustomed to the Royalton way were impressed.

The prizes ranged from smartphones, appliances, passes for other resorts, and cash of over US\$1,000 to some winners. The toast of the evening was Amanda Longman, an outstanding bartender who walked away with a plethora of prizes and was crowned the Front of House Employee of the Year and overall Employee of the Year 2018.

Amoy Edwards of the human resources department was the recipient of the Employee of the Year Award for the Back of House, and she was also showered with gifts and prizes that she never envisioned. Rounding off the female prowess for the night was Ann-Marie Crawford from the housekeeping department, who was awarded the Supervisor of the Year.

A night fit for royalty



Department of the Year – Weddings

Given the female dominance of the award ceremony, it begs the question, Who runs the world?

Other winners for the night were Jeffrey Malcolm, fitness manager, who won the TripAdvisor award; Tamica Palmer, Bartender for the 'I See You' and Ges Hotel Awards; and Acleish Pearson, entertainment manager who stood above the rest, crowned Manager of the Year.

Overall Department of the Year was awarded to the Weddings and the coveted General Manager's Award for outstanding performance and representation of the company was awarded to Tanisha Lee Shirley, front office manager.

Other awardees included Tanisha Marsh Noble, elite services manager; and Leonard Anderson, Wow Factor Manager.

It was an evening well represented by the staff body and packed with entertainment from the Hah-R-Mony Dancers.

A resounding speech from philanthropist and journalist Janet Silvera was the cherry on the top. She reminded the staff of the importance of solid customer service and charged them to continuously go beyond the call of duty. It was a



Leonard Anderson, Wow Factor Manager (right) receiving the General Manager's Special Award from Daniel Cazarin, general manager.



I See You Award and Most Mentioned on GesHotel Award presented by Terron Hewitt (left) to Tamacia Palmer, bartender.



Employee of the year (Back of House) – Award presented by Kerry Ann Quallo Casserly, Regional Director of Sales & Marketing (left) to Amoy Edwards, Human Resources Clerk (right).

gripping speech that resonated with the winners and those who looked on, aspiring to be on stage in the spotlight.

It was a great event. Kudos to general manager Daniel Cazarin who continues to prove his passion for rewarding staff in such a profound way. The event was led by the Human

Resources Department with Angeline Anderson, the director at the helm, who, in addition to Mesha Truman, recruitment and selection officer, mobilised the team.

There is already much anticipation for Royalton's Staff Awards 2020.



Manager of the Year Award presented by Daniel Cazarin, general manager (left) to Acleish Pearson, entertainment manager.



Employee of the Year (front of house) – Award presented by Shawn Moses, junior general Manager (left), to Ann-Marie Longman, bartender (right).



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Jamaica Tourist Board sales delegation meets with top travel agencies

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board's (JTB) sales and marketing team recently visited Trinidad and Tobago to woo Trinidadians to visit Jamaica.

The team, led by Camile Glenister, deputy director of tourism in charge of marketing, partnered with representatives of Caribbean Airlines to meet top-selling travel agencies in Trinidad and Tobago. The visit was aimed at building awareness among Trinidadians by equipping travel agencies with the tools needed to sell Destination Jamaica.

"We are excited to be pursuing and growing our stakes in the Caribbean tourism market," said Glenister.

"Trinidadians are a good fit for our growth strategy, as they love Jamaican music, our jerk cuisine and welcoming Jamaican vibe. We anticipate that our meetings with the Trinidadian travel agents will bear fruit and encourage more travel to Jamaica."

While holding discussions with Andrew Willoughby, chief executive officer of Willoughby's Travel Services, the tourism deputy director said that each year, thousands of Trinidadians visit Jamaica to enjoy the diversity of the destination's tourism product. She expressed that adding events such as Reggae Sumfest to the list of reasons to visit would be worthwhile. Last year Jamaica welcomed 11,255 visitors from Trinidad and Tobago, a 6.4 per cent increase from 2017.

"I am very happy that you have come to visit us today," said Willoughby Travel



Andrew Willoughby (third right), CEO of Willoughby's Travel Services, shares lens with members of the JTB team on their recent visit to Trinidad. This is part of the JTB's sales activation plan, geared at getting more visitors to Jamaica from Trinidad. From left: Christopher Wright, business development manager; Camile Glenister, deputy director of tourism, marketing; Karlene Shakes, national sales manager; Francine Carter Henry, tour operator and airlines manager; Trudy Dixon, Caribbean sales manager; and Maureen Smith, promotions and events officer. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

Service CEO.

"Even though both islands have sand, sun and beaches, Jamaica has so much more to offer, and more and more people are asking about Jamaica," he noted.

"The majority of those who want to visit Jamaica are interested in visiting for music," he added. Willoughby went on to explain that most Trinidadians want to visit places with short driving times between activities, and are interested in the variety of eating spots.

Travel Agencies visited on the trip

included Amral's Travel Service, Haygem Tours & Travel Service Ltd, Lazzari & Sampson Travel Service, and Willoughby's Travel Services, which are among the top-selling agencies for Caribbean Airline's route to Jamaica. These agency visits are part of a targeted programme by the JTB, as they host seminars with the agents with plans to introduce the Jamaica Travel Specialist Programme later in April.

To learn more, go to www.visitjamaica.com.



Angella Bennett, new regional director for Canada. **CONTRIBUTED**

JTB appoints Angella Bennett regional director of tourism for Canada

DONOVAN WHITE, Jamaica's Director of tourism, has announced the appointment of Angella Bennett to the position of regional director of tourism, Canada, at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB). She will be based in Toronto and assumed her role in early April.

Bennett brings more than 20 years of hospitality sales and marketing experience to the position, having worked extensively in several markets, including Canada, the US, Europe, Latin America, and her native Jamaica.

"It is with great pleasure that we welcome Angella to the JTB team," said White.

"Canada remains a vital market for Jamaica and we intend to aggressively push to increase our visitor arrivals from that country. Given her experience across the hospitality sector and her penchant for devising revenue-generating strategies to increase sales, she is well suited to aid the JTB in achieving growth in this important region."

Bennett recently served as director of sales at RIU Hotels & Resorts, Jamaica, overseeing sales and revenue-management activities for 2,500 rooms across five resorts. During her tenure, she successfully opened five of the six RIU Hotels in Jamaica and, most recently, launched the opening of the Melia Braco Village hotel in Trelawny.

Earlier in her career, she served as Caribic Vacations Limited's director of tour operator management, where she oversaw product development, quality control, and accounting management for a myriad of tour operators, including Airtours International, TUI Germany, DerTours, MiersWeltreizen, and Jetair.

Bennett holds a MSc in hospitality and tourism management from Revans University, United Kingdom; certification in Marketing from The University of the West Indies, and is a confirmed Fellow with the International Management Centres Association.



Members of the Haygem Tours and Travel Service Ltd team pose with their Jamaica-branded bags with members of the Jamaica Tourist Board's sales and marketing team on their recent visit to Trinidad and Tobago. The merchandise were given to visited agencies and contained product updates and Jamaican memorabilia. **CONTRIBUTED**

AC Hotel Kingston now open for reservations



The Exterior of the AC Hotel Kingston CONTRIBUTED

AC HOTEL Kingston is now open for bookings on its website, www.marriott.com/kinar.

The new hotel will be opening its doors in Jamaica's capital city on June 1, 2019, as the first AC Hotel by Marriott to be launched in the Caribbean region.

"My family and I are excited to bring one of the most sought-after lifestyle business hotel brands to our hometown, Kingston. The classic European design, coupled with features of our Jamaican culture, has made for a true one-of-a-kind combination that the team and I look forward to sharing with our guests," states family lead of AC Hotel Kingston, Adam Stewart.

He said that through this venture, he was also looking forward to building new partnerships and expanding existing ones within the country's Tourism Linkages Network which is geared towards improving the island's economic standing.

AC Hotel Kingston, which adds a modern touch to the Kingston skyline, will offer guests a personalised experience in a

well-designed space that strikes a balance between work and play. The chic, European-inspired property will welcome guests with a cascading water feature and a driveway elegantly lined with palm trees. The hotel, conveniently located in the heart of the city's vibrant metropolis, is in proximity to the major business and social districts and offers a unique mixture of hill and sea views.

ONE-OF-A-KIND PIECES

Throughout the hotel, guests will encounter a collection of one-of-a-kind art pieces, each crafted by a Jamaican artist. This will give guests a small window into the region's art culture and hopefully encourage them to explore the city and discover its story.

Home to 220 guest accommodations, with three different categories, the hotel offers queen-bedded and king-bedded rooms and deluxe suites, all purposefully designed for working or unwinding.

The queen-bedded rooms contain two beds and are ideal for families or colleagues

on a business trip. The king-bedded rooms contain a balcony and are perfect for the business traveller who appreciates a well-designed oasis, and the deluxe suites open into a living area that may double as a meeting space.

The hotel features the AC Lounge, a space of creativity by day and a hub of social buzz by night. During the day, guests will be able to exchange ideas or make the final edits to a presentation in this setting, designed with the entrepreneurial spirit in mind. At night, the AC Lounge will serve as the perfect spot for guests to enjoy tapas-style *hors d'oeuvres* and the AC Hotel Kingston's signature cocktail blend, freshly prepared by an expert mixologist. The lounge will also feature live DJ appearances and a state-of-the-art sound system, creating a vibrant setting for locals and visitors to enjoy the nightlife.

The AC Hotel Kingston is designed to appeal to guests' senses and remove the friction of travel. From its signature scents to the feel-good music that expands beyond

the AC Lounge throughout the hotel, guests are able to draw energy from the hotel's deliberate details.

Staying true to the world-class service that the busy AC Hotel guest expects, AC Hotel Kingston will be equipped with over 11,000 square feet of cutting-edge meeting facilities that can accommodate up to six meetings simultaneously. The spacious conference room will be able to welcome up to 600 guests; the smaller meeting room is fit for up to 50 guests; and for smaller, private meetings, two media salons will be available for up to 10 guests each. Each of these meeting spaces will be fitted with the latest audiovisual technology.

Guests staying at AC Hotel Kingston may use their Marriott Bonvoy Loyalty Points upon booking for discounts on their stay. The Marriot Bonvoy Program is valid among 6,700 hotels within 130 countries. For more information on the collection of brands offered in the Marriott Bonvoy Program, please visit <https://www.marriott.com/marriott-brands.mi>.

Heritage and Poetry Fest has potential

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE PARISH of St Thomas has some captivating nature spots, and a dramatic landscape. Add to the mix are a rich and vibrant culture, a storied history and a colourful heritage. Talents also abound in the eastern parish, where national heroes George William Gordon and Paul Bogle lived and died.

So, the idea of a St Thomas Heritage and Poetry Festival has to be an excellent one. It's an opportunity to showcase the culture and heritage of the parish and to give parishioners and non-parishioners a platform to share their artistry.

The idea was conceived by Omar 'Melenin' Ryan, a Morant Bay High School and University



Abeng blower Patrick Henry was never, ever going to miss the St Thomas Heritage and Poetry Festival. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

of The West Indies, graduate, and an un-apologetic promoter of the parish of his birth. From conception to manifestation, the thought evolved on Sunday, March 31.

"The idea for the festival came more than 12 years ago. It came out of the realization that St Thomas is a culturally rich parish. It has Rastafari, Kumina, Pocomania, and other cultural expressions, and so I thought it necessary to have a festival to celebrate these cultural expressions and more, so, as a poet, I think we need more avenues, especially festivals, to promote the art of poetry," Ryan told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

Yet, days before the event, it was announced that permission was not granted for the use of the advertised venue, Lyssons Beach, near Morant Bay and the Princess Margaret Hospital. My Beach at Prospect was the alternative space, a cool and laid-back one.

The big plus of the day-night event was that most of the advertised performers, including the big names, Mutabaruka, Amina Blackwood-Meeks, Steppa, Rastakuri, turned up, likewise, a plethora of rising stars. Words and rhythms soared upon the breeze across the sea and up the hills, way into the dark night.

Booth holders also came in their numbers with an assortment of products and food. Items made of natural ingredients were quite popular. The biggest setback was the low turnout, which was

attributed in part to the sudden change of the venue. The event suffered significantly also because of a lack of major sponsorships.

"We made a big loss on the 31st, but the day will always be one to remember," Ryan said. It was the day he hosted his first heritage and poetry festival in his parish, and for now he just wants to "pay off the bills, plan and get some people onboard to have a wonderful event next year.

"I think this is an event with a lot of potential to grow into a serious cultural event for heritage tourism, etc," he told **Hospitality Jamaica** confidently.



There could never be a heritage festival in St Thomas without some Kumina.



Amina Blackwood Meeks entertaining the audience with storytelling.



O'Neil Pinnock of St Andrew travelled to the festival to sell his matchstick items.

ROBERT CAMPBELL:

A cultural ambassador of sorts

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

AT AGE 14, Robert Campbell of Race Course, Clarendon, lost his mother. At a crossroads, he said, he was without any skills, and school was not an option. His days at Ensom City All-Age School in St Catherine were over, and his father was absent from his life.

Campbell's entry into the world of work started with his learning to build furniture, and in the process acquiring woodcarving skills. It did not take long for him to become a proficient woodcarver, and so his initial earnings were from wood-carving.

He was also exposed to wood sculpting through the Mighty Gully Youth Project in Old Harbour, St Catherine. At Mighty Gully, he said, he fell in love with wood sculptures and has made some exquisite pieces himself. He still has his first piece.

While working at Wassi Art as a wood joiner, he went over the ceramics section, and there he made something out of clay. His "boss", he explained, was impressed and suggested that he make the transition to the ceramic section, where he eventually got a

part-time job before making the evolution to a full-time one. That was how he got seriously involved in ceramics, as he had always thought he would be an exceptional woodcarver.

The youngster who left school at grade nine, without any parental support, has evolved into a man who has made a name for himself in the creative industry in the Caribbean. He sculpts, carves, paints, creates moulds, among other things, and is also on the educational side of the creative industry. He teaches what he knows, and has undergone training himself.

At one point, he was contracted by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) as a consultant. Through this consultancy, he has taught mould-making and sculpting in Anguilla, Barbados, and Montserrat, where he initiated a pottery project. Campbell himself had done an advanced mould-making course in Barbados, and in 2014 he was selected among the top 10 designers by the Caribbean Export Development Agency in Barbados.

In 2107, Campbell was among nine artisans (sponsored by the ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme, funded by the European Union, and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme) who received intensive training in ceramic techniques and pottery at the African Minerals and Geo Sciences Centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Since his return to



'Nubian Princess', clay on hard wood by Robert Campbell.

Jamaica, he has taught ceramic production, imparting his knowledge to over 30 people.

This multifaceted artisan operates under his brand, Khadabra – Hands In Clay, and is

hoping to secure sponsorship to attend the first World Artist Conference next month in Beijing, China. His work is very extensive and may be viewed at www.khadabra.com.



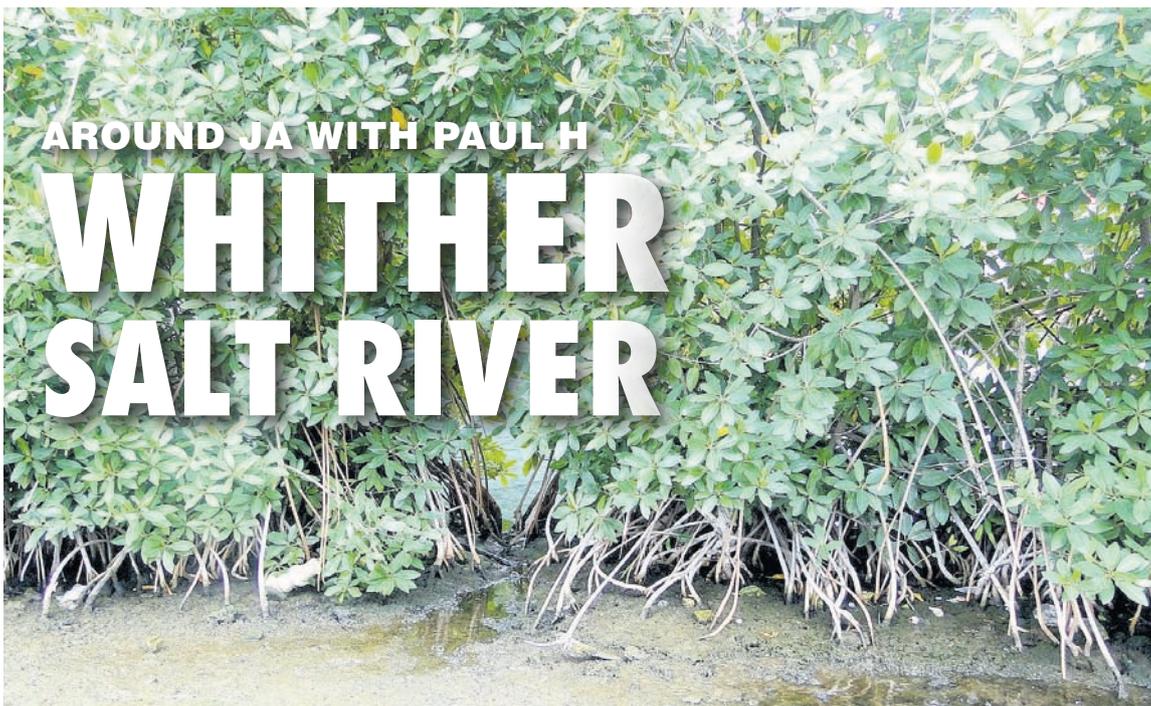
'Wakanda', a clay mask by Robert Campbell of Race Course, Clarendon.



Artist Robert Campbell showing Hospitality Jamaica how he could mount an assemblage of clay and driftwood.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

WHITHER SALT RIVER



A mangrove cluster near the bathing pool at Salt River in Clarendon. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

ON MY way to interview the artist Robert Campbell in Race Course, Clarendon, I kept thinking to myself that this parish which has produced so many well-known Jamaicans is really bereft of scenic spots that I would visit over and over again.

I love breathtaking views of verdant hills and valleys, despite my extreme vertigo; idyllic spots, away from the madding crowd; rustic seaside vistas, not dirty fishing beaches; quaint little villages, not rural decadence; and the taste and scent of clean river and seawater.

Not that Clarendon does not have any of the above, I just do not feel the joy whenever I am in this parish. So I prayed that on my visit on Saturday, April 6, I would chance upon something that would really pull me in and titillate me.

At Freetown, we took the left, away from the road that leads to



Water seeping from beneath the main road into the bathing pool at Salt River.

May Pen. There was nothing to gawk at, nothing to get my juices flowing, nothing to get me to shout, "Stop, stop!" Until I saw two rusting buildings on my right.

A river of sorts and what appears to be the remnants of a waterworks

were on the left. There was another forlorn building on the right. They all looked like abandoned warehouses. I smelled history and so I shouted, "Wait there, stop, man, stop!"

At the side of the road, there was



A derelict post office at Salt River.



A youngster relaxing and watching what is going on in the water below at Salt River.

a cyclist dressed in cyclist's attire. He knows nothing about the place, he said, but was from Portmore in St Catherine, and was waiting for somebody. Let him wait.

I saw some canoes to the left, and a multistorey boat. We turned back and went over to what appeared to be a fishing village. There were many more canoes and another boat, from which several men were line fishing. We greeted three men under a little tree, and I started to ask about the place. One of them questioned my presence upon seeing my camera. Another story not worthy of telling.

It turned out that I was standing on the remnants of a place that

played a very important role in the history of sugar in Jamaica. I was right, history abounds. But Salt River Port, as it is called, is another story in itself, for another time. I am still doing the research.

And despite the interesting historical background, the boats, the remnants of sugar barges, the passages through which they once travelled, and the mangroves, I felt not one iota of delight.

Moving on, we travelled through the community of Salt River, and I struggled again to find things to grab me. There were little houses, apparently from the days when sugar was king, but they were not quaint and idyllic. The place was



People enjoying themselves at the bathing pool at Salt River.



A section of the Monymusk Gun Rod and Tiller Club at Salt River in Clarendon.

dry and humid.

I was told that there was somewhere, along the main road, where people bath in a river. Soon, we came upon it. At last, I said, and decided to stop on my way back from Race Course, another place that is painfully boring. But the artist I went to see was not, nor were the things he produced.

On the way back we stopped at the bathing spot. It was not actually a river as we know it, more like a pond being fed with the Salt River watershed. The water that feeds it comes through rocks from under

the main road. It is a mangrove, replete with crab holes.

From the main road, the water looked inviting, but the shacks from which smoke billowed were so unflattering. It is a chill spot all right, and there were several vehicles parked, and many people were in the water, obviously enjoying themselves.

So, this is the Salt River I have heard about. Yet, salt or fresh, it did not seem like anything that I would put my big toe into. It is nature at its best, a flourishing ecosystem, which people should perhaps leave



Some of the cookshops near the bathing pool.

alone and find somewhere else to frolic.

I left feeling disappointed again, with the state of the place and the cup of chicken foot broth that I bought. I could not wait to go home to cook my rich pumpkin

Saturday soup.

Back home, I did my research on the spot, learning that years ago plans were afoot to upgrade the “popular destination”. I guess the people who frequent that crab ecology will have to wait some

more, counting the hair on the crab claws. Actually, when I was waiting on the soup, I saw one peering at me from its hole. It seemed to be saying, “Paul, please go home.”

And I obeyed.

Puerto Rico selected as host for prestigious World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit

DISCOVER PUERTO Rico, the island's first-ever destination marketing organisation, today announced that the Island will serve as the host for the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) 2020 Global Summit.

Representing the global private sector of travel and tourism, the Global Summit is regarded as the most important worldwide event in the sector and gathers significant global business leaders yearly.

"We're honoured to have been

chosen as host destination for the upcoming World Travel and Tourism Council 2020 Global Summit. Puerto Rico is a place where rich culture and natural wonders lay the foundation for an immense bounty of one-of-a-kind experiences. We're thriving as a destination of global importance and hosting this summit will elevate even further our tourism offering, positively impacting the local economy. We look forward to welcoming the global tourism industry next year to discover all

that Puerto Rico offers," said Brad Dean, chief executive officer of Discover Puerto Rico.

In Puerto Rico, the travel industry employs roughly 77,000 people, contributes 6.5 per cent to the island's GDP, and impacts a noteworthy 17 additional sectors of the economy.

This is on the rise, given the island's increasing popularity as a must-visit destination on a global scale, and is validated given the selection by the WTTC as the first United States (US) island territory

to host the respected event.

"We are delighted to bring next year's Global Summit to the beautiful tropical Caribbean island of Puerto Rico, a welcoming and diverse destination that is attracting travellers from all over the world," said Gloria Guevara Manzo, president and CEO of WTTC. "We're particularly excited because the destination provides ease in travelling and doing business since Puerto Rico is a US territory yet has the allure of the Caribbean."

The WTTC Global Summit will

be held from April 21-23, 2020, at the District San Juan, a five-acre hospitality and entertainment district opening later this year. The complex is currently being designed and is poised to be the most vibrant and popular setting for events, conventions and performances in the Caribbean.

Puerto Rico's unique history and offerings set it apart as a global destination, including a fusion of Taino Indian, Spanish and African cultures, seen vividly in the food, music and architecture. Found on the island is El Yunque, the only tropical rainforest in the US forest system; three of the world's five bioluminescence bays; and El Monstruo, the longest zip line in the Americas.

Visit discoverpuertorico.com for more information on the destination and its variety of offerings and lodging options.

Alamo Jamaica receives Customer Favourite Award

RENTALCARS.COM HAS awarded the Jamaican franchise of Alamo Rent a Car with the 2018 Customer Favourite Award.

Rentalcars.com is the world's biggest online car rental-service, working with more than 900 companies around the world. The Customer Favourite Award recognises the company that is rated higher than any other car-rental company at the Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA).

Alamo Jamaica, operated by ATL Automotive Car Rental, has built a culture that is driven by first-class service and quality standards, from its team of hand-picked, hospitality-trained experts to its commitment to providing the newest and best fleet of reliable Honda and Kia models. Alamo Jamaica also provides the fastest-growing fleet and reservations in the Caribbean region for Enterprise Holdings Inc, with over 300 mid-sized and full-sized sedans, minivans and SUVs in under three years of operation.

"We are honoured to be named **rentalcars.com**'s customer favourites. We take great pride in this achievement, as a company and also as a team of young professionals representing Brand Jamaica. We are dedicated to ensuring that each customer is satisfied on their journey with us. We believe that our customers' experiences should be seamless so that they can focus on the more important things in life," stated Lancine Saunders, ATL Automotive Car Rental's lead ambassador at the NMIA.

Alamo Car Rental operates in four locations in Jamaica in the cities of Kingston and Montego Bay, including at both international airports. For more information on Alamo Jamaica, visit www.alamo.com or their social-media pages @alamoRentalJamaica.



The ATL Automotive Car Rental Team.