

The Gleaner

# *Hospitality* Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

## *Couples Tower Isle* redefines luxury with **OASIS SPA VILLAS**

■ 3 multicity trends and why you should care

■ Distinguished Journalist Gay Nagle Myers to Receive CTO Award

■ Jason deCaires Taylor recognised for his outstanding contribution to Grenada





Couples Tower Isle Oasis Spa Villa bedroom.

# COUPLES TOWER ISLE

## redefines luxury with Oasis Spa Villas

Surrounded by trees and copious amounts of other greenery, including palms, ginger lilies, and coffee roses, the Oasis certainly lives up to its name and to the Couples brand, which is known for being guardians of the environment. Parrots and a few other birds also make the trees their home, their chirping at times serving as a gentle reminder of the tropical location and also as confirmation that the property is toxin-free and very environmentally friendly.

The Oasis is characterised by a Zens-type of architecture offering a peaceful, prayerful environment, which is a growing trend in modern spa designs. As a consequence, due to its free open spaces and trees, clients are able to get the benefit of all the soothing Caribbean breezes.

The Oasis offers unlimited services for couples staying in the spa villa, services that are provided by a very mature and experienced staff of 15, the majority of whom, combined, boasts decades of experience in spa services.

“They (staff) are very familiar with the level of service that we are doing in the tourism sector. I have about 15 of them now, and thankfully, because of the villas, we are almost always busy. It really has brought in a new level of business. We opened just over a year ago, and we have people who have already come four times to the spa villas. They are so enraptured by it that they keep coming back,” says group spa manager Denise Morrison.

Beaming with pride, she noted that the number-one service was the couples massage.

“The unlimited offer is something really attractive and it pulls guests in. But we also try to guide them. They have the option of



A couple on their way to the spa for a Couples Massage. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

### JANET SIVERA

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

**T**HE LUXURIOUS Couples Tower Isle has redefined traditional all-inclusive properties in the Caribbean, with its newly opened Oasis Spa Villas, which offers the only all-inclusive, unlimited spa package in the region.

The Villas, a 493 square feet Oasis Spa Villa and the 693 square feet Signature Oasis Villas, provide couples with not only unrestricted private access to all the services and treatments available at the award-winning spa, but also the option of booking unique services in their own private sun-filled terrace.

Each of the expansive, lavishly appointed villas includes private walkways with direct access to the spa, personal plunge pool, king-size bed, and outdoor shower.

The Oasis Spa itself is not only a shining example of Jamaica’s spa and wellness sector offerings, but can, without a doubt, be described as being among the Caribbean’s finest examples of wellness architecture.



From left: Lasonya Meeks, Shauna Vincent, and Daniella Francis.



Spa aestheticians Marie Ann Scott (left) and Latoya McGregor.



Denise Morrison, group spa manager, Couples Resorts.

massages, facials, anything on the menu and we have over 20 services on the menu, and you can get all of them at no additional cost.”

Home to seven treatment rooms, two are for couples, one is for hydrotherapy and is equipped with a tub, while the others are single.

But the Oasis offerings do not stop there. The juice bar offers all natural juices and smoothies, which are free from artificial sweeteners and are a way to flush and cleanse the body.

Water, she said, was a crucial part of the spa experience, so guests are encouraged to drink to flush the system as part of continuing detoxification.

“Water is very important in the spa environment. It is all about the cleansing because the skin, which is the largest organ, is what we work with primarily, so we do a lot of showering, where we submerge the people in water with added stuff like salts or seaweed to help with the detoxification,” she said in explaining the focus on hydrotherapy.

No true spa exists without a signature scent, so, of course the Oasis has its own, in the form of lemongrass, known commonly across Jamaica as “fever grass”.

The most sought-after spa treatments at the Oasis include the peppermint detoxification

treatment, which also remedies issues of cellulite. In this hour-long treatment, the client is massaged as well as wrapped in bandages and then cocooned, according to aesthetician Fennella Todd.

“All our products are seaweed based and natural. Everything is natural,” Todd told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

The Lava shell treatment is also a top pick. In this treatment, four ceramic shells are warmed and used to do the massage. According to spa therapist Marie Scott, the shells enable the muscles to relieve tension during the procedure.

“It is ideal for tired, aching muscles. It is a very relaxing, smooth,

gentle massage, but a little pressure can be applied. It is a mixture between the shell and the therapist’s hands,” she said.

The 75-minute Vita Kera firming facial for mature skin types is aimed at hydrating and firming the skin and diminishing the build-up and appearance of fine lines.

Aesthetician Latoya McGregor, who is a specialist in facials, recommends that this be done twice per week for best and lasting results.

“It is not extremely intense, so it is not harmful to the skin. If you are doing it for firming, it is best in five intervals per month. It has a special enzyme to help smooth the lines on the skin, especially right at the corners of the eye and along the forehead.

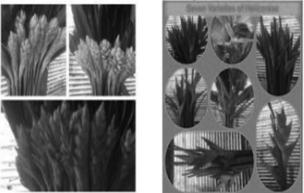
“Skin has memory, so the more often you do that is the more accustomed skin becomes to staying nice and smooth so it doesn’t develop all those wrinkles,” she said.

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A couple enjoying the Oasis Spa Villa

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# Hugh Riley retires as CTO secretary general after 10 years at the helm

Hugh Riley, secretary-general, Caribbean Tourism Organisation.

## *Region's top tourism official goes on pre-retirement leave*

**T**HE REGION'S tourism development agency is to begin the search for a new secretary general to replace the departing Hugh Riley.

Riley, who was appointed to the top post at the Barbados-headquartered Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) in August 2009 after acting for a year, has gone on pre-retirement leave ahead of his departure at the end of June this year. The organisation's director of finance, Neil Walters, will act in the position until a successor is appointed.

The secretary general is the public face and chief spokesperson of the CTO and provides the organisation with visionary leadership, strong direction, and clarity to its policy development. The holder of the post is responsible for implementing the vision of the organisation based on the strategic direction set by the council of ministers and

commissioners of tourism and the CTO board of directors.

### **ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION**

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), with headquarters in Barbados, offices in New York and London, and representation in Canada, is the Caribbean's tourism-development agency comprising membership of the region's finest countries and territories including Dutch, English, French, and Spanish-speaking territories, as well as myriad private sector allied members. The CTO's vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year-round, warm weather destination, and its purpose is Leading Sustainable Tourism - One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean.

Among the benefits to its members, the organisation provides specialised support and technical assistance in sustainable tourism development, marketing, communications, advocacy, human resource development, event planning and execution, and research and information technology.

## Kingston Employee wins American's Prestigious Chairman's Award

THE CHAIRMAN'S Award is the highest honour and token of gratitude American bestows quarterly upon employees who have been nominated by their peers and managers for outstanding achievements that make a difference either at work or in life. The Annual Chairman's Award is bestowed upon the top 100 quarterly winners selected by American's officers.

Marvia Cole, lead agent for American based in Kingston, was among the top 100 annual winners recently honoured at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas, Texas. The gala was hosted by CEO Doug Parker and top officers.

"The Chairman's Award is meant to recognise those who are the cream of the crop – people who do amazing things on behalf of our customers, of each other, of American Airlines," CEO Doug Parker said.

Cole's career is marked by excellence in service. She volunteered several times to help guide operations at two stations in the Caribbean and is an expert in all airport functions. She has also spearheaded charity efforts and fundraisers to support cancer-fighting organisations.

"It's an honour to represent Jamaica and bring home the Chairman's Award," said Cole. "Taking care of each other is part of American's culture, and at the same time, it's very rewarding to feel recognised and cherished as part of the team."



Marvia Cole accepts the Chairman's Award from chairman of American Airlines Doug Parker.

CONTRIBUTED

# Passenger demand moderates in February

**T**HE INTERNATIONAL Air Transport Association (IATA) announced global passenger traffic results for February 2019, showing that total revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) rose 5.3 per cent compared to February 2018.

This was the slowest rate of growth in more than a year but was still in line with long-term demand trends. Monthly capacity (available seat kilometres, or ASKs) increased by 5.4 per cent, and load factor slipped 0.1 percentage points to 80.6 per cent, which is still high by historic standards.

“After January’s strong performance, we settled down a bit in February, in line with concerns about the broader economic outlook. Continuing trade tensions between the US and China and unresolved uncertainty over Brexit are also weighing on the outlook for travel,” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s director general and CEO.

## INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER MARKETS

In February, international passenger demand rose 4.6 per cent compared to February 2018, which was a slowdown from 5.9 per cent growth in January. Capacity climbed 5.1 per cent, and load factor dropped 0.4

percentage points to 79.5 per cent. Airlines in all regions but the Middle East showed traffic growth versus the year-ago period.

European carriers showed the strongest performance for a fifth consecutive month in February. Passenger demand increased by 7.6 per cent, compared to a year ago, unchanged from January. Europe’s continuing strong performance provides a paradox, given Brexit concerns and signs of a softer economic outlook. Capacity rose 8.0 per cent and load factor slid 0.3 percentage points to 82.3 per cent, which still was the highest among regions.

Asia-Pacific airlines’ February traffic rose 4.2 per cent compared to the year-ago period, a substantial slowdown from the 7.2 per cent increase recorded in January. The timing of the Lunar New Year holiday in the first week of February this year may have shifted some traffic to January. Capacity increased 4.7 per cent, and load factor dipped 0.3 percentage points to 81.0 per cent.

Middle East carriers recorded a 0.8 per cent traffic decline in February compared to a year ago, the only region to report a drop year over year. Capacity rose 2.9 per cent, and load factor fell 2.7 percentage points to 72.6

per cent. Broadly speaking, passenger volumes of the region’s airlines have been moving sideways for the past 12 to 15 months.

North American airlines’ traffic climbed 4.2 per cent in February, a decline from 5.4 per cent growth in January. Capacity rose 2.9 per cent, and load factor was up one percentage point to 79.0 per cent. Signs of softening economic activity at the end of 2018, in conjunction with the effects of ongoing tensions between the US and several of its trading partners, may be mitigated by the region’s low unemployment and generally sound economic backdrop. Latin American airlines saw traffic rise 4.3 per cent compared to February 2018, a slippage from 5.4 per cent annual growth in January. Capacity increased by 5.6 per cent, and load factor dropped one percentage point to 81.4 per cent. Renewed economic and political uncertainties in a number of key countries may weigh on air transport demand in coming months.

African airlines experienced a 2.5 per cent rise in traffic for the month compared to the year-ago period, down from 5.1 per cent growth in January. Concerns over conditions in the largest economies are contributing to

*‘This was the slowest rate of growth in more than a year but was still in line with long-term demand trends.’*





Connecting the dots from city to city. CONTRIBUTED

# 3 multi-city trends and why you should care

**T**HE TRAVEL industry is absolutely massive (\$1.6 trillion in 2017)! But, with a massive market comes massive competition.

The industry that thrives on beautiful Instagram photos and elite festivals (Fyre anyone?) has a fierce underbelly. To succeed, companies must embrace innovation and leave the *status quo* behind. The companies that push the boundaries and embrace technology are the ones that are still here, thriving, and winning.

Multi-city travel is a gold mine in the travel space, for those brave enough to seek it out. Here are three key trends in the multi-city space to keep your eyes on, and why you should care.

## THE RISE OF METASEARCH

The flight industry changed forever when Skyscanner launched in 2001 (with Kayak following quickly behind). Travellers no longer needed to huddle over their computers, pulling their hair out, with 15 tabs open, comparing prices online.

Suddenly, 15 lists of itineraries became one, and only the best ever

*‘Technology has made it easy to access these data sources and assemble them in a way that speaks to travellers’ desire for flexibility.’*

made it to the travellers’ eyes... For OTAs (online travel agencies), metasearch took online travel planning from a metaphorical shopping mall to an all-out battleground. And if metasearch is the battleground, then new technologies are the battleaxes.

OTAs need to come up with new, innovative ways to drive their prices down to get to the top. The metasearches themselves are also in the fight, driving traffic to airlines directly through itineraries created using split-ticketing. A prime example of this is Kayak’s

Hacker fares or fares constructed from multiple one-ways. We expect this trend to continue, with OTAs getting less organic traffic and more through meta-search.

So why should you care? If you aren’t putting effort into creating better itineraries, there’s a high likelihood that travellers will never even see them.

## OTAS ARE SHAKING UP THEIR CONTENT

New technology has allowed OTAs to start integrating multiple data sources (we’ve seen up to 15

consolidators for one OTA!) and LCCs (low-cost carriers). Great private fares and cheap LCC content are driving flight prices even further down. Again, if metasearch is a battleground, bringing in LCCs is like showing up to the battle with a fire-breathing dragon. Itineraries are only as good as the content from which they’re made and the way in which they’re constructed. The standard GDS output is dead; split-ticketing is the way of the future because fewer travellers’ will tolerate the rigidity of antiquated airline alliances. Technology has made it easy to access these data sources and assemble them in a way that speaks to travellers’ desire for flexibility. However, few companies are at the cutting edge of leveraging data sets, machine learning and automation to really take advantage of untapped opportunities in this new space.

So why should you care? By integrating multiple data sources to drive your prices down, and assembling them in a way that understands travellers’ desire for flexibility, you’ll be moving one step closer to the prize.

## MULTI-CITY TRAVEL SEARCHES ARE DRAMATICALLY INCREASING

Travel is more accessible and affordable than ever before. Travellers today have the desire to travel and the resources to get there. And when they’re crossing oceans, why not try to knock off as many destinations from their

bucket list as possible. The options are limitless, especially compared to previous generations of travellers who relied on mall kiosks and Lonely Planet books. The wealth of information available and a desire for flexibility have caused the transition to the multi-city era. It’s here, it’s booming, and it has huge potential to make you money.

Flexibility is increasingly becoming a priority, with many OTAs now offering a plus or minus three-day feature. We know that fully customisable, easy-to-access itineraries are the way forward. And moving into the future ultimately means embracing that flexibility. To truly succeed as an organisation, you must fully understand your traveller. In the multi-city space, we’ve found that 60 per cent of leisure travellers are completely flexible. So how do we offer travellers the flexibility they desire? When a trip is merely a number of destinations on a bucket list, the order doesn’t matter. However, the best order isn’t always clear – in a five-city trip, there’s over 120 different possible routes. Innovative technology can help!

So why should you care? Flexibility is the way of the future. Travellers will inevitably hit all the stops on their bucket list, and they’ll do it in a way that works best for them. If you don’t meet their needs, you’ll lose this generation of flexible independent travellers.

**Credit: TripNinja**



# MOBAY CITY RUN

## gets massive boost

The starting point.

**B**UOYED BY a flurry of corporate support, the organisers of the MoBay City Run say they are “quietly confident” that this year’s 10k and 5k run for charity will be its biggest yet.

And there are good reasons for the optimism as already, the RIU hotel has stepped up to the wicket in a big way, registering a whopping 790 participants and



Janet Sylvester, commercial director, Courts Jamaica Limited.



counting.

“We are aiming for 800 and will not stop until we hit the jackpot,” said an elated Frank Sondern, general manager of RIU Palace and RIU Reggae.

RIU is one of many of the island’s resorts supporting the charity 10K and 5K Run and Walk, set for this Sunday, May 5, starting from the Old Hospital Park in Montego Bay.

And never one to be left flat-footed, hotel giants Sandals Resorts International has considerably upped its sponsorship of the charity event, pumping in what the event’s organisers are simply calling “more cash and kind”.

The company’s sister brand, Appliance Traders Limited, will provide three Amaroks to be used on the race route, while Holiday Inn, S Hotel, Sea Gardens and Deja are housing international and local media as well as the timing team. Meanwhile, resorts such as TenSing Pen, Royalton, Hilton Rose Hall and Couples have confirmed a number of prizes for participants.

In addition to the strong support from the hotel sector, a number of business process outsourcing companies have already registered hundreds of participants, with Conduent having the largest group so far.

This comes as MoBay City Run’s biggest partner, Courts (Unicomer) Jamaica Limited, has offered to sponsor 340 persons this year as part of their 60th anniversary celebrations.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

### Participants of MoBay City Run.

Courts will also adopt two school-feeding programmes under the MoBay City Run banner.

“We will be sponsoring the MoBay City Run to the tune of \$2 million,” said Unicomer Jamaica (owners of the Courts Jamaica Limited brand) Commercial Director, Janet Sylvester.

“We were a partner since the inception and will continue for a very long time. This year, Courts celebrates its 60th year, which will see us sponsoring 60 persons in four communities to participate on race day, collaborating with the Montego Bay City Run committee to identify and support the feeding programme for two schools and on race day, creating a chill zone filled with activities for all the participants.”

For his part, MoBay City Run’s logistics

coordinator, Emerson Whittley, said, “a better script” could not have been written for this year’s event.

“We have to say a big thank you to all our sponsors who have really stepped up their game for this run for an education event,” said Whittley, adding that he expects to see more than 4,000 participants come May 4.

He added that he was both impressed and excited to see that the event had now sparked a lot of global interest, pointing to the number of international media personnel who will be in Jamaica to cover the event.

The Mo Bay City Run has provided nearly \$20 million for students who have both been hard-pressed and financially challenged to take up places or complete their courses at tertiary-level institutions in western Jamaica.

# Balearic Islands

## poised to become first tourism destination developed under 2030 Agenda

**D**EPLOYING NEW resources and actions for the progressive adaptation of the Balearic Islands (Mallorca, Menorca, and Formentera) to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, is one of the main objectives of the agreement signed between the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the IMPULSA BALEARS Foundation. Its aim is to jump-start the process of the strategic reformulation of tourism in order to make an effective contribution to sustainable development.

The planning and execution of new projects focused on local sustainability, taking into account the tourism production and consumption patterns of the Balearic Islands, close relations with regional actors, harnessing public-private synergies, and the generation of strategic knowledge on the part of the foundation – are among the key features of this cooperation with the UNWTO, as the United Nations agency responsible for promoting tourism as a vehicle for sustainable development.

The establishment of circular economy guidelines in the hotel sector of the Islands and the identification of best practices already being implemented in this regard are among the first initiatives of the agreement. The objectives are to establish a specific approach to the relationship between hotel activity and its surrounding environment, to obtain intelligence that facilitates decision-making in the implementation of responsible consumption and production measures in line with the 2030 Agenda, and to lay down a strategic framework to activate the network of companies in the sector and other stakeholders.

The memorandum of understanding, signed by UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili and the president of IMPULSA BALEARS, Carmen Planas, will be in force until December 31, 2021.

CONTRIBUTED  
The Balearic Islands

## AA, United upbeat about travel to USVI – tourism department

AFTER TALKS with United Airlines in Chicago and American Airlines in Dallas, respectively, Tourism Commissioner Designee Joseph Boschulte says that there has been strong demand for seats to the territory's airports on St Thomas and St Croix this past winter season, which is likely to result in additional capacity this winter season as well as the following summer between Chicago and St Thomas before the coming winter season.

In fact, Boschulte reported that United was preparing to launch a daily non-stop Houston-St Thomas service for this summer and would also consider plans for new and additional flights to St Thomas and St Croix the following summer, especially with the increased business from the oil refinery on St Croix and as additional hotel rooms become available.

"We have had some very important discussions about the future of airlift to the territory and look forward to following up with our airline partners to ensure that we have adequate flights into our islands, especially as more accommodations come on line in the months ahead," said Boschulte, who noted that United had already



Commissioner Designee Joseph Boschulte with journalist Maudlyne Ihejirika of the Chicago Sun-Times.

loaded new Saturday flights.

His meeting with American Airlines at its Dallas headquarters

was also positive, with the airline reporting robust growth in demand to the destination. Under consideration for American, the commissioner designee disclosed, was increased capacity from Chicago, Dallas, and Miami in the coming months, and potential for growth out of the Charlotte hub in the future, benefiting both airports in the territory.

While in Chicago and Dallas, Boschulte also met with travel agents, meeting planners, travel writers, social influencers, and community leaders to update them on the territory's recovery as well as to develop smart partnerships.

"These meetings matter as we embark on a managed growth strategy through the full return of land-based tourism following the storms of 2017," he said. "The travel and tourism sector is changing to meet its growth and is becoming more electronic and Internet-based, but ironically, the more virtual it gets, the more important it is to regularly meet face-to-face with our partners," Boschulte said.

The commissioner designee and his team are working on new opportunities presented by last week's meetings and presentations.



Commissioner Designee Joseph Boschulte (centre) with American Airlines' Alex McIntyre (left) and Kyle Holden at AA Headquarters in Dallas last week.

## Distinguished journalist Gay Nagle Myers to receive CTO's Award of Excellence

THE CARIBBEAN Tourism Organization (CTO) will present its Award of Excellence to Gay Nagle Myers, senior editor for *Travel Weekly*, for her compelling and influential stories that effectively communicate the allure of the Caribbean.

The prestigious award recognises journalists and travel writers whose coverage of the region over an extended period has been par excellence.

Myers will be honoured during the Caribbean Tourism Industry Awards gala, which recognises exceptionalism in promoting the Caribbean and honours individuals whose outstanding, passionate, and dedicated work has contributed to the development and success of the region.

The esteemed awards dinner takes place on Thursday, June 6, from 7 – 10 p.m. at the Wyndham New Yorker (481 Eighth Avenue) during Caribbean Week New York (#CWNY2019), when the Big Apple is captivated by Caribbean flair, pulsating energy, and colourful sounds.

"I am humbled and honoured to be receiving this Award of Excellence from CTO. The Caribbean region is near and dear to my heart and continues to play a major role in my career as a journalist," said Myers. "I'm grateful to CTO for its role in my Caribbean coverage over the years. CTO continues to be a source of news and interviews, always responsive to my questions and helpful with the answers. I am thankful for CTO's continued support and professional staff, many of whom I consider as friends."

Myers is the Caribbean editor for *Travel Weekly* and has been with the publication longer than most of the hotels she writes about have been welcoming guests. She reports on and travels to, sun, sand and sea destinations on the tourist circuit and off the beaten path. Myers joined *Travel Weekly* in 1985 after several years as a writer and publisher for other leading travel publications.

"It is with both respect and admiration that the Caribbean Tourism Organization recognises Gay for her drive and commitment to positioning the Caribbean as a charming and important region," said Sylma Brown, director, CTO-USA. "This is just a small way of saying thank you for the contributions she has made over the years, bringing the region to readers through her creative writing pieces," she added.

In addition to the Award of Excellence, CTO will present the Caribbean Travel Media Awards, the CTO Allied Awards comprising the "Jerry", the Allied and a Special Recognition Award, the Diaspora and Lifetime Achievement awards, as well as the Jamaica-sponsored Marcia Vickery-Wallace and Marcella Martinez memorial awards.



Gay Nagle Myers

# Jamaica to benefit from increased airlift this summer

*Destination's primary source market United States, sees biggest increase*

JAMAICA IS set to welcome more travellers this summer as the destination has secured over 1.4 million air seats this season, an increase of 108,872 or 8.4 per cent, over last year.

Jamaica's primary source market, the United States (US), has seen the biggest growth, having secured over 100,000 additional seats for the period between May and August 2019. This is strong evidence of the confidence US airline partners have placed in Jamaica.

"We are looking to build on the strong start to 2019, having welcomed over 1.3 million visitors

through the end of March, which generated just under US\$950 million in revenue for Jamaica's tourism sector," said Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. "The groundwork has been laid in the first quarter, and with the increased seat capacity this summer, we anticipate continued growth and increased earnings for the destination."

In the Midwest region, Southwest begins new weekly service on Saturdays from St Louis to Montego Bay starting June 9.

The west will see United Airlines adding extra flights on

Tuesdays and Thursdays from Houston (IAH) to Montego Bay. Additionally, Sun Country Airlines will begin new service from Dallas to Montego Bay.

## UNITED STATES

The Northeast region has seen the most significant increase, accounting for more than half of the seats secured. From New York, JetBlue Airways has added more capacity and increased frequency to Kingston and Montego Bay, and Delta has added daily service to Kingston. From Newark, United Airlines has increased frequency to Montego Bay from Baltimore, and

Southwest has increased frequency to Montego Bay.

The Southeast region has added over 20,000 additional seats for the summer to Montego Bay. American Airlines has increased flights from Charlotte, Delta has increased its capacity from Atlanta and JetBlue will be adding a second daily flight from Orlando during August.

Spirit Airlines has introduced new service to Montego Bay and Kingston. From New Orleans, Vacation Express will reintroduce its charter service to Montego Bay starting May 25 and will operate through to June 22.

"It is encouraging to see that growth is not only from the established markets. As we open new gateways, we are attracting visitors from new markets," said White.

## EUROPE

Europe has grown its overall seat capacity to by 9,257 seats, or 5.5 percent, compared to last year. This is due primarily to the addition of new service from Manchester and larger equipment from British Airways out of Gatwick and TUI out of Manchester. TUI has also doubled its seat capacity from Belgium and Holland, with longer rotations.

## CARIBBEAN

In the Caribbean, new direct service from Barbados twice weekly on Caribbean Airlines largely accounts for the six per cent increase this summer.

For more information on travel statistics for Jamaica, please visit [www.jtbonline.org](http://www.jtbonline.org).

## Jamaica's Radio Remote Programme contributes to increase in tourism arrivals

EACH YEAR, the Jamaica Tourist Board organizes and facilitates multiple radio remote programmes that have contributed significantly to increased tourism arrival figures.

Since 2016, Jamaica has partnered with over 10 participating hotels to host radio stations from over 45 key target markets throughout the US reaching over 45 million consumers – delivering a value of over USD\$10 million.

"Jamaica's radio remote programme has been extremely successful over the years," said Donovan White, Jamaica's Director of Tourism.

"Not only do they connect our island to

consumers throughout the US, but they also drive airlift from new gateways, support new airline partners and help to sell air seats and hotel rooms. We look forward to continuing the programme and encouraging more of our industry partners to participate and reap the benefits."

Radio remotes are live broadcasts from a location away from a formal studio, which allows the radio hosts to take part in and promote a variety of experiences in Jamaica. These 'on the road' shows provide opportunities for representatives from local attractions and accommodation partners as well as the Jamaica Tourist Board hosts



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Jamaica Tourist Board, in partnership with JAWW Marketing and Beaches Negril, hosted 23 radio stations from across the United States during a multi-station Radio Remote. Jamwest Adventure Park was among the exciting activities on their itinerary.

to participate in live, on-air discussions, highlighting the destination offerings to a captive audience.

The remote studio is typically set up at a partnering hotel property and the hotel also provides representatives for interviews to promote its offerings and special packages. Some broadcasts also include a come-along component where radio station listeners can win trips or purchase packages to travel with their favourite radio station personalities. Radio stations promote Jamaica via on-air, digital and social media messaging, images and video before, during and following the remote thus providing several weeks of coverage for in each of the selected markets.

Participating hotel partners have included:

Beaches Negril, Gran Bahia Principe, Hilton Rose Hall, Holiday Inn Resort, Hyatt Ziva, Iberostar Rose Hall Beach, Iberostar Rose Hall Suites, Jewel Runaway Bay, Moon Palace Jamaica, Sandals Negril, and Sandals Ochi.

Radio stations have been hosted from the following major target markets: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Richmond, Rochester, Springfield, Tampa, Topeka, West Palm Beach, Wilmington, and Worcester.



Enjoying Yaaman Adventures are members of a six-market radio remote broadcast. Moon Palace Jamaica was the accommodation partner.

# JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR

*recognised for his outstanding contribution*

*The world's first  
underwater sculpture  
park in Molinere Bay,  
Grenada*

**W**ORLD-RENOWNED SCULPTOR Jason deCaires Taylor has been specially recognised by the Grenada Tourism Authority (GTA) for his outstanding work in creating the world's first underwater sculpture Park in the island.

Between 2006 and 2009, Taylor founded the park in Grenada, which was listed as one of the Top 25 Wonders of the World by **National Geographic**. His concrete sculptures, based on people, history and folklore, eventually become alive by supporting the sustainable growth of the colorful reefs in Molinere Bay.

Subsequently, this park became a marine protected area, a decision taken by the government of Grenada, who pledged to preserve 20 per cent of the country's coastal waters. The Sculpture Park includes art installations such as 'Vicissitudes' (famously known as the 'Circle of Children'), 'Grace Reef', the 'Lost Correspondent' and the 'Unstill Life', to name a few.

As a gesture of gratitude to Taylor for his work, the Grenada Tourism Authority (GTA) hosted a dinner with representatives of the Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation, the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association, the Grenada Scuba Divers Association, the Grenada Underwater Sculpture Management Inc, and the Grenada Arts Council. At the dinner, Taylor was presented with a special nutmeg-designed award for his contribution to the destination's unique selling points.

At the Sculpture Park, visitors are taken to the area by local tour operators and they can either sail, snorkel or dive to experience this stunning and unique experience. TripExpert have rated this experience as the number one attraction in Grenada in 2019, based on online reviews, searches and clicks.

Taylor is famous for integrating contemporary art into conservation with marine life. He has continued his artwork in Mexico, The Bahamas and in Spain. He travels all over the world for his work, and he is currently engaged on a project in Australia.

Tourism stakeholders in Grenada have continued his good work with additional sculptures such as the 'Nutmeg Princess' and the 'Selfie Statue'. The GTA hosted a competition in 2018 to encourage local talent to create new sculptures. The winning submission, dubbed 'Wet Fete', includes the Carnival characters Shakespeare Mas, Wild Indian, Jab Jab, Shortknee and Vieux Corps. The plan is to add these sculptures to the underwater Sculpture Park in the coming years.



Jason deCaires Taylor receives his award from the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation Arlene Buckmire Outram.

CONTRIBUTED

# CRAFT CRAFT JAMAICA

## GIVING CREATIVES A PLATFORM

**PAUL H. Williams**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

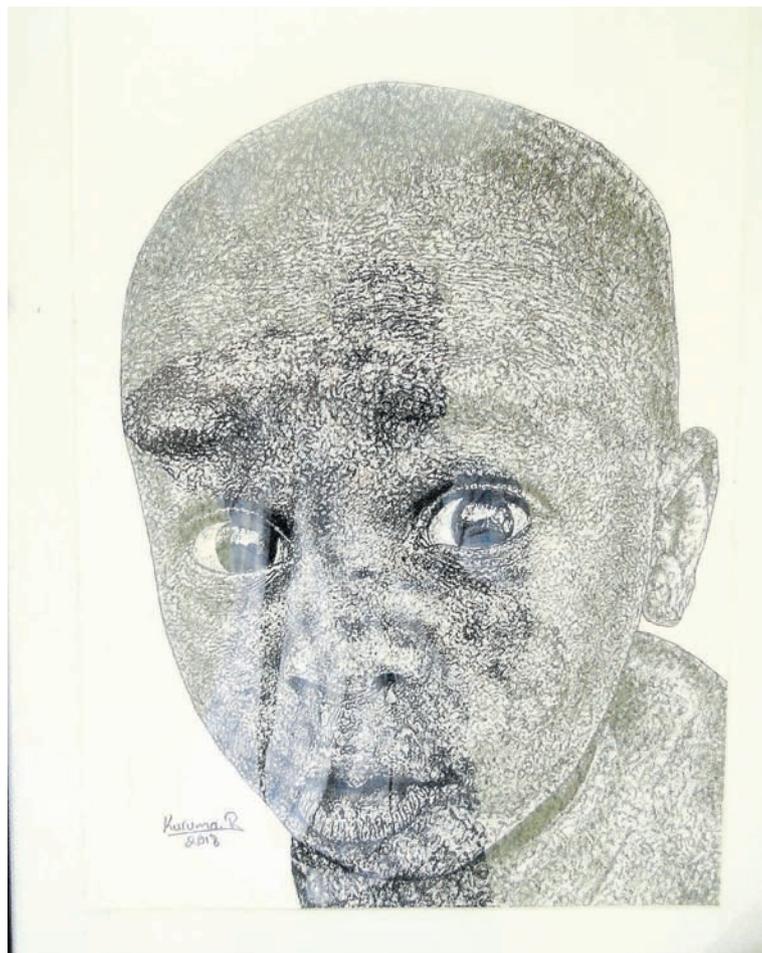
**J**AMAICA ABOUNDS with creative people: singers, dancers, actors, carvers, ceramists, sculptors, painters, illustrators, photographers, fine artists, jewellers.

Some are well known, others are not.

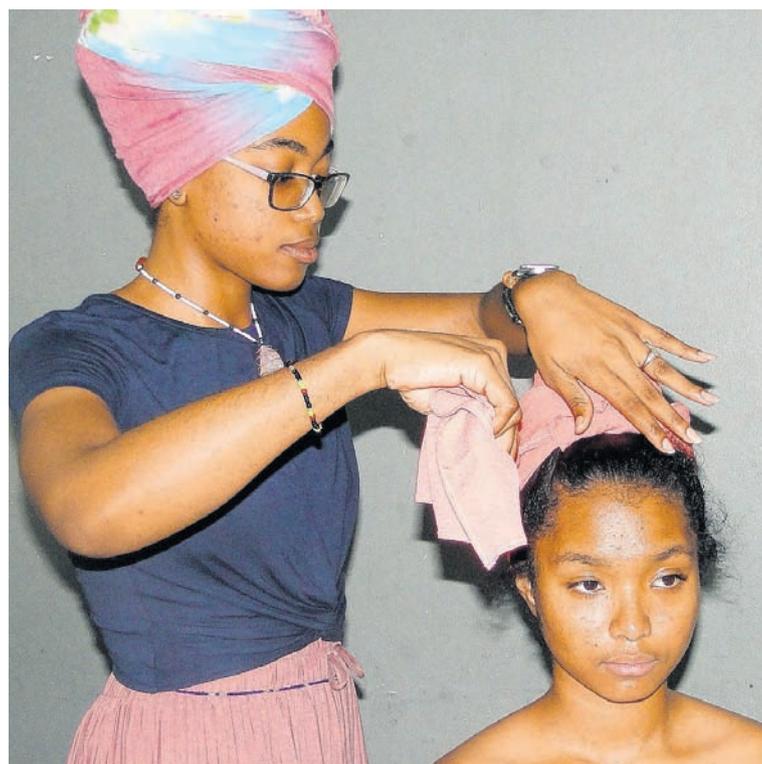
Despite their fame, or lack thereof, they all need a platform from which they can effectively market their work. Some cannot afford a physical shop because of financial challenges or burdensome operational costs.

The use of social media and other online platforms is one way then to get the information out that they are open for business. Some go it alone in their online outreach. Others are part of an umbrella entity.

Craft Craft Jamaica is one such online entity that promotes and markets the work of some creatives, and recently, it hosted a pop-up craft village at Campion College, St Andrew, to offer a physical space where buyers and sellers could meet face to face to do business and to network.



One of Kuruma Reid's black-and-white pieces.



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

A head-wrapping demonstration at Craft Craft Jamaica Pop-Up Craft Village at Campion College, recently.

**Hospitality Jamaica** was present at the Lindo Auditorium at Campion and spoke with Marcel Norman, the CEO of Craft Craft Jamaica, about the work that it is doing. "At its core, it is an online platform that allows Jamaicans to sell their wares to the world," Norman said.

There is no fee for the hosting, and vendors can put as many items as possible on the site, but each item attracts a small "mark-up" from Craft Craft. One of the main

requirements is that the items must be produced locally because the site is about promoting Brand Jamaica.

And while it cannot resolve all the challenges that its vendors face, Craft Craft assists vendors with getting their payment from overseas buyers, the distribution of the items, and the following-up of leads.

There are 60 vendors on the site, which was established in September last year, but Norman



Peter-Kay Catwell of PKay Jewelry smiles as some patrons look at her items.



Celia Williams of Meline Fashions fits perfectly among her Afrocentric clothes and accessories.

said that in the next six to eight weeks, about 70 more will be added.

As for the motivation behind the pop-up craft village, Norman said, “We have been in communication with about 100 vendors, and we just want to showcase a bit of them, to showcase the beauty of Jamaican creativity.”

The intention was also to get vendors to interact with one another. And for this, the first such gathering, he said that the vendors were excited about what it means for the rest of the year.

Among the patrons who attended were officers from the Tourism Enhancement Fund. In reaction to their presence, Normans said: “They have taken notice of our craft producers. They have realised that we have quality products that we can now provide not just to the local market, but international markets as well”.



Artist Christopher McKenzie (centre) discussing his art with Yonique Priestley and Jamaro Marville of the Tourism Enhancement Fund.



From left: Some members of the Craft Craft Jamaica team, Marcel Norman (CEO), Jordanne Thomas, Alex Lewis, Kathy Davis, Omari Harris, and RaeChelle Hamilton.



Sensational pieces from Shellsation.



The abandoned port at Salt River in Clarendon is now used as a base for fishermen in the area.



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

Another abandoned warehouse at Salt River Port in Clarendon.

## AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

# The rise and fall of

# Salt River Port

**R**ECENTLY, ON my way to see artist/artisan Robert Campbell in Race Course, Clarendon, I stumbled upon a piece of the history of sugar production in, and export from, Jamaica.

Two old, rusting zinc structures along the Salt River main road in the said parish piqued my interest. On the other side of the road, directly in front of these structures, there were the rusting remnants of what seems to have been a waterworks, used to pump water from the river into those buildings.

Just before we saw these buildings, there was another zinc-looking one, but no rust. It turned out to be much larger than the first two I saw. Again, across the road I saw what looked like a fishing village.

We went over and found out from some men on the scene that it is indeed a fishing village of sorts, but they admitted that they were only “squatting” there, as the original fishing village was destroyed by a hurricane, and thus their current circumstances. There was a decadent-looking building at the spot, a remnant of the port facilities.

I was told that the place used to be a sugar port. The men pointed to some decomposing metal barges in the water. In years past, these vessels would take the sugar from the warehouses through a mangrove waterway to Salt River Bay where the ships would dock. That explained the three buildings on the other side of the road. They were actually warehouses, and yes, water was pumped from one side of the road to the other into the two rusting zinc structures.

But the men could not give me enough information about the place, only to say it was

Wisco Wharves that used to operate the port, which they now use as their fishing base. They were right, because on the front of the biggest structure, set apart from the two rusting ones, was printed, WISCO WHARVES LIMITED.

My penchant to research things that are not clear to me went into overdrive, and what I found about Wisco, the West Indies Sugar Company, was most revealing.

Wisco was founded on May 22, 1937, around the Frome Estate in Westmoreland, with an initial capital of £600,000. It was



A waterway that barges laden with sugar used to travel along to reach Salt River Bay, off the coast of Clarendon.



Remnants of a water-pumping facility at Salt River Port in Clarendon.

controlled by Tate and Lyle, who owned 65 per cent of the capital, and with its registered office in London, England, it was to evolve into a sugar giant in Jamaica. The following year, it acquired the Monymusk Estate in Clarendon. In February 1938, it controlled 32 per cent of Jamaica's sugar production. In 1949, Wisco bought the Bog plantation, located near Monymusk; and in that same year, it completed a new factory at Frome.

But, Jamaica had few large ports from which to export the much sought-after product. This and the poor condition of the road were a challenge to Wisco. At the beginning of the 1950s, at the instigation of Tate and Lyle, which had already been carrying out bulk handling in its refineries, Wisco innovated bulk loading.

To facilitate this, the subsidiary Wisco Wharves Limited was formed. In 1954, the Salt River bulk shipping terminal and warehouses were set up in Clarendon.

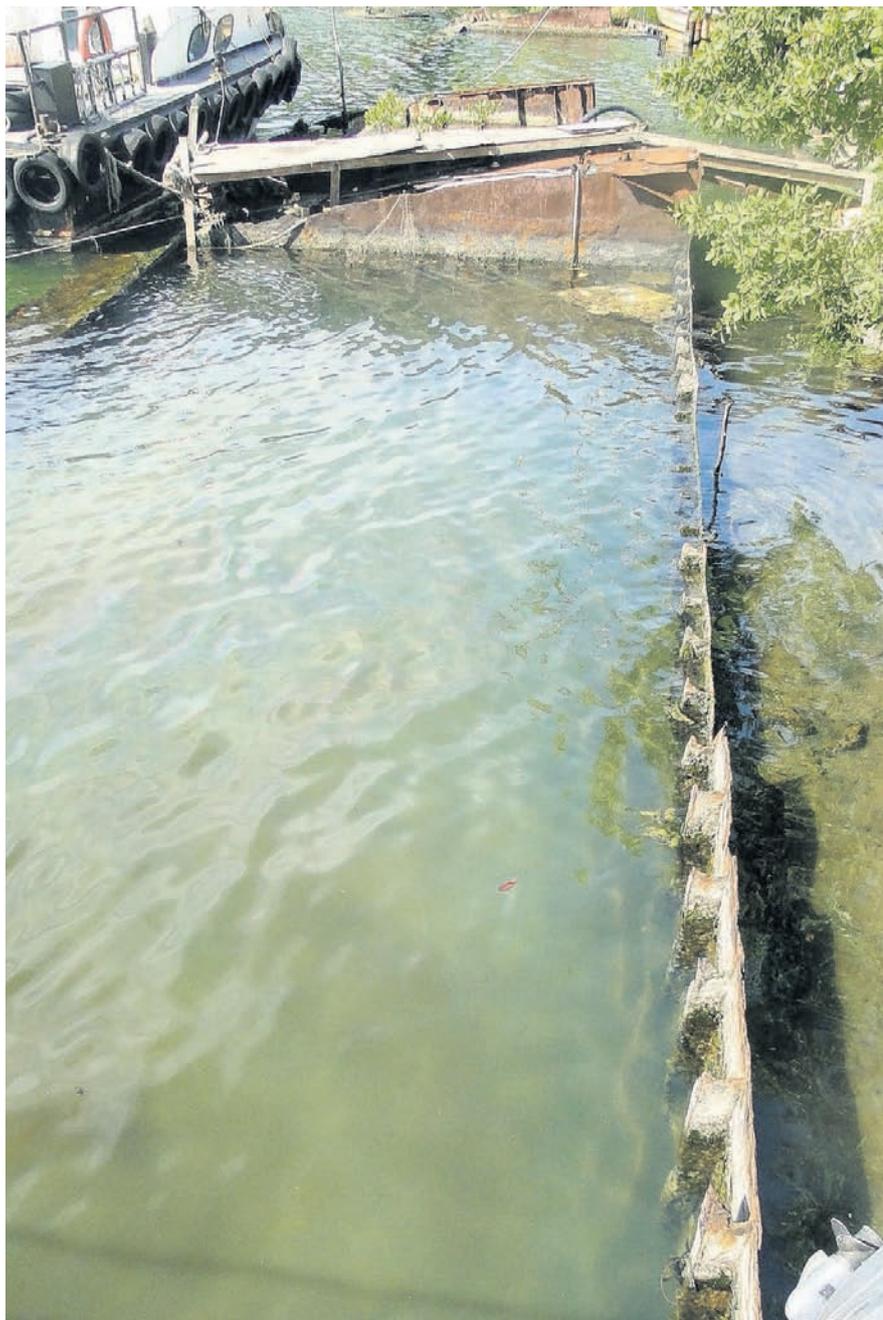
In 1956, similar facilities were opened in Savanna-la-Mar; and by 1966, three ports, Bowden in St Thomas, Salt River, and Savanna-la-Mar were managed by Wisco Wharves Ltd. They were said to be the most profitable ports in Jamaica.

In 1966 alone, 78.8 per cent of Jamaica's sugar export went from these ports. Bulk sugar export rose from 11 per cent in 1951 to 93 per cent in 1957, and to 99 per cent in 1961. The sugar was carried away from these ports to Britain and Canada by the Sugar Line, another subsidiary of Tate and Lyle.

Wisco reigned supreme in the era when sugar was king, and with the decline of the industry in Jamaica, the sweet rewards dissipated, and eventually became diluted. The decomposing metal barges at Salt River, which I chanced up, have stories to tell, yet slowly and surely they and the narratives they hold will be buried in the murky depths.



People fishing from a tugboat at Salt River Port in Clarendon.



A decomposing barge that used to carry sugar to ships docked at Salt River Bay.



Rusting Wisco warehouses.

# St Kitts earns top honours from World Travel and Tourism Council

THE ST Kitts Ministry of Tourism and the St Kitts Tourism Authority are delighted to announce that St Kitts and its Sustainable Development Council has won a prestigious Tourism for Tomorrow Award from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), presented at their Global Summit in Seville, Spain, held from April 3 to 4. The keynote speaker was former US President Barack Obama. Taking home the Destination Stewardship Award for 2019, St Kitts is now officially recognized as a global leader in sustainable tourism.

“It is a great honour to be recognised by the WTTC alongside organisations pursuing leading practices in sustainable development,” said the Hon Lindsay F.P. Grant, minister of tourism for St Kitts & Nevis. “Our Sustainable Development Council facilitates

*‘We hope this preservation will lead to long-term tourism growth and allow people to enjoy our beautiful island for many years to come.’*

partnerships and relationships among public and private sectors, as well as among all people in St Kitts, to ensure that development in our destination preserves and benefits our environment, culture, heritage and community livelihoods. We hope this preservation will lead to long-term tourism growth and allow people to enjoy our beautiful island for many years to come.”

WTTC’s Tourism for Tomorrow (T4T) Awards are the world’s top accolade in sustainable tourism; they recognise the highest ethical standards in the sector and are respected by industry leaders, governments and international media alike. The awards are aimed at recognising best practices in sustainable tourism within the industry globally, based upon the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Carlene Henry-Morton, St Kitts Sustainable Destination Council, addressing delegates at the WTTC meeting recently.

principles of environmentally friendly operations; support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage; and direct benefits to the social and economic well-being of local people in travel destinations around the world.

## SPECIAL CEREMONY

Now in their 15th year, the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards took place at a special ceremony during the WTTC Global Summit in Seville to celebrate inspirational, world-changing tourism initiatives from around the globe. The Destination Stewardship Award recognises organisations helping a place to thrive and bring forward its unique identity for the benefit of its residents and tourists. Accepting the award for St Kitts was permanent secretary (Ag) in the Ministry of Tourism, Mrs Carlene Henry-Morton, and Assistant Secretary Mrs Diannille Taylor-Williams.

Permanent Secretary Morton noted, “In accepting the award on behalf of St Kitts, it is important to acknowledge the team whose hard work laid the foundation for our sustainability programme. Particular recognition goes to the Sustainable Development Council, chaired by assistant secretary Diannille Taylor-Williams the Department of Marine Resources, the St Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring

Network, the Heart of St Kitts Foundation, the staff of the Ministry of Tourism and the St Kitts Tourism Authority.” The 2019 WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Award winners are highly commended and recognised for business practices of the highest standards that balance the needs of ‘people, planet and profits’ within the travel and tourism sector. Award winners promote inclusive growth and illustrate a strong commitment to supporting change and transformation in business practices and consumer behaviour towards a more environmentally conscious sector.

The awards are judged by a panel of independent experts, including academics, business leaders, NGO and governmental representatives, who narrowed down the list of 183 applications to just 15 finalists. The three-stage judging process included a thorough review of all applications, followed by on-site evaluations of the finalists and their initiative. The winner of each category was determined by the WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2019 Winners’ Selection Committee. WTTC represents the global private sector of travel and tourism. Its Global Summit is the most important event in the sector worldwide each year.



Diannille Taylor-Williams (left) and Carlene Henry-Morton, St Kitts Sustainable Destination Council.