

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

Jamaica Giants

A Massive Environmental Conservatory



Sargassum a continuing challenge for tourism

That Black, Triangular Rock

Rose Hall introduces a double launch high tea and Golf Academy

Jamaica Giants

A Massive Environmental Conservatory



One of two galleries.

Ricky Jackson's earth worshipping tourist attraction

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

IN 1987, long before environmental conservation became a global buzzword, Negril businessman Ricky Jackson acquired Jamaica Giants, a vast estate tucked away in Moreland Hill on the border of the parishes of Hanover and Westmoreland.

Instead of using the property for housing development or other types of construction, as many would have done, the only thing the nature lover did for the first 15 years was to plant trees on his 4,000-acre property, a decision many people thought at the time to be extremely weird.

Little did they know that Jackson, who is a multiple award-winning champion farmer, was simply fulfilling his vision of owning a rainforest one day, one that would preserve that side

of Jamaica for generations to come. Thirty years later, his dream has been fulfilled. Jamaica Giants has flourished to become "Ricky Jackson country".

Jamaica Giants is unique to sustainable tourism development and has already won pride of place when it outpaced several tourist attractions recently and copped the second-place award in the Sustainability Pitch Competition at the annual Seatrade in Miami, Florida.

Over the last few decades, Jackson, whose roots are in Orange Hill, Westmoreland, has planted hundreds of thousands of trees on the property, among them tropical fruits, ornamental, as well as lumber trees such as cedar and mahogany.

"We actually call it a natural reserve. To



A painting of Reggae superstar Judy Mowatt.



Manager of Jamaica Giants Maxine Gawron shows the various works of art during a recent tour of the facility.



Never Die Tree

date, he has planted about half a million trees, and he is not done yet,” Maxine Gawron, manager of the property, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

The property not only overlooks, but extends towards the legendary Georges Plain. An unending mass of trees, forming a closed broadleaf forest, serves as home to birds and other wildlife. Jackson has made it a point of duty to keep the property free of pesticides, fungicides and other chemical-free to protect his bird friends as he is a staunch environmentalist who believes that “the birds have to eat, too”.

The great house, which is one of two dedicated art galleries, is perched on the highest point of the property and was restored by Jackson when he acquired the estate. In fact, extensive rebuilding and restoration work was carried

out as everything except the building’s foundation was in ruins.

The upper floor of the great house offers a panoramic 360 degree view of the surrounding lands. From there, in the distance, sections of the Caribbean Sea, Negril, Orange Hill, Little Bay, Savanna-la-Mar, Paradise, and Frome Sugar Factory can be clearly seen and are absolutely picture perfect.

The gallery hosts a plethora of paintings by Jamaican artist Bruce Allen, a St Elizabeth native and Jamaica School of Art graduate who grew up in March Town in Hanover who is commissioned to paint for Jamaica Giants by Jackson, who has been an avid art collector for more than four decades.

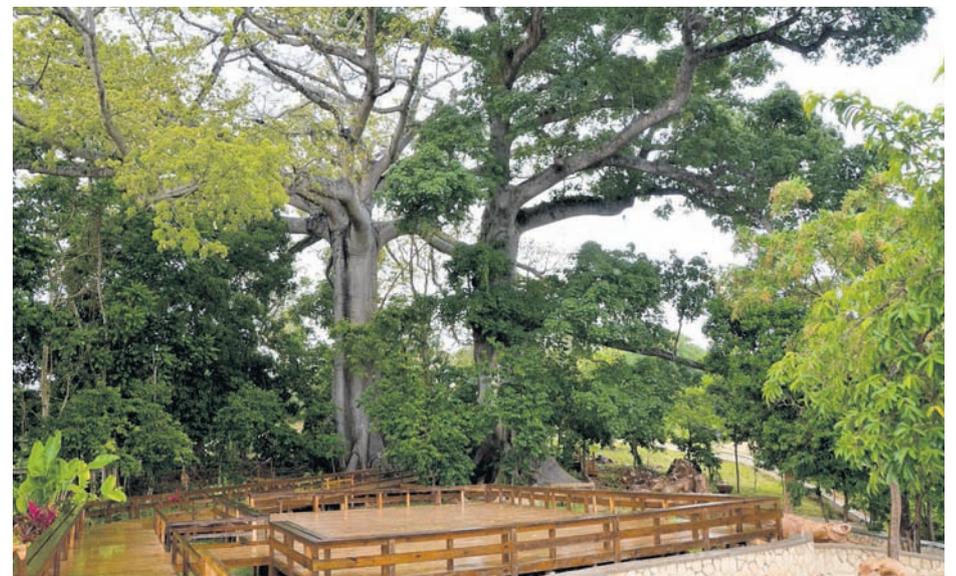
Allen’s work on display features more than 150 paintings, including a musical giant collection featuring



The giant cottonwood trees at Jamaica Giants.



Welcome to the land of the Giants.



Flora at Jamaica.



Inside the gallery at Jamaica Giants.

reggae legends such as Bob Marley, The Heptones, Jimmy Cliff, and Judy Mowatt, as well as more contemporary ones such as dancehall artiste Sean Paul.

Among the most recognised paintings are those Allen has done of the Lucea town centre, which, according to Gawron, “our guests recognise it right away because they are usually stuck in traffic in Lucea”.

According to her, there are plans afoot to open a bar and offer other amenities to enable Jamaica Giants to be able to facilitate retreats, cultural events, wellness events, and artist retreats.

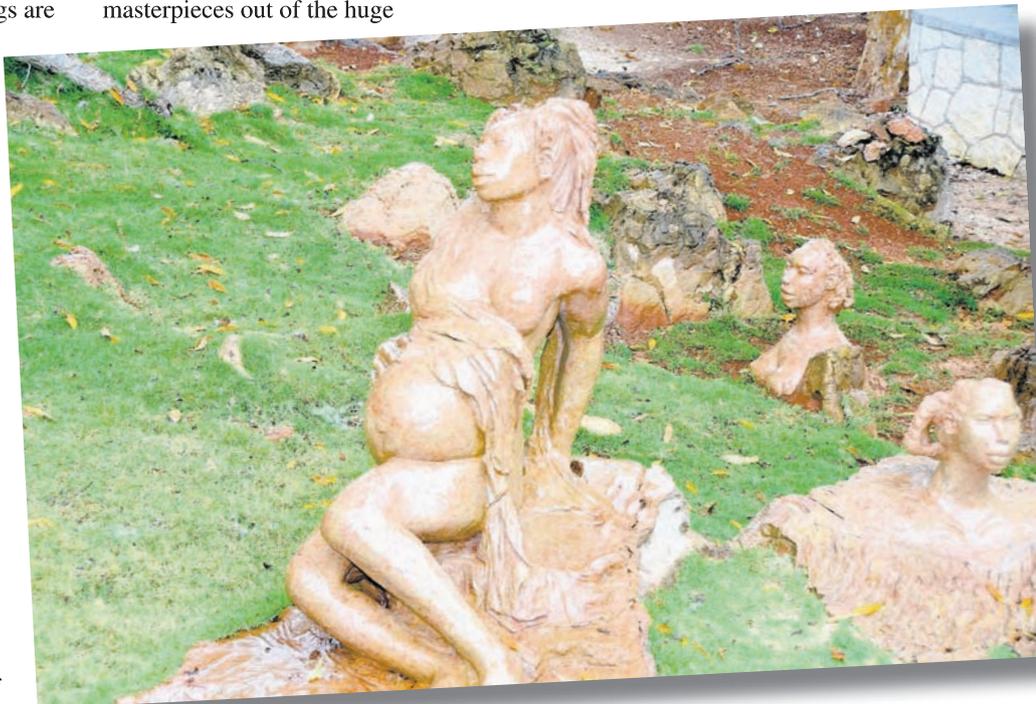
“We will start with Sunday brunch. We have our own cows and our own sheep on the property, and it is as organic as it gets. So we want to be able to give you that kind of feel when we start serving food,” she said.

“The visitors who have come here have been repeat visitors to Jamaica because we are really off the beaten path, so they don’t really have a problem with venturing out. A lot of persons when they hear we are kind of far away, they are not fully convinced that they can take a trip,” she explained.

Another amazing, almost indescribable feature of the property is the sculpture garden featuring carvings by sculptor Fitzroy Russell, who used a power saw to create masterpieces out of the huge

rocks that occur naturally on the property.

The first sculpture was carved in 2015 and was that of a temptress. The more than 40 pieces include those



Fertility, one of the interesting sculptures in the Sculpture Park at Jamaica Giants.

dubbed ‘The protector’, ‘The fertility’, ‘The Power’, ‘The Trying Man’, ‘Wishing Well’, and the highly erotic “Temptation Garden of Earthly Delights”.

A beautifully built boardwalk, with photo and yoga spots, leads to the great house and is flanked in one area by two giant silk cottonwood trees, which are estimated to be about 250 years old.

The property is perfect for retreats and is ideal for lovers of nature, artists, and creative people. In the short run, it will be fully solar-powered and completely off the JPS grid. Currently, it supplies its own water through the application of water-harvesting techniques.

In terms of its history, the property, which dates back to approximately two and a half centuries, was originally known as Moreland Pen and was home to a cattle farm, pimento, and a sugar cane plantation. However, Jackson chose to look to the future, and instead of dwelling on the days of slavery, opted to differentiate and focus on his passions: art, the environment, and agriculture.

The trek up the hill to Jamaica Giants, to be enveloped in nature, is well worth it.

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Rose Hall does a double launch with high tea and golf academy

THIS SPRING, Rose Hall Developments announces the launch of its Afternoon Tea alongside the opening of the Golf Academy.

The Rose Hall golf academy was created to provide promising students an opportunity to explore the game of golf without economic investment.

“Rose Hall believes that talent needs to be nurtured at early ages, and this sport contributes to much more than skill. It provides discipline, concentration, sportsmanship and an opportunity for employment in the golf world – like a star, as a caddy, golf pro or an administrator,” stated Michele Rollins, chairman of the organisation.

Rose Hall is also taking the high tea ritual and traditions to the next level.

From seasonal specialties, created with skill and precision by a dedicated team, to charming and selective teas, the new ‘Rose Hall Afternoon Tea’ combines tradition and culture with a modern English twist, stated the group’s Public Relations Manager, Michelle Parkes.

Inspired by Jamaica’s classic and

prestigious British culture, the Afternoon Tea package includes a selection of savoury finger sandwiches, sweet pastries, homemade fruit tarts, and traditional English scones with fresh cream, strawberry and guava jam.

The comprehensive medley of British black tea (or a choice of selective teas) and freshly brewed coffee, Witches Brew, fresh lemonade and sparkling wine are the perfect accompaniments, Parkes added.

Rose Hall Developments is inviting lovers of high tea to spend their fresh spring afternoons at the historic great house with friends and loved ones and enjoy a magnificent setting with elegant, welcoming service, transforming a traditional tea experience into a great treat for everyone.

Afternoon Tea is available every Wednesday between 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m.

“We look forward to the success of the high tea and the academy, and perhaps a green jacket won by a Jamaican Tiger Woods,” said Michele Rollins, who is also a big golfer.



Chairman of Rose Hall Developments Michele Rollins and US Consular General Jeremiah Knight being served during High Tea at the Rose Hall Great House



From left: Michele Parkes, destination relationship manager at Rose Hall Developments, share lens time with Jodi-Ann Gordon and Chelsea Wauchope, destination relationship specialists



Cheers to good tea. Some tea lovers enjoying every minute of the High Tea at the Rose Hall Great House.

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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Sargassum a continuing challenge for tourism

David
Jessop



THE VIEW FROM EUROPE

THERE ARE indications that the Caribbean may see this year once again unusually large amounts of Sargassum seaweed washed up on its shores.

In recent days large quantities have begun to arrive on Mexico's southeastern Caribbean coast, with forecasters suggesting that as the year goes on, large quantities may also begin to arrive across the rest of the region.

For those who do not know, sargassum is a type of abundant seaweed creating ocean rafts that can stretch for miles. Although ecologically important and a floating habitat for multiple forms of marine life, when carried onshore by prevailing tides and winds, it can build up on once-pristine tourist beaches in the form of a rotting mass of foul-smelling vegetation.

In the past, it was largely believed to originate in the Sargasso Sea in the eastern Atlantic, but more recently, scientists believe that it has started to arrive in the Caribbean from the equatorial waters between Brazil and West Africa, where rising sea temperatures as a result of climate change, and pesticide and fertiliser runoff from the Amazon and Congo, is causing it to

proliferate.

So serious has the problem become that a recent MIT Technology Review suggested that the cumulative effect is beginning to disrupt the equilibrium of coastal ecosystems, and by killing off the seagrasses that help keep sand in place, is causing beaches to erode more rapidly.

Although sargassum has been arriving in the Caribbean for many years, its height and volume have now become so great that voluntary efforts to clean beaches are proving ineffective, with potentially longer-term negative economic consequences for tourism.

Tourism ministers and industry representatives indicate that they have become increasingly concerned about the seaweed's unsightly appearance, visitor complaints, the cost of mechanical removal, and the possibility of reputational damage. There is also some anecdotal evidence of investors questioning the long-term cost implications in relation to projects they are engaged.

To try to address the issue, The University of the West Indies and a number of other regional and international bodies have been exploring possible solutions, including whether there are nutritional uses for the seaweed if processed, issues related to the ecological damage to beaches, and what, if any, technical solutions there may be keep the seaweed offshore.

One alternative, but costly, solution being considered by several countries in the region is the installation of

barriers. These, it is suggested, might keep the seaweed from reaching the shore in a manner that will result in the ocean currents then carrying the sargassum back out to sea.

In addition, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) announced earlier this year that it had begun a fact-finding study to document sargassum influxes since 2011 and why in some years such as 2018 it reached unprecedented levels, with an estimated clean-up cost of US\$120 million. The survey, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, is expected, when complete, to suggest actions for the region's fisheries and tourism industry and the scope of support that Japan may provide to help address the problem.

Despite this, experts suggest that the sargassum problem is not going to go away in the near future, suggesting that a regional response will be required if the problem is to be effectively dealt with both at a technical level and in relation to visitor perception.

Unfortunately, too many potential visitors still view the Caribbean from afar as one place. This suggests that if the problem of sargassum occurs again this year in the same way it did in 2018, it will require much clearer sustained messaging by the industry and governments, indicating that such inundations are sporadic, do not affect all beaches, and there is much more to a Caribbean vacation than going to the beach.

Former Minister, two directors of tourism among recipients of CTO Allied Members Awards

THE ALLIED members will honour six people at the travel industry awards dinner on Thursday, June 6, for their contributions to regional tourism.

Former Grenada Tourism Minister Brenda Hood is among six stalwarts of Caribbean tourism to be honoured by the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) allied membership at the Travel Industry Awards Dinner during Caribbean Week New York (#CWNY2019) next month.

Hood is the chairman of the Grenada Tourism Authority and has served at various stages during her career on the CTO's human resources technical committee and the boards of the then Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (now the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency) and the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas.

She, along with Colin James, chief executive officer of the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority, will receive the Allied Award for outstanding contributions to the region's

development.

The Allied Award was established in 2005 to recognise individuals within the CTO family – government, airline, cruise line, allied and affiliate members and CTO staff – who have done an extraordinary job of contributing, in a tangible way, to the sustainable development of the region.

Tourism Director of The Cayman Islands, Rosa Harris, along with Laura Davidson, president and founder of Laura Davidson Public Relations, will be celebrated with the Jerry Award for the passion with which they serve the region.

Established in 1997 in memory of the late Jerry Magit, who represented the allied members on the CTO's board of directors, the Jerry Award recognises people who demonstrate a passion for the region and have dedicated time, energy, financial, and other personal and professional resources to its development.

Noel Mignott, president and chief executive officer of The PM Group, and Annette Stowe, Internet and

conference administrator at CTO-USA, Inc, will receive the Special Recognition Award for high performance. This award honours high-performance individuals whose contributions, particularly in the last year, have truly made a difference among the region or Caribbean community and/or industry. It is not limited to service directly in the travel arena, but for service in any ancillary industry that supports tourism and brings continuous positive recognition to the region.

In addition to the CTO allied membership awards, the CTO will announce the winners of the travel media awards and will present its Lifetime Achievement Award, its Distinguished Caribbean Citizen Award, and its Award of Excellence, among others, while Jamaica will present the Marcella Martinez and the Marcia Vickery-Wallace awards.

The Travel Industry Awards Dinner will take place on Thursday, June 6 from 7 – 10 p.m. at the Wyndham New Yorker (481 Eighth Avenue).

Courtleigh

treats travel agents

THE COURTLEIGH Hospitality Group hosted a coffee break for Kingston-based travel agents last week at The Jamaica Pegasus, Royal Club Lounge. It was a morning of coffee, conversation, and lovely views of the picturesque Kingston city from the 14th floor.

Sales and Reservations Manager for the hotel Maurice Bryan, addressing the travel agents, spoke about how important they were to the property and how critical an interactive session was for them to have a greater understanding of the Courtleigh Hospitality Group when marketing the product.

The travel agents were engaged in presentations from each hotel representative about the amenities provided and different programmes the hotel has to ensure a great guest experience. They were also taken on a tour of The Jamaica Pegasus hotel rooms to give them a better insight when booking guests.

The highlight of the event for Chin Yee's Travel Consultant, Yolande Lee was, "the Pack for a Purpose programme offered by the hotel group is a great programme that I was happy to learn about. It shows that it's not just about



Leisure for Pleasure team (from left) Denise Thomas, Alessandra Smith-Bailey, Judith James-Watts, and Marva Thomas were happy to be experiencing the Royal Club Lounge for coffee and conversation.

earning, but giving back to those in need, and I support that cause."

Lee, who works for the longest-serving travel agency in Jamaica and who was brimming with praise for the hotel group, said, "I am proud to know the hotel group is Jamaican-owned, and I am even happier to be supporting our own local brand."

Group Director of Marketing

and Sales Nicola Madden-Greig, in her presentation to the agents, stated that with sister hotel Knutsford Court having the most double-bedded rooms in Kingston, Jamaica Pegasus currently having the largest ballroom in the city, and the Courtleigh boasting the most one-bedroom luxury suites, "we are always working hard to



Travel agents and Courtleigh Hospitality Group were all smiles after a great event.



Courtleigh Hotel And Suites sales and reservations manager, Maurice Bryan (right), and sales manager Celia Steele (left) paused the conversations for a photo moment with Chin Yee's travel consultant, Yolande Yee.



Courtleigh Group Sales Agent, Tomeika Flemmings (left) speaking with the team from Unlimited Connections during the coffee break.

ensure that we offer the best of amenities and services in Kingston, and our new hotel (the former Wyndham) will offer even more variety for discerning guests."

She added that another hotel in the group, The Holiday Inn Resort, an all-inclusive, located in Rose Hall, Montego Bay, has also been the main attraction in that resort city for local and overseas families based on the personalised service and fun experience offered.

Trafalgar Travel's Business Development and Communications Specialist Jamila Gordon had a thrilling experience and said it was a very informative session, "I am definitely looking forward to selling the hotels."

The Courtleigh Hospitality Group thanked the travel agents for their support through the years as they continue to offer their guests variety and a personalised Jamaican hotel experience.

Sandals thrill and treat EDUCATORS

They were welcomed to the luxury-included resorts in fine style, some by talented musicians serenading them as they arrived and others by a host of smiling managers with offerings of cold, scented towels and cocktails.

Close to 450 teachers were invited to join in the Teachers' Day festivities at Sandals Resorts in Negril, Ocho Rios, South Coast and Montego Bay. They were treated to luncheon, a host of entertaining acts, and lots of prizes, including eight complimentary two-night/three-day stays at a Sandals resort in Jamaica, Red Lane® Spa experiences, candlelight dinners, souvenir items, gift certificates, and premium beverages.

Sandals Negril hosted teachers from 10 schools across western Jamaica at its popular Sundowner Caribbean Restaurant. The close to 60 teachers enjoyed a lavish buffet spread, while rocking and singing to the soothing sounds of local entertainer Barry Watson and dancing away as local disc jockey DJ Buck upped the ante.

David Latchimy, Sandals Negril's general manager, was also a hit after welcoming and thanking the teachers for their service to nation building.

"What a day today has been! It felt as if we were all from one school just here at a luxurious resort being treated like kings and queens. Sandals Negril, from we arrived, just created this vibe of togetherness for us all. It was evident that they took great pleasure in hosting us, and we truly felt loved and appreciated," shared Sherida

Malcolm, principal at the West End Infant School.

The Ocho Rios region paid tribute to 210 teachers from 39 schools in a special luncheon hosted at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort.

Junie Gilmore, from New Generation School, St Ann, was one of the lucky winners of one of the complimentary stays and shared how excited she was. "I still can't believe it. I am very thankful to Sandals for giving us the opportunity to celebrate Teachers' Day in such fine style and to make my day so extraspecial. Now I will plan for my big weekend to Sandals."

Over on the southern shores of Jamaica, 61 teachers from eight schools in Westmoreland and St Elizabeth were fêted like no other at Sandals South Coast. The deserving teachers were served a sumptuous meal prepared by the resort's master culinary team and words of inspiration courtesy of guest speaker, Wolde Kristos.

They were invited to shake a leg and let their hair down to the melodies of Prince J and the Altitude Band, performing top selections from greats like Teddy Pendergrass and Tarrus Riley, among others. The resort also presented awards to the longest-serving male and female teacher in attendance at the luncheon and a Rookie of the Year award to the newest entrant to the teaching profession.

For 120 teachers from the parishes of St James and Trelawny, the management and staff of Sandals Resorts in Montego Bay treated them to a lunch-hour concert. Singers, dancers, and dee-jays from the Sandals team served up great entertainment but were rivalled by the educators, who thrilled the audience with their own singing and dancing, earning themselves great prizes as well.

"We really appreciate Sandals for doing this for us. All of the managers and staff took time to put this together, and we really hope we can do this again next year," said Mona Ennis, a teacher at Falmouth Infant School.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

After a few minutes of celebrating their winnings, Pell River Primary's principal Opal Delisser (second left) and teacher at Happy Hearts ECI, Tarisha Tomlinson, (second right) paused to collect their complimentary two-night/three-day stays at a Sandals in Jamaica from Sandals, Beaches and Grand Pineapple's Regional Public Relations team of Jervene Simpson (left) and Renee Deleon.



Gratitude is a must! For her dedication to the nation's children, educator Narda James from Falmouth Infant School was sweetly serenaded by Sandals Montego Bay's entertainment coordinator Rajesh McLean at a Teachers' Day luncheon held for educators in St James and Trelawny.



CONTRIBUTED

From left: Dr Elaine Bryan, Jamaica Honorary Consul in Atlanta; Copland Comrie, Person of the Year; Dr Yvonne Smith, Atlanta Montego Bay Sister Cities Committee for Business Community Service; Prime Minister Andrew Holness; Jeanette HoSang, Royal Caribbean Bakery, Business of the Year; Ambassador Audrey Marks; Dr Vincent HoSang, Royal Caribbean Bakery, and Oliver Mair, Jamaica's Consul General in Miami.

JTB sponsors Atlanta Chamber of Commerce annual Awards Banquet

The Jamaican Chamber of Commerce of Atlanta held its annual JamCham Awards Banquet in April at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center in Atlanta.

Each year, the event acknowledges and celebrates notable members who serve the community with distinction. This year, the event was sponsored by the Jamaica Tourist Board along with Panton Equity Partners, Best

Jamaican Chamber of Commerce President Suzette Arnold addresses gala attendees.



Dressed Chicken, St Regis, Metals & Materials, Vertical Capital Advisors, Bak Foods, Chef Rob's Caribbean Café & Upscale Lounge, Merrill Lynch, Stone Oak Lounge, and Sandals Resorts.

Jamaica's prime minister, The Most Honorable Andrew Holness, was the evening's guest speaker. This was Holness' first visit to the Georgia capital city in his capacity as prime minister.

"It was an honour to address Atlanta's most notable members who have contributed so much to the community," said Holness. "The diaspora has

always been and continues to be a key partner in working to improve the needs of Jamaicans through outreach programmes, philanthropy, and local efforts in promoting the destination."

Award recipients included Dr D. Terrence Foster's medical practice and Royal Caribbean Bakery for "Business of the Year", Dr Yvonne Smith of Atlanta Montego Bay Sister Cities for "Business Community Service", and Copeland Comrie received the award for "Person of the Year," an award in honour of the late philanthropist, Jamaica-born Lowell Hawthorne, CEO and founder, Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery & Grill.

The Atlanta-based JamCham seeks to address key concerns and issues within the Jamaican-American business community and the larger Caribbean community in the area. The group also provides opportunities for networking, personal and professional development, and is a cohesive voice in



From left: Ava Sinclair, Regional Marketing Manager, Best Dressed Chicken; Alrene Richards Barr, Director of International Affairs at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and Tamara Christie-Johnson, Business Development Officer, Jamaica Tourist Board.



Banquet attendees celebrate and enjoy lively entertainment by 'Dreggae' and Anthony Steele with music by DJ Migraine.

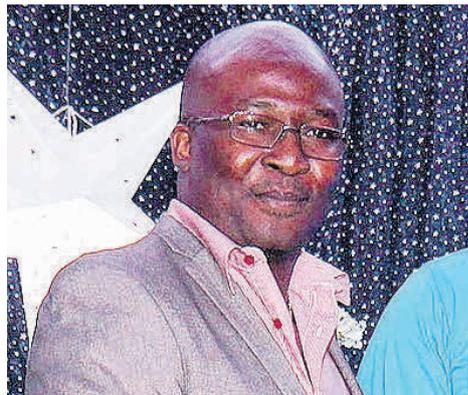


Tony Gray, president, Atlanta Jamaica Association; Tamara Christie-Johnson, business development officer, Jamaica Tourist Board; Michele Kow, Jamaica travel specialist Top 50 Travel Agent/entrepreneur; Michaelaine Lee and husband Ray Lee, business development manager, Unique Vacations; Joyce Tomlinson, ground transportation supervisor, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

Jewel Runaway Bay Beach & Golf Resort gets new GM

PLAYA HOTELS & Resorts N.V. (NASDAQ: PLYA, 'Playa') has announced the promotion of Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa Hotel manager John Miles to the position of general manager of Jewel Runaway Bay Beach & Golf Resort. As general manager, Miles will oversee the day-to-day operations of the all-inclusive resort, located in St Ann.

A native of Jamaica, Miles began his career at Hilton Rose Hall in 2009, formerly Rose Hall Resort, as an assistant guest services manager and later advanced to the position of executive assistant manager and hotel manager at Jewel Dunn's River



John Miles

Beach Resort & Spa. His tenacity and passion for hospitality resulted in subsequent growth and greater responsibilities when he was appointed the hotel manager of the 489-room key, Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa in February 2017.

Miles, who has placed an emphasis on continuing education, has earned several certificates from Central Connecticut University, Runaway Bay HEART Academy, Jamaica Advanced Computer System, and American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute. Miles also served as a key member of several pre-opening task forces for Jewel Runaway Bay Beach &

Golf Resort, Jewel Paradise Cove Beach Resort & Spa and Jewel Grande Montego Bay Resort & Spa.

"John's progressive growth and advancements are a testimony to his passion and humility. His dedication to elevating the guest experience and working knowledge of the Jewel brand further supports why John has earned this well-deserved promotion," said Alex Stadlin, chief operating officer of Playa Hotels & Resorts.

Jewel Runaway Bay has long since been regarded as a haven for families touting a robust kids' club and the largest waterpark in Jamaica. Miles's focus will support the resort's legacy and loyal clientele by creating a personalised guest experience that is aligned with what guests today are looking for in a family-friendly resort, including educational kids' club programmes that support ecotourism and social responsibility initiatives by benefiting the greater St Ann parish.

USVI governor wants strong aerial highways

AS THE US Virgin Islands announces the return of hotels and resorts to the accommodations landscape over the next few months, the leader of the US Territory committed his government to securing increased airlift to fill those rooms.

Speaking after a successful meeting with Delta Air Lines' leadership team in Atlanta last Thursday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr said a strong aerial highway policy was critically important to the territory's future, and his administration was exploring every avenue to boost relations with airline partners.

"We have been meeting and talking with airline officials since we took office, and this session here in Atlanta was no different – getting important feedback on the performance of routes into St Croix and St Thomas and giving our partners at Delta an update on our tourism rebound and recovery," said Bryan.

Bryan, who was accompanied by tourism

commissioner nominee Joseph Boschulte, reported that Delta was generally satisfied with the performance of its routes into both of the territory's airports and committed his teams at both the Department of Tourism and the Virgin Islands Port Authority to identify opportunities for capacity increases with the airline.

"It was encouraging to hear how confident Delta's team is about our product and that they are keen to work with us to bolster Atlanta-St Croix flights to pre-storm levels when we were experiencing an uptick in demand to the 'Big Island'," the governor stated.

"The St Croix airport has been underutilised for years, so we are looking forward to exploring new ways to put people into seats to St Croix," said Bryan, explaining that with Divi Carina Bay Resort expected to come back online later this year, with the expansion in sharing accommodations, and robust business travel demand returning with the resumption of activity at

the oil refinery, the conditions looked favourable for increasing flights to St Croix.

The governor said that the airline was encouraged by a very strong uptick in traffic to St Croix this past March and was satisfied with the performance of its routes from Atlanta and New York to St Thomas.

Bryan told the airline executives that legislation would soon be introduced to attract investors to new hotel and resort projects across the territory.

He will brief the investment community on the administration's business-friendly approach to hotel development at the Caribbean Hotel & Resort Investment Summit in Miami this week.

While in Atlanta, the governor and commissioner nominee also met the Department of Tourism's advertising agency of record, J. Walter Thompson Atlanta, where they explored the importance of leveraging data to differentiate audiences and improve storytelling.



International Jazz Day

Concert delightful

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

JAZZ LOVERS and other patrons were treated to a delightful concert to observe International Jazz Day on Tuesday, April 30, on the east lawns of Devon House in St Andrew. The eighth International Jazz Day was celebrated around the world, with Melbourne, Australia, being the host city.

The show at Devon House was produced by The Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts (EMCVPA) in partnerships with the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, and Touchstone Ticketing.

“The International Jazz Day Concert celebrates the rich history of jazz; it brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics, and jazz enthusiasts all over the world to celebrate and learn about jazz and its roots, future, and impact; raise awareness of the need for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding; and reinforce international cooperation and communication,” the EMCVPA says in a statement.

And with the EMCVPA being what it is, the performers were drawn from its faculty and students. They included Ibo Cooper,

Orville Hammond, Rafael Salazar, Trevelle Clarke-Whyne, Jon Williams, Derrick Stewart, Ruth Browne and Michael Sean Harris. They shared the stage with the EMCVPA Jazz Ensemble.

The performance highlight of the evening was when Mexican-American, world-renowned trombonist Steve Turre brought his class and expertise to the mix. With his trombone and shells of various shapes and sizes, he left the audience spellbound. Physically, he towered over saxophonist Oshane Love, a third-year EMCVPA music education student, but the audience showed much love for Oshane. He is already a virtuoso. His future sounded very bright.

And that of the three female art students who were doing live art looked very colourful. While the instruments were tingling, clanging, strumming and moaning onstage, Rachele Cover, Pamella Chang, and Shari-Joe Giscombe were creating images that depict jazz motifs. It was a merger of art and jazz.

Among the patrons were Minister of Culture Olivia Grange and her team. In a brief address to the audience, Minister Grange, among other things, said, “We also celebrate the influence of jazz on Jamaican



World-renowned trombonist Steve Turre hypnotising the audience with one of his many shells at the International Jazz Day Concert on the east lawns of Devon House, recently.

music, and the contribution of Jamaican musician to jazz internationally.

“As minister of culture with a seat on the executive council at UNESCO, and as chair of the convention and recommendations committee, I also take it as my personal responsibility that Kingston lives up to the designation Creative City of Music, and this celebration tonight is part of fulfilling that goal.”

**CONTRIBUTED
 PHOTOS**
 Minister of
 Culture
 Olivia
 Grange .



Edna Manley College second-year art student Shari-Joe Giscombe making magic on the canvas, while jazz music wafted through the air.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The year-three hospitality and tourism students at Excelsior Community College who recently held an appreciation banquet to honour their lecturers.

Hospitality students honour their lecturers

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IN A blue, white and crystal-themed room, sometimes bathing under blue, pink and red lights, the lecturers who teach in the tourism, hospitality and entertainment programmes at Excelsior Community College at 20 Camp Road, Kingston 4, had a ball recently.

They were fêted, entertained, serenaded, imitated, awarded, and appreciated by their third-year students, who planned and executed a 'lecturers' appreciation banquet' in partial completion of their special events management course. The services they provided include food and beverage preparation, bar, waiting and serving, décor and dining arrangements, security, husher, entertainment, guests room hosting, etc.

The evening's proceedings were conducted by the affable MC, Donovan Stewart, a student himself. The well-known humorist gave patrons much to laugh about with his brand of storytelling, and he had



Safron Brown and Trishawonna Fagan in a dramatic moment while they perform 'Cass Cass' by Louise Bennett.

many stories to tell. The entertainment from special guest artistes was emboldened by that given by the students themselves, who sang, recited, acted and danced.

In addition to the trophies that were presented to all their lecturers, special prizes, under the title of Lecturers' Grammy, were awarded

in the categories of Most Dramatic (Rayanne Clarke and Claudia Blythe-McLeod), Best Dressed (Karleen Scott and Jhevoughn Coombs), Most Organised (Karleen Scott), School Spirit (Rayanne Clarke), Walking Wikipedia (Dean Sharon Black). Alladeen Douglas-Knight walked away with the

prizes for being the most inspirational, humanitarian and most approachable lecturer.

In his vote of thanks, Shaquille Cunningham was more than generous for the rapport with, and guidance from, his mentors and educators. He told the story of his evolution from being a high-school

graduate sitting at home, depressed, not knowing what to do with his life until an item of news struck him.

He heard that the tourist industry was set to boom. This meant that jobs would be available. It was time for the pity party to end, and so he set out to investigate where he could go to be trained for employment in the said industry.

For many reasons, Excelsior Community College was his choice to pursue a degree in tourism and hospitality. This move, he said, transitioned him from "the bwoy" he was then to "the man" he is today. He is the only man in his batch, and was the manager for the event.

In a statement, Cunningham said, "The concept of a lecturers' appreciation banquet was born out of gratitude for our lecturers. We also noted that there are members of staff who have, and continue to do an excellent job in assisting us on a daily basis, and for that we are grateful. The exceptional service given to us by lecturers and members of staff has helped us to develop into young, aspiring managers."

THAT BLACK, TRIANGULAR ROCK

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IN MY trips around Jamaica, there are some places I visit repeatedly. Charles Town Maroon village in Portland is one of them. And I don't go only when its very popular Charles Town International Maroon Conference and Festival is on in June each year.

I sometimes turn up arbitrarily to chill or accompany people on a tour.

I like Charles Town because of its history, first and foremost. It is rich. The Maroon culture, for whatever it is, is another pull factor. It seems to be thriving at many levels. The drumming, the singing, the dancing, the food. And there are some folk there that I get along well with.

Then there is the spiritual element. And last year June, though I left in a huff and puff because something happened that I shall remember for the rest of my life, I'm still trying to fathom the 'event' by the river.

One of the pulls of Charles Town is the section of the Buff Bay River that flows past it. It is a super chill-spot atop or between the rocks against which cold waters rush and bubble as if in a haste. No trip to the village is complete without a



The Jamaican Folk Singers in one of their engaging numbers at the Charles Town International Maroon Festival last year.

dip.

Last year when I was having one of those riparian chill moments, a Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica (PBCJ) journalist caught up with me and some of my friends. He interviewed me right there on the rocks.

We spoke about the Maroons' history and significance on the Jamaican heritage landscape and the stories of how we African people came to be here in Jamaica. We spent a little time talking about the river, I think, and the Triangular

Slave Trade, the sea routes from Europe to Africa, to the West Indies, and back to Europe.

The overcrowded barracoons, packed with our ancestors, sailed through the Middle Passage – from Africa across the Atlantic to the Caribbean – under the most inhuman and inhumane of conditions. The trips, which many did not survive, were perhaps worse than slavery itself.

After the interview I went back into the water to soothe my tired body. I reflected on the



The Charles Town International Maroon Conference and Festival is a marketplace for a wide variety of items.



People participating in a Taino ancestral ritual at the Charles Town International Maroon Festival last year.

PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

conversation with the PBCJ, and I wondered about life on the plantations, and even right there at Charles Town before it was so called.

As I lay on a huge rock, my left hand went into the water. Then I felt something brushing against my fingers. I held on to it. It was a stone. Being a collector, I brought it up to see what it looked like.

First, I noticed it was unusually black. Hmmm. But what struck me was the shape. It had three regular sides like a triangle. Then, I started to shiver for I was holding a black, triangular-shaped stone only minutes after I had spoken about the Triangular Slave Trade routes.

I vocalised my awe and called the attention of my friends to it. I was beside myself. Coincidence? I think not. That stone that the river gave me has some ancestral connection and significance. They wanted me to have it among my collection.

I have been carrying it around in my bag ever since. Sometimes I hold it at its three corners and tell the story about it, about the day in June 2018 when I earned it.

The 11th International Charles Town Maroon Conference and Festival is on this year from June 21-23, under the theme of 'peace'. Once again, the Asafu Yard and Riverside Park will be bustling with a bonfire, scholars, patrons, and tourists. And that black, triangular stone?

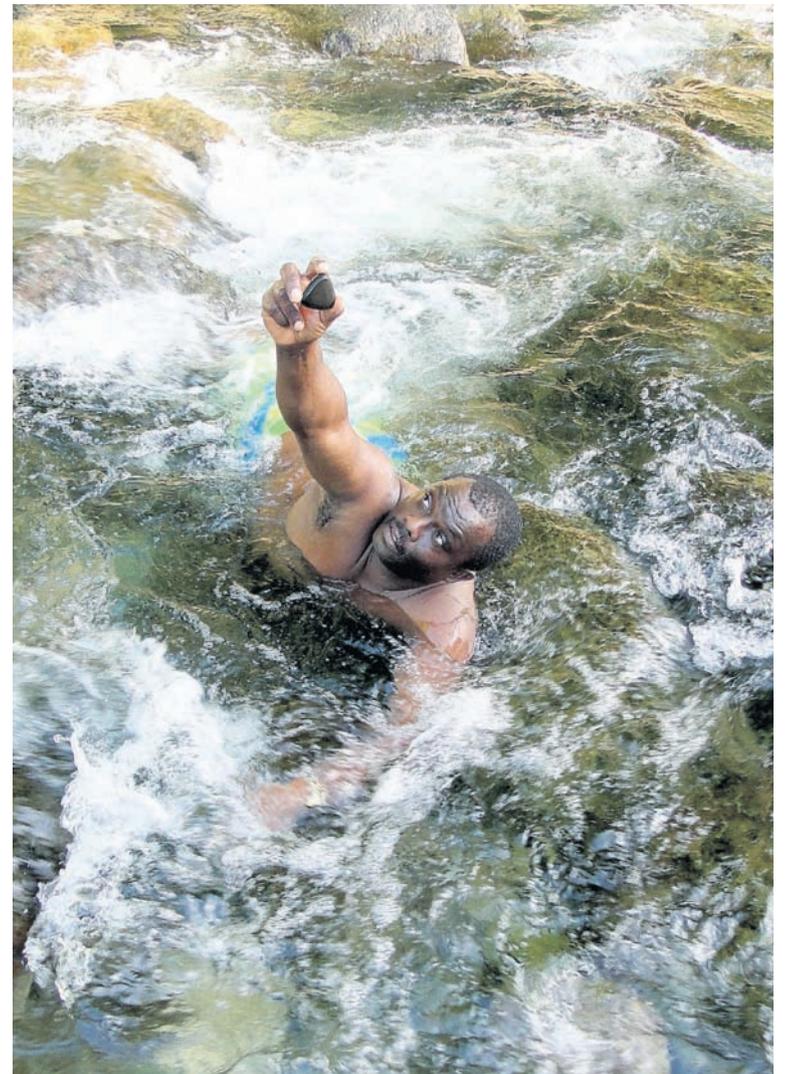
Your guess is as good as mine.



Hypnotic drumming is one of the activities in the River Park during the Charles Town International Maroon Conference and Festival in Portland.



Children dancing against the backdrop of the bonfire at the Charles Town International Maroon Conference and Festival last year.



Hospitality Jamaica writer Paul H. Williams shows the black triangular stone he took from the Buff Bay River at Charles Town, Portland, last June after giving an interview to the PBCJ about the Maroons and the Triangular Slave Trade.

THE CARIBBEAN Tourism Organization (CTO) has announced the finalists for the Caribbean Travel Media Awards, which will be held at the Wyndham New Yorker on 7 June during Caribbean Week New York (#CWNY2019).

It is the second incarnation of the expanded media awards programme which the CTO has staged for the past two decades to honour travel journalists and other professionals whose exceptional work has raised the profile of the Caribbean brand and helped the region achieve its tourism goals.

New in 2019, the CTO has added the 'I Have Influence' award to the contest in recognition of the growing number of influencers who contribute to telling the Caribbean's story.

A distinguished panel of media and industry judges led by veteran travel journalist Mark Orwoll, were enthusiastic about the quality of work represented, indicating that the prestigious competition attracts a higher calibre of submissions each year.

"The Caribbean has long inspired artists, designers, and vacationers of all sorts with its vibrant culture and laid-back atmosphere. The media entries our committee reviewed make it abundantly clear that the region is also a powerful muse for the journalists, photographers and influencers who motivate travel decisions and contribute to the Caribbean's status as the world's leading warm weather destination," said Orwoll.

A contest in which readers can select the winner for the Oh My Word, I Blogged! Best Caribbean Travel Blog Posting will continue to allow voting through 18 May, 2019.

For the remaining categories, the following finalists have been selected:

CTO expand Black Tie Awards to honour influencers along with Journalists during Caribbean Week NY

Caribbean Tourism Industry Awards Gala held at Wyndham New Yorker Hotel on 6 June, 2019

I Couldn't Have Written It Better Myself: Best Feature Article in a US-based Consumer Newspaper

Kristin Emery: 'Paradise Found: Unspoiled and Undeveloped in St. Kitts.' – Observer-Reporter (Southwestern PA)
Lawrence Millman: 'Mayaguana, a World Away and Worth the Trip.' – Boston Globe
Christopher Muther: 'How Martinique's Rum Became Certifiably the Best in the Caribbean' – Boston Globe

Been There, Wrote That: Best Feature Article in a US-based Consumer Magazine

Emma Glassman Hughes: 'Artists in Barbados Reveal the Beauty of Negative Space' – Here Magazine
Larry Olmstead: 'Catch It If You Can' – Celebrated Living
Tony Perrotett: 'The Martinique Mystique: Why Americans Are Suddenly Flocking to This Gorgeous Caribbean Island?' – Travel + Leisure

Inner Circle King/Queen: Best Feature Article in a US-based Trade Publication

Gay Nagle Myers: 'Romantic Escape at Sandals Royal Barbados' – Travel Weekly
David Swanson: 'Visiting a Sandals Resort as an LGBT Couple' – TravelAge West
Ed Wetschler: 'Jamaica: News for Travel Agents' – Recommend

Oh Snap! Best Photograph in Conjunction with a Feature Article

Raymesh Cintron: photo accompanying 'We Want to Show the Islands as They Have Never Been Seen Before' – Cacique

Brian Finke: photo accompanying Marta Cerdà's 'Razing Cane: To Taste Haiti's Small Batch Rum is to Cut to the Heart of What Makes the Island Worth Exploring' – AFAR
Jeff Mayers: photo accompanying Marshelle Haseley's 'Trinidad Carnival...More Than Meets The Eye' – Panache

Golden Mic: Best Feature Broadcast

Jason Kidd: 'Live from Sandals Grenada with Ria Murray' – WRQX Mix 107.3
Donna Perkins: Episode on Negril, Jamaica – Andiamo Uptown
Ryan Seacrest: Segment on The Bahamas – Live with Kelly and Ryan

Virtual Visitor Award: Best Feature in an Online Publication (not including blogs)

Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon: 'This All-Inclusive Resort in Jamaica Offers Unlimited Spa Treatments' – Islands.com
David Molyneaux: 'Barbados Offers Beaches, Cricket Matches, Local Rums and a Glimpse of Jewish History' – MiamiHerald.com
Tik Root: 'How One Country Is Restoring Its Damaged Ocean' – NationalGeographic.com

I Have Influence: Best Executed Influencer Campaign That Delivered Results Based On Agreed Objectives

Silvia Lawrence: Guyana
Francesca Murray: Jamaica Food and Drink

Enocha Tellus: Pure Grenada

Up the Social Ladder: Best Social Media Marketing Campaign by a CTO Member Country

Bahamas: #NoFilter influencer campaign by Bahamas Ministry of Tourism
Jamaica: #JoinMeInJamaica digital marketing campaign by Jamaica Tourist Board
Martinique: #MakeItMartinique campaign in conjunction with Uncommon Caribbean

Look, I've Gone Social: Most Outstanding Social Media Coverage of an Event or Activity (by a journalist or influencer)

Chelsea Davis: Barbados Crop Over Festival
Lebawit Girma: Barbados Food & Rum Festival
Francesca Murray: Grenada Chocolate Festival Me Too! I Rediscovered Home! Best Feature by a Diasporan Journalist in US or Caribbean Media
Kevin Williams: 'Rum Making with Appleton Estate's Master Blender' – Caribbean Life

No Anansi Story! Best Feature by a Caribbean-based Journalist (that appeared in Caribbean-based media)

Catherine Morris: 'Soufriere Models Community Tourism' – St Lucia Star
Ricqcolia Phillip: 'UberSoca Cruise: The CARICOM of the Soca Experience' – Loop
Leisha Wong & Janeen Johnson: 'Island Inspired' – Cayman Airways Skies

Winners will be announced at the Caribbean Tourism Industry Awards Gala during Caribbean Week New York on Thursday, June 6, 2019

International Revellers 'Wukkin' up local Airbnb bookings

THE EXPLOSIVE growth of carnival in Jamaica has ignited an economic boost in the market, with double-digit growth in visitor arrivals each year since 2016. Kingston's Airbnb bookings were at an all-time high, with approximately 1,700 guest arrivals who were expected to stay at Airbnb properties in Kingston from April 27-29.

"Airbnb remains committed to helping expand the tourism sector, empowering residents, and unlocking the magic of Jamaica for more travellers around the world," stated

an Airbnb representative.

The Airbnb host community in Kingston contributes to the growing local tourism industry and the economy at large; earning important extra income that helps support families and stays in the local economy.

The growth of Jamaica's event tourism industry provides new opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs to thrive on the waves coming from seasonal events such as Carnival in Jamaica.

Since 2016, the number of

carnival participants has steadily increased. According to data from the Tourism Linkages Network, 2,000 revellers participated in 2016, 4,000 in 2017, and 6,000 in 2018. This year, participation was expected to exceed last year's record.

According to information obtained from the Tourism Linkages Network, roughly 50 per cent of the revellers who participated in the road march last year were tourists.

Data from the Jamaica Tourist Board show that these carnival participants spent,

on average, US\$236 per day during their stay, with 34 per cent of this money allocated to accommodation.

Local organisations such as the Jamaica Tourist Board and the Tourism Enhancement Fund, through the Tourism Linkages Network, are making significant investments into Carnival in Jamaica to strengthen its regional and international appeal.

With the explosive growth of carnival still on the rise, the economic impact will continue to benefit multiple sectors.