

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019



Canna Corner

puts the spark
in Ganja
tourism



Patrons checking out the offerings at Canna Corner at Reggae Sumfest 2019. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Patrons at the Canna Corner at Reggae Sumfest 2019.

“Canna Corner is important because a symbiotic relationship is being forged between herb and the music. Most Jamaican reggae artistes, they push the ganja on a different level, calling for the freeing of the herb.”

inside of the reggae festivals or shows. But, in this organised fashion and my people coming together, it was marvelous,” Evans told **Hospitality Jamaica** on Saturday night at the Catherine

Hall in Montego Bay.

“Canna Corner is important because a symbiotic relationship is being forged between herb and the music. Most Jamaican reggae artistes, they push the ganja on a



Guests flowing in and out of the Canna Corner at Reggae Sumfest 2019.



Ras Negus of the award-winning Herb House in Montego Bay.

different level, calling for the freeing of the herb. So, collaboration on something like this was needed, and, if you see how Reggae Sumfest is being advertised, it has a Rastaman doing musical vibrations as its logo. So it is a coming home; us meeting at home, basically,” he said.

The response from the tourists and Jamaicans, Evans said, was heartening, adding that with its medicinal cannabis offerings, Canna Corner also provided a boost to the Jamaican wellness agenda through



The CannaHemp Energy drink booth was popular.



Police officers were among those who streamed in to Canna Corner.

its vegan food offerings and natural beauty products; and ganja tourism, which still remains largely untapped.

“It was also a great experience for the overseas visitors. Some of these people were already exposed to those types of displays, because they are from California, Colorado, different places in Canada, and these places are big cannabis dealers. But for some of them it is the first they are seeing stuff like this. When we showed the cannabis

plants, they wanted to take pictures. It is the first time many were seeing an actual cannabis plant,” he added.

“Some of them said they wished they could just stay in Jamaica, because this (ganja) is what they want,” he said.

According to an article published in **The New York Times** earlier this month, titled ‘Cannabis tourism is on the rise’, ganja experiences are “totally hot in Colorado and emerging in others like California, which have “rolled out the green carpet for tourists and entrepreneurs are organising marijuana-infused experiences, including painting classes, bus tours and food classes”. Ganja tourism is regarded as a multibillion-dollar industry.

The RAGGA organization obtained a special exemption from the Government under the Sacramental Rights and so members of the organisation were not able to sell ganja in the village, but were only able to accept monetary contributions.

Ras Negus of Rastafari Root House sees the Canna Corner as redemption for the weed and a furtherance of the push towards full legalisation.

“We give thanks, because we are on a mission with ganja to get Rastafari full freedom and full rights in all operations of the ganja business. We give thanks that this has happened right here in Montego Bay,” he said.

Lorinel ‘Ras Picky-Picky’ Simmonds told **Hospitality Jamaica** that he was grateful that ganja was being embraced in the very city where one of its natives, Mario Deane, was arrested and later lost his life due to possession of a ganja spliff.

“I want to say thanks to Mr Bogdanovich for allowing us this privilege so we could be here at Sumfest. We do appreciate it and we are looking forward for it to be better. Regrettably, a youth, Mario Deane, lost his life over what we are here trying to promote today,” he said.

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Half Moon names Shernette Crichton general manager

THE BOARD of Directors of Half Moon, one of the Caribbean's most iconic resort destinations, has announced the appointment of Shernette Crichton as the resort's new general manager.

Crichton, who is the first woman to hold the position, served as Half Moon's director of resort operations since 2015 and interim general manager since December 2018.

"Shernette has been responsible for leading and implementing programmes that have been instrumental in the success of Half Moon over the years," said Guy Steuart III,

chairman of Half Moon.

"This was a natural selection as she has been the embodiment of Half Moon's values of respect, integrity, certainty, and honesty. We are confident that Shernette will continue our traditions of excellence in the competent manner that she has handled all her other roles," he said.

Shernette Crichton's tenure at Half Moon began in 1990 as a trainee manager. She soon moved up the ranks to assistant sales manager then to assistant manager, special projects, spearheading Half Moon's

environmental and pillars of excellence training programmes.

In 1998, she went on to the Tourism Product Development Company, where she spent a year as the agency's training officer. In 1999, she returned to Half Moon to assume the post of director of training and education.

In 2007, she was promoted to hotel manager, becoming the first woman to hold the post.

Crichton's appointment commenced on July 1.



Shernette Crichton, new general manager, Half Moon. CONTRIBUTED

Round Hill
CONTRIBUTED

Global Magazine Travel and Leisure gives top ranking to the Tensing Pen Negril and Round Hill Hotel and Villas

READERS OF one of the world's leading travel magazines, the influential **Travel + Leisure** (T+L) magazine in its 2019 World's Best Awards, have ranked Jamaica's Tensing Pen and Round Hill Hotel and Villas among the top 100 hotels in the world.

Tensing Pen, located in Negril, is ranked 76th in the world's top 100 hotels and fifth in the Caribbean's top 25 hotels. In both categories, Tensing Pen is the highest-ranked Jamaican hotel.

Montego Bay's Round Hill Hotel and Villas is the only other Jamaican resort to make the mark this year.

Every year, for its World's Best Awards, **Travel + Leisure** asks readers to weigh in on

travel experiences around the globe – to share their opinions on the top hotels, resorts, cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Hotels are rated on their facilities, location, service, food, and overall value. The results of the Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards 2019 are featured at www.travelandleisure.com/worlds-best and in the August issue of **Travel + Leisure** magazine.

"Last year, we were ecstatic to be voted as one of top 25 hotels in the Caribbean category. Now, in 2019, to be further recognised as one of the world's top 100 hotels is truly wonderful. All of the Tensing Pen team is elated by this recognition from the readers of **Travel and Leisure**. It truly demonstrates the appeal of

small and independent hotels to world travellers and the commitment of our hard-working team to service excellence," remarked Evelyn Smith, general manager.

For his part, managing director of the Round Hill Josef Forstmayr has been toasting the coveted position in which his resort has found itself.

Renowned for its impeccable service, outstanding food, and the willingness of staff members to go the extra mile to meet requests, Round Hill has earned an international stamp of approval over the years, that is, in addition to the fact that physically, as it has often been described, as a naturally beautiful, serene, tranquil, mesmerising, quaint, and fabulous place.

Manufacturer praises hotels that buy Jamaican and build Jamaica

JANET SILVERA

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

ONE OF Jamaica's major manufacturers of hospitality and tourism supplies is singing the praises of hotels which have, over the years, made it a standard operational policy to purchase goods, both edible and non-edibles, that are made in Jamaica.

Harvey Lyn of Kingston-based Perry's Manufacturing says tourism dollars keeps businesses like his afloat and allows the industry to have an impact even beyond the communities in which the hotels are located. According to Lyn, the efforts of these hotels to invest in local linkages and integrate themselves into the local economy has helped many persons from some of even Kingston's most depressed areas to benefit from tourism.

"It's important for the hotels to try and purchase things made in Jamaica. You can literally see the tourist dollars move from Rose Hall to Hagley Park in Kingston and the area surrounding it, impacting lives and generations," he told

"It's important for the hotels to try and purchase things made in Jamaica. You can literally see the tourist dollars move from Rose Hall to Hagley Park in Kingston and the area surrounding it, impacting lives and generations."

Hospitality Jamaica.

"I've watched, over the years, team members lives changed where the ladies who have been working here for a while, their children are now doctors, working in the IT department at banks, becoming pilots. All this is possible because of the hotels who make it their policy to try and purchase non-edible and edible things locally ... it is very important for the hotels to support Jamaica, buy Jamaican. It shouldn't be any other way," Lyn said.

Perry's started out as manufacturers of uniforms in 1975 and a decade later, ventured into the production and distribution of a wide range of linen products for beds, baths, tables, and kitchens, as well as apparel for chefs in, but not limited to, the hospitality sector.

One prime example of tourism's positive effect on communities and Jamaicans far removed from Jamaica's tourism meccas, Lyn says, is Prunella Scott, a seamstress

From being a janitor, I pushed myself and sacrificed a lot to be where I am at today, even after my house burnt down," she added.

Perry's Manufacturing Company is a three-time Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Purveyor of the Year awardee and is one of the leading distributors, manufacturers and exporters of hotel supplies in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

The entity is also an exclusive, authorised distributor of well-known brands of furniture and wares for kitchens, bars and dinner tables. Perry's is also the exclusive, authorised distributor for Libbey's glassware, ABOUKIR tableware, Coyabay outdoor furniture, and Bison cookware in Jamaica.

from Kingston's inner city who started out at Perry's as an office attendant, went to garment-sewing school and then moved gradually up the ranks to seamstress.

"When I started as an office attendant, I later went to school and now I am a seamstress. I started sewing napkins, pillowcases and sheets and now moved on to sewing jackets," she said.

"Being at Perry's is like a team, like a family, and I am so proud.

Jamaica shines at Caribbean305 in South Florida

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) joined the Caribbean-American Heritage Month celebrations, as a premium sponsor of the popular Caribbean305 event. Presented by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, Caribbean305 is an annual event that highlights the art of Caribbean cooking, bringing together top chefs and bartenders from more than a dozen destinations in the region.

Jamaica's culinary team, led by the Culinary

Federation of Jamaica, delighted eventgoers with a menu of authentic dishes including ackee and salt fish tostones, curried goat dumplings, and 'jungle juice', a tropical cocktail made with melon, pineapple, ginger, rum, Scotch bonnet pepper and mint. The JTB brought the sounds of reggae to the evening's entertainment with a special live performance by Willie Stewart & Friends.

Caribbean305 was held in South Florida in June.

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JAMAICA INN PAINT AND SIP FUND-RAISING EVENT



It was a lovely evening of fun, booze and laughter at the Jamaica Inn.

JAMAICA INN hosted its first Paint and Sip fund-raising event on Wednesday, July 17, in support of the White River Fish Sanctuary (WRFS). The Jamaica Inn Foundation, in partnership with the WRFS, is heavily involved with preserving local marine life off the Ocho Rios Coast. The three-year-old sanctuary has seen much success. The fish population and other marine life have increased dramatically and the first batch of coral pieces from the 1,000 grown in the nurseries were 'planted' out and are flourishing.

The event was hosted by artist, Liana Gomes and was a huge success as persons came out in their numbers (both local and international guests) to show their support. Thanks to partner Select Brands and patrons for their continued support.



General Manager, Kyle Mais caught in action creating his own masterpiece at the Jamaica Inn Sip and Paint fund-raiser.



Keva Rose of Select Brands did her own piece even while sponsoring the fund-raising event. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Local artist Liana Gomes guiding the group step by step to create the session's featured painting.

Jamaica's Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme to be a landmark for global tourism, says Bartlett

TOURISM MINISTER Edmund Bartlett says the Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme will be a landmark plan for tourism social legislation in the world, as it will be the first of its kind to provide a comprehensive pension plan for all the workers of the tourism sector – whether permanent, contract or self-employed.

Speaking at a Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme Awareness and Sensitisation Seminar at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston recently, the minister noted that "we now, as a result of collective efforts over a period of time, have come together with a plan that will be a landmark plan for tourism social legislation in the world. Jamaica will be the only country in the world that has a comprehensive pension plan for all the workers of the tourism sector".

The Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme is designed to cover all workers between age 18-59 years in the tourism sector, whether permanent, contract or self-employed. This includes hotel workers as well as persons employed in related industries, such as craft vendors, tour operators, red cap porters, contract-carriage operators and workers at attractions.

The Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme, which will receive \$1 billion in funding from the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), will see benefits being payable at age 65 years or older.

"This landmark piece of social legislation in the industry is going to represent, in time, the largest pool of domestic savings that this economy would have provided. Real growth comes when we are able to convert domestic savings into investments," he said.

He further noted that the plan will be of particular interest to workers in the industry who have been employed at a number of organisations over the years on short-term employment contracts.

"The plan will protect contract workers by providing them with a social safety net. It will enable them to join as a self-employed person.

"The plan will protect contract workers by providing them with a social safety net. It will enable them to join as a self-employed person. So you can move from one company to the other, change your contract, knowing that your retirement plans are secure."

So you can move from one company to the other, change your contract, knowing that your retirement plans are secure," said Minister Bartlett.

According to the tourism minister, the scheme is the final piece in a four-point human capital development plan to enhance Jamaica's tourism workers.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The other three initiatives in the human capital development plan are training, capacity building, and creating the ability of tourism workers to have knowledge and convert that knowledge into practical applications; providing a pathway to professionalism and jobs; and improving the social conditions around which the tourism worker lives.

"If we are to build the capacity of tourism to deliver on the prosperity agenda, we must build the capacity of the people; the human capital must be enhanced. We think that there is no equity in this game if this industry is so big and it cannot secure the safety, future and social requirements of the people who work in it," he said.

The Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme Bill was passed in the Houses of Parliament on June 25 and is in keeping with the Government's focus on creating a social security network within the tourism sector.

The Ministry of Tourism will host three other Tourism Workers' Pension Scheme Awareness and Sensitization Seminars in Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril as part of its public awareness campaign.

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Chantelle Abratis, Red Stripe Hostess, Kiera Flynn, activation manager at Heineken UK lined up at Gloria's buffet alongside sweepstakes winners Golda Pearson and Royston Hope. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Red Stripe provides an enriching Jamaican experience for International Sweepstakes winners

THE CHANCE of winning an all-expense paid vacation to Jamaica for Reggae Sumfest 2019 was the hope shared among entrants in the Red Stripe International sweepstakes competition.

The beer manufacturer has continued to entice its foreign markets by showcasing authentic Jamaican culture and even more so, giving consumers an opportunity to experience it.

This dream was fully realised when five lucky winners – one hailing from the UK and five from Australia – learnt of their success in the competition.

What started out as a regular date night at Tracks and Records in London saw the UK winners, Golda Pearson and Royston Hope, entering a raffle, which afforded them their win. For the Australians, the sweepstakes was awarded to bar owners who saw an increase in sales and consumers who posted the most interesting photos of a Red Stripe drink coaster on social media.



Brady Donald Chandler, Australian sweepstakes winner, smiles for a photo before the exciting ATV tour.

Bar owners Nathan Lamont and Ben Rickman managed to sell over 200 kegs of beer within two months while the social media photo competition saw persons posting creative photos such as Brady Chandler, who scuba-dived

for a worthy picture of the branded coaster.

Though the trip was focused on highlighting Jamaica's musical heritage at Reggae Sumfest, the winners were given far more than they expected. The group, which arrived



Emma Phillips steers the catamaran back to port after a day full of energy and ice-cold Red Stripe.

on Wednesday, July 17, along with their guests, stayed at the Half Moon hotel with much anticipation of what the trip had in store.

“It was important for us to present more than just an opportunity to attend Reggae Sumfest 2019 to our international guests. Red Stripe is a major supporter of local music, but we are even more supportive of Jamaican culture and local industries surrounding this. To have them partake in all aspects of the culture is the most meaningful experience we can offer,” stated Reshima Kelly, junior brand manager for Red Stripe and Innovations.

The group was first treated to dinner at Gloria's Seafood in downtown Kingston before heading to Montego Bay for their first night's rest. A day of excursions followed as the group visited the Doctor's Cave Beach before doing a night tour of the RoseHall Great House, renowned for the thriller tales of Annie Palmer. Another day saw guests on a Chukka tour

inclusive of ATV riding, power snorkelling, and a catamaran cruise, but the delight of the experience was felt in the Montego Bay Craft Market visit, where they had an opportunity to interact with locals.

“It was extremely fun and exciting to go into the local craft market. I am of the belief that you cannot appreciate another person's culture without an understanding of who the people are and what they are about. It was interesting for me as a Guyanese seeing the similarities between our islands. The people are hopeful, though, in spite of the obvious challenges,” said Golda Pearson, UK winner.

Amid the excursion and the excitement at Reggae Sumfest, the visitors managed to use the opportunity to relax and bask in the simplicity of the experience – days spent at the beach, time spent with their significant other or even leveraging new friendships in beautiful Jamaica.

Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association recognises industry excellence

ST MAARTEN Hotel Association executive Wyb Meijer, Aruban guest experience supervisor Berlinda Engelhardt, and Puerto Rican security supervisor Luis de Jesus were named among three Caribbean tourism industry stakeholders who have exemplified excellence across the region's bread-and-butter industry.

Meijer, executive director of the St Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association, was named the 2019 Caribbean Association Executive of the Year by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) and the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives during the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum at the Hyatt Regency Miami last month.

Meijer, who was recognised as a professional who excels in association operations, destination marketing and community affairs, helped properties and association members recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Irma in 2017, positioning the trade association as a key thought leader. Along with the association, he provided detailed briefs to World Bank officials and local government, and he continues to generate new ideas and initiatives for the industry, and for the improvement of the local community and the region.

Berlinda Engelhardt from the



Caribbean Employee of the Year Berlinda Engelhardt (second from right) with (from left) Frank Comito, CHTA director general and CEO; Patricia Affonso-Dass, CHTA President; and Vanessa Ledesma, CHTA chief operations officer. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino earned the Caribbean Employee of the Year title. Joining the Renaissance team in 2007 as a casino host, Engelhardt became a hotel concierge hostess within one year, before becoming lead guest experience supervisor, the position she has held for the last 18 months. Hailed for her impeccable guest service skills and for creating an inclusive environment, Engelhardt volunteers at 'Hands 4 Addicts',

a local organisation which helps provide grooming and hygiene care for drug addicts.

The Caribbean Supervisor of the Year distinction, honouring private-sector hospitality employees who display excellence in leadership and management, went to Luis de Jesus, security supervisor at El Conquistador, the Waldorf Astoria Resort in Puerto Rico. De Jesus, who currently oversees 25 employees, previously served as



Wyb Meijer (second from right) is the 2019 Caribbean Association Executive of the Year. From left are Frank Comito, CHTA director general and CEO; Patricia Affonso-Dass, CHTA president; and Stacy Cox, president of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives.

an engineering supervisor. He was cited for his team spirit, reliability, and willingness to act as a resort ambassador across several departments.

"These Caribbean professionals are incredible ambassadors of Caribbean tourism, exemplifying the spirit of excellence that is required for us to remain competitive in our industry," said Patricia Affonso-Dass, CHTA

president, as she congratulated this year's recipients and thanked industry stakeholders at all levels for their daily commitment to strengthening the Caribbean guest experience.

"Let us ensure that we continue to applaud the men and women who shine their light every day, sharing with the world what wonderful Caribbean hospitality is all about," she stated.

Reggae Sumfest highlights



Protoje was the man of the moment as he poses with (from left) Lila Ike, Hilton Rose Hall's Chris-Ann Clarke and Sevana at the recently concluded Reggae Sumfest music festival.



Jamaica's 'sugar' and favourite with the ladies, Beenie Man, hangs out with Hilton Rose Hall's Chris-Ann Clarke at Reggae Sumfest, held recently.



Hilton Rose Hall Resort's social media champion Chris-Ann Clarke was very pleased to pose along side reggae's latest sensation Koffee, after her performance at Reggae Sumfest on Friday, July 19, in Montego Bay. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

Jamaica shines at Caribbean305 in South Florida

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) joined the Caribbean-American Heritage Month celebrations, as a premium sponsor of the popular Caribbean305 event. Presented by the Caribbean Hotel and

Tourism Association (CHTA), Caribbean305 is an annual event that highlights the art of Caribbean cooking, bringing together top chefs and bartenders from more than a dozen destinations in the region.



Representatives of the Jamaica Tourist Board join members of the Culinary Federation of Jamaica to represent the destination during the Caribbean305 event in Miami.



From left: Deputy Director of Tourism – The Americas, Donnie Dawson; JTB summer intern Sydney Sarju; inside sales coordinator, Southeast USA, Andrea Chase; Miss Jamaica Florida, Deyon Callender; Jamaica's Director of Tourism, Donovan White; inside sales coordinator, West/Southwest USA, Paulette Wright; National Sales Manager Karlene Shakes; JTB inventory control clerk, Remone Danhi; business development officer, Southeast USA, Christopher Wright.

Jamaica's culinary team, led by the Culinary Federation of Jamaica, delighted eventgoers with a menu of authentic dishes, including ackee and salt fish tostones, curried goat dumplings, and 'Jungle Juice', a tropical cocktail made with melon, pineapple, ginger,

rum, Scotch bonnet and mint. The JTB brought the sounds of reggae to the evening's entertainment with a special live performance by Willie Stewart & Friends.

Caribbean305 was held in South Florida in June.

Jamaica named Favourite Tourist Board in the Caribbean

THE VOTERS have spoken ... and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) was named 'Favourite Tourist Board – Caribbean' at Baxter Travel Media's annual Agents' Choice Awards Gala last month.

More than 6,500 Canadian travel agents cast their ballots, bringing the coveted award to the JTB.

"Jamaica Tourist Board Canada's dynamic and dedicated team works tirelessly to provide valuable resources and product knowledge to our travel agent partners," said Director of Tourism Donovan White. "Building mutually beneficial relationships with these key industry partners have

been integral to their success. In return, the agents passionately sell Destination Jamaica, ensuring Canadians come back to the island year after year."

Baxter Travel Media is the publisher of **Canadian Travel Press** and **Travel Courier**, two of the most successful travel trade publications in Canada. The Baxter Travel Media Awards is the largest travel agent survey of its kind in Canada. From January-April 2019, thousands of travel agents nationwide voted for industry suppliers in more than 40 categories, including the highly sought after Favourite Tourist Board – Caribbean.



Angella Bennett (second from left), regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board(JTB) Canada, holds the 'Favourite Tourist Board – Caribbean' at Baxter Travel Media's Agents' Choice Gala in Toronto in June. Others pictured (from left) Maureen Barnes-Smith, director of sales & marketing, Unique Vacations Canada Inc.; Judy Nash, administrative assistant at JTB Canada; and Gary Sadler, senior vice-president, Unique Vacations Inc.

Upcycling workshop turning the tide on trash

AS THE saying goes, one man's trash is another man's treasure and it's a thought come true for approximately 25 members of the Whitehouse and Bluefields communities who participated in an Upcycling Workshop at the Whitehouse Community Centre recently.

Upcycling is the process of creative reuse, transforming waste materials or useless, unwanted products into new materials or products that have a higher value not only monetarily but also for the environment.

The programme was initiated by the Sandals Foundation in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is part of the Whitehouse and Bluefields Solid Waste Reduction Project. This project, which has been taking place over the last 14 months, has introduced waste separation, plastic bottle recycling, community composting, and lessons in schools to engage the youth in these activities at an

early stage.

The workshop entailed two sessions. In the first session attendees were taught how to use a variety of waste materials including wine corks, paper and lionfish fins to make jewelry. In the second session they were taught how to make durable garbage bins using primarily plastic bottles.

According to Sandals Foundation Environmental Manager, Bianca Young, the aim of this workshop is to encourage and introduce upcycling as a method to empower community members to participate in the waste reduction and separation project as well as to create an incentive to drive and expand the initiative.

"This session is an important part of the Whitehouse/Bluefield Solid Waste Reduction Project because of the impact it can have in creating a sense of community when it comes to Solid Waste Management, said Young, and there is potential for persons to

make a livelihood through upcycling."

One of the facilitators for the sessions, Robert Toby Grant, CEO for Jamaica Artistic Movement for Youth and Humanity (Jamyah) International was particularly intrigued by the lionfish fin earrings that some participants made.

"The lionfish remains a growing problem in our marine environment, so to see where we can eat it and then afterwards use the wasted parts of it to make earrings, bracelets etc. is very good," he said.

"Whitehouse is a fishing community and we want to preserve that. We want the young people to actually venture out into things like these where they have the beauty and bounty of the environment and at the same time can actually make a living from it."

For Christopher, a resident of St Elizabeth who attended the Jewelry making session, the initiative was really interesting. "It's nice to see that we could make everything from

"Whitehouse is a fishing community and we want to preserve that. We want the young people to actually venture out into things like these where they have the beauty and bounty of the environment and at the same time can actually make a living from it."

scratch and everything here you can basically find at home so it's really interesting."

Another resident, Nickeisha Robinson from Bluefields said the session was excellent. "I plan on carrying my pieces back to my community and sharing what I've learned with my community members and guests. And my children are going to enjoy this as well," she said.

Robinson and a number of other attendees particularly enjoyed making the plastic bottle bins and jewelry items from waste paper, which is readily available throughout their communities.

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Jamaican stories told with METALS

PAUL H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

A LAO LUQMAN is a Nigerian artisan and cultural diplomat who has been teaching a variety of art, including 'chasing and repoussé', to Jamaicans since 2017. Chasing and repoussé is a centuries-old technique of etching images and objects in metals and other materials to tell stories.

Currently, Luqman is exhibiting over 50 pieces of his own work inside the foyer of the regional headquarters of The University of the West Indies, Mona.

Called 'Stories with Metals' and hosted by the Nigerian High Commission, in collaboration with the Jamaica Business Development Corporation, the show is "celebrating the rich cultural heritage between Jamaica and Nigeria".

Luqman comes from the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, Benin and Togo, and uses his knowledge and skills to tell Yoruba ancestral and familial stories. "The history of cultures is shown in

the Taino of Jamaica and Yoruba of Nigeria in different forms ... Stories with metal aims to revive and highlight the rich cultural heritage at risk of becoming extinct in our society," among other things, is how he explains the show in his notes.

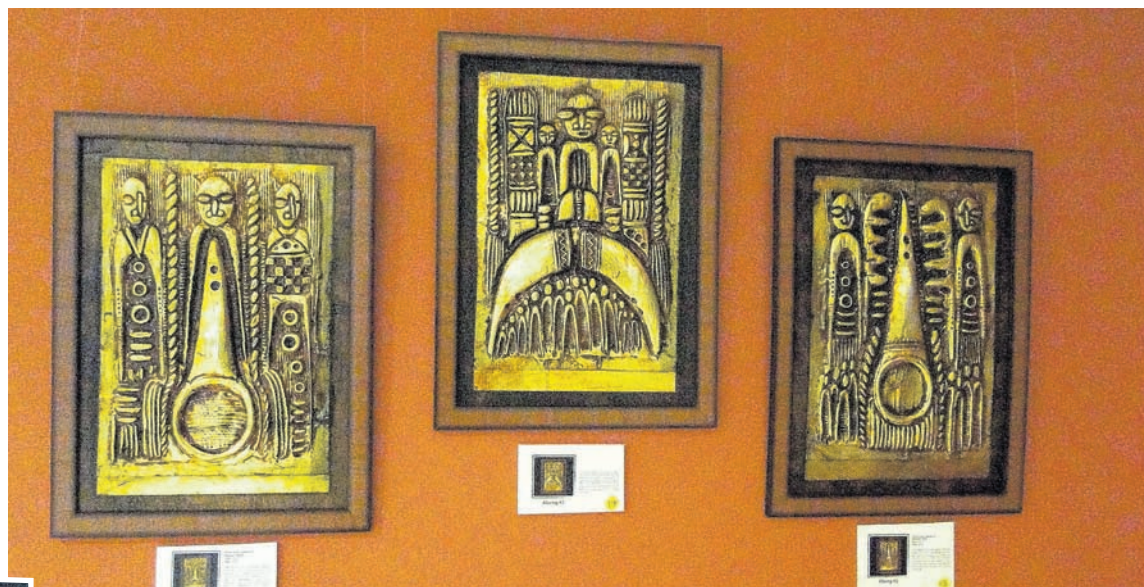
In keeping with the theme, elements of Jamaican history and heritage are skillfully depicted in the metals. They are stories of the Taino, the transatlantic trade in Africans, the 'Middle Passage', resistance to slavery, 'Maroonage', and Emancipation, all etched in the metals, which are actually recycled materials.

"Recycling and reusing lithography plates for chasing and repoussé technique, the images are drawn directly on the plates, carefully brought out and detailed, giving the true story of cultural life and the relationship of traditional Yoruba, Benin of Nigeria, and Taino, Maroon and Rastafari of Jamaica. The background is detailed, with curved and straight lines meeting each other at a point alongside symbols and motifs, such as



From left: Imoikor Akhingbe Monday, personal assistant to the Nigerian high commissioner to Jamaica; Janet Olisa, Nigerian high commissioner; Nigerian Ambassador Dada Olisa; Valerie Viera, chief executive officer at the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC); Colin Porter, technical services manager at JBDC; and honorary consul at the Consulate of Latvia in Jamaica, Robert C. Scott, making fashion statements at the opening of Alao Luqman's solo exhibition inside the foyer of the regional headquarters of The University of the West Indies recently.

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS



'Abeng 1', 'Abeng 3' and 'Abeng 2'



'Maroon Festival'



From left: Nigerian cultural diplomat and artist Alao Luqman, and Nigerian Ambassador Dada Olisa look on as Nigerian High Commissioner to Jamaica Janet Olisa points at something on one of Luqman's chasing and repoussé pieces.

cowrie, combs, manila and others,” Luqman says in his artist’s statement.

Apart from the aesthetics and the visual appeal of the pieces, the stories they tell force viewers to reflect and ask questions, because Luqman’s art is provocative and has brought the stories of the ancestors to life. The Tainos, the people who inhabited Jamaica before the arrival of the Europeans, are represented by ‘Taino Zemi 1’ and ‘Taino Zemi 2’. Zemis were representational objects fashioned from natural materials by the Tainos to use in their social, political and religion rituals. But their world came tumbling when overwork, Columbian diseases, and murder almost annihilated them.

The Tainos were replaced on the plantations by Africans brought across the Atlantic Ocean through what is widely known as the Middle Passage, the second leg of the triangular slave trade. The story of the cramped and inhuman conditions of the journey from Africa to the Caribbean is poignantly told in ‘Middle Passage’.

There are three pieces in which the abeng is the main subject. The abeng is actually a cattle’s horn adjusted to give off a variety of sounds when blown. It was, and still is, an important instrument in the Maroon story and celebrations, which is depicted in a piece

called ‘Maroon Festival’. The Maroons were the Africans who fled the plantations to create their own space. Their flight was an effective form of resistance, and on show are three pieces called ‘Resistance’. Resistance eventually led to freedom, which is portrayed in ‘Emancipation’, another part of our checkered story.

Hospitality Jamaica spoke with Luqman about the importance of including Jamaican stories in his array, and he said “the history of Jamaica and Africa are related in so many ways,” among other things. The unusual pieces on the Jamaica art landscape have been quite a stir, pulling patrons from all over the Corporate Area towards them.

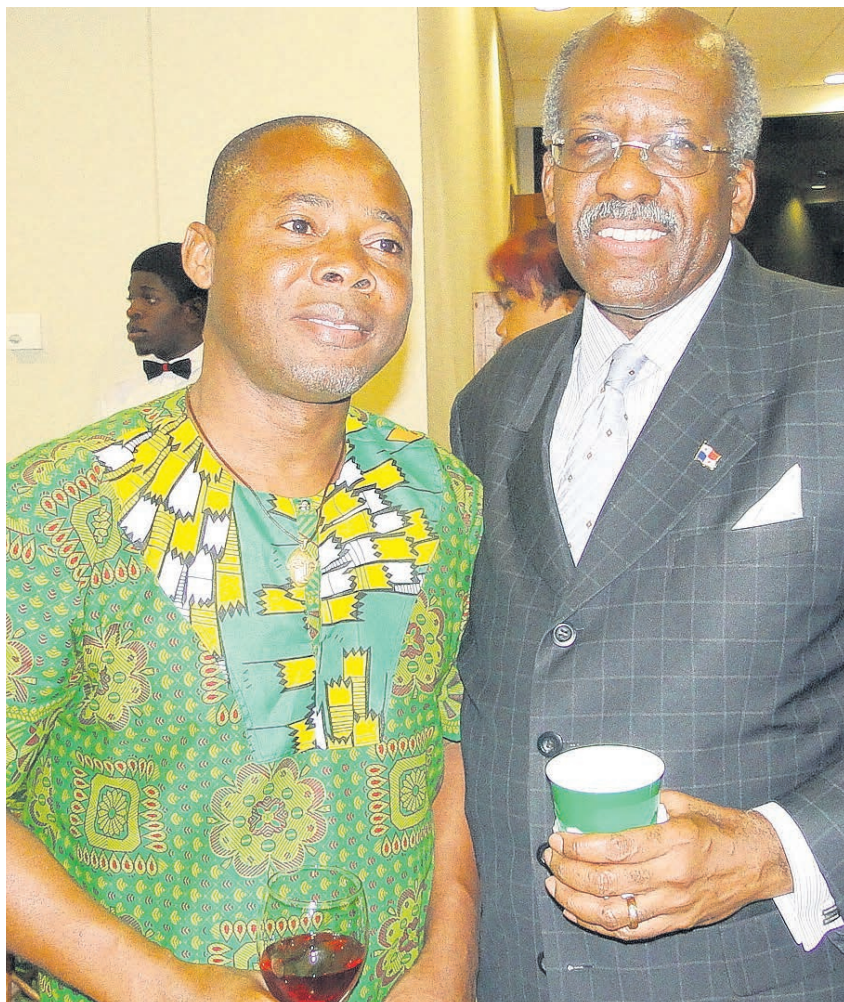
Members of the diplomatic corps, viz an entourage from the Cuban Embassy, led by Counsellor Ricardo Calvo Aguila; Embassy of Panama Deputy Chief of Mission Rolando E. Barrow, Nigerian High Commissioner to Jamaica Janet Olisa and Ambassador Dada Olisa; justice of the peace, honorary consul of the Consulate of the Republic of Latvia in Jamaica, and dean of the Consular Corps of Jamaica, Robert C. Scott, were heavily represented on opening night, and since then, more expatriates have gone to see the awe-inspiring pieces, telling stories with metal.



‘Middle Passage’



Valerie Viera, chief executive officer at the Jamaica Business Development Corporation, addressing the gathering with one of Alao Luqman’s pieces, ‘Emancipation’, in the background.



Rolando E Barrow (right), deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of Panama, is happy to be in the frame with the artist himself, Alao Luqman.



Opun Ifa (divination board) is sandwiched by ‘Resistance to slavery’



Jerked rabbit and bumper crowd at BOSTON JERK FESTIVAL

A section of the bumper crowd that turned up at the recent Boston Jerk Festival. PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

I WAS enjoying the ambience at the recent Boston Jerk Festival, sipping on cane juice, munching on 'salt fish flittas' made by Syble Watson, who lives in the area, and watching the clowns making a fool of themselves, when I heard a man loudly advertising his jerked rabbit.

I shuddered. Who would really want to kill a fluffy, cuddly rabbit and jerk it for consumption? I thought about how they might

have killed the rabbits, those poor, innocent, long-eared creatures, and I shuddered some more.

I was tempted to go see what it looked like, but as much as I tried, I could not. I see rabbits as pets, and you simply do not eat your pets. But, it was just mind-boggling as to why I was shaken by the thought of killing and jerking rabbits. It could have been something I saw years ago.

I witnessed how a hog was killed and I was tormented for an entire day thinking about how painful it could have been if someone had used a piece of lumber to clout me in the forehead. For that's how the hog was killed. It had a sledgehammer effect on me. Bam! And the swine went silent after squealing incessantly for mercy.

Yet, back at the jerk festival my hypocrisy chipped in. I was hoping to get a piece of

jerked white-tail deer meat. These invasive ruminants, I heard, are teeming in eastern Portland. However, if deer meat was available, I did not see any, so that desire perished.

So, what's the difference between killing an unwanted deer and slaughtering a rabbit? One is cute and cuddly, the other is a nuisance to farmers, some would say. Which is more tender? Jerked rabbit or jerked deer? Is one more innocent than the other? And what



The meat of the matter.



Was it roots, rock or reggae he was singing? Not sure.



The 'king' and 'queen' of the festival.



There was a lot of clowning going on.



It was scorching hot, but the beach kept the heat at bay in Boston Bay.



And the winner is, at left, home town boy, 'Head'!

about the fish in the flittas I was eating? The meat of the matter!

Jerked rabbit, jerked deer, and jerked fish aside, the turnout for this year's installation must have been encouraging for the promoters. It was bumper to bumper, people to people, vehicle to vehicle. Things were warmed up the day before, music blared, firesides set up and ready to blaze, vendors marked out their spots, and people were seen washing pots. There were pre-event activities, even some boxing matches, and boxes of matches were standing by.

The size of the crowd on the day was a good sign that people were supporting events that were not put on by big

corporate entities. The pull is the Boston Jerk brand, and people had travelled from abroad to be at this jerk festival by the sea. For Boston is not just a little community in east Portland. It is well known the world over for its jerked foods.

The beach setting is perfect for the event, but the issue with parking and congestion has to be addressed. There was not adequate parking space and the road is very narrow. The situation inside the venue itself was 'cook and curry', but it was outside of the enclosure that greater control of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, parking, and vending was needed.

And should there be a future ban on jerked rabbit? I should have asked the clowns.



Syble Watson was around to help quench the thirst.



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