

The Gleaner  
**Hospitality** **Jamaica**

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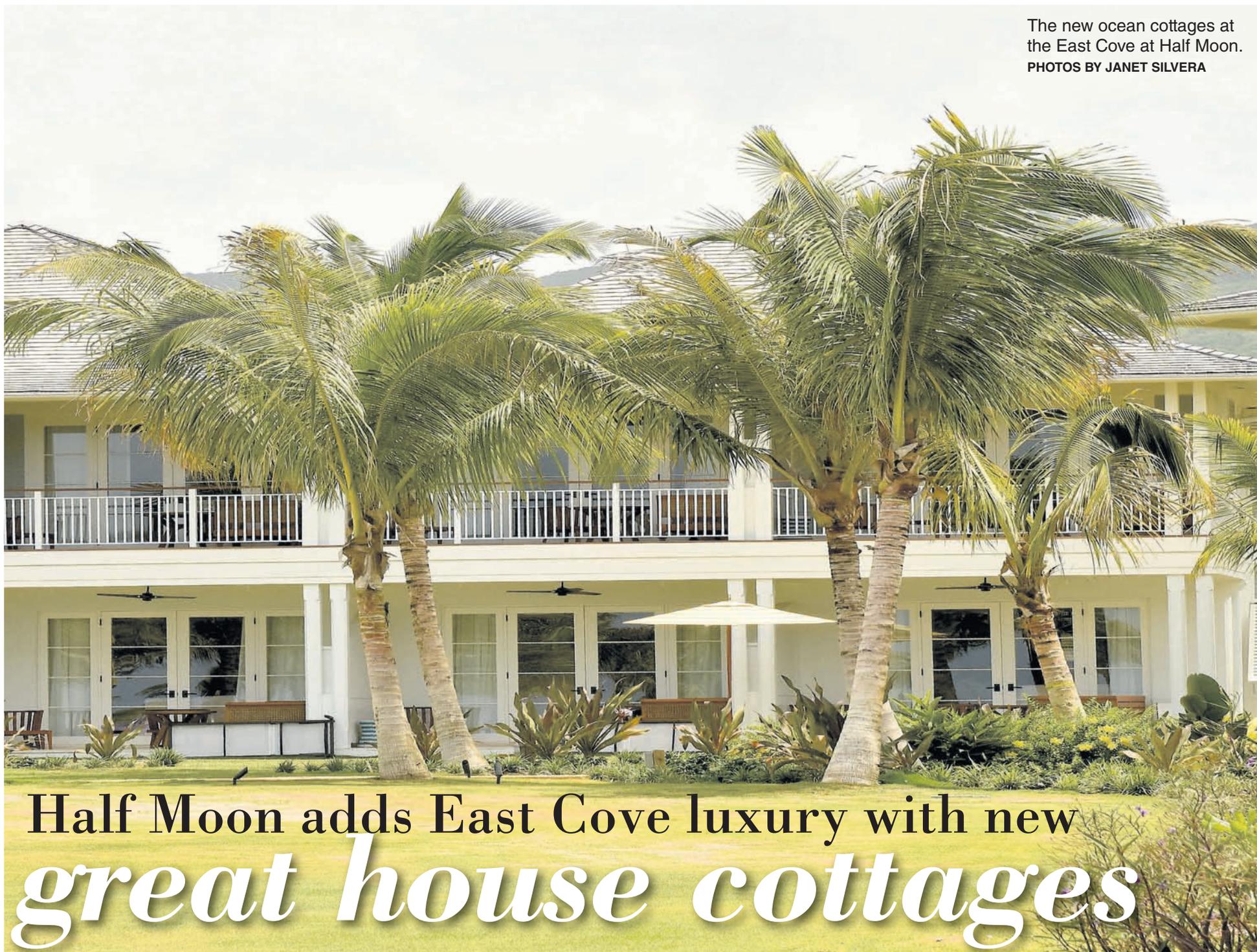
Half Moon  
presents  
**great  
house  
cottages**

**'Not even death  
could stop me'**

**Oh, what  
a night**

**3,900 youth empowered by  
TEF summer programme**

The new ocean cottages at the East Cove at Half Moon.  
PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA



## Half Moon adds East Cove luxury with new *great house cottages*



The patio area of one of the East Cove one-bedrooms at Half Moon.

### JANET SILVERA

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

**L**UXURY AND wellness have always had an inextricable bond at Montego Bay's world-renowned Half Moon, so it comes as no surprise that the features of the property's newest addition of accommodations has the same 'wow' effect.

The eastward expansion of the property's offerings coincides with its 65th anniversary and features an expansive beachfront, with a promenade of breathtaking views of the Caribbean Sea from each accommodation – depicting a great house-style setting.

Set to officially open in December for the start of the winter tourist season, some 32 rooms at the area called the 'East Cove' opened for Presidents Week, followed by the Reggae Sunfest period, when rooms were in high demand, evoking very positive feedback from the guests.

"This is our transformation. It is bringing contemporary rooms to the property. We are 65 years and we have not done anything grand since 2003, when we opened up the Hibiscus Suites. So with all the new products around us, we have to stay competitive and out front, and we believe that this is very competitive and that our guests will love it," general manager of the property, Shernette Crichton, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

There are four East Cove cottages, each with a total of eight rooms and 16 rooms in the estate houses, plus nine rooms at the great house, making a total of 57. The rooms feature paintings from Jeffery Samuels, one of Montego Bay's best fine artists, as well as some from the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts.

The Prestige Ocean Room offers a spectacular view of the Caribbean Sea and promotes indoor-outdoor living with its

extensive patio area with a daybed; which makes it perfect for simply chilling or for a romantic dinner as guests bask in the lap of luxury.

“One of the features that our guests love is the fact they can lay outside with chaise lounges right by the ocean,” she said.

Half Moon has always been an ecologically friendly hotel with bounteous amounts of fruit trees, and the tradition continues with apples, naseberry, breadfruit, ackee, among others, spanning the grounds of the new section. Food has always been the essence of the hotel since its inception, and its two newest eateries account for it now boasting a total of 12 restaurants.

“We have a lot of coconut trees because we have an experience called our coconut bottler that provides our visitors with fresh coconut water during the days. So they get a taste of the plantation and a tour.”

In addition, the new East Cove will be featuring two new restaurants – Del Mar, which is a seafood restaurant right on the water, as well as the great house restaurant, which a three-meal dining facility, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Both will be complemented by a new jerk shack called Spice, giving visitors the Jamaican flavours which will be



The Prestige Ocean Room.

enhanced with a hammock bar experience.

“So you are sitting in a hammock at the bar tasting the natural juices as well as smoothies,” Crichton explained.

Embracing the fact that wellness tourism had become very popular for persons travelling today, Crichton said Half Moon has kept up with the trend.

“We have to take a holistic

approach, so that’s one of the reasons we have placed our new ital restaurant at the spa. Right next to the spa is our yoga pavilion and our meditation area. We also have our new herb garden right next to

the yoga pavilion. We also have the largest infinity saltwater pool in Jamaica, opposite the great house,” she added.

The hotel offers several payment options, including a European Plan, a Premium Plan, which includes all meals and a beverage credit; as well as a Full American Plan. Non-motorised water-sports activities are complimentary to all guests, unlimited access to the fitness facility, morning coffee and infused water throughout the property, as well as a beach butler service, where guests have access to a smoothie, and a hot or cold towel as part of the elements of luxury.

The Salamander Group is now managing the Jamaican resort, and will be assisting with the day-to-day operations, budgeting and purchasing, food and beverage operations, and all other components that keep the hotel going.

Salamander operates the Hammock Beach in Florida, Innsbrook, Copperhead Golf Course and the Salamander Resort in Virginia.

“The partnership was a no-brainer for us because they are into golf; they are into equestrian; they are into tennis; and Half Moon is about that,” said Crichton.

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An intimate and homely setting on the patio. This chair can be converted into a daybed.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (centre) meets with key hotel stakeholders of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association to discuss the threat of sargassum to the island's tourism. Joining Bartlett are (from left) President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Omar Robinson; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith; Executive Director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Dr Carey Wallace; and Director of Projects at the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Johan Rampair. CONTRIBUTED

# Potential global economic downturn, sargassum real threats to tourism – *Bartlett*

**M**INISTER OF Tourism Edmund Bartlett has indicated that Jamaica is taking note that the potential global economic downturn and sargassum phenomenon are real threats to the tourism industry.

“We recall the recession of 2008 that impacted economies globally and recognise the need to strategise in light of data and trends. Despite this global recession, Jamaica’s tourism grew by an average 3.5 per cent and we will need to learn from those lessons,” said Bartlett.

There is a general concern that the global economy may be on the verge of a slight downturn and possible recession. There is also concern regarding sargassum, which is a type of seaweed that can negatively impact tourist destinations when washed up on shore.

“The possibility of a global economic downturn can have a devastating impact on

not only Jamaica’s tourism, but the region’s tourism. Coupled with this potential threat is now the impending influx of sargassum on our shores. What this means is that we must act decisively and swiftly to collaborate on the best way forward to get ahead of these threats,” Bartlett said.

He was speaking at a meeting with members of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) last Thursday at the Montego Bay Convention Centre to discuss the threat of sargassum on the island’s tourism. The meeting included senior officials from the ministry and its agencies, key hotel stakeholders, and president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association, Patricia Affonso-Dass.

“This meeting with our hotel partners is critical as we seek ways to develop economic resilience. These threats have the potential to negatively impact our livelihoods given the fact that the Caribbean is so heavily

dependent on tourism.

“Last year, the Caribbean welcomed 29.9 million visitors and contributed 40 per cent of the region’s GDP [gross domestic product] but if we do not act, we could see our growth in arrivals and earnings go down,” added Bartlett.

## **NEED STRATEGY TO CUT SARGASSUM**

The tourism minister also used the opportunity to have partners from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology make a presentation on their suggested strategy to cut off the sargassum prior to it reaching Jamaica’s shores and to get feedback from hoteliers.

President of the JHTA, Omar Robinson, also highlighted the need to urgently identify solutions to “mitigate against any potential fallout this could have on our tourism product”.

Bartlett added that as it relates to

sargassum, “The Global Tourism and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCM) is leading the charge to collaborate and conduct research to come up with workable solutions. Earlier in the week, the GTRCM also met with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea to explore future collaboration regarding research on the sargassum challenges faced by the Caribbean, towards identifying solutions.”

Bartlett, through the GTRCM, recently spearheaded a regional sargassum forum, which included mechanical engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Precision Engineering Research Group, and noted researchers from The University of the West Indies, Mona, and the GTRCM.

On October 9 and 10 of this year, the GTRCM will host a second summit with leading researchers geared towards climatic disruptions with a focus on sargassum.



Nita Kimuri sharing with a group of Jamaicans. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

# ‘Not even death could stop me’

*European tour operator’s love for Ja not shaken by gunman’s threat*

**S**INCE I was 15 years old, I have been dreaming about Jamaica. And finally, when I was 20, I travelled there – with the intention to get to know Jamaica as best as possible and collect enough information and pictures to write books and plenty travel reports about this amazing island for the most popular magazines in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

My first stop was Kingston, and my first experience was in the ghetto, where one gunman wanted to shoot me because I took pictures in that area, and that made him mad. I was never fearful of anything, and this bad experience could not distract me from my love for the country.

Simply put, I was travelling alone, a young girl, not interested in any ganja or drugs, not interested in any sexual or love affairs, not



The four travel guides written by Nita Kimuri.

interested in any alcohol; just very interested in becoming an expert on things Jamaican.

And it happened. Today, I know Jamaica better than any Jamaican. I travel to Jamaica every year – three to four times – exploring and continuously becoming a real expert.

I wrote and published four books about Jamaica. I presented Jamaica here in East Europe in a positive light. I teach people how to explore Jamaica and stay safe everywhere, even

in the Kingston ghettos.

Fifteen to 10 years ago, almost no one from Slovakia or the Czech Republic travelled to Jamaica, but I was advertising Jamaica in a huge way via my travel reports in popular magazines, in my books, and later in TV documentaries that were made in Jamaica, plus plenty of radio and television interviews on my website and on social media.

And lately, since 2015, finally, Slovaks and Czechs have started travelling to Jamaica in huge numbers.

I became a tour operator, and seven guys from some of the most dangerous Kingston ghettos became my professional tour guides, and we all are showing Europeans the parishes of St Andrew and St Catherine, where tourists normally would not have been brave enough to go without us.

Some 390 Slovaks and Czechs visit Kingston every year with me – saying, “Kingston is the most beautiful and safest place in Jamaica, and Kingstonians are the best people in Jamaica that tourists can ever meet.”

So, this is what I do. After 20 years of hard work, I created a good name for Kingston, and Jamaica in general, for Europeans.

Now tell me, which other ‘whitey’ is doing so much for cleaning up the bad reputation of Jamaica and Kingston? Plus, I ensure all my tourists bring gifts for the poorest Jamaicans in the ghettos!

People in the ghettos of Kingston realise that to work for white tourists makes their lives better than crime, violence, and smuggling.

– Nita Kimuri

## LINKS TO KIMURI’S ARTICLES

- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/dovolenka-jamajka-kto-vlastne-sme/>
- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/cestou-necestou-jamajka-tv-dokument/>
- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/jamajkanita-slovenka-na-jamajke-nita-kimuri/>
- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/jamajka-najlepsie-knihy/>
- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/jamajka-clanky-o-nas-v-mediach/>
- <https://www.jamajkanita.sk/jamajka-poznavacie-vylety/kingston-blue-mountains/>

# 89 times and counting

## *US couple turns Couples Resort vacations into charity work*



Jane Saks (centre) collects a plaque from Slean Harris, principal of Three Hills Primary School, while her husband, Gene, looks on. Harris gave the couple the plaque to show her appreciation for the assistance the two have given to the institution. **CONTRIBUTED**

### **CARL GILCHRIST**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**I**T'S A story that seems to justify the labelling of Jamaica as a paradise, with Couples Tower Isle resort being the preferred spot.

Over the past 48 years, Gene and Jane Saks of Florida in the United States has made a staggering 89 visits to Couples Resorts in Jamaica, 87 of them to Couples Tower Isle, and the other two to Couples Sans Souci and Couples Negril.

"It's their (Couples Tower Isle) fault why we went to the other properties instead. They had closed down for renovation," a chuckling Jane Saks told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

In the earlier days, the couple's visits might have been just for vacation, but, over time, their visits have turned into charitable missions, with the two former teachers contributing immensely to several of Couples Tower Isle's community givebacks.

Mrs Saks took the time recently to retrace their path through the years as it relates to coming to Jamaica.

"The first time we came to Tower Isle was in August of 1971 on our honeymoon, and again on our second honeymoon in February of 1973," she recounted.

"We went to many other places in the Caribbean, came back to Couples because our travel agent recommended it. We didn't know it was Tower Isle, (but) we were so excited we've been coming every year since, at least once a year, sometimes twice a year, even three times a year."

She was asked, 'Why do you keep coming back?' Her response: "Because of the people, the staff, [and] the food is always very fabulous. The ambience of the hotel, it's vintage but well kept," she explained.

The first time the Saks actually made a contribution locally was 18 years ago.

"In January 2001, my friend from Arizona and my husband were on

*'We went to many other places in the Caribbean, came back to Couples because our travel agent recommended it. We didn't know it was Tower Isle (but) we were so excited we've been coming every year since, at least once a year, sometimes twice a year, even three times a year.'*

the golf course and they decided they wanted to give back to the Jamaican people. They decided it would be nice to have a charity golf tournament to give back to the staff and their family. So we came back with our friend, who is a golf pro, in August of 2001 and went to the Port Maria Hospital. That was our first charity.

"The first tournament was January 2002, in collaboration with Couples (Tower Isle), and we've been having an annual tournament ever since.

"We've had many charities, a boys' home in Highgate which, unfortunately, was burnt to the ground by vandals. We have Hamilton Mountain Basic and Primary School and the Three Hills Primary in Charles Town."

It was Three Hills Primary School that they visited recently to look at some of the work that was done with the contribution they made from funds raised with the Rotary Clubs of Florida.

School principal Slean Harris was happy for the assistance and presented the Saks with a plaque as a show of appreciation.

Meanwhile, for the happy couple, the vacations will continue and the charity work will go on, as long as they are able to.

# SHENADE QUARRIE WINS AGAIN!



A smiling Shenade Quarrie after her recent promotion to Club Sandals manager. PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

IN MAY, when one of Sandals Negril's Club Sandals agents, Shenade Quarrie, was announced as the Diamond Team Member of the Year 2018, the ballroom at the Negril Hills Golf Club erupted with cheers and screams, as she undoubtedly deserved the coveted title.

And last week, Quarrie triggered even more screams, cheers of glee, hugs, and congratulations when she was announced the new Club Sandals manager for Sandals Negril, leading a team of 18 persons.

Club Sandals is the department responsible for giving guests personalised concierge services that may include preparing vacation itineraries, making reservations, handling guests activities on and off the resort, as well as hosting special events.

"Even with the absence of a manager and a supervisor, Shenade has really been carrying the Club Sandals mantle efficiently and with pride," General Manager David Latchimy said ahead of the announcement.

He was right. Quarrie's team underwent a transition recently and she was quick to jump in and fill the gap. This saw her handling the arrival of club-level and butler guests, preparing her team's weekly schedule, representing in heads of department meetings, daily shift meetings and other things required of a supervisor, while still carrying out her assigned tasks as a Club Sandals agent.

But she is never deterred by that as she is a positive human being at heart, and that is evident in her day-to-day approach on the resort.

Her work ethic has been unmatched ever since she stepped through the gates of the Sandals-owned Beaches Negril as a hospitality trainee in 2009.

"After graduating from the Hospitality Training Programme, they never actually had me wait for a call back. I just continued working at the front desk. I think this was because I was an outstanding trainee," she shared.

## STEADY CLIMB

Quarrie was later sent to Sandals South Coast (then Sandals Whitehouse) to work in the concierge department after being recommended by a manager at Beaches Negril. There, she worked assiduously, copping several awards before leaving in 2011 to assist a family member who had started a customer-service business.

She rejoined the company in 2015, this time at Sandals Negril, where she has since been a booming success story. Quarrie's list of accolades is illustrious. She has won almost every team member recognition award from approximately 15 categories observed on the resort on a monthly basis.

"It always makes me so proud whenever I win anything. Everyone knows I cry easily and this is because I know my journey has been met with its fair share of challenges. There were days when I had to cry or just take a walk. I've even felt like giving up, but I have grown, and now I know how to manoeuvre challenges,"



Shenade Quarrie collects her awards from resort General Manager David Latchimy (left) and hotel manager, O'Brian Heron, after being named Diamond Team Member of the Year 2019 at the annual Prestige Awards.

CONTRIBUTED

Quarrie explained.

Apart from her latest award – her promotion – Quarrie is still basking in her Team Member of the Year moment and says she is happy she did something great in the eyes of her four-year-old son.

"On the night when my name was announced as Diamond Team Member, my son was the first person who came to my mind. I was like, 'I did it for us, Amairy,'" she shared.

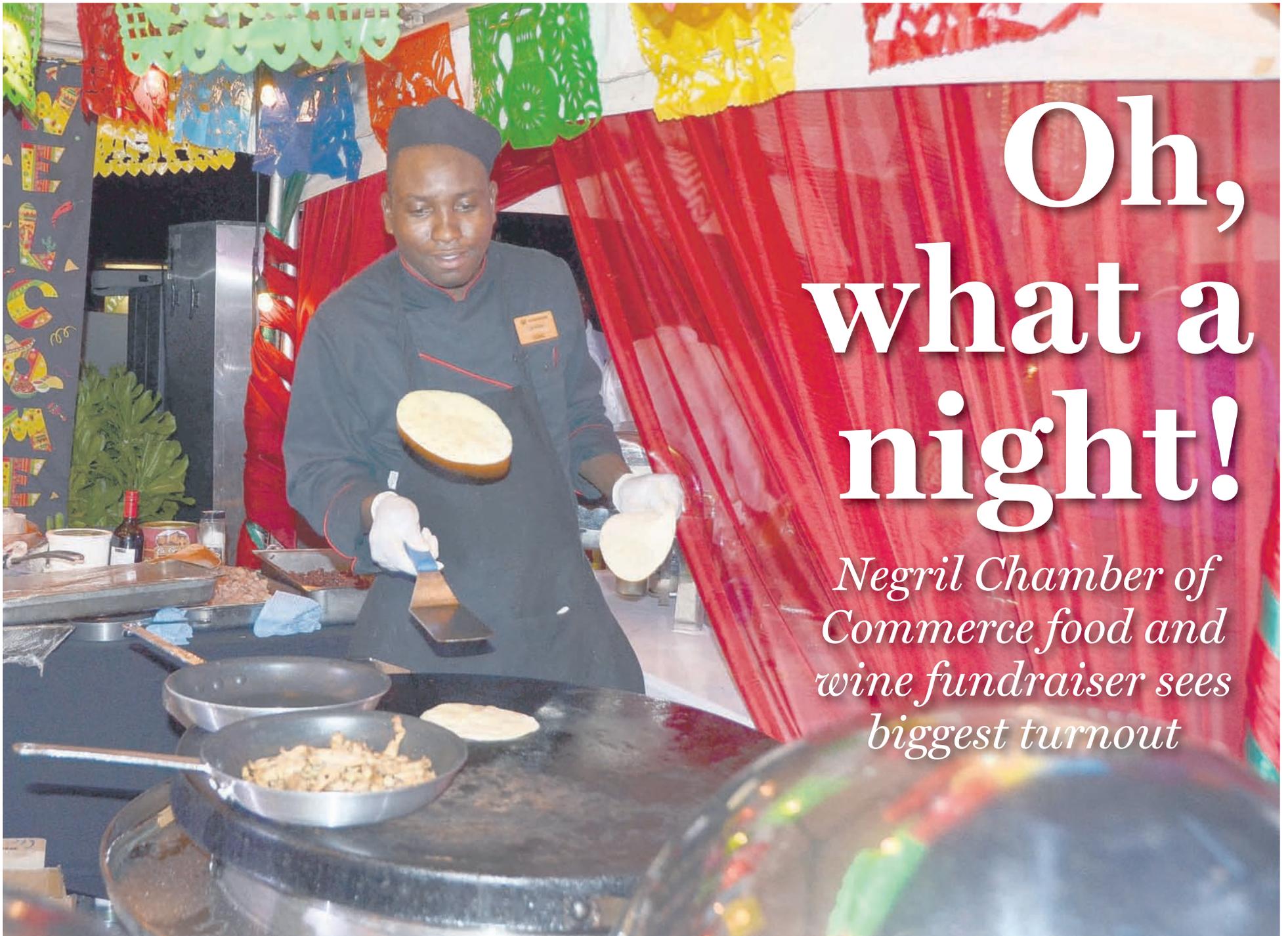
She is one of the lead foundation ambassadors on resort, who often helps to raise funds, give back to communities, and inform the public of the foundation's impact.

The 27-year-old is a storehouse of ideas and information, often reeling off guests' concerns and feedback off the tip of her tongue without missing a single fact. The vivacious Quarrie is one of the persons many call on when they want a unique set-up for guests on special occasions, like birthdays, anniversaries, honeymoons, and retirement.

Quarrie's colleagues at Sandals Negril are all happy for her promotion and latest challenge. All are echoing the well-deserved sentiment.

"We all screamed from the bottom of our bellies for Shenade because not only does she deserve this promotion, she has earned it. We have seen where she has grown tremendously. She carries herself with a certain level of poise, and she commands respect from her team and from all of us. I am truly happy for her and I will be right here supporting her every step of the way," shared Hotel Manager O'Brian Heron.

“ It always makes me so proud whenever I win anything. Everyone knows I cry easily and this is because I know my journey has been met with its fair share of challenges. There were days when I had to cry or just take a walk. I've even felt like giving up, but I have grown, and now I know how to manoeuvre challenges. ”



# Oh, what a night!

*Negril Chamber of  
Commerce food and  
wine fundraiser sees  
biggest turnout*

An Azul Sensatori chef displays his food-juggling skills. PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA



Negril Chamber of Commerce Director Elaine Bradley is flanked by (from left) Damion Salmon of the Rockhouse, Negril Chamber President Richard Wallace, and his sons, Craig and Matthew.

**T**HE NEGRIL International Food and Wine event seems to have had its biggest turnout yet, as hundreds of revellers turned out at The Boardwalk Village on Saturday night, not only to eat, drink and be merry, but to show support to what was the Negril Chamber of Commerce's fourth all-white party fundraiser.

"We are so grateful. We are so overwhelmed here; it's amazing. This is the fourth event we've had so far. In terms of numbers, we haven't finalised and tabulated everything yet, but obviously, by just looking at the crowd that was here, it was definitely the best," president of the 36-year-old chamber, Richard Wallace, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

"This is the fourth event and each year it gets better and better, and we had ATL on



Kenroy Williams is sandwiched by his JPS colleagues Simoneese Davis (left) and Annesha Cummings.



From left: Linesha Davis, Robyn Hall, and Annesha Cummings are having a grand time at the Negril International Food and Wine Festival.



Hedonism II's Executive Chef Michael Barnett serves some tasty Indian butter chicken to Negril Chamber of Commerce Director Sophie Grizzle.



Tawani Connell dances with her daughter, Arya Headley, at the Negril International Food and Wine event last Saturday night at the Boardwalk Village in Negril.



Samantha Reynolds had the time of her life.

board this year. It is very rare that an event in Negril that can pull the type of people who came out tonight and we are very humbled by that," he added.

First-timers ATL and Margaritaville were the new entrants to the event, sponsoring the non-alcoholic beverages and juices for the patrons, along with the event's long-standing partners – Hedonism II, Couples Resorts, Sandals Resorts, Rockhouse, Azul Sensatori, and The Cliff.

"Last year, 100 per cent of the proceeds went to the Negril Health Centre. We handed over \$1 million to the health clinic fund. This year, not a hundred per cent will go to the health clinic, but a substantial amount will. The rest will go to other charity projects that the chamber does during the year," Wallace said.

Concerning the food, perhaps the main surprise of the night was the creation by West End-based The Cliff Hotel, in the form of a breadfruit fish taco, with a black bean and corn salsa topped with picadillo and a cilantro crema.

According to Jonhoi Reid, chef de cuisine at The Cliff, his team decided to pull out all the stops this year to get a better rating than they did last year.

"Tonight we gave them a twist on a Mexican special with a little bit of Jamaican. The response to it was pretty amazing. I didn't know it would go so well. The line was so long; it was amazing. Everybody really said this was one of the best dishes on the night, so the response was really good," he explained.

"We have a special piece of equipment that we use to shape the breadfruit like the taco shell. It's on our everyday lunch menu. We did just one dish and tried to capture the audience tonight and I think we did very well with that. We are looking forward to doing it next year. We said this year we are going to do something that Negril has never seen and it really worked for us," he said.



The Cliff Jamaicanised tacos with their succulent fish tacos made with a shell created from breadfruit.



After preparing and serving up their delicious fish tacos, culinary staff members of The Cliff Hotel had a grand time partying with their colleagues.

FLAVOURS OF the island were brought by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) to Windsor in the United Kingdom, at the Jamaica One Love Rum 'N' Reggae race night. Attracting more attendees than ever before, the event was aired on Sky Sports across the country.

Jamaica was headline sponsors and the race meet featured the best selection of Jamaican rums, reggae beats, as well as authentic Jamaican food that tickled the taste buds.

Four of the races were also named with a Jamaican theme: The Jamaica One Love Handicap; The Jewel Runaway Bay Stakes; The Cool Running Handicap and The Visit Jamaica Summer Handicap, with the winners in each race receiving tumblers and a bottle of Appleton Rum.

As part of attracting new UK visitors to experience the destination, the Jamaican-themed race night encouraged all attendees to don their Caribbean-style outfits and enter the 'best-dressed' competition for the chance to win a family holiday of a lifetime to Jamaica. Up for grabs was a stay at the all-inclusive Jewel Runaway Bay Beach & Golf Resort, flights and transfers.

Attendees were treated to live reggae entertainment from well-known group Marley Revival. Racegoers also enjoyed an authentic Jamaican rum experience, which included rum cocktails and tastings, and the island's famous jerked chicken.

As part of the sponsorship package, the JTB hosted some of its most valued trade partners and media to inspire them to feature the destination in their newspapers and magazines.

Elizabeth Fox said, "This year was our first time sponsoring the

# One Love 'Rum 'N' Reggae' attract thousands

*Racegoers flock J'can-themed event in record-breaking numbers*



Elizabeth Fox, regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board UK, presents a prize of rum to a lucky winner. CONTRIBUTED

Windsor races and we are thrilled with just how many attendees it attracted. It just goes to prove that

Jamaican culture, especially its gastronomy and music, is world-famous. By showcasing this to an

untapped, target audience as part of this marketing activation, we have demonstrated that Jamaica offers a

whole host of exciting experiences for UK holidaymakers planning their next holiday."

## JTB, London's Somerset House partner to highlight Ja's diverse heritage

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) has partnered with the arts and cultural centre, Somerset House in London, to inspire United Kingdom audiences to experience Jamaica.

To promote Jamaica as a destination with a rich musical and cultural legacy, the JTB will be sponsoring the premiere of the vibrant documentary, **Inna De Yard**, today August 21, 2019, as part of the Film4 Summer Screen series. The film, which is set in Jamaica,

celebrates the island's musical heritage and captures the story of a remarkable group of reggae legends, including Ken Boothe, Judy Mowatt, Winston McAnuff and Lloyd Parks.

**Inna De Yard** reveals the band's passion for reggae music and the ongoing relevance of the genre and its social values. The film will be shown to an audience of 2,000 people and the JTB will also host key media at the event.

The JTB's involvement with this

exhibition will not only appeal to the diaspora community within the UK, but also tap into Somerset House's affluent and culturally engaged customer base to drive bookings to the Caribbean destination. As part of the activity, Somerset House is hosting a competition on its website, providing all-important customer data for the JTB to use for future marketing opportunities. The competition will be supported through Somerset House's social

media channels, newsletters and via its e-newsletters, with a combined reach of more than one million followers and subscribers.

Elizabeth Fox, regional director of the Jamaica Tourist Board said, "The partnership with Somerset House is a great example of how the Jamaica Tourist Board is using creative ways to reach new audiences and drive potential bookings to the destination. This activity aligns with our key themes of culture and music and

is a brilliant opportunity to inspire travellers to visit Jamaica."

Offering a diverse public programme of contemporary arts and culture in the heart of London, Somerset House is one of the city's most spectacular spaces which draws three million visitors every year. The **Inna De Yard** premiere coincides with a major new exhibition that celebrates the past 50 years of black creativity in Britain.

# August conference to discuss transformation for tourism evolution

**S**IGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES arise for those tourism-related companies that are able to transform through any diversity in order to remain competitive in today's changing global tourism landscape.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) will examine the negative forces and positive tourism recoveries in a general session at the upcoming Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development taking place from August 26-29, 2019, at the Beachcombers Hotel in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The panel titled "Transformation for Tourism Evolution" will be held on August 29 from 10:45 a.m. until noon. The session will illustrate significant advantages gained by those who were innovative and creative during times that the tourism market was

disrupted.

Local tourism entities are largely categorised as micro, small, and medium enterprises, and their ability to harness transformative advances is an existential imperative for ensuring their sustained relevance in an ever-changing geo-political climate. This session takes a critical look at new opportunities to regenerate the regional tourism industry in the areas of market access, disaster recovery, and climate resilience as a means of increasing tourism competitiveness and sustainability.

Maria Fowell, tourism specialist, economic development policy unit for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), will moderate the panel, which will also hear from Camillo Gonsalves, St Vincent and the Grenadines' minister of finance and

economic planning, sustainable development and information technology. Kieran St Omer, research officer, strategic planning and projects at the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), will speak to the topic 'Opportunities and Threats from a Move Towards Digital Currency'.

The conference, otherwise known as the Sustainable Tourism Conference (#STC2019), has been organised by CTO in partnership with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority (SVGTA).

Under the theme 'Keeping the Right Balance: Tourism Development in an Era of Diversification', industry experts participating in #STC2019 will address the urgent need for a transformational, disruptive, and regenerative tourism product to meet ever-rising challenges. The full

conference programme can be viewed at <https://www.caribbeanstc.com/program/>.

St Vincent and the Grenadines will host #STC2019 amid an intensified national thrust towards a greener, more climate-resilient destination, including the construction of a geothermal plant on St Vincent to complement the country's hydro and solar-energy capacity and the restoration of the Ashton Lagoon in Union Island.

To register for the conference, visit <https://www.caribbeanstc.com/register>. Rates are available for general delegates, including CTO members and non-members, St Vincent and the Grenadines residents, travel agents, and students (both local and international rates).

## AA adds third daily Miami flight to St Thomas

THE US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism has announced the addition of a third American Airlines daily flight between Miami and St Thomas in time for the winter season.

Commissioner of Tourism Joseph Boschulte has reported that effective December 18, 2019, the third daily flight will operate as a "same-day turn", departing Miami International Airport at 8:35 a.m. and arriving at Cyril E. King Airport at 12:04 p.m.

The return service departs St Thomas the same day it arrives at 1:04 p.m., landing in Miami at 3:10 p.m.

"The addition of this flight signals another step forward for our administration as we strive to restore air service to the territory," said Boschulte.

He revealed that the new seats are most timely in light of the continuing expansion of the sharing economy as well as the return of The Ritz-Carlton, St Thomas, in December.

Boschulte added that the Dallas-Fort Worth-based carrier would extend Charlotte-St. Croix flights from Saturday only to daily during the peak Christmas period from December 18, 2019, to January 4, 2020.

The service will depart the



Commissioner of Tourism, US Virgin Islands, Joseph Boschulte.

Charlotte Douglas International Airport at 11:45 a.m., arriving at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport at 4:24 p.m. The return flight will depart St Croix at 5:15 p.m., arriving into Charlotte at 8:10 p.m.

"I would like to thank our tourism industry stakeholders for working closely with the Department of Tourism to strengthen demand for our destination while we presented our case for increased airlift to our airline partners," said Boschulte.

He asserted that his team would continue to engage carriers to strengthen the aerial highways that connect the Virgin Islands to



A North American aircraft flying in the skies CONTRIBUTED

the US mainland and the global marketplace, including exploring options for additional flights to St Croix.

"We also look forward to working with our partners to roll out effective tactics to market our destination before, during, and beyond

the upcoming peak winter season," the commissioner stated.

Earlier, the Department of Tourism announced the commencement of American Airlines service to St Thomas from Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago, beginning December 21, 2019. The Dallas

flights will operate year-round on Saturdays while the Chicago service will operate seasonally, also on Saturdays.

United Airlines will also serve the Chicago-St Thomas market with weekly Saturday flights, beginning November 2, 2019.



# Port Royal floating pier not viable now

A Port Royal ferry of yesteryear at eternal rest in a lagoon of the Port Royal mangroves. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS



People planting mangrove seedlings in the water along a section of the Palisadoes road. In the background is a view of downtown Kingston, including Kingston Harbour, the seventh-largest natural harbour in the world.

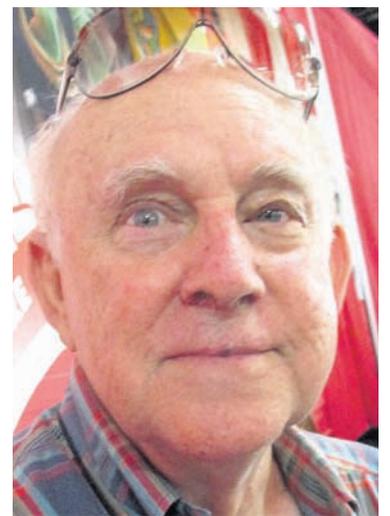
**PAUL H. Williams**  
*Contributor*

**P**ORT ROYAL'S development and tourism potential were recently thrust back into the talk shops with the announcement by Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett that a floating pier is to be set up so that cruise ship passengers can visit this historic town.

The town is nestled at the tip of the Palisadoes spit that encloses Kingston Harbour.

Arguments for and against this ambitious notion is all over the media, so **Hospitality Jamaica** reached out to Ainsley Henriques, two-time chairman of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, since he was once involved in the restoration of some of the buildings that were falling into ruins.

The pier itself is not the problem, yet Henriques said it is to be



Ainsley Henriques, former chairman of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, does not believe it is viable for Port Royal to be a cruise-ship destination. Kingston Harbour is a better option he thinks.

established in the section of the mangroves which is a thriving nesting area for the brown pelican. A cruise ship pier and the activities surrounding it will disturb the ecology, a disaster for the birds.

“How do you put a boat with 3,000 or 4,000 or 5,000 people in a place which can handle only 300 people?” Henriques asked. He said further, “What we have to understand is capacity limitation on every place we want people to visit, otherwise we can destroy the place.”

Henriques is also contending that Port Royal does not have the amenities to accommodate the great number of passengers who would be visiting the sleepy seaside town, which has a population of approximately 2,500 people, many of whom work outside of the town. As it stands, Port Royal is not ready for the possible influx of cruise ship passengers. That is the message Henriques is conveying.

“If you really want to make Port Royal a place for visitation, you have to recognise that there are certain social features that have to be available. You have to have proper toilets, adequate water, and an adequate sewer system. All of this is not there,” he declared, revealing that the existing water grid was put in place in 1899, 120 years ago.

Henriques recalled having to truck water into the town, some years ago, when he arranged for several hundred archaeologists to visit the much-romanticised area, that was once described as the ‘Wickedest City on Earth’, and which was partially destroyed by an earthquake and attendant tsunami on June 7, 1692.

Apart from the historic sites, some of which need to be restored, and the reputation that it enjoys for its seafood, there is not much more in terms of shopping, entertainment, dining, museums, etc.

“How I would approach Port Royal, and how I wanted to approach Port Royal ... was in fact to recognise Kingston Harbour, the seventh-largest natural harbour in the world; it would be developed in a way in which people could visit Kingston Harbour,



Giddy House in Port Royal is a very popular attraction.



Brown pelicans in a lagoon near the Port Royal Mangroves.

and travel around the Harbour. They could go to Port Henderson; there is history in Port Henderson; they could go to Rockfort Mineral Bath; they could go to other facilities in Kingston, including Port Royal,” Henriques said.

What he is in fact proposing is that

Kingston Harbour should be the spot from which tourists disembark. They would then travel all over the city, shopping and seeking out entertainment spots and other attractions, monuments, etc. Port Royal would then be



A tomb in the Old Naval Cemetery along the Palisadoes strip.

one of the places that they might go to, not the only place, since it is not ready to meet and sustain the needs of cruise passengers. Moreover, he does not see how the people of Port Royal themselves will benefit from the arrival of the cruise passengers with all of its inadequacies.

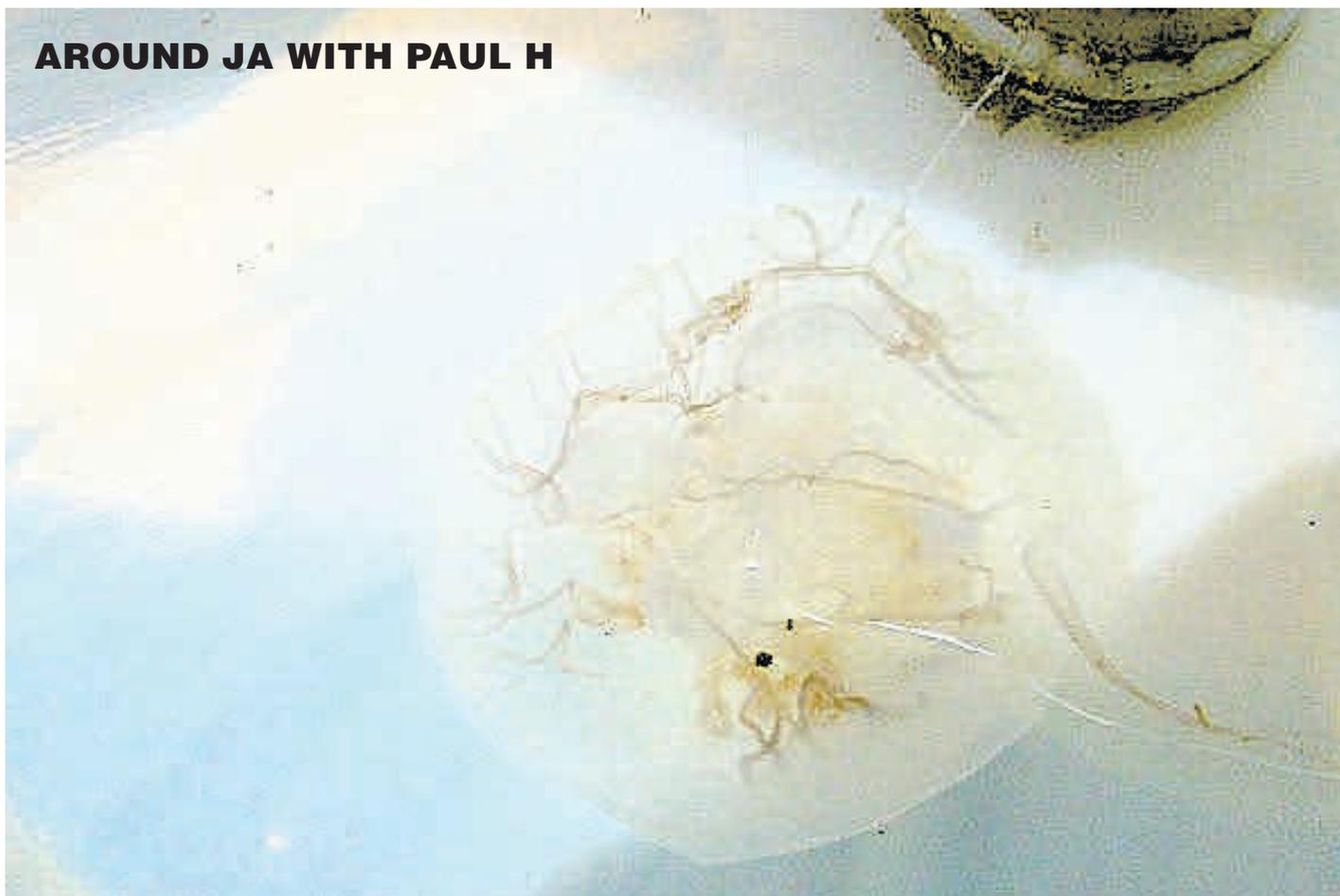
“So, yuh not planning properly how the Kingston Harbour should be used. You are just grasping at what a cruise ship is promising you, and it is stupid, utterly stupid and ignorant, because to be able to have a proper visitation of people in Port Royal, they would have to have somewhere else to go for the day ... . It cannot handle cruise-shipping passengers with any number because Port Royal does not have enough space there for people to come off the cruise ship and enjoy themselves,” Henriques declared.



This block of residences in Port Royal are said to have been built after the 1951 storm.



For decades, the Port Royal Lighthouse has been watching to see what is to become of the place where pirate and former lieutenant governor, Henry Morgan, is buried.



Jellyfish teem in the Port Royal mangroves. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

# Ecology on its side, but ...



A monument marking the spot where the first coconut tree was planted on the Palisadoes strip.

**I**N AN accompanying article, 'Not Port Royal alone', in today's publication, Ainsley Henriques, two-time chairman of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, is not supporting the idea that Port Royal should be a cruise-ship destination because it lacks much-needed social and commercial amenities, among other things.

Once described as the 'Wickedest City on Earth', and partially destroyed by an earthquake and attendant tsunami on June 7, 1692, Port Royal is replete with historical sites and ruins, some of which are underwater. And they have been pulling people from all over the world to the place that was once the haunt of pirate-turned-lieutenant governor Sir Henry Morgan. World Heritage Site inscription is now on the front burners.

But while I am particularly interested in the man-made structures in Port Royal, I see that there is also much value in the geography and ecology of the place, which I find thoroughly fascinating. It is so near downtown Kingston and surrounding concrete jungle, yet it is



The Port Royal Mangrove is a scenic place to see by boat.



Oysters clinging to a mangrove root.



Map of Port Royal and a section of the Palisadoes strip.



Mangrove seed pods.

nestled in nature. Its proximity to Kingston is a blessing, yet a curse since it is the destination for much of the garbage that Kingston pushes out into the sea.

It is a shame, though, for the mangrove forest on the harbour side is a naturally magical place that teems with fish, oysters, and a variety of birds, including the brown pelican. Much of the oysters sold on the streets of downtown Kingston are acquired from there. I took a boat ride through the forest years ago and was really enchanted by the place.

At one point, we travelled under overhanging mangrove branches that created an arch. Boating through the romantic aura that it oozed was an experience to remember. I saw oysters clinging to everything they could, and there was an abundance of jellyfish. Mongoose sprinted from branch to branch upon seeing us, mischief shining from their beady eyes.

The sight of birds and their white droppings on green leaves said loud and

clear that we were passing through their sanctuary, almost unspoilt. There must be a way to get the refuse out and to prevent them from being deposited within for it is a beautiful and ecologically important place. Who in high places is suddenly going to realise that it is?

Along the way, on the Palisadoes strip, there are spots where people go to fish. It has a variety of acacia shrubs and cacti. The beach on the south of the spit is sun-drenched and has a variety of pebbles and driftwood further up. If ever you want to take a long evening stroll, that's the place to go. Walk with a bag. Nature has treasures scattered all over the place, waiting for you.

So while Port Royal lacks certain infrastructural development, the road to it and the greenery have made it a nature lover's haven if only people could see the value of it. And some people like it like that. Infrastructural development, they say, will take away the quaintness of the place and lead to environment degradation.



A section of the expansive black-sand beach to the south of the Palisadoes strip.



Garbage in the Port Royal mangroves.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (left) with participants (male and female) in the Tourism Enhancement Fund's (TEF) Summer Internship Programme (SIP), Le-Ann Connell (second left) and Shemar Findley (second right). Dr Carey Wallace, TEF executive director, is at right. The occasion was the SIP closing ceremony at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

# 3,900 youth empowered by TEF Summer Internship Programme

**I**N THE past six years, some 3,900 youths have benefited from the Tourism Enhancement Fund's (TEF) Summer Internship Programme (SIP), which introduces participants (between 16-25 years) to the world of work and assists them with gaining professional experience.

This year's internship programme gave some 649 high-school and tertiary students the opportunity to intern in tourism and non-tourism fields at 90 private- and public-sector entities across the island. In addition, TEF collaborated with Jamaica Association for the Deaf to place 10 hearing-impaired students in schools.

Speaking to a packed house at the programme's closing ceremony, Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett told the interns that their postings would have given them a "very practical and hands-on appreciation of the many moving parts that must come together seamlessly to create the tourism experience that we sell to the world". The ceremony took place at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston.

Noting that some interns may have wondered, in the process, how significant their jobs were to tourism, Minister Bartlett explained the five pillars essential to the sector's growth; namely, new products, new markets, new investments, development of human capital and new partnerships that bring the many moving parts of the industry together.

"You may wonder why you went to a paramedical facility to work. Because we are involved in creating three keys that are



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith (left), presents Shaniel Brown with a top performer award in the Tourism Enhancement Fund's Summer Internship Programme. Brown, who interned at the Shortwood branch of the National Parish Library, also won a Customer Service Gold Award.

important to those five pillars – safety, security and seamlessness. So, to enable safety and have an understanding of safety, you now have to go

where the providers of safety reside. And it's not just the police, but the hospitals," said the tourism minister, noting that health security is

a critical part of the destination assurance that makes Jamaica a place where people want to go to.

"So we need trauma centres and we need proper clinics, trained nurses that can respond quickly and the best doctors. We also need the best equipment for medical care. So you see just within the sphere of medicine – another moving part – how we are securing the safety of our visitors," Minister Bartlett continued.

He pointed out that the providers of security and the creation of a seamless system through connectivity were equally important to tourism's proper functioning and success.

"These are what cause tourism to happen and so, therefore, when we do these summer internship programmes, it is to expose you to these areas that are not in the hotels where traditionally you see tourism. We deliberately didn't post you at hotels for that purpose, so you understand how broad, how extensive, how inclusive tourism is; how deep and wide the value chain of tourism is; and how, when you train in all these various disciplines, you are really preparing yourself to give service," he said.

This year, interns were taken through formal training in customer service, business and office etiquette and leadership development with special focus on Guest Service Gold Tourism, for which they will be certified. This certificate course was offered in partnership with the American Hotel and Lodging Educational institute.