

The Gleaner

# Hospitality Jamaica

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## BEST GANJA

**Give local farmers concessions  
in all-inclusive hotels**

How JetBlue works with Caribbean destinations **6**

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# Give **LOCAL** **GANJA FARMERS'** concessions in all-inclusive hotels

**Janet Silvera**  
*Hospitality Jamaica  
Coordinator*

**T**HE IMMINENT establishment of cannabis dispensaries within Jamaica's all-inclusive hotels should be the sole prerogative of local, authentic ganja farmers, according to one US-based expert.

The ones who operate in the Orange Hill community, which lies adjacent to the resort town of Negril, which straddles Westmoreland and Hanover, were given the thumbs up by James Burr of Enlightened Development and Enlightened Cannabis, which is based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Burr says because Orange Hill is internationally recognised as producing the world's best ganja, all-inclusive hotels could be approached to offer concessions to members of that ganja-farming community, which is also a chapter of the Westmoreland Hemp and Ganja Farmers' Association (WHGFA), and is fully recognised by the Jamaican Government.

## **COMMUNITY PRODUCT**

Burr who has been visiting numerous ganja farms in Jamaica since the mid-1990s, recommended that the Cannabis Licensing Authority, which he says is reluctant to allow hotels to establish their own dispensaries, due to concerns about hoteliers taking over what has been traditionally a 'community product', should engage in discussions with the WHGFA

and appoint a group representative to begin working, from now, with the major all-inclusive hotels regarding concessions.

*'Because this is all local people who have a vested interest in the game.'*

"Because this is all local people who have a vested interest in the game already," he told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

According to him, this was the perfect opportunity to protect local farmers from other external sources, and even other foreign investors from coming in and taking over their market.

He said only the quality ganja produced by farmers in Orange

Hill should be supplied within the all-inclusives, as Jamaica can only compete in cannabis if the quality is perfect, "Orange Hill has all the attributes to grow perfect herb, including expertise involving decades of field work, in the right climatic conditions".

The idea of giving concessions to community members is one that Burr says has been tried, tested and proven to be successful in areas such as the Leonard Jackson Airport in Atlanta,



A local ganja farmer prepares his plants in an orderly fashion.  
**CONTRIBUTED**

James Burr  
**PHOTO BY  
JANET SILVERA**





A ganja farm in a rural district in Jamaica CONTRIBUTED

which, when it was built, offered food concessions to community members, many of whom had entered into criminality due to economic deprivation.

“So when you go through that airport, you see those small businesses ... small restaurants and those small vendors. They weren’t given to Burger King, McDonald’s, Wendy’s – the big organisations. It needs to be inclusive of the community, and the way that that happens is concessions,” he added.

He said tourists coming to Jamaica’s all-inclusive resorts should be able to access cannabis, similar to how they access items such as food as well as tobacco, liquor and beer in a controlled manner.

“Alcohol has its restrictions; cannabis will also have its restrictions. But yes, people shouldn’t have to leave an all-inclusive and go out on to the street or travel long distances to a dispensary every time they want a roll of spliff,” he said.

Burr also noted that since the relatively small sizes of the traditional ganja-growing areas surrounding places such as Negril hinder farmers from supplying the hotels, tourists, the export industry and the local market, there would be a serious need for expansion.

“There is a reason why Orange Hill herb is better. Thirty per cent culture, 30 per cent history, because these are the people who have the strains and want to be in the ganja industry. That’s where the hippies came with the seeds and the hybrids. So Negril and that whole area have the advantage,” he said.

Jill Burr of Sustainable Resort Development for the Caribbean also had another spin on the subject. According to her, community-run concessionaires within the all-inclusives will offer opportunities for tourists to immerse themselves in another aspect of Jamaican culture, as many who are non-smokers may want to eat, get the oil, or simply smell the herb.

She said because tourists predominantly do not leave the all-inclusive resorts, it is critical that the local industry fill this gap.

She said a dispensary or herb house retail outlet within the resort itself, brings in the opportunity for consumers to learn about and experience the culture, as opposed to “just come in and then buy some herb and go smoke it somewhere,” but, would be able to learn, for example where it was farmed, the profile of the farmers, and the development of particular strains.

“Some people have a legitimate concern that it would take away from the local market or would take away from local people benefitting. All-inclusive resorts do have a reputation of that, without a doubt, and that often is the case. But with this particular instance, there is actually an opportunity to introduce culture into what can be a very homogenized environment. Because ganja is a part of Jamaican culture, period,” she said.

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Jill Burr  
PHOTO BY  
JANET SILVERA





A ganja farm hidden away in deep-rural Jamaica, where local farmers have been breaking the law over the years to earn a living from the plant.

# Rasta ganja reigns supreme...

outclassing weed from foreign dispensaries, says US expert

**R**ASTAFARIANS AND their traditional ganja farmer counterparts continue to outperform international cannabis brands that have now established cannabis dispensaries, particularly within the island's resort areas, according to Atlanta-based cannabis connoisseur James Burr.

According to Burr, despite the locations of these entities in prime resort areas and their branding and marketing efforts using influencers and other means, ganja grown in open fields by traditional Jamaican farmers continues to eclipse these brands in terms of quality and potency aspects such as aromatics, smoking pleasure, enjoyment, burnability, and other esoteric elements that come into burning ganja.

"We feel that right now, Jamaica is in the market with a product that is coming in at a price point that is of ultra-quality, but we are not seeing ultra-quality. Right now, the black market is outperforming world-class growing organisations that are coming here into Jamaica and getting licensed," Burr, who is one of the principals of Enlightened Development and Enlightened Cannabis, said.

"My hat goes off to the Rastafarian community because there is a level of quality that they are able to maintain compared to the people who have all the tools and the necessary things..." he added.

Because traditional ganja farmers have already established that they have a premium

product and "want to have a place in the marketplace", it is imperative that the Alternative Development Programme, enacted on their behalf by the Government of Jamaica, is successful because cannabis is a quality-driven consumer market in which 'quality rules'.

Burr, who has been travelling across Jamaica since 1994, said that the expertise found within the Rastafarian farming community, especially, has been recognised to be of immense value to scientists across the world. He said that many scientists with doctoral degrees in agriculture and cannabis experts have flown great distances to Jamaica to "sit with people in the bush" to be schooled by Jamaican ganja farmers, who, in tending to the plants, spend a lot of time

touching them.

"The hands-on, touching-of-the-plant experience is invaluable. Somebody who is actually growing herb, curing herb, working with different strains, physically working with them every day and has been working with them for 20, 30 years – your average Rastafarian farmer, 35 to 55 years old – basically has a master's to a PhD in cannabis science," Burr stated.

He said that the problem of low-quality herb in dispensaries is not peculiar to Jamaica as the same thing prevailed in 2004 when dispensaries in west Los Angeles in California first came into existence.

"We had the same issues in Los Angeles, California, when it just got started. You



KENYON HEMANS/PHOTOGRAPHER

could get to buy much better herb on the street at a much better price...," he said.

"We were all sitting back, thinking, 'This dispensary thing is never gonna work'. We were all proven wrong because right now, if I were in Los Angeles and I needed to get a quality bag of herb, the first place that I would go is a dispensary... . Every person who was growing weed in LA illegally is now growing it legally and being very

successful at it," he said.

Burr said that there is hope yet and that he is confident that the Jamaican situation will turn out the same as in California. He is predicting that within five years, there will be quality ganja at Jamaican dispensaries as Rastafarians and other traditional ganja farmers, through the Ministry of Agriculture's Alternative Development Programme, will be allowed the opportunity to get their

produce to legitimately enter the marketplace.

He said that the Ministry of Agriculture has to ensure that quality is basis for the operation of any dispensary in the country in order to preserve the island's reputation as the ultimate ganja destination, which is key to the success of Brand Jamaica.

"When we go out into the country and we are buying stick weed and it is fresh and hasn't been put

into a bag and transported and oxidised, it's a totally different product than when we find something that has been around for a while," he explained.

"Jamaica has a harsh environment. Two, three weeks of just sitting around in the Jamaican environment is enough to degrade herb, so freshness is definitely key," he added.

He said that as the market evolves globally and new, much

larger countries, like Colombia, enter the cannabis arena, Jamaica will have to target the niche of premium quality, as the island cannot compete in terms of volume, but only on its unmatched standard.

"That is what already distinguishes the Jamaica brand, and that is what they need to get on the global market: quality. Organic, sustainable, socially responsible, premium quality," Burr said.

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# CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANISATION TOURISM SECTOR OUTLOOK FORUM PREVIEW: How JetBlue works with Caribbean destinations

*“Your destination must be not only present, but ‘come alive’ in mobile placements across the Web, with links to simple and fast-booking options once a customer shows interest.”*

– Mike Pezzicola, JetBlue

**M**EMBER GOVERNMENTS of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and leaders from entities that generate business to the region meet in Antigua and Barbuda on Friday, October 4, for the first CTO Caribbean Tourism Sector Outlook Forum.

Among the senior executives who will speak about their plans, programmes, and activities is Mike Pezzicola, the head of commercial for JetBlue from Google, who went to JetBlue from Google, where he spent the previous five years building out the Google shopping product.

Ahead of the forum, he was quizzed on a number of issues, including the Caribbean tourism product and how the region’s tourism sector should make better use of technology.

**CTO:** What makes JetBlue the number-one carrier to the Caribbean?

**MP:** For our entire 19-year history, the Caribbean has always been a major focus of JetBlue. JetBlue operates over 1,000 flights daily, with a third of its route network in the Caribbean. Also, we are proud to have one of our focus cities located in the region at San Juan. We have continually grown our destinations and flights in the Caribbean over time as well as enhanced our service offerings with the addition and expansion of Mint service.

**CTO:** When you work with member countries to introduce service, what are some of the things you look for?

**MP:** Our customers are always our first focus. How can we expand our service in a way that excites our existing customers and introduces JetBlue to customers in new markets? Along with our customers, we are, of course, always looking to form strong partnerships with member countries to determine how we can introduce service in a way that is sustainable and poised for growth for both JetBlue and the member country.



JetBlue introduces the largest electric ground service equipment (eGSE) fleet at New York’s JFK International Airport, cutting four million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions per year.



Mike Pezzicola CONTRIBUTED

**CTO:** Do you collaborate with the destinations on marketing? If so, how?

**MP:** Marketing our awesome

destinations is a favourite part of my job. If you explore the JetBlue and JetBlue Vacations websites, you’ll notice how we strive to emphasise not only key attractions, but also the unique aspects and culture of Caribbean destinations. We partner with destinations on cooperative marketing efforts for both large campaigns (month-long out-of-home marketing efforts) and even smaller events (such as highlighting local regional sporting or cultural events).

**CTO:** Based on your experience at Google building out the Google shopping product and combining Google’s search experience with seamless e-commerce shopping, how must the Caribbean use technology to facilitate travel?

**MP:** Most customers at the very

least begin their inspiration and education for travel using their thumb (searching, scrolling, and exploring on their phone). Your destination must be not only present, but ‘come alive’ in mobile placements across the Web, with links to simple and fast-booking options once a customer shows interest. How can you get customers not only to explore and learn on their phone, but then quickly BOOK as well?

**CTO:** What are your thoughts on the Caribbean tourism product as it currently stands?

**MP:** The Caribbean market provides such a wide variety of unique options for customers, which is both an opportunity and a challenge. We, together, must ensure customers consider the Caribbean as they begin planning their travel

but at the same time ensure we leverage your variety of offerings.

**CTO:** Without going into too many details, please summarise what you intend to share with our member governments at the CTO’s outlook forum?

**MP:** I look forward to providing some details about the growth of JetBlue Travel over the next few years.

The CTO Caribbean Tourism Sector Outlook Forum is for government members only, including, but not limited to, ministers and commissioners of tourism, directors of tourism, chief executives of destination-management organisations, permanent secretaries, advisors, and specialists and technical officers.

# RJRGleaner Hospitality Jamaica nominations extended

**N**OMINATIONS HAVE been extended for the fifth-anniversary staging of the prestigious RJRGleaner Communications Group Hospitality Jamaica Awards, which will take place on Saturday, November 9, at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St James.

The event, one of the signature attractions on the local hospitality industry calendar, is designed to highlight and showcase the successes of stakeholders to include individuals, resorts, attractions, and entertainment events that have made an exemplary contribution to the development of the sector.

Nominations for this year's staging will now close on Monday, October 7, with voting commencing on Tuesday, October 8, for a period of two weeks via a special website.

Already, several nominations have been received mainly in the category of 'Best All-inclusive' hotels under and over 300 rooms. Other popular categories include 'Best Attraction' and 'Best Tour Operator'.

Janet Silvera, who has been the coordinator of

Hospitality Jamaica since its inception 14 years ago, says the 2019 edition of the awards will be a glitzy affair, steeped in glamour and entertainment. She is expected to pull out some of the biggest names in the hospitality industry.

"It is critical for us to recognise and celebrate the individuals, organisations, and entities that make

Jamaica the destination that it is – the diversity that we offer, that is not known everywhere else, and the uniqueness that is Jamaica," said Silvera. "That is what we are seeking to recognise with these awards."

This year, the event will feature four new sections, which Silvera believes will open the door to more persons being recognised and awarded for their contributions. The four categories are: Best Opening of The Year, Best-Kept Secret, Best Cultural Experience/Tour, and Entertainment – Best Event.

"Four brand-new categories have been added to this year's list of awards, increasing the total to 17. Three companies will be shortlisted for each category after votes are tallied," said Silvera.

"We have decided on this format because all of these come together to form a large part of what makes the hospitality industry what it is."

She added: "The Entertainment – Best Event category will showcase events like Reggae Sumfest, Rebel Salute, Dream Weekend, and Buju Banton's Long Walk to Freedom, which all attracted significant numbers of visitors to the island and positively impacted our tourism product."

As part of its bold effort to outdo 2017, which generated significant local and regional attention, with Kevin Hendrickson walking away with the coveted Hospitality Personality of The Year award and hotel mogul Gordon 'Butch' Stewart copping the Pioneer Award, Silvera said a veteran in the industry who has been making waves locally and internationally will be accorded the Pioneer.

The list of categories is as follows:

## ACCOMMODATION

- Best All-Inclusive over 300 rooms
- Best All-Inclusive under 300 rooms
- Best EP/Business
- Best Small/Boutique
- Best Eco/Sustainable
- \*Best Opening of the Year [Best Hotel Launch of the year 2019]

## TOURISM

- Best Attraction
- Best Cultural Experience/Tour
- Best Tour Operator
- Best Purveyor
- \* Best-Kept Secret [Off-the-beaten path tourism entity]
- Best Resort Town

## FOOD

- Best Cuisine

## ENTERTAINMENT

- Best in Nightlife
- Best Event
- Hospitality Personality of the Year
- \* selected by the judges



Janet Silvera, Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator.  
CONTRIBUTED

# American Airlines team members give back to educational institutions in Jamaica

**A**ERICAN AIRLINES has proudly served Jamaica for more than 40 years. As part of the company's commitment to diversity, American Airlines

Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRG) work to educate, create awareness and promote inclusion initiatives.

The Caribbean EBRG is dedicated to educating people regarding the importance of the

Caribbean market as well as raise cultural awareness. Every year, this group coordinates a volunteer Adopt-an-Island project to benefit a community in the region.

This year Jamaica was selected. During a three-day mission, the team worked with three local institutions: Whitfield All-Age School in Kingston, Jamaica College in Kingston, and Grove Mount Basic School in Mandeville.

The EBRG chapters in London (LHR) and Miami (MIA), along with the Gregory McFarlane law firm, representatives from the Organization of Black

Aerospace



The Organization of Black Aeronautical Professionals supported this trip and visited with American Airlines. Seen here is one of their pilots, Halle Greene, along with a student.



American Airlines visited Grove Mount Basic in Mandeville and donated a library, school supplies and footwear for more than 50 children. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Professionals (OBAP) and the Princes Trust (founded by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales) were all part of this effort.

## MEET AND GREET

The team donated funds towards the building of a playground at Whitfield All-Age School to help achieve the Early Childhood Commission's regulation certification, as well as donating school supplies and books. At Jamaica College, the volunteers had an opportunity to connect with more than 500 high-performing students from more than 40 local schools. Ten American Airlines pilots plus four from OBAP presented motivational talks and empowerment sessions, where students had an opportunity to interact, ask questions about their experience in the industry, and learn about careers in aviation.

There were motivational and enrichment activities with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). In addition to these activities, the group donated supplies. They wrapped up their visit at Grove Mount Basic School and established a library for more than 50 students, and donated footwear, school equipment and other items.

"This mission's goal was to support, motivate and provide



The presidents of the Caribbean Employees Resource Group in London and Miami being presented with a plaque. This group planned the Adopt an Island trip to Jamaica.

expertise to these students as well as make their schools a better place," said Georgina Smith, EBRG LHR Chapter president. "These young people need to believe they can achieve their dreams. Of the 46 participants on this mission, a large number were born or went to school in Jamaica.

"The students heard first-hand about the importance of a STEM curriculum," said Joel Hall, EBRG

MIA Chapter president. "It is wonderful to be able to give back to the communities many are proud to call home."

American Airlines has served Jamaica since 1997 and today operates more than 95 weekly flights during peak season between Kingston and Montego Bay and Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Miami and Philadelphia.



# AMResorts

## *fêtes 2019 Scotiabank Vision Achievers*



From left: Jesus Gomez Gutierrez, hotel manager, Breathless Montego Bay Resort & Spa; Carlos Estrada, general manager, Breathless & Secrets Resorts Jamaica; and Fernando Garcia, area commercial director, AMResorts Jamaica.

**A** NUMBER of 2019 Scotiabank Vision Achievers were feted by the management and staff of AMResorts recently.

From having breakfast at the quaint ultra-luxurious boutique resort Zoetry Montego Bay and indulging in yoga and massages, to drinks and exciting activities at Breathless Montego Bay to lunch and relaxation at the peaceful, sophisticated paradise epitomised through Secrets Wild Orchids & St James, the Vision Achievers had a fun-filled, satisfying experience.

The services, food, rooms and fantastic views from each resort were unique in their offerings, each

appealing to different target groups.

In trying to describe the view from the pool deck at Breathless Montego Bay, Cheryl Neufville from Neufville Management & Communications Ltd, one of the Vision Achievers, exclaimed, “This resort is aptly named as the view truly leaves you breathless!”

Gerald Gentles, owner of G2 Travel Services and organiser of the day’s activities, said that this type of experience is what all his clients can look forward to when he plans their vacation and company events. “I take the stress out of the planning process for vacations, conferences, workshops, meetings and events in general for all



From left: Gerald Gentles, owner, G2 Travel Services; Kaylia Harrison, sales manager, Zoetry Montego Bay; Ibonne Pinilla, general manager, Zoetry; and Fernando Garcia, area commercial director, AMResorts Jamaica. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

my clients,” explained the 2019 Scotiabank Vision Achiever.

The group was accompanied by Scotiabank executives. For the ninth year, the bank has invested millions of dollars in an intensive 17-week training course provided by action coach Marcia Woon Choy for local small and medium

enterprises (SMEs) who were successful in their quest for the Vision Achiever programme.

Fernando Garcia, area commercial director of AMResorts Jamaica, expressed his delight with the partnership between G2 Travel Services and the resorts he represents.

AMResorts is a collection of luxury resorts in destinations such as Mexico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Zoetry Montego Bay, Breathless Montego Bay and Secrets St James and Wild Orchid are some of the properties that fall under AMResorts in Jamaica.

# Jamaica holds key meetings during IMEX America in Las Vegas

JAMAICA HAD another strong year of building relationships and closing contracts to build out future business at the Annual IMEX America Expo in Las Vegas, the largest meetings industry trade show in the US, held at the Sands Expo and Convention Center.

Led by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) Groups & Conventions Manager John Woolcock and business development officer Margaret Clarke-Wheatley, the team was joined by a number of destination partners, including Montego Bay Convention Centre (MBCC), AmStar, Jamaica Tours Ltd. (JTL), Island Routes, Round Hill Hotel & Villas, Playa Hotels & Resorts (Hyatt Ziva/Zilara, Hilton Rose Hall & Jewel Resorts), along with Glamour Luxury Destination Concierge and Moon Palace



Team Jamaica. Destination management companies, tour operators and hoteliers at IMEX America share lens time with Jamaica Tourist Board executives, including Donnie Dawson (right), deputy director of tourism – The Americas. CONTRIBUTED

Jamaica.

Jamaica's booth was busy and generated much interest throughout the three days with over 300

appointments held and numerous leads received for groups interested in hosting future events in Jamaica. Buyers hailed from the United

States, Canada and Latin America, with an unprecedented amount of interest from Brazil.

IMEX America provided the Jamaica Tourist Board the opportunity to follow up with Petrobras Incentive from Brazil to ensure the continued success of the on-island

programme. The Petrobras Incentive, which brought over a thousand people to Jamaica in May, has ensured that Jamaica is sourced by more Brazilian Planners for future programmes and is already generating continuous buzz for Jamaica in the Brazilian market.



Ana Mantovani, Eventesse Programme Manager for Petrobras Incentive 2019, along with John

Woolcock, groups & conventions manager for the Jamaica Tourist Board, met at IMEX America to catch up following the successful Petrobras Incentive that came to Jamaica earlier this year.

CONTRIBUTED

## Jamaica Travel Market in the UK



Edmund Barlett (third right), minister of tourism and Donovan White (second left), director of tourism, share lens with the winners of the Jamaica Tourist Board's Jamaica Travel Market Awards. The awards recognise the UK and Nordic tour operators and agencies that have achieved the largest growth in room night production to Jamaica during 2018. Front row (from left): Lisa White, Dial A Flight; Jade Andrews, Kenwood Travel; Elizabeth Fox, regional director UK/N Europe, Jamaica Tourist Board; and Laverne Walker, Sackville Travel. Back row (from left): Scott Edwards, Virgin Holidays and Mark Nisbet, Love Holidays – Jez Clarke – TUI. The winners of each category were: UK Tour Operator – British Airways Holidays; UK Travel Agency/Tour Operator – Lotus/Dial A Flight; UK Online Tour Operator – Love Holidays; UK Charter Tour Operator – TUI UK; Nordic Tour Operator – Ving; UK Long Haul Specialist Tour Operator – Kenwood Travel; UK Caribbean Specialist Travel Company – Sackville Travel and 'Your Choice Award' CONTRIBUTED

# CRAFTSMAN

wants to pass on skill



Cecil Hylton shows an unfinished wicker chair which he had been working on for a day. PHOTOS BY GARETH DAVIS

**Gareth Davis Sr**  
Gleaner Writer

PORT ANTONIO, PORTLAND:

WITH MORE than 40 years experience as a craft artist, Cecil Hylton, who specializes in building chairs, beds, tables, and baskets using wicker strings grown in the forest, is fearful that he will not be able to pass on his trade.

Hylton, a Rastaman, spend most of his days at the craft village at Allan Avenue, Port Antonio,

making luxury chairs, sofa, and tables, using wicker and cedar wood.

“Wicker is one of the oldest form of making furniture and other items,” said Hylton.

He added, “The wicker industry faltered in recent years, as manufacturers blindly bought wicker strings from persons who visited the forest during the moonshine period, resulting in termites infesting the strings. As a result, consumers suffered, as the furniture started to

rot after about a year. “But in my case, I ensure that I visit the forest during dark-night periods to collect wicker strings.”

#### LONGLASTING

He explained that when soaked in salt water, this acts as a preservative. The finish product, which also includes the use of cedar wood, can last up to 50 years and beyond.

“I have gotten good support from returning residents, the local

people, and a few tourists, who stop by to purchase hats, baskets, and cups. But my greatest challenge now is to pass on the skill and art to others, so as to preserve the future of wicker-making.”

According to Hylton, he is more than willing to go into the schools to teach his craft to students which could augur well for the future, especially as it relates to tourism. He argued that unless the powers that be intervenes, wicker-making could become extinct in another 10

years or so, as those involved in making furniture using wicker are ageing.

Emphasising the urgency of the situation, Hylton said he really wants to pass on all that he has learnt to the younger generation.

“It is in fact a good and prosperous livelihood. I am also urging the powers that be to open up an area where we can build furniture using wicker, and for it to be exported to other countries.”



Wicker artist Cecil Hylton soaking wicker strings in salt water.

Finished wicker products done by Cecil Hylton.

# Judie O’Sullivan elected to Jamaica Co-operative Automobile Limousine board

**Carl Gilchrist**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

JUDITH O’SULLIVAN has become the third woman to be elected to the Jamaica Co-operative Automobile and Limousine (JCAL) Tours Limited board in the organisation’s 30 years.

The tourism marketing consultant was also the first female from the Ocho Rios, St Ann region to be named to the executive.

Speaking to **Hospitality Jamaica** last Wednesday, O’Sullivan, who will serve for a two-year term, said hard work and integrity is what she has brought to the table.

“Well, it’s hard work. Integrity is number one because you know how the work can be. Integrity is my motto,” she asserted.

She added that she is motivated to ensure that JCAL members benefit from being with the co-operative.

“I am really and truly motivated to have everybody benefiting from their investment here at JCAL. The members buy their buses and then join the cooperative. As members; they pay fees and everybody would want to invest to gain a profit; so what motivates me is to help to get these members realising profit on their investments.”

## MARKETING EXPERTISE

Over the years, O’Sullivan has brought her marketing expertise to impact various areas of the business sector in the Ocho Rios region, both within and outside the tourism industry.

Currently, she is a marketing consultant for Five Star Water Sports, where “I assist them in the areas of cruise lines, just dealing with the marketing of their company – the tours, the weddings, everything to do with their operations. I assist in the marketing, the public relations, the familiarisation

trips, all of that”.

Meanwhile, JCAL President Brian Thelwell has hailed O’Sullivan’s election, saying her presence would bring another perspective to the running of the board.

“The softer side of business is not necessarily in the male purview, so maybe a female would give us the opportunity to see another perspective that we might not have been able to see,” Thelwell said.

“Also, it means we’re welcoming diversity and encouraging others of the female gender who might believe that maybe they’re not worthy as far as performing in a man’s world. We want to ensure that persons develop their full potential and become whatever they can be; so from that regard we welcome her to the board, and we will take every opportunity to assist her in developing herself.”



Judie O’Sullivan CONTRIBUTED



From left: Cedar Grove High School student Geraldine Campbell; Deputy Director of Tourism, Marketing, Camile Glenister; Courtleigh Hospitality Group Director of Marketing and Sales, Nicola Madden-Grieg, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith; Courtleigh Hospitality Group Sales Manager Celia Steele and St Jago High School student Joel James at Jamaica Tourist Board’s tourism exhibition, held on World Tourism Day recently at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel. CONTRIBUTED

# COME FOR THE FOOD

**Paul H. Williams**  
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

**T**HE FOOD Hygiene Bureau Jamaica, a non-government organisation in Kingston, held its 8th International Food Safety Conference last week at The Knutsford Court Hotel in St Andrew under the theme ‘Caribbean Preparedness – Regulatory control’.

“This conference seeks to bring together a team of world-known experts, government and regulatory bodies to share in plenary discussions, specialised workshops, network opportunity, as well as for industry to showcase their range of products to the international arena,” the Food Hygiene Bureau said.

Its objective, it also said, is “enhancing food safety and security through safe food practices and regulations, a recipe for tough times”. A range of topics, including regulatory controls, export controls, food importation challenges, food hazards and controls, farm-to-fork approach, new technology in farming, and consumer protection through labelling were discussed by presenters from India, the USA, UK, and of course, Jamaica.

One of the presenters from Jamaica was Nicola Madden-Grieg, group director of marketing and sales at Courtleigh Hotel and Suites. Speaking in the



Nicola Madden Grieg, chair of the Jamaica Gastronomy Tourism Network, speaking about ‘Gastronomy and Brand Jamaica’ on the opening day of the Food Hygiene Bureau Jamaica’s 8th International Food Safety and Security Conference, held inside The Knutsford Court Hotel in St Andrew on Tuesday, September 24.



Founder and president of Countrystyle Community Tourism Network, Diana McIntyre Pike, talking with Floyd Green, minister of state in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries, on the opening day of the Food Hygiene Bureau Jamaica’s 8th International Food Safety and Security Conference. PHOTOS BY

PAUL WILLIAMS

capacity as chairperson of the Jamaica Gastronomy Tourism Network, her presentation, titled ‘Gastronomy and Brand Jamaica’, took a twist from the rest. She spoke about food tourism, moreso, Jamaica as a destination for food.

## CRITICAL FOR GROWTH

“Obviously, for us, gastronomy is critical to the growth of tourism and, therefore, ensuring that our food supply is safe and one that we can promote is critical to the process,” she told the gathering. It is all about quality, consistency and authenticity, she said. Gastronomy is the art of choosing, cooking and eating good food.

The essence of her presentation was that people should be coming to Jamaica not mainly for the weather and the beaches only, but also for its food. It should be the gastronomy destination. She said Jamaica is ranked 11th on the **Cambridge World Dictionary of Food Index**, which classifies products that are authentic to destinations.

“We do have our pedigree as far as cuisine is concerned,” she said, and we need to capitalise on that. And after a 2016 baseline study found that food was the sixth main reason why visitors come to Jamaica, a master brand, Taste Jamaica, was established to promote Jamaican gastronomy both locally and international through various platforms. Another baseline study, in 2017, reported that food is now the second reason why people choose Destination Jamaica.

Asserting that we need to go beyond “jerk”, Madden Grieg said, “We have to expand our minds in terms of what is Jamaican cuisine and Jamaican food and how we utilise our asset.”



Should people be coming to Jamaica for escoveitched fish?



Ophelia Carter, lead singer with the resident band at Secrets Resort in Montego Bay, giving the students in attendance much to scream and cheer for at the Tourism Career Expo concert, inside The Jamaica Pegasus hotel, on Friday, September 27.



Jamique Ensemble in an electrifying performance at the Tourism Career Expo concert. PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

# Hundreds of hotel rooms and jobs to come

**Paul H. Williams**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**T**HE WEEK of September 22-28 was observed as Tourism Awareness Week, with World Tourism Day being the 27th.

Under the theme ‘Tourism and Jobs – A better future for all’, the Ministry of Tourism highlighted its human capital development strategy, as well as the number of traditional and non-traditional jobs available in the sector.

Key messages that were conveyed during the week included tourism is a strong driver of economic growth and development; it provides several income-earning opportunities; careers in tourism are wide and diverse; and tourism is an inclusive industry.

Kicking off with a church service at Church on the Rock in St Andrew, the week included career talks at select schools islandwide; a career expo at the Jamaica Tourist Board library in New Kingston; and a Tourism Linkages Network pop-up kitchen and fashion show at the PanJam Breezeway, also in New Kingston.

On World Tourism Day, there was a tourism career expo and concert inside The Jamaica Pegasus hotel. After the talks and presentations, patrons, mainly high-school students, were treated to top-class entertainment from Agent



Something onstage had the rapt attention of these students at the Tourism Career Expo concert inside The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.

Sasco and others. It was a fitting way to end the World Tourism Day activities, entertainment being a major element of tourism and hospitality.

World Tourism Day is celebrated “to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of

tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value” the Ministry of Tourism said. “As the day set aside in the United Nations calendar, the celebration seeks to highlight tourism’s potential to contribute to reaching the sustainable development goals and



One day, maybe, Jerome Scott, a sixth-former at St Thomas Technical High School, will be an airline pilot.



Agent Sasco ended the day on a high note with his well-received performance at the Tourism Career Expo concert inside The Jamaica Pegasus hotel on Friday, September 27.

addressing some of the most pressing challenges of today,” the ministry also said.

According to the ministry, the industry drives nine per cent of Jamaica’s gross domestic product (GDP) and contributes in revenue terms some 20 per cent of GDP. For January-June 2019, real GDP was estimated to have increased by 1.4 per cent, relative to the corresponding period for 2018. This increase was due to the growth in the service industry, particularly with hotels and restaurants. The sector earnings have grown from US\$369 million in 2017 to US\$431 million in 2018. Tourism now directly employs 120,000 people or 10 per cent of the labour force.

“This tourism growth underscores the invaluable worth of the sector as a powerful driver of economic and social development. This continued growth of the tourism sector in Jamaica will depend on the right people with the right skills being available to meet the new human capital demands of the sector,” the ministry said.

There will be more job opportunities this year, the ministry said, with some 1,005 new hotel rooms; and come next year, according to the ministry, “Jamaica

will witness the largest growth in hotel rooms ever, with the expansion of current hotels and the construction of new ones.

“When you consider the ratio of 2.3 employees per room, that is another 41,000 jobs. This makes the need for a cadre of well-trained, quality workers to support the sector an absolute priority,” the ministry also said.

The tourism ministry also mentioned the creation of the Jamaica Centre for Tourism Innovation, an international accreditation platform for employees within the sector. Since April 2018, some 1,893 people have been certified, and another 514 are in training. The facility offers a practical curriculum that complements existing hospitality programmes at the country’s tertiary institutions, and targets senior hospitality professionals.

“Prioritising human capital development is an absolute necessity, as we seek to improve employment opportunities in the sector and sustain our award-winning and globally competitive tourism product. It is for this reason we are proud to join the world in celebrating a week, which embraces the theme, ‘Tourism and jobs – a better future for all’,” the ministry stated.



Manchester High School students showing off the gifts they got from the Jamaica Tourist Board during the Tourism Career Expo concert.



Posters showcasing an industry that is expected to provide hundreds of new hotel rooms, resulting in many jobs over the next couple of years. PHOTOS PAUL WILLIAMS

# NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!!!

SELECT THE '**BEST OF THE BEST**'  
IN TOURISM



## HOSPITALITY JAMAICA AWARDS 2019

### CATEGORIES

#### ACCOMMODATION

Best All-Inclusive over 300 rooms  
Best All-Inclusive under 300 rooms  
Best EP/ Business  
Best Small/Boutique  
Best Eco/Sustainable  
Best Opening of the Year  
*[Best Hotel Launch of the year 2019]*

#### TOURISM

Best Attraction  
Best Culture Experience/Tour  
Best Tour Operator  
Best Purveyor  
Best Resort Town  
\*Best Kept Secret  
*[Off-the-beaten path tourism entity]*

#### FOOD

Best Cuisine

#### ENTERTAINMENT

Best Nightlife  
Best Event

#### HOSPITALITY PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

\*Selected by judges

## NOMINATION CLOSES OCTOBER 7

#### Entries Must Include:

\*Nominee's name, address and telephone number | \*Brief description of the specific reasons for nominating an organization  
\*Category in which you are nominating your candidate | Your name, address and telephone number

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