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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2020

ARTISANS

key players in Ja's
tourism success



Cruisin' around in Port Royal

Root art and my 'twin brother'

Bright Side Festival rocks Jewel Paradise Cove with reggae music

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Artisans

key players in Jamaica's tourism success

JANET SILVERA

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

JAMAICA'S SUCCESS as a tourism destination can be linked to various elements, chief among them the often overlooked street food and the art and craft sectors and the artisans who produce these items, oftentimes through very arduous labour.

Veteran artisan Jerome Johnson is among several artisans who, for many years, have been fulfilling the desires of visitors to preserve their experiences by connecting them to the heritage and culture of Jamaica through memorabilia.

On weeknights, Johnson can be found at Couples Sans Souci in St Mary, selling his handmade craft items on property, a courtesy extended to him by the hotel's management which took over the property 14 years ago, and which, essentially, enables him to add to the

Jamaican cultural experience and, at the same time, make a good living.

"I have been coming here for like 20 years now. They treat me good and everything. It was my brother who used to be here before, but my brother is not around," he said.

"All of these are made in Jamaica," he

said, pointing to his

array of craft items which ranged from jewellery to garments and wood sculptures. "I do some of them and what I don't do, my friends do. A lot of people eat from this, because I have a lot of friends who do this work. I get the opportunity to sell so I am here all the days, and I only take a break on weekends."



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

From left: Debbie Kerr shares lens with her sister Janice Kerr and mother Greta Kerr at the Couples Sans Souci anniversary party.

For Johnson, his top in-demand product is his turtle carvings, which he started doing in honour of the highly popular, now-deceased turtle, Charlie, who lived in a pond at the property for many years. His Bob Marley pieces, and any item emblazoned with the 'One Love' slogan are also hot items.

"It is more than words can say to

be here every day. It's like a dream come true for me. The general manager, Mr Battaglia, is the one who gave us the opportunity; he has a good heart," Johnson said.

The Jamaican craft sector and the tourism industry have always had a symbiotic relationship, as the collection of souvenirs and mementos is a popular activity for the majority of visitors to the island. In fact, the Association of Caribbean States in a 2017 article titled the 'Craft Sector in Tourism', noted that for the countries, like Jamaica, sales of locally made products to tourists and tourism businesses offer an important source of international exchange and a means of channelling revenues from tourism back into national and local economies.

"Craft is evocative of the local history, culture and tradition, and thus is inextricably linked to the tourism product and experience of the locality from which it originates. The craft tells the story of the place and the people, thereby

Josh and Steph Ivil, visitors to Couples San Souci who enjoy the diversity of the Jamaican culture.

generating interest and potentially repeat visits,” the ACS noted.

Janice Buchanan from Ocho Rios is another craft vendor who sells authentic Jamaican craft and other items at Couples San Souci. The 43-year-old has been involved in the craft industry for the past 23 years, and her sojourn has spanned even as far as Negril.

“Just recently, I got the opportunity to come here and I am very grateful. I used to showcase at Beaches Negril, but because of the distance I stopped selling in Negril,” she said.

“When you are in the craft market, it is very competitive, but this place is a great place. You just know that when you come here, you have to attire yourself properly and you know the rules,” she said.

The cultural food tradition often seen within the streets of Jamaica has been brought within the walls of some hotels on the north coast. Spotted at San Souci was Vinell Fairweather of Mango Valley in St Mary, who is part of a two-man team which has been faithfully delivering coconuts to the property for years.

According to him, while he has in the business for 12 years, his partner has been delivering coconuts several days per week to the hotel for approximately 40 years, long before Couples Resorts acquired it

One night per week, Fairweather comes to the property to cut jelly coconuts the traditional Jamaican way, with a machete, for the guests.

“I deliver jelly ever Monday and Tuesday, and I come here on Thursdays and Saturdays,” he said.

St Catherine native Wayne Dennis has been supplying warm, roasted peanuts, which he sources in St Elizabeth and hands out from his cart at the property.

Dennis comes to the hotel every Tuesday night and during holiday periods to prepare his warm peanuts and hand them out the delighted guests. He also visits other hotels to undertake the same task, but describes San Souci as his ‘original place’ which has provided a guaranteed market for his peanuts for the past 29 years, with orders of as much as 320 packs per night, depending on the house count.

“I used to sell on the streets in Ocho Rios, and SuperClubs used to run this hotel, and said they wanted to start it and see if di guest dem would like it. And them order 100 pack fi di first night and in less than 20 minutes, di guest dem eat it off,” Dennis told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

“The guests dem love it and from there, dem seh ‘Carry more, carry more’, till me deh here till now,” he said.

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Artisan Jerome Johnson (left) shows the diversity of his jewellery to visitor Shane Clanson, a guest of Couples Sans Souci, during the resort’s anniversary party last Friday night.



Artisan Marilyn Blake (right) sells her clothing to Lynda Callander, a guest at Couples Sans Souci.



PHOTOS BY LEON JACKSON

The old Hampden Wharf building.

Falmouth's Artisan Village 90 per cent ready after \$700-million investment

LEON JACKSON

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

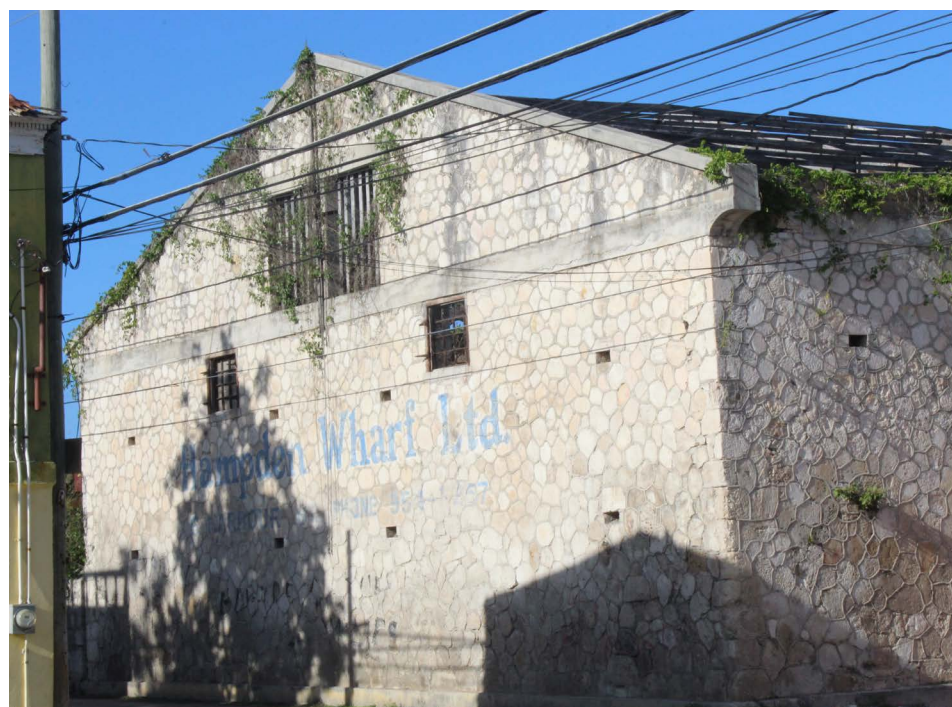
A \$700-MILLION investment by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) has transformed the old Hampden Wharf building on Harbour Street in Falmouth into a first of its kind Jamaica Artisan Village.

The village is built on lands leased from the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ).

“The Artisan Village is intended to offer Jamaicans and visitors a unique experience that includes music, food, cultural arts and craft. It will offer Jamaicans with creative abilities an opportunity to connect to the tourism value chain and provide unique products for patrons to take home,” Dr Carey Wallace, executive director of the TEF, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

According to him, handcraft is one of the fastest growing activities and is an integral part of the tourism experience for international tourists.

The village will provide training for craft producers, supporting the development of new designs, and showcasing Jamaica’s



A frontal view of the Hampden Wharf building.

unique artisanal products.

Admitting a \$35-million overrun on its original budget, Dr Wallace said the village was 90 per cent completed. Within days, he expects to reveal a theme for the facility. “Most likely it will surround rum and sugar. Presently, we are courting artisans who will be available to our tourism guests.”

Welcoming the added value to attractions for cruise ship passengers docking at the busy historic port, Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett argued that Falmouth needed attractions to help keep the visitors in the town.

“When visitors spend in the town, the wealth from the guests benefits the people. I am very proud that the Artisan Village has maintained the Georgian architectural integrity for which Falmouth is known throughout the world. It adds to Falmouth’s mystique,” he stated.

The Falmouth Historic District was declared a national monument in 1996. Then it had intact the largest collection of Georgian buildings in the Caribbean.

William Tatham, vice-president of the PAJ,

expressed his delight at the transformation of the old Hampden Wharf buildings, which at one time served as a store house for rum and sugar, which was then shipped to markets in England,

He said it further enhanced the presence of the development of Falmouth.

Custos Paul Muschett, an advocate of historical preservation, was also welcoming of the maintenance of the Georgian architecture of the town, stating how pleased he was with how the village had been built.

His only regret, he said, was the fact that they were not able to maintain the original use of the Hampden Wharf.

“The construction represents the only refurbishing of any building in Falmouth, which has maintained the Georgian architecture for which Falmouth is famous. Twenty-one Market Street is one example of which I speak. I feel pain every time I pass by the building,” he noted.

Expressing his hope there will be opportunities to offer leather products to visitors to the village, the custos said worldwide travellers love leather, which has the ability to provide unique designs.



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Sections of The Artisan Village expected to be completed by June 2020.

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Bahamian Businesswomen produce delegate bags for Caribbean tourism conference

CLOSE TO 1,000 delegates who will converge in Nassau this week for the 2020 edition of Caribbean Travel Marketplace will collect some meaningful mementos produced by entrepreneurs who survived last year's Hurricane Dorian, which displaced thousands in northern Bahamas.

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), along with the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) and the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board, led the fundraising initiative to support the creation of authentically Bahamian 'swag bags' for the region's largest and longest-standing tourism marketing event, hosted at Baha Mar resort in Nassau.

Bahamian art and craft industry matriarchs Agatha Mackey and Mavis Dean have been overseeing the project for months during which they have trained displaced workers to create stylish and useful bags incorporating straw and raffia.

"We are so pleased to be able to add this personal touch to Marketplace, showcasing and supporting Bahamian talent while supporting those who were impacted by Hurricane Dorian," said CHTA President and Barbados hotelier Patricia Affonso Dass, who said this year's initiative is a departure from the promotional items that are predominantly sourced from Asia.

Abaconians June Basset and Comfort Smith both lost their homes and have been living in a shelter in Nassau since the Category 5 storm in September. They have expressed their sincere thanks for the training and look forward to rebuilding their lives and expanding their trade back home in The Abacos.

The bags will feature the Bahamian flag in raffia and include handmade chocolates produced by the Grand Bahama-based Bootleg Chocolates, which is co-owned by entrepreneur Amanda Ormerod-Mullenmade. The treats are made with fresh fruit, berries, spices and rum that are indigenous to the region.

A special feature of this year's Caribbean Travel Marketplace will be the integration of the Tru Tru Bahamian mini-marketplace experience that celebrates rich Bahamian culture and entrepreneurship.

According to Carlton Russell, president of the BHTA, the annual festival was created to showcase the best of Bahamian food, music, dance, art and craft. "It is a celebration of what is truly Bahamian, and we are pleased to be able to share a sample of it with the regional and global tourism community."

Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2020 to welcome top-tier travel agent to sell the region

THE CARIBBEAN Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has introduced a pilot programme to include a group of leading travel agents from across the United States at next week's Caribbean Travel Marketplace in The Bahamas.

Karen Whitt, CHTA's first vice-president and chair of Caribbean Travel Marketplace, announced that in addition to the wholesalers and tour operators who traditionally attend Marketplace from around the world, top Caribbean-selling travel agents from New York and Rhode Island to Tennessee and Texas will assemble at the popular Baha Mar resort campus in Nassau to meet with operators of Caribbean hotels, resorts and attractions.

"Throughout the years, we've discussed the idea of how to incorporate the travel agent industry into our event and we have a lot of different ideas on how this could be done successfully," said Whitt, who serves as vice-president of marketing and brand development for the Hartling Group in Turks and Caicos Islands.

She explained that to kick-start the process, CHTA invited a select group of top-tier agents to experience Marketplace 2020, participate



Bag maker Comfort Smith putting the finishing touch on the Caribbean Travel Marketplace bags.

as a buyer, and provide feedback on the event. "This feedback will help shape policies into the future. However, what we can assure is that our Caribbean suppliers are very excited about this pilot program and its potential to increase business to the region," Whitt added.

Whitt, who leads the marketing team at The Shore Club Turks and Caicos, which was recently



June Bassett of The Bahamas shows off the design of the bags for Caribbean Travel Marketplace.

named the No.1 Caribbean resort by **Travel + Leisure** readers, said that while the agents are in Nassau, they will meet with executives from a cross section of destinations and hotels, in addition to participating in site inspections with select hotels on the island.

The 2020 edition of Caribbean Travel Marketplace, slated for The Bahamas from January 21 to 23, is a collaboration with local partners



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Rooms Resort team conducting business at Caribbean Travel Marketplace.

Baha Mar, the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation, and the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board.

The event will be held at Baha Mar's Performing Arts and Convention Center, at one of the newest and most impressive resorts in the Caribbean.

There has been strong interest in buyer delegates, with 225 delegates from 115 companies registered for the meetings. They will come from Australia, The Bahamas, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Portugal, Puerto Rico, the Russian Federation, Spain,

St Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

Produced by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, this year's Caribbean Travel Marketplace host sponsors are the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation, Baha Mar, and Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board, while platinum sponsors include ADARA; AMResorts; Figment Design; Interval International; Marketplace Excellence; Mastercard; STR; TravelClick, an Amadeus company; Travelzoo; US Virgin Islands.



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Fort Charles is said to be the first fort built to protect Jamaica.

The Old Naval Hospital in Port Royal.



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



A monument to mark the spot where the first coconut tree was planted on the Palisadoes peninsula in March 1869.



A plaque (in St Peter's Church) laid in memory of Frenchman Lewis Galdy, who survived the 1692 Port Royal earthquake in dramatic fashion.

PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS
Giddy House is actually the old Royal Artillery Store that was tilted by the 1907 earthquake.

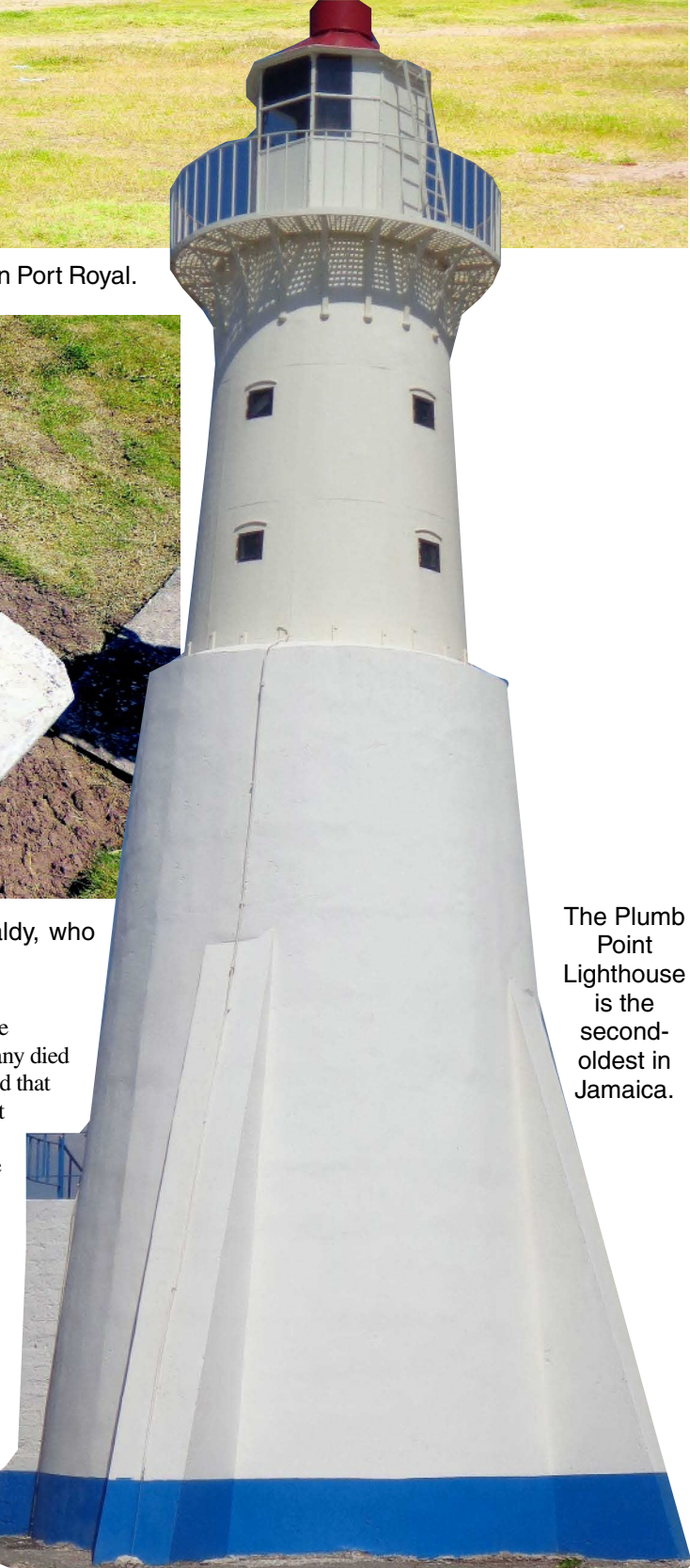
Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IT WAS with much excitement that Port Royal, the quaint little village, located at the end of the Palisadoes peninsula that partially encloses Kingston Harbour, welcomed its first cruise ship, the *Marella Discovery II*.
Some people are happy about it, others are not – for various reasons. But its arrival is certainly a turning point for cruise tourism in Jamaica in particular, and the story of Port Royal in general. It was a historic moment.
It's indeed a storied place with the most famous story about it being the 1692 earthquake, which tossed a major part of the settlement, then known as 'The Wickedest City on Earth', into the sea. It is replete with history, heritage and romance, and has been the subject of many debates for several decades.
Its development, or lack therefore, is what people love to talk about with much passion. Everybody seems to have a plan for it; some were proffered, others are still embedded in the brains of the conceptualisers.

But it was the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ) which took the mantle of leadership, establishing a cruise port on nine acres of land at the Old Coal Wharf, a section adjacent to what was historically known as the Royal Naval Dockyard. It is situated between Morgan's Harbour and the Plumb Point Lighthouse.
The interesting thing about the port is that passengers will go to and from the ships via a floating pier (sea walk). "This method eliminated the need for piling and dredging," the PAJ says. However, some people believe the establishment of the said port was a bad idea, and that infrastructurally, Port Royal cannot sustain a cruise tourist industry by itself.
So, how will this destination be marketed? For, as aforesaid, it has an internationally known history and heritage, is a major seafood destination for locals, and has a complex ecology consisting of very interesting flora and fauna. The PAJ is now promoting it as a 'cultural and heritage hotspot' and with entertainment in the mix. What then, is in this hotspot? What are the tourists expected to see and do?
As is, though the town is popular with seafood lovers, it is not a place where people frequent for its entertainment spots.

So, it is left to be seen how it will evolve into an entertainment Mecca. And without doubt, it is big on heritage, with many sites scattered over the peninsula and the town proper.
HISTORY
The most famous of such sites is Fort Charles, whose construction started in 1656. Lord Nelson was briefly in charge of it in 1779. In the 18th century, it became the headquarters of the Royal Navy, and carried a full complement of 104 guns.
The fort was never attacked, but it was a very busy place. Many of the legendary British admirals were stationed there. It consists of Nelson's Quarterdeck, the Victoria and Albert Battery and Giddy House, the old Royal Artillery Store that was tilted by the 1907 earthquake.
The research also revealed that the Fort Charles Maritime Museum is in the private quarters of Lord Nelson, and that the Archaeological Museum and Conservation Centre was once housed in the Old Naval Hospital, a two-storey structure originally made of prefabricated iron sections brought from England in 1819. A museum is part of the current plans.

From the hospital to the Naval Cemetery, on the outskirts of the town, the dead would be taken. Many died from yellow fever in the early 1800s. And it is said that Henry Morgan, former pirate and twice lieutenant governor of Jamaica, was interred there.
Another version said Morgan's remains were laid to rest in a nearby cemetery, which was washed away by the tsunami that followed the 1692 earthquake, which Lewis Galdy, a Frenchman, survived. His remains are said to be lying in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, which was destroyed three times before the current structure.
Other sites include the Plumb Point Lighthouse, the second-oldest in Jamaica; a monument erected to mark the spot where the first coconut tree was plant on the strip, in March 1869; the ruins of Fort Rocky; and the old gaol on Gaol Alley.



The Plumb Point Lighthouse is the second-oldest in Jamaica.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

From left: TenSing Pen's Evelyn Smith, daughter Annecia, husband Joseph Smith, hotelier Daniel Grizzle and son Nelson Smith (front).



Minister of Tourism Edmund Barlett (right) converses with brother of the deceased, John Wright.

Tourism sector turns out to celebrate the life of *Carolyn Wright*

RONDEL VILLAGE'S Carolyn Wright's contribution to Jamaica's tourism industry spanned two decades, both in the private and public spheres.

She was a dedicated member of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), representing the Negril Chapter as a councillor from 2001 until 2016, and serving as the chairperson for five years. She also served as a member of the association's marketing committee between 2001 and 2004.

Wright also represented the JHTA at a regional level as one of Jamaica's board members of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association from 2014 to 2016 and 2018-2019.

During a thanksgiving service for Wright at the Mary Gate of Heaven Catholic Church in Negril two weekends ago, former President of the JHTA, Evelyn Smith, in a soul-stirring tribute said, "Carolyn



From left: Former Jamaica Tourist Board boss ladies, Janice Allen and Patricia Samuels, in a jovial mood with current boss Odette Dyer.

was a very supportive and valuable member of the JHTA who participated fully in the activities of the association at all levels. She could always be relied on to keep

us abreast of what was happening and to provide us with important feedback on issues. Carolyn was the type of member that every association would love to have".



From left: Tourism Enhancement Fund's Dr Carey Wallace, Rockhouse's Damion Salmon, Sandy Haven's Anne Chen and Sandal Resorts' Wayne Cummings.

Smith added that few would understand the dedication it takes to travel from Negril to Kingston to attend early-morning board meetings, and she had the privilege

to travel with Wright on many of those treks between 2011 and 2016. "I valued the opportunity to talk and gain her perspectives on various issues relating to tourism,



From left: Hedonism II's Kevin Levee, Hilton Rose Hall's Carol Bourke, AMSTAR DMC's Richard Bourke, and Sunset at the Palm's Andre Dhanpaul.

as well as tourism's role and responsibility in our society."

In Negril, Wright's reach was strong and vibrant. Throughout her decades of service, she served on a wide range of committees – Spring Break, Negril events, area marketing, beach regeneration, to name a few. As chapter chair, she worked on a joint marketing programme with the Chamber of Commerce which engaged members in marketing workshops, developed packages highlighting 'Negril Carnival', 'Spring Break', 'Summer Madness', the 'Negril Triathlon', and 'Reggae Marathon'; and also resulted in positive media, including a Travel Channel feature.

Wright Smith said that she worked with her on the vision that Negril should be allowed to host the JAPEX (Jamaica Product Exchange) too and galvanised support from large and small players, locally and internationally, to host the event, the first and only time in 2006.

As area chairman, Wright was an advocate for "doing right" by Negril. She understood that the responsibility of an area chairman and was to be vocal on issues impacting the area, engaged the membership in programmes for their betterment, while ensuring communication flow from the JHTA national body to the area.

She advocated on many issues, from security, beach regeneration, resort beautification, escalating utility costs and property taxes, horses on the beach and noise. She never hesitated to first speak or meet with the relevant authority, then write, and, if necessary, speak with the media.

Wright also extended her spirit of service to the Negril Chamber of Commerce and for many years was a director of that organisation.

Carolyn Wright will be missed. **Hospitality Jamaica** brings highlights of the service celebrating her life.



Father James Bok escorts the mother of the deceased, Joyce Wright (centre), and her daughter, Celina Wilson, from the church.



From left: Opposition Spokesman on Tourism Dr Wykeham McNeill (cousin of the deceased); Hedonism II's Cecile Levee, President of the JHTA, Omar Robinson; and Sandy Haven's Robert Headley.



The Rondel Village team out in support of their former boss.

Rebellion on stage at the Bright Side Festival.



BRIGHT SIDE FESTIVAL

rocks Jewel Paradise Cove with reggae music



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Italian reggae artist Alborosie performing at the Bright Side Festival.

CARL GILCHRIST
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR THE fifth straight year, Island Gigs took the Bright Side Festival to the Jewel Paradise Cove in Runaway Bay, with reggae music the featured genre for the second consecutive year.

As customary, the hotel was booked out exclusively for fans of the festival, which was held from January 9-13 and which featured the High Times Cannabis Lounge.

Local and international acts – Rebellion, Jah 9, Lutan Fyah, Native Wayne, Earthkry, Alborosie and Common Kings – along with DJ Mackle, kept the mostly California crowd entertained.

There were multiple performances by the artistes over the five days. In addition, there were acoustic performances by Eric Rachmany, lead singer of Rebellion, and

Kyle Ahern, guitarist with the band.

Reggae singer Lila Ike and actress Sheryl Lee Ralph were among the few Jamaicans who visited the Bright Side Festival

Rachmany, whose band Rebellion was making their second successive appearance on the show, said the aggregation was happy to be in Jamaica again and is trying to be at the Rebel Salute show for next year.

Alborosie, who performed with his band Shengen Clan, told **Hospitality Jamaica**, “It was very good, I enjoyed myself,” after exiting the stage.

Media liaison for the festival, Sean ‘Contractor’ Edwards, hailed the event a success

“The festival went great,” Edwards said. “It was incident-free, lots of clean, wholesome reggae music, and all the fans were very happy.”

JEWEL PARADISE COVE

voted Jamaica's Best Wellness Retreat for 2019 by World Spa Awards

THE 225-ROOM Jewel Paradise Cove Beach Resort and Spa in Runaway Bay, St Ann, has been voted Jamaica's Best Wellness Retreat for 2019 by World Spa Awards.

The wellness programme at Jewel Paradise Cove includes hosting three wellness retreats annually – in May, August and – December and wellness programmes throughout the year done by Sienna Creasy, spa director for Hilton Rose Hall Resorts and Spa, and Jewel Resorts.

Creasy, an international yoga instructor, is the innovator of reggaeates, an exercise that combines reggae and Pilates.

She explained that the hotel's retreat programme includes the integration of local teachers; international practices; signature classes, including yoga, meditation, sound healing, paddleboard yoga, zumba, yahsuh, reggaeates, among others.

"We are truly proud to have received this award and acknowledgment for our efforts!" Creasy told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

General Manager at Jewel Paradise Cove, Barbara Burton, was pleased with the award and pointed to other facilities.

"In addition to that, we have our own fitness professional on property, our own tennis pro on property, so there is always a myriad of wellness activities. We are one of the few properties that have a fit trail that meanders through the property, where the guests can use that fitness routine," Burton explained.

"So yes, it's in addition to a great all-inclusive vacation, we want to focus on the wellness of mind, body



The World Spa Award certificate presented to Jewel Paradise Cove.

and spirit."

Carl Gilchrist



Jewel Paradise Cove award-winning spa.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



PHOTO BY CARL GILCHRIST

Claudette Kenlock (right), HR manager at Mystic Mountain, presents Moneague College student Sari Israel-Graham with her package as Nalini Sooklal (centre) of Recycling Partners of Jamaica looks on.

Mystic Mountain Foundation launches Youth Environment and Tourism Project

CARL GILCHRIST

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

A NEW venture to positively impact the environment of three parishes along the north coast was started recently when Mystic Mountain Rainforest Foundation launched the Youth Environment and Tourism Project.

The project sees schools in St Mary, St Ann and Trelawny being sponsored by the Foundation, with the target for environment clubs within participating schools to vastly increase their collection of plastic bottles from the environment.

The effort is supported by the Recycling Partners of Jamaica (RPJ), which will recycle the bottles.

Speaking at the launch, which was held at the Ocho Rios attraction, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Mystic Mountain Mike Drakulich underscored the importance of taking care of the environment.

He disclosed that the location of Mystic Mountain was used previously as an illegal dump but was transformed into a world-renowned tourist attraction, which is now self-sufficient in electricity and water.

With students from several schools across all three parishes present, Executive Chairman of RPJ Dr Damien King challenged

the students to look after the environment and urged proper garbage disposal. He, however, went on to congratulate them for the work they have doing through the various environment clubs.

Students from Iona and Horace Clarke High, Moneague College, Brown's Town, York Castle and Muschett High, and Steer Town Academy were among those in attendance. They received packages that included bags, T-shirts, gloves, among other necessary items to aid in their efforts.

Sean Witter, a teacher at Muschett High in Wakefield, Trelawny, accompanied his students to the launch, citing the importance of the event.

"We think it's very important for them to be cognisant of the importance of protecting the environment and what is involved. We love what is going on here and wanted to be a part of it," he told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

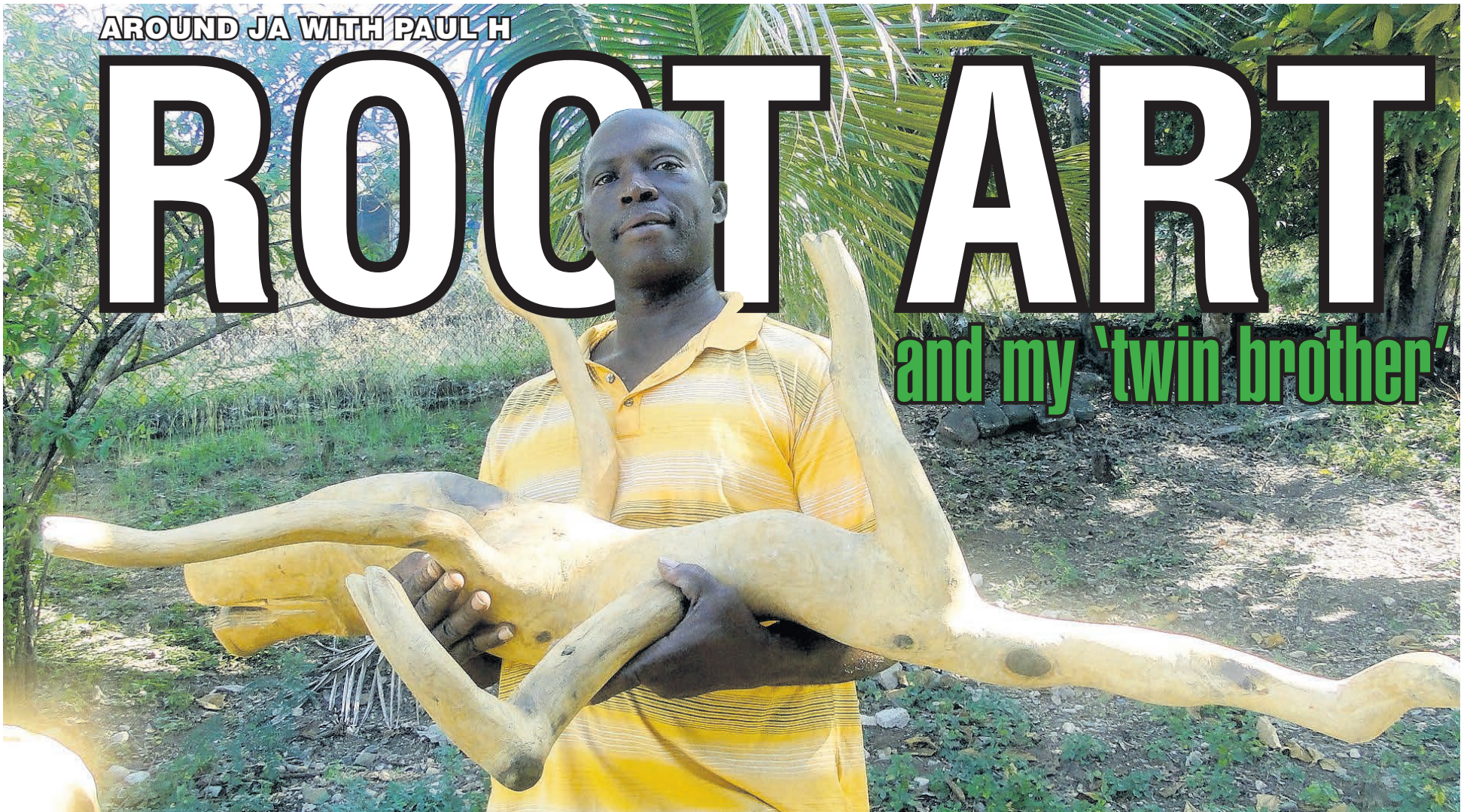
Witter said that moving forward; the school will be more involved in taking care of the environment.

Programme Manager at Mystic Mountain Rainforest Foundation, Ezekiel Russell, said the company's thrust for a better environment is part of its corporate social responsibility.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

ROOT ART

and my 'twin brother'



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

Pulling out tree roots has unearthed the creativity that laid dormant within Courtney Brown's brain for most of his life.

I LOVE art, especially if it is very different from that which I see regularly, something to gawk at and to inspire my own artistic abilities. So, when I heard of a man from St Thomas who turned tree roots into thought-provoking works of art, I did not hesitate to go see him at Eleven Miles, Bull Bay.

Upon arrival, the friend who told me about him said he

looks like me. I brushed his comments aside because I have heard many utterances about people who look like me before, and I was never convinced. So, the latest utterance was not earth-shattering.

What struck me; however, were the 'sculptures' that were lined up waiting for my arrival. I sat in the car trying to figure out what they were. They looked like alien creatures from

another space and time. They were contorted as if they were dancing. These were what I was brought to see, and they looked different from any wood sculptures I had seen before.

Brimming with questions, I pulled my ageing and creaking body from the car and looked around for my friend and the sculptor. There they were, standing under a tree smiling, and anticipating my reaction.



The 'discussion' on global warming is on in earnest.



CONTRIBUTED

People are convinced that intuitive artist Courtney Brown (right) of Eleven Miles, Bull Bay, St Thomas, is Hospitality Jamaica writer Paul H. Williams' long-lost 'twin brother'.



May I have this dance?

Yes, the man has black skin, is about my height, has a gap between his teeth, and a sturdy upper body like mine, but nothing jumps out at me to get me to say, 'Wow!' He was awestruck, and so was my friend. After brief pleasantries it was question time.

But as we chatted, I kept glancing at him, and my focus was now distracted. Then, suddenly I told him that I would look like him when I get older, assuming that I am the younger one, and they laughed. The conversation was now about us 'twins'.

Yes, there is a slight resemblance, but I am a little taller. His name is Courtney Brown, and his head is smaller than mine, and our smiles reveal our gaps. Something was going on, and my friend was very fascinated.

Later in the evening, a Facebook post drew the most responses I have had in a long while. That he is my 'twin' was the general conclusion. My father has some explanation to do, some said. Yet, he is from the west, and he's dead. So, I laid the matter to rest. It is just nature playing with us.

Back to the root art, Brown said he got into working with lignum vitae roots by chance in November 2015. The first piece he pulled out, he said, looked a dog, and

'While a making it, mi mind more relax, focus, it make people laugh, and whatever I can do to make people laugh I feel like it's a good thing.'

he decided immediately to make something with it. He took it home "and get to work right away", he said.

Whatever he created with it became an instant attraction. People were amazed, started to call him a sculptor, and created all sorts of excitement. He was motivated and decided to make some more, as a sort of creative zeal had taken him over.

He would push the roots, one of which he alone cannot lift, in a wheelbarrow for "four to five miles uphill" to transform them. He said he had never trained for such artistic work, had never forayed in the arts, and had never dreamt of such. "I never know that it in mi," he revealed. And now he has "developed a passion" for it. One particular piece took him three days to be uprooted.

The pieces have drawn much admiration from his associates and friends, but most of them are still

works in progress. As they stand, they are not exactly the way they were when he first dug them out. He had to trim and cut off pieces that were not in line with his concepts. Then he used arbitrary tools to create facial features.

Individually, they have their own essence, but together they look like they are having a discussion about what to do with us Earthlings who are destroying the environment, and when you reposition them they look like strange sea creatures in a ritualistic dance.

Brown does not intend to keep them as conversation pieces or his own home decor. He intends to make some money from his hard work. He has pulled out the roots, and the roots have unearthed his creativity.

And, he said, "While a making it mi mind more relax, focus. It make people laugh, and whatever I can do to make people laugh, I feel like it's a good thing."



Fasten your seat belt, we are ready for the take-off.



This is the piece of lignum vitae root that was to trigger Courtney Brown's artistic zeal.



A 'pig' with three legs and a long tail?

International tourism growth continues to outpace the global economy

SOME 1.5 BILLION international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2019 globally, a four per cent increase on the previous year, which is also forecast for 2020, confirming tourism as a leading and resilient economic sector, especially in view of current uncertainties. By the same token, this calls for such growth to be managed responsibly so as to best seize the opportunities tourism can generate for communities around the world.

According to the first comprehensive report on global tourism numbers and trends of the new decade, the latest **UNWTO World Tourism Barometer**, this represents the 10th consecutive year of growth.

All regions saw a rise in international arrivals in 2019. However, uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the collapse of Thomas Cook, geopolitical and social tensions and the global economic slowdown all contributed to a slower growth in 2019 when compared to the exceptional rates of 2017 and 2018. This slowdown affected mainly advanced economies and particularly Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

Looking ahead, growth of three to four per cent is predicted for 2020, an outlook reflected in the latest UNWTO Confidence Index which shows a cautious optimism: 47 per cent of participants believe tourism will perform better, and 43 per cent at the same level of 2019. Major sporting events, including the Tokyo Olympics, and cultural events such as Expo 2020 Dubai are expected to have a positive impact on the sector.

Responsible growth

Presenting the results, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili stressed that “in these times of uncertainty and volatility, tourism remains a reliable economic sector”. Against the backdrop of recently downgraded global economic perspectives, international trade tensions, social unrest and geopolitical uncertainty, “our sector keeps outpacing the world economy and calling upon us to not only grow, but to grow better,” he added.

Given tourism’s position as a top export sector and creator of employment, the UNWTO advocates the need for responsible growth. Tourism has, therefore, a place at the heart of global development policies, and the opportunity to gain further political recognition and make a real impact as the Decade of Action gets under way, leaving just 10 years to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Dunss River Falls Tourist attraction.

The Middle East leads

The Middle East has emerged as the fastest-growing region for international tourism arrivals in 2019, growing at almost double the global average (up eight per cent). Growth in Asia and the Pacific slowed down but still showed above-average growth, with international arrivals up five per cent.

Europe, where growth was also slower than in previous years (up four per cent), continues to lead in terms of international arrivals, welcoming 743 million international tourists last year (51 per cent of the global market). The Americas (up two per cent) showed a mixed picture as many island destinations in the Caribbean consolidated their recovery after the 2017 hurricanes, while arrivals fell in South America due partly to ongoing social and political turmoil. Limited data available for Africa (up four per cent) points to continued strong results in North Africa (up nine per cent), while arrivals in Sub-Saharan

Africa grew slower in 2019 (up 1.5 per cent).

Tourism spending still strong

Against a backdrop of global economic slowdown, tourism spending continued to grow, most notably among the world’s top ten spenders. France reported the strongest increase in international tourism expenditure among the world’s top ten outbound markets (up 11 per cent), while the United States (up 6 per cent) led growth in absolute terms, aided by a strong dollar.

However, some large emerging markets such as Brazil and Saudi Arabia reported declines in tourism spending. China, the world’s top source market, saw outbound trips increase by 14 per cent in the first half of 2019, though expenditure fell four per cent.

Tourism delivering ‘much-needed opportunities’

“The number of destinations earning US\$1 billion or more from international tourism has almost doubled since 1998,” adds Pololikashvili. “The challenge we face is to make sure the benefits are shared as widely as possible and that nobody is left behind. In 2020, UNWTO celebrates the Year of Tourism and Rural Development, and we hope to see our sector lead positive change in rural communities, creating jobs and opportunities, driving economic growth and preserving culture.”

This latest evidence of the strength and resilience of the tourism sector comes as the United Nations (UN) celebrates its 75th anniversary. During 2020, through the UN75 initiative, the UN is carrying out the largest, most inclusive conversation on the role of global cooperation in building a better future for all, with tourism to be high on the agenda.