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Knutsford Express rolls into Port Antonio

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

KNUTSFORD EXPRESS, the pioneering transportation firm which has changed the face of local transport, has expanded its service to the forgotten tourist resort of Portland.

Knutsford now boasts an island-wide network with new service along Jamaica's north-east coast, from Ocho Rios to Port Antonio.

The aim, Knutsford Express chief executive officer, Oliver Townsend said, is to put in 20,000 seats, giving properties that are struggling to get their guests there much-needed, reliable transportation, "particularly from Negril and Montego Bay".

Statistics from the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) shows a record of approximately 20,000 tourists visiting Port Antonio in 2014.

"We are delighted after much effort to finally serve the parish of Portland," said an excited Townsend during an interview with **Hospitality Jamaica**. He noted that from their new offices at the Errol Flynn Marina in Port Antonio, which opened on April 7, they are offering daily scheduled luxury coach service, "connecting our award-winning north coast service via Ocho Rios, to Negril, Montego Bay, Falmouth and New Kingston".

ATTRACTING TOURISTS

According to him, although the service was designed for Jamaicans, it has been attracting tourists who also appreciate the professionalism, reliability, safety and comfort associated with Knutsford Express.

"It is with great pride that we introduce this service to Port Antonio, using coaches equipped with air-conditioner, reclining seats, Wi-Fi, onboard restroom and bottled water. We operate at such a standard that tourists are drawn to it."

Townsend said with fares as low as US\$26 per person one-way, this will significantly add rooms to the many properties in Portland that have complained over the years about their inaccessibility and absence of an aerodrome lit for arrival of aircraft at night.



Anthony Copeland (left), director of operations, Knutsford Express, and the company's managing director, Oliver Townsend.

Hotelier Jabbar Fahmi of Jamaica Palace said, "Knutsford Express will certainly speed up guest arrivals at Jamaica Palace. The comfort and style they offer is very welcomed".

The service has been welcomed by a number of local tourism interests including: Hotel Tim Bamboo, Mockingbird Hill, Rio Vista Resort, Great Huts and Bayview Eco Resort.

Passengers departing Negril as early as 7:15 a.m. get to Port Antonio after 1 p.m. currently.

From Thursday to Monday, persons can also depart Montego Bay at 5 p.m., getting to Port Antonio by approximately 9 p.m. Likewise, every morning the bus leaves Port Antonio at 6:30 a.m. with complimentary drop-off at the Sangster International Airport.

"We have gotten overwhelmingly positive feedback from all parts of the accommodations sub-sector in the hospitality industry, because they realise this opens up the tourist market to them in a fundamental way," added Townsend.

He explained that prospective passengers can plan a vacation in Port Antonio because it's no longer way off the beaten path.

"With a click on the Internet, they are able to secure travel arrangements."

Townsend argued that the service will probably bolster the local taxi operators as well.

"Like all our other areas where we operate, it creates business for the local taxi operators."

MARKETING ADVANTAGE

The Knutsford Express CEO is hoping that the JTB, with its impressive expansion of the mass market side of the industry, will take marketing advantage of this investment made in putting seats in various parts of the island.

"Ideally, we are assisting the smaller properties."

Making reference to comments made by Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill, Townsend said he has spoken about the growing demand

for multi-destinations in the Caribbean, "Likewise, Jamaica being diverse, you have this sub-sector of the Jamaican industry that wants to explore and see more. We have made the investment and we are hoping that the JTB will help to spread the news of this new service."

All the buses being used are coaches that are 90 per cent equipped with restrooms. They are feature-rich, offering more comfort than the typical buses used in the tour industry.

"They are all are air-conditioned with reclining seats, reading lights. They are a newer generation of coaches with charging feeds for laptops and phones," Townsend said.

Beyond the high technology that the vehicles are equipped with, it is the service offered to passengers, particularly by their customer transportation officers that Townsend said remains the high point.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



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Sections of the new Reggae Hill attraction in Ocho Rios.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A FANTASTIC show that featured the Jolly Boys mento band and guitar maestro Ernie Ranglin, fine food, and a salubrious atmosphere at the newly created attraction, Reggae Hill, impressed a visiting team of Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) platinum members on a recent tour of the location.

The tour of the venue, situated on the Irie River property, involved representatives from several cruise lines, including Norwegian, Carnival and the Royal Caribbean.

The tour also took in the popular Bamboo Beach Club, which incidentally operates Reggae Hill.

“It was the first introduction for the cruise ship executive and it was quite encouraging,”

said Sam Wieselberg, who represents the parent company.

“They have visited hundreds of ports of call, so it makes us feel that we’re doing something right. We had a very short time to prepare and the artistes didn’t have time to prepare for a full show, but they were a delightful treat, they were marvellous.”

Reggae Hill, on the Irie River property, offers river swimming, reggae music and exquisite gourmet dining.

The visitors were treated to authentic Jamaican food with a menu consisting of, among other delicacies, ackee and salt-fish with fried ripe plantain, mahimahi fish with roasted breadfruit, spicy cherry salamari on saffron rice and escovitch fish on polenta.



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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

As the US gradually lifts travel ban on Cuba

Writing on the wall for the region

ONE DAY in the not-too-distant future, it is likely that United States (US)-registered cruise ships will begin to sail into Cuban ports. That day has not yet arrived as US regulations expressly prohibit US visitors and most US-registered vessels travelling to Cuba for tourism purposes, but already, non-US cruise companies are opening up what looks like becoming a significant cruise market.

European companies, including Fred Olsen Line and Thomson Cruises, are now sailing out of Barbados and Montego Bay as well as from ports further afield including Tenerife and Southampton. Their success is likely to grow as Cuba is rapidly becoming a must-visit destination and it becomes harder to obtain a hotel room in cities like Havana in the high season because of the easing of travel restrictions to Cuba for Cuban Americans and for

specified categories of US visitors on study tours, or the like.

For some years now, Cuba has made clear that it wants cruise calls and has been developing its ports and marinas around the country with the expected ultimate prize being the further development the port of Havana, probably in conjunction with an international developer.

According to the official Cuban media quoting the president of the Cuban tour operators, Havanatur, José Bisbe, during the 2014-15 winter season, the island received the largest number of visits ever with 200 ship calls at various ports around the island.

US CRUISE LINES

While this has been happening, and since President Obama and President Castro's December 2014 announcement that Cuba and the US would normalise relations, the big US cruise lines have not been standing still.



David Jessop

At least one major US cruise corporation has been in dialogue with the Cuban authorities and there is anecdotal evidence that they are considering how best to lobby Congress. It seems they may do this along with a number of Fortune 500 companies through one of the new super Political Action committees that have recently been formed to press for an end to the US trade embargo.

The process may be slow to bring about a complete change, but it is already clear that there are incremental steps that can be taken to modify existing regulations under the US president's executive authority.

FERRY SERVICES

For instance, in the last weeks, the US Treasury and Commerce departments have granted licences to allow, for the first time in more than 50 years, US companies to operate ferry services between Florida and Cuba. The four or possibly more companies involved are expected to operate services out of Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Key West and possibly some other US ports as well.

While Cuba has still to approve the service and agree with the companies involved which Cuban ports they will call at, the decision marks a further step in the easing of travel restrictions on US citizens.

Although the ferry services are prin-

cipally aimed at Cuban Americans and offer travel at a lower cost than present chartered air services and will carry baggage for free, they will also be able to carry other US visitors in the 12 allowed travel categories, continuing the process of gradually making Cuba the new normal. The services may also in time carry cargo in the form of now allowed non-state exports from Cuba's emerging self employed sector.

Before the US imposed a trade embargo on Cuba, cruise ships and ferries called at Cuban ports on a daily basis. The growing interest of the cruise lines in Cuba is not yet a challenge for the rest of the region, but the writing is on the wall. Cuba in the space of months has become a hot destination for US citizens. If, as Cuba hopes, the US travel ban is eventually lifted and the big cruise lines call and take up incentives to home-port, the rest of the region needs to consider the ways in which the structure of tourism in the region will change.

Half Moon appoints new GM

ON HIS new appointment as general manager of the Half Moon, A RockResort, industry veteran, Sandro Fabris, said the Jamaican traditions are traditions that will continue to set Half Moon apart as a luxury destination.

The Montego Bay resort, known for its timeless elegance, distinct character, and quintessential Jamaican hospitality, are what has been at the heart of the 400-acre beachfront resort throughout its 60-year history.

Fabris brings more than two decades of management experience for luxury hotels around the world to his new role.

"Hospitality is foundational to Jamaican culture, so delivering authentic, high-quality service to our guests at Half Moon is easy," said Fabris. "Our guests come on holiday to discover the local traditions, culture and gastronomy; and they come to Half Moon not for formality, but for a carefree and relaxing experience where the local-based staff is passionate, excited and eager to share the beauty of their country with Half Moon's guests."

A global hospitality pro, Fabris started his career with CIGA Hotels at the Hotel Excelsior in Venice-Lido, has been hotel manager at the

Hotel Cipriani in Venice, and served as general manager for the prestigious Reid's in Madeira, a popular year-round resort island known for its local wine, flora and artisans. As regional managing director of Africa for Orient Express Hotels, he was in charge of the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town, the Westcliff Hotel in Johannesburg and three safari camps in Botswana. He speaks Italian, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

STRONG LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

"Sandro has demonstrated strong leadership and performance throughout his career in a number of countries and cultures," said James O'Donnell, senior vice-president and COO, Vail Resorts Hospitality & Real Estate. "His philosophy on service, culture and leadership are well aligned with our vision for Half Moon, so we are pleased to appoint him as general manager."

Guy Steuart III, chairman of Half Moon Bay, Ltd, echoed O'Donnell's sentiments in welcoming Sandro to Half Moon.

"For more than 60 years, Half Moon has offered guests an authentic Jamaican retreat where our service standards and product offer-

ings reflect the best in both Jamaica and the Caribbean," he said. "We are truly honoured to have Sandro join our team and believe his experience will continue to enhance Half Moon's appeal among our loyal and new guests alike."

Fabris began his tenure at the Half Moon in mid-April.



Sandro Fabris

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AS THE nation celebrates Child's Month, Half Moon, A RockResort reaffirmed its commitment to caring and protecting the nation's children by reopening its house at the SOS Children's Village in St James.

The house, which will be home to eight children between the ages of five and eight years, will be maintained by the resort. Delivering the keynote address at the event, chairman of the Child Development Agency (CDA), Maxine Henry-Wilson, made the call for Jamaicans to show more concern for the nation's children and be more vigilant in reporting child abuse.

Henry-Wilson lamented at the recent increase in crimes commit-

ted against the nation's children and urged Jamaicans to not "see and blind and hear and deaf", but to engage the relevant authorities as the nation works together to make Jamaica a safe haven for its children.

She further encouraged corporate entities to assist children in state care who need to pursue higher education but face financial challenges.

The Half Moon House was first opened in 1972, but closed in the late 1990s. General manager of the resort, Sandro Fabris, gave the resort's commitment to do whatever it takes to provide for the children who will occupy the house.

Half Moon reopens SOS house



Ribbon Cutting: From left: Half Moon's general manager, Sandro Fabris; Jason Cummings, councillor for the area; Maxine Henry-Wilson, chairman of the Child Development Agency; Nadine Anderson, national director, SOS Children's Village; and Reverend Christopher Anderson, programme director, SOS Children's Village.



Half Moon's Sharon Logan (left), director of sales, and Erma Clarke, human resources director, at the hotel's house opening at the SOS Children's Village.



Reverend Wayne Smith from the Cornwall Courts Baptist Church, who opened the house with prayer, greets Myrtle Dwyer, director of Glamour DMC.



The Half Moon Organising Committee: First row, from left: Joan Coore, interior decorator; Shernette Crichton, director of resort operations; Beverly McKenzie, training manager; Diandra Shand, marketing and communications manager; and Phillip Robinson, functions coordinator. Second row, from left: Jeffrey Smith, interior design coordinator; Sherine Blake, executive housekeeper; Erma Clarke, human resources director; Kameil Brown, staff events coordinator, Garvin Codlyn, functions coordinator; and Rudolph Lee, driver.



Sandro Fabris (left), Half Moon's general manager, presents a cheque to Christopher Anderson, programme director of SOS Children's Village.



Carol Worburton-Ellis (left), Child Development Agency monitoring officer, Western Region; and Nadine Williams, national director of SOS Children's Village, at the opening of a house by Half Moon.



Following the prize presentation, Jason Hall (right), deputy director of tourism, cruise, events and attractions, Jamaica Tourist Board, poses with Men's 3000m, second-place winner, American, Andrew J. Acosta (left), and the winner, Juan Luis Barrios, of Mexico.

Jamaica hosts successful staging of IAAF track meet

THE NATIONAL Stadium was the place to be on May 9 for the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association's Jamaica International Invitational Meet (JIIM). Now in its 12th year, the event welcomed a bevy of Jamaican and international track and field stars. An IAAF World Challenge Meet, JIIM 2015 was co-sponsored by Jamaica Sport in collaboration with the Jamaica Tourist Board.

The meet attracted world-class athletes including Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Stephanie Ann McPherson, Asafa Powell, Kerron Stewart, Hansel Parchment, Travis Smikle, Novelene William-Mills and Javon Francis. International competitors included LaShawn Merrit, Allyson Felix, Sanya Richards-Ross, Bershawn Jackson, Vikas Gowda, Jonathan Borlee, Christian Cantwell and Catherine Ibarguen.

Many of the athletes posted world-leading times, which augur well for the event and destination Jamaica.

Sports tourism is an important part of the marketing mix that attracts visitors to Jamaica and during the staging of the JIIM, Kingston had the attention of the track and field world. Jamaica's sporting acumen

and reputation makes the island one of the best tourist destinations in the world. She has been using international sporting events such as JIIM to leverage the ability of the athletes and her award winning tourism product to boost sports tourism.

LEADING SPORTS TOURISM DESTINATION

In applauding the success of the meet, Jason Hall had this to say: "The legacy of our excellence in sport, especially track and field, combined with our world-leading tourism product, has enabled Jamaica to be the leading sports tourism destination in the region. The Jamaica International Invitational Meet is an excellent vehicle for sports tourism. Jamaica Sport and the Jamaica Tourist Board are working closely with the meet organisers to take the event to the next level of being part of the illustrious Diamond League series."

Through Jamaica Sport, the Jamaica Tourist Board aims to invest in sporting opportunities that will generate positive returns for Jamaica and promote the island as the premier sporting destination in the region.

JAMAICA

TOURIST BOARD

Second annual Jamaica ITF Seniors Championship held in Montego Bay

THE KARL Hale Jamaica Tour 2015 took place on April 21-26 at Half Moon, A RockResort in Montego Bay. The tour was sponsored by the Jamaica Tourist Board and featured 100 players from Jamaica, France, Britain, Canada, the United States, Cayman Islands and Trinidad and Tobago.

Karl Hale, a Jamaica-born tennis professional and tournament director of Toronto's Rogers Cup, organised the International Tennis Federation (ITF) tournament which brought 2013 Wimbledon Champion Marion Bartoli to the island for an exhibition and charity fundraiser in support of building a school in Jamaica. Hale played Bartoli in a Battle of the Sexes exhibition game – a match that Bartoli won.

She also pledged her support to build a brand-new school in Montego Bay in partnership with the Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation, a Canadian charity established in 2006 by Karl Hale. To date, the foundation has raised more than \$775,000, which has helped to build seven schools and help more than 4,000 Jamaican children. Some of the schools which have benefited include Bernard Basic School, Long Hill Basic School, Reliance Basic School, Arlington Basic School, and the Park Mountain Early Childhood Institution.

Plans for a third annual ITF championship in Jamaica are under way with the dates currently slated for April 20-24, 2016.



From left: Jason Hall, Karl Hale, Marion Bartoli, Mark Joseph and Bryan Grenier.

WESTERN JAMAICA has been given the opportunity to be better informed about the history and nature of the Rastafari movement through a historical exhibition mounted at National Museum West, located in the Montego Bay Cultural Centre.

In keeping with its efforts to foster the development of various aspects of the country's tourism product, the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) played a pivotal role in enabling the Rastafari exhibition to be mounted at the Cultural Centre, where it will be displayed for a year.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition recently, executive director of the TEF, Clyde Harrison, described the mounting of the exhibition and the presence of members of the Rastafari community as “a journey with some distance still left to go”, but which stood out as a testament to the spirit of the Jamaican people.

From the viewpoint of Rastafari, Harrison commented on “the strength of their culture, their insistence on being themselves and being accepted for who they are and what they are about”. For other Jamaican people – “the police, the Government – to accept them also, it's the spirit of the Jamaican people in its full glory – the Rastafari and everybody else coming together to say welcome Rasta,” he added.

PROMOTING WHAT'S GOOD

Speaking to TEF's involvement in the exhibition, Harrison said while the fund promoted tourism extensively, the fact was that “we promote what is good for Jamaicans and for the tourist to enjoy”. As examples, he pointed to several TEF projects including the development of the Montego Bay Cultural Centre, restoration of The Dome in Montego Bay and the current installation of LED lights on the Elegant Corridor from Sangster International Airport to Lilliput, St James.

He said: “We are funding the museum and we will continue to do so. We will not ignore the culture of the people nor what is important to us, and when we do this, it speaks to our spirit, so we are very proud to be associated with this endeavour and all the others that we have put forward for the people of Jamaica and the tourists to enjoy.”

Member of Parliament for Central St James, Lloyd B. Smith, welcomed the exhibition as a special undertaking to pay tribute to Rastafari.

“This exhibition, I am sure, will help to enlighten the general popu-

TEF funds historic Rastafari exhibition at Museum West



The recent opening of the historical Rastafari Exhibition at National Museum West inside the Montego Bay Cultural Centre was enhanced by pulsating Nyahbingi drumming by Rasta Village Live, featuring Prince Tebah and vocals by Ras Iziniga Ion (right).



Executive director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Clyde Harrison (right), hears from curator of National Museum West, Dr Alicia Palmer (centre), how the Rastafari movement developed into an internationally recognised community, as member of parliament for Central St James, Lloyd B. Smith, is glued to the information on display at the Rastafari Exhibition, which opened at National Museum West inside the Montego Bay Cultural Centre recently.

lace about the fact that Rastafari is a *bona fide*, genuine part of the Jamaican culture and history. It is indeed a very integral part of our national psyche, and this has been embodied in the fact that wherever you go in the world, Rastafari can be seen in one form or the other.”

Director of the National Museum Jamaica, Dr Johnathan Greenland, noted that it was the first major exhibition for Museum West. He disclosed that the exhibition ran at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC in the USA for many years before the Rastafari community negotiated for it to be brought to Jamaica. Its first stop was in Kingston, where it was expanded extensively.

PURPOSE OF THE EXHIBIT

Through artefacts, images, videos and text, the exhibition seeks to explore the history and nature of Rastafari, including: the revelation of Rastafari, the philosophy and evolution of the Rastafari movement, the visit of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie to Jamaica, and the impact of Rastafari on music. It also provides a historical review of the tribulations experienced by members, in particular the events surrounding the Coral Gardens massacre in April 1963.

Following a yearlong run in Montego Bay, it will be turned over to the Rastafari community for it to be housed at a permanent learning centre to be established by the ethnic group.

First Man at the Rastafari Indigenous Village in St James also applauded the collaboration of the Government of Jamaica and the Rastafari Millennium Council in bringing about the exhibition.

“Especially here in Montego Bay, the Rastafari community faced one of our worst challenges; this is where the Coral Gardens incident took place, (and) right here in the centre of the city is where Sam Sharpe and all of our African people were down pressed, and for us to be here eternally burning Babylon and then find that the same system now can speak of who Rastafari is and what Rastafari represents over that period of time, that is a great achievement,” he proclaimed.

St Lucia to host third annual LOVE Elevated Wedding Symposium

FROM SEPTEMBER 23-27, 2015, St Lucia will host a roster of wedding experts during the third annual LOVE Elevated Wedding Symposium. New this year, a panel of real brides who were married on the island will share their destination wedding experiences and first-hand advice with attendees.

"Recognised worldwide as the 'most romantic island in the Caribbean', Saint Lucia has a natural ambience for weddings and romance," said Louis Lewis, director of tourism for the St Lucia Tourist Board. "By providing truly useful information to attendees about destination weddings, the wedding symposium builds St Lucia's reputation as a premier location for weddings, as well as provide opportunities for our island partners to better understand the market."

PANELLISTS AND SPEAKERS

Noted speakers will also address the latest trends and topics ranging from What's New and Trending in the Industry, Using Social Media to Enhance Destination Weddings and Increase Sales, to Why St Lucia and Surviving a Destination Wedding; providing insights to planning and hosting the perfect wedding on the island.

Panellists and speakers include:

■ Michelle Myers, chief revenue officer and publisher of **BRIDES** who launched Brides Live Wedding, a crowd-sourced, live-streamed wedding curated by brides, which garnered nearly one billion impressions and enabled her to successfully monetise social media. Prior to **BRIDES**, Myers served as vice-president and publisher of **Luckymagazine** and was the founding publisher of **People StyleWatch**.

■ David Beahm, founder and president of David Beahm Design, has drawn from experience with New York's top florists and special event designers, as well as formal training in theatre, television and grand opera to become one of

New York's top event designers. A favourite of celebrities, socialites and the fashion world, his work on Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas's wedding was featured in magazines and news shows internationally and was touted as "the wedding of the century". **Town & Country** magazine has called him "one of New York's extremely design savvy" talents.

■ Alan Berg has been named North America's leading expert on the business of weddings and events. Berg's experience ranges from publisher of two wedding magazines, to vice-president of sales at The Knot, and now, a contributing education guru for WeddingWire, the leading wedding technology company. He also speaks and consults for WeddingsOnline in Ireland, Dubai and India, as well as Guides For Brides in the United Kingdom.

■ Andrea McDowell, previously a TV director for the BBC, is the founder and managing director of the wedding videography company Shoot it Yourself. The company launched five years ago and is the United Kingdom's largest wedding videography company, producing over 350 wedding videos a year.

FESTIVITIES

The festivities include site visits to unique wedding destinations and hotels around the island, a showcase of island wedding vendors, and the opportunity for attendees to observe a sunset wedding aboard the *Pearl Pirate Ship*. A picturesque sunset cruise and cocktail reception from the southern side of the island with views of the iconic UNESCO World Heritage Pitons round out weekend activities.

Priced at US\$250 per person, the five-day symposium includes all seminars, social events, site inspections and transportation from select hotels. For a complete schedule and more information, visit www.stlucia.org/weddingsymposium/.



CONTRIBUTED

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (left) and Cuban Ambassador to Jamaica, Señor Bernardo Guanche Hernández, share a light moment during a courtesy call on McNeill by the ambassador at the ministry's New Kingston offices on Wednesday, January 14.

McNeill to moderate panel discussion at seminar in Haiti

MINISTER OF Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill will moderate a panel discussion at the International Seminar: Multidestination Opportunities for Regional Integration, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, from May 19 to 22.

The tourism and entertainment minister was scheduled to depart for Haiti yesterday.

While in Haiti, McNeill will also participate in the 58th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for the Americas being held on Thursday. Both the Commission meeting and the international seminar are being jointly organised by the Haitian government and the World Tourism Organization.

The panel discussion is titled The Importance of Tourism Routes as Part of Regional Cooperation Agreements. It includes panellists Cecilia Alvarez-Correa, minister of trade, industry and tourism, Colombia; Marcela Bacigalupo, minister of tourism, Paraguay; Maru Acevedo, deputy director, Guatemala Tourism Institute, Guatemala; Manuel Marrero Cruz, minister of tourism, Cuba; and a representative from the Silk Road Programme, UNWTO.

McNeill is being accompanied to Haiti by the ministry's permanent secretary, Jennifer Griffith. He returns to the island on Friday, May 22.



RIU GM reads to students

RIU RESORTS general manager, Frank Sondern, reads to Barracks Road Primary School students during a Read Across Jamaica project with the Spanish Jamaica Foundation.

Jade Mountain tops most romantic holiday list

LONDON'S TELEGRAPH Media Group has recognised Jade Mountain in St Lucia as the top of its top 10 list of most romantic holidays in the Caribbean.

Recognising the alluring resort as the *crème de la crème*, **Telegraph Travel** published that "of St Lucia's many romantic boltholes, the most striking is Jade Mountain".

"I love what we do at Jade Mountain, and I love it when people deeply in love use us as their sanctuary to enhance and deepen their romance, so it is certainly fantastic to be recognised at the top of the list of the most romantic holidays in the Caribbean from this important media company," said Karolin Troubetzkoy, operations director of Jade Mountain and its sister, Anse Chastanet resort in St Lucia.

The influential London daily newspaper paid homage to the innovative design wrought by Nick Troubetzkoy, the Canadian owner and architect of the stunning

resort: "It's a futuristic, hilltop lair with gigantic, open-plan bedrooms called sanctuaries, that bask in mesmerising views through 'missing' fourth walls of the island's green Pitons erupting out of the sea."

REMOVING DISTRACTIONS

Also highlighted by the British paper was the Troubetzkoy's insistence on removing all distractions to romance: "The rooms are free of technology – the idea is you should focus your attention on your partner – and most have their own iridescent-tiled (infinity) pools."

And while deeply flattered by the well-earned recognition awarded to Jade Mountain, Troubetzkoy warmly notes that "we should not overlook that right next door to Jade Mountain is our Anse Chastanet, another of the most romantic resorts in the Caribbean, with a deep-rooted connection to St Lucia's art and culture, beautiful views and classic Caribbean charm".



Jade Mountain in St Lucia.

Romance is back in Caribbean Week New York



Event planner Tatiana Byron, who will organise Caribbean Week's wedding showcase in New York.

THE CARIBBEAN Tourism Organisation (CTO) is once again injecting a little romance into Caribbean Week New York. For the second year running, the region's tourism development agency has retained Wedding Salon, the planners of United States bridal tradeshow for the luxury market, to organise a Romance Pavilion at the grandest Caribbean tourism event in New York.

The Romance Pavilion is an opportunity for engaged couples seeking a romantic honeymoon or destination wedding to connect with renowned Caribbean resorts, countries, and travel agents.

Wedding Salon, a partnership between American event planner, Tatiana Byron, and Martha Stewart Weddings, organises high-end weddings and luxury bridal shows. Their shows attract thousands of brides-to-be, celebrities and socialites seeking to discover the latest trends and meet with the top vendors.

"Destination weddings are on the rise with one in four couples getting married in a location far from their residence. The Caribbean Romance Pavilion provides couples with the opportunity to speak to vendors and decision makers that would otherwise be a flight away. It's

comforting getting to do some of the planning face to face," said Byron.

More than 300 couples have already registered to attend the event, where they will meet the top local vendors from the Caribbean who will help plan these couple's destination wedding or honeymoon.

VENUE

It will be held on Wednesday, June 3 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Ez Studios on 325 West 37th Street, New York. The programme will include a refreshment station, Beautini make-up trials, a flower-adorned canopy by QG Floral, Glamour Closet designer gown previews, Artemix Tattoos, M2M DJs, door prizes and luxury swag bags with surprise products such as Essie and OPI.

Caribbean Week New York is a series of business meetings and consumer events organised by the CTO New York office to showcase the warmth, spirit and vibrance of the Caribbean. In addition to direct contact with consumers, it also provides extensive media exposure for participating CTO members and partners.



Open-door 'mosque'.



The 'First Supper'.

Mazola goes even deeper at Redbones

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ARTIST MAZOLA is well known for his provocative pieces. One of the many that were displayed in his latest show was a platter made of little pieces of board. From it he served spiced bun. He lightheartedly called it the 'Last Supper', a parody of that famous biblical supper.

The place was the showroom at Redbones Blues Café, and Mazola is not a Christian.

"I am not of any religion," he asserted. So why did he get religious? In fact, he had not gone religious, as we know it. Mazola, the artist, was using art to make a religious commentary to engage patrons.

PROVOCATIVE SET-UP

And not far from the 'Last Supper' was the 'First Supper', a red apple in a wood composite bowl. It was another provocative set-up. But the provocation didn't stop there. Just above, but not over, the 'First Supper', was an encased mirror, splashed with a 'bloody' figure. Below it, 'blood' was sprinkled and settled on the floor.

On an adjacent wall was another mirror embedded in a 'mosque'. From



Mazola with a piece of the 'Last Supper'.

it was reflected the 'Last Supper'. It was a juxtaposition of sorts of an Islamic symbol against a Christian theme.

"There are two main religions which are always fighting each other, which they shouldn't be. One, they are very close together, two religions which have this belief in one supreme being, but because of how they came about they are always fighting," Mazola explained.

MOST ENGAGING PIECE

The assemblage, which Mazola calls 'Pass Over', was arguably the most engaging of the many pieces on show. It was the last piece he said he had made. He had never done a piece like that before and had to push himself to finish it. It was not finished in the studio, and the idea of splashing the red paint on to the mirror to represent blood didn't occur until it was mounted.

The idea was motivated by the biblical Passover story, and "it fits the theme of the season", Mazola told **Hospitality Jamaica**. The idea was executed and the result has "generated a lot of talk". And the "conversation continues in my mind", Mazola said.



Mazola cutting Easter bun on a platter made of wood composites.



The 'Pass Over'.



A patron viewing Mazola's work at Redbones Blues Café recently.



Mazola opening the door to the 'mosque'.

Arts in the Park – Dance Edition



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Kerry-Ann Henry and Marlon Simms of the National Dance Theatre Company treat the audience to a riveting performance during Arts in the Park – Dance Edition.



A bumper crowd turned out to witness the wide variety of Jamaican dance, ranging from traditional folk forms to contemporary dancehall.



Members of the Old Harbour Dance Troupe gave a stellar performance at Arts in the Park – Dance Edition, which took place on May 17, 2015, at Hope Gardens. The fourth staging of Arts in the Park was hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment in association with the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission and the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. The initiative forms part of an ongoing effort by the ministry to develop the local entertainment industry and to give artistes international exposure.



The L'Acadco Dance Force delivered a high-energy performance, much to the delight of the audience.



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (centre) makes a point as he discusses the excellent talent which was displayed at Arts in the Park – Dance Edition, which took place on May 17, 2015 at Hope Gardens with State Minister in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment Damion Crawford (left); and Virginie Mecene, artistic director, Graham 2 and director, Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance.