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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2015



ARE THERE
LIMITS TO THE
TOURISM DREAM?

RUN AWAY
TO A JEWEL



BLUE AND JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

JAMAICA'S FIRST WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Jamaica gets first World Heritage Site

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ENCOMPASSING PARTS of St Thomas, Portland and St Andrew, the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, established in 1993, is a rugged but scenic place of great geographical and ecological diversity.

It has some of the most dramatic and dynamic landscapes in the island, with lush, unending ranges of majestic mountains, oft shrouded, kissed and caressed by fog and mists. Expansive valleys that look eerie when covered by sheets of cloud shadows are viewed from ledges, ridges and passes.

In the valleys, meandering around interlocking spurs are cool streams and rushing rivers, punctuated with sparkling or thundering waterfalls. It's the birthplace of rain. Within the thick foliage and waters come a plethora of creatures, some endemic to the region. And when night comes, the musical nocturnal creatures serenade the starry skies.

Protected by law, this nature lovers' haven is managed by the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDDT) in collaboration with the National Environment and Planning Agency, the Forestry Department, and the Ministry of Youth and Culture.

MAROON LAND

But centuries before these organisations took charge, the passes, the rivers, the streams, the caves and the mountainsides were the preserves of the first freedom fighters in the Western Hemisphere – the Maroons. The place was their territory, their haunt, their refuge, their battle ground.

The Maroons used the environment and all that it had to offer to wear down the resolve of the English soldiers and militia who destroyed Old Nanny Town. But the mystical and warlike Nanny was undaunted, and relocated to continue the fight.

Nanny, Quao and the other fearless Maroons launched a guerrilla war upon the English, who, outwitted and broken, offered to sign a treaty of peace and friendship with the Maroons.



PHOTO BY ACTION4REEL

An overhead view of the lush vegetation of the Blue and John Crow Mountains.



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Waterfalls and pools such as the ones in this photo are common in the Blue and John Crow Mountains.

That was in 1739, but the significance of the victory of the Maroons over the English has not been lost.

In addition to its value as a place of significant ecological diversity, the region has a special place in the story of the Jamaican people of African heritage, and that is why it was proposed to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site. To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must meet at least one out of 10 selection criteria.

Jamaica's application process started a few years ago. But before inscription could be awarded, the site had to be nominated first. The evaluators, in the form of advisory bodies, were in Jamaica from October 27 to November 2 to inspect the nominated property for World Heritage Site status.

According to the World Heritage Convention, world heritage status is given to natural and cultural sites across the globe that are considered to be of "outstanding universal value", meaning that the sites possess cultural and natural significance "which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and are of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity". Elements of authenticity and integrity associated with sites must also be demonstrated in the nomination process.

FINALLY INSCRIBED

So, after months of deliberation, on July 4, in Bonn, Germany, the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park was officially inscribed a World Heritage Site by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. The inscription is historic on two levels. It is our first World Heritage Site, and it was inscribed as a mixed site, making it only the 32nd mixed site of the current 1,007 World Heritage Sites.

Jamaica is now one of only 24 countries with a mixed World Heritage Site, and one of only two small-island developing states with this status. The Blue and John Crow Mountains World Heritage Site is the first mixed site in the Caribbean.

The news is great, and most heartwarming, but how will such a designation benefit the Blue and John

Crow Mountains National Park, and Jamaica by extension? The World Heritage Convention says, “By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage Sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.” In addition, the World Heritage Convention has a raft of benefits for inscribed sites, some of which are listed below:

■ A key benefit of ratification, particularly for developing countries, is access to the World Heritage Fund. Annually, about US\$4 million is made available to assist state parties in identifying, preserving and promoting World Heritage sites.

■ Emergency assistance may also be made available for urgent action to repair damage caused by human-made or natural disasters. The attention and the funds of both the national and the international community are focused on the conservation needs of these particularly threatened sites.

■ Sites on the list are a magnet for international cooperation and may thus receive financial assistance for heritage conservation projects from a variety of sources.

■ The inscription of a site on the World Heritage List brings an increase in public awareness of the site and of its outstanding values, thus also increasing the tourist activities at the site. When these are well planned and organised, respecting sustainable tourism principles, they can bring important funds to the site and to the local economy.

A release from the JCDT, through Dr Susan Otoukon, executive director, also explains how Jamaica stands to benefit from this important inscription: “Jamaica’s recognition at the global heritage table will be significantly elevated as the country’s cultural and natural heritage can now be measured according to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) managed by the World Economic Forum.

“The TTCI has as one of its pillars of measurement the number of World Heritage sites in a country. World Heritage status opens up new realms for Jamaica in areas of tourism, research, and the promotion of local-based initiatives through the promotion of these areas.”



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Nanny, depicted here by Gloria Simms, played a significant role in the defeat of the English.



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Moore Town Maroons, who trekked to Old Nanny Town last year June.



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park is monitored by rangers.



PHOTO BY ACTION4REEL

Camouflage was one of the strategies used to defeat the English militia in the Blue and John Crow Mountains.



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

The Blue and John Crow Mountains are regarded as one region home to many endemic species of flora and fauna.

Are there limits to the tourism dream?

David
Jessop



CONTRIBUTOR

THE OPPORTUNITY to visit another country and to relax in a controlled, idyllic environment is what, for most, makes a vacation so special. Understanding this is why the Caribbean has been able to grow its product so successfully over the years from one that was once only available to the very rich, so that today it is able to cater to almost every type of visitor seeking a sun, sea or cultural experience.

In doing so, the region, individual countries, hotels and the industry have strived to create an environment for the visitor that is often distant from Caribbean reality. It is the nature of tourism and we all accept this, knowing, too, that it is no different from what the region's global competitors are doing.

The industry today is structured around and promoted through selling and delivering dreams in ways that much of the grittiness of everyday life of a country is removed. The idea of 'the traveller' as someone who immerses themselves in whatever may come has largely disappeared, been consigned to writers and explorers like Colin Thubron, and travel has been sanitised.

This is not unreasonable when a visitor works 50 weeks a year and wants to spend their hard-earned



dollars on relaxation or a chosen form of hedonism or culture. It is also good business for the host nation and the industry.

However, in Europe, in the last months, a number of developments have brought visitors face to face in beautiful locations with a very different form of reality, raising questions about whether there are limits to the dreams and destinations the industry can sell.

So challenging has the contrast become that it may trigger a new and fundamental debate about certain countries, and a greater awareness

among visitors that, in some countries, there is a vast gulf between reality and the image presented.

At its most extreme, visitors to popular resorts in Tunisia and tour operators are now being instructed by the British and Irish governments to leave the country immediately. This follows the deaths of 38 holidaymakers on a beach in Sousse in an appalling terrorist attack aimed at murdering visitors and damaging terminally that country's tourism industry.

In a different way, the challenge can also be seen in Greece, where

visitors to some Aegean Islands have quite literally come face to face on beaches and taverns with men, women and children with nothing coming ashore from small boats after having made a perilous crossing from North Africa to escape from wars in Syria, Libya and other countries.

To their credit, many visitors have joined local people to help transport, clothe and feed the refugees who have to make their way to often distant police stations in order to obtain the papers that will permit them to travel to

Athens for registration as refugees. But others turn away, disgusted that their holiday has been ruined; offended that reality does not match the dream that they believe they have purchased.

PEACEFUL VACATION

If one is hard-headed, this may of course be to the benefit of destinations like the Caribbean, safe in the knowledge that visitors travelling to the region are able to enjoy a happy and peaceful vacation, well away from the world's troubles, although noting that this gives me no pleasure.

Whether the industry and its dream-sellers like it or not, recent developments in Europe – and earlier tourist-related incidents in Kenya, Egypt and India – cannot help but raise issues about an industry that juxtaposes relative visitor wealth, different cultural and religious values and ways of life with the day-to-day reality of local life, and now, conflict.

The tourism industry is not good at addressing moral dilemmas of this kind, and the suspicion is that most tour operators will abandon destinations where they feel that visitors will have a less-than-perfect experience.

For every individual we see suffering, the vast majority of us will reach out to help, yet objectively, it is hard to argue that a vacation should not in some way seek to protect us from the real world.

There are no easy answers, but the region should be prepared for a debate.

Interval Int'l funds scholarships for C'bean nationals

INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL, a prominent worldwide provider of vacation services, and participating member resorts has awarded scholarships to eight Caribbean nationals, encouraging the pursuit of college degrees in hospitality and tourism fields. The scholarships are funded through the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Education Foundation (CHTAEF), an organisation that has been developing careers and promoting professionalism for nearly 30 years.

"As a long-standing supporter of the CHTAEF, Interval is proud to work with its resort clients in the region to give deserving students the opportunity to achieve their goals," said Jan Wyatt, Interval's vice-president of corporate marketing. "We hope that these students will return to their respective home countries to help deliver outstanding hospitality services and ensure the future of the industry in each locale."

"The shared ownership sector has been the largest contributor to the CHTAEF over the last decade, and we are very

grateful for its continuing commitment," added Richard S. Kahn, foundation chairman.

Each of the 2015 Interval International scholarship winners has earned this well-deserved assistance. They come from five different countries, will be attending five different schools, and seeking degrees in a variety of relevant areas:

ARUBA

- Arantxa Alves, Berkeley College of New York for marketing
- Christopher Geerman, Florida International University for Hospitality Management

THE BAHAMAS

- Kenia Taylor, Florida International University for Tourism Management

HAITI

- Kareen Etienne, Florida International University for

Hospitality Management

JAMAICA

- Gason Powell, Florida International University for Hospitality Management
- Jordon Richards, Johnson & Wales Rhode Island for Culinary Studies

PUERTO RICO

- Patricia Diaz-Centeno, Boston University for Event Management

ST MAARTEN

- Caroline Nolasco, University of St Maarten for Hospitality Management

Scholarships are awarded based on prior academic achievements, economic need, and previous work or internships in the Caribbean hospitality industry.



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Perry Christie on Caribbean tourism



Perry Christie

CONTRIBUTOR

The following speech was delivered by Bahamian Prime Minister Perry Christie at the opening of 36th annual CARICOM Heads of Government Summit in Barbados on Thursday, July 2, 2015.

LONG AFTER I will have ended my stint in the chair, The Bahamas will continue its responsibility for the CARICOM tourism desk and I wish to pledge to members that I intend to carry on my time as head of that desk with as much vigour as I intend to see our tourism responsibilities carried out in The Bahamas through my minister. That vigour will reflect my strong belief that it is through tourism growth and development that we have a collective opportunity to begin to address our problem of youth unemployment most rapidly.

I know that, for some, tourism may be redolent of a part of our history that we would want to keep barricaded. For most of our countries, tourism is the largest earner of foreign exchange and the largest employer. For all of our countries, tourism absorbs the broadest range of skills of any economic sector; tourism is the one sector for which there is no such thing as a jobless recovery. The very nature of tourism requires more people to be hired with increasing number of visitors. If unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is the scourge of our times, there appears to be no better economic sector for us to embrace in leading us closer to the promises that we have made to our lands.

GREAT CONDITIONS

I come to this view not only because of the intrinsic benefits that tourism delivers. I also come to this view because I have become convinced that when we look at the world today and at the various global trading blocs that have been formed and when we examine the various initiatives being pursued by CARICOM, it seems to me that the one natural bloc from which our CARICOM nations have much to gain is the God given bloc accorded us by having within the Caribbean the most salubrious con-



Artisans display their goods inside the historic Falmouth Port.

ditions for existence on our planet.

I am convinced that tourism, the largest part of our collective economies and, in most cases, the largest part of our individual economies deserves much more attention at our regional meetings. Further, I am persuaded that tourism development and all that it entails is the fastest path to reducing unemployment in our region and the fastest path to reducing the debt burdens that terrifies upcoming generations. We are supposed to make each generation better. I fear that we are on the brink of leaving the next generation with a much greater burden to carry if we don't begin to focus on ways to make our natural strengths stronger.

I know about and respect the powerful importance of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) to which our Ministers of Tourism belong. But it has occurred to me that unless CARICOM, that Caribbean body with the largest gathering of government heads of the Caribbean, signals to the CTO that tourism is very important to our col-

lective good, they will take their cues from the rarity of discussions about tourism at our CARICOM meetings as the indicator of our true beliefs.

My views are further prompted by what we see happening with the Cuban embargo and the United States. You will recall that it was CARICOM that spoke longest and loudest about the need for that embargo to be removed. In fact, not long after our most recent meeting as a body in Cuba, a meeting that I had the privilege to Chair, the announcement of intent was made by President Obama.

Mr Chairman, I have to tell you that after reading the Paper produced by the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association on the likely impact on Caribbean tourism of the reopening of Cuba to travel for United States citizens, I hear their appeal for us to act as a group to take full advantage of the opportunity to our collective benefit. In their recommendation to establish a Caribbean Basin Tourism Initiative, I hear their appeal for CARICOM to act in a more con-

certed manner. The Caribbean Basin Tourism Initiative promises that our citizens can receive benefits from our collective action that we might not be able to achieve for them as individual nations.

We need to take action to achieve the reciprocal reduction of taxes on airline tickets between the United States and Canada. The present high taxes have the effect of reducing travel rather than increasing it.

EXAMINE TAXES

I am not suggesting for one moment that we should remove all taxes from airline tickets immediately and invite the United States, Europe and South American countries to do the same. What I am asking is that we examine the likely effects of such a move on employment, on total spending and on tax collection. I do know that a recent PriceWaterhouseCoopers report on the effects of the UK imposed APD on airline tickets has been negative for the UK in terms of jobs and tax collection. While we prefer to believe that our lobbying efforts had some effect, it is

clear that some of the adjustments that the UK made to APD is a result of discovering that that ticket tax was counterproductive.

With taxes on airline tickets approaching 65 per cent of the total ticket prices in some cases in the Caribbean, there is an argument to be made that the social and economic benefits to be derived from increased volumes of visitors exceed the taxes removed.

So Mr Chairman, this proposed Caribbean Tourism Initiative deserves some closer examination for the benefit of all CARICOM communities. In line with the authors of the document, the world most tourism dependent region, the Caribbean, should also be seen to be the most tourism competent. We must go further in addressing our air transportation rules, our shipping rules, our regional marketing rules, training and development, etc.

I firmly believe that this could be the beginning of some significant steps in the direction of making things better in The Bahamas and better in the Caribbean.

DISCOVER
PREMIUM
CHOOSE



PERFECTION RUNS IN THE FAMILY

MUST BE 18 YEARS AND OLDER TO DRINK, ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

HOTEL REVIEW



The infinity pool.

Kareem LaTouche

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WHO THIS hotel is for: While there are plenty of amenities for kids, including a lavish water park, the hotel has a certain mature feeling that will find favour with most adults.

What makes it stand out: The architecture and design is modern and sophisticated throughout, with angular furniture, vibrant colours and glass pieces to complement the theme. When you enter the rooms, they are outfitted with lively abstract art paintings and bathroom vanities that are certain to stand out.

REVIEWER'S POINTS

■ Even though you might be on vacation, try to make use of the free international call service. Just pick up the phone, call the operator and give her the number you want to call. Even though I rarely used it, it's just great to know it was there for free.

■ Aesthetically, the Zen restaurant is beautiful, but I found the general buffet restaurant to have the best selection of food.

■ If you want a nice, soothing massage, skip the outdoor Jacuzzi and go for the heavy-duty showers located to the far end of the infinity pool. It does wonders for an aching back.

■ The hotel rooms form a 'u' like shape around the property, hence the view from any balcony is alluring.

■ If you are in North America or



Kerry-Ann Quallo Casserly, director of sales, Royalton White Sands.

Europe and just want to get away from the cold without necessarily immersing yourself in the Jamaican culture, this hotel might be perfect for you.

■ An area where the hotel can improve on is the late-night entertainment. It does seem to get very quiet after 12 a.m. That can be a good or bad thing depending on what type of person you are.

Here are five scenarios for Kerry-Ann Quallo Casserly, director of

sales at Royalton White Sands:

1. If you are trying to rekindle your love life what night activity must you try?

A: Enjoy our music under the stars by our floating musicians while sipping on your favourite martini at our martini bar!

2. If you have a strong stomach, what's your recommended meal?

A: Mouth-watering rib eye steak with mashed potatoes, topped with our award winning crème brûlée.

3. You want to brag to your friends when you return to work, what should you have?

A: The onsite craft vendor make his and hers Bob Marley necklaces.

4. You suffer from motion sickness. As you arrive, ask the receptionist for what?

A: Rum and more rum!

5. You have a hyperactive child, but you also want to spend time with your spouse.

A: We have the best offering for children as it relates to Kids Club! We accept ages two-12 from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. at no extra charge. Specially trained Kids Camp employees will keep children entertained at our water park, or indoors with arts and crafts, video games, dance lessons, trivia, movie night and much more!

If that is not enough, then our mascots, Max and Ruby, or Mike the Knight, will seal the deal and win over their little hearts!



This is the general view from any balcony.



It's simple, modern and sleek.



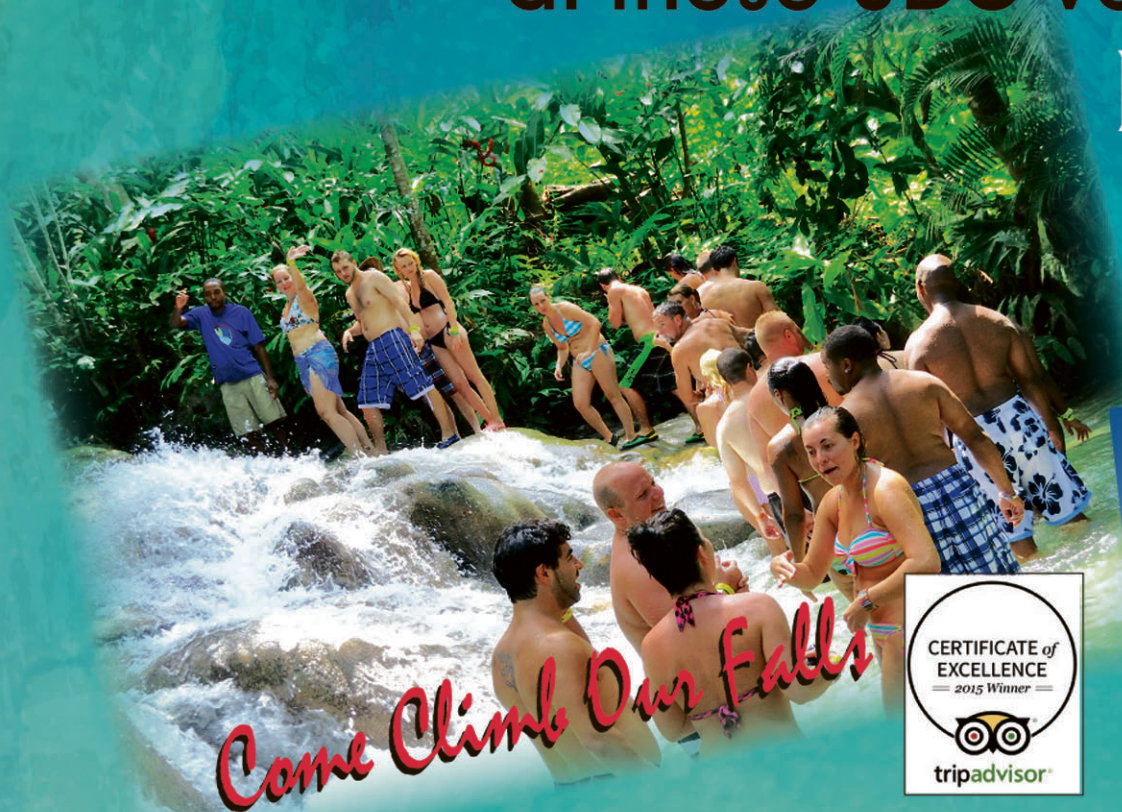
With a water slide this elaborate, kids are sure to have fun all day.

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Shaggy performing for NBC's 'TODAY Show'.

Shaggy delivers Jamaican vibe at Rockefeller Center

ON JULY 7, Grammy-winning Jamaican recording artiste Shaggy performed live on NBC's **TODAY Show** at the latest instalment of the Toyota Concert Series at the Rockefeller Plaza in New York. Sponsored by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), fans and supporters created a sea of Jamaican flags as Shaggy opened up his performance with his newest single, **I Need Your Love**, followed by a variety of his classic hits including **It Wasn't Me**, **Mr Boombastic** and **Angel**.

Shaggy's new album, **Out of Many, One Music**, earned him a 2015 Grammy Award nomination for Best Reggae Album and the music video for **I Need Your Love** has garnered more than 50 million views on YouTube.

To further support the event, the Jamaica Tourist Board (@visitjamaicanow) hosted a Twitter chat with Shaggy (@direalshaggy) which resulted in over four million hashtag impressions (#JamaicanMusic).

JTB and Palace Resorts partner to bring island flair to Yankee Stadium

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) and Palace Resorts have joined forces to sponsor Jamaica's Promotional Day at Yankee Stadium on August 7, 2015. The strategic partnership includes an all-inclusive vacation package giveaway for four, compliments of Moon Palace Jamaica Grande and Delta Air Lines, the Official Air Line of the New York Yankees.

Palace Resorts and the JTB will be celebrating Jamaica's Promotional Day in grand style by transforming the SAP Suite Lounge at Yankee Stadium into an experiential oasis reflective of both Jamaica and Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, the brand's first property outside of Mexico. The lounge will set the stage for Jamaica's Promotional Day as it will host JTB representatives, a slew of VIPs, top meeting planners, tour operators, travel agents and media. Patrons will also have a chance to enter to win a trip on-site at the Jamaica's Promotional Day Kiosk located in the Great Hall.

At the game, in which the New York Yankees are set to play Toronto, the first 18,000 attendees will receive a Jamaica and Moon Palace Jamaica Grande branded canvas beach bag.

"Partnering with world-class brands such as the New York Yankees, Palace Resorts and Delta Air Lines is a great way to bring awareness to Destination Jamaica. We anticipate that this collaboration will boost arrivals from the Northeast market during the upcoming fall season," said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's Director of Tourism. "Jamaica is now increasingly attracting a more affluent visitor demographic like the New York Yankees fan base, which is why this partnership feels like a home run."

"Palace Resorts has built a reputation as a company that has redefined the all-inclusive concept and consistently provides guests with the highest calibre experiences in Mexico and the Caribbean. Strategically aligning

ourselves with likeminded marquee name brands and forward-thinking organisations such as The New York Yankees, The JTB and Delta Air Lines, is a testament to our commitment to excellence," said Gibran Chapur, executive vice-president of Palace Resorts. "We are eager to celebrate Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, the next chapter in Palace Resorts' 30 year history, with our valued partners during a sure to be exciting day at Yankee Stadium."

EXCITED ABOUT PARTNERSHIP

"We are excited that both the JTB and Palace Resorts have partnered with Delta Air Lines, and hope that the Jamaica's Promotional Day will augment their brand awareness as a Caribbean destination," said Michael J. Tusiani, New York Yankees senior vice-president of corporate sales and sponsorships.

Tri-state area residents will have an opportunity to vacation like a major leaguer through the Grande Slam Jamaica photo contest. Persons who visit www.palaceresorts.com/grandeslamjamaica will be entered in the final drawing of the grand prize all-inclusive trip for four to the Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, the newest five-star resort in Ocho Rios, Jamaica.

To enter the contest, visit www.palaceresorts.com/grandeslamjamaica, fill out the entry form and send a photo with 50 words or less detailing the applicant's super-fandom, and why he/she deserves a trip to the all-new Moon Palace Jamaica

Grande in Ocho Rios. Participants have a chance to win the grand prize of a three-night stay for four, including airfare, courtesy of Delta Air Lines. Three additional runners-up will receive a three-night stay for two with airfare. Participants have until July 24, 2015 to enter the sweepstakes online. All finalists will be invited to Yankee Stadium on August 7, 2015 where the grand prize winner will be announced.

Following a multimillion-dollar transformation, the soon-to-opened Moon Palace Jamaica Grande will boast more than 700 guestrooms and suites with oceanfront views of the Caribbean Sea. The resort will feature 17-acres of ivory sand and aesthetics by cutting-edge designer Francois Frossard, on the longest stretch of private beach in Ocho Rios. Upon completion, Moon Palace Jamaica Grande will include five lavish swimming pools, multiple restaurants, a gourmet corridor, a FlowRider(r) Double wave simulator, Wired Teen Lounge, expansive kids club dubbed, The Playroom, Noir, an ultra-chic nightclub, signature Awe-Spa with dedicated wellness centre and 25,000 square feet of multifunctional meeting and event space.

For more information on Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, or to book, visit: www.moonpalacejamaica-grande.com. To find out more about a sports-themed vacation to Jamaica, visit www.visitjamaica.com.

J'cans urged to document unique culture

STATE MINISTER for Tourism and Entertainment Damion Crawford is urging more Jamaicans to dedicate time and effort to documenting aspects of the unique Jamaican culture. Speaking recently at the official ceremony to mark the handing over of 100 digital tapes containing priceless interviews and concert footage from the **Legends of Ska** documentary project, Crawford underscored the need for more Jamaicans to produce films, features and documentaries showcasing the culture, such as the successes of our cultural icons and musicians.

The **Legends of Ska** documentary, which was produced by American film producer, Brad Klein, captures the growth and evolution of ska as a distinctive Jamaican musical genre. It also examines the impact of Jamaican music globally and gives unique insight into the lives and careers of some of our most legendary ska performers. Klein dedicated over 12 years of his life to creating the film.

In thanking Klein for handing over the tapes to the Jamaica Music Museum, Crawford said, "This vast catalogue of archival footage and images is truly a national asset. The significance of this footage resonates with those of us who understand the importance of capturing and preserving aspects of our history for the benefit of current and future generations alike."

TELLING THE JAMAICAN STORY

Crawford added that, "As a country, Jamaica continues to captivate the world through our unique culture and music, but more Jamaicans need to dedicate the time and effort to telling our own story, to capturing our history and culture on tape so that more people can truly appreciate the achievements of various talented Jamaicans."

Crawford underscored that "the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and its agencies are committed to fostering the continued development of the entertainment industry and the preservation of our cultural heritage. It is this commitment that has guided our decision to finance this initiative through the Tourism Enhancement Fund, in order to bring these valuable tapes to Jamaica".

For his part, minister of transport, works and housing and noted music aficionado, Dr Omar Davies, expressed similar sentiments, noting that, "Even as I express gratitude to Brad on this initiative, I hope that within Jamaica, we will seek to start doing this in a more systematic way, in terms of documenting the work of artistes and ensuring that the next generation will be aware of this rich piece of our history."

In accepting the footage, director/curator of the Jamaica Music Museum, which is an arm of the Institute of Jamaica, Herbie Miller, said, "I would like to thank Brad for his very generous and committed donation. In accepting this, I do it on behalf of the ancestors and the survivors who we call the Legends of Ska, as well as the Jamaican people."

Half Moon resort named among best family hotels

Rated as 'Family Vacation Critic's' 2015 Favourite

KNOWN FOR its one-of-a-kind amenities and superb hospitality, Half Moon – a 400-acre luxury resort located in Montego Bay – maintains its position as a top choice for families looking for that perfect Caribbean getaway.

Named as a '2015 Favourite' by Family Vacation Critic, TripAdvisor's family travel site, Half Moon continues to wow travellers with its wide variety of amenities that are suitable for families, especially children.

"Half Moon is well positioned to welcome large and small families," noted Sandro Fabris, general manager of the resort that has been in operation for more than six decades. "A short flight from many US cities, and with direct flights from a number of international airports to Jamaica, Half Moon continues to be a safe space for families, where they will find ways to not only relax, but spend quality family time together," he said.

Upon arrival, families have access to a unique activity centre, the Anancy Children's Village, catering to children ages three to 12, as well as trained nannies and coordi-



Children at play at Half Moon.

nators certified by Penn State University's Better Kid Care Program. Other amenities include watersports activities, swimming pools, an exclusive dolphin lagoon, pony park and equestrian centre.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

According to **Family Vacation Critic**, to be designated a Favourite, hotels must have been recommended by 75 per cent or more families who have reviewed the property with either a four or five-star rating. Award recipients have also been vetted by the travel resource's team of experts.

"These winners represent hotels that truly excel as family-friendly properties," explained Lissa Poirot, editor-in-chief of **Family Vacation Critic**. "Because awards are only given to hotels that receive a high rating from both our team of experts and family travellers who have stayed at the property, the **Family Vacation Critic** Favourite Hotels designation offers parents a credible stamp of approval to use when searching for the perfect hotel for their family."

TEF welcomes Ja's first World Heritage Site

Fund provides over \$13M to support venture

THE TOURISM Enhancement Fund (TEF) has expressed delight at news that the push to have the Blue and John Crow Mountains designated as a World Heritage Site has yielded significant success. This follows the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's unanimous decision to have the site inscribed on the prestigious World Heritage List. The decision was made at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee Meeting now underway in Bonn, Germany.

The inscription resulted from a strategic partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and its agencies, and the Ministry of Youth and Culture. The Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) has provided over \$13 million to date to support the venture. Overall, the TEF has allocated some \$761 million to heritage and cultural projects over the last

two years, some of which has been used to finance the upgrade of several heritage sites across the island.

The designation marks the first World Heritage site for Jamaica and is also the first mixed (cultural and natural) site for the Caribbean sub-region. The Blue and John Crow Mountains is now one of only 32 mixed sites, which include several world-renowned sites such as the The Taj Mahal of India, Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Great Wall of China.

Included in the TEF \$13 million allocation is a tranche of over \$4.6 million, which facilitated the trip by the Jamaican contingent led by Minister of Youth and Culture Lisa Hanna to Bonn, Germany, where they successfully defended Jamaica's nomination at the meeting, which ran from June 28-July 8.

In expressing satisfaction at the achieve-

ment, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeil said, "I am elated that the initiative was successful and it is proof of the far-reaching impact that partnerships can have. I am confident that the designation will help to enhance the appeal of Jamaica to travellers with a special interest in culture and boost our standing as a competitive destination in accordance with the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index."

Executive director of the TEF, Clyde Harrison, said, "We are very pleased with the outcome of this project and our support for the venture has yielded significant dividends." He added that "this designation will significantly boost our efforts to develop heritage tourism locally, which is in-keeping with TEF's drive to safeguard heritage sites and points of interest".

Farmers urged to benefit from tourism boom

MINISTER OF Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill has urged the nation's farmers to plan strategically to benefit from the expected increased demand for local produce as the tourism sector continues to experience strong growth.

With tourism arrivals continuing to trend upwards, 1,600 new hotel rooms being added to the accommodation inventory in the next 18 months, and thousands more rooms in the advanced planning stages, McNeill asked the audience of some 100 farmers, agricultural produce suppliers and representatives of agricultural organisations from across the island, "Who is going to feed all these visitors?"

McNeill was giving opening remarks at a meeting hosted by the ministry's Tourism Linkages Hub on July 1, to sensitise the farmers and suppliers to the anticipated boom in tourism and the need for them to effectively plan production to meet the increase in demand. The meeting was held at the Golf View Hotel in Mandeville, Manchester.

"Someone has to feed these people. We can either bring in the food or grow the food," McNeill stated.

MORE THAN ARRIVALS

"We cannot continue to look at tourism success from the angle of tourism arrivals and investments. I want the benefits of tourism to reach the Jamaican people, too. That is my priority," the minister stated, adding that "tourism must be used as a tool to decrease poverty and give more Jamaicans wealth".

"But it is not going to happen just like that. We have to work together to make it happen," said McNeill. He pointed out that the Tourism Linkages Hub is on a mission to ensure the tourism sector becomes better integrated with and creates more opportunities for local agriculture. The minister said he would like the day to come when



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill urges the nation's farmers to plan strategically to benefit from the expected increased demand for local produce as the tourism sector continues to experience strong growth.

nearly everything consumed in local hotels is produced in Jamaica.

In addition to charging farmers and suppliers to pay careful attention to quality, quantity and pricing, McNeill pointed to fruits, premium products and the farm-to-fork concept as three areas of opportunity from which they could benefit.

In his address, the minister of agriculture, labour and social secu-

rity, Derrick Kellier, praised McNeill for his vision, not just in establishing the Hub, but in ensuring its vigilant stewardship as it seeks to increase the supply of agricultural products to the tourism market.

"Jamaica can only prosper on a sustainable basis when we develop and maintain linkages to ensure that every industry and economic activity allows as many people as possible to prosper," said Kellier,

adding that "one han' cyan clap, so collaboration remains critical".

He concluded by saluting the efforts of the linkages hub as the two ministries continued to work together to identify the market demand for agriculture produce in the tourism sector and effectively plan production and distribution to meet those needs.

Leading discussions at the meeting were Tourism Linkages Hub project manager, Carolyn McDon-

ald Riley; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Donovan Stanberry; and Tourism Linkages Council member Dr Derrick Deslandes.

Representatives from the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, the Agro-Investment Corporation, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the Jamaica Agriculture Society and JAMPRO were also in attendance.

Sandals Whitehouse number one at Travel awards

THE SANDALS Whitehouse brand is again in celebratory mode after ranking number one in the **Travel + Leisure** 2015 World's Best Awards. The luxury-included resort outshone other reputable brands in the general Caribbean, Bermuda, and The Bahamas Resorts category.

This year, **Travel + Leisure**

opened its annual poll to more than 970,000 readers to determine the most sought after hotels around the globe. Respondents were asked to rate hotels on rooms/facilities, location, service, restaurants/food, and value. In addition to Sandals Whitehouse topping the list, sister property, Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort

Villages & Spa retained its ranking as the best Caribbean resort for families for the second year in a row. Beaches Turks & Caicos also ranked No. 16, and Sandals Royal Plantation was ranked No. 23 in the general Caribbean, Bermuda and The Bahamas Resorts category.

"We are extremely humbled that Sandals Whitehouse was selected

as number one and we credit this award to the dedication, diligence and commitment of our over 600 team members. Their love for the Sandals brand, the industry and the country runs deep, and this award is a true testament to their hard work," said a passionate and equally happy Courtney Miller, general manager for Sandals Whitehouse.

Sandals Whitehouse is located on the lush, untouched southern shores of Jamaica, boasting 360 rooms and suites nestled within 500 acres of wilderness preserve. The resort features seven gourmet dining options, six bars, four shimmering pools and an array of entertainment, land and water sports activities.

HOTEL REVIEW: JEWEL RUNAWAY BAY

Run away to a Jewel

Kareem LaTouche

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WHO THIS hotel is for: It's ideal for anyone who is family oriented. The majority of the activities the resort offers caters to team activities such as laser tag or playing at the water park.

What makes it stand out: The staff is extremely friendly and approachable, and within a short period, several of them usually know you by name. Perhaps this is why guests are not given a wristband.

REVIEWER'S POINTS

- It's a very lively hotel, persons are always moving around, which also creates a feeling of freedom.
- Skip the buffet at Coral Café and give the Aquamarina Beach Grill a try. The jerk chicken and the wraps are delicious. If you are going for the wraps, try to get it during the midday period. I guess due to high demand, they are usually finished in the nights.

- There are three main options for nightly entertainment, which is good because you get to choose, based on your personality. If you like to eat while watching live entertainment, dine at the Coral Café. If you want to have a drink and mingle, stay at the bar and if you are the party animal, then go to the club.

- For those who are big on presentation and want a different dining experience, try the Platinum Restaurant. They will serve you fish on a miniature aquarium. However, if you're all about the savoury stuff, dine at the Court Jesters. Though it takes about 25 minutes to prepare the entrée, it's worth the wait.

- Two personalities you won't forget are Scott Robbins, general manager, a very passionate and approachable person who finds time to answer as many emails as possible, and resident entertainment coordinator, 'Purple', he is usually the life of the party and doesn't seem to sleep.

- The property can be very windy due to its proximity to the beach, and whenever a 'Do not disturb/room service' sign is placed on the door, it tends to fly away. If you want to ensure no one disturbs you when you are sleeping, get a thumb tack or a piece of tape to keep the sign on the door.

- For years, the Ruby Ranch was the main attraction of the hotel with the laser tag facility, but now it's all



The newly finished water park.

about the water park and a must-try activity is the tandem tube slide.

Here are four scenarios for Scott Robbins, general manager of Jewel Runaway Bay:

1. You and your wife had a long flight and got into an argument, what do you recommend to smooth things over?

A: Upgrade to a one-bedroom oceanfront plunge pool suite and then have your butler do a romantic dinner on the beach, or better yet, in the plunge pool, which is on your balcony.

2. You are looking for a large family activity to do?

A: Wednesday night hay ride to the Red Ruby Ranch with night time laser tag, movie and smores around a bonfire is always a great experience.

3. What drink should you ask the bartender to make that is certain to keep you happy all night?

A: Everyday is a different gem of the day. Hit all seven, maybe in one night, and if you can't manage that, just ask for a Sapphire mix.

4. A menu entree and appetiser that will keep you talking about it for days?

A: Have dinner at our Platinum restaurant and you will see what I am talking about. Jerk chicken pop tart for appetiser, jerk pork loin for entree and for dessert, carnival churros.



Scott Robbins, general manager, showcases the hat he is going to wear for his part as Mufasa in his daughter's school play, 'Lion King'.



The one-bedroom oceanfront plunge pool suite.



Each day, ask for that specific gem of the day from the bar or restaurant and their staff will deliver it, even the tour desk.



Try the wrap or jerk chicken at the Aquamarina Beach Grill.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

Old Nanny Town trek, a reflection

EXACTLY ONE year ago, I embarked on a trek to Old Nanny Town, Portland, way up in the rugged and brutal interior of the Blue and John Crow Mountains. I was among a group of about 40 people. The expedition's purpose was to get footage for a documentary called **Queen Nanny – Legendary Maroon chieftainess**.

Physically, for me, it was a disaster, an old and unfit man taking on those merciless terrains. One week after my return to sane ground, my big toenails fell out. They are going to be auctioned years from now because of their historical value. I mean, they have traversed mountainsides and valleys that not many people will get the opportunity to go and see. Seriously now. The place is as beautiful as beauty is, but it is tough. For the younger trekkers, it was a walk in the park actually, the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. And despite my struggles, near misses, frustration with my ageing body, I am longing to go back. I have lost some weight, etc.

It was four days of invaluable embracing of nature and soaking up of Maroon culture and camaraderie with the soldiers and guides who accompanied us. Now, there are times when I close my eyes and imagine that I am at base camp, where the trek ended for me. The scenes just cannot leave my mind. And that 10-minute helicopter ride back? Ah bway! And then came the recent announcement that the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park is now a World Heritage Site, inscribed on the World Heritage Site List. (See story on page 11).

MAROON HISTORY

This most important announcement is the basis of my reflection. Without the story of Nanny and the Maroons and how they used the environment to their advantage, there would be no inscription, I believe. I had not just been on the site. I was in the heart of the site, in the midst of the history and heritage and the diverse landscape, it being a mixed site. I feel so blessed to have been to the place where my fearless ancestors launched the world's first guerilla war to walk on some of the paths on which they have trod. I cannot, for one moment, imagine how much



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

A JDF medic attends to the big toe of Hospitality Jamaica writer Paul H. Williams during a trek to Old Nanny Town, Portland, last year.



Hospitality Jamaica writer, Paul H. Williams, chilling out in the Stony River in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park in June last year.



Scenes like these are very common in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park.



Charles Town Maroons Paul Atkinson (left) and Rodney Rose demonstrating Maroon fighting manoeuvres.

tougher it was then to move about in that dense wilderness. Yet, they created trails that the English militia didn't know of and could not perceive. Cuna Cuna Pass, Corn Puss Gap, Morant Bay, Woman's Town, Stony River, Two Claridge, Captain Stoddart and the John Hall trails are now part of the Nanny Town Cultural Heritage Route, which includes battle sites. Based on what I saw of the park, on the ground and from the helicopter, it seems to be in good condition. Yet, there are challenges, such as deforestation for agricultural purposes, bush fires, killing of animals, informal settlements and invasive plants taking over natural forest areas. And now that it is a world heritage site, the onus is on all of us to preserve the integrity of the site, and I know the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JCDT), through its hard-working rangers, will be more vigilant than ever in its effort to conserve, save and maintain the park.

Our role is to support the work of the JCDT and use our only national park within the ambit of the law, for the world is watching us. I want to see more people, locals and visitors from abroad, trekking to the different spots and routes. You can only get a feel of the place going there yourself. You shall return with lasting memories. A dirty brown short I still have. It will be framed and captioned. Just try the Old Nanny Town route. And, as I said, I am more than glad I went. The documentary is now in its final stages of production. The world premiere will be in New York at the United Nations in October, while the Jamaica premiere will be held in the same week of the world premiere. More anon. The video and still images will come alive onscreen, but in my mind are forever embedded the majestic, the idyllic, the eerie, the beautiful, the painful, and the triumphant pictures of my trek to Old Nanny Town. Her footprints are still on the paths, sacred grounds, and so are mine.



Some Moore Town Maroons drumming and dancing in the night during a trek to Old Nanny Town, Portland, last year.



A pot of crayfish from the Stony River.



Soldiers sharing a meal at base camp.

Int'l tourist arrivals up four per cent

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM demand continued to be robust between January and April 2015, with tourist arrivals increasing four per cent worldwide according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Almost all regions enjoyed strong growth. Prospects for the May-August period remain upbeat, with close to 500 million tourists expected to travel abroad during these four months.

Destinations worldwide received some 332 million international tourists (overnight visitors) between January and April 2015, 16 million more than the same period last year, corresponding to an increase of four per cent.

This result follows an increase of 4.3 per cent in 2014 and consolidates the upwards trend of international tourism in recent years (+4.5 per cent international tourist arrivals a year on average since 2010).

By region, the Americas (+6 per cent) led growth, followed by Europe, Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East, all recording four per cent to five per cent more arrivals. By subregion, Oceania and South America boasted the strongest increase (both +8 per cent), followed by the Caribbean and Central and Eastern Europe (both +7 per cent), the latter rebounding from last year's decline. In Africa, demand weakened in 2014 after years of solid growth, affected mainly by the Ebola outbreak among other challenges. Limited data currently available for January-April 2015 points to a six per cent decline, as African destinations struggle to recover from the misperceptions affecting the continent.

STRONG RESULTS ACROSS MANY DESTINATIONS

"It is encouraging to see the tourism sector consolidating its excellent results despite security concerns and unrest in many parts of our world", said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai. "This underscores that tourism is a surprisingly resilient economic sector which increasingly contributes to development in many countries around the globe. For national governments, it is a reminder that tourism can be part of the solution to foster socio-economic development and job creation," he added.

In the Americas (+6 per cent), all four subregions continued to enjoy significant growth in January-April



FILE

In this February 25, 2015 photo, tourists look for souvenirs at a shop in Trinidad, southern Cuba.

2015, led by South America (+8 per cent) and the Caribbean (+7 per cent). Strong outbound demand from the United States fuelled results as 20 million US tourists travelled abroad through April, 7 per cent more than during the same period last year.

Asia and the Pacific (+4 per cent) consolidated its growth of recent years, with Oceania (+8 per cent) and North-East Asia (+5 per cent) in the lead. South-East Asia (+3 per cent) recorded moderate results this four-month period as the rebound in Thailand (+25 per cent) was offset by declines in other destinations.

Europe, the world's most visited region, enjoyed continued strength with international tourist arrivals growing by 5 per cent through April. Arrivals in Central and Eastern Europe increased by 7 per cent, rebounding on the poor results of 2014 following the conflict in Ukraine and the slowdown of the Russian economy. Southern Mediterranean Europe (+5 per cent)

maintained strong growth, though for many destinations these are low season months. Western Europe and Northern Europe both enjoyed a solid 4% increase in arrivals, partly due to good results in traditional winter sports destinations.

International tourist arrivals in the Middle East are estimated to be up by 4 per cent through April, further continuing the region's recovery, which started in 2014 after three consecutive years of declines. Africa's international tourist numbers, on the other hand, declined by an estimated 6 per cent as a consequence of the decrease in arrivals to North Africa (-7 per cent) as well as to sub-Saharan Africa (-5 per cent). Figures for both Africa and the Middle East should be read with caution, as they are based on limited available data for these regions.

"The Ebola crisis in West Africa and the security concerns are serious challenges for Africa's tourism

and for the international community as a whole. We must work together in managing and overcoming these challenges and in supporting destinations for a prompt recovery. It is important to remember that tourism is the lifeline of many communities around the world and that we face today a global threat that affects all our societies," said Rifai.

OPTIMISTIC PROSPECTS FOR THE COMING MONTHS

Close to 500 million tourists are estimated to travel abroad between May and August 2015, the Northern Hemisphere holiday peak season, a total that accounts for some 41 per cent of all international tourist arrivals registered in a year.

According to the latest results of the UNWTO Tourism Confidence Index, prospects for this period continue to be bullish and are the highest for this period since the pre-crisis year 2007. The sentiment

is positive among all regions and areas of activity.

Business intelligence tool ForwardKeys also shows healthy growth in international air travel reservations for May-August 2015. Overall bookings are up 5 per cent thanks to strong demand for domestic air travel (+7 per cent) and continued growth in international travel (+4 per cent). By region, air reservations increased most in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Europe, while reservations to and from Africa and the Middle East are weaker.

According to the forecast issued by UNWTO in January this year, international tourist arrivals are expected to increase by three per cent to four per cent for the full year 2015, in line with UNWTO's long-term forecast of 3.8 per cent a year for the period 2010 to 2020.

Results presented here reflect preliminary data reported to date and are subject to revision.