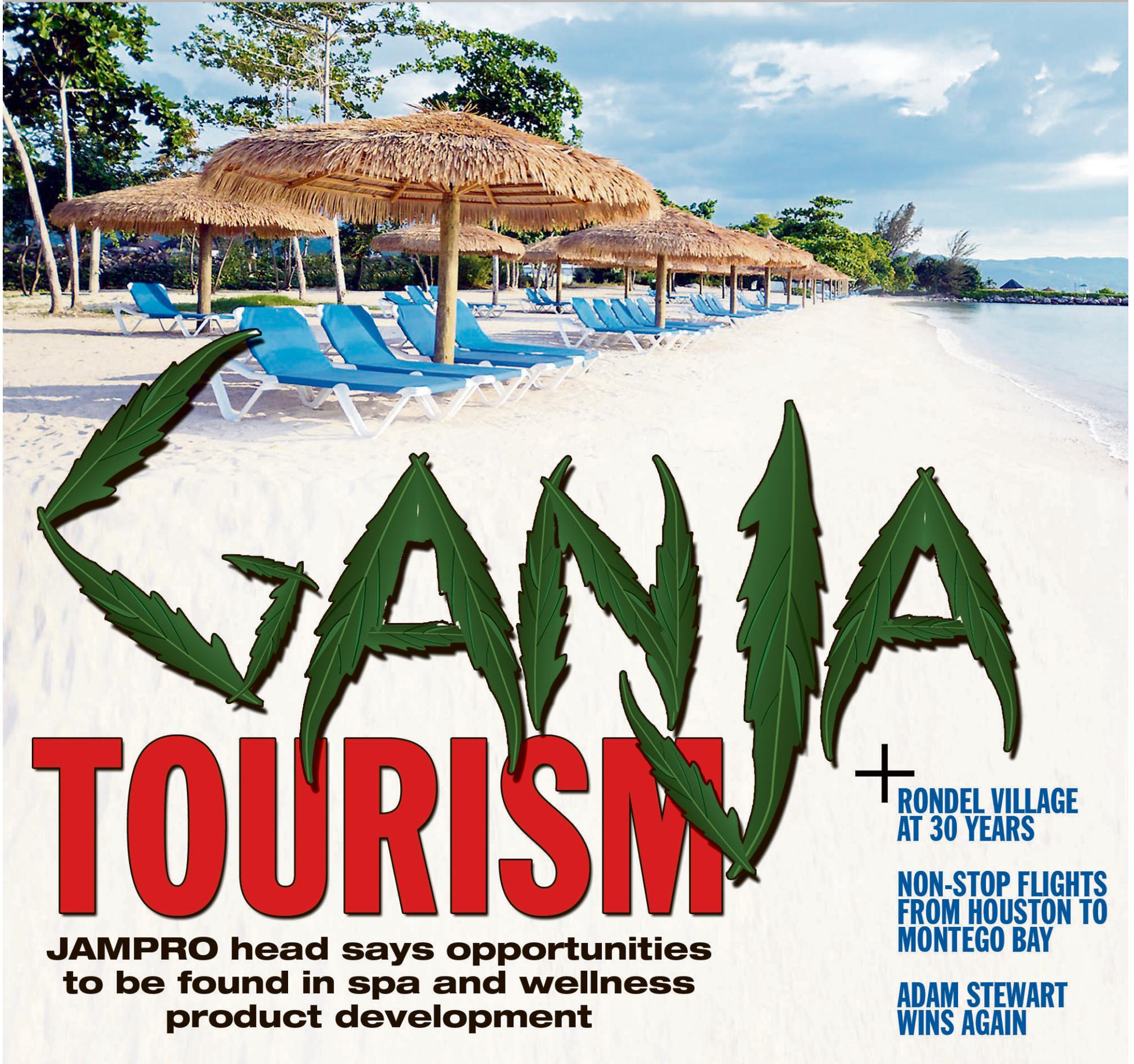


The Gleaner  
**Hospitality Jamaica**

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2015



# TOURISM

**JAMPRO head says opportunities to be found in spa and wellness product development**

**+ RONDEL VILLAGE AT 30 YEARS**

**NON-STOP FLIGHTS FROM HOUSTON TO MONTEGO BAY**

**ADAM STEWART WINS AGAIN**

# Investment plans chart new course for Sandals and construction industry

OVER THE last three decades, Sandals Resorts International (SRI) has established itself as one of the Caribbean's leading brands and a pacesetter in luxury-included travel.

Now, as the trailblazing resort chain enters the next frontier, the evolution of its brands remains a top priority, and its ongoing projects are not only keeping the Sandals brand competitive, but are also providing a lucrative boost for local contractors and stimulating development within the construction industry.

To date, SRI has engaged close to 200 local contractors and vendors in pursuit of its vision and in undertaking its various projects.

According to Richard Hamilton, director of projects and engineering for SRI, since July 2014, the company has undertaken and completed 156 infrastructural projects on its properties in Jamaica and there are 142 projects currently in progress.

Hamilton notes that this indicates a 35 per cent increase in the number of projects undertaken by SRI in Jamaica, when compared to the same period for 2013/14.

"This increase will continue over the next few years as we improve our current room stock to continue to lead the sector," he said.

## PROVIDING JOBS

For Anthony Grannum, owner of Coast & Land Aesthetic Development Ltd (CLAD Ltd), which has the contract for the Palms project currently underway at the company's flagship property, Sandals Montego Bay, projects such as these provide an excellent opportunity that will not only allow CLAD Ltd and other companies to showcase their passion, but also to grow and provide needed jobs for the skilled and unskilled labour force it employs.

CLAD Ltd currently has a staff complement of 130 assigned to the Palms block renovation project at Sandals Montego Bay, which is slated for completion in mid-December and will see all 66 guest rooms of this idyllic seaside promontory enhanced to reflect the new Sandals signature look, inclusive of outdoor tranquility tubs on the terrace as well as new bathrooms with in-demand soft furnishings such as ivory flooring, mosaic tiles, backlit mirrors, porcelain vanities and



Edinburgh suite at Sandals.



A look inside the recently completed Edinburgh suites at Sandals Royal Caribbean, also a locally contracted project.

stone elements throughout.

"This group comprises of labourers, carpenters, framers, finishing joinery trades, masons, steel fabricators, plaster men, tilers, painters, roofers, plumbers and electricians," said Grannum. He also noted that his company is in the process of increasing staffing up to 170 members to keep the Palms project on track for an on-time completion.

"SRI will always work with local qualified and experienced contrac-

tors and artisans that can allow development and refurbishment projects to be implemented with the highest quality and within challenging time constraints," said Hamilton. He noted that SRI has built strong relationships with its local contractors and continues to work with them to ensure that the highest levels of quality and implementation are achieved.

He, however, pointed out that Jamaica generally struggles with the



Construction workers working on the Palms at Sandals.

level of training and on-the-job experience that is available in other countries. This could be an indicator as to why many projects in the industry are still being carried out by overseas-based contractors.

Grannum, whose Jamaica-based company continues to benefit from industry projects, says his team encourages mentorship of trade apprentices to grow new skilled trades for their company's

future expansion. But he believes that if top clients like Sandals continue to offer this kind of support, CLAD and other local contractors will not only keep their doors open, but support continued capacity building within the construction industry through exposure to groundbreaking new ideas and the implementation of training workshops for all building trades.

# Opportunities abound for ganja tourism

**Claudia Gardner**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**P**RESIDENT OF JAMPRO, Diane Edwards, said huge opportunities abound for Jamaica's ganja entrepreneurs to capitalise on, through the development of hemp and ganja spa products, wellness centres and other related commercial activities in the island's flourishing wellness tourism sector.

Edwards made her comments during an interview with **Hospitality Jamaica** at the Jamaica Cannabis Reforms Conference, which was staged by the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Industry Investment and Commerce and the Beckley Foundation at the Couples Swept Away Resort in Negril, last Saturday.

"The opportunity between cannabis and tourism is really very exciting because what we can be doing now is developing treatment centres and wellness centres," said Edwards, adding that JAMPRO had a whole cluster developing on wellness tourism, and nutraceuticals, which is a huge ingredient in wellness tourism.

According to her, people who want to de-stress, detox, meditate and learn new techniques of coping with life can go to a treatment centre where they can receive massages with cannabis oils.

"You could do tonics, facial scrubs, skin creams, soaps ... all sorts of different products," she said.

## PERFECTLY LEGAL

Edwards pointed out that the use of these topical applications was not illegal.

"We could be doing a lot with that, just before we get into things like consumables which, at this point, unless they are less than one per cent THC, are still illegal," she added.

Edwards said this sector of the ganja industry would be supported by JAMPRO and that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) should prepare themselves to be drivers of this segment of the health and wellness industry.

"I think there is a great role for the MSMEs. They need to start to understand value chains ... for instance, a wellness village ... all the spas in Jamaica will need cosmetic products ... they will need balms; they will need massage oils, soaps, skin creams, so that is something MSMEs can get into," she explained.



JAMPRO President Diane Edwards addressing a marijuana conference in Negril on Saturday, November 14.

"Then there are a lot of services. MSMEs don't think about design services. Everybody needs their packaging designed if they are making a new product. People need their posters, their flyers, their websites. They need them designed so design is another great area for MSMEs to get into," she said.

In the case of Colorado, the first state in the United States where marijuana use was legalised, reports show that there has been a rise in the establishment of cannabis-related industries. The ganja industry website, [ganjapreneur.com](http://ganjapreneur.com), reported in December last year that since the inception of the recreational cannabis industry in Colorado, the market has "grown and thrived" and created all types of niche businesses, including spa services. One such spa is Primal Wellness, which is said to be the world's first day spa offering cannabis-infused products and related services.

In 2013, the Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) reported that health and wellness is valued at US\$180 million in the

Caribbean, with the potential to add \$50 million in revenue growth annually. It said that the sector was small and underdeveloped and that the product lacks consistency and branding, which could enhance its potential to grow and create jobs in the region, and that as much as 70 per cent of income from tourist dollar was being lost. CEDA said 95 per cent of oils, lotions and other products used in the health and wellness sector are imported into the region, suggesting that opportunities also exist for the development of a value chain.

## SPA THERAPY

The number of spa therapists in Jamaica were estimated at approximately 3,000 in 2010. According to a Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) document on health and wellness tourism, "resorts and hotels are joining the health spa development craze" and "most upmarket hotels have expanded their services to facilitate guests who now see spa therapy as the deciding factor in a resort vacation, rather than just an additional amenity".

The TPDCo said Jamaicans are also leaning towards this form of recreational activity, resulting in a proliferation of day spas, particularly in Kingston, and that the increasing demand for this type of activity could be a window of opportunity for potential investors in tourism.

Edwards also said another business area with huge potential for private enterprises, specifically Rastafarians, could be the establishment of a museum similar to the famous Hash, Marijuana and Hemp Museum in central Amsterdam in the Netherlands, which has more than 6,000 items in its collection and a giftshop which sells hemp cosmetics, hemp bags and other items.

"For instance, a Rastafari group can get together and say 'we are offering an authentic Rastafari museum or a ganja museum'. You see, the thing is we have to start thinking outside the box, because a cannabis museum, I think, would be a fantastic thing and just starting from how cannabis got into Jamaica, how it was used by cane farmers and indigenous remedies and then coming to the present day, where a lot of what Grandma said is being validated by science. There is a lot to show in terms of the history and the cultural impact," she said.



Minister Anthony Hylton (right) speaks to Professor Winston Davidson, chairman of the Bureau of Standards, during the cannabis reform conference in Negril on Saturday, November 14, where opportunities for investment and development of cannabis spa products were discussed.



Royalton White Sands' director of sales, Kerry-Ann Quallo-Casserly (right), and front desk receptionist Saneika Evans embrace students of the Spicy Hill Early Childhood Institution during the official opening ceremony recently.



Food For The Poor's Samantha Mahfood (right), Minister of Education Ronald Twhaites (centre) and Canadian High Commissioner Sylvain Fabi greet students at the official opening of the Spicy Hill Early Childhood Institution, along with other stakeholders.

# Sunwing opens early-childhood school

**Janet Silvera**

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

LESS THAN two years after opening its first Jamaican hotel, the Sunwing Travel Group, through its Sunwing Foundation, has funded the construction of an early-childhood institution in Trelawny.

The school, Spicy Hill Early Childhood Institution, was officially opened by Minister of Education Reverend Ronald Thwaites; Canadian High Commissioner Sylvain Fabi, and Food for the Poor's Samantha Mahfood recently.

Some 85 students are enrolled at the facility, which was built in collaboration with Food for the Poor.

"Our plan is to support youth, education and training initiatives, which is the key, if we are to effect positive change in these communities," Kerry-Ann Quallo-Casserly, director of sales at Royalton White Sands in Trelawny, told the gathering.

The Sunwing Travel Group has a strong affiliation with Royalton White Sands and is the hotel's exclusive partner in Canada. Quallo-Casserly pointed out that by making youth development central to the mission of the charitable initiative, the Sunwing Foundation hopes not only to improve the quality of life of the children of today, but also to empower them to succeed, providing them with positive aspirations for tomorrow, therefore, also strength-



Royalton White Sands' Kerry-Ann Quallo-Casserly addresses teachers, administrators and students at the Spicy Hill Early-Childhood Institution.

ening their communities for many years to come.

The early childhood education institution also caters to the children of many Royalton White Sands staff.

According to the hotel executive, none of this would have been possible without the hard work of the entire team at Food For The Poor, both in Jamaica and in Canada.

"Thanks to Samantha Mahfood and all her colleagues and partners, including Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation. Food for the Poor has been pivotal in the construction of

23 schools across the island in just three years, and have made a significant contribution to the Jamaica 50 Campaign launched in 2012 to construct 50 new schools to coincide with the island's 50th anniversary. So we feel honoured to have collaborated with such a key partner in improving Jamaican education."

## QUICK CONSTRUCTION

Construction on the school commenced in April this year, with the classrooms ready to be occupied by September.

"When the foundation learnt of the need for a school right here in Trelawny, they jumped at the chance to be involved," Quallo-Casserly revealed, stating that the cherry on the cake was to learn that involvement in this project would mean an enrichment of the quality of education for Jamaican children, which is so close to the Foundation's goals.

The children were also recipients of books from Books Give Us Wings, a Toronto-based charity run by Jamaica-born teacher, Myrna Gabbidon.

"Books Give Us Wings seeks to promote early literacy by ensuring that young children have their own reading books to take home and enjoy with their family," Quallo-Casserly stated.

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# ALWAYS ON



# GUARDSMAN



## 929-3299

# Ultra-long-haul flights – the way of the future?

**David Jessop**



THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

THE LONGEST time I have ever spent on a plane in the air is just under 14 hours. It was not intended, but the flight I was on between London and Dallas Fort Worth experienced a severe in-flight weather delay while an extensive storm crossed the Dallas region, causing us to fly a holding pattern for nearly an hour before beginning a long and slightly alarming final approach through the skirt of the storm.

For me, the length of that flight was at the very edge of how long I want to spend on a plane, but indications are that much longer direct flights may, in the coming years, become the norm.

According to industry publications, very soon, Emirates will introduce a non-stop service between Dubai and Panama City. The new daily service, which begins next February, takes 17 hours 35 minutes to cover around 8,500 miles and will, for a while, become the world's longest scheduled passenger service.

Despite this, what are to be known as ultra-long-haul flights are likely to become the norm as a new generation of lighter, fuel-efficient aircraft begin to come into service. These are the Boeing 777-8 and the Airbus A350-900ULR, which over the next five years will enable dramatically extended, longer non-stop services to operate for 19 hours or more.

This and the dramatic recent fall in the price of aviation is reportedly also leading to Singapore Airlines considering the re-introduction of a direct New York-to-Singapore service in 2018, and the Australian airline Qantas exploring the possi-

bility of operating a direct London-to-Perth service.

The effect of these direct services without intermediate stops will be to reduce existing flying times on such routes by as much as eleven hours. However, an issue that is emerging is whether there are physical and mental limits to the endurance of the passenger. While previous experience and research shows that business travellers are prepared to fly for such long periods in premium cabins, it is less clear whether those who travel in coach will be as keen.

## POSSIBLE NEW NORM

That said, the airlines believe that if they can make the economics work, and if, as they expect, demand will increase across the board based on keen fare structuring, ultra-long-distance flying could become the new norm.

If this does happen, it potentially offers new opportunities for Caribbean tourism, opening up the possibility of encouraging visitors

from populous non-traditional markets in Asia, the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East.

At present, the longest direct flights into the Caribbean are those from Moscow or St Petersburg on Aeroflot into Santo Domingo and Havana. However, very soon, Air China will exceed the flying time of Russian services into the region by introducing a same-plane service from Beijing to Havana, which is intended to catalyse tourism from China to Cuba and to the whole of the Latin American and Caribbean region. The flights will, however, not be direct, making a technical stop in Montreal, Canada, with the first flight due on December 27.

Whether over time direct China services may be possible if its travellers develop a taste for land-based or cruise vacations in the Caribbean remains to be seen, but for many, the possibility of being in the air on an airliner for more than 18 hours may be too much to bear, unless the nature of the experience

can be adapted.

The problem is both mental boredom and physical, and while no end of entertainment, a larger space around each seat, especially in coach, may go some way towards making the experience acceptable, my sense is that something more would be needed; for instance, an arrangement whereby passengers, and children in particular, can more easily move around the cabin and have areas where they can associate with one another.

The latter, of course, already exists in first class on many airlines, but for those without the wherewithal to pay, the idea of 19 hours on a plane in a cramped seat is potentially a nightmare, and for some, it may be even fatal.

As for me, I intend to head in the opposite direction. Time permitting I am very interested in a new approach by Icelandair: They are offering low cost London to New York fares that include a lay-over in Reykjavik.

## MBJ Airports Ltd making a difference

THE SCOUTS Association of Jamaica was one of three recipients of \$2.4 million in donations from MBJ Airports Limited, operators of the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay.

The association received \$600,000 from monies raised via the airport's Change for Children initiative.

Funded through unsolicited donations of passengers departing the airport, the initiative, MBJ's commercial director, Sitara Byfield, told **Hospitality Jamaica** was the second disbursement since the units were placed in the airport facility in 2013.

The other recipients were We Care for Cornwall Regional and the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf.



Chief commercial officer, MBJ Airports Limited, Sitara Byfield (second right), hands over a cheque valued just over \$600,000 to assistant chief commissioner of the Scouts Association of Jamaica, Albert Ferguson. Sharing in the occasion is Andrea Dillon, operations manager, Global Exchange.



MBJ Airports Limited's chief commercial officer, Sitara Byfield (right), presents a cheque valued at \$600,000 to CEO of the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf, Donville Jones, and his wife, Phyllis.

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# Rondel Village celebrates 30 years

**Claudia Gardner**  
HOSPITALITY JAMAICA WRITER

**T**HE RONDEL Village hotel celebrated three decades of operations in Negril last Saturday night with an awards dinner in honour of long-serving staff members and its top repeat guests.

Among the staff members who received awards were property attendants Hugh Johnson and Karl Golaub, driver Kurt Pringle and Marlon Thorne of the Maintenance Department, who have all been working at the hotel for 10 years.

Housekeeper Beverly Deans and staff cook, Nerissa Smith, each received award for 13 years of service, while housekeeper Carol Malcolm was applauded for her 15 years of service. Housekeeper Portia Laing received a citation for 19 years of service, while her colleague, Donna Kinlock, received an award for 20 years of service. The hotel's longest-serving member of staff, accountant Maxine Gooden, was also hailed for her 27 years of sterling service.

"This year, we are celebrating our 30th anniversary, and I have decided to focus on our most important assets – our guests and our staff. We are recognising all staff members, and in particular, those who have been with us for 10 years or more. We are also acknowledging a few guests who have been visiting consistently for the last 10 years, along with a couple other guests who have stayed with us for close to 20 or more years," managing director of the hotel, John Wright, explained in his opening remarks.

The hotel was founded by the Wright matriarch, Joyce, and started out with three villas and three members of staff. The hotel has since grown to 56 rooms with a capacity of just over 120 guests, complemented by just under 60 members of staff.

Multiple repeat guests Harold and Mary Pritchett; Max and Val Graber; Frank and Chris Hart, as well as Kathy and Jerry Gibbins, were also acknowledged for being among the property's top visitors.



Property attendant Karl Golaub accepts his plaque for 10 years of service from General Manager Carolyn Wright.



Accountant Maxine Gooden (left) gives board chairman and founder of Rondel Village, Joyce Wright, a hug after receiving her award for 27 years of service to the Negril hotel.



Donna Kinlock receives her award for 20 years of service from Frances Peterson.



Driver Kurt Pringle (right) accepts his plaque for 10 years of service from Managing Director John Wright.



Board chairman and founder of Rondel Village, Joyce Wright (left), and her daughter, Frances Peterson.



Housekeeper Beverly Deans poses with Managing Director John Wright after receiving her award for 13 years of service to Rondel Village.



General Manager Carolyn Wright is hugged by Max Graber and his wife, Val, after the two were presented with a gift in appreciation of their multiple return trips to Rondel Village since 2005.



Chris Hart (centre) and her husband, Frank, pose with Frances Peterson as they receive their plaque in appreciation of their multiple return trips to Rondel Village. The couple has been coming to Rondel Village for their vacations for the past 17 years.



Fiona McNeill and her aunt, Sylvia McNeill, were among the family members who turned out at Rondel Village to support the Wright family, owners of the hotel.

The Dawson family of California was specially honoured for visiting the property every year for the last 28 years.

"James, Thelma, Shyra and Jimmy (Dawson) first stopped by Rondel Village in 1986 while walking on the beach. They returned the following year and have been visiting ever since. We even have letters written by Thelma and Shyra in 1991 describing their unforgettable visit ... thank you for being a part of our family for the past 28 years," general manager of Rondel Village, Carolyn Wright, told mother Thelma Dawson and daughter Shyra, who were in attendance.

In response, the elder Dawson expressed what she said was her love for the property and its owners and staff, whom she said were like family to her.

"I feel a part of this family, and I know I have become a part of Rondel Village. When we first started (visiting), there were three little houses and one lady (Joyce Wright) and a dog. One year, our bus was to come and pick us up at four in the morning and she got up and waited outside with us for the bus. I feel comfortable here; I love it here.

Through the years, we have brought many, many people here. When you look at every little part of this place and you think of the hard work and the dedication and the love that these people have, you can't help but come back and enjoy it," she said.

General Manager Carolyn Wright told **Hospitality Jamaica** that constant upgrading of the property, coupled with its warm and very hospitable staff, were the main reasons for the property standing the test of time.

"Thirty years is very significant for Rondel Village because what we do is continually upgrade and refurbish, and it makes a big difference because the guests when they come back, they love it ... everybody who comes here comments how the staff is so nice and so friendly. There are a big asset to the property," she said.

# Jamaica welcomes daily non-stop service from Houston to MoBay

## JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

VISITORS FROM Houston, Texas now have easier access to Jamaica. As of November 1, Southwest Airlines began operating daily non-stop service between Houston's Hobby International Airport (HOU) and Jamaica's Sangster International Airport (MBJ) in Montego Bay.

"The new service is a testament to the strong partnership with Southwest Airlines aimed at attracting visitors from Houston and its various feeder markets," said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's director of tourism. "With the busy winter season fast approaching, we are pleased to welcome the airline's first daily non-stop service from Houston, which will ensure that destination Jamaica remains a potential vacation option for visitors from the south-west and west."

To celebrate the occasion, Jamaica and Southwest created an island breakfast celebration at the gate in Houston before the inaugural flight departed. Passengers were treated to a fare that included



Janice Allen (second left), regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board, welcomes visitors at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay. From left are: Joseph Nathaniel Dayes, Nevada Jackson-Dayes and Joseph Lee Dayes. The Dayes family from Texas, United States were visiting Jamaica for the first time. They were among passengers on the Southwest Airlines flight which made its inaugural trip from Houston, Texas. Smiling in the background is Dr Rafael Echevarne, chief executive officer, MBJ Airports Ltd.

Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, Jamaican music, as well as lots of prizes and surprises. Representatives from the Jamaica Tourist Board and Southwest Airlines were on hand for the official ribbon cutting.

As part of the celebration, a small

media contingent travelled on the inaugural flight to Montego Bay. In Jamaica, they were hosted at the Royalton White Sands, where they got the opportunity to sample the culinary offerings and experience some of the island's attractions first-hand.



Janice Allen (centre), regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board, gives a passenger a welcome token after she disembarks Southwest Airline's inaugural flight from Houston into Sangster International Airport (MBJ), Montego Bay. To their right is Sharon Hislop, manager, commercial business development and marketing at MBJ Airports Limited.

The new daily flight departs from William P. Hobby Airport's (HOU) new \$146 million international concourse at 10:35 a.m. and arrives at Jamaica's Sangster International Airport (MBJ) at 2:50 p.m. The

return flight is scheduled to depart MBJ at 3:45 p.m. and arrives at HOU at 6:15 p.m.

For further information on travel to Jamaica, please go to [www.visit-jamaica.com](http://www.visit-jamaica.com).

## J'can wins big in FCCA Foundation Children's Essay contest

TEN-YEAR-OLD LINDXEE Collins of Hemmingay Preparatory School in Montego Bay is the 2015 FCCA Foundation Children's Essay Contest second-place winner. Competing against students from 18 other nations, Lindxee's essay on How Has The Cruise Industry Improved My Country earned her the award. She was elated as she received her certificate and cash prize from Jamaica's director of tourism, Paul Pennicook, at the Jamaica Tourist Board's corporate

office in New Kingston.

She was proud that her hard work was being rewarded. This was the first time that her school, Hemmingay Preparatory, was entering the contest, and school principal, Pansy Piccott, was excited at Lindxee's success. Jamaica has consistently done well in the competition, fielding entrants each year. The contest is open to all students at the primary and secondary level. The Jamaican leg of the contest is coordinated by the Jamaica Tourist Board.



Surrounded by her parents, Dwight and Avril Collins, and school principal Pansy Piccott (left), Lindxee Collins beams as she collects her second-place award from Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook.

# Adam Stewart's a winner ... again!

## *Sandals chief named Caribbean Personality of the Year*

**S**ANDALS RESORTS International's (SRI) chief executive officer, Adam Stewart, continued his award-winning year after being named Caribbean Personality of the Year at the International Caribbean World Travel & Living Awards.

In its 21st year, the International Caribbean World Travel & Living Awards have become the Oscars of the Caribbean, recognising excellence in travel, tourism and real estate throughout the region and is voted for by the magazine and its readers with special awards given by the magazine at its discretion. Previous years' guests of honour include HRH Princess Katarina, Sir Trevor McDonald OBE and Hollywood film producer, Michael Winner.

"Being recognised by such an illustrious title such as **Caribbean World** and its readers is a tremendous honour for my team and me. At Sandals, we work hard to be the best, to be different, and for people outside of our company to not just notice it, but commend it is both deeply humbling and satisfying. We will use this award and others like it as our inspiration to continue to set the bar for hospitality in the Caribbean and beyond," said Stewart.

For the SRI CEO, this latest accolade comes fresh on the heels of being named the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Hotelier of the Year for 2015 last month as well as the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Hotelier of the Year for 2014/2015 earlier in the year.

After almost a decade of Stewart's stewardship, Sandals continues to follow a trajectory of exhilarating growth that has been marked with new resorts, new islands as well as industry changing innovation and development. Stewart's leadership has transformed the all-inclusive concept to Luxury Included resorts that offer guests levels of exclusivity never seen before. Aside from



Stewart's personal triumphs, it caps an extraordinary month that saw the company being named the World's Leading Luxury All-Inclusive brand at the World Travel Awards last month. The company collected 17 awards in addition to receiving the notable recognition of

Caribbean's Leading Hotel Brand for the 22nd consecutive year.

The company has exciting plans afoot with 10 breathtaking new developments in the pipeline, including new resorts and the entry into new territories in the Caribbean.

## US-based runners donate to schools in Negril

WHEN THE 433 runners and 100 cheerleaders of the US-based Reggae Runnerz group arrive in Jamaica for the Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K, they will be bringing shoes for the football team and gears for the netball team at the Negril All-Age School. They will also be conducting development seminars for students at the Hanover Educational Institute, as well as donating funds to the Green Island High School.

Reggae Runnerz have launched a members-only crowd-funding initiative to raise funds for the Green Island High School in order to assist student achievement through the use of improved technology. The initiative closes on Friday, December 3, at which time a cheque will be presented to the school's representative for the amount collected. In recent years, Reggae Runnerz has presented school supplies and sneakers to students at the institution during the Reggae Marathon Pasta Party in Negril.

"We have been making donations to schools in Negril and have volunteered our time in the community," said Lisa Laws, founder of Reggae Runnerz, a group of runners from various clubs across the US who have come together to "run where the sun meets the sea".

Lisa noted that Black Girls Run 'n Reggae Running Group out of Northern California joined Reggae Runnerz this year to participate in the Reggae Marathon races after meeting at last year's Reggae Marathon. Prior to their visit to Negril in 2014, the group learned of the need for running shoes for students at Negril All-Age School and decide to donate the items. And while visiting the school, members pledged to bring football boots and netball gears on their return for the 2015 Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K.

The Reggae Runnerz founder noted that there were individu-

als within the group who also planned to assist various communities during their time in Negril. Among them is Akilah Thompson, founder of I Am Beauty Inc, a New York-based socially conscious organisation with focus on the development of girls and women to build confidence, exceptional character and leadership skills. Akilah will be the keynote speaker on Saturday, December 5 at 8 p.m. at the Hanover Educational Institute's Candlelight Dinner at Cousin's Cove. On Tuesday, December 8 she will also conduct an I Am Beauty workshop aimed at empowering at-risk girls and young women, also at the Hanover Educational Institute.

### TECHNOLOGY SESSION

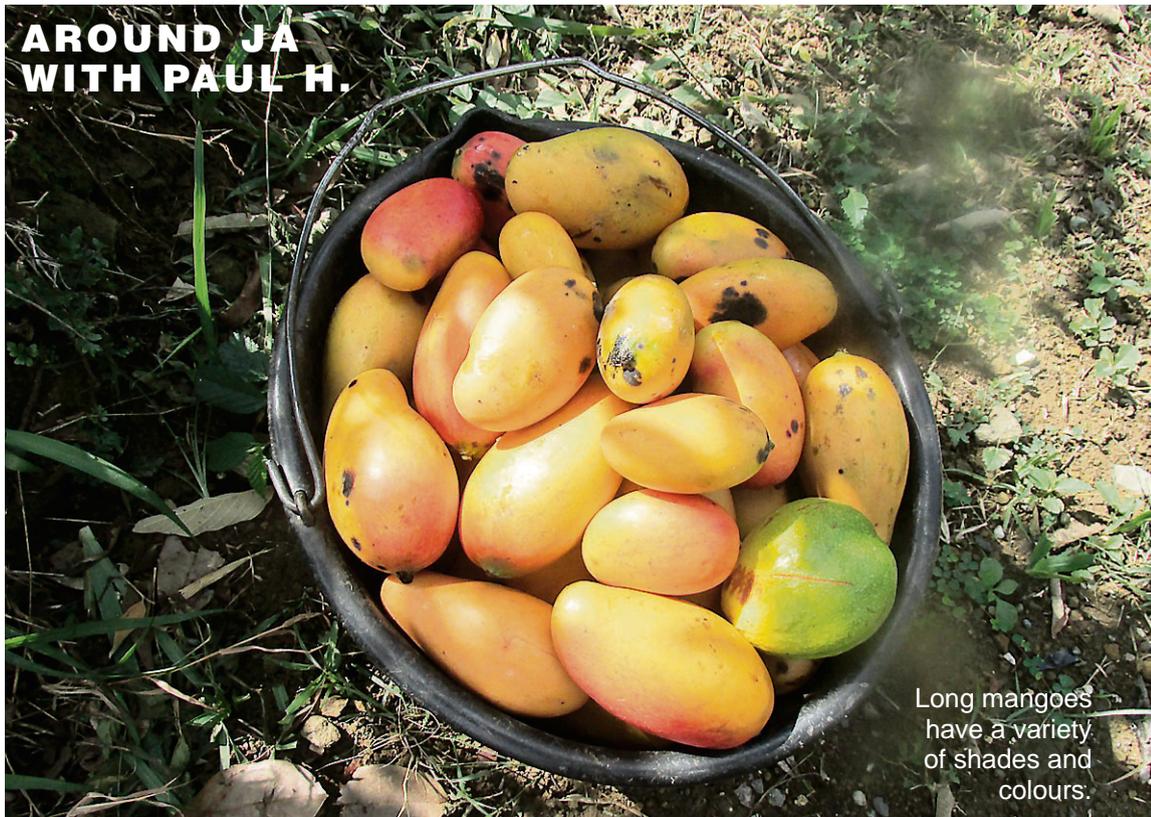
Another Reggae Runnerz member, Shann Bernard, who is founder of Color Coded Academy and president of Generations Inspired Inc, will conduct an introductory session on technology and web development on December 8 also at the Hanover Educational Institute. Colour Coded Academy provides technology courses to underprivileged youth.

All participants will receive care packages, with health and beauty products, donated by I Am Beauty Inc and Generations Inspired Inc.

Over the years, Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K has conducted a shoe drive where gently used running shoes are collected at the annual event and distributed the following year to needy students and others participating in the Burger King Reggae Marathon Grand Prix series, leading up to the December event.

The Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K kicks off at 5 a.m. on Saturday, December 5 in Negril. However, registration and runner packet pick-up takes place at the Couples Swept Away Sports Complex from Thursday, December 3.

AROUND JA  
WITH PAUL H.



Long mangoes  
have a variety  
of shades and  
colours.

# To Long Road for long mangoes

**Paul H. Williams**  
*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

FOR YEARS, I have wondered about the origin of a type of mango that is reaped after the regular mango season. It is flattish, oblong, kidney-shaped, and has a variety of colours from green to yellow, gold, orange, red, to variegated.

In Kingston and other parts of the island, it is commonly called 'sweetie come brush mi', 'come see' or just 'sweetie'. It has a distinctive flavour that teases the taste buds. You smell it, and you want to taste it right away. And should you buy a dozen, eat one and believe you are going to leave the rest for later, chances are you are not.

Anywhere I see them, I have to buy, but they are not found everywhere. Mostly in Portland, St Mary and St Ann they are seen. Whenever I ask Kingston and St James vendors where they are from, they tell me 'up the line', St Mary.

Years ago, a young man in Annotto Bay promised to show me a place where they are grown. I was curious because I had never seen these mangoes on trees. It wasn't

the reaping season, so I didn't take up the offer. But nothing before the time. The time came on Friday, November 13, apparently.

I left Kingston with a friend to visit Long Road in St Mary. His mom was brought up in the nearby district of Annotto River, where nobody lives now. She joined us along the way.

I got up from 4 a.m. for a 5 a.m. departure. I got ready in a daze as I was still very sleepy. And you know what happened to me on the journey? I lost my sense of direction. I was announcing places that we had already passed, or had not yet reached.

## LOST MY BEARINGS

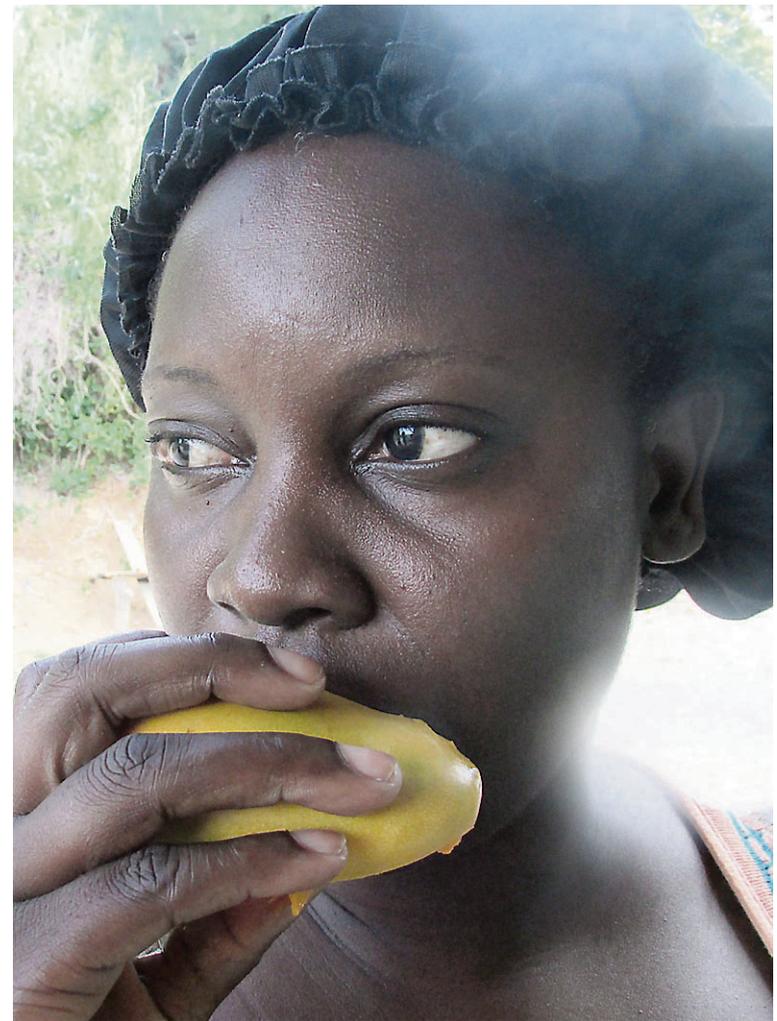
For instance, I was announcing Winnifred Beach at a point in St Thomas when I know exactly where it is in Portland, and was asking for the road that leads to Yallahs Ponds when I was almost in Morant Bay! Then the St Thomas/Portland border was the worst. I was adamant that we were in Portland when we were not. How could I? I know that stretch!

It was embarrassingly funny. Yes, I laughed everytime it happened, and then I soaked up the embarrassment. Eventually, I got back my mental compass and was now announcing correctly, showing off, and trying hard to recover from my blunders. I was no longer in a daze.

Kingston, St Andrew and Portland were covered in good time, and then St Mary appeared. To get to Long Road, we had to go into Annotto Bay and take a left turn. Turning out of Annotto has always been a welcoming thing for me. It's the most unsightly place on the north coast. Makes my skin crawl. Build a bypass, somebody, please.

From rural rot, the road led to beautiful vistas of hazy mountains in the distance. The place was wet from days of rain, and as we proceeded, the road got narrower and rougher. We were now ascending into the hills on winding roads, which run along the edges of precipices. The mountains over yonder and the valleys below were welcoming, unlike Annotto Bay.

The bumpy ride I could live with. I wanted to see what was at Long



Ingrid Forbes claims the mangoes at Long Road are the best, thus her reasons for travelling the long, rough road to Long Road.



The long mangoes grown at Long Road, St Mary are said to be the most flavourful of them all.



From the hilly district of Long Road, the coastline of St Mary and beyond can be seen.



From the ridge on which Long Road is located in south-east St Mary, there are many breathtaking vistas.



Long mangoes waiting to be picked up at Long Road, St Mary.

Road. And it was a long road to Long Road. Along the way, we saw people with boxes of mangoes waiting by the side of the road.

Yet, I still didn't realise what was going on. It was when we had got to our destination, located at the end of a ridge, that I became aware that I was in sweetie-come-brush-mi country. And in that country, it is widely known as long mango.

I attempted twice to buy some sweeties, and two persons refused to sell, saying they would fetch a better price from the people who are coming from all over to buy at the wholesale rate. I couldn't understand. I had the money ready, but they had rather go to the market or wait for vendors to come in.

And yes, vehicles were coming to collect the long mangoes. So, my question was finally answered, Long Road, and surrounding districts in St Mary are the Mecca for sweetie/long mangoes. Residents said vendors come to Long Road from as far as Montego Bay to fetch the fruits, which owe their sweet taste and fragrance to the geography of the region.

There are two crops per year, the long-day in June/July, and the short-day in November/December. And now that I know where they are, I might just go back to get some long-day ones. The short-day ones I eventually got on Friday were all devoured before I went to bed. The bumpy road to and from Long Road ended up sweet, after all.



Short-day mangoes will be ready to pick in December.



A young man who requested not to be identified polishes his long mangoes before taking them to Kingston.

# 25 years and counting!

*Swiss couple vacations at Round Hill Hotel & Villas for the last 25 years*

**I**N 1990, Swiss couple, Dr Ruinell Sigg-Fanoë and his wife, Susse, stayed at Round Hill Hotel and Villas for the very first time. This would be the first of many stays and the start of a beautiful relationship.

Since then, the Sigg-Fanoës have vacationed at Round Hill every year, usually for four weeks, for the last 25 years.

A year before their first stay, the couple had vacationed elsewhere, but read about Round Hill and found it fascinating. When the time came for their next vacation, they knew the obvious choice was Round Hill, and it's a choice they've continued making ever since.

For the Sigg-Fanoës, visiting Round Hill, and by extension, Jamaica is like visiting family.

"We feel at home," said Dr Sigg-Fanoë, "Whenever we come, we get a lot of hugs and smiles, and everyone tells us 'welcome home'. We like the people very much.

Everyone is always smiling and they make us feel very welcome. We just love the whole atmosphere and the warmth of the people."

Having spent so much time at Round Hill, about 700 days in fact, the Sigg-Fanoës have stayed in nine of the resort's 26 beautifully appointed villas and have built meaningful relationships with almost all the staff.

Mrs Sigg-Fanoë shared, "We have a lot of memories here. Everytime we come, we either bring friends or our family. We've also taken our grandchildren here. Right now, we are here with our son, Roman, and his family."

Asked to identify one outstanding memory, the Sigg-Fanoës both agreed that all their experiences have been memorable.

Seasoned travellers, the Sigg-Fanoës have spent much time exploring Jamaica as well, visiting famous attractions like the Black River Safari, Mayfield Falls, Port Antonio, and much more. According to Dr Sigg-Fanoë, they've spent a number of years exploring the island, and now when they visit, they "stay put" at Round Hill, enjoying all that the property has



Dr Ruinell Sigg-Fanoë and his wife, Susse, multi-repeat guests of Round Hill Hotel and Villas, enjoy a casual morning in their exquisite villa.



The Sigg-Fanoës and their dedicated villa staff share a few smiles with the camera. From left are Carl Powell, gardener; Donna Stone, housekeeper; and Marlene Wellington, also a housekeeper.

to offer. With 25 years' worth of visits to the resort, the Sigg-Fanoës have cultivated a daily routine.

"We have our breakfast at 8:30 a.m.," shared Mrs Sigg-Fanoë. "Dr Sigg-Fanoës loves ackee, so he has that and I always have my float where I lay out in the pool and read a book, especially when we're in a villa where the pool is in the sun. Next, we go to the beach, and at 12:30, we go to the beach bar, where I always have a Yellow Bird." Their day is typically rounded out with lunch, the beach and a bit of sailing or snorkelling.

## PERSONAL COTTAGE

So in love are the Sigg-Fanoës with Round Hill that they expressed regret at not purchasing a cottage when they had the opportunity.

"We say it all the time", said Mrs Sigg-Fanoë, "We should have bought a cottage here."

The Sigg-Fanoës consider Jamaica their second home and explained that they often share the word about the island and Round Hill with their friends and family back in Switzerland.

Dr Sigg-Fanoë revealed, "We tell people that we've never had a bad experience here. It's always been great. I love to go shopping in Hopewell, for example. It's so interesting to go and take a look at the shops, and when I do, I get all the greetings saying, 'Hi Doc, how are you?'"

Lovers of Jamaican cuisine, the Sigg-Fanoës always travel home with Jamaican jerk seasoning, though Mrs Sigg-Fanoë admitted that their attempts to create Jamaican food and beverages at home never quite rival the authentic offerings at Round Hill.

Managing director at Round Hill, Josef Forstmayr, also agreed that the Sigg-Fanoës were indeed like family.

He said, "It is always such a pleasure to welcome the Sigg-Fanoës back home to Round Hill. We hold all our guests in high regard, and especially our repeat guests as they continuously give us the stamp of approval and encourage us to maintain and improve our product."

## ARTISAN CORNER

# Wicker – The art of Kingston

ON DRIVING to work recently, I noticed from the corner of my eye a wicker donkey with a saddle loaded with wicker baskets and a mouth full of grass. He was just standing on the roadside, on the corner, an unexpected declaration of our heritage and culture against the background of cement and steel and the manic rushing of good citizens on their way to air conditioned offices in the vicinity.

I continued driving, but on reaching my destination, I found the image lingering and a curiosity grew. I could not allow the moment to pass or the question to go unanswered. I turned back. On finding myself on the corner with the donkey, there was no one around. I parked and took some pictures and then noticed that there were more wicker items further up the road and some men in close proximity. I headed in that direction and inquired about the artisan and the items. They quickly called ‘the Wickerman’, who was actually very near to the donkey, but he now boasted a basket loaded with juice, crisps and other snacks for sale to the occupants of nearby offices.

He hurried over, but approached me cautiously when he saw the camera and was faced with my questioning about his art. I quickly explained that my interest was purely in his skill as an artisan and that I was not there to enforce or regulate him. He relaxed and proceeded to give me the following information: His name is Audley Johnson, aka Donovan Wicker. He has been making wicker products for almost 40 years. He turned to wicker as his salvation when as an abused child, he ran away from home and was taken in by some men who took the time to teach him the craft. He credits his survival from his own instincts, being April-born, he says he was “not a tuff head yout”, but he is not a fool. He did not finish school, he ran away in the seventh grade and has been self-employed with wicker ever since. He says he works with integrity.

“Mi nuh tek nothing from nobody. Me work hard fi survive,” he says.

He loves working in wicker, but is now tired of the same designs and wants to create more. He works mostly from a book, and when



Wickerman Audley Johnson with his goods.



Donkey and baskets made out of wicker.

introduced to new designs, he has proven himself capable. He says: “I have seen the business change over the years; hardly anyone working in wicker anymore, not on the scale as it used to be.” He recalled when Jamaica used to export wicker in a big way, and at that time, there

were many wicker workers. He harvests his wicker in Portland and has noticed that with the drop in demand, there is an excess amount to be had. He showed me his technique, which is very similar to the weave used by some African artisans. He agreed and said he had copied

the style from a basket given to him. He showed me the grass used and stated that it’s common and easily available.

When questioned about the fragility of wicker in the context of other materials such as plastic being used to create the same effect, he

responded to say “wicker, like other gifts from the earth, needs the right maintenance and care to make it last”. He stated that wicker, if well maintained, will enhance any home; add texture; quality and life to a living environment and will enhance the very air in the home. He indicated that people who purchase wicker have a love for not just the function of the thing, but for the way it makes you feel. This is why he loves working from his location in the city where his work can be seen and appreciated not just for the functionality, but for the aesthetics.

So what about cost? Well, wicker is not cheap. There is the specialist harvesting with the movement of the moon, the transportation of the materials, and the hours of loving craftsmanship. However, as Wickerman says, “When you buy my wicker, it will make you rich in mind and in spirit and enhance the vibration of your home.”

■ *Article contributed by Arlene McKenzie, director craft development, Tourism Product Development Company Ltd. Email: Arlene.McKenzie@TPDCo.org.*

# Antiques and Collectibles Fair this weekend

**Paul H. Williams**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**F**OR 23 years, the Antiques and Collectibles Fair has offered patrons the opportunity to own or view objects straight from the past – items that were owned by other people, perhaps spanning many generations.

These objects tell something about the previous owners and what was happening at the time they were first made.

This weekend, Saturday, November 21, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, November 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., patrons will get another opportunity to connect with the past at the 24th staging of the fair in the Lindo Auditorium at Campion College, Matilda's Corner, St Andrew. Entrance is on Old Hope Road, across from Sts Peter and Paul Church.

"Not only are a huge range of items for sale, but one can learn about the history and value of these items by simply asking. Through this, one can learn about what one owns or has inherited," Ainsley Henriques, organiser of the event, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

He noted that as families downsize, as people age and eventually die, as estates are broken up, and as modernisation causes living patterns for some to change, many valuable items come to market.

The fair is a great market for dealers and collectors as it presents a



Ainsley Henriques, organiser of the Antiques and Collectibles Fair, with a water filter of yesteryear at last year's show.

wide variety of items ranging from pins to huge pieces of furniture. From the understated to the ostentatious. They will be all on display. Of particular importance are objects made and used right here in Jamaica, bringing back nostalgia of old-time Jamaica.

Last year, when **Hospitality Jamaica** spoke with Henriques, who was once an antique trader himself, he said the idea to have the show was born out the BBC road show, which came here 24 years ago. He realised there was so much that Jamaica had to showcase.

"My own show was born. We have to make all of this available to the knowledge of everybody," he told **Hospitality Jamaica** then.

"These are artefacts of the past, so what we want is for the people to understand the heritage of this country in these artefacts," Henriques said.

The show, then is to showcase the Jamaican heritage, to teach people about their history, and for the sale of collectibles and antiques.

"Patrons are encouraged to invest in our past for your future wealth. Collect now," said Henriques.

Under the theme, 'Build and



Who were their first owners, and what happened to them?



Were the original owners members of a certain political party? Items from last year's Antiques and Collectibles Fair.

treasure your antiques collection', the 24th staging of the show is also regarded as a place at which to buy

meaningful Christmas gifts, many that are likely to turn out to be very valuable many years from now.

## TEF funds Mt Alvernia \$5m skills-training programme

THE MOUNT Alvernia High School (MAHS) is all set to establish a Language Lab and a food and nutrition department under the Tourism Enhancement Fund's (TEF) tourism skills-training programme.

The TEF is putting more than \$5 million into the MAHS project, and TEF board member, Evelyn Smith, handed over a cheque to school vice-principal, Jeanette Dobson Vernon, following a tour of the facilities to house the programme.

TEF executive director, Clyde Harrison, said the project arose out of a concern by the board of directors that "the product that we deal with for tourism is not just the physical. We have to be also concerned about the human capacity to play their role in tourism. We fundamentally believe that every child is a promise and we need to find a



Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) board member Evelyn Smith (front right), presents a cheque to Mount Alvernia High School's vice-principal, Jeanette Dobson Vernon, to fund development of the school's tourism skills-training programme. Standing in support are senior students of the school and head of Home Economics, Barbara Singh (second left).

way to facilitate that and to develop excellence within certain disciplines that will ultimately lead to excellence within the industry."

### REAL WORK SCENARIOS

He explained, with that commitment, TEF has identified a number of feeder schools for the tourism industry "to see where we could add resources to develop what the children would be encountering as they seek jobs in the sector".

Harrison added, "Frankly, it makes no sense that you have somebody that is in a food setting, but doesn't really see or experience the real thing that they would be seeing in a hotel kitchen."

For its part, Dobson Vernon said Mount Alvernia was moving away from being a purely grammar school.

"We're looking at the fact that even though we are a grammar

school, the world is catering for people with skills to fill available jobs. Over the years, we have been trying to move gradually from the grammar school portfolio and more into a comprehensive technical portfolio in terms of subjects offered."

The need was seen for a Language Lab to improve on passes, also to phase in Caribbean Vocational Qualification as part of its examining body.

"What comes with that is portfolio learning and a lot of practical hands-on work, so we're phasing in clothing and textiles. Now they're doing fashion designing, and eventually, we're going to have food and nutrition," she added.

With the TEF contribution, the number of students doing food and nutrition will double from 60 to 120, while about 40 are expected to take on clothing and textiles.