

The Gleaner
Hospitality **Jamaica**

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2018

LET'S GO TO
#KGN

Jamaica's
capital becoming
well known for
cuisine, culture



Dolphin
Cove hosts
special needs
children



Bartlett
targets
wellness
tourism market

Kingston among top 2018 destinations for Canadians



FILE PHOTOS

These men watch the final sunset for 2013 from the Kingston waterfront.



Murals at the front of Life Yard, located at 44 Fleet Street, southeast Kingston.

Ja's capital becoming well known for cuisine and culture

JAMAICA'S CAPITAL city of Kingston has been topping lists of places for Canadians to visit in 2018. Resting at the foot of the Blue Mountains, Kingston is the cultural heartbeat of the island with its pulsating reggae rhythms, culinary offerings and rich history.

Kayak.com recently listed Kingston as one of the top 10 trending holiday destinations for Canadians after the travel search engine saw a 39 per cent rise in interest from Canadian travellers over the previous year. **WestJet Magazine** also named Kingston the No.1 place to visit in their list of the top 10 destinations to visit in 2018. The city is recommended for its growing local food movement, major infrastructure investments, and a world-class music scene.

"Our capital city of Kingston delivers a unique cosmopolitan experience unlike any other city in the Caribbean," said Donovan White, Jamaica's director of tourism. "Visitors are often surprised by the vast number of activities and cultural experiences on offer in Kingston, beyond the traditional 'sun, sand and sea' that the Caribbean is known for."



Growing local food movement

Jamaica's cuisine features a mix of cultural influences dating back to her Chinese, European, Indian and African ancestors. The result is an eclectic and tasty combination that is uniquely Jamaican. From jerk to ital cuisine, and from roadside cookshops to five-star restaurants – the dining experiences are mouthwatering. Some popular spots in Kingston include Gloria's Restaurant, Chateau 7 Gourmet Jerk Centre, Redbones Blues Café, EITS Café, and Devon House for ice cream. Life Yard is another popular culinary hotspot with a community-based urban farm and restaurant that celebrates Rastafarian culture.



Gloria's Restaurant in Port Royal.

Blue Mountain culinary trail

Approximately an hour from Kingston are the island's famed Blue and John Crow Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the highest mountain range in Jamaica – Blue Mountain Peak. The Jamaica Blue Mountain Culinary Trail is a new gastronomy initiative from the Ministry of Tourism that features 15 participating eateries and attractions in the Blue Mountains. Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee is one of the most expensive and sought-after coffees in the world, and there are several plantations that visitors can tour here, such as the Craighton Coffee Estate, Clifton Mount Estate and the 200-year-old Old Tavern Coffee Estate.



The Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston.

Major infrastructure investments

Recent upgrades to the North-South Highway between Kingston and Ocho Rios have made the city more accessible from the north coast. Upgrades are also being made to the Norman Manley Airport and Kingston's waterfront, with new restaurants and shops opening soon at Victoria Pier. Devon House and the Bob Marley Museum, two of Kingston's iconic landmarks, have recently undergone major renovations to develop and preserve the heritage sites. And new and soon-to-open hotels, such as the Courtyard by Marriott, R Hotel, and AC Hotel by Marriott, are all adding to the city's global appeal.



Orlando Walters from Wild Cane, St Ann, traveled to Kingston for the Bob Marley Earthday Celebration on Tuesday, February 6. "Bob Marley is my favourite," explained Walters, who came for Bob Marley, the music and the unity.

World-class music scene

Kingston has played an important role in forming Jamaica's music culture and legacy. As such, UNESCO designated Kingston a Creative City of Music in 2015 and stated: "Music is deeply etched into the historic foundations of Jamaica The hometown of Bob Marley and Dennis Brown has been the breeding ground of six musical genres: reggae, mento, ska, dub, rocksteady and dancehall."

Three music museums lead the way in portraying the city's musical past. The Bob Marley Museum takes visitors through the late musician's former home and recording studio, and the newly opened Peter Tosh Museum celebrates the former reggae legend and member of Bob Marley and the Wailers. Additionally, a visit to the Trench Town Culture Yard introduces travellers to the housing project that is widely credited as the birthplace of ska, rocksteady and reggae music, and immortalized numerous reggae songs, including Marley's *No Woman No Cry*. The yard's museum is stocked with Wailers memorabilia, including a rusted VW bus they used in the 1960s.

Many live music venues around the city invite visitors to experience Jamaican music first-hand, including Redbones Blues Café, Kingston Dub Club and The Deck.

For more information go to www.visitjamaica.com.

Courtleigh's continues to blaze the awards trail



Operations Manager Cecile Hyatt-Reynolds collects the Tourism Service Excellence Award 2017 for the Resort Champion, Kingston Area.

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator:

THE 2017 winners of Hospitality Jamaica's 'Best European Plan Hotel' Award, the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites, are again in the news, this time as regional winners of the recent Tourism Service Excellence Awards.

This is the Kingston hotel's second recognition at the Tourism Product Development Company organised event, having won the Best Organisation award in 2012.

"Outside of the hotel copping these awards, team members have been bringing home a number of accolades, with Maurice Bryan named Manager of the Year, Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) 2013, Kevin Hendrickson, Hospitality Jamaica Personality of the Year 2016, and our bartender Anthony Bascoe copping the JHTA Hotel Employee of the Year for 2017," Nicola Madden-Greig, Courtleigh's director of sales told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

Outlining the additional recognitions received over the years, Madden-Greig said that in 2009 Cecile Hyatt-Reynolds, the hotel's director of operations was



Courtleigh waiter Shane is all smiles by the breakfast buffet station.

named, the JHTA Manager of the Year, and that same year, the chain's managing director, Kevin Hendrickson was awarded Hotelier of the Year. He went on later to cop the JHTA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

Not to be outdone, Karl 'Daddy' Hendrickson, chairman of the Hendrickson Group, received the JHTA Lifetime Achievement Award 2011.

Now accustomed to bringing home the 'curry', Courtleigh's renowned Alexander's Restaurant has continued to raise the bar of success, having won the Jamaica Observer Food Award for Best Place for Lunch.

INT'L, LOCAL CUISINE

Alexander's specialises in international and local cuisine and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"The good thing about Alexander's is that you get the best of both worlds. You have indoor and outdoor dining, complemented by a diverse menu to match the clientele," Mark Dekrines, executive chef at the hotel, tells **Hospitality Jamaica**.

He noted that daily specials, such as soups, were all made from scratch. The restaurant's more

popular and probably tastiest dish is its jerked chicken pasta, "and our fish and chips (snapper island-style), either run down, curried or escoveitch, are among the favourites for our customers," stated Dekrines.

With the positive responses to the hotel's offerings, also being touted by online agencies such as **Booking.com** and **Expedia.com**, Courtleigh's sales manager, Maurice Bryan, credited the amazing team employed to the property.

"We have longevity with our staff, and because of the intimate nature of the hotel, we are able to give personalised service," he boasted, adding that there are companies that are always booking Courtleigh for their events "because they can close their eyes and know that we are going to do a great job".

Repeat business, he said, was amazingly consistent. "Every week, there are at least two or three repeat business related events." According to him, the culture of service comes naturally.

"You are either made out for this or you not," argued Bryan.

A boutique-style hotel, Courtleigh Hotel and Suites boasts 128 rooms, 38 suites and 89 deluxe rooms, some with kitchenettes.



Alexander's Restaurant at the Courtleigh.

Issa Trust's awesome gift to St Ann's Bay Hospital

\$34m upgrade makes ward one of the best

Carl Gilchrist
Gleaner Writer

THE SUPPORT just keeps coming, year after year, from Couples Resorts' charity arm, Issa Trust Foundation (ITF) to the paediatric ward of the St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital.

Last June, pop group Air Supply performed a benefit concert at Couples Sans Souci Resort and Spa from which \$20m was raised. This money was integrated in a whopping \$34-million improvement project for the ward, which was opened last Thursday by Health Minister Dr Christopher Tufton.

Extensive work was done on the ward and included the provision of new beds, cots, vital-sign monitors, piped medical gases, furniture for staff, patients and visitors, replacement of all windows, new curtain tracks and curtains, a central air-conditioning system,



Diane Pollard (left), president and CEO of the Issa Trust Foundation (ITF), guides Health Minister Dr Christopher Tufton on a tour of the newly renovated Paediatric Ward at the St Ann's Bay Hospital. Behind them are Paul Issa, chairman of the ITF, and MP Juliet Holness.

split air-conditioning units, fans, television sets, ventilators, and other critical infrastructural improvements, including the

critical care nursery.

"I believe that how we care for each other reflects who we are as a nation; and how we care for



Dr Christopher Tufton and Juliet Holness give their attention to a young patient during the tour. Paul Issa, chairman of the Issa Trust Foundation, which funded the \$34 million project, looks on.

children reflects the kind of future we're going to have," ITF Chairman Paul Issa pointed out.

Tufton praised the ITF for the contribution, saying: "Issa Trust Foundation put together a contribution which includes quite a number of physical structures and upgrading in order to ensure that this facility maintains its standard and indeed advances the support that it's giving.

"I want to place on record our appreciation to the Issa Trust Foundation for the continuous work and acts of goodwill to the

St Ann's Bay Hospital and, by extension, to Jamaica."

Issa, in the meantime, has expressed appreciation to all who made the project a success. The list includes Air Supply, Wisynco, Jamaica National, FLOW, CPJ, RJRGLEANER Communications Group, Fraser Fontaine & Kong, Select Brands, Rainforest, Seafoods Dolphin Cove, Caribbean Airlines, Cool Corp, Lion Pride, Marksman, CIBC/First-Caribbean Bank, Arosa, Richmond Estate, Lee's Fifth Avenue, Red Stripe, patrons Sir Patrick and Lady Allen, NERHA, and Couples Resorts.

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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Ultra-long-haul travel has arrived

David Jessop
Contributor

OVER THE years, I have travelled to and from Europe on multiple airlines and in every class. I have had the good fortune – once – to have flown to London on Concorde, and the misfortune to be packed, sardine-like, in the back row of a low-cost transatlantic carrier that no longer exists.

Most flights have been perfectly acceptable, rarely being longer than the 10 hours it takes to get to Kingston from London, although once, eastbound to Houston, headwinds and bad weather resulted in a flight that seemed to last forever, at nearly 13 hours.

I note this because much lengthier, new, direct air services seem set to test the physical and mental endurance of passengers, especially those travelling in coach.

Two weeks ago, Qantas, the Australian airline, introduced a direct 17-hour service between Perth in western Australia and London using a specially designed Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. The plane has higher levels of cabin humidity and oxygen, better temperature control, lower pressurisation, and mood lighting: all of which are said to enable the passenger to feel less dehydrated and jet-lagged on arrival. The new service reportedly also has special features in all three of its classes, designed in part to keep passengers



entertained, and meals better timed for long journeys.

That said, the airline has recognised that for some passengers, very long flights may be challenging. It has noted that it will be sending passengers an email before departure, advising them on the health and well-being steps they should take before, during and after their flight.

What, however, is apparent from the reports of those journalists who drew the short straw on the inaugural flight and flew in coach, is that three basic problems arise on very long-haul flights: the seat spacing, width and pitch; the discomfort of being stuck for long

periods in a middle of a seat row; and boredom. While their elite colleagues were sleeping in business class, a less-fortunate group suffered. Some wondered in their reviews whether there are physical limitations to the lengthy flying times which many long-haul airlines are introducing as new aircraft come into service.

MORE EFFICIENT

Qantas and other airlines argue that extended direct flying times are efficient and less expensive for passengers and make better financial sense for the carrier, especially as aircraft manufacturers begin to roll out

new extended-range versions of Boeing's Dreamliner and the Airbus A350. For example, next year, Singapore Airlines has said that new equipment makes it economically viable to fly again direct from Singapore to New York, on what will become the world's longest scheduled route at around 20 hours.

What all of this suggest is that if airlines are increasingly flying longer distances non-stop, they need to give much more thought to passenger comfort, well-being, and sleep, particularly for those travelling in coach.

To this end, Qantas' chief executive recently told an industry

conference that the airline is exploring whether on ultra-long-range services it might introduce beds or other facilities such as lounges or exercise areas in parts of the plane normally dedicated to cargo. He noted that on such services it is not possible to carry freight because of weight-to-range limitations, so the airline was beginning to think that for an additional cost, premium economy passengers might purchase access to facilities in what would otherwise be cargo bays.

MORE COMFORT

What no one seems to be talking about, however, is enabling travellers in the back of the plane on very long flights to sit in more comfort. Over the last two decades, to increase yield, many airlines have reduced the spacing of seats and sought to charge premium prices for coach seats with extra legroom.

Some carriers have recognised this is an issue, but most appear to think that image, on-board service and price continue to be more attractive than comfort.

For the Caribbean, the issue of ultra-long-haul flying is not yet of direct relevance, but as every tourism minister wishes, one day visitors will travel on direct air services from much further afield, and in particular China. Let us hope that by then, such visitors will be able to travel in greater comfort.

Dolphin Cove hosts special needs children for Down's Syndrome Day

Carl Gilchrist
Gleaner Writer

DOLPHIN COVE in Ocho Rios hosted more than 20 students and five teachers from Edgell School of Special Education, in commemoration of World Down's Syndrome Day, which was observed on March 21.

The students were drawn from the school's four units, located in St Ann's Bay, Ocho Rios, Brown's Town and Trinity, Port Maria.

"We are here because today highlights Down's Syndrome Day, through the kind courtesy of Dolphin Cove, which has granted the children the opportunity of being here to enjoy the atmosphere, the dolphins

and all the natural scenery," explained guidance counsellor Dane Hudson.

General Manager Mauricio Cortez said Dolphin Cove was happy to host the children for the day, as it was part of the company's duty to give back to the community.

"We need to give back a little bit of all the things the community gives to us, so today we're hosting these students with some special needs. It's almost nothing, it's just something we want to give back, something we can do to make them happy," said Cortez.

The children seemed to enjoy being among the rabbits, the lovebirds, macaws, and even the iguanas, before going in the water to touch the dolphins.



A Dolphin Cove employee (top) and a teacher (right) encourage students from Edgell School of Special Education to touch a dolphin while on a tour of Dolphin Cove recently.

A big thank you!

FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS EASTER



FDR's super vacation nannies keeping guests happy

Carl Gilchrist
Gleaner Writer

THEY PACK a lot of knowledge, experience and love, especially for the children in their care. They are the vacation nannies that keep guests and their children happy when they vacation at Franklyn D. Resort and Spa (FDR) in Runaway Bay in St Ann, Jamaica.

Just imagine the sense of relief you would feel when, while on vacation on this tropical island, you leave your kids with someone so you can have some real fun, and you know – yes, you just know – they're going to be just fine.

Welcome to the team of vacation nannies which includes, among others, Karlene Brown and Shawn Fletcher, who have been nannies for 21 years; Coretta McLaughlin, 16 years; and Sharlene Whyte, over 10 years.

They help spearhead the success of the family vacation at FDR. Their job, ultimately, ensures that FDR enjoys a high level of repeat clientele.

Hospitality Jamaica caught up with Brown, Fletcher and McLaughlin recently to chat about their job and how they keep renewing themselves to continually offer awesome nanny service, earning high commendations repeatedly.

"I am now a grand-nanny," laughed Brown as she spoke of her time at FDR.

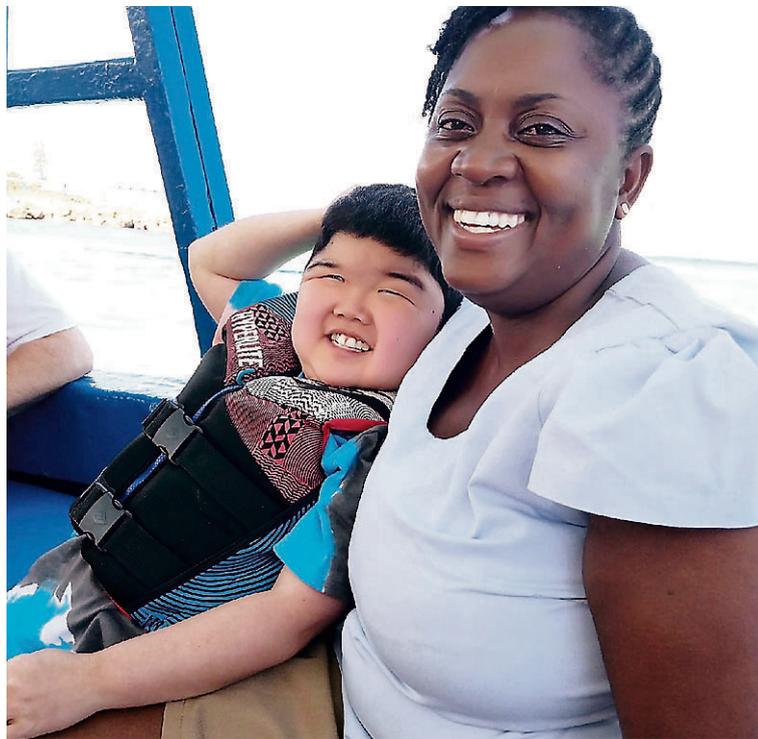
"The children that I had taken care of and helped to grow over the years are now adults with families of their own that return with their children and request me to be their nanny," she explained.

TRUST, LOVE, RESPECT

Brown also has two families that she has served for 17 of her 21 years at the hotel, the Mackies and the Gruters, a testament of the trust, love and respect she has earned over the years.

She has built lasting relationships with some of her clients and has even been treated to trips overseas, by the families, as a result.

Fletcher's journey is along a similar path to that of Brown's. Each year she looks forward to



Sharlene Whyte cares for little Maddox, while on a boat trip with the boy's family who were vacationing at FDR.



Shawn Fletcher



Coretta McLaughlin

returning guests, eagerly awaiting to see how the kids have grown, just like she would have, had they been hers.

They share life's experiences, they seek advice from her which, again, is a reflection of the trust they have in her.

And then she would sometimes bring her two children to meet some of the wonderful guests she has met over the years – one big, happy family.

"Working here has helped me tremendously," she admitted.

However, no one seems to enjoy



Karlene Brown

the job more than McLaughlin, who loves the nanny concept.

"Working with children is the greatest feeling ever!" McLaughlin exclaims. "When I work with families and they are satisfied and happy, then that contributes to me feeling happy and fulfilled that my

guests are having a wonderful vacation."

Her greatest thrill comes when repeat guests request her specifically when they arrive. It tells her she's doing something awesome! Just like the rest of the ladies on the team.

MATTHEW HAUGHTON

Living his *dream* at Sandals Royal

FOR MATTHEW Haughton, working at Sandals Royal Caribbean and Private Island isn't just a way to earn a living. It's a dream come true.

Now a butler at the resort's over-the-water villas and bungalows – the most luxurious accommodations at the resort – Haughton is proud of how far he's come since he started as a dining room server almost two decades ago. But Haughton's Sandals story started long before he landed a job at the resort. It began when he saw brochures and magazines showcasing the luxurious Sandals resorts.

"I had a brother who used to work for Sandals, and he always brought home the magazines. I always told myself that I wanted to work there one day," the 43-year-old proudly

reminisced. Immediately after graduating from high school, an unlikely event in Haughton's life would push him one step closer towards his dream job at Sandals.

"I became a father at 19, fresh out of high school. My child's mother and I got help from family, but you can't always depend on people. After a while, I knew I had to get a job to take care of my responsibility," Haughton explained.

With this in mind, Haughton enrolled in a training course for waiters, hoping that this would land him a job at Sandals. However, his dream did not become an immediate reality.

"It actually took me six years to get a job at Sandals. During those years, I worked at a few other

resorts. But I always had my mind on Sandals," Haughton reminisced.

Finally, Haughton landed a job as a waiter in 2000 at Sandals Royal Caribbean in Montego Bay. This was his time to shine and show his employers, they made the right choice in hiring him. Making excellence his duty, Haughton spent years perfecting his craft as a waiter and a true Sandals team member. This hunger for excellence, along with a charming personality, engaging the resort's guests at every turn, earned him the position of dining room supervisor. He also won various resort awards acknowledging team members who are exceptional at executing their duties.

"I have received awards, like the Sandals Foundation Community



Matthew Haughton, a butler at the over-the-water suites at Sandals Royal Caribbean.

Spirit Award, Smile Award and Courtesy Award, and I was recently nominated for People's Choice Award," Haughton recalled.

GROWTH THROUGH SANDALS CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

Haughton's professional growth was also enhanced by training and development opportunities he has gained through the Sandals Corporate University, which allows team members to achieve certification in many aspects of the hospitality industry. Haughton smiled as he listed his certification in leadership development, professional communication, supervisory management, product and brand knowledge, and customer relationship management, which, he says, has enhanced his career in hospitality.

With all that training and development, Haughton waited patiently for his next big opportunity at the resort, which has a culture of promoting from within. In 2016, he got his chance when Sandals Royal was preparing to open the region's first over-the-water villas and bungalows and was recruiting the first set of butlers to serve the high-end guests.

Knowing that his years as a waiter had prepared him for this move, Haughton decided to pursue the training programme.

"It wasn't difficult for me to

make the transition from a dining room server to a butler because 70 per cent of butler service involves skills you learn as a waiter. You have to know your foods, your wines, how to serve, and how to be humble and courteous to guests," Haughton explained.

Head butler at Sandals Royal's over-the-water villas and bungalows Samantha Davis attested to Haughton's professionalism and good work ethic, adding that the younger butlers emulate him even though the role of butler is new to Haughton.

"Matthew has an exceptional personality and a professional demeanor, and these are key characteristics of a good butler," Davis said.

One of the biggest accomplishments he believes his job has allowed is funding the education for the daughter he fathered at 19 years old. She is now pursuing medical studies abroad. With his current job as a butler, Haughton is confident that he will be able to help his three younger children to also achieve their educational goals.

"I love this company so much, I just don't think I could work anywhere else. As many would say, I have been 'Sandalsed', and I wouldn't want it any other way," Haughton said between chuckles.



Matthew Haughton puts the final touches on one of the over-the-water bungalows at Sandals Royal Caribbean prior to his guests' arrival.



The Jamaica Tourist Board partnered with RIU Hotels & Resorts Jamaica for two grand prize giveaways to RIU Reggae and RIU Negril. The first giveaway took place live during the game as part of a 'dream cam' that scanned the crowd to select a winner. The second giveaway happened online for Leafs Nation members and was promoted via Facebook (1.3 million fans) and Twitter (1.8 million followers). One lucky member will win a trip for two to RIU Reggae in Montego Bay.

Minister Bartlett targets wellness tourism market

TOURISM MINISTER Edmund Bartlett says that Jamaica is well positioned to partake in the booming health and wellness tourism market, which represents 1.8 per cent of global GDP.

Speaking at the inaugural Spa Standards and Sensitisation Workshop on Wednesday (March 28), the minister shared that the health and wellness sectors, of which spas play a major role, has been identified as one of the key areas of focus under his ministry's growth strategy.

"We have created a special segment in our Linkages Network, which focuses solely on developing the health and wellness industry. We recognise that the warmth of our climate, the development of nutraceuticals and natural hot springs are among the products that have become essential to a growing market," explained the minister.

He went on to say, "Our research indicates that spa tourism alone represents a \$179.7-billion market, and a wellness tourist spends 65 per

cent more than an average tourist. So, what we are doing here today is encouraging more spas to meet international standards so that we can encourage more of these tourists to visit the island."

The sensitisation workshop, which took place at the Eden Gardens Wellness Resort and Spa, was hosted by the Tourism Linkages Network of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Bureau of Standards of Jamaica and the Ministry of Health. The ministry targeted spas across the island with the primary objective of driving adoption of the JS319 standards in spa operations as set by the Bureau of

Standards of Jamaica.

Other core objectives of the workshop were to address gaps identified in spas to assist with the adoption and maintenance of internationally recognised standards and to encourage the certification of spas, as well as their staff, by the Bureau of Standards and the Tourism Product Development Company's Jamaica Centre of Tourism Innovation initiative.

The Spa Standards and Sensitisation Workshop is intended to be an ongoing advocacy programme and aims to shape the adoption of international standards in the wellness landscape of Jamaica.

JAMAICA
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Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett engages in conversation with Owner of the Face Place Spa, Marie Hall Smith (centre) and Director of the Standards Division of the Bureau of Standards, Jamaica, Julia Bonner Douett during the launch of the Spa Standards Sensitisation Workshop. The event was hosted by the Health and Wellness Network of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Bureau of Standards, Jamaica at the Eden Gardens Wellness Resort & Spa last week.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (centre) greets South African praise poet Jessica Mbangeni (left) and member of the Health and Wellness Network Dr Diane Robertson.

SILVERA'S PICKS

Remembering the late Dittie Guise



Janet Silvera

S EVEN YEARS ago, I met a no-nonsense, distinguished-sounding lady via telephone.

She abruptly ended our conversation, noting that she was at the airport fighting to clear some of her belongings through customs.

She did call back.

The lady was Dittie Guise, late general manager of the Montego Bay Convention Centre. At the time of the telephone call, she had already achieved national recognition as a leader of the hospitality industry. She had been a driving force in bringing vitality, visibility, and economic growth in the billions to key cities and facilities in the United States.

Born in England of Jamaican parentage, Guise had long decided that Jamaica was where she wanted to retire.

On Tuesday, March 20, several members of the hospitality sector, family members and staff of the convention centre bade farewell to Guise in a very

mournful ceremony. Guise, who was touted as building customer service cultures that transform organisational performance, died after a short admission to hospital.

She is survived by husband Kenneth Williams, mother Dr Icelyn Gray, a sister, and brothers.



Relatives paying tribute to Dittie Guise at her memorial service.

A scholarship in her honour was announced by SMG's executive vice president, Gregg Caren. Guise had worked with SMG for 20 years at the time of her death.

The scholarship will carry an internship component, Caren announced during his tribute, and the recipient must be studying hospitality management.

The SMG executive did not say what the value of the scholarship was. However, as someone who is aware of Guise's work, any scholarship awarded in her name will be well worth it.

Guise was a champion of collaborative relationships and was artful in strategic alliances that transcend disparate or even hostile groups, says her biography. The latter is extremely true. I have had the opportunity to work with her on several occasions, including the staging of the 'Oscars' of the Caribbean, the Hospitality Jamaica Awards.

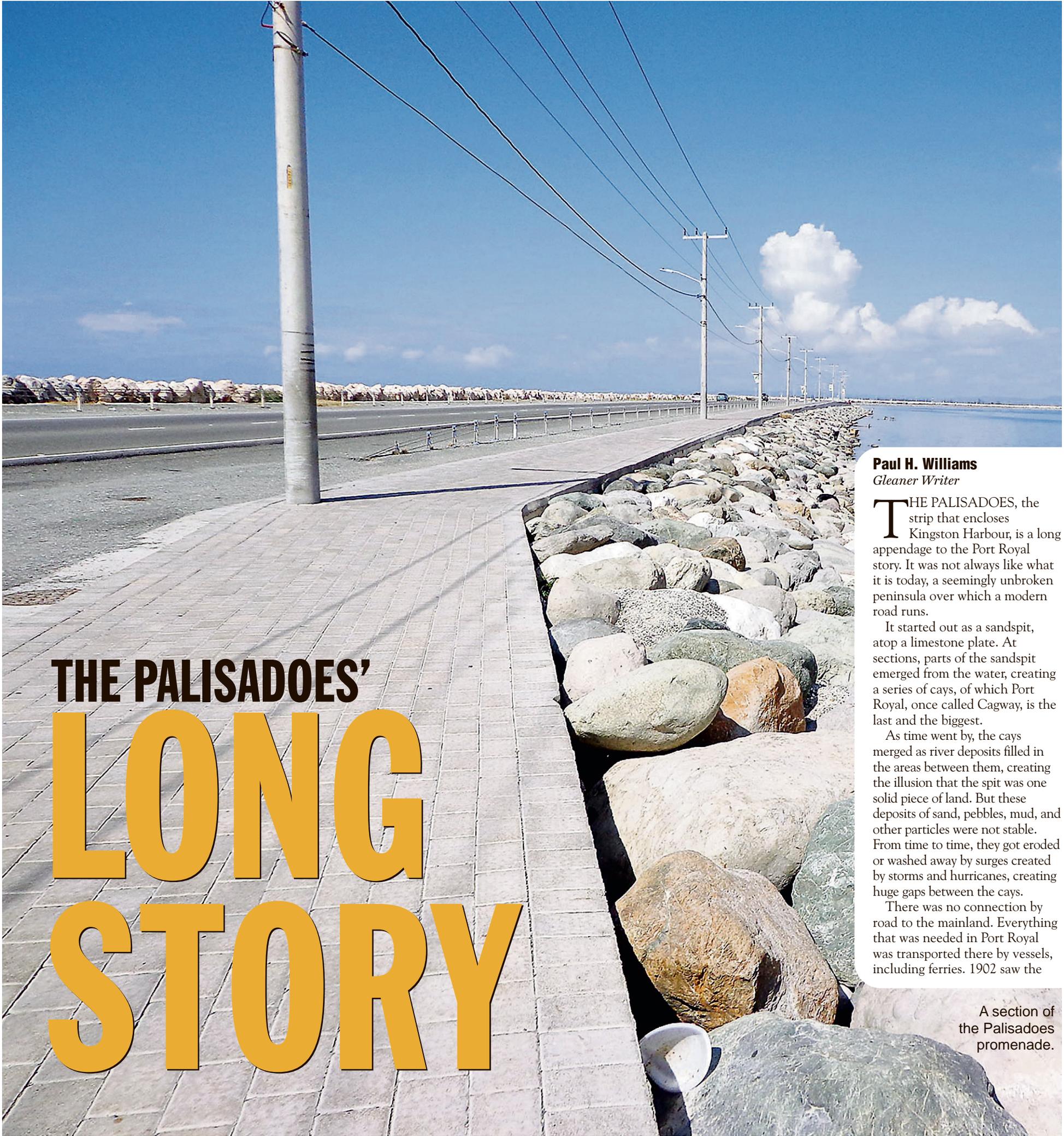
Guise believed in giving everyone a chance and would tell you in no uncertain terms that she was no pushover. She had learnt the art of bargaining, and one thing was for sure, at the end of the day, she was never going to give away the prospective earnings of the convention centre.

As close as she got with her clients, they all knew there was a line that could not be crossed.

Guise was good for Jamaica and great for the Montego Bay Convention Centre. She brought her distinguished career to the boys and girls at the centre, who are richer today, having stood at her feet.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com

Dittie Guise, former general manager, Montego Bay Convention Centre.



THE PALISADOES' LONG STORY

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

THE PALISADOES, the strip that encloses Kingston Harbour, is a long appendage to the Port Royal story. It was not always like what it is today, a seemingly unbroken peninsula over which a modern road runs.

It started out as a sandspit, atop a limestone plate. At sections, parts of the sandspit emerged from the water, creating a series of cays, of which Port Royal, once called Cagway, is the last and the biggest.

As time went by, the cays merged as river deposits filled in the areas between them, creating the illusion that the spit was one solid piece of land. But these deposits of sand, pebbles, mud, and other particles were not stable. From time to time, they got eroded or washed away by surges created by storms and hurricanes, creating huge gaps between the cays.

There was no connection by road to the mainland. Everything that was needed in Port Royal was transported there by vessels, including ferries. 1902 saw the

A section of the Palisadoes promenade.



Children planting mangrove seedlings along the Palisadoes.



People fishing at a spot along the Palisadoes main road.



A monument in the Old Naval Cemetery in memory of the men of the 'HMS Goshawk', who drowned at Port Royal.

laying of pipes to transport potable water to Port Royal. But it was not before 1930 that the construction of a decent road connecting it to the mainland began. Built by convicts, it was completed sometime in 1936.

Long before that the Government had established a coconut plantation there in 1869. The first coconut tree was planted on the fourth of March by John Norton, the then superintendent of the General Penitentiary. Over time, diseases wiped out the crop, and the last tree was struck by lightning on August 16, 1931.

There are two cemeteries on the peninsula, one of which is the Old Naval Cemetery, located in an area near Henry Morgan's burial place, the original naval cemetery, which is said to have been destroyed by the 1692 earthquake.

It was established about 1742 for the interment of British sailors and soldiers. It is also the resting place for the victims of yellow fever and other communicable diseases. Within it is a monument shaped like an anchor, in memory of the men of HMS *Goshawk* who were drowned at Port Royal.

Other points of interest include the Plumb Point lighthouse and Fort Rocky. The lighthouse was built in 1853 on a platform of hardwood six feet into the sand. It is said to be 70 feet tall. Its light at the harbour entrance can be seen from 20 miles away, while the one facing the sea is visible from 12 miles.

Fort Rocky, also known as Rocky

Point Fort, is said to have been built between 1879 and 1882. It was one of the forts built in the Port Royal area to protect it again attacks from the sea. It is now going through the process of ruination, which perhaps had started after World War II when its guns were returned to Britain.

BIODIVERSITY

The Palisadoes is also known for its biodiversity, consisting of land and marine vegetation and several species of birds and sea creatures. The areas washed by the ocean is drier than the land on the harbour side. They consist of sea grapes, acacia thorn bushes, a variety of cacti and some mangroves. The harbour side is wetter and consists mainly of mangroves and other marine plants.

The vulnerability of the Palisadoes to natural disasters is unending, and over the years, the sea has flowed on to the road, creating great anxieties since that road is the only one to and from the community and the Norman Manley International Airport.

This has led the Government to augment the ocean side near to Harbour View with huge boulders to buffer storm surges, and mitigate against flooding. The road surface was improved and a long promenade created.

The Palisadoes strip is a place to go trekking, chill on the beaches, fish, bird watch, view the Kingston waterfront from afar, and learn about the past.



The monument to mark the spot where the first coconut tree was planted on the Palisadoes Plantation on March 4, 1869 by John Norton, superintendent of the General Penitentiary.



Plumb Point lighthouse.



These boulders were arranged to buffer the impact of storm surges.

PHOTOS BY
PAUL H.
WILLIAMS
Giving thanks
before the
food is
served.



Of Good Friday, full moon,
bullfrog
and bumpy road





Kavim Abayomi Deer making sure there is enough fire for the yam, coconut and plantains.



Golden Shore indeed.



'Blue drawers' made by Hospitality Jamaica writer Paul H. Williams.

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

FOR THE past week, happiness has taken over my being for many reasons. Yet, it should have been a time of anger and anxiety, for several reasons. The positive overrode the negative. Of all the days of happiness, Good Friday stood out. It was a resurrection of my full-bodied laughter, the type that makes me feel faint.

When Friday rolled around, I accompanied a friend to an African family party, hosted by mutual friends, on Golden Shore Beach near Retreat in St Thomas. I really didn't want to hear for the millionth time how someone was brutally crucified on a cross, so it was a great way to escape the depressing repetition.

I slept most of the way to Morant Bay, from which the ride to Retreat was short.

It was my second time to Golden Shore, and the question I asked the first time popped up again. Where



People who had gathered for the African family party on Golden Shore Beach in St Thomas on Good Friday.

is the gold? And the same response came. There is none. Yet, later on, there would be gold.

There was much meeting and greeting, from the baby to the

elderly. We were all there, laughing and chatting, telling stories – our stories, the narratives about our African ancestors.

RUMMAGING THROUGH ROCKS

Soon, I was lured away from the group by the pebbles on the beach on the greyish-black sands. Talking about golden shore. It is a stone collector's haven. And I am a stone collector – a naturalist, if I may.

I spent about 45 minutes rummaging through the vast array of little rocks. Since there were so many, I decided to stay in one spot, for there was no way I could possibly cover the entire stretch of stones.

With a bag full of 'gems', I rejoined the group. Games were still on. Volleyball, three-legged races, sack races, relays. I didn't participate in these activities, not wanting to outdo my competitors, so I watched from the sidelines, laughed at the blunders, and took pictures.

And where there is a family gathering, there is a feast, and



The three-legged race is about to start.

sharing. I beamed with unadulterated pride and joy when I saw people enjoying the 'blue drawers' that I cooked, and my roasted coconut. I had to remind some of them of the difference between blue drawers and 'dokunoo'.

As the light of day dimmed, the sun put on a golden display. The western sky glowed gold, which was reflected by the dancing sea. Thus the name Golden Shore?

Instead of returning to Kingston, I spontaneously decided to overnight at a place called 'Rock'. Never been there before. It is way off the beaten track, atop a mountain. And when I arrived, I felt like I was passing out in the dark.

It was the roughest road I have travelled on in my entire life. The person who drove warned us, but we could never have imagined what we were to endure. It was like sailing in a boat on a very stormy sea. No, siree! And when all that violent rocking was over, my blood sugar dipped. The Easter bun which I had brought, just in that, was to quickly revive me.

I am glad it did, because you would not have heard the story of what happened when we stopped at a spring to wash off the sea salt.

So, there I was bathing in a spring under a full moon. Fireflies darted about in a sort of welcoming frenzy. I saw a movement in the water. I stood still. Something moved again. My heart skipped a beat. Snake?

I stepped away. The thing approached me.

The moon shone on it. Its bulbous eyes glistened. I shuddered and shouted, "Bullfrog! Bullfrog! See waa bullfrog deh!"

Everybody, including the moon, laughed. I continued to expunge the sea salt from skin and hair, watching the warty creature, for it was not going to spoil my joy of bathing in a spring under a full moon.

Insane.

The trek down the mountain Saturday morning was not as bumpy as the one on Friday, the day when the waves and pebbles on Golden Shore Beach and the laughter and stories of friends and acquaintances filled me with unspeakable joy.



A-dZiko Simba (left) completing her leg of the relay.



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New York to wake up to Caribbean wellness

Caribbean Week set for June 2-8

CARIBBEAN WEEK New York (#CWNY18) will have a special feel this year as the city of over 8.5 million people gets a taste of the re-energising and rejuvenating power of Caribbean wellness.

During the weeklong event the wellness theme will be incorporated into many of the bespoke activities, including a trade show and educational forum for travel agents on Tuesday, June 5, to better prepare them to sell the Caribbean as a wellness and rejuvenation destination.

Caribbean Week New York is the largest regional tourism activity in the New York area. Artists, performers, celebrity chefs, investors and other strategic partners join government officials and the media as all converge on the Big Apple for a week of festivities designed to raise awareness for the Caribbean's diverse tourism industry and provide opportunities for member destinations to promote their individual products and services.

Ministers, directors of tourism, national tourist office representatives and other tourism and hospitality officials will participate in meetings, seminars and other business development events to further enhance the Caribbean brand and provide necessary updates and critical support to the travel agents and press who influence key traveler demographics.

CHANGES

One of the key changes this year is the getting up close and personal with the top journalists' event, Caribbean Media Marketplace, which is set to be even more effective with a refreshing morning schedule on Thursday, June 7. The media will have an additional opportunity to network with tourism officials and industry executives later that evening with the expanded, Jamaica co-sponsored Caribbean Tourism Industry Awards Dinner. In addition to the traditional media categories, this year's programme will recognise excellence and innovation in digital marketing and social media news coverage.

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Caribbean Week New York culminates with a star-studded cultural celebration at the iconic Capitale in New York City for the annual Rum & RhythmTMBenefit – the Ultimate Food and Rum Experience in New York City – where the region's top food and beverage talents will serve as flavour ambassadors for Caribbean gastronomy and mixology on Friday, June 8.

AGENDA

The weeklong agenda of consumer and trade events includes:

■ CELEBRITY CHEFS PROGRAMME

Multiple locations

The Caribbean is well known for its culinary diversity with a variety of gastronomic influences. Throughout the week, Caribbean celebrity chefs will prepare authentic Caribbean dishes at highly visible, upscale locations whose customers match the profile of Caribbean vacationers.

■ TOURISM INDUSTRY WORKSHOP

9 a.m. - noon on June 4
Wyndham New Yorker, 481 Eighth Avenue, New York City

NTOs and other government and industry representatives will receive valuable insights on 'Employing Successful Sales Strategies' to increase confidence and performance.

■ CARIBBEAN DIASPORA FORUM

5-8 p.m. on June 4
Wyndham New Yorker, 481 Eighth Avenue, New York City

The Caribbean Diaspora Forum engages New York's vibrant Caribbean-American community as unofficial brand ambassadors and gives it a powerful voice via stimulating dialogue between members of the Caribbean Diaspora, regional tourism officials and other industry and civic leaders.