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THE LAND OF BLESSED GOLD



BY NELSON CHRISTIAN STOKES

A founding member of the Jamaican Bobsleigh Team, Nelson Christian Stokes is a four time Olympic competitor and a successful entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker. www.coolrunningslive.com

THE SEARCH FOR GOLD

When Christopher Columbus set sail on his second voyage from Cádiz on September 24, 1493 the crews of his ships had one thing above all else on their minds; to find Cathay, the land of gold. Prowling along the south coast of Cuba, hoping that this was in fact Cathay, the crew became angry and disappointed that there was no gold to be found. Then, Columbus received word from the natives living in Cuba of an island to the south – ‘the land of blessed gold’ – Xaymaca. The explorer immediately set sail for this island believing that if it were not Cathay, it had to be close to the land of gold. It turned out that there was no gold in Xaymaca, and that the word actually meant ‘land of wood and water’, hardly sources of the great wealth expected by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. By the 19th century, Cathay was known as China; by the time the British captured Xaymaca from the Spanish, it was known as Jamaica, and by 2008; Jamaican athletes found a wealth of gold in China.

BEIJING

Jamaica finished the Games of the XXIX Olympiad with a record eleven medals, which could easily have been twelve if the promised gold in the women’s 4 x 100 meter event finals had not melted away in a bungled exchange. When the dust settled, Jamaica had racked up six gold, three silver and two bronze medals. The tally surpassed Jamaica’s previous best of seven medals won in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and our best gold medal haul of two won at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki.

Of the 204 nations participating at the Beijing Olympics, Jamaica finished 13th overall and 3rd in track and field. Consider the specific medal achievements. In the women’s 100 meter final, Jamaica had an unprecedented sweep of the event with Shelly-Ann Fraser winning in 10.78 seconds and team-mates Kerron Stewart and Sherone Simpson tying for silver, unable to be separated on the photo finish. The women’s 200 meters was won by the reliable and beloved Veronica Campbell-Brown, the first woman to defend her Olympic title in a personal best time of 21.74 seconds. In the same race, Kerron Stewart finished third in a personal best time of 21.99 seconds, adding the bronze to the silver already won in the 100 meters. In the last 100 meters of the women’s 400 meter event, Shericka Williams stunned the crowds with a final sprint which landed her the silver medal in a personal best time of 49.69 seconds. The women returned in the 4 x 400 meter relay event to win a hard fought bronze medal.

The world record breaking relay team celebrates after their historic win. From left: Usain Bolt, Michael Frater, Asafa Powell and Nesta Carter (Photo: Reuters)



While the stadium still buzzed from the exploits of a young superstar in the 200 meter race, Melaine Walker won the women’s 400 meters hurdles and set a new Olympic record of 52.64, joining compatriot Deon Hemmings, Jamaica’s first female gold medallist who won the event at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. But who was this young superstar that the crowds could not get their fill of?

BOLT

Of the 10,708 athletes from 204 countries competing in the Beijing Games, including the phenomenal Michael Phelps of the U.S.A., one man stood above all; Usain Bolt of Sherwood Content, Trelawny, Jamaica.

Overcoming a series of demoralizing injuries and a disappointing exit from the 200 meter event in Athens in 2004 for which the world junior champion and world record holder was mercilessly criticized, Usain Bolt did what had never been done before.



Usain Bolt after breaking the 200m world record (Photo: Reuters)

On August 16, Bolt demolished a field of the best sprinters in the world, including friend and former world record holder Asafa Powell, cruising to victory in the 100 meters. The sprinter lowered his own world record from 9.72 seconds to 9.69 seconds, despite dropping his arms and celebrating 20 meters before the finish line.

This win and the world record could have been predicted by Bolt’s optimistic fans, but next was the 200 meters. After seven races and facing Michael Johnson’s formidable world record of 19.32 seconds set in Atlanta in 1996, reasonable people could expect the gold, but not a world record. This is the stage on which greatness plays out. Vowing to ‘leave everything on the track’, Usain took off in the 200 meter final, a man on a mission. Coming into a headwind of 0.9 meters per second on the straight, there was no celebrating, no easing up as in the 100 meter race. Bolt worked, and worked hard for 201 meters, bowing to cross the line, even though he was 15 meters in the lead, before he looked at the finish time; 19.31 seconds. A moment later, the time was revised down to 19.30 seconds, a new world record.



The historic all Jamaican medal ceremony with Kerron Stewart, Shelly-Ann Fraser and Sherone Simpson (from left) (Photo: Reuters)

We were watching history. Both Jesse Owens and Carl Lewis had won the 100 meters and 200 meters in a single Olympic Games, but neither had set a world record in the process for any of the events, let alone both. The greatest performer in Olympic history was dancing right before our eyes, affecting the world with his effusive personality. As if history had not had her fill, Usain returned with Nesta Carter, Michael Frater and Asafa Powell in the men’s 4 x 100 meter relay event to take the gold and the world record in a time of 37.10 seconds. The relay was particularly gratifying for Jamaicans since it saw our beloved Asafa Powell win a gold medal despite the disappointments in major championships over the years. Usain had won three medals and set three world records and we, in our lifetime, got to see it live.

WHAT IT MEANS

Long before Abe Issa pioneered Jamaica’s tourism product, before Sandals, and Beaches and Rick’s Cafe and Jake’s; long before Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, Shabba Ranks, Beenie Man, Buju Banton and Shaggy; long before Jamaican Michael Lee Chin made the Forbes list of the world’s billionaires, Jodi-Ann Maxwell won the Scripps Howard spelling bee for Jamaica, and Lisa Hanna won Miss World, the single thing that gave Jamaica its sense of nationhood, of independence, of impact, meaning and pride of place in the world, was track and field. Being referred to as the Jewel in Britain’s crown in the 18th century because of our prolific sugar production was a matter of pride for the island’s British expatriates, as the achievement of West Indian cricketers in England in the 1950’s was a matter of pride for the West Indies. From 1948 until now, our greatness in track and field is our own and hence, it has a special place in the psyche of the Jamaican. It is what bonds father to son, one generation to the next, what cements school loyalty and magnifies national pride. So it is no wonder that the world marvelled, not only at our performance on the track in Beijing, but our celebration around the world.

Like an Anniversary, Christmas or a Christening, the Olympics are not something to be celebrated alone. All around the world, from London to Lima, from Kingston to Cape Town, wherever two or three Jamaicans live, we got together in our homes, in our workplaces and on the streets to watch our sons and daughters take on the world. Not abstract, distant characters, but Shelly-Ann Fraser from Waterhouse, whom we might well have overlooked as a schoolgirl sprinter, Usain Bolt from that hotbed parish of talent, Trelawny, and so on. They were up there, but they were from here and we cheered as if our voices carried

through space into the ears of our champions and gave them strength. Half-Way-Tree in Kingston was blocked off to allow us to watch the events on a big screen as was Trafalgar Square in London, painted Gold for the week. Everywhere at home and through our great Diaspora our cars were adorned with flags, our bodies with the national colours and our spirits bursting at the seams. We were all of us Jamaicans; we were all of us proud; we were all of us champions. For a time, we were not defined by BBC or CNN or anyone else – putting up images and stories about which we were not so proud. For a time, as the world watched, we defined ourselves as a talented, blessed, ambitious and successful people. For a time, we hurdled with Melaine, flew with Shelly-Ann, dug deep with Shericka and danced with Usain and dreamed among ourselves of the day when our blessed island nation will live out its fullest potential on the world stage as our athletes did in Beijing.

'Golden Girl' Veronica Campbell-Brown (Photo: Reuters)



For more about Chris Stokes and to comment on this article visit coolrunningslive.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS WINTER 2008/2009

NOVEMBER 1 – 5	JAMAICA INVITATIONAL PRO-AM TOURNAMENT – 'ANNIE'S REVENGE III' – MONTEGO BAY
NOVEMBER 7 – 9	PORT ROYAL MUSIC FESTIVAL – PORT ROYAL
NOVEMBER 8 – 15	KINGSTON RESTAURANT WEEK – KINGSTON
DECEMBER 1	MOTOR SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES – DOVER, ST. ANN
DECEMBER 5	WORLDS BEST PASTA PARTY – SWEEP AWAY SPORTS COMPLEX, NEGRIL
DECEMBER 5 – 7	JMMC ALL STAGES RALLY JAMAICA – ST. CATHERINE TO KINGSTON
DECEMBER 6	REGGAE MARATHON & HALF MARATHON – NEGRIL
DECEMBER 7	JCDC JONKUNNU FESTIVAL – RANNY WILLIAMS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, KINGSTON
DECEMBER 19	WELCOME TO JAMROCK – KINGSTON
DECEMBER 21	DEVON HOUSE CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR – KINGSTON
DECEMBER 27	EAST FEST – GOODYEAR OVAL, ST. THOMAS
DECEMBER 31	HARBOUR FEST AND FIREWORKS – KINGSTON
DECEMBER 31	LIVE MUSIC NATION – KINGSTON
JANUARY 6	ACCOMPONG MAROON FESTIVAL – ACCOMPONG, ST. ELIZABETH
JANUARY 10	REBEL SALUTE – PORT KAISER SPORTS CLUB, ST. ELIZABETH
JANUARY 22 – 24	AIR JAMAICA JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL – MONTEGO BAY
FEBRUARY 1	BOB MARLEY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION – BOB MARLEY MUSEUM, KINGSTON
FEBRUARY 4 – 7	AFRICA UNITE SMILE JAMAICA YOUTH SYMPOSIUM – LIBERTY HALL, KINGSTON
FEBRUARY 5	ANNUAL BOB MARLEY LECTURE – UWI MONA CAMPUS, KINGSTON
FEBRUARY 6	JAMAICA CELEBRATES BOB – BOB MARLEY MUSEUM, KINGSTON
FEBRUARY 6	AFRICA UNITE PREMIERE – CARIB 5 CINEMA, KINGSTON
FEBRUARY 15	FI WI SINTING – CELEBRATING OUR AFRICAN HERITAGE – BUFF BAY, PORTLAND
FEBRUARY 23	AFRICA UNITE SMILE JAMAICA CONCERT – JAMES BOND BEACH, ST. MARY
FEBRUARY 24	REGGAE ACADEMY AWARDS – NATIONAL INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE, KINGSTON
APRIL 4 – 5	CARIBBEAN VEGGIE FEST & WELLNESS CONFERENCE – RHODES HALL PLANTATION, HANOVER
APRIL 13	TRELAWNY YAM FESTIVAL – ALBERT TOWN, TRELAWNY
JULY 12 – 18	REGGAE SUMFEST – CATHERINE HALL, MONTEGO BAY

Please note events are subject to change without prior notice. For further information, contact Jamaica Tourist Board. www.visitjamaica.com



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A RARE TRIPLE TREASURE

I've had the good fortune to play some of the best-known courses in the world, from Pebble Beach to the Old Course at St. Andrews – with many stops in between. When I recently visited Jamaica for the first time, I discovered first-hand the fantastic combination of Jamaica's easy-going atmosphere and the three outstanding golf courses of Rose Hall.



BY DON JOZWIAK

Senior Editor of PGA Magazine and the PGA Professionals' Guide to Travel. He lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

In fact, I'd say that Rose Hall makes an ideal spot for a golf vacation because of the way the sport and the surroundings enhance each other. The Cinnamon Hill, Half Moon and White Witch golf courses all offer creative architecture, natural beauty and outstanding service. Better yet, a round of golf is always a stress-free experience – tee times are easy to arrange, the courses are just minutes away – meshing smoothly with a post-round Red Stripe at a jerk pit on the beach. Any golf traveler who has had a vacation ruined as they suffered through an overcrowded, over-sold round or had to travel an hour or more from their hotel, will wonder why they ever went anywhere other than Jamaica.



The challenging Cinnamon Hill Golf Course (Photo: Cinnamon Hill)

Adding to the allure of staying and playing within the Rose Hall area, is the distinctive personality of each golf course. While the White Witch plays through high hills with panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea, Half Moon has a more traditional country club feel whereas Cinnamon Hill meanders from the hills to the beach and back again.

Each course features outgoing golf professionals who oversee the course, the instruction and the caddie programs. Scotsman Ewan Peebles is at the helm of Half Moon golf course, while Cinnamon Hill boasts Trinidad native Robert Ames – brother of and former caddie for PGA Tour star Stephen Ames – as the head Golf Professional. Meanwhile, the White Witch recently appointed Michigan native and PGA member Mike Cole as its new Director of Golf. Cole first came to the White Witch and The Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort as a college intern in 2000 and played a key role in the opening of the course. After stints as Golf Shop Manager and Head Professional, he is now in charge of the famous course named No. 1 golf resort in the Caribbean by Travel + Leisure Golf. "The allure of 'the Witch' is amazing. I fell in love with the course when I first came to Jamaica, and I haven't looked back since," says Cole. "Our Golf Concierges epitomize true professionalism and I feel honored to work with them every day on such a spectacular course."



The picturesque Half Moon Golf Course (Photo: Half Moon Hotel)

The White Witch is a true test of golf, weaving its way through the foothills high above the coast. The first tee offers an endless view of the Caribbean Sea, setting a tone for the beauty of the 17 holes that follow it. The highly skilled crew of Golf Concierges helps visitors navigate the undulating Robert Von Hagge design and serves as storytellers of the area's rich history. This includes the story of the real 'White Witch' – a 19th-century beauty named Annie Palmer who owned the sugar plantation on which the golf course now stands. Palmer, who is believed to have possessed magical powers, is said to have killed three of her husbands in the plantation's infamous Rose Hall Great House, located near the White Witch Clubhouse. Now open for guided tours, locals believe the spirit of the White Witch still haunts the Great House, though it is the work of Robert Von Hagge that provides the mystery on the golf course.



The White Witch Golf Course with its magnificent views (Photo: Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort)



Mike Cole, Director of Golf at The Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort (Photo: Heidi Zech)

Adjacent to the White Witch, the Cinnamon Hill golf course takes full advantage of an amazing swath of land that runs from the mountain foothills down to the beach and back up to the hills. Rose Hall's second Von Hagge design boasts three front nine holes along the Caribbean Sea and the old sugar plantation's aqueduct. The par-4 fifth and par-3 sixth holes are right on the beach, and bring the water and wind into play. Playing downhill into the prevailing ocean breezes, you'll not easily forget the sight of your shots soaring out toward the deep blue water on the fifth hole. The fifth green sits right on the beach, close enough for you to hear the waves crashing, spy several sunbathers and smell the nearby jerk pit. With a tee box that juts out into the sea, you have to carry the water to hit the right side of the sixth hole green. Winding through dense jungle foliage and more historic plantation ruins, the back nine includes a waterfall that can be seen in the James Bond film *Live and Let Die*. Be sure to bring your camera when you play Cinnamon Hill.

Just down the new, smooth road from Cinnamon Hill, you'll find the Half Moon Golf Club. This classic Robert Trent Jones Sr. design which makes great use of the naturally undulating terrain of the foothills, has been revitalized by a recent \$2 million renovation. You have plenty of room off the tee, but be sure to trust your experienced caddie when he or she gives you strategic advice on how to approach shots and subtle greens.

Always well-conditioned, the course may be the most fun for less-experienced golfers or families. But for serious players who want a challenge, teeing it up at Half Moon from the back tees is no easy round. With a classic golf shop and Clubhouse with an outdoor bar, the course features the outstanding Sugar Mill restaurant for a post-round meal to remember.

Visitors staying at The Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa, Rose Hall Resort & Spa, Half Moon and the soon to be open Solis The Palmyra Resort & Spa have access to tee times at all three Rose Hall golf courses – a unique arrangement that I look forward to enjoying on many future trips to the Rose Hall area of Jamaica.



Some of the staff at the White Witch golf course (Photo: Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort)

KEVYN CUNNINGHAM JOINS WHITE WITCH GOLF COURSE



Academies, located at The Ritz-Carlton's prestigious White Witch Golf Club. Cunningham is utilizing the experience he has gained conducting clinics of golfers across the world to create the ultimate

Kevyn Cunningham, a twenty-year veteran of David Leadbetter Golf Academies and Master Instructor, is pleased to announce the opening of Cunningham Golf

learning experience for golfers of all different levels. The new Caribbean golf academy offers one, two and three day schools, full day retreats, as well as individual and group instruction using the latest V1 teaching software. Cunningham, who believes any golf lesson starts with a good relationship between client and instructor, regularly keeps in contact with his clients who often send him video recordings of their golf swings over the internet. To find out more, please contact the White Witch Golf Course at 953-2800 ext. 5172.

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COOL, MUST DO ADVENTURES

Jamaica offers so many fun-filled adventures and unique attractions that it is hard to decide which one to select. Ziplining and bobsledding offer thrills to adrenaline junkies, while swimming with dolphins and glass-bottom kayaking is perfect for lovers of the marine world. More gentle activities such as hiking and cycling are also available, as are several adventures for children. Knowing that it is a hard choice, our team has put together a list of recommended highlights. Do it the Jamaican way – enjoy a day of ultimate fun! Check with your hotel tour desk or call the attractions at the numbers listed below.

CAMEL TREK SAFARI

PROSPECT PLANTATION NEAR OCHO RIOS

Prospect Plantation's new Camel Trek Safari is a unique adventure that you can experience nowhere else in Jamaica. Upon arrival to the Camel Park, camel trainers will give you a brief orientation. You can cuddle with the camels and take photos while you wait to saddle up. Travel the beautiful countryside on the back of your gentle and docile new friend, while comfortably seated in a beautifully decorated saddle. This entertaining adventure entitles you to your own, personal 'Camel Driver's License'. Call 994-1058. www.prospectplantationtours.com



Ready to take you on an adventure (Photo: Heidi Zech)

KOOL RUNNINGS WATER PARK

NEGRIL

Kool Runnings Water Park - the greatest chill under the sun! This state-of-the-art water park provides fun amusement options to visitors and locals of all ages. Patrons are pulled through the intriguingly designed entrance into its magical water world with 10 amazing super-size water slides, ¼ mile lazy river, Captain Mikie's Coconut Island for kids, Anancy Village, restaurants and much, much more. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. Closed Mondays. Call 957-5400. www.koolrunnings.com.



Fun amusement at Kool Runnings Water Park (Photo: Kool Runnings)

A DAY AT DOLPHIN COVE

OCHO RIOS

With lots of activities and fun, Dolphin Cove is the perfect place to spend the day. Visitors can captain their own mini-boats and explore the coast, interact and snorkel with dolphins, sharks and stingrays, take a glass-bottom kayak ride to explore the fascinating underwater world and interact with exotic birds, snakes and iguanas on the Jungle Trail Walk. Pirates roam freely along the Boardwalk of "Little Port Royal" and the One Legged Pirates will perform a 'Jig or Two.' Jamaica Tours offers tours to Dolphin Cove from all the major north coast resorts. Call 974-5335. www.dolphincovejamaica.com

SEA KEEPER FOR A DAY

DOLPHIN COVE, OCHO RIOS

If you have ever dreamed of working with dolphins, sharks, stingrays and other creatures of the sea, you can try out your talent at Dolphin Cove, which offers guests the rare opportunity to be 'Sea Keeper for a Day'. Learning 'hands-on' training techniques used by the professionals, participants assist animal trainers in food preparation, feeding and training of dolphins, sharks and stingrays. Call 974-5335.

www.dolphincovejamaica.com



Visitors enjoy a day at Dolphin Cove (Photo: Dolphin Cove)

ZIPLINE ADVENTURE TOURS

LETHE NEAR MONTEGO BAY

Zipline Adventure Tours offers you the longest combined zipline experience in the Caribbean. Travel at 30 - 40 mph across great expanses of land up to 250 feet off the ground, while volcanic spouts of adrenaline rock your core as you whisk through the air with the natural beauty of Jamaica as your companion. Designed to satisfy the adventure needs of the entire family, exploration activities at the Great River Adventure Center in the hills of Hanover include canopy tours, bamboo rafting, kayaking, river tubing, guided hiking tours, liqueur tasting, botanical garden walk and plantation tours. Whether you desire heart-pumping action or a more relaxed activity, an abundance of fun is waiting for you at the island's first adventure center. For more information call 940-7394 or visit www.zipline-tours.com



Having lots of fun at Zipline Adventure Tours (Photo: Heidi Zech)

TRAIL MIX TOUR

BRACO STABLES, TRELAWNY

In addition to its great equestrian Swim & Ride, Braco Stables now offers you the chance to explore Trelawny's magnificent scenery on foot and bicycle on their new TrailMix adventure. The tour starts with an energizing 2 mile hike through the canopied tropical forest up to Braco Hill, which boasts a magnificent panoramic view of the coastline from some 300-400 feet above.



Braco's Trail Mix Tour offers something for everybody (Photos: Nigel Lord)

The 60 minute hike is followed by a relaxing 30 minute bicycle trip over gently undulating terrain, through hedgerows and farmland down to the stunningly beautiful beach. Enjoy a cool, refreshing dip in the crystal-blue Caribbean Sea and breathe in the warmth of the sun on the soft white sand. From here, a driver will take you back to the Braco Great House for a well-deserved refreshment and a final photo-taking opportunity at the poolside gazebo. Wear sensible walking shoes, loose clothing and shorts with your swimsuit. Children must be at least 10 years old. Tours are available daily: 10.30 am and 2.30 pm. Call 954-0185.



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Dolphin Cove

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Croydon Plantation Tour

Capture the true spirit, history, flavour & culture of Jamaica

Spirit of Reggae (The Bob Marley Experience)

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Black River Nature and Safari

See crocodiles and swim in waterfalls at the Black River safari

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THRILL SEEKERS WANTED AT MYSTIC MOUNTAIN

Travel above the treetops on the Rainforest Sky Explorer to the peak of Mystic Mountain, where several electrifying adventures await those hunting for the latest in excitement. Drive your very own bobsled down the mountain on the Rainforest Bobsled ride, officially declared the hottest new 'must do' on the island. Traverse the rainforest on the zipline adventure, glide down the waterslide to the infinity pool and dine to spectacular views at the R2 restaurant. Mystic Mountain offers a medley of different ways to experience the jungle that are guaranteed to get the whole family buzzing with pleasure.



En route to the top of the Mystic Mountain
(Photo: Heidi Zech)



Educate yourself about the Jamaican culture at the Mystic Pavilion (Photo: Heidi Zech)

Bobsled can be compared to a roller coaster ride through flora and fauna on a stainless steel track, 700 meters downhill and 300 meters uphill." The bobsled track takes you back to the Railway Station, where you can opt to bobsled again, visit the gift shop or glide down the water slide into the blue waters of an infinity pool which features breathtaking views.

A visit to the island's newest attraction in the hills above Ocho Rios begins with a walk through prolific, green grounds along the cooling river to the Rainforest Sky Explorer chairlift. Cleverly utilized to transport pioneering adventurers into the lush, mountainous rainforest territory just minutes from the famous Dunn's River Falls, Jamaica's first chairlift elevates explorers 700 feet during the 1 km journey to the Mystic Mountain peak. Says Barbara Lulich, Marketing Consultant at Rainforest Bobsled Jamaica at Mystic Mountain; "The 'Rainforest Sky Explorer' is a state-of-the-art lift, manufactured by Doppelmayr CTEC based in Salt Lake City, Utah".

Breathtaking views of the sparkling Caribbean Sea, Ocho Rios and the roaring hills of St. Ann can be enjoyed from the Rainforest Sky Explorer on the journey to the top of the mountain, where the Mystic Pavilion and the Railway Station await. Upon arrival, visitors can purchase a photo taken during the trip up the mountain and take pleasure in the many colorful displays and shopping at the Mystic Pavilion.

The most thrilling part of the visit, however, starts at the Railway Station, a picturesque replica of an early 1900s Jamaican railway station. Here, daredevils can climb into one of 25 custom designed Jamaican bobsleds and try their hands at the tropical version of the Olympic toboggan winter-sport of bobsledding. Not made for the faint of heart, adventurous spirits steer their very own bobsled down the hillside on the 1 km gravity driven Rainforest Bobsled ride, experiencing the feeling of being a member of the famous Jamaica Bobsled Team. Explains Barbara; "The Rainforest



The magnificent view of Ocho Rios from the R2 restaurant (Photo: Heidi Zech)

Other Mystic Mountain escapades include the Rainforest Zipline Canopy Tour, another exploit definitely worth trying. This amazing combination of five zip lines allows 'zipper' to glide 170 meters through the jungle 'a la Tarzan' at a near vertical descent of 10 meters before landing on a wooden platform which doubles as the mid-station of the Rainforest Sky Explorer. From here zipline riders can access the chairlift.

In addition to the many fun activities, dining at the Mystic Mountain's R2 restaurant is a unique experience. Chefs Jose Riquelme and Ravi Anne Kiran have created a contemporary menu that includes favorites such as Mystic Mountain Burgers, Caribbean inspired dishes, vegetarian delights and an 'Irie Pickney' menu for kids. With seating for 78 persons and ample outdoor space at the 700 ft altitude eatery, R2 is also an ideal spot for weddings and functions.

A partnership between Rainforest Aerial Trams and company founders Horace A. Clarke and Michael N. Drakulich, Mystic Mountain is well on their way to obtaining Green Globe certification due to their commitment to creating a green, eco-friendly attraction. The entire park has been carefully designed to place minimal influence on its diverse ecosystem and terrain, which is home to natural springs, tropical plants, an abundance of trees and a wide variety of birds. Explains Barbara; "The Rainforest Sky Explorer was built using F posts and the latest in chairlift tower technology, which keeps the impact on the forest environment at a minimum." The bobsled track, which was carried by hand through the rainforest, was laid enveloping the limestone cliffs.

Mystic Mountain is open every day from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm. Children of all ages can enjoy the Rainforest Sky Explorer chairlift, but have to be a minimum of 12 years for the Rainforest Zipline Canopy Tour and at least 42 inches tall and 8 years old for the Rainforest Bobsled ride.

For more information, talk to your hotel tour desk or call 974-3990 or visit www.rainforestbobsledjamaica.com.

Bobsledders in anticipation of a thrilling ride
(Photo: Heidi Zech)



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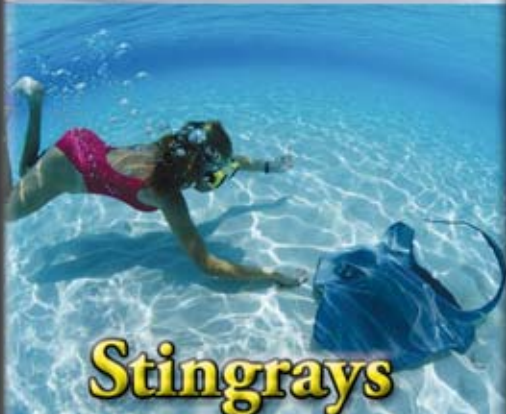
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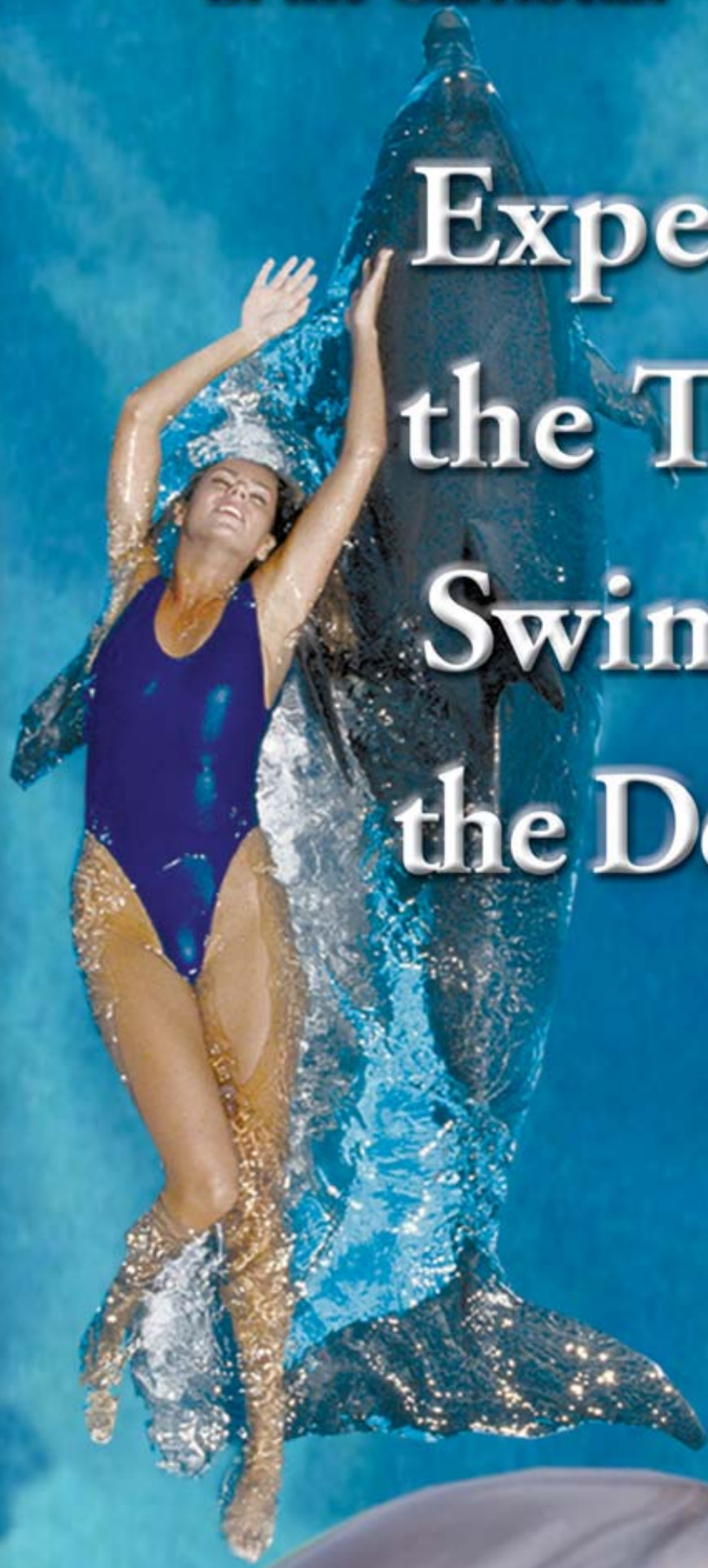


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259 YEARS OF APPLETON RUM

Three Rs immediately come to mind when people think of Jamaica; Reggae, Rastafari and Rum. While 'Rastas' and Rum may not mix, the pairing of Rum and Reggae usually goes down pretty well. Owned by J. Wray & Nephew, Appleton Estate has produced rum for more than 259 years and the golden drink is hailed by most as the island's best. Spend a couple of hours with the Appleton family at their estate in St. Elizabeth and you will really learn to appreciate the drink that is synonymous with Jamaica and its culture.

We were greeted with a warm smile from our tour guide Kayon and handed a potent rum punch upon our arrival at the Appleton Estate. Thus, our rum-making journey began with a drink in hand. "Sip slowly!" - we were warned. The tasty concoction, a blend of four different types of Appleton Rum, can only be enjoyed at the estate.

The success of Appleton Rum is most certainly due to the combination of the island's superb natural resources and the efforts of the estate. Additionally, pure spring water, naturally filtered through the limestone rocks of the Cockpit Country, is used in the distillation process. All these elements combined make Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum among the finest in the world. However, it soon becomes clear that the human element is another important aspect in the production of premier rum. Appleton Estate's Joy Spence is the first woman in the industry to hold the revered position of Master Blender. The creator of countless fine blends, including the limited edition Appleton Estate 250th Anniversary Blend, Joy is a 'sensory expert' who describes the development of a rum blend as a combination of art and science. Explains the Master Blender; "To create a new blend of rum, you must first identify the style of rum you want. Then, you look at the stocks of rum that are available to you, bearing in mind the compatibility of the different marks, the effects of ageing and the chemistry profile. Once you have completed this process, you decide on the best artistic combination." Like many Jamaicans, Joy enjoys Appleton Estate V/X Jamaica Rum chased with Coca-Cola or Ting, a local grapefruit soda, or Appleton Estate Reserve Jamaica Rum with "a splash of soda water".



Appleton's Master Blender Joy Spence
(Photo: Appleton Estate)

Extremely educational, Appleton Estate's rum tour gives insight to Jamaica's past which is deeply embedded with the production of sugar cane. The tour takes you through

the entire process of rum making and although equipment and technology have improved greatly over the years, the process remains the same - extraction, fermentation, distillation, ageing and blending.

Appleton's pride is well-deserved as the estate continues to create award winning rums. The estate has shied away from mass production, opting instead to maintain the traditional batch process of making rum. The details of fermentation and distillation were explained to us by Kayon, before we moved into the Ageing House, where some 8,000 barrels of rum are being stored in white oak barrels from Tennessee for periods between 3 to 30 years. Permeable, the barrels allow the rum to breathe as it ages, acquiring color and flavor from the wood to become darker, smoother and sweeter. Each year, the barrels in the Ageing House lose 6% of their rum as a result of evaporation. "What a waste!" one might say, but the employees at Appleton call this the 'angels share,' because it is the best. The cooling effect of evaporation works like natural air conditioning, which the Appleton people wittily call 'rum conditioning', referring to the effect the evaporating alcohol might have on the visitors of the Ageing House.

At the end of the tour, it is time to 'belly up to the bar' - John Wray's Tavern to be exact. The tasting selection included delicious options like Rumona, a creamy rum-based liqueur with hints of vanilla and Berry Hill, a pimento liqueur which makes a good marinade for jerk chicken or pork. Included in the lineup was also a bottle of Overproof White Rum which is used in Jamaica as an antidote for just about everything.

The Appleton Rum Tour is available Mondays to Saturdays from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Enquire at your hotel's tour desk for more information or visit www.appleton.com to learn more about 'the finest rum in the world'.

Tel: 963-9215.

Knowledgeable tour guide Kayon tempts you with 13 Appleton products
(Photo: Heidi Zech)





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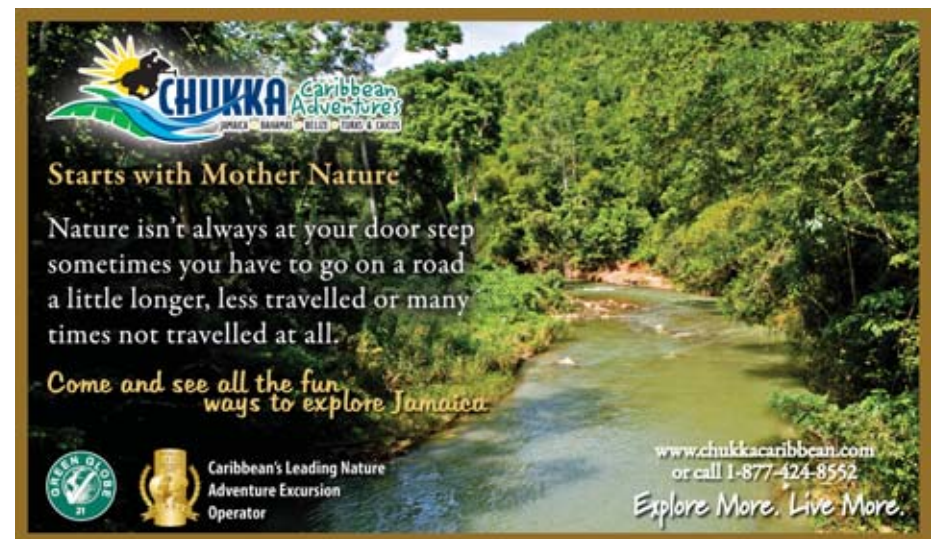
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SPELUNKING IN THE GREEN GROTTTO

Along Jamaica's north coast highway between the towns of Runaway Bay and Discovery Bay lies one of Jamaica's popular attractions – the Green Grotto Caves. Aptly named 'green' for the algae that covers its walls and 'grotto' from the Latin words that mean 'cave with an underground lake', the caves have been linked with Jamaica's history at several stages and more recently provided the submarine scene backdrop for 007 James Bond.

Artifacts recovered from the caves and their surroundings suggest that Taino Indians, the island's first inhabitants, used them for shelter. It is also believed that the Spanish sought refuge in this hidden lair during their 1655 battle with the British for control of the island. A perfect hideaway and harbor for both runaway slaves and smugglers running arms to Cuba, sections of the caves were used as a storage place for rum in more recent times. As a consequence, the Green Grotto Caves have acquired many names over the years, including – Runaway, Dairy, Rum, Hopewell and Dry Harbour Caves.



The mysterious underground lake at the Green Grotto (Photo: Heidi Zech)

Providing a plethora of information about the caves' history, geology, plant and animal life, our expert tour guide Chedd led the way through the innermost sections. Chedd specializes in accents and impressed us with an excellent imitation of the late Aussie explorer Steve Irwin. 21 species of bats can be found in Jamaica and the Green Grotto Caves is home to nine of them, including the 'Big Eared Bat', the 'Mustache Bat' and the



Green Grotto tenants at rest (Photo: Heidi Zech)

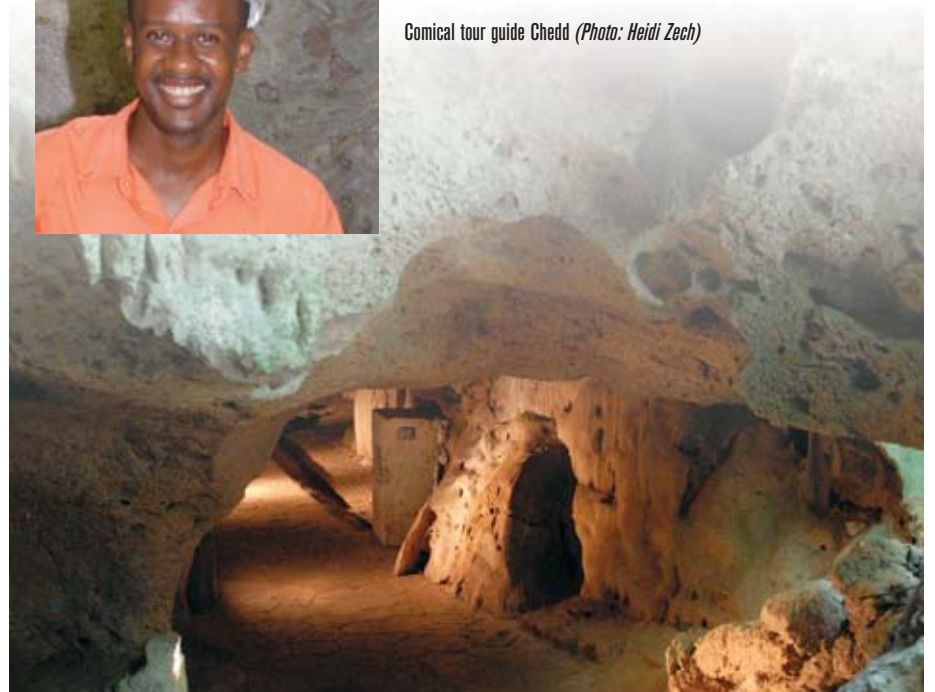
Jamaican 'Fruit Eating Bat'. The bats are harmless, going about their business while you tour their cozy home. Thoroughly informative, the guides are often quite humorous and love to share funny stories and point out rock formations that resemble animals or famous people.

The highlight of the tour is the 37 meter descent, some 60 steps, into the Green Grotto's innermost cavern which boasts a crystal clear, underground lake. The lake was made famous as the location of the submarine scene in the James Bond movie *Live and Let Die*, where 007 Roger Moore enters the lair of the villainous Dr. Kananga.

One of Jamaica's first attractions to become Green Globe certified, the Green Grotto team is committed to preserving the environment. Plans are afoot to introduce additional activities such as hiking, fishing, canoeing and picnicking in the near future. Even if you are not an avid spelunker, the Green Grotto Caves are fascinating and absolutely safe. The only gear you need is comfortable shoes, preferably sneakers, as a complimentary hard hat will be provided at the beginning of the tour. The 45 minute tour costs US\$20 per adult and US\$10 per child (ages 4-12), which includes a fruit punch at the end. Open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm every day. For more information about Green Grotto, visit www.greengrottocavesja.com or tel. 973-2841/3217.



Comical tour guide Chedd (Photo: Heidi Zech)



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IT'S ALL GOOD

With the distinctly Jamaican name WATA, the island's #1 bottled water has taken the Jamaican market by storm. Bottled from two natural, artisan wells beneath the foothills of Spanish Town in the parish of St. Catherine, WATA is already naturally filtered through 200 feet of limestone by the time it arrives at the plant. Since its launch in 2002, the brand has focused on the general health benefits of drinking water and worked actively to align WATA with a healthy lifestyle. In only 6 years, WATA has gained nearly 60% of the country's bottled water market share, a remarkable feat for such a young brand.



William Mahfood, Managing Director of the Wisynco Group (Photo: Wisynco)

Says William Mahfood, Managing Director of the West Indies Synthetics Company (Wisynco) Group, the company behind the popular WATA brand; "Once at the plant, the water is taken through a 6 step purification process before a minimum amount of minerals and salts are put back into the water to create a good taste."

Wisynco's stringent water filtration and purification process has earned the company official endorsement, and its water plant is the island's only to hold an international HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certification. Sand filtered, chlorinated, carbon filtered, put through a process of reverse osmosis, ultra purified, micro filtered, sterilized and hyper filtered, WATA bottled water indeed merits its tagline

"nature's purest and most perfected water" and with the addition of salt and minerals, indeed "It's All Good!"

According to Mahfood, sales of bottled water have surpassed the sale of carbonated soft drinks in Jamaica and Wisynco is adding production capacity to meet the 40% growth in demand. Says the Managing Director; "The increase in water consumption is a worldwide phenomenon, Jamaica is just moving ahead of the curve."

Customers have grown to love WATA which, like all of Wisynco's products, conveys the message 'proud to be Jamaican' through its patois brand name. Mahfood declares that although he happened to be the one to come up with the name, the product's tremendous success is largely due to the efforts of Zachary Harding, Wisynco's previous Director of Marketing who was headhunted by the JTB (Jamaica Tourist Board) as Deputy Director of Tourism last year. States Mahfood; "A young, bright marketing professional, Harding was the driving force behind the development of the WATA brand."



Recently, the company joined forces with Ocean Spray to launch a flavored water, mixing 4-5% Ocean Spray cranberry juice with WATA. Says Mahfood; "Jamaica is the largest per capita market for cranberry juice in the world. Therefore, it made sense to marry the island's two strongest brands, WATA and Ocean Spray, into one beverage." Introduced 4 months ago, CRAN WATA with red and white cranberry flavors has been a huge success, a fact that Mahfood accredits to the strength of the two brands; "The new product has surpassed all our expectations, selling 5 - 6 times more than anticipated. It is a great motivator for us to continue expanding the range of flavors."

Recognizing the value of proper rehydration while engaging in physical activities, WATA has used sports as a marketing platform to launch many innovative media solutions. In 2005, WATA introduced uniquely designed bottle labels for each of the Premier League's 12 soccer teams.

Describes Mahfood; "Marketed as the 'Official bottled water of the League', we gave JAS5 to each team for every case of WATA sold. The initiative was hugely successful because it provided cash contributions to each of the teams as well as an additional, incentive-based cash reward to the two champion teams."



In October 2008, Wisynco sponsored the initial staging of the WATA Rose Hall Triathlon and Wellness Festival, which seeks to position Jamaica as a 'Sport Tourism Mecca' and health and wellness hub. During the event, WATA showcased a 'refresher' booth featuring its varied sizes of bottled WATA, packaged to appeal to its many aficionados and provided refreshment at water stops along the triathlon path. Says Karen Rosen, Wisynco's Marketing Manager; "We are enthused at this association and will actively continue to promote our sponsorship of this historic triathlon."



Says Rosen: "WATA is a brand that holds promotion of healthy lifestyles as one of its core messages. The message we strive to communicate via appropriate media at all times is that: with 8 glasses of WATA a day, you're bound to be taking the healthy way!"

Marketed in a range of sizes, WATA is available in the following formats: 330 ml LIKKLE WATA (little water) for children, the 600 ml PREMIER WATA (premier water) which comes in regular and sport, 1.5 liter and 3 liter bottles.

The WATA brand is identified with most major retailers in Jamaica and Wisynco's client list includes customers such as the SuperClubs, Iberostar, Fiesta, Island Grill Restaurants, Margaritaville, KFC, Wendy's, Burger King, Domino's and Air Jamaica.



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HOPE AND SHELTER FOR JAMAICA'S ANIMALS

Thanks to the big heart and kindness of Maureen Sheridan, countless abandoned animals have been given a second chance at The Animal House, one of only two animal shelters on the island. Founded in 1996, the sanctuary currently gives refuge and love to 141 homeless dogs, cats and horses. Ignited and powered by Maureen's love for animals and concern for their survival, The Animal House team rescues, cares for and finds new homes for as many abandoned animals as possible.



Maureen and one of her rescued pups Foxy Brown. (Photo: Heidi Zech)

After years of working as a successful writer and producer in the fast-paced music industry, Maureen Sheridan became convinced the animal population of Jamaica needed her as their spokesperson. In 1996 the entrepreneur, who has worked with Jamaican Reggae greats such as Third World, Sly and Robbie and wind instrument virtuoso Dean Fraser, turned the idea into reality and founded The Animal House, which was formally registered as a charity in May 2003.

Located on a 'hidden-away' property in the beautiful, St. Ann countryside of Lydford, half an hour drive from Ocho Rios, the shelter currently houses 94 resident dogs and puppies, 45 cats and 2 horses. Their needs are attended to by Maureen, live-in caretaker Patrick Smith and shelter supervisor Orville Reynolds.



Leah with Vida at Bamboo Village in Trelawny shortly before leaving Jamaica. (Photo: contributed by Leah MacDonald)

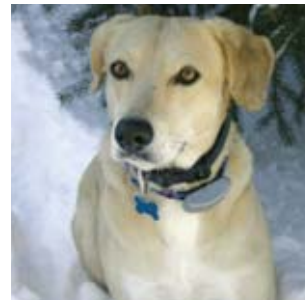
After being greeted with a heart and eardrum breaking concert of eager barking, we visited with a few of The Animal House residents. Dwellers include the 17 year old cancer survivor Liza, a Jamaican Brown, the half Pomeranian Foxy Brown and Jacques, a couch potato with his own old sofa believed to be an unidentifiable mix of Labrador and Shepherd. Another occupant with an interesting story includes Shaggy, formerly known as 'tour guide' at Dunn's River Falls. Malnourished and homeless, the Golden Retriever was spending her time guiding visitors to the top of falls, until a kind cruise ship passenger from Miami reported her to The Animal House. Today, Shaggy lives a healthy and happy life at the refuge. Explains Maureen; "She thinks she owns the shelter", pointing to the Golden Retriever, who is watching Orville feed her fellow shelter residents through the window.

Once an animal is reported to The Animal House, Maureen personally rescues the injured, neglected or abused animal and provides food, shelter and medical care. Maureen has been very successful in finding permanent homes for many of the animals that she has saved, both in Jamaica and overseas.

Shelter supervisor Orville feeding some of the 141 residents. (Photo: Heidi Zech)

We talked to two owners, who both adopted abandoned pets from The Animal House. Lesley Ferrier from Toronto found Marley at a Jamaican hotel while vacationing with friends 5 years ago, and began feeding the stray dog daily. On her last night on the island, the pitiful Labrador mix came limping by to look for her and Lesley was heartbroken when she had to leave the dog behind. After finding The Animal House online, Lesley called the shelter to explain the situation and after 5 nights of trying to catch the dog, Maureen was finally able to call Lesley and tell her the good news.

Lesley's new pet was soon on his way to his new homeland thanks to the generosity of Sky Services and Air Canada and arriving in Toronto, Marley was received like a celebrity with welcome sign and gift bags. A local newspaper was waiting at the airport to cover the story, which aired on TV and radio stations nationwide. After overcoming heartworm, Marley eventually got used to the new environment and the 'lucky dog' now enjoys the cold winters in Canada!



Marley loves the snow! (Photo: Lesley Ferrier)

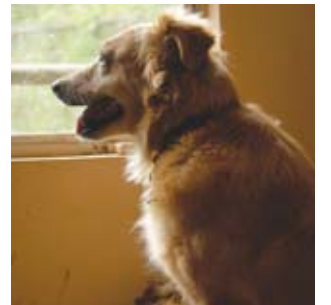
Vida is another Canadian emigrant. Tiny and starving, the mutt was found at a craft market in Trelawny by Leah and Steven MacDonald. Again, The Animal House was contacted and Maureen put all her efforts into rescuing the little creature. Today Vida, a one year old puppy of undetermined whippet ancestry, is happy and healthy living in Ottawa.

"In Jamaica, I personally deliver all adopted animals and ensure that the environment is suitable", explained Maureen, who emphasizes that adoptive owners have to be caring animal lovers. "I have only once had to recover a placed dog due to inadequate care once," adds Maureen.

Dogs that are not matched with suitable new owners are guaranteed a home for life at The Animal House where they receive daily care and lots of love. However, help is always much needed and gratefully received. "Apart from monetary donations, we need volunteers to play with the dogs and lavish some attention on them", says Orville, who left his job at a hotel in the Blue Mountains to work at The Animal House.

Explains Maureen, who personally has spent all her savings and much of her regular income on The Animal House; "Generous individuals sometimes drop off bags of food or medicine. Chris Blackwell, Couples Resorts, Sandals and the Four Seasons Hotel have been of great help." But even when cash donations are added, it is not enough for the organization to survive. With veterinary tech training, Maureen and Orville are able to perform some medical care, but they are hoping that local vets will be willing to donate their services on an ad-hoc basis some day to help keep The Animal House going. Behind the great mission of The Animal House, lies an even deeper hope. "We want to educate young children to treat animals with love and compassion and plant a seed that will grow and flourish through them in the future."

Help is desperately needed at The Animal House. Money can be donated via Paypal on www.theanimalhousejamaica.org Call (876) 801-8386.



Shaggy oversees the yard of 'her shelter'. (Photo: Heidi Zech)



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FROM AFRICA TO THE HILLS OF JAMAICA

The Maroons were Africans who escaped from enslavement in the New World and set up their own communities throughout the Americas, fighting over many years to retain their freedom. Unconquered, Jamaica's Maroons eventually forced the British colonial authorities to negotiate peace treaties that gave them their own land and some internal autonomy in their settlements. Some 275 years later, the Maroons still maintain their independence. Recognized as an indigenous people by the United Nations, they remain autonomous from Jamaican society to a significant extent.



BY OLIVE SENIOR

Olive Senior is an acclaimed international author whose work has been translated into several languages. In the *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, Senior explores Jamaican culture and society from A to Z.

EXTRACT FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAMAICAN HERITAGE BY OLIVE SENIOR. TWIN GUINEP PUBLISHERS.

When the English took Jamaica from the Spaniards in 1655, many of their African slaves fled to the woods and played a major role in helping the Spaniards sustain the five-year struggle against the English. Eventually, one band went over to the English but others continued to resist and by the time the last Spaniard left, the remaining ex-slaves had established a life of freedom in the woods. They continued to harass the English settlers, raiding plantations for supplies, arms, and women. Over time their numbers were augmented by enslaved Africans fleeing the plantations of the English. The Maroons, as they came to be called, were predominantly Akan speakers from the African Gold Coast, referred to as Coromantees, though other ethnic groups were also represented.

There are several explanations for the origin of the word 'Maroon', the most commonly accepted being that the English word maroon, like the French 'marron', derives from the Spanish cimarrón meaning 'wild'. Originally applied to cattle that had escaped into the wild, the word soon came to refer to the human runaways who fled to the bush and established communities in inhospitable terrain from which they resisted European forces sent against them.

In time, there were several Maroon bands organized under strong leadership. The mountainous areas they inhabited protected their camps against the incursions of British soldiers and settlers. They lived as a fighting force so they could move quickly and were able to communicate with one another by means of their talking drums, the Abeng animal horn, and through their secret language shown to contain many Akan words.

The Maroons split into two main groups called the Leewards and the Windwards from their geographical locations. The so-called Leeward Maroons lived at the western end of the island in the mountains bordering Clarendon and St Ann Parishes and were united under the great leader Cudjoe, assisted by his brothers Johnny and Accompong. In time, Cudjoe moved his band to the wild Cockpit Country in the western parishes. From there they raided the nearby plantations for 40 years, preventing settlement of the interior.

Meanwhile, the other bands had concentrated in the eastern end, making their homes in the high mountains of Portland and St Thomas Parishes and were called the Windward Maroons. Two of the leaders of the Windward Maroons were Quaco and Kofi. But their greatest leader was Nanny, whose name is recalled in their old settlement of Nanny Town. Like the Leewards, these Windward Maroons were also worrying the authorities, carrying out lightning raids on settlements and retreating to their mountain fastness. The many swift rivers in Portland and the high rainfall made pursuit difficult. As in the west, they prevented the expansion of European settlement in the area, Portland Parish at the time being virtually unsettled. There were many clashes between the Maroons and government forces sent against them over the years.

Maroon Town villagers in 1908



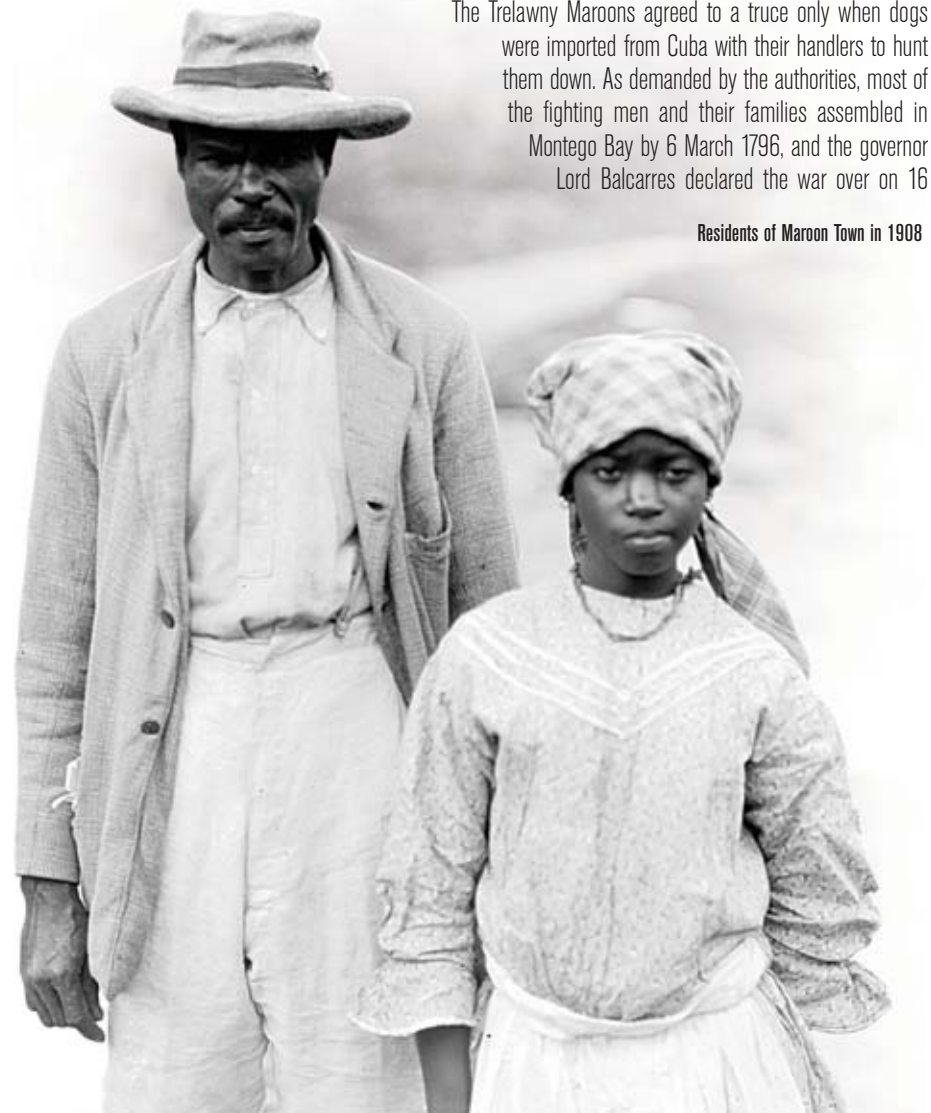
However, the Maroons wanted to settle down as free people and in 1739 a peace treaty was negotiated between Cudjoe and the British government. According to the agreement, the Maroons were given land and certain freedoms, including freedom from taxation. The main settlement in St. James on 600 acres was named Trelawny Town in honor of the governor of the day and was the headquarters of Cudjoe. Land (400ha) was also given in St Elizabeth Parish and the settlement named Accompong after the leader of that band.

Shortly after Cudjoe signed the peace treaty for Maroons in the west, Quaco signed for the Maroons in the east (on 23 June 1739). But there was a split among the eastern Maroons and one year later, Nanny signed a separate treaty for her band, founding what is now Moore Town in the Rio Grande Valley. It remains the principal Maroon settlement in the area. After the signing of the peace treaties, the Maroons lived quietly in their settlements. In fulfillment of one of the conditions of the treaties, they returned runaway slaves and generally helped the authorities to maintain law and order.

But the peace did not last forever. In July 1795 the Trelawny Town Maroons rebelled, partly in response to long-simmering grievances with the government. The immediate spark was that two of them had been convicted in the courts for pig stealing and, to add insult to injury, had been flogged by a runaway slave whom the Maroons had previously caught and handed over to the authorities. When meetings with the authorities failed to appease them, the proud Maroons took up arms again. A few of the older Maroons heeded the governor's call to surrender by 12 August and were promptly imprisoned, but many of the young warriors once more engaged the soldiers in guerrilla warfare, raiding and plundering crops and plantations in surrounding parishes. There were only about 300 fighting Maroons in Trelawny Town but they held out against the 1,500 soldiers sent against them.

The Trelawny Maroons agreed to a truce only when dogs were imported from Cuba with their handlers to hunt them down. As demanded by the authorities, most of the fighting men and their families assembled in Montego Bay by 6 March 1796, and the governor Lord Balcarres declared the war over on 16

Residents of Maroon Town in 1908



The Abeng animal horn
(Photo: © The Gleaner Company Ltd)

March. The Trelawny Maroons had come expecting to negotiate another treaty, but they were tricked by Balcarres who had personally taken charge of the war, for he ordered all of them put on board three ships he had waiting in the harbour. The ships sailed on 6 June for Port Royal, and from there transported the Maroons to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Deported were 568 Maroons of whom 401 were old men, women and children and 167 arms bearing men. Their life in Halifax was never satisfactory and after two years they were sent to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in Africa. These Maroons were to form an elite in Sierra Leone, from whom many of that country's prominent families are descended and some 60 of them returned to Jamaica in the 19th century.

Maroon communities have never been large in numbers, but they have imprinted themselves on the consciousness of the wider society. In earlier centuries they created fear among the authorities and the colonists, holding up settlement of vast areas of the island through their guerrilla activities and putting military campaigns against them high on the agenda. As symbols of resistance, they have played a significant role in shaping the psyche of Jamaicans.

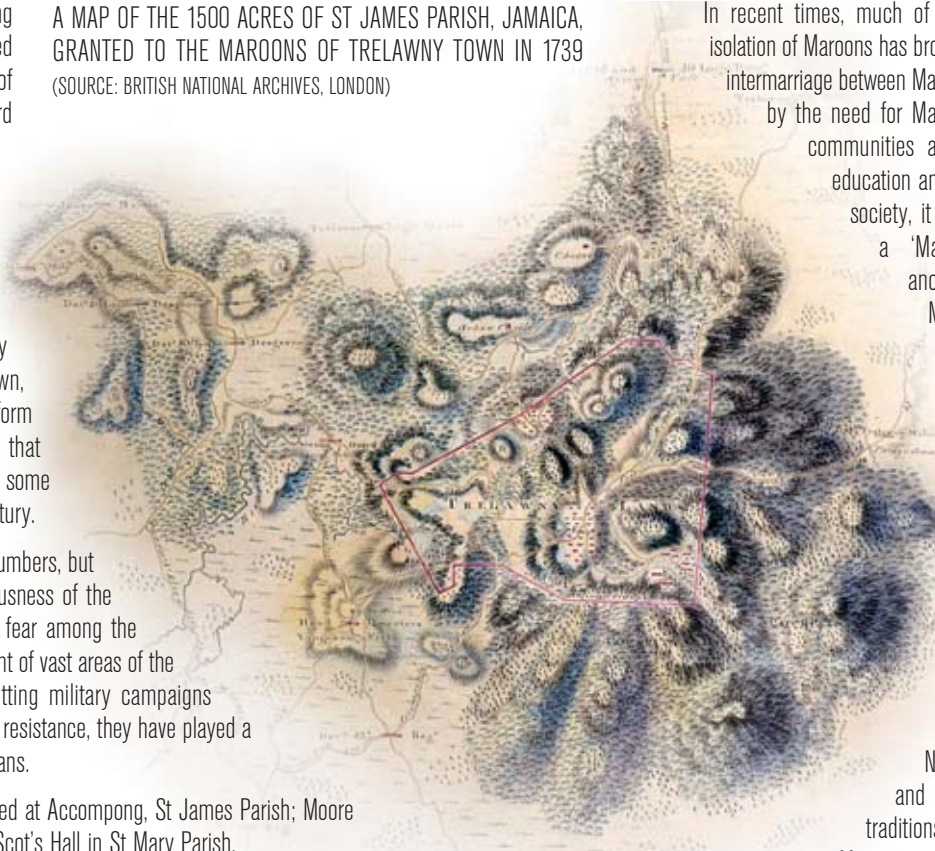
Maroon communities in Jamaica today are located at Accompong, St James Parish; Moore Town and Charles Town in Portland Parish, and Scot's Hall in St Mary Parish.

Each Maroon settlement is governed by a colonel, an honorary title dating from the peace treaties. The leadership is decided on among the Maroons themselves. The Maroons still retain some of their old traditions and the abeng and the drums are still used on ceremonial occasions. The Maroons distinguish between their 'business dances' to which visitors are not permitted, and 'pleasure dances' which allow visitors. Researchers have argued that the isolation of the early Maroons helped to preserve many of the old African customs, among them the Myal healing tradition. Certain types of celebrations among the Maroons also hark back to earlier times, including an 'ambush dance' in which Maroons dress in green leaves to reenact their guerrilla days in the bush and initiation dances and warrior types dances testing male courage, part of the Kromanti tradition. Music and dance styles unique to them are also found among the Maroons. A Maroon religious chant recorded in 1953 proves beyond doubt that an African-based pidgin existed alongside Jamaican Creole, and was a mixture of Akan and other African languages.



A proud descendant of the Jamaican maroons, Yvette Clark is the first ever Jamaican elected to the U.S. Congress. With mother, Una Clark (left) and father Leslie Clarke (right) (Photo: E. Anderson)

A MAP OF THE 1500 ACRES OF ST JAMES PARISH, JAMAICA, GRANTED TO THE MAROONS OF TRELAWNY TOWN IN 1739 (SOURCE: BRITISH NATIONAL ARCHIVES, LONDON)



In recent times, much of the separation and isolation of Maroons has broken down, helped by intermarriage between Maroons and others and by the need for Maroons to leave their communities and live outside for education and work. In the wider society, it is impossible to tell

a 'Maroon' apart from another Jamaican. The Maroon communities themselves that were once shrouded in

secrecy, are now sharing part of their rich heritage with the rest of Jamaica and the world through their participation in international symposia and cultural events and publication of research by scholars who have lived among them. The Maroon community of Accompong now has a tour for tourists and the celebration of the town's founding and Cudjoe's birthday on 6 January is a public one, attracting hundreds of visitors.



The annual Maroon festival in Accompong (Photo: © The Gleaner Company Ltd)

Nevertheless, there are still secrets that are never revealed to outsiders and Maroons preserve among themselves remnants of their sacred traditions handed down by the Maroon ancestors and preserved by each generation. Maroons are credited with being the repository of African traditions, especially those relating to healing, divination and sorcery and 'Maroon medicine' is still regarded by many in the wider society as most powerful. Farming, fishing and hunting (including the wild pig) are still major Maroon activities. All of these elements contribute to what might be called the Maroon identity, shared by any who claim it by birth. Maroon societies have not only conserved elements of African culture but also provide a direct link with the indigenous people of Jamaica, the Tainos. The oral culture has always held that such linkages exist, but they are now being supported by solid evidence from archaeological research in old Maroon settlements.

NANNY OF THE MAROONS - A NATIONAL HERO



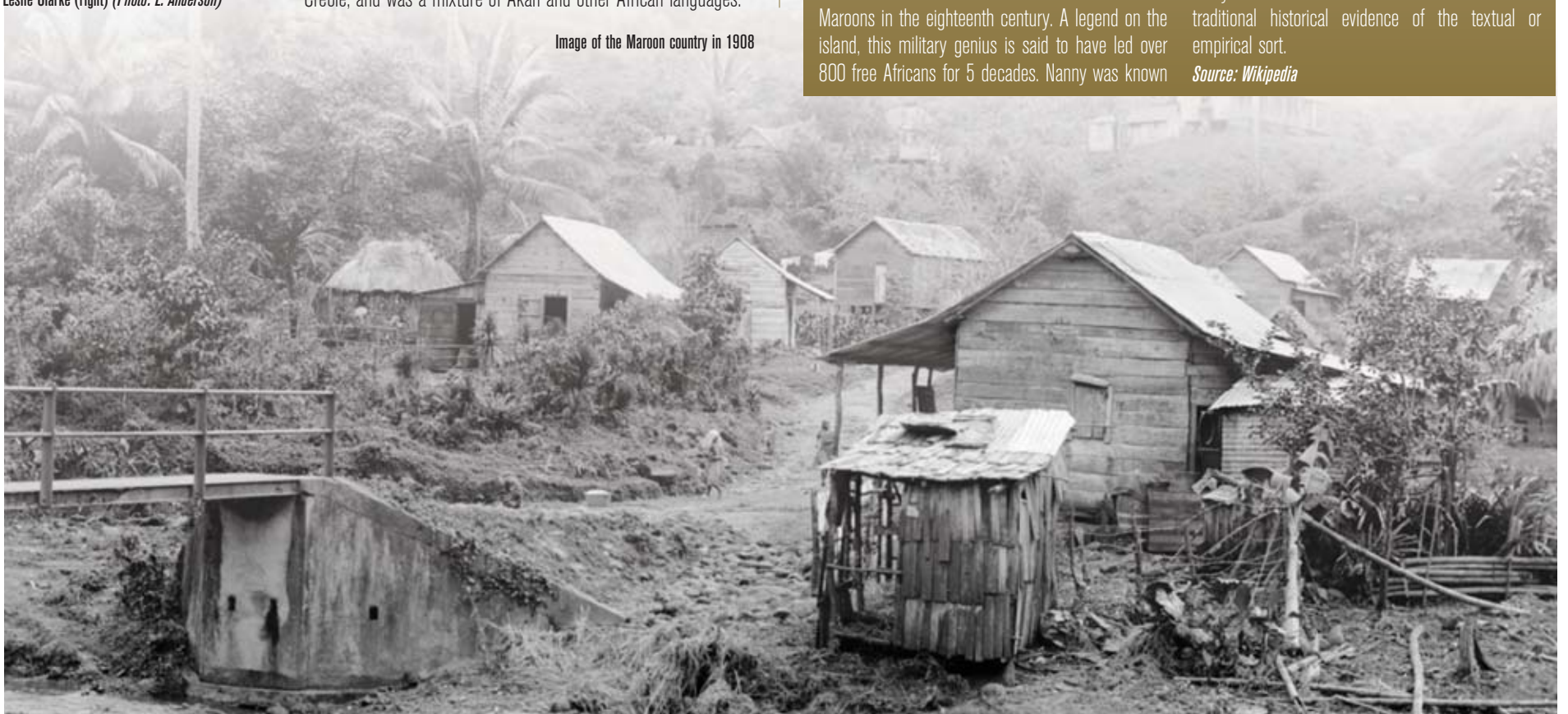
Nanny of the Maroons, also known as Queen Nanny and Granny Nanny, the only female listed as a National Hero, was a well-known leader of the Jamaican

for her exceptional leadership skills, especially in guerrilla warfare and was widely believed to possess supernatural powers. This spiritual leader would change the history of a nation and has been immortalized in songs and legends. Most of what we know about Nanny comes from the oral tradition, and many claims about her cannot be verified with traditional historical evidence of the textual or empirical sort.

Maroons in the eighteenth century. A legend on the island, this military genius is said to have led over 800 free Africans for 5 decades. Nanny was known

Source: Wikipedia

Image of the Maroon country in 1908



SECOND HOME BUYERS CHOOSE JAMAICA

Ralph Lauren, Lennox Lewis, Keith Richards and Jane Seymour all own homes on the island, which has long stayed out of the spotlight for foreign buyers. But times have changed. With luxury homes in the Caribbean getting increasingly pricier, savvy investors have taken note of the fact that Jamaican real estate remains undervalued.



Andrew Issa, Managing Director of Coldwell Banker Jamaica
(Photo: Coldwell Banker Jamaica)

Despite concerns about the many uncertainties affecting global markets, a staggering 55% of last year's real estate transactions in Jamaica were completed with overseas clients, who are showing heated interest in local property. According to leading realtor, Andrew Issa, Managing Director at Coldwell Banker Jamaica, you get a lot more real estate for the money in Jamaica as opposed to other Caribbean islands. Says Issa: "With prices starting as low US\$450,000 for a luxury condominium on the Gold Coast, Jamaica is still a bargain."

Jamaica's position as a unique niche market has been affirmed over the last year. Foreign clients, who continue to show emotional attachment to the island and find it conveniently located geographically, are ever more present in the high-end real estate market and brokers report that sales are continuing at a consistent rate. Says the Coldwell Banker Director; "One can safely say that the market has experienced neither a rise nor a fall, but rather a consolidation of justified pricing."

According to Issa, location continues to be a main factor for affluent buyers looking for a tropical island home. Says Issa; "Pristine beachfront property in the US is scarce, it is very hard to find. Jamaica is close to the US and it has really exotic, ocean-front properties without the crowded feel of Florida and the Eastern seaboard." Warm blue water, sun-kissed beaches and palm trees waving in the breeze evoke the image of paradise for most. "With luxury homes it is location, location, location. And in the sun, sand and sea, a short hop from the US, is where buyers want to be."

The steady pace of local real estate sales centers largely on the glitzy Solís The Palmyra Resort & Spa, just 15 minutes away from Montego Bay on the north coast, and the chic beach cottages of the Golden Eye Villas and Spa, located just outside Ocho Rios. Explains Issa; "These days buyers want more than just bricks and mortar and they are willing to pay for it." According to the realtor, the level of service is vital to buyers; "Integrated resort developments with condominiums and villas are popular because they include a full array of

luxury services and amenities such as restaurants with famous chefs and designer spas. Importantly, they also offer security and management."

Stretching along half a mile of pristine Caribbean oceanfront, Solís The Palmyra is largely viewed as the main catalyst for the island's real estate renaissance. In tune with escalating trends towards a preferred lifestyle environment, the gated luxury resort on the island's Gold Coast caters to high-end real estate buyers with a penchant for luxury living. Visionary designers, excellent quality of construction, landscaping and interior design have ensured that the resort is perfectly positioned to attract this clientele to what is considered the most exciting development to come along in decades.

At prices 30-40% below that of other Caribbean developments such as The Ritz-Carlton in Grand Cayman, the Viceroy development in Anguilla and The Residences in Paradise Island, Bahamas, Solís The Palmyra has compelled many buyers to pick Jamaica as a second home destination. Explains Issa; "While penthouses at The Residences in Paradise Island, Bahamas, sell for just over US\$2,400 per square foot, a similar penthouse at Solís The Palmyra in Rose Hall, Montego Bay is a great buy at under US\$900 per square foot." The Coldwell Banker realtor points to the Government's move to allow premier casino gambling as another chief reason to pick the Gold Coast. Says the realtor; "With the news of a casino gambling license granted to the developers of the swanky development, people are getting excited about the potential."

With more than 300 international flights per week into the brand new Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, including 60 flights from non-stop markets, Jamaica is more accessible to visitors than any other Caribbean island. Says the Coldwell Banker Director; "Just think about it. You can leave your U.S. home in the morning and enjoy a round of golf in Jamaica by 2 p.m. Come winter time, that is quite a tempting way to spend the weekend."

It is expected that Jamaica will solidify its position as having the best real estate properties in the Caribbean. Foreign ownership of land in Jamaica is unrestricted and with international financing available through First Caribbean International Bank, the real estate offer is even more tempting. Says Issa; "The trendsetters who are able to see the opportunity and act on it will be able to capitalize on their investment."

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THE NEW STANDARD FOR JAMAICAN ELEGANCE - SOLÍS THE PALMYRA

With its opening just around the corner, Solís The Palmyra offers guests and residents the ultimate haven in the heart of Montego Bay's elite enclave, Rose Hall. Located on 16 acres of white sand beachfront, the ultra fashionable retreat offers the latest in amenities, including a world class designer spa, three championship golf courses, two seafront swimming pools, private swimming beach, three restaurants, a nightclub, bars, a gourmet deli and so much more. At the heart of the action to open the island's newest ultra luxurious resort we find General Manager Lester Scott. A seasoned professional with more than 20 years in the international hospitality industry, Lester is passionate about providing unparalleled service combined with that unique brand of warmth only Jamaica and its people can offer. States Lester; "When guests are at Solís The Palmyra, they will know by all we do, that they are experiencing Jamaica at its finest."



Lester Scott (Photo: Heidi Zech)

Lester's international history includes the opening of several hotels throughout the U.S. as well as Puerto Rico, Japan and Mexico. With the imminent opening of Solís The Palmyra, the hospitality expert is adding Jamaica to his worldwide repertoire. Says the General Manager; "When the opportunity presented itself I couldn't resist being part of the opening of the first Solís in North America and the Caribbean. Our goal is to create that special service culture which pairs the natural warmth of the Jamaican people with the resort's unique ambience. How can anyone rival that unbeatable, Jamaican smile?"

A proud veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Lester received his first introduction to the hospitality business at an early age, working in the family owned restaurant in his hometown of Kansas City, Missouri. His infatuation with the hospitality industry was re-ignited when he was recruited to work for Hyatt on the completion of his studies in Business Management at the University of Missouri. Explains Lester; "The hotel business is addictive - it gets into your blood!"

A few years later, Lester left Hyatt to join what at the time was a little known hotel company; The Ritz-Carlton. Part of the team of trailblazers that developed the Ritz-Carlton chain to a sizeable 25 luxury hotels, Lester was one of the group's 'opening team' for 10+ years, gaining unequalled experience in the many complexities of opening new Ritz-Carlton properties in Kansas City, Pasadena, Hawaii and Amalia Island, Florida. "Working with Ritz-Carlton in the early days was full of adventure and excitement, you never knew from one month to the next just where you might end up working," he remembers.

Lester is as passionate about the relentless pursuit of excellence as Horst Schulze, the hotel guru who built The Ritz-Carlton into a world known brand. Says the General Manager; "We built a lot of masterpieces in life and when Mr. Schulze left Ritz-Carlton to create a new masterpiece, I absolutely had to be a part of it."

Looking for a way to capture the luxury market and to go beyond the standards of service that the industry icon set as worldwide industry benchmarks during his days at Ritz-Carlton, Mr. Horst Schulze is now on a mission to deliver an even higher level of service. And, it has to be said, no-one is more famous for providing service to the world's 'crème de la crème' than Schulze, the man behind Solís. With nearly 100 hotel openings under his belt, Horst believes the selection of the right team members and the training process is integral to creating a world class property. His philosophy that success can only be measured in 'repeat guests' and 'referrals' is as embedded in the company's psyche as is the passion for creating exceptional service. Explains Lester; "Our company is fanatically passionate about delivering exceptional service. Not sometimes, but all the time. Consistent, caring service is our business and that is what makes us different. Mr. Schulze's philosophy is that unless you have 100% guest satisfaction, you must improve."

While Lester's career has taken him all over the U.S. including Arizona, California, Illinois, Florida and South Carolina, it was the latter that provided him with a great introduction to the culture of Jamaica. "We came to Montego Bay to recruit seasonal employees for our resort in Daufuskie Island, South Carolina. We employed upwards of 100 Jamaicans each year." The local grapevine hasn't missed the fact that Lester is back on the island to open up Solís The Palmyra, which has resulted in a flurry of phone calls and visits to the GM's pre-opening offices. "There is great anticipation among our past employees, who want to be part of creating the Solís level of service on the island," says Lester. Expectations are running high for the opening of Solís The Palmyra. "I love the anticipation that goes along with the opening; there is a lot of buzz! We all eagerly await the opening; this will bring many excellent job opportunities to the citizens of Jamaica. However, our selection process is tough; - we will only hire the best that the island has to offer."

To deliver consistent service at an exceptional level, Solís is partnering with the best of the best, every step of the way. States Lester; "We are extremely excited about the resort's partnership with Susan Harmsworth and her legendary ESPA brand. Our 30,000 square-foot designer spa will be the finest spa facility in the Caribbean." The spectacular ESPA will offer the latest in holistic beauty and body treatments by European trained therapists, VIP suites, private outdoor treatment and relaxation areas, aromatic Caldarium and Laconium steam rooms, vitality pools, lifestyle showers and ice fountains.

The search for the best within their field extends to all areas of the operation as demonstrated by the exhaustive search that went into hand picking the right culinary expert for Solís The Palmyra.

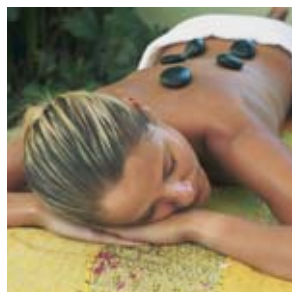
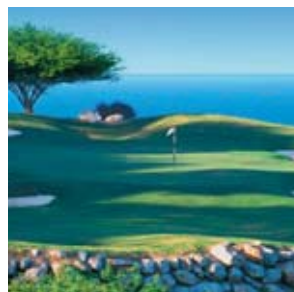
"We were extremely pleased to bring a Chef of Scott Simpson's caliber into our ranks. With over 18 years of experience working at some of the best properties for Marriott all over the world, including Asia, South America and the United States," says Lester. The culinary artist will have a unique platform to show off his flair for creating innovative gastronomic delights at the resort's three restaurants.





A fine dining experience with exceptional wines will be available at Hemingway's Hideaway, the oceanfront signature restaurant which boasts unobstructed breathtaking views of the Caribbean Sea. Explains Lester; "On selected nights of the week, the restaurant will seamlessly transform into an ultra chic lounge with live entertainment. Our lounge will offer an atmosphere of sophistication and glamour in which people will come to have a great evening." Says the GM; "While our three meal a day restaurant features popular favorites and delicious local Jamaican specialties served in a family type environment, the resort's pool bar restaurant provides exceptional service, tropical drinks and great sandwiches for all to enjoy in a festive 'come as you are' environment."

Built and designed to provide the finest luxury stay on the island, it is clearly the allure of unparalleled indulgence and high service standards that have resulted in an unprecedented interest in Solís The Palmyra. Affirms Lester; "The property's best feature will be the service available to residents and guests. Each penthouse and villa comes with a personal 'In-Room Attendant' who will ensure that guests receive the finest service the country



has to offer. Whether you would like the fridge filled with your favorite foods before you arrive, have a glass of Burgundy from Southern France served to you as you enjoy the sunset from your own veranda or require a gourmet meal prepared in the privacy of your residence, our Chefs will be there to accommodate. If you wish to book a dolphin swim or organize a babysitter, your 'In-Room Attendant' will be on hand to arrange it all." Additionally, a full Concierge Service is available to all guests. Explains Lester; "People will come to Solís The Palmyra for different reasons. Some come to find solitude, others will come to take advantage of the adventure of the island. We will help to tailor-make a complete package to fit the needs of each guest so there will be no worries about the logistics, leaving guests to simply enjoy their experience."

Fully furnished and with breathtaking ocean views, the resort's beautifully appointed suites, penthouses and villas feature full kitchens, high-speed Internet access and premium cable HDTV. Says Lester; "The guestrooms of our residences are twice the size of similar rooms at any top hotel in the world." But the hotelier describes the penthouses and the villas as the resort's ultimate accommodations; "Our metropolitan type penthouses feature sweeping views to rival any other, while our spacious villas are perfect for longer stays. Families will be very comfortable in our villas; they are appointed with all the amenities needed to really give you that home away from home feeling."

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THE ULTIMATE BIRTHDAY GIFT

“In celebration of your birthday, choose any country in the world to visit,” was what Dr. Marvin Wells told his wife Nicole. Haitian-born Nicole’s connection to the Caribbean led her to choose Jamaica, where the couple had honeymooned 17 years earlier. Far more secure and developed than her homeland, the couple enjoyed the island’s unbeatable atmosphere close to her native isle’s shores. Little did they know that Nicole’s birthday trip would lead to one very special birthday present.



The Wells at The White Witch Golf Course, Rose Hall (Photo: Nicole and Marvin Wells)

Once Nicole had made her choice, Dr. Wells booked their stay at The Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort in Rose Hall and planned a wonderful celebration for his wife with the help of the hotel’s concierge. Direct flights from nearby Orlando made Jamaica an easy destination to get to which wouldn’t cause too much disruption to their busy schedules. This was to be the couple’s third visit to the island. “You know what they say” said Mrs. Wells, “after three times, you are a local”.

The couple took note of many positive changes that had happened on the island since their last visit 7 years earlier. Remembered Mrs Wells; “The last time we visited the island there was no highway. The drive from the airport to Ocho Rios took 3 hours and the roads were desolate. The new highway is definitely a major improvement.”

Soon after arriving at the newly renovated MJB airport, they picked up a Jamaica Tourist and learned about The Palmyra Resort & Spa (now called Solís The Palmyra). Two of the articles in the paper struck a chord with the couple. One was a story about Dr. McLeod, a dentist like Dr. Wells, who had recently purchased a residence at Solís The Palmyra. The other, was an article about the island’s new luxury development. “As a developer, Mr. Trotta could have chosen any other location in the world to build Solís The Palmyra, but he chose Jamaica. We really like to see the opportunities he has created for Jamaicans by opening the door for others to invest in Jamaican real estate,” said Dr. Wells.

As owners of several properties in the United States, the Wells had just finished building their dream home. Hence, they did not immediately consider a residence at Solís The Palmyra. However, each day, a smiling young lady at The Ritz-Carlton real estate niche would greet them and from the balcony of their room, they realized that The Palmyra’s construction site was right next door. Eventually, their curiosity got the better of them and they scheduled a tour of the construction site.

Once they had learned more about the project from Sales Executive Stasia Stephenson and Director of Sales Debra Derrick, they were hooked. Explained Mrs. Wells; “We were really impressed with the level of craftsmanship and the attention to detail at Solís The Palmyra. Being from an island, I am happy to see a development of this quality and we are excited to be a part of it.” While Mrs. Wells is particularly enthralled about the 30,000 sqft signature spa, Dr. Wells - an outdoorsman and golfer - can enjoy easy access to Rose Hall’s three wonderful golf courses.



A luxury residence at Solís The Palmyra Resort & Spa (Photo: Solís The Palmyra Resort & Spa)

The projected growth of the island and the plans for Celebration Jamaica, a major resort project next door to Solís The Palmyra, further cemented the Wells’ decision to purchase. “I believe in the islands and what they have to offer and I am happy investors are choosing a small island like Jamaica,” emphasized Mrs. Wells.

Mrs. Wells described their residence at Solís The Palmyra as “the ultimate birthday gift”, while stating jokingly that she does not know what her husband will do next to top such a magnificent present. Watching the Beijing Olympics, Dr. Wells was amazed at the achievements of Jamaica’s athletes; “For a country so small with so few people, their achievements are truly amazing. I told Nicole that we made a great decision with an appreciating investment.” In her excitement with the project, Mrs. Wells said: “I am dreaming of flying over there to take possession of our residence, we are just so excited about it! Now we own a piece of Jamaica.”

Dr. Marvin and Nicole Wells from Jacksonville in Florida, proud owners of a residence at Solís The Palmyra. (Photo: Nicole and Marvin Wells)



Artist rendering of Solís The Palmyra Resort & Spa

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Fern Hill Villa is a charming 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom property with an adjoining unfinished 2-bedroom cottage located opposite the original Cardiff Hall Great House. All the bedrooms and living room open onto a 70 foot long verandah, with relaxing views of the sea and the hills. A gazebo and pool overlook the 2+ acres of tropical fruit and ornamental trees. There are separate living and dining areas, a large kitchen and bar area. All the bedrooms are air-conditioned. The cottage is located to rear of the main house, with the staff quarters nearby.

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Villa Rococo, a 4,500 sq ft villa is tucked into a lush garden enclave in the Reading Hills above Montego Bay with a captivating view of the sea. Designed and built by Lady Sarah Churchill in the late 1960's, this 5-bedroom, 5½-bath property lends itself as a private home, or as a successful international rental villa. This 1-acre estate features lovely terraced gardens with a variety of fruit trees, with large staff quarters and laundry below decks. Priced at US\$950,000.



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CASINO GAMBLING ON THE GOLD COAST

With the announcement of a casino license to the developer of Solís The Palmyra for the new US\$1.8B resort casino project named Celebration Jamaica, the Gold Coast has firmly established itself at the heart of the action. Already home to several of the island's premier resort properties, including the The Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon and the soon to be open Solís The Palmyra, the pioneering project is set to propel the Gold Coast into a class of its own, luring high-end tourists to its shores with the promise of Las Vegas style casino gambling, championship golf courses, restaurants, water park, shopping, conference center, beaches and world-class entertainment.



The Government's decision to allow full-blown casino gambling gives Jamaica yet another competitive edge on the global tourist scene, adding the glamour of casino gambling to the island's allure of stunning beaches, turquoise waters, welcoming people and laid back lifestyle. Made official by Prime Minister Bruce Golding in his annual 2008 speech to the nation, the PM announced that revenues from casino operations will be placed in a special fund to finance much needed capital developments in health, education and security.

While the two mega resorts Celebration Jamaica and Harmony Cove have been green-lighted by the Government for casino licences, legislation has yet to be passed by the Jamaican Parliament. Said Robert T. Trotta, developer of Solís The Palmyra and Celebration Jamaica; "Celebration Jamaica is moving ahead and we expect casino legislation to be passed by Parliament in the last quarter of 2008."

The island's first casino hotel will form the cornerstone of the US\$1.8B master plan development set to be rolled out on 65 acres of Gold Coast oceanfront adjacent to Solís The Palmyra. The main building, a sixteen story 5-star hotel containing 1,500 rooms will house a 75,000 square foot casino, basing its entertainment offer around the introduction of sports book and table games such as Roulette, Craps, Blackjack and Baccarat. Catering to a high-end clientele, the casino hotel will offer a state-of-the-art discotheque, conference meeting space, including a ballroom, an outdoor function area, retail space, front desk lobby, a spectacular lobby lounge overlooking the Caribbean Sea, bars, restaurants, kid's club, health club, spa and an array of additional facilities.

The largest private investment ever to be made in Jamaica, Celebration Jamaica signifies a new epoch in the island's tourism chronicle. With the extraordinary feature of being less than a 15 minute drive from Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport on the new 4 lane highway, the multi-layered resort will tempt visitors with an array of premier attractions which include a water and entertainment complex, a dolphin bay marine attraction, a water amphitheater, a world class marina, a variety of restaurants, nightclubs, entertainment and shopping experiences throughout. Anticipated to become a significant competitor to the world's most popular destination resorts, a total of 2,000 rooms and luxury real estate components are planned throughout the development.

Four secluded white sand beaches and a boardwalk will connect the entire coastline from The Ritz-Carlton to the Rose Hall Resort & Spa, a Hilton resort. The connecting of the areas hotels will turn the area into an integrated resort community in which visitors can roam around freely to enjoy the many entertainment options available, thus enhancing the overall experience. The resort will also be connected to a 2,500 person capacity convention center that the Government of Jamaica has committed to building in Rose Hall, by way of a pedestrian

overpass spanning across the highway. Said Trotta; "We believe that the addition of high-end casino gambling and all the other entertainment options will increase the occupancy of all the area hotels, as well as bring significant benefits in the form of much needed after-dark entertainment."

Over the last 8 years, the area of Rose Hall at the heart of Jamaica's Gold Coast has experienced explosive growth, turning the elite enclave into a veritable tourist mecca. Now, the promise of high-end casino gambling has turned the Gold Coast into a hotspot of development. Said Trotta; "The Gold Coast has another 8 years of strong growth ahead."

It is widely believed that the project will help catapult the island into the big leagues in a boost that can only be a winning hand for Jamaica. Describing the casino resort as a tipping point for Jamaica, the Celebration Jamaica developer said that the project will be financed through its first year of construction by its equity partners. Commented Trotta about the effects of the current U.S. credit crunch; "The current crisis has primarily been brought on by a lack of confidence in the economic markets. We expect that the credit crisis will ease up from the beginning of 2009, following the U.S. Government's bailout and the post-election euphoria, which should restore confidence in the financial market."

In comparison to Harmony Cove, the only other project in the country to be granted a casino license, Celebration Jamaica has a key advantage. Whereas the Gold Coast project benefits from Rose Hall's existing US\$1B infrastructure, invested over the course of the last two decades, Harmony Cove is facing huge infrastructure investments in addition to construction costs. A private/public partnership between Tavistock Group and the Jamaican Government, the 8,000 room project which includes several hotels, full-service casinos, championship golf courses, tennis & racquet center, an equestrian center, a water and adventure park, conference facilities, retail shops, restaurants and local attractions. The project is reported to be on track for a 2010 construction start.

The introduction of casino gambling marks the culmination of an unprecedented in-flow of foreign direct investment and international expertise to the island. Since 2000, Jamaica has attracted close to US\$6B* in foreign direct investment and unlike the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, the island has managed to attract private-sector investments to support a rapid transformation of its infrastructure. A veritable change has taken place in every industry corner; tourism, banking, telecom, real estate, energy and transportation. In 2007, Jamaica was ranked 26th by the World Investment Report for foreign direct investment, a remarkable feat for a nation of 2.7 million.

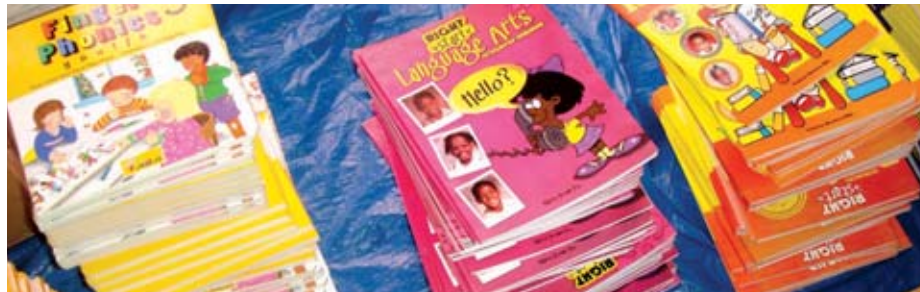
It is estimated that between 25,000 – 40,000 permanent jobs will be created through the two new casino projects, as well as an equal amount of construction jobs during the building period. The massive expansion of rooms will also create growth in the area of peripheral, smaller businesses, including tourism transportation services, restaurants and additional tourist attractions.



* Planning Institute of Jamaica

10,971 INFANT SCHOOL CHILDREN RECEIVE TEXTBOOKS FROM THE PALMYRA FOUNDATION

Although some textbooks are available to students starting primary school, resources have not yet reached the country's infant school level, where the lack of textbooks and basic supplies affects the majority of children. With early childhood education proven to be a significant factor in the promotion of healthy, successful lives, the Palmyra Foundation has focused its efforts on providing free textbooks to the country's youngest.



While 2,000 infant school children received 15,000 free textbooks from the Foundation in its first year, close to 11,000 four-six year olds benefited from books from the charitable organization this year. The price tag of this year's book purchase was US\$285,000 (JMS\$20.3M), part of which was raised at the Foundation's 2007 Fundraiser in Montego Bay, where The Honourable Prime Minister Bruce Golding gave the key note address.



Inspired by the children: Madhu Mahtani, Raquel Dadlani, Scott Simpson and Candace Hart (Photo: Kathi Constanzo)

The willingness to help the nation's youngest learn to read and write clearly extends to the Foundation's 40+ volunteers who helped bundle and distribute almost 50,000 textbooks to 88 public infant schools across the island's 14 parishes. A global group of social entrepreneurs including locals from Jamaica and expatriates from the United States, Italy, England, India, Ireland, Spain, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Columbia, Romania and Canada, the volunteers all share a desire to make a difference and the conviction that education is the key to creating a better future and driving the back roads of Jamaica to hand out textbooks has clearly been a joyful experience. Said Kathi Constanzo, The Palmyra Foundation Chairperson; "Once you come with us to visit the children and personally distribute textbooks, the purpose gets into your heart and under your skin."

Said Jamaican born Stacey Chung, who has traveled the globe as a music and artist promoter for many years; "I have found a way to become a goodwill ambassador for my beautiful country. These children motivate me, they inspire me." Said volunteer Raquel Dadlani about why she became involved with the Foundation; "The most important asset in Jamaica is our children, therefore education is vital to our country." Volunteer Madhu Mahtani voiced the same opinion; "Being involved with the Foundation makes me feel like I am doing something to help the future generations of my country. I feel that I am making a difference."

Sarah Perez surrounded by students at the Petersfield School (Photo: Suki Kapahi)



Volunteer Suki Kapahi at Petersfield Infant School (Photo: Kapahi Photography)

The Palmyra Foundation's book drive supports a massive effort undertaken by the Ministry of Education to ensure that students achieve mastery of the Grade Four Literacy Test, the internationally accepted standard for threshold literacy. Said Minister of Education, Andrew Holness; "Currently, we have implemented three programs designed to eradicate illiteracy among our children."

According to Holness, one of the Ministry's main efforts is the strengthening of teaching resources. "In practice, this program is deployed through 50 literacy specialists who work with clusters of schools to improve the teaching capabilities of our teachers." The Minister further highlighted the Literacy 1-2-3 program, which provides a curriculum and the necessary support materials for the three first grades. Additionally, the Minister pointed to the Expanding Educational Horizons (EEH) project, which is aimed at raising the literacy level of Grades One to Four students. Said Holness; "A partnership between the Ministry of Education and USAID, the program targets the 72 primary schools on the island and seeks to improve school's leadership, management and instruction capabilities."

According to Holness, the most significant factor in improving literacy in Jamaica is to get the nation to understand that lack of reading and writing skills still is a widespread problem. Although mastering levels have improved significantly from 42% in 1999 to a reported 71 % today, too many children continue to fall behind. Stated the Minister; "It is a national objective to eliminate illiteracy."

Commenting on the benefits of The Palmyra Foundation's distribution of free textbooks, Holness said; "In the short term, the distribution of textbooks will strengthen the children's preparedness to manage the primary school curriculum. In the long term, it will help develop a reading culture." Said the Minister; "Education is a partnership. We extend our hands in working with other interests in the area of education, such as The Palmyra Foundation, and are very grateful for the assistance we have received so far."

The Minister's opinion is shared by teachers and principals across the island, who have welcomed the complimentary textbooks. Said Mr. Eann Singh, Principal of Vaughansfield School in St. James; "We have found that the children who have textbooks are much better equipped to deal with the next grade. They get used to having their very own set of books at school and quickly learn the importance of reading."

Chairperson Kathi Constanzo commended the Foundation's many supporters; "Every textbook matters and no donation is too small. We thank the many volunteers and businesses who have contributed time and money towards this year's distribution."

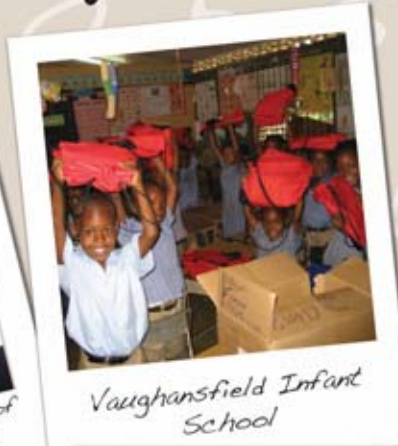
The Foundation's Chairperson Kathi Constanzo with a happy student at Cambridge Infant School (Photo: Stacey Chung)



**The future is bright...
...when you can read and write!**



*Kathi Constanzo, Chairperson of
The Palmyra Foundation at
Bethel Infant School*



*Vaughansfield Infant
School*



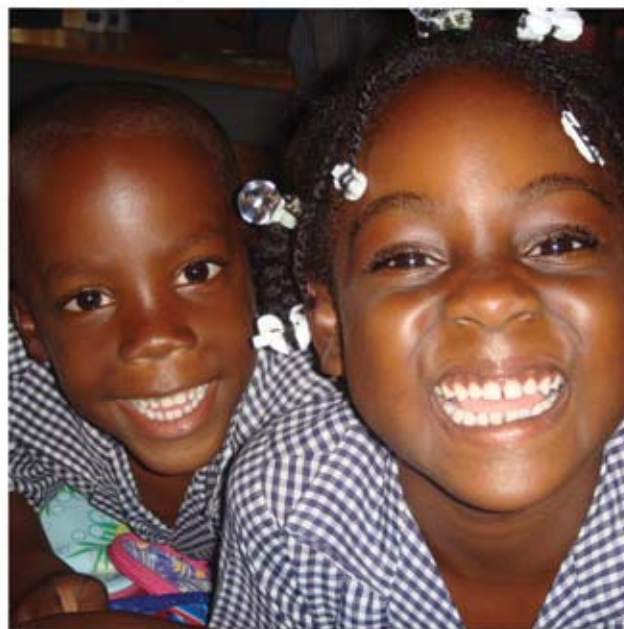
*Devon Headley, Customer
Relations & Marketing Manager
of Bryan's Bookstore*



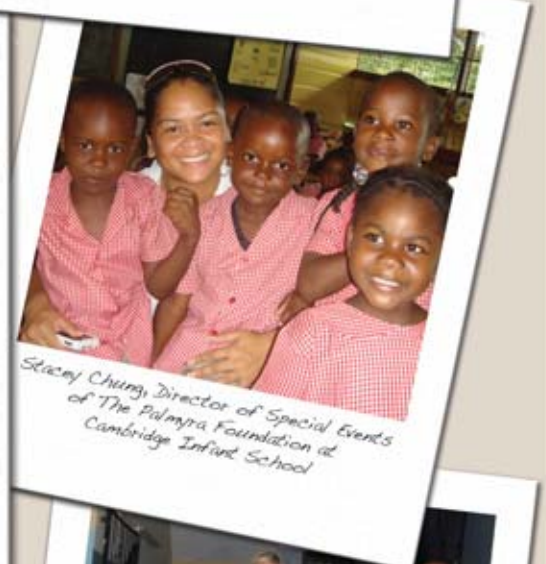
*Happy faces at
Lucea Infant School*



*Lester Scott, General Manager of
Solis The Palmyra Resort & Spa
with kids at MoBay Infant School*



**This year, 10,971 children
received free textbooks
from The Palmyra Foundation.**



*Stacy Chung, Director of Special Events
of The Palmyra Foundation at
Cambridge Infant School*



*Savanna-La-Mar Infant
School*



*St. Ann's Bay
Infant School*



*Savanna-La-Mar
Infant School*



*Providence Heights
Infant School*



*Volunteers at our 1st
distribution of 2008 at
Montego Bay Infant School.*

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FROM MARTHA'S BEST WITH LOVE

No refreshing island beverage is complete without the taste of papaya, described by Christopher Columbus as the 'fruit of angels.' From their orchards in Trelawny parish, Martha's Best cultivate and ship Jamaican papayas all over the world. Growing one of the sweetest and most delicious varieties of papaya available, this ground-breaking company is expanding their sales both locally and internationally. Do your taste buds and body a great deal of good by indulging in some delicious, homegrown papayas while you are on the island.



Martha's Best papayas ready to be shipped
(Photo: Heidi Zech)

Affectionately referred to as 'pawpaw' by islanders, the Jamaican grown variety of the papaya is called the 'Solo'. Introduced to the island from Hawaii in 1911, it is particularly desirable for its sweetness. Compared to papaya grown in other tropical locations such as Belize, Brazil, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, the local 'pawpaw' measures a remarkable 17 on the food industry's Brix scale measure of sweetness, compared to the Brazilian variety, which typically scores a 10.

Some of Jamaica's best 'pawpaws' are produced along the banks of the Martha Brae River by Martha's Best, a pioneering company who has

adopted their name from the fertile river, popular among tourists for bamboo rafting. Here in the Queen of Spain Valley, Martha's Best annually cultivates 2.6 million kilograms of papaya, making the Jamaican company the island's and the English-speaking Caribbean's largest exporter of the sought after tropical fruit.

From selection to packaging, a thorough process and a team of 270 employees ensures that only the very best of its papayas leave the island. Reapers walk through the orchards selecting the day's fruit according to color, as papayas are ripe when the hue is even all over. To reach the fruit, harvesters often require mechanical assistance, as the trees grow at a monthly rate of 1 foot and can get very tall. Hoisted into the air by hydraulically powered picking carts, we joined in the day's harvesting activities. From this height it was amazing to see thousands of papaya trees lining the valley and we marveled at the task of reaping them all. Despite the bumpy ride we were delighted to take home the prize - boxes of tasty Martha's Best papayas.

Selecting the right papaya is an art
(Photo: Heidi Zech)



Once collected, the papaya is sent to the packing house for grading, cleaning, weighing and packaging. Martha's Best produces approximately 3,500 boxes daily of the precious crop, which is especially popular in the oriental food markets of United States and Canada. Exported via air freight, the company's close proximity to the Montego Bay airport and the frequency of its international flights is a great advantage.

Martha's Best has won an array of national export awards and continues to find new and pioneering ways to improve and expand its operations. The company has plans to expand its papaya production to include new varieties like the Belizean 'Maradol', as well as increasing its production for the national market. To enable expansion into European markets, the company is also working to obtain the Europe GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certification.



Packing Martha's Best papayas
(Photo: Heidi Zech)

NUTRITIOUS AND DELICIOUS

Delicious in taste, the papaya's potent combination of nutrients also makes it one of the healthiest fruits you can eat. An excellent source of antioxidants including beta-carotene, vitamin B and C, flavonoids, folic and pantothenic acid, papaya contains the minerals potassium and magnesium in addition to fiber. Collectively, these healthful ingredients are instrumental in maintaining cardiovascular health and also protect against colon cancer. What's more, the papaya's digestive enzyme papain is used to treat burns, inflammation of joints and heal digestive ailments.

5 Ways to Eat Papaya

- Puree and blend with balsamic vinegar to make a delicious salad dressing
- Blend with ice to make a refreshing smoothie
- Dice with other fruit to make a fresh salad
- Chop and combine with vodka and lemon peel. Allow to sit for a week, strain fruit to leave behind a flavorful liqueur.
- Split in two, share with a friend and devour!



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EAT, DRINK AND BE IRIE

Jamaica offers an array of tasty foods. From roadside jerked chicken straight out of the 'jerk pan' to white glove dining in a fine restaurant, the island offers plenty of dining options to fit any pocket and liking. While on the island, enjoy Jamaica's great food and service with a smile, make new friends at the most beloved hangouts and above all: BE IRIE!



MONTEGO BAY MARGUERITES SEAFOOD BY THE SEA GLOUCESTER AVENUE

Marguerites is known as the top seafood restaurant on the north coast and it deserves its reputation. This elegant and sophisticated water's edge bistro enjoys one of Montego Bay's best locations and specializes in fresh, creatively prepared seafood dishes, which continue to enthrall visitors. Enjoy an intimate dinner served on the oceanfront terrace by the attentive staff, while you watch the fish swim in the turquoise ocean below. Caribbean seafood specialties include Cognac Lobster, Pimento Smoked Blue Marlin and Tijuana Shrimp and flambé specialties are prepared at your table. The

tasty desserts are a must-try. Complimentary shuttle service is provided in the Montego Bay area.

Open daily: 6:30 pm - 10:30 pm. Tel: 952-4777. Reservations are recommended.

ELEGANT - MONTEGO BAY

Habibi Latino, Shoppes at Rose Hall

CUISINE: LEBANESE

Open Tue - Sun 11:00 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 631-3589

Sugar Mill Restaurant, Half Moon Golf Course, Rose Hall

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm. Tel: 953-2314

The Houseboat Grill, Montego Bay Marine Park

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm. Tel: 979-8845

Jasmines, Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort, Rose Hall

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & ASIAN FUSION

Open 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Closed Sun. Tel: 953-2800

Ma Lou's Gourmet Shack, Coral Cliff Entertainment Center, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN

Open daily 6:00 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 952-4130

Akbar & Thai Gardens, Half Moon Shopping Village, Rose Hall

CUISINE: INDIAN & THAI

Open daily 12:00 pm - 10:30 pm. Tel: 953-8240

Day-O Plantation Restaurant & Bar, Fairfield

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open Tues - Sun 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Tel: 952-1825

Dragon Court Restaurant, Fairview Shopping Center

CUISINE: CHINESE

Open daily 11:30 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 979-8822-4

Wine With Me, Altamont Court West Hotel, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open Tues - Sun 6:00 pm until late. Tel: 952-9087

(Please note: moving to Half Moon Shopping Village December 1. For details call 371-4804)

Luna di Mare, Rose Hall Resort & Spa

a Hilton Resort, Rose Hall

CUISINE: NORTHERN ITALIAN

Open daily 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm. Tel: 953-2650

The Native, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open Mon - Sat 7:30 am - 10:30 pm.

Sun 8:00 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 979-2769

CASUAL - MONTEGO BAY

The Royal Stocks Pub & Steakhouse, Half Moon Shopping Village, Rose Hall

CUISINE: TRADITIONAL ENGLISH FARE

Open daily 10:00 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 953-9770

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Bar & Grill, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open daily: 11:00 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 952-4777

The Jamaica Bobsled Café, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 10:00 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 940-7009

The Groovy Grouper, Doctor's Cave Beach, Gloucester Avenue

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily: 10:00 am - 10:00 pm.

Tel: 952-8287

CASUAL - MONTEGO BAY CONT.

Mango's Restaurant, Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort, Rose Hall

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm. Tel: 953-2800

Dolly's, Hotel Glorianna Plaza, Sunset Blvd

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open daily 7:30 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 979-0045

Café Blue, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Rose Hall

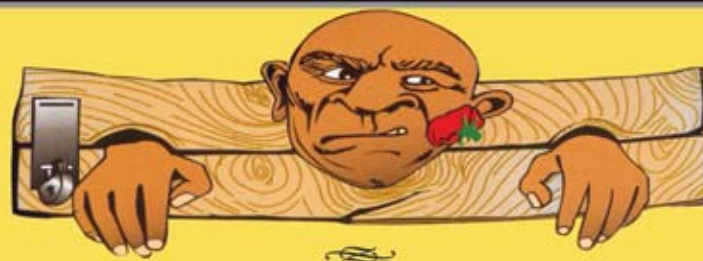
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OCHO RIOS

THE IRISH ROVER PUB

DRAX HALL, ST. ANN

Jamaica's first authentic Irish Pub is now open in Greenwich Park, Drax Hall only minutes from Ocho Rios. After living in Ireland for over 40 years, Jamaican Winston Samuels returned to the island with his Irish wife Angela and realized their dream of opening the Irish Rover Pub. Angela, whose father is an Irish pub owner, has delighted

the many patrons with authentic Irish dishes such as Eggs with Bangers & Bacon, Steak & Guinness Pie, Shepherds Pie and the all time favorite; Fish & Chips served with homemade tartar sauce. We sampled the pub's delicious, rich Irish Stew with tender lamb pieces and the great Irish/Jamaican hospitality to the fullest. The couple has even 'Jamaicanized' the world famous Irish Coffee, replacing the whiskey with a generous shot of Tia Maria and renaming it Calypso Coffee. The novel concoction is topped with lots of whipped cream - delicious! A great hang out spot for the entire family, prices at the Irish Rover are very reasonable.

Open daily from 10 am until midnight (at least). Tel: 972-9352.

ELEGANT - OCHO RIOS

Le Papillon Restaurant and The Caviar Bar, Royal Plantation

CUISINE: FRENCH & CARIBBEAN

Opening hours: Tues - Sun 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm.

Tel: 974-5601

Passage to India, Soni's Plaza, Main Street

CUISINE: INDIAN & CHINESE

Open Tues - Sun 11:30 am - 10:00 pm.

Tel: 795-3182

Almond Tree Restaurant, Main Street

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 7:30 am - 9:30 pm. Tel: 974-2813

The Dinner Terrace at the Jamaica Inn

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm. Tel: 974-2514

Evita's Italian Restaurant, Eden Bower Rd.

CUISINE: ITALIAN

Open daily 11:00 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 974-2333

Toscanini's, Harmony Hall, St. Mary

CUISINE: ITALIAN

Open Tues - Sun 12:00 pm - 10:30 pm. Closed Mon.

Tel: 975-4785



CASUAL - OCHO RIOS

Hard Rock Café, Tajmahal Shopping Plaza, Main Street

CUISINE: AMERICAN

Open Sun - Wed 11:00 am - 7:00 pm, Thurs - Sat 11:00 am - 11:00 pm. The Rock Shop is open everyday from 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. Tel: 974-3333

The Ruins at the Falls, 17 DaCosta Drive

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm. Tel: 974-8888

Little Pub Restaurant, Main Street

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open daily 7:00 am - 10:30 pm. Tel: 974-5825

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Bar & Grill, Island Village

CUISINE: AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 8:30 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 675-8976

CASUAL & ELEGANT - NEGRIL

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Bar & Grill, Norman Manley Boulevard

CUISINE: AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN

Open daily 8:00 am - 11:00 pm.

Tel: 957-9180 / 957-4467

Rockhouse Restaurant, West End Road

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL FUSION

Open daily 7:30 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 957-4373

Hungry Lion, West End Road

CUISINE: VEGETARIAN & SEAFOOD

Open daily 5:30 pm - 11:00 pm. Tel: 957-4486

Rick's Café, West End Road

CUISINE: AMERICAN

Open daily from 12:00 pm - 10 pm. Tel: 957-0380

Norma's on the Beach, Sea Splash Hotel, Norman Manley Boulevard

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN

Open daily 7:30 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 957-4041

Kuyaba on the Beach, Norman Manley Boulevard

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 7:00 am - 11:00 pm. Tel: 957-4318

Cosmo's Seafood Restaurant & Bar,

Norman Manley Boulevard

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open daily 9:00 am - 10:00 pm. Tel: 957-4784

Sweet Spice, 1 White Hall Road

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open daily 8:30 am - 11 pm. Tel: 957-4621



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The island famous Akbar and Thai Gardens restaurant combines two world favorite cuisines under one roof. For the best in authentic Indian and Thai delights, visit Akbar and Thai Gardens. This unique restaurant offers guests the opportunity to sample outstanding Indian and Thai cuisine in traditionally decorated surroundings. This chic eatery provides the ultimate dining experience for a relaxed lunch or a romantic dinner. Choose from the extensive dinner menu or join the ultra - fabulous

lunch buffet, which is served Monday to Friday between 12 pm - 3 pm. The outstanding menu selection includes the well-known 'Tandoori Chicken' on the Indian side and the Thai house specialty 'Chicken-Gai Appleton' adding Jamaican flavor to this traditional Thai dish. These tasty options can be complemented with a bottle of wine selected from the extensive wine list Akbar and Thai Gardens offer. With a truly upscale yet comfortable setting, Akbar and Thai Gardens is the ultimate fine dining experience. This is an Asian culinary journey not to be missed. Akbar and Thai Gardens is also located at the Half Moon Shopping Village in Montego Bay. Open from 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm for lunch and 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm for dinner and cocktails. Tel: 926-3480/926-0605

ELEGANT - KINGSTON

Norma's on the Terrace, Devon House, 26 Hope Road

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN & INTERNATIONAL FUSION

Open Mon - Sat 10:00 am - 10:00 pm.

Tel: 968-5488

Chez Marie, 7 Hillcrest Avenue

CUISINE: MIDDLE EASTERN

Open Mon - Sat 11:30 am - 3:00 pm & 6:00 pm

- 10:00 pm. Tel: 927-8078

East, The Market Place, 67 Constant Spring Rd.

CUISINE: JAPANESE

Open: Tues 5:00 pm, Wed-Sun noon-12.30 am

Tel: 960-3962

Jade Gardens, Sovereign Centre, Hope Road

CUISINE: CHINESE

Open daily, 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm. Tel: 978-3476



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Half Moon Shopping Village Tel: 953-8240

ELEGANT - KINGSTON CONT.

Café Aubergine, The Market Place, 67 Constant Spring Rd.

CUISINE: FRENCH & ITALIAN

Open daily 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm. **Tel: 754-1865**

Kabana Gardens, 12 Hope Road

CUISINE: JAMAICAN

Open daily 12:00 pm - 12:00 pm. **Tel: 908-4005**

Mac's Chop House, 24-26 Trinidad Terrace, Kingston

CUISINE: INTERNATIONAL

Open Mon - Sat 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm. **Tel: 960-6328**

Redbones Blues Café, 21 Braemar Ave, New Kingston

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open Mon - Fri 12:00 pm - 11:00 pm,
Sat 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm. **Tel: 978-6091**

CASUAL - KINGSTON

Rib Kage, 149c Constant Spring Rd & 12 Braemar Ave.

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN

Open Mon - Thurs 11:00 am - 10:30 pm, Fri & Sat
11:00 am - 11:00 pm, Sun 1:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

Tel: 905-1858 and 978-6272 (Braemar Ave.)

Cuddy's Sports Bar & Grill,

New Kingston Shopping Centre

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 11:30 am - 10:00 pm. **Tel: 920-8019**

Indies Pub and Grill, 8 Holborn Road, New Kingston, off Hope Road

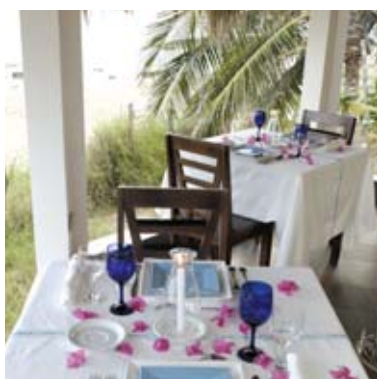
CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open Mon - Fri 11:00 am - midnight,
Sat 11:00 am - 1:00 am. **Tel: 920-5913**

TGI Friday's 51 Hope Road, Kingston 10

CUISINE: AMERICAN

Open Mon - Thurs & Sun 11:00 am - midnight,
Fri & Sat 11:00 am - 2:00 am. **Tel: 978-8443**



SOUTH COAST

ANDREA'S STEAKHOUSE AT MARBLUE

MARBLUE VILLA SUITES,
TREASURE BEACH, ST. ELIZABETH

This elegant fine dining restaurant on Jamaica's south coast is run by German host and gourmet chef Axel Wichterich, who creates Jamaican dishes with his unique, European touch. The Surf & Turf and the Filet Mignon topped with freshly caught Lobster tail, Sauce Bearnaise and Pommes Alouettes come highly recommended. Diners can pick their own lobster from the lobster basin. Other exquisite menu items include Pumpkin

Bisque with Appleton Rum, Thai flavored Curry Goat and Filet of Red Snapper topped with Pastis Shrimp. Don't forego a chance to try their tempting deserts. Enjoy fine wines from Germany, USA, Australia, Chile and Italy and enjoy the finest in French brut; Champagne Veuve Cliquot. Open daily 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Tel: 965-3408.**
By Reservation only!

CASUAL & ELEGANT - SOUTH COAST

Bird of Paradise Restaurant, Mandeville

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 7:00 am (weekends 10:00 am) - 10:00 pm.

Tel 962-7251

Bloomfield Great House, Mandeville

CUISINE: CARIBBEAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open Mon - Sat 12:00 pm - 9:30 pm. **Tel: 962-7130**

Jack Sprat, Jake's Hotel, Treasure Beach

CUISINE: JAMAICAN & INTERNATIONAL

Open daily 10:00 am - 10:00 pm. **Tel: 965-3583**

Lew's International Chinese Restaurant, Mandeville

CUISINE: CHINESE

Open Mon - Sat 12:00 am - 8:30 pm,

Sun 1:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Tel: 962-1252**

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NEW AIRPORT LOUNGE & BAR



The brand new Cockpit Lounge at MJB Airport (Photo: Island Entertainment Brands)

"An airport paradise!" is how honeymooners Amy and Eric Ewald described the new Cockpit Bar & Lounge at the Sangster International Airport. Disappointed to be heading home, the two were elated to have been able to experience the Cockpit Bar & Lounge at Montego Bay Airport Shopping Mall. Said Mr. Ewald; "After spending 5 glorious days here on honeymoon, we thought our vacation was over! The Cockpit Bar extended our vacation a little, and we couldn't be happier."

Located next to gate 7, more passersby are dropping by the new lounge to relax with a drink and sample some of the truly authentic Jamaican offerings before heading back home. In addition to popular Jamaican favourites like jerked chicken and curried seafood, the menu includes soups, salads and sandwiches.



Waiting time will go by fast at this inviting lounge (Photo: Island Entertainment Brands)

Operated by Island Entertainment Brands and co-owned by Versair, the bar is named after Jamaica's picturesque Cockpit Country and decorated and designed by Christine Gourzong to fit this theme. Showcasing a side of Jamaica that many visitors have not had the chance to experience during their stay, the new lounge provides visitors with information about the Cockpit Country's indigenous flora and fauna, which has been studied by many botanists and horticulturalists. Old colonial type windows and grand palm trees set the mood for each person entering the Cockpit Bar. Featuring even more foliage and tropical elements such as a waterfall and murals of the Cockpit Country, the interior is just as appealing as the welcoming exterior.

"The concept was built around the idea of offering tourists a glimpse of another side of the island," said Tricia Robbins, Director of Marketing for the Island Entertainment Brands. "Jamaica is a lot more than sun and sea. It is a beautiful country that possesses some of the world's most amazing landscape and terrain. By bringing some of it to the Cockpit Bar & Lounge, we hope to encourage visitors see more of the island," said Mrs. Robbins. **Tel: 940-0190**



LIVE AND DIRECT

Jamaica is a musical nation and the pulsating sounds of the island's Reggae beat will soon get you into 'that groovy feeling'. There is no better way to enjoy Reggae or other music forms than a live show. Here are a few hotspots around the island that you should definitely give a listen.

ALFRED'S OCEAN PALACE

NORMAN MANLEY BLVD.

On Negril's famous seven-mile beach the best place to hear your favorite tunes is at Alfred's. This funky little beach bar has been around for over 20 years and is a popular hang-out for visitors and tourists alike. Owner Alfred Arthurs ensures that everyone has a good time at a very reasonable cost - only US\$3! Music fans come by on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday nights to hear the local A.O.P band belt out great roots, rock and reggae! Showtime is 10:00 pm. Open daily 10:00 am - 2:00 am. **Tel: 957-4669/4735**

BLUEBEAT JAZZ BAR

GLOUCESTER AVENUE, MONTEGO BAY

For jazz and blues enthusiasts, BlueBeat is a delightful retreat, especially when house band 'Scotch' takes center stage. Live shows begin at 9:00 pm Thursdays to Saturdays and during the rest of the week, the latest jazz and R&B videos play in the background to set the mood. Tasty finger food and signature martinis are sure palate-pleasers that fit perfectly with the bar's intimate and relaxed vibe. Open Daily 6:00 pm - 2:00 am. **Tel: 952-4777**



CHRISTOPHER'S JAZZ CAFÉ

20-22 TRINIDAD TERRACE, NEW KINGSTON

Located at the ground floor of the 'über-fashionable' Quad night club, the Jazz Cafe brings a lighter side of entertainment to the four-level entertainment complex just off New Kingston's hip-strip. Take in the Jazz Café's live music offerings on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00 pm when jazz, influenced by reggae, rock and dancehall sounds, takes on a modern twist. Open Mon - Fri 4:00 pm - 12:00 am, Sat 4:00 pm - 2:00 am. **Tel: 754-0823**

IRISH ROVER PUB

DRAX HALL, ST. ANN

Jamaica's one and only Irish pub is located just 10 minutes from Ocho Rios. Step inside this watering hole and you will get the feeling of being somewhere in Dublin. Roots Reggae band, The Corner Stone Family brings their vibe to the Irish pub on Thursday and Friday nights, dubbed 'Jamirish Style' evenings with Irish food and drink specials. Patrons are treated to more live music on Saturdays and smooth jazz on Sundays to go with their scrumptious brunch. Open Daily 10:00 am - 12:00 am.

Tel: 972-9352

CORAL CLIFF

GLOUCESTER AVE., MONTEGO BAY

Another 'Hip Strip' favorite is Coral Cliff. Known for its 24/7 gaming lounge, this venue features an exciting weekly entertainment lineup including Karaoke on Mondays at 9:00 pm and a Cabaret act on Tuesdays at 10:00 pm. Talented house band Jumanji performs Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 9:00 pm, on Fridays at 9:30 pm and on Saturdays at 10:00 pm. Coral Cliff occasionally showcases seasoned local entertainers in concert and hosts other special events so drop by to see what's on. Open daily 24 Hours. **Tel: 952-4130**



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TRADING POST
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Cheeseburger in Paradise
Liquor in Chill
Fly to the Left
Wrestle, Sweet Again

NECESSITIES FOR THE PERFECT JAMAICAN BEACH DAY



From Montego Bay's Doctor's Cave Beach to Negril's famous seven mile beach, James Bond Beach in Oracabessa, Frenchman's Cove in Port Antonio, Hellshire Beach near Kingston and the unspoiled shores of Treasure Beach on the south coast, you can find the perfect beach spot anywhere on the island.

However, the perfect beach day requires some preparation. With the input of an experienced shopper and beachgoer, we put together a list of 'must haves' to ensure that your beach day is perfect. You may notice that most of our items are most interesting to female readers. This fact is based on research, which demonstrates that most guys do not need more than their shorts and the last four items on our list.



THE PERFECT BAG

Jammin' Jamaica has a wide selection of cute and trendy bags. Our professional shopper was enamored by this red straw creation with wooden handle, large enough to fit all necessities and guaranteed to match most beach wear. Find your perfect bag at Jammin' Jamaica, Shop #29, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9289.

To create a more sporty look, go with the light Jamaican 'No Problem' knapsack from Gadget, guaranteed to hold all your beach necessities and more. Available in various colors at Cool Gear, Shop #2, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9645. Closed on Sunday.



THE PERFECT BEACH WRAP/ DRESS

With a keen eye for new inventions, our avid shopper came across The Saress®, an easy alternative to the sometimes difficult to handle sarong. Forget knots and ties; this timeless creation is the perfect slip-on. Available at major hotels across the island and at Jammin' Jamaica, Shop #29, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9289.

with any item of clothing in her extensive wardrobe.

Look for the flip-flops at island outlets including Fontana Pharmacy at Fairview Shopping Center in Montego Bay, and at the WalkGood store, MBJ Airport Shopping Mall which is open 7:00 am - 10:00 pm seven days a week, tel: 880-0046.



THE PERFECT FLIP-FLOP

Infected by the 'Sex and the City' bug, our fanatic was well aware that Charlotte was showing off her poster of the famous Havaianas flip-flops after the girls leave NY Fashion Week in the recent hit movie. Thus, she tracked down her favorite sandals from the 08/09 collection and settled on the very feminine 'Fit' model in sand & light gold. With adjustable heel straps, the Havaianas are very comfortable and 'go'



THE PERFECT BOOK

At Casa de Xaymaca, our avid shopper came across some interesting books in which to bury her head while relaxing. Favorite picks: 'Waiting in Vain' by Colin Channer and 'Before the Legend' by Christopher J. Farley. To learn more about Jamaican Dancehall Culture, read 'Sound Clash' by Dr. Carolyn Cooper. Another popular classic is 'White Witch of Rose Hall' by Herbert G. deLisser, a 'must read' for Montego Bay visitors. Casa de Xaymaca is located at Shop #17, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9987.

THE PERFECT SHADES

We found THE spot for trendy eyewear. Visit The Shade Shack, - a sunglass heaven for Ray-Ban, GUCCI, Dior, PRADA, Oakley, D&G, Burberry and Versace eyewear. Our shopping pro tried on the latest fashion shades from Christian Dior, a very stylish way to protect your eyes. Located at shop #21, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, The Shade Shack has it all, tel: 953-8604. Closed on Sunday.

THE PERFECT HAT

The hat - a stylish necessity to prevent sunburn and keep you cool. Lined with a black and white polka dot border and an appealing bow, this light straw hat has a classic, trendy look. Available at Shady Daze, Shop #9, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-2084 and Shop #6 Time Square Plaza in Negril, tel: 957-3680.

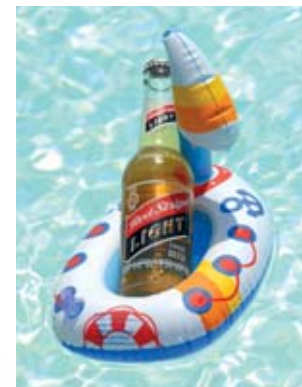
THE PERFECT BATHING SUIT

Our fashion freak hit upon this 'Latino Monokini' from Rosa Cha. With 3 peek-a-boo spaces and elaborately decorated front panel featuring small beads, soft embroidery and ribbon in several colors including jade, mauve, purple, florescent yellow, blue and gold. Our shopping guru picked one of the artistic creations up at the WalkGood store in MBJ Airport, tel: 880-0046. As of January 2009, Rosa Cha will be available at KerryManWomanHome, Kingston and Half Moon Shopping Village, Montego Bay.



THE PERFECT TOY

Also for big kids! These cute sailboat floaters come in all shapes and colors and are the perfect size to hold your favorite drink. Available at Cool Gear, Shop #2, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9645. Closed on Sunday.



THE PERFECT DRINK

Red Stripe - the great island beer is another item Jamaica is famous for. A 'must drink' for all island visitors and residents, brewing company Desnoes & Geddes has now created the very popular, low alcohol Red Stripe Light as an alternative to the stronger classic Red Stripe. Available at supermarkets, roadside and beach bars island wide.

THE PERFECT SUNBLOCK

Protection is important and SUN LAB offers 6 spray-tube formulas that fit perfectly into even the smallest space. This water resistant and non-sticky sunblock contains essential vitamins, antioxidants, natural moisturizer and invigorating, tropical paradise fragrances. Available at Cool Gear, Shop #2, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9645.

THE PERFECT TOWEL

The beach towel is a basic beach need, but don't be boring and sport one with dull colors. Add some extra spice and bring the classic Jamaican flag towel. Available at Jammin' Jamaica, Shop #29, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, tel: 953-9289.

Our shopper and the Jamaica Tourist Team wishes you a great day at the beach!



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The Shoppes at Rose Hall

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www.srhja.com

BARGAINING EXPECTED!

For bargain hunters, shopping in Jamaica can be a full day activity. All resort areas are home to colorful local markets, where hand-made arts and crafts are showcased and bargaining is expected. The rule is, don't give up! Eventually, any stall owner will compromise and you'll walk away with your favorite piece at a reasonable price. If you are on the hunt for outstandingly priced jewelry, watches, designer goods, perfumes or crystal, many duty-free shopping stores sport price tags that are not carved in stone, so if you are hungry for some good deals, get out there. Ask your concierge to point you in the right direction, as several of the shopping malls offer shuttle services to and from your hotel.



Exclusive jewelry store at The Shoppes at Rose Hall (Photo: SRH)

MONTEGO BAY

EXPERIENCE LUXURY SHOPPING AT THE SHOPPES AT ROSE HALL

This 'must-visit' attraction for duty-free luxury goods and gift shopping is the latest addition to Montego Bay's 'Elegant Corridor', showcasing 30 of the island's top retailers, designer boutiques and souvenir stores in a landscaped, open-air plaza. Jamaica's most exclusive duty-free retailers, including Bijoux, Jewels & Time, The Royal Shop, Jewels in Paradise, Casa de Oro, Tropicana, Colours, Swiss Stores, Chulani Jewelers and Golden Nugget, offer the latest in fashionable jewelry and luxury goods at this prime location. Additional shops include designer boutiques such as Déjà Vu, Sheenaz, Island Leisure, Flights of Fantasy, Cool Gear, Jammin' Jamaica, the Shade Shack and Shady Daze. Jamaican souvenirs can be found at Casa de Xaymaca and Tina's Arts and Crafts, while Rose Hall Cigar Club, Coffee and Spice and Booze and Bites offer premium coffee, cigar and alcohol brands.

In addition to great shopping, The Shoppes at Rose Hall plaza allows visitors to enjoy Blue Mountain Coffee specialties and light fare at 'Café Blue', or relax in gourmet splendor at the vibrantly colorful Habibi Latino, a Middle Eastern restaurant located next to the signature waterwheel.

Conveniently located across from the Rose Hall Great House, and minutes away from Solís The Palmyra Resort & Spa, Rose Hall Resort & Spa A Hilton Resort, Ritz-Carlton and Half Moon hotels. Transportation arrangements can be made through your hotel's concierge desk. Call 953-3245 or e-mail srhja@cwjamaica.com.

OTHER POPULAR SHOPPING AREAS IN MONTEGO BAY

The City Centre downtown Montego Bay for duty-free jewelry, designer timepieces and souvenir items. The Harbour Street and Old Fort Street Craft Markets downtown Montego Bay and Fort Street for hand made straw, souvenir and other craft items. Stores along the 'Hip Strip', Gloucester Avenue for countless souvenir and resort wear shops, Margaritaville and Harley Davidson merchandise outlets.

OCHO RIOS

Island Village, Main Street is a premier shopping and entertainment spot offering an open-air, garden setting with a boardwalk and an array of retail shops. Duty free stores available include Casa de Oro, The Royal Shop, Swiss Stores, Jewels & Time and Tropicana. Tajmahal, Main Street offers 26 duty-free stores, several souvenir and apparel shops and The Hard Rock Café's Rock Shop. Ocho Rios Craft Market, Main Street showcases local arts and crafts in more than 135 stalls. Soni's Plaza, Main Street is another favorite location for duty-free, jewelry, perfume, cigars and souvenir shopping.

NEGRIL

Time Square Shopping Mall, Norman Manley Boulevard is the main shopping plaza in Negril, featuring 14 souvenir & duty free stores and café. Enjoy reggae music, liquor sampling and basket weaving demonstrations. Luxury goods stores include The Royal Shop, Casa de Oro and Tropicana. The Negril Craft Market on Norman Manley Boulevard is a popular spot for hunting local souvenirs, straw items, carvings and arts and crafts.



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GREEN UP YOURSELF!

If you want to feel good about your style and your environmental choices, check out the new, eco-friendly designer line from WalkGood. With trendy bags and footwear, the designer-with-a-twist collection offers an exciting way to incorporate green into your daily life.

The name; LabelOne3, represents every person's ability to participate in the 3 basic steps of environmental protection: Reducing, Reusing and Recycling. Encouraging awareness of our impact on the planet, the label incorporates the 3Rs into all LabelOne3 creations and is a great choice for those who are both style and environmentally conscious. Popular for their beauty and quality, all LabelOne3 designer products and accessories are made using sustainable materials and processes, offering a guilt free alternative for designer addicts who also care about the milieu.



Western, cowboy-styled hat with leather braid trim made of natural colored, recycled canvas. (Photo: WalkGood)

The trendy WalkGood store at the MBJ Airport Mall (Photo: WalkGood)



Said Vanessa Taylor, the creative mind behind the accessory collection; "LabelOne3 accessories are perfect for individuals who are passionate about style, change and our planet." Taylor, who is the owner and CEO of WalkGood, immersed herself in a 'green' environment on a recent trip to Brazil and emerged with the concept for the original, sustainable line. Inspired by the country's highly developed culture and tradition for top quality products, Taylor conceived the novel line which she describes as "original and edgy". So, mix some environmentally friendly accessories with a Jamaican twist into your wardrobe and "Green Up Yourself!"

Check out the novel LabelOne3 collection at the WalkGood store in the MBJ Airport Shopping Mall, open 7:00 am - 10:00 pm seven days a week, tel: 880-0046.

Men's sport shoes made of recycled canvas and recycled rubber tire soles. Available in several colors and sizes up to 11 1/2. (Photo: WalkGood)



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OCHO RIOS
Island Village Entertainment Centre, 675 8975 • Ocean Village Shopping Centre, Main Street, 974 2519

MONTEGO BAY
Shoppes at Rose Hall, 953 9274

www.SwissStoresJamaica.com

SUPREME TIMEPIECES AT MATCHLESS PRICES

Jamaica is a great place to shop for luxury brands and excellent duty-free retailers can be found at premier shopping venues in every major resort area. Luxurious timepieces, such as the magnificent watches featured here, can be purchased at prices up to 30% less than in the North America and Europe.

BEIJING 2008 LIMITED EDITION CHRONOSCOPE

WHERE TO FIND IT: JEWELS & TIME

The first of a new series of timepieces celebrating the great cities of the world, the *Beijing 2008 Limited Edition ChronoScope* by Swiss watch manufacturer Ernst Benz, commemorates China's capital in its great Olympic year. Inspiration for the design was found in the perfect symmetry of the number 8, a sign of wealth and prosperity in Chinese culture highlighted by the opening date of the Beijing Olympic Games; 08.08.08. Limited to only 88 pieces the *ChronoScope* is available with two different dial executions, Noir (Black) and Vermilion (China Red). Only 8 pieces of the coated brushed steel version, the Black PVD (Physical Vapor Deposition), are available. Delivered in custom made Chinese-themed packaging, the limited edition *ChronoScope* is offered with hand-stitched alligator straps in red or black.



Available at Jewels & Time in Montego Bay at City Centre (tel: 952-3261), The Shoppes at Rose Hall (tel: 953-4600), Island Village and Tajmahal Plaza (tel: 675-8762-4) in Ocho Rios. www.jewelsandtime.com

HAPPY SPORT CHRONO MARK II BAGUETTE

WHERE TO FIND IT: TROPICANA JEWELERS

Experts in 'The sparkle of diamond and the understatement of black', Chopard's *Happy Sport Mark II Chrono Baguette* is a ladies watch diamond lovers will not be able to resist. Set with 40 baguette diamonds (4.98cts) its bezel reposes on a brilliant white gold case with a sparkling diamond on its crown, whilst the mother of pearl dial features 5 mobile diamonds. The *Happy Sport Mark II Chrono Baguette* is available on a black crocodile strap with a white gold clasp that illuminates this fantastic timepiece even further.

For a more feminine look, the timepiece is also available with a brightly colored crocodile strap in 18ct. pink gold, sporting a diamond-cut sapphire in the crown.



Available at Tropicana Jewelers in The Shoppes at Rose Hall (tel: 953-2242) and City Centre (tel: 952-6982) in Montego Bay. In Ocho Rios at Island Village (tel: 675-8774) and Tajmahal Shopping Centre (tel: 974-2928) and at Negril's Time Square Plaza (tel: 957-9530).

www.tropicanajewelers.com

SEAMASTER DIVER 300M JAMES BOND

WHERE TO FIND IT: SWISS STORES

For the past decade, Agent 007 has been wearing a Seamaster timepiece from watchmaker Omega. Coinciding with the latest Bond movie, *Quantum of Solace*, Omega has released an updated version of the popular chronometer, called the *Seamaster Diver 300m James Bond*. Featuring Omega's Caliber 2500 Self-winding Movement, the watch is fitted with the revolutionary Co-Axial Escapement to ensure long-term accuracy. With screw-in case back and stainless steel crown, the watch is water resistance up to 300 meters. In addition to its impressive functionality, the watch is the series' most elegant version yet.



Pick up the new Seamaster at Swiss Stores at The Shoppes at Rose Hall (tel: 659-9274) in Montego Bay, at Island Village (tel: 675-8975) in Ocho Rios, at the Mall Plaza Constant Spring Road (tel: 926-6537) or Pegasus Hotel (tel: 929-8147) in Kingston.

www.swissstoresjamaica.com

PASHA SEATIMER BY CARTIER

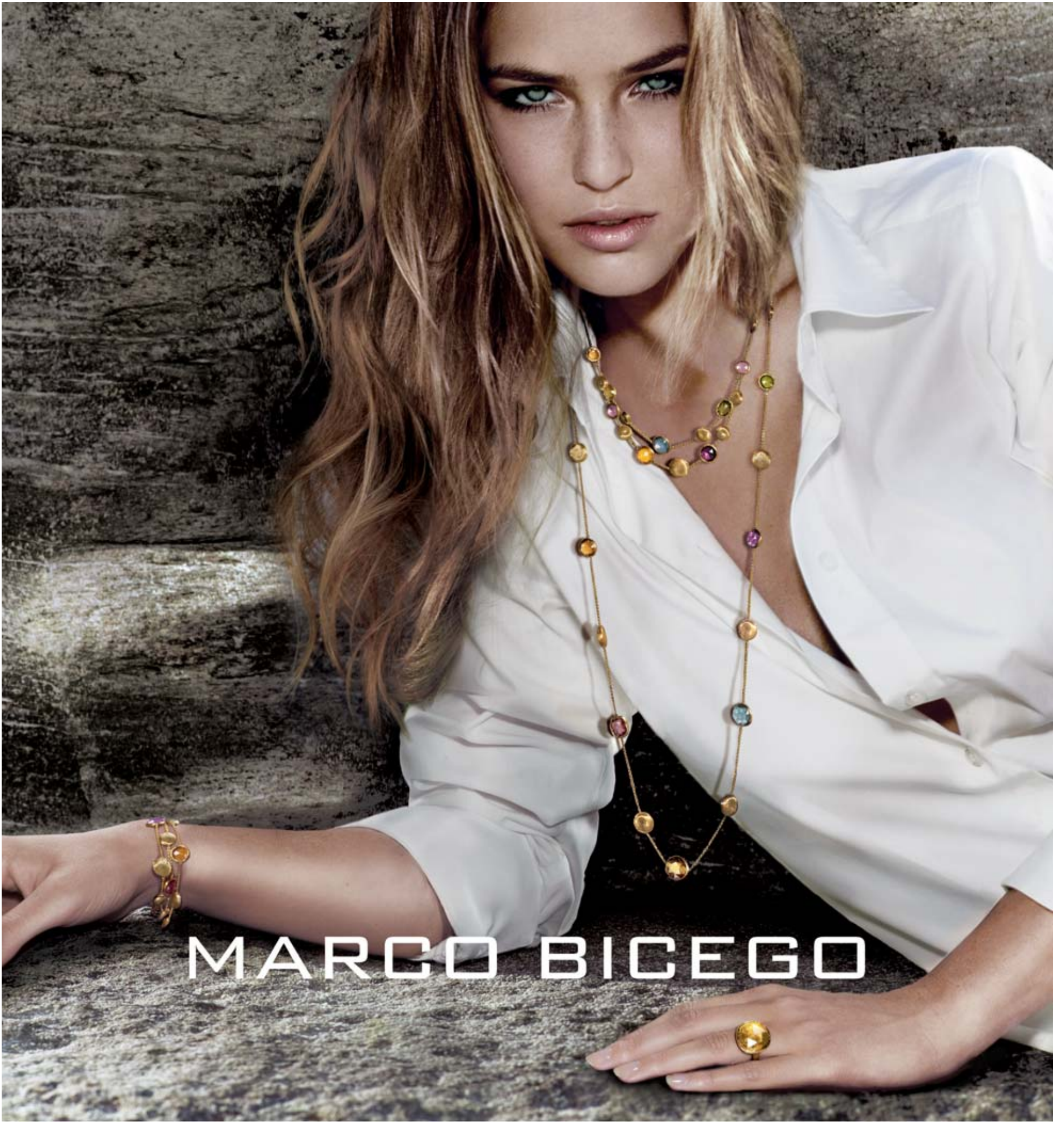
WHERE TO FIND IT: CASA DE ORO

A mark of status and sophistication, Cartier's *Pasha Seatimer* is perfect for the gentleman who skillfully maneuvers the seas of life. With a stainless steel 40mm case, robust bracelet and concealed folding clasp, the watch delivers in both looks and performance. The *Pasha Seatimer* is powered by mechanical movement with Cartier Calibre 049 Automatic Winding and is water resistant up to a depth of 100m. Presented with an elegant, black dial which sets off the bold, Arabic numerals of the timepiece.



Look for this unique Cartier creation at one of Casa de Oro's locations; The Shoppes at Rose Hall (tel: 953-9755) and at City Centre (tel: 952-3502), Montego Bay. At Soni's Plaza (tel: 974-5392) and Island Village (tel: 675-8999) in Ocho Rios and in Negril's Time Square Plaza (tel: 957-9530). www.casadeoro.com





MARCO BICEGO

Tropicana
JEWELERS

PIECES OF THE PAST

Chocked full of defining moments and poignant characters, Jamaica's history is a long and colourful one. For more than three decades, Trevor Clarke has made it his business to preserve the Island's past by collecting memorabilia that tell the story of his Jamaica. The owner of the charming Alhambra Inn in Kingston has more than a thousand keepsakes proudly displayed throughout his twenty-room Inn. A self-proclaimed history aficionado, he delights in showing off his treasure trove of antiques to guests of the hotel, folks enjoying the sumptuous Sunday brunch or locals taking a leisurely stroll down memory lane.



BY MELANIE REFFES

Melanie Reffes is a travel journalist based in Montreal and specializes in coverage of the Caribbean.



A trip down memory lane at Alhambra Inn (Photo: Melanie Reffes)

With relics dating back to the 17th century, his collection is the largest in Jamaica with each piece personally selected by Clarke himself. "With our Spanish and British history from sugar mills to the great houses, our history needs to be preserved and honoured," the 68 year old former accountant says pointing to the nooks, crannies and cabinets filled to brimming with Jamaica's past. "I have one hundred Spanish jars and each one tells a different story," he says admiring the earthenware pots that are the star attraction in the open-air lobby, so lush it's a veritable Garden of Eden. Originally used to store water, they also hid valuables during the English conquest and are a humble tribute to the Spanish chapter in Jamaica's history.

After returning from England in 1974, Clarke took a liking to old heating irons and pots and his collection was born. Remembering growing up during the Fifties, scouring for artifacts nurtures his unrelenting passion for all-things Jamaican. "I keep the items the way I get them," he says explaining that a simple clean-up is all he does so authenticity is not lost. With his unbridled knowledge of trivia and natural storytelling abilities, he lights up describing what life was like during the 18th century. "Folks would bring their lunch to work in this carrier," he says referring to a metal container shaped like a cylinder, "It was separated into compartments so meat and rice could stay fresh during the day."

As a tourist admires a chimney or British chamber pot, Clarke tells him that well into the last century; every bedroom had three basic items. "Everyone had a basin, water jug and chimney and the higher the family income, the fancier the design with the best used by guests." Another blast from the past and favourite of visitors is his salute to the Sixties.

From telephones and radios to typewriters and ice cream buckets, they illicit tender memories for the gracious collector. "I used to listen to music from Miami all night long," he remembers holding an old-fashioned radio he says still works. The vintage signs that hang just about everywhere also represent a vital chapter in West Indian history. "We used to have one of those," says a guest gazing up at a Red Stripe and Canada Dry sign that is fifty years old.

Married to Sonia for thirty years and with one daughter and three grandchildren, preserving Jamaica's history is a labour of love for Trevor Clarke. "My wife doesn't collect but she's fine that I do," he says with a twinkle in his eye. "Some folks ask if they can purchase the items, but I tell them none are for sale."

The exhibit is open to the public with no admission charge. The curios are not only for the curious but also for school and church groups who stop by for a lesson in Jamaican history and old-timers who smile when they see artifacts they may have thrown away. Lazy meandering is encouraged with the hope tourists and locals will appreciate Jamaica's history for more than rum and reggae.

The Alhambra Inn is located at 1 Tucker Avenue, Kingston 6. Sunday Brunch with a dazzling array of island specialties from hominy corn porridge and 'Ackee & Codfish' to dumplings, boiled bananas and roasted breadfruit is served from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (JAS\$875.00 per person). Tel. 978-9072, email: alhambrainn@cwjamaica.com

Trevor Clarke in his garden of novelties (Photo: Melanie Reffes)



Historic soda and beer signs (Photo: Melanie Reffes)



Trevor Clarke proudly shows his collection (Photo: Melanie Reffes)



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE LIFE AT A TIME

The U.S. Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by living and working in developing countries to promote world peace and friendship. Today, more than 100 volunteers are spread across the island, assisting local communities in a variety of projects from the conservation of Jamaica's natural resources, eco-tourism and education to the promotion of healthy living.



Ambassador LaGrange Johnson with Peace Corps Country Director Howard Anderson (Photo: US Embassy)

It is said that a tour with the Peace Corps is an experience to draw on for the rest of your life. In the last 46 years, more than 3,400 Peace Corps Volunteers have served on the island of Jamaica, helping individuals build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities. Clearly, it takes a special kind of person to join this altruistic organization working to create world peace one life at a time. Talking to some of the members of the philanthropic organization who are currently serving on the island, we learned that the chance to make a difference in other people's lives and the lust for Adventure are the main reasons most volunteers choose to serve in the Peace Corps.

Volunteers receive pay and living expenses that enable them to live in a manner similar to the local people and two vacation days per month of service, a total of 48 days over two years. Many use this time to travel to nearby countries,

expanding their opportunities for adventure and cross-cultural experiences. Transportation to and from the country of service is provided and student loans are deferred for the duration.

Explains Howard Anderson, Country Director of the U.S. Peace Corps in Jamaica, who has been with the local chapter since October 2006: "For me, it was about seeking adventure as much as anything else, but the motivations of our volunteers are many, from wanting to serve and help others, to learning a second language or preparing for a career in international development."

Anderson, whose favorite areas on the island are Port Antonio and Treasure Beach, advises visiting tourists to get out and travel the back roads of the island. Says Anderson: "Jamaica offers a rich and continuously changing culture. It has the obvious development problems of an island nation, but the people of Jamaica possess a special spirit of energy."

Based at the Peace Corp headquarters in Kingston, Anderson and Programming and Training Officer Ginni Wilderson are supported by a local team of medical staff, nurses, program managers and administration tallying 20. Says Anderson, a Seattle native: "We are very proud of the work our volunteers do, particularly within the areas of eco-tourism and traditional tourism. Jamaica relies heavily on the tourist industry, and we are trying to support their efforts."

The Jamaican chapter of the U.S. Peace Corps works closely with U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica Brenda LaGrange Johnson and once the required training program has been completed, every volunteer is personally sworn in by

The 2008 group of Peace Corps volunteers at swearing in ceremony at the US Embassy in Kingston (Photo: US Embassy)



Ambassador LaGrange Johnson at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston. Not even a 'force majeure' can stop the ardent ambassador in her support of the program and the labors of love of its many volunteers. "The 2007 swearing in ceremony was carried out at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston during Hurricane Dean!" remembers LaGrange Johnson with a smile.

Says LaGrange Johnson: "Jamaica was one of the first countries to welcome Peace Corps Volunteers and it is now an established 46-year-old tradition." A true philanthropist at heart, LaGrange Johnson is the ultimate patron of the island's 100+ volunteers and never misses an opportunity to talk about their many altruistic endeavors. Says the U.S. Ambassador: "Although I serve as the 'official' United States Ambassador to Jamaica, the 'unofficial' ambassadors are our 100+ Peace Corps volunteers who make a real difference in the lives of ordinary Jamaicans. These volunteers are the unsung heroes and I am proud to know them!"

Ambassador LaGrange Johnson has a longstanding history with the Peace Corps. "My admiration and respect for the Peace Corps started when I met my husband's brother Don. He was part of the original Peace Corps Volunteers who were sent to Nigeria in 1961, long before today's efficient means of communication with cell phones and e-mails. Off Don went to Africa for two years, during which only a few letters were sent home."

The Ambassador particularly highlights the local chapter's "Over 50" Volunteers program, a pilot effort for older volunteers which has proved a huge success. States the Ambassador: "Soon 50+ year old Volunteers will be a normal part of all Peace Corps programs, so for all of you who missed out on volunteering in your youth, here is your chance!"



Jennifer Bert at Castleton Gardens (Photo: Jennifer Bert)

JENNIFER BERT (26) FROM LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA PROGRAM: ENVIRONMENT, CASTLETON GARDENS

Jennifer Bert's interest in the Peace Corps was ignited by her high school French teacher who had been a volunteer in Cameroon, Africa, and the teacher's many stories struck a chord with the young student. After graduating in political science, Jennifer decided to join the Peace Corps.

The young adventurer has worked with the Castleton Development Committee for two years, developing the visitor attraction Castleton Gardens into a public garden, a project which recently received a small project assistance grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). "We decided to concentrate on plants that attract hummingbirds and butterflies, and we also have two specimens of Jamaica's national bird, Doctor Birds, in the garden so that people can see it."

When we spoke to her, Jennifer was returning to school to get her MA in Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh. "I have gotten so much out of my tour in Jamaica, working with the Development Committee," said the volunteer. "And I am really going to miss the mangoes and the breadfruit!"



Brooke awards a certificate at Whitehall Basic & Prep School (Photo: Brooke Anderson)

BROOKE ANDERSON (24) FROM WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

PROGRAM: ENVIRONMENT, NEGRIL

After finishing college with a degree in biology and marine science, Brooke Anderson arrived on the island two years ago as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Since then, Brooke has worked as an Environmental Education Officer with the Negril Coral Reef Preservation Society (NCRPS), promoting activities to preserve the coral reef among the local population and creating public awareness. "I work very closely with the teachers of 18 different area schools to reach the local school children, and do presentations at the local schools. I also give guided tours at the NCRPS center and tours of the coral reefs in glass-bottom boats." Recently, Brooke was the coordinator of "Earth Day 2008" organized by the NCRPS around the theme "The Effect of Global Warming on the Reefs of Small Island Developing States." More than 650 persons participated in the day's activities.

While in the Peace Corps, Brooke found love with fellow volunteer Donny Comer, another Peace Corps participant working in the area of the Black River. Donny, who hails from Georgio, Oregon, is working on a project with the Southern Regional Health Authority, building basic schools and giving computer classes.

Together, they are hoping to roam the world as Peace Corps Volunteers working as substitute teachers in developing countries. Says Brooke: "I am going to miss the people, the food, the fruits and my beautiful house on the Caribbean Sea."



Sandy West with food vendor Sister Angela Rose (Photo: Heidi Zech)

SANDY WEST (59) FROM THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

PROGRAM: ENVIRONMENT, NEGRIL

"I waited to join the Peace Corps for a long time, but it was always there in the back of my mind," explains Sandy West. After raising her children and running four different small businesses in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Sandy decided that it finally was time. In six weeks, she sold her house and her businesses, went to Texas to visit her parents and submitted her application to the Peace Corps. Thus, she ended up in 'The Capital of Casual' and since then, Sandy has worked with local hotels to promote the Royal Palm Nature Reserve as a tourist attraction. "I didn't like Jamaica at first. But despite their struggles, Jamaicans

are such happy, friendly and vibrant people. I grew to love the Jamaicans, and through them, grew to love Jamaica." Sandy also runs the Blue Flag project in Negril, monitoring the quality of the beach water every two weeks. If the water is sufficiently clean, member resorts and hotels are allowed to fly the blue flag that represents premier beach water quality. Sandy has been on the island for 13 months, but plans to stay for another two years, extending her stay in Negril by one year. Her ultimate goal is to be in the Peace Corps for ten years. "It is my turn to give back, and I really enjoy using my life experience to make the world a better place."

HELEN AND MIKE HENRICH ('OVER 50' VOLUNTEERS) FROM VIRGINIA

PROGRAM: YOUTH, LUCEA

The Henrichs are part of an older generation of people who are returning to serve in the Peace Corps as 'Over 50' Volunteers. As newlyweds, the couple was looking for adventure and joined the Peace Corps to experience another culture. Hence, they spent their first tour together in the Philippines in the 70s. "We lived in a thatched roof hut five minutes from the South China Sea, and have a lot of fond memories from our time there. I worked at the YMCA while Mike worked with sports development," says Helen. When the couple had a son, Michael, the family settled in Virginia where Helen ran a private social services practice. In 1999, their son Michael joined the Peace Corps and spent two years as a teacher at a boarding school on the island nation of Vanuatu, west of Fiji in the South Pacific

"We decided to volunteer again and asked for the Caribbean," explains Helen. Based in Lucea on the island's north coast, Helen visits high schools to promote conflict resolution, teach anger management and help reduce violence. "We were looking for a meaningful experience," explains Mike, who teaches reading and writing to children aged between seven and eleven at Green Island High School. "It has been a very rejuvenating experience, and a strong reminder of what the Third World is. There are still a lot of poor kids."

ZEBULON TURRENTINE (27) FROM BELL BUCKLE (NEAR NASHVILLE), TENNESSEE

PROGRAM: HEALTH, WATER AND SANITATION, ACCOMPONG

"I joined the Peace Corps out of a personal feeling of duty to do something meaningful, adventurous and challenging. I did not specify any geographical area and was assigned to Jamaica," explains Zebulon. "Zeb," as he is affectionately called, is a self-proclaimed "Jack of all Trades" with a background so diverse that his Peace Corps supervisor thought he would be able to handle the somewhat 'rough' environment of Maroon Town.

Zeb's abundance of ideas soon inspired a new, successful program for Accompong's unemployed. With a Bachelors Degree in music, the young volunteer used to work as a wood worker in a small guitar building company. "I was trying to create a craft item with a connection to the Maroons and one day, I made a spoon." The young woodcarver got the local guys involved, and soon they realized that the more spoons they made, the more they could sell. "Realizing that they could make some money, more guys like Dowdy and Bungo got involved and started making and selling spoons," explains Zeb.

Says Zeb; "We have also developed a website called www.cockpitrepublic.com, appealing to people who want to go off the beaten track, learn about the Maroons and follow their original trails." With no internet in Maroon Town, Zeb has to travel over one hour to Santa Cruz to access the internet. "I would love to get internet up there so local people are able to manage the web site," he explains.

Zeb also teaches literacy classes, typing and hand washing and works with the Maroon Council on an on-going beautification program as part of the Health, Water and Sanitation program. According to the young volunteer, the most rewarding part of the experience is to be able to make a difference. Says Zeb; "People need to know that Jamaica is a safe place. There is a whole other world away from the sun and beaches, and I am committed to making sure everyone finds out!" What will he remember most when his tour is over in a year's time? "I have met some great people and made some real friends."

Volunteer Peter Hogge at Bellas Gate school in St. Catherine (Photo: U.S. Peace Corps)



Helen and Mike Henrich came to volunteer in Jamaica from Virginia (Photo: Heidi Zech)



Zebulon Turrentine with Richard Robinson, President of the Youth Club in Maroon Town (Photo: Zeb Turrentine)



WHAT A GWAAN?

Jamaicans like to be up to date with the latest gossip. Get up to speed with the local news and gossip terminology on our 'What a Gwaan' page. In Jamaica, the term "fast" actually means "nosey", so if a Jamaican tells you that "you too fast", he or she thinks that you are sticking your nose where it doesn't belong. Our column allows you to be "fast" by keeping you up to date with all you need to know while on the island; past, present and future happenings, events and celebrity visits.



Usain Bolt and the current Miss World, Zi Lin Zhang, featured on commemorative OneLove card (Photo: JTB)

Harding, Jamaica's Deputy Director of Tourism. Jamaica's first OneLove commemorative card will feature Champion Usain Bolt and current Miss World, Zi Lin Zhang, who graciously accepted an invitation to visit the island for the inaugural staging of the 100m World Beach Sprint in 2009.

WORLD'S FIRST DESTINATION LOYALTY CARD

The world's first destination loyalty card, called the OneLove card, will be launched by the Jamaica Tourist Board in early 2009. Announced at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the news came fresh on the heels of Olympic sensation Usain Bolt's world-record breaking 100 meter sprint that won gold for Jamaica. "The launch of the destination loyalty card is Jamaica's first step towards embracing customer-relationship marketing in tourism. OneLove is in keeping with Jamaica's lifestyle and message of peace, love and unity", said Zachary

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'WINE WITH ME' MOVES TO HALF MOON SHOPPING VILLAGE

Stylish member of Montego Bay's fine dining arena 'Wine With Me' is moving to the Half Moon Shopping Village as of December 1. Owned and operated by Cecile Levee, the restaurant offers an extensive wine selection and outstanding menu complemented by friendly service and great atmosphere. For more information, call 371-4804.

PRIME MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON VISITS THE IRISH ROVER

Former Jamaican Prime Minister, The Hon. P.J. Patterson has officially declared the Irish Rover Pub in Drax Hall near Ocho Rios as one of his favorite watering holes. On his visit on August 10, he was presented with a bottle of finest Irish Whiskey by Irish Rover owners Angela and Winston Samuels.



The Hon. P.J. Patterson with Irish Rover owners Angela and Winston Samuels (Photo: Irish Rover)

NATIONAL GALLERY RECEIVES AMBASSADORS FUND DONATION

In July 2008, U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, Brenda LaGrange Johnson presented the National Gallery of Jamaica with US\$27,330 under the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. The funds will be used to repair and preserve five nationally significant works of art, which require urgent and special attention. Ms. Olivia Grange, Minister of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports thanked the U.S. Ambassador for providing the Gallery with resources for the endeavor. With a collection of approximately 1700 works of art, the majority composed of wood, oil on canvas, or works on paper, The National Gallery of Jamaica is the largest national gallery in the English-speaking Caribbean



The U.S. Ambassador presents Ms. Olivia Grange, Minister of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports and Wayne Chen, Chairman of the National Gallery, with symbolic giant check (Photo: US Embassy)



Nigel Rose with Mrs. Michele Rollins and Tony McGeorge, President of Valley Forge Military College (Photo: M Rollins)

FORMER SOS RESIDENT GRADUATES No.1

Congratulations to Nigel Rose, former resident of the SOS Village in Barrett Town, Rose Hall, who graduated from Valley Forge Military College in Wayne Pennsylvania on May 16, 2008 as the Valedictorian of his class. Despite his humble beginnings, Nigel stunned the college with his extraordinary performance as the only summa cum laude student. From here, the talented young man will move on to Drexel University where he will study international marketing in his junior year. Nigel was able to study thanks to generous scholarships from The Mustang Foundation and Mrs. Michele Rollins of Rose Hall Developments. Said Mrs. Rollins; "The finer the education, the greater the opportunity our young people have to use their academic skills to become the leaders of tomorrow. There is no better investment in Jamaica's future."

REGGAE MARATHON, HALF MARATHON & 10K FOR NEGRIL

Runners and walkers: get into gear for the 8th Reggae Marathon, which takes place along the scenic coastline of Negril to the sounds of live reggae music. The annual Reggae Marathon attracts people from all over the world and this year, the organizers have also added a 10K Race to the event. Participants of the Marathon and Half Marathon must report to the starting line at Long Bay Beach Park at 5:15 am on December 6, to compete in the 'capital of casual' race. Following the race, the Reggae Marathon Victory & Awards Jam takes place at the spectacular Negril Escape, located on the West End. Visit: www.reggaemarathon.com or call 922-8677.



Runners at the 2007 Reggae Marathon (Photo: Errol Anderson)

AIR JAMAICA JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL - JANUARY 22-24, 2009



Billy Ocean at the 2008 Air Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival (Photo: Heidi Zech)

'The Art of Music' is back! Get into gear for the 2009 staging of the event, to take place at the Cinnamon Hill Golf Course in Montego Bay. Since its introduction in 1996, The Air Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival has grown into the island's premier entertainment event attracting patrons from the U.S., Europe and the Caribbean. Firmly established as one of the major, global music events, more than 40,000 attended last year's festival. Now in its 14th year, the three night festival has featured famous musicians such as Michael Bolton, Diana Ross, Anita Baker, Air Supply and Shaggy, just to name a few. Another class-act staging is guaranteed for January 22 - 24, 2009. For more information please call 953-8282. www.airjamaicajazzandblues.com



Melanie Reffes receives her award from The Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism (Photo: JTB)

TRAVEL WRITER MELANIE REFFES RECEIVES MARCIA VICKERY-WALLACE AWARD

The prestigious Marcia Vickery-Wallace award was established in 1987 as a tribute to its namesake, the former editor of Brides Magazine who tirelessly promoted the Caribbean region. Each year, the JTB, in conjunction with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, dedicates this award to a journalist who has followed in her footsteps with the same dedication. This year, the prestigious award was presented to Canadian journalist Melanie Reffes, for the passion with which she has written about the vibrant culture of the Caribbean. With over a decade of experience in print and broadcast journalism, Melanie's articles have appeared in numerous North American trade and consumer publications including the Toronto Globe and Mail, Canadian Traveler, Agent@Home, Cruise & Vacation Agent, and The Miami Herald, among others.

GOVERNOR GENERAL HALL RECEIVES UK'S HIGHEST HONOR

The Governor General of Jamaica The Most Honourable Professor Kenneth Hall has been conferred with a Knighthood, one of the highest honors an individual can achieve, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The bestowal took place in a ceremony at London's Buckingham Palace on May 30th. Professor Hall was sworn in as Jamaica's fifth Governor General and representative of the Queen on February 15, 2006, succeeding Sir Howard Cooke, who spent 15 years as Governor General. Following the knighting, the Governor General is addressed as "His Excellency the Most Hon. Professor Sir Kenneth Octavius Hall, ON, GCMG, OJ" and his spouse will be known as "Her Excellency the Most Hon. Lady Hall."



Knighting ceremony at Buckingham Palace (Photo: JIS)



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