



The Official E-Newsletter of the Caribbean Tourism Organization

Welcome

Welcome to the December 2010 issue of the *CTO News*, the Caribbean Tourism Organization's e-newsletter.

We welcome your participation and feedback. Please feel free to e-mail us at jjohnrose@caribtourism.com to express your views or offer suggestions for future content.



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VIRTUAL CARIBBEAN

OneCaribbean.org Update

CTO Members are invited to view the presentations from the 2010 European Marketing Forum on www.OneCaribbean.org.

If you've misplaced your login, please email Sharon (scoward@caribtourism.com), or just click FORGOT PASSWORD on the homepage and it will be sent to you.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Bonaire

CTO News celebrates the accomplishments of one CTO member destination each month. This month, our spotlight is on Bonaire!

Bon Bini na Boneiru! Welcome to Bonaire! The island lies 30 miles from Curacao, 50 miles north of Venezuela, 86 miles east of Aruba, outside of the Caribbean hurricane belt. Bonaire, 24 miles long by 3-7 miles wide, has NO traffic lights!



Bonaire has earned a reputation for being one of the most environmentally conscious islands in the Caribbean! A leader in sustainable tourism, Bonaire believes in growth while maintaining nature and culture.

For more information, visit: www.tourismonbonaire.com/

INSIDER SCOOP

Special Marketing and Media Opportunities

HOT DEALS

Do you have a "Hot Deal" on offer?

ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is headquartered in Barbados with marketing operations in New York, London and Toronto. The CTO is the Caribbean's tourism development agency and comprises membership of over 30 member governments as well as a myriad of private sector entities.

The CTO's mission is to provide to and through its members, the services and information needed for the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people. The organization provides specialized support and technical assistance to member countries in the areas of marketing, human resource development, research and statistics, information technology, and sustainable tourism development. The CTO disseminates information on behalf of its member governments to consumers and the travel trade.

For more information, please visit: www.OneCaribbean.org

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MAKE PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK FOR YOU!

Be sure you are on our distribution list for " Hot Tip" publicity leads from top media outlets looking to promote the Caribbean. Contact Johnson JohnRose to subscribe: jjohnrose@caribtourism.com

STAY IN THE KNOW

The Tourism Executive Brief is your source for invaluable industry intelligence provided by the CTO to members and their strategic partners and by visiting www.onecaribbean.org/marketingintelligence. Contact Annette Stowe at Annette@caribtourism.com if you would like to be added to the email distribution list.

THE ALLIED CORNER

Each month CTO News recognizes a CTO Allied Member for its ongoing efforts in creating awareness and promoting tourism to the Caribbean region. This month, we're highlighting the **Bleu Émeraude**.

Bleu Émeraude is a luxurious new residence on the Grand Case beach. We are always striving to make your stay as enjoyable as possible. Our aim is to ensure that you are as comfortable as can be, by always being ready to listen and by offering you the types of services that will make life easier for you. www.bleuemerade.com

For more information on Allied Members including roles and responsibilities, visit www.OneCaribbean.org

HOT DATES

STC-12 (Bermuda)

April 3-6, 2011

For more information on events, contact ctony@caribtourism.com

Caribbean tourism performance back to 2008 levels



Stay-over arrivals to the Caribbean are back to 2008 levels, according to statistics compiled by the CTO's research department. The region recorded a 4.7 per cent rise in visitor arrivals in 2010, welcoming 23.1 million tourists, up from 22.1 million visitors in 2009.

"This figure takes us back to the peak arrivals levels we recorded in 2008," said Winfield Griffith, the CTO's director of research and information technology.

Cruise tourism has also been on the rise, registering a six per cent increase for 2010, while the hotel sector registered marginal increase with a one per cent rise in occupancy and five per cent increase in total room revenues.

CTO statistics show that countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) recorded a four per cent rise in 2010 over 2009 on the strength of a six per cent rise in the sub-regional grouping, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Among the OECS states, Anguilla and St. Lucia recorded double digit gains.

The Dutch Caribbean showed a marginal increase in arrivals, dampened somewhat by Curacao's 8% decline over the first three quarters of this year. The Spanish speaking Caribbean continued to experience positive growth in arrivals in excess of six per cent on average, the CTO statistics revealed.

"Indications are that the fortunes of Caribbean tourism are gradually changing for the better, but could take some time before experiencing robust, sustained growth," Mr. Griffith said.

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Minister Sealy supports CTO's push to have tourism taught at CXC level

Barbados' minister of tourism, Hon. Richard Sealy has thrown his ministry's support behind the CTO's push to have tourism as an examination subject at the level of the region's examination body, the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). "I think it's an excellent idea, because we are at one with the region with regard to more calls for tourism-related subjects," Minister Sealy said at a recent tourism debate among secondary schools. The CTO has been pressing for the teaching of tourism as a stand-alone subject in order to equip Caribbean students with the fundamentals of tourism and hospitality at an early age.



"Because tourism has become an intensely competitive industry, our Region's decision-makers are keen to give the Caribbean every meaningful advantage possible; and there is little doubt that providing our youth with marketable skills in the world's largest industry deserves serious consideration," said CTO Secretary General Hugh Riley. "The tourism industry around the world has recognized the need to expose secondary school students to the world of Travel and Tourism," added the secretary general, making reference to the international programme, Passport to the World: An Introduction to Travel & Tourism, which is supported by The Global Travel & Tourism Partnership.

"We believe that our Region should have its own tourism certification programme for secondary schools, addressing global and Caribbean concerns, issues and needs." The CTO recognizes that a relevant qualification is extremely attractive to employers and that any job applicant who has studied tourism and hospitality at CXC level will likely have a considerable advantage over one who has not studied it. In addition, the CTO has said, certificate-level study in Tourism and Hospitality will open teachers' and students' minds to the vast array of possibilities regarding careers in the industry. It will encourage some of the Caribbean's brightest and best to further their education in Tourism/Hospitality, and unleash the type of creativity that is necessary to be the best employees, the most accomplished professionals and the most successful entrepreneurs.

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Customer satisfaction key in competitive sector – Secretary General

Secretary General Hugh Riley continues to espouse the virtues of total visitor satisfaction, stressing this is needed if the Caribbean's tourism sector is to survive formidable competition from wealthy destinations outside the region.

In delivering the feature address at the 4th Annual Awards ceremony of Guyana Tourism Authority and the country's ministry of tourism, the Mr. Riley made reference to the UK's appointment of a tourism minister and the US Travel Promotion Act as concrete signs that these countries are taking tourism seriously. And he warned that the region must focus on total visitor satisfaction in order to remain competitive.



"They have a tourism minister now," he said of the British government. "A recent study by Oxford Economics indicated that, last year, tourism was responsible for a hundred and fifteen billion pounds in direct and indirect contributions to the British economy, or approximately nine percent of GDP. So Britain is seriously dependent on tourism", the secretary general said.

The U. S. Travel Promotion Act intends to raise in excess of a hundred million US dollars a year to promote the United States as a tourism destination.

"They are competing against us for visitors all over the world, and they are doing so aggressively. Their market share is growing, and the Caribbean's is not. They are pooling their resources to their best advantage, and the Caribbean is not. They have big budgets with which to market themselves, and the Caribbean does not. How do we, as a region, collectively compete?" he asked.

Mr. Riley stressed that while the region may be unable to match the big budgets of the larger countries, the Caribbean ought to outdo them when it comes to customer satisfaction.

"There will always be someone who has more money to spend than we do, but they shouldn't have better service than we do. They shouldn't pay more attention to customer satisfaction than we do. They shouldn't care more than we do. They can't possibly care more than we do, because this is the most tourism- dependent region on the planet," the secretary general told stakeholders.

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Caribbean suppliers express gratitude for opportunity to meet cruise executives



Caribbean suppliers who participated in a CTO Purchasing Pavilion at the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) conference in the Dominican Republic in October have said that they have seen positive results from the exercise. The Caribbean Tourism Organization coordinated the Pavilion to showcase vendors and suppliers who wanted to sell their products to the cruise lines. Multiple Purchasing Cruise Executives and Distributors members of FCCA had pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings with the participating Caribbean vendors and suppliers.

"Thank you for the experience to be a part of the purchasing pavilion. I am glad I took your advice. Everything that you advertised you delivered. Also you followed up during the actual event. Thank you kindly.," said Jayette Burrows, the operations manager at J & J Seafood/Heritage Seafood in Nassau Bahamas. "I will always remember the experience of viewing how the CTO and FCCA seem like two well knit families that work well together to accomplish one common goal. This was displayed throughout the entire conference: high standards, high expectations, knowledgeable and goal oriented."

The companies participating in the CTO Purchasing Pavilion included J & J Seafood LTD from the Bahamas that sells seafood; Miss Anna's Hot Sauce from USVI that produces hot sauces; Calypso Rum Cakes from Barbados that produces rum cakes; Fresh Directions from Dominican Republic that sells avocados; Antigua Distillery LTD from Antigua that produces rum and Lucinda O'Connell & Associates, producers of arts and craft items. Tropical Shipping also participated, promoting their Cruise Conversion Programme.

A workshop was also held where there was interaction about the ABC's of selling products to cruise lines with representatives of cruise lines and distributors, including Ivon De La Torre, Smiljana Brac and Alvin Dennis from Norwegian Cruise Lines; Davis Mizer from Carnival Cruise Lines; Vina Adams from Royal Caribbean, Celebrity and Azamara Cruise Lines; George Kamaritis from Global Maritime Supplies; Hal Kidder from Starboard and Cindy Thomson from Sysco

"Overall, the trip was rather educational as I am now aware of what some cruise lines look for in terms of the purchasing process," said Calbert Francis, the Caribbean sales and marketing manager for Antigua Distilleries Ltd, which is currently in dialogue with three cruise lines which have expressed interest in the company's rums. Other participants have said that they have begun negotiations with various lines with a view to providing these lines with some of their products.

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CTO organises tour guides "train the trainer" workshops

Twelve professional tour guides from three CTO member countries participated in a recent train-the-trainer workshop organised by Caribbean Tourism Organization.



The CTO organized the workshop as part of a process towards developing a standardized, certificate training programme in the form of a Caribbean Vocational Qualification for tour guides in the Caribbean.

"We strongly believe that by developing standardized curricula for tour guide training in the Caribbean we will raise the professionalism of tour guides across the region;" said Bonita Morgan, CTO's director of human resources.

The two-week workshop, conducted by Ms. Iris Barry of the UK, a

certified tour guide trainer with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), brought together tour guides from the public and private sectors from The Bahamas, Barbados and Curacao. The co-facilitator was Ms. Joan Leacock.

The programme is funded by the Organization of American States and the European Union, with funding support from the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association and the Barbados Ministry of Tourism.

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Trinidad national is CTO/Monroe College scholarship recipient

Trinidad & Tobago national Tamika Keane is the recipient of the first-ever scholarship offered by Monroe College as part of the CTO Foundation Scholarship Programme. Ms. Keane will pursue a bachelor's degree programme in Hospitality Management, over the course of eight semesters of full-time study, at Monroe College in New York, NY, U.S.A. (www.Monroecollege.edu).



"I am so excited to learn I have been accepted by Monroe College, New York to pursue my dream of obtaining a degree in Hospitality Management. Let me offer special thanks to the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) for granting me a four year scholarship to help me achieve my long held ambition," Ms. Keane said. "I promise the people of the Caribbean who have invested so much faith in me that I will not let them down. I know this experience will make me a better person, and I thank God for providing me with this opportunity. I promise to work diligently and excel in my area of study so I can return to my beloved twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and help achieve its dream of becoming one of the leading tourism destinations in the world."

This very generous and unique gesture from Monroe College was offered to Caribbean citizens in celebration of Caribbean Week in New York and in recognition of the diverse student body that make up this College, including many Caribbean nationals.

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A Christmas Message from the Secretary General



As we celebrate this joyous holiday season let us take some time to pause and reflect on our many blessings – from the harmony of our rich cultural diversity, to the peace and stability that still surround us despite life's inevitable challenge. It is a good time to give thanks for the health and happiness of our friends and family and prayers for those in need, here in the Caribbean and around the world.

This is also the time of year to 'take stock'; to come together and review our goals as we celebrate our accomplishments throughout the year. Through tough economic times, our resilient and fighting spirit helped us register upward movement in tourism arrivals, with our region projecting a 4.7 per cent increase to the end of the year. The revenue position also continues to improve. We are thankful for these positive signs and we look forward to the New Year with optimism.

It is our hope here at the CTO that you will enjoy a safe, healthy and happy holiday season. We look forward to working even more closely with you as we strive to be an effective global voice for all our members.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!