

Jamaica's Tourism Sector Enhances Worldwide Appeal

In an effort to meet and surpass the needs of all visitors, Jamaica's tourist industry has continued on a path towards diversifying its product. As part of its strategy to deliver a world class product, despite the challenging economic environment, tremendous investment has been made in the island's hotels and attractions sectors.

OCHO RIOS

- Since the realignment, elevation and expansion of its Breezes brand in November, all Blue Mahoe Spas at SuperClubs Resorts, have changed their product lines and now use Dr. Grandel's skincare line. The German-based skin and body care products are produced in accordance with original recipes at a state-of-the-art plant where EPIGRAN - the essential wheat germ based active ingredient - is made in-house.

- SuperClubs' Hedonism III is celebrating its Green Globe Gold Status having moved up from Silver late last year.

MONTEGO BAY

- Secrets Resorts & Spa made its debut in Jamaica with the newly built 700-room, side-by-side resorts Secrets St. James and Secrets Wild Orchid. Ideally located on the Northwest coast of Jamaica only 15 minutes from the Sangster International Airport, Secrets Resorts & Spa offer adults an extra measure of romance and sensuality in exquisite luxury settings. Secrets Wild Orchid, which boasts a total of 350 rooms including 260 on the main complex and 90 rooms in the preferred club, had its soft opening on March 24.

Among the features of each room are oversized four-poster beds, full entertainment systems complete with LCD flat-screen televisions and CD/DVD players, a Jacuzzi for two, private furnished balconies, luxurious bath amenities, and Secrets' signature discreet 24-hour room service. Secrets St. James, scheduled to open in May, will boast an additional 350 rooms and feature a British colonial air. Both Secrets St. James and Secrets Wild Orchid will share a common area, the Promenade.

Guestrooms and suites at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort have been upgraded with nearly 300 of the total 524 rooms completed in 2009. Rooms have been repainted, new furniture, linen, flooring and flat-screen TV's added for optimal guest comfort. The resort's Sol-Mer Spa & Salon, has also been expanded with several new treatment rooms added to give more guests the opportunity to take advantage of its full range of beauty and wellness treatments. Combining spa-exclusive Pevonia Botanica products with uniquely Jamaican accents, the Sol-Mer Spa & Salon delivers a sublime spa experience within tranquil Thai-inspired surroundings. Uniquely Jamaican accents are most prevalent in massage treatments, which offer guests a choice of natural Jamaican oils. One option, a Jamaican bitter orange oil, is specially formulated to de-stress and relax muscles, while another, a Jamaican fever grass oil, works wonders on tension and anxiety.

- Round Hill is boasting tremendous success with a new sustainable initiative, its own organic herb and vegetable garden. Guests can now participate in a garden tour to see firsthand the more than 20 different varieties of vegetables and herbs including ginger, spearmint, lemon grass and fever grass used in the preparation of meals. Executive Chef Martin Maginley has been using the many fresh herbs and vegetables which are grown on property to fine tune his exquisite Caribbean cuisine.

- The Palmyra, A Solis Resort & Spa, the island's first luxury beachfront residential community, situated on 16 acres of pristine waterfront land on the Rose Hall estate is set for completion soon. Solis The Palmyra offers 299 beautifully appointed guestrooms plus one-, two- three- and four-bedroom suites, penthouses and private villas that feature between 645 to 2,600 square feet of living space with large private terraces. The resort will feature the Caribbean's first branded world-class 30,000 square foot ESPA and an ocean-view fitness center. Guests will have a wide array of dining options with five venues offering authentic, internationally inspired dishes with organic choices, a gourmet shop and wine cellar featuring fine wines from around the world. The property includes 13,000 square-feet of indoor meeting space and outdoor event lawns. Private concierge, butler, maid and chef services are available and are included with each private villa.

- Guestrooms at Altamont West, the 31-room boutique property are now being refreshed and once completed will result in an upgrade to the décor. Guests can also expect to appease their culinary delights as the property is soon to open its own restaurant Norma's, operated by celebrated chef Norma Shirley.

By summer, the property will install a card system which will control the use of electricity to enhance its energy conservation initiatives.

KINGSTON

Spanish Court Hotel, located in the heart of the New Kingston business district, since opening its doors in February 2009, has made a number of additions to its offerings to enhance the client experience. The 109-room property, which features distinctive Spanish architecture with true Jamaican style is Kingston's first yoga-friendly hotel as yoga mats are placed in all guest rooms with a yoga pose chart. Spanish Court is also playing its part in 'green' efforts with the use of the guest electronic key, that, when inserted in a slot in the room turns on the power, and on leaving the room, ensures that the power is automatically switched off.

The Jamaica Pegasus Hotel has completed an extensive multimillion dollar refurbishment project that has produced some 300 new-look rooms, featuring Deluxe Rooms and Junior Suites, Royal Junior Suites, Royal 1-Bedroom Suites and three Royal Luxury Suites. The renovation has resulted in the Pegasus undertaking a modernization of its facilities with state-of-the-art accents like plasma TVs, hypoallergenic pillows, and custom-made (in Jamaica) furniture. Bedspreads have given way to duvets, 'work spaces' are fully equipped with desks, swivel chairs, lamps and free high-speed wireless internet connectivity. Suites feature lounges with plush love seats and armchairs and all rooms have refrigerators, coffee makers, irons and ironing boards. All 'Royal Club Suite' guests enjoy a range of services specially designed for business executives including: private check-in and check-out services, complimentary continental breakfast as well as access to a private fitness room and meeting room.

Altamont Court has completed the first phase of its modernization with its previously open air bar now enclosed and air conditioned as well as new furniture added for added comfort. All the poolside furniture has also been replaced/upgraded. The modernization has also resulted in the addition of 32-inch flat screen TVs and radio/CD players in each room.

SOUTH COAST

• Sandals Whitehouse European Village & Spa since its reopening in December 2009 now boasts a number of new features expected to further enhance the experience for all travelers. Among the changes to the property were upgrades to soft furnishings throughout the expansive resort and renovations to all restaurants, the main lobby area and treatment rooms at its exclusive Red Lane® Spa. In addition, debuting with the reopening, guests can now experience Neptune's, offering classic Mediterranean cuisine, a growing favorite among diners worldwide not only for its contribution to healthy living, but for its robust flavor and emphasis on fresh seafood.

NEGRIL

• Sunset at the Palms is adding twenty rooms to the chic hideaway. These rooms, expected to debut in Fall 2010 were previously part of the Cabins that are now being enhanced to be brought up to the same standard as the existing rooms. This will bring the property's total stock to 85 rooms.

Bluefields Bay Villas has added a number of new features to its villa properties with all now offering WiFi capability. The property has also built a helicopter landing area and now work closely with Island Hoppers to offer guests an airport transfer experience that lessens the transfer time to approximately 10 minutes, giving guests incredible vistas of Jamaica's cane fields, orange groves, mountains and the sea. Spa services are now available in-house, so guests can arrange desired treatments easily and without prior planning. Bluefields Bay Villas continues its tradition of culinary excellence with fusion recipes made with direct-from-farm-and-sea ingredients.

Tensing Pen continues its commitment to product improvement with enhancements and additions to the culinary treats served at The Lodge, the hotel's intimate open air restaurant, overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Incorporating the hotel's passion for Jamaican influenced fare, new items have been introduced on both the lunch and dinner menus. Guests can now enjoy a light fare which includes Smoked Marlin Salad served with a Pepper Jelly Vinaigrette, Callaloo Fritters and Escoveitch Fish Wraps. Grilled Polenta with Okra, Saltfish Ceviche with a Coconut Oil Vinaigrette and Calamari in Red Stripe Batter with a Pineapple Lemongrass sauce have been incorporated as tasty starters for dinner. Shrimp Rundown with Fettucini and Escoveitch Pork have now joined the traditional Tensing Pen favorites of Jerked Chicken and Grilled Snapper.

PORT ANTONIO

• For the ardent nature enthusiast, Hotel Mocking Bird Hill has added 'on top of the world,' a new deck perfect for birdwatching as well as romantic dinners under the stars. Work is now complete on the creation of its sculpture park and renovations have been done to the economy rooms making them more spacious and comfortable. The property now offers satellite TV (Direct TV) in its lounge.

ATTRACTIONS

· Island Routes Caribbean Adventure Tours is set to welcome Soul Rebel, a new 54' state-of-the-art catamaran to its sleek fleet. The company's sixth luxury catamaran, Soul Rebel is expected to be deployed to Jamaica soon. Custom designed with attention to every detail and equipped with the very latest in technology, Soul Rebel will deliver an ideal cruising and partying experience. Its space age hull construction and soaring mast guarantees an unbelievably fast and smooth ride. Its thrilling waterslide will propel guests into the crystal blue sea, while the Soul Rebel DJ rocks the boat and the Island Routes staff mixes up premium-brand cocktails and serves gourmet hors d'oeuvres.