

'Duppies' at Outameni Experience

The only place you might see a ghost in the middle of the day is at the 300-year-old great house at Outameni Experience, just outside Falmouth.

Perched on the hill just behind the Experience is a restored greathouse whose pristine exterior belies its age. Slave girls singing "dis long time gal me neva see yu" welcomed everyone with ice-cold jelly coconuts prepared by a yardman, reminiscent of the plantation era.

The botanical courtyard was arranged with all kinds of indigenous plants - with the most interesting being 'medina' or 'black man's Viagra'. In the distance, the cobalt-blue sea beckoned, reminding all of the choice vistas that the plantocracy enjoyed from the verandahs of their greathouses.

Cudjoe, the Time Traveller, transported visitors to yesteryear with anecdotes about the original owners of the great house - two English doctors who concocted indigenous medicines which were used to heal the slaves on that estate and neighbouring plantations. Artefacts and crops from the plantation era were on display and prepared visitors for entry to the great house where the well-spoken house slave Karril 'Azumba' Genas introduced them to the ghosts who could be heard downstairs.

Timeless mahogany furniture in the living room found favour with all, but the master bedroom provided much humour as the men were introduced to the original 'teapot' - a vessel designed for use by men at night. Highly polished silverware adorned the dining table which was the last stop before the group went outside for the sampling of a Jamaican culinary smorgasbord.

The sumptuous layout was a pastiche of jerk chicken, escovitched fish, ackee and salt fish, and fritters served with rum punch, sorrel, june plum juice and Blue Mountain coffee. Dessert was not forgotten in the spread of sweet potato and cornmeal pudding plus the good old-fashioned 'toto'.

On hand to welcome all the guests was head honcho Lennie Little-White who explained that this multimillion-dollar expansion was designed to enrich the cultural mosaic that Outameni Experience offers to residents and visitors. Little-White stated: "The great house was always the backdrop and inspiration for Outameni Experience. Because of visitor demand, we have decided to open it up to expose the lifestyle of the plantocracy. Besides, the live-in ghosts are happy for the company." The Great House Tour and Cuisine Delight are meant to stand alone or be an add-on to the 90-minute extravaganza that is enjoyed at the seven villages that combine to form the Experience.

Outameni Experience is the closest attraction to the new Falmouth Pier, and the operators believe that their enriched product is well suited to satisfy the discriminating tastes of all who want to sample the real Jamaica.