

## Tourism

by Adrian Loveridge,  
a hotelier of four  
decades' standing

### Tourism Matters



## Enhancing our food offerings

Later this week, Barbados will celebrate the tenth annual **Food and Rum Festival** with five days of special events and highlights to expose an incredible diverse choice of eating places and further the widespread perception of being the Caribbean culinary capital.

Note, that I have not specifically mentioned restaurants, as increasingly both locals and visitors are discovering edible alternatives. For the first time, the **Food Truck MashUp** will be featured and held at the Pelican Village between 2 p.m. and midnight on Saturday, October 26, giving our enterprising smaller tourism entrepreneurs an incredible opportunity to showcase their creative offerings.

I really hope that our local manufacturers and distributors of rum and other beverages will fully support this particular day, with sampling tents and special offers, unique to the event.

It presents a great and low-cost way for Barbados-based companies to influence brand choice, so when our visitors return home, they can make better informed choices, when confronted with multiple competing rum alternatives.

On the national tourism website ([www.visitbarbados.org](http://www.visitbarbados.org)) there is even a full page dedicated to Food Trucks, stating that 'Locals often refer to them as 'food-vans' and can be found today on every corner of the island'.

Clearly, there is a lot more both our policymakers and individual private operators can do, to better inform the public and get their product across.

For our food truck operators, existing or aspiring, you really don't have to go too far to gain inspiration for a higher level. Websites like [foodtruckempire.com](http://foodtruckempire.com) and [roaminghunger.com](http://roaminghunger.com), present dozens of ideas.

Mention should also be made of the son of one of our leading business visionaries Edwin Thirlwell, whose offspring (Angus) created the Hotel Chocolat empire and recently launched the 'Chocmobile'.

Despite its recent unfortunate incident, within a few days of being put on the road originally, it was selling up to 800 cups (and many other products) of hot chocolate a day.

### Van food pioneers

Thirlwell senior, is probably among the very first global van food pioneers, having founded the British-based Mr Whippy ice cream, back in the 1950s.

Looking at liquid options, Prosecco and Gin have taken on an almost insurmountable ascension in popularity within the United Kingdom. Custom-built attractive three-wheeled sales vehicles are now exported all over the world.

Could a similar concept be adapted to market our unique rums products at special events, weddings and functions?

With a lot of vision, determination and support, the possibilities would appear almost endless, while helping us maintain our hard won reputation as a leading gastronomic destination, and at the same time fostering new businesses and generating further employment.

As I understand it, in the United States, these rolling restaurants are the fastest growing segment of the dining industry, already employing over 14 000 people, with a forecast combined turnover of US\$2 billion per year in earnings.

As previously unknown destinations continue to vie for "our" market, it's critical that we further encourage and develop all aspects of our tourism offerings to the highest possible standard.

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# Opportunity for leadership training

More than 20 Barbados Hotel & and Tourism Association (BHTA) members now have the opportunity to gain United Kingdom accredited diplomas in management and leadership after participating in a Springboard Leadership workshop recently.

John Quail, Springboard's director of operations, explained that the Unlocking Your Leadership Potential to Drive Business Performance workshop is specifically designed for supervisors, managers and anyone responsible for improving business performance through their people.

He said: "Research shows that effective leadership is one of the most important factors in determining organisational success. The workshop provided participants with the knowledge, tools and techniques that will help them to understand the concept of leadership, why leadership is important, and the actions needed to improve their effectiveness as leaders.

"They learnt about the concepts and practicalities of leadership and had the opportunity to reflect on their own leadership style and its impact on team performance.

"They can now go on to complete five more units to achieve the Confederation of

Tourism and Hospitality (CTH) accredited Diploma in Management & Leadership for Business & Hospitality. The units are all

individually certificated and Unit Two, 'Developing a Customer Service Culture to Create Competitive Advantage and Business Growth', will be held on November 9.

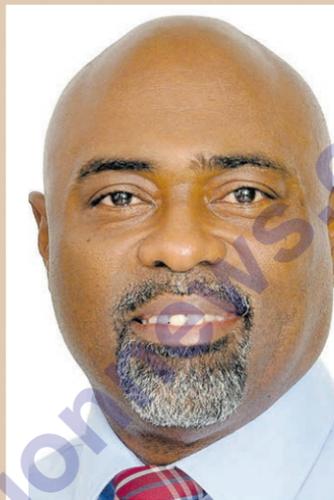
"The CTH is the UK's leading specialist professional awarding body for qualifications in the hospitality and tourism sector."

BHTA chief executive officer Senator Rudy Grant congratulated the members, noting that participation demonstrated a willingness to expand their knowledge and skills.

He said: "At the BHTA, we believe that training is extremely important, especially in this industry. We believe that keeping abreast of new skills and techniques is key not only for the personal growth and development of our members but for the overall survival and success of the industry.

"That is why we are always looking for projects to assist our members. And over the years, we have provided or facilitated training in other leadership programmes, health and safety, security, first-aid and culinary arts, among other disciplines."

(PR)



Senator Rudy Grant (FP)

## Bahamas tourism support grows



Frank Comito (FP)

Travellers wishing to support victims of **Hurricane Dorian** are seizing opportunities to travel to the Caribbean and areas of The Bahamas unaffected by the unprecedented storm.

Nearly 100 of the region's outstanding hotels responded to the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's (CHTA) call for support of a one-month online travel auction last month. The response from hoteliers was overwhelming, prompting CHTA to launch a second travel auction this month.

**Hurricane Dorian** unleashed historic destruction on The Abacos and Grand Bahama, destroying critical infrastructure, levelling thousands of homes and businesses, and uprooting the lives of tens of thousands of residents, many of whom are now homeless.

The first round of the online auction raised more than US\$50 000, which will be directed to assist with the long-term recovery efforts, helping affected tourism-

related employees, and building back a better tourism product for Abaco and its Cays, and Grand Bahama.

"The contributions from our hotel membership from over 30 Caribbean destinations have been generous, and we can't thank them enough for supporting this worthy cause," said Frank Comito, CHTA's director general and chief executive officer.

Encouraged by the contributions of Caribbean hotels and resorts, which continued to pour in following the rollout of the auction, the association launched round two early in October with many more options from some of the world's most desirable resorts and destinations.

CHTA's president, Barbados-based hotelier Patricia Affonso-Dass, said: "Lovers of the Caribbean as well as those who are looking to fall in love with the Caribbean for the first time will have many destinations and hotels to choose from as they shop and bid on vacation options, while helping those in need." (PR)



Patricia Affonso-Dass (FP)