



BHTA tourism industry update

Research and member feedback indicate that the 2021/2022 winter season is promising and, in this regard, we continue to be cautiously optimistic.

However, the COVID-19 environment continues to be fluid, which means that the tourism landscape can be negatively impacted with little warning.

In December 2021, occupancy was estimated at 65.8 per cent in comparison to 45.1 per cent in 2020 and 75.7 per cent in 2019. This highlights that while occupancy is improving, it is not back to the 2019 levels.

The projection is for a reasonably well performing winter with occupancies for the months of January, February, March and April 2022 projected at 66 per cent, 62 per cent, 65 per cent and 45 per cent respectively.

As we assess our tourism performance it is important to highlight that although tourism business is returning, the total hotel revenues received in 2021 are approximately 43 per cent of the 2019 revenues.

The critical performance marker of Revenue Per Available

Room (RevPAR) is approximately 46 per cent of what it was in 2019.

This clearly signals that the road to full recovery for the tourism industry may still be two or three years away.

Barbados has benefitted from the return of significant airlift. While the global average for the return of airlift to tourism destinations is 60 per cent, Barbados has had the benefit of more than 90 per cent of the airlift returning.

Most of the aircrafts are coming to Barbados with high loads which demonstrates significant confidence in Barbados as a tourism destination.

The recently concluded five-match T20 series was beneficial for some of our members, particularly certain "A" and "B" Class hotels and Direct Tourism Services (DTS) such as restaurants and car rentals.

We are therefore looking forward to the test series in March this year. Cricket has been a welcomed event and has certainly enhanced our visitor arrivals.

The BHTA believes that as we encourage and welcome

visitors to Barbados we must ensure that the visitor experience is exceptional.

One of the persistent sources of concern continues to be the airport experience.

Against this background, we will shortly be recommending to the Government of Barbados, through the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, changes to the Barbados Travel Protocols in a manner that maintains our competitiveness while ensuring that health and safety are not compromised.

The Barbados tourism industry is on the rebound but is still faced with many challenges and great uncertainty. The industry recovery must be assessed in a holistic manner that takes account of all the variables in this dynamic environment.

Rudy Grant,
CEO – Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA).

The Fourth Estate mandate

As we once again march off into a dispensation where Barbadians will be governed in Parliament by an unhindered government, the role of the Fourth Estate will take on greater importance.

I am very much aware having worked in and around the media in North America that there is often an unholy relationship between ruling government parties and media houses.

Governments can enrich or channel significant wealth into the coffers of media owners and managers, as long as they play the game and perpetuate the agenda of the party in power. This often holds true for advertisers and interest groups who with a phone call can have bona fides stories buried for forever.

While overseas I was aware of politicians who would call media owners and threaten them, curse them or promise them

business opportunities if their editorial content presented them in a positive light or stifled truths that might embarrass the parties in power.

Another tactic was to inundate media houses with frivolous lawsuits that had little to no chance of succeeding but because they were aware that owners were weak or looking for monetary advantage, they were confident that their tactics would work and societal truths would be kept away from the public.

In an atmosphere where any government has overwhelming power media owners must rise to the occasion and show that they are not pariahs, opportunists, or simply without souls. They and their charges must be willing to uphold the finest traditions of journalism where truths, honesty and integrity come first, and are not sacrificed on the altar of financial opportunism.

We the people are not stupid and many of us can always tell

when a publication has become compromised.

We see it in the type and quality of stories printed, those stories in the public domain that are withheld, and the direction of editorials, especially those that refuse to deal with glaring missteps by the parties in power.

Owners and managers should always be aware that readers are turned off by weak, tame, one-sided journalism and will look elsewhere for news content. Advertisers notice the switch with keen observation. In this digital age, it is even easier to detect the drift and thus to seek publicity elsewhere.

I would hope that as Barbadians start to conduct their lives in a one-party state for at least the next five years, that the Fourth Estate is not caught loitering on any politician's backdoor or pandering to their dictates.

Hyacinth Greenidge

What's up doc? Two points to ponder

Is it a three-headed Hydra, the definition of a camel – a horse made by a committee or a three-pronged approach? A hydra may be defined as

(1) containing many problems, difficulties or obstacles; or

(2) having many branches, divisions, facets, etc., most may know the physical difference between a horse and a camel, and quite a number may also be familiar with a three-pronged approach, an example of which would have been taken by past West Indies cricket selectors – with three, but more often four, fast bowlers in the team.

This 'story' came to me when I looked at the various assignments of the new Cabinet of the Barbados Government particularly with respect to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

There is an Executive Chairman, a Minister of State in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Sonia Browne, with a focus on the Hospital, and a Minister in the Ministry itself who would have overall responsibility. So, I also have to ask in true Buggs Bunny style, 'What's up doc?'

BIG or Little WU

Many years ago, there floated up an entity called (if my memory serves me right) the Barbados Industrial and General Workers Union (BIGWU).

It washed out with the tide of time. Now we have what may be called a little 'U' the Unity Workers Union?

I am not sure if the original premise for calling out the nurses on strike by this union still stands, or much more has been added thereto?

In any event, I have to find out from our journalists if they have approached the founding father of this union, Mr. Caswell Franklyn and asked for a copy of the letter of complaint sent by him to the Chief Personnel Officer – now styled Director General – outlining the subject heads which the union deems appropriate for discussion and resolution?

That letter would indicate when it might have been

Congrats to the West Indies

I might be biased because I am proud Trinidadian. But let me say that I congratulate Kieron Pollard for his great leadership of the West Indies team in the series against the English.

He persevered despite the misinformation circulated by a well-known broadcaster who should have known better than to spread such news without verification or at least checking

sent and one may judge by the date of the response, which should also be in Mr. Franklyn's possession, what progress, if any, has been made to date which would seek to satisfy both nurses and the union.

My question to both parties is, 'What's up Doc?' The time for action on this matter is long past. We have to appreciate that despite the high-powered troika mentioned above they are helpless in the situation and must await negotiations which may reach the Ministry of Labour and beyond. In the meantime, may we see the letters please.

Michael Rudder

with the parties involved. But then he sells insurance and is not a real journalist.

I hope this West Indies success continues in India in a few weeks' time. We must support our team, not spread unproven rumours about them.

Mayaro Joe