



The Proposed Value Added Tax- A View from the Tourism Sector

By McHale S C Andrew

Introduction

Empirical evidence suggests that the value-added tax (VAT) could be a most efficient means of raising Government revenue from legitimate economic activity. However, although the VAT has been hailed as a rather resourceful tax and an efficient revenue generation mechanism, its success depends squarely on the capacity of public administration as well as the ability of local businesses to effectively implement and competently manage the new process.

The tourism sector would indeed benefit from a simplified, fairer and more transparent taxation system that negates any inherent anti-export bias from the current tax regime. Of course, as the leading economic sector in St. Lucia, it must be prepared to pay its fair share of taxes, as it does indeed, but the burden of taxation must be spread as equitably as possible so that the incidence of the VAT and its effect on overall economic activity is not counterproductive. In other words, the incidence of the VAT must be such that it has a neutral, if not positive, effect on the distribution of economic welfare. Moreover, the Authorities should be ever mindful of the fact that the VAT's incidence or burden does not depend on where the revenue is collected but on the price elasticity of demand and price elasticity of supply for the particular good or service whose production (value-added) is being taxed. Hence, the introduction of VAT must be based on the principles of equity, efficiency and administrability.

Equity

Equity requires that the VAT be applied fairly. The main purpose of taxation is to allocate the burden of funding the operations of government and of paying for public services. The tourism sector relies heavily on government facilitation and support services including Customs and Immigration Services, infrastructural development, destination and sub-sector marketing support and the maintenance of law and order. The sector already bears a significant tax burden through, inter alia, taxes on importation of goods and services, property tax, withholding taxes on payments to non-residents, consumption and excise taxes on local consumption, hotel accommodation tax, cruise passenger head tax, airline ticket tax and airport departure taxes. Consequently, the implementation of the VAT should be done in as transparent and equitable a manner as possible and must not in any way place a greater burden on tourism or any other sector.

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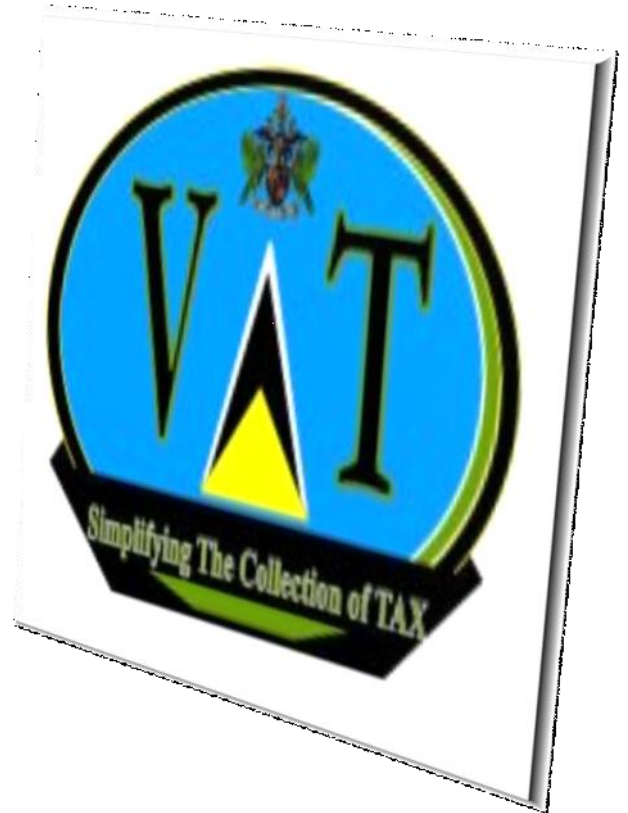
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The prospect of levying an introductory VAT that would result in a higher net rate of tax than the combined effect of other indirect taxes that it replaced could be very tempting to policy-makers who are keen on increasing the overall revenue intake. One would however caution that the most effective and sustainable means to ensure an increase in revenue is to (1) increase the level of compliance; (2) tighten the exemptions regime; and (3) rely on the buoyancy of the tax system rather than on increases in the tax rate. Tax buoyancy refers to the situation where an increase in tax revenue is dependent on growth in economic activity such that when GDP goes up there is an equivalent or sometimes even greater rise in the tax revenue without increasing the tax rate.

It would be interesting to see what the effect on economic activity, and by extension on overall Government revenue, would be if an introductory VAT rate of 10% is applied after factoring in deserved exemptions and zero rated items. Of course, in some instances this would represent a net reduction in the replaced taxes, such as consumption tax, but the net effect on economic activity could more than offset such a reduction if that approach results in a veritable economic stimulus. Besides, various taxation studies have shown that a simple tax rate, that is easy to calculate and apply, generally results in greater compliance and enhances the fairness and transparency of the tax regime.



Efficiency

Optimal efficiency requires that the cost of administering the VAT must be justified by the amount yielded by that tax. One of the key issues that have been consistently mooted by the VAT Implementation Office is the VAT's replacement aspect, which posits that, "*VAT will not be an additional tax but a replacement for some existing indirect taxes. It will be a broad based, comprehensive and simplified system of taxation on transactions.*"

That statement notwithstanding, the challenge would be how to ensure that the administration of the new VAT system does not cost more than the combined administrative costs of the taxes that it replaced. Thus, the Authorities would have to ensure that the management of the VAT implementation process does not represent an additional charge on the public purse but lowers the overall cost of tax administration. This would be the best indicator of increased efficiency and would undoubtedly assist the overall public sector reform effort, which in turn should lower the cost of public services. The entire economy and not just the tourism sector would benefit from such an outcome.

Administrability

Perhaps the biggest challenge of VAT implementation in a small developing country is how to ensure that the business sector develops the requisite understanding and technical capacity to handle the VAT payment, collection and reporting process. Failure to adequately address that issue and to make sure that the private sector and indeed the country as a whole is well equipped to make the transition to a VAT system could undermine the credibility and acceptability of the system. The VAT must therefore be introduced only after such technical understanding and managerial capability is achieved.

By the same token, the public sector has to demonstrate a high level of competence in implementing, monitoring and enforcing the VAT. Policy consistency and ample administrative competency in managing the process are essential to its success and general acceptance.





Final Celebration for SLHTA Contestants



The MR. and MISS SLHTA 2009 Prize Giving Ceremony was held on Sunday 08th November 2009 at the Coconut Bay Beach Resort and Spa. At the Prize Giving Ceremony the contestants were given a warm and exciting send off by the management and staff of the Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa. The nine contestants had the privilege of enjoying the day at the resort and in the evening the SLHTA in collaboration with Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa hosted a Prize Giving Ceremony and Cocktail Reception in their honor. Each contestant was presented with a Certificate of Participation, gifts and prizes. The male contestants for 2009 were Miquel La Porte of Sandals Resorts; Andreas Francis of Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort and Veejay Sydney representing Hospitality Management Services.

The female contestants were Leona Constable of Coconut Bay Beach Resort and Spa; Miguelita St. Ange of the Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort (first runner up); Glenda Abbott of Sandals Resorts (second runner up); Vernessa Gilbert of the Marina at Marigot Bay; Velma Soody of the Association of Travel Consultants and Ria Herman representing the Intimate Inns of Saint Lucia.

In attendance were the nine contestants, chaperones, Mr. McHale Andrew the Executive Vice President of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, Mr. Joe DuBois Chairman of the SLHTA Pageant Committee, Mr. Daniel Belizaire Chairman of the SLHTA Events Committee, Mr. Kingsley Powlette one of the founders of the Pageant, Mr. Vishal Bhalla General Manager of Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa, committee members and invited guests. Special Remarks were given by Mr. Joe DuBois and Mr. McHale Andrew followed by the presentation of gifts and prizes. Andreas Francis, MR. SLHTA 2009 and Leona Constable MISS SLHTA 2009 received trophies compliments of First Caribbean International Bank and a two year scholarship each to attend Monroe College Saint Lucia. Other prizes included jewelry, cell-phones, weekend passes to luxurious hotels, dinners and spa treatments.

The Vote of Thanks was done by Leona Constable, the reigning MISS SLHTA 2009. Ms Karen Davis the Head Chaperone received a special gift from the contestants for her support and guidance. Special recognition was also given to Mrs. Brenda Cozier of Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa and Fenella Anne Samuel from the Palm Haven Hotel for their contributions in making the Pageant a success. It was then hugs, pictures, fun, laughter, food and drinks as guests and the contestant mingled before the sun set on the 2009 SLHTA Pageant.

SLHTA Upcoming Events

2010 Calendar

Annual Tourism Property Owners' Meeting

SLHTA AGM

President's Ball

Tourism Awards

Annual Celebrity Golf Classic

Annou Tjuit Sent Lisi

Rhythm & Spice



SLHTA Welcomes New Allied Members



Sacred Cows is among the newest members of the SLHTA. As well as specialising in sports and project management, the company has extensive international knowledge in tourism

and event management, marketing, and communications. Sacred Cows founding director Nova Alexander, who recently returned to Saint Lucia having run a successful hotel and destination representation company in the UK, has a seasoned track record in tourism, sports and event management and is also founding director of the Sacred Sports Foundation, a subsidiary and St. Lucia-based charity established to provide developmental programmes through sports for disadvantaged youth. In June, the Foundation held its first sports coaching programme. "Our aim is to be the catalyst for change. We want to be seen as thought leaders, focused on inspiring a diversely creative team that conceives original ideas for our clients. We believe in excellence through dedication. That ingenuity and quality can live hand in hand with enjoyment and profitability" says Nova. Working alongside Nova is her brother Delroy Alexander, a Pulitzer Prize nominee financial journalist, management consultant and crisis management specialist. He has worked in the US, UK, North Africa, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe on a range of developmental projects, bringing a keen analytical mind, excellent promotional skills and organisational analysis. Visit www.sacredcowsgroup.com



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Applications to Government for Fiscal Incentives

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FLOISSAC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES
Barristers, Solicitors & Notaries Royal
Cnr. Brazil & Mongiraud Streets
P. O. Box 722
Castries, Saint Lucia

Tel: (758) 452-2887/452-3250/458-4931

Fax: (758) 453-1496/458-4051

E-mail: ffa@candw.lc

Website: www.floissaclawyers.com



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personal and professional connections between nations and people. Since our launch in 2001, Digicel has become the largest mobile telecommunications operator in the Caribbean and a recent new entrant to the Central American mobile market.

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For more info visit: www.digicelstlucia.com

SLHTA Welcomes New Hotel Member



The Marina Haven Villa:

This newest villa built in Rodney Bay is perfect for those who like to be near the action, while enjoying at the same time the beauty and tranquility of the best accommodations around.

This villa is only minutes from the longest golden beach in St. Lucia (Rduit Beach), the St. Lucian Golf Club at Cap Estate and some of the most famous restaurants and shopping that our wonderful island has to offer. A cul-de-sac of dreams embedded in richly sweet, succulent colors and scents luxurious palm trees and flowers greet you as you approach Marina Haven with authentic old fashion-styled décor.



Caribcert



Following the successful launch of the CARIBCERT certification program for hospitality workers on September 14th 2009, the SLHTA is pleased to announce the enrollment of over thirty-five employees on the program. These successful applicants have all received their training packages and are currently working along with their supervisors to achieve certification in the following areas:

- Junior and Senior Waiter
- Bartender
- Food Service Supervisor
- Beverage Service Supervisor
- Housekeeping Supervisor
- Cook
- Food Preparation Supervisor
- Reservations Agent
- Front Desk Agent
- Front Desk Supervisor
- Front Office Manager

The CARIBCERT Certification Programme is a system of occupational standards and certification developed by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association. The Programme “developed by the industry, for the industry” represents the collective expertise of over two thousand industry professionals across the Caribbean who helped to craft the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to be considered competent in these occupations.

The St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, is proud to introduce the CARIBCERT certification program to St. Lucia as a means of strengthening service quality across the hospitality industry as well as a mechanism to motivate and support hospitality workers in pursuit of their career aspirations.

H1N1



On Monday 9th November, 2009, the SLHTA facilitated a presentation to its membership, by the Ministry of Health, on strategies to control the spread of the H1N1 influenza virus in the workplace.

Dr. Alina Jaime and Dr. Gemma Cherry presented a historical overview of the virus and the current status of preparedness of the island in the instance of an outbreak.

To guide their operations in the event of staff falling ill, businesses were encouraged to develop plans and communicate these plans to all staff members. Support was provided on the development of these plans and participants were informed of how they can access information for circulation to staff.

Over twenty three companies were represented in what proved to be a healthy discussion on preventing the spread of the H1N1 influenza virus in the workplace. The discussion concluded with a warning by Dr. Jaime on the possibility of a second wave of the virus and the need to be vigilant and prepared.

VAT Consultation with SLHTA Members



The Value Added Tax (VAT) Implementation Project Team in collaboration with the SLHTA conducted a consultative session for members on the policies to guide the VAT System. The VAT Implementation Project Team was established by Cabinet in October 2008.

The gathering was held on Wednesday 9th December from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Rex St. Lucian Conference Room. The meeting served to educate and prepare members on the implementation of VAT by providing valuable information while trying to obtain members' views on the content of the VAT White Paper. Major decisions and transitional issues are being considered by policy makers.

A brief presentation on the VAT System was made by the VAT Implementation Project Team followed by open discussion and input from participants. Specific proposals and suggestions from the floor were welcomed.





Private Sector Funds to Convert Derelict Pub on the Rodney Bay “Ramp” into a Community Police Sub-Station

The St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), the Rodney Bay Community Association (RBCA) and the Rodney Bay Village Corporation (RBVC), with the generous financial support of several enlightened corporate citizens, have partnered with the Government of Saint Lucia through the Ministry of Home Affairs & National Security and the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, to fund the redevelopment of the erstwhile Cat’s Whiskers Pub on “The Ramp” at Rodney Bay into a community police substation. An official “sod turning” ceremony to commence the reconstruction process and to acknowledge the munificent financial contribution of many other private sector partners took place at the Royal by Rex Resort on Friday December 18th at 10.00 AM. In attendance were Mr. Ausbert Regis Commissioner of Police, Honourable Ezechiele Joseph Acting Prime Minister, Mr. McHale Andrew Executive Vice President of the SLHTA, Mr. Lindell Gustave (Guscomms Inc.), corporate donors and invited guests.

After several meetings between the SLHTA, the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, the RSLPF, the RBCA, and various interests in the Rodney Bay area, the urgent need to construct a new substation was acknowledged. This proposed new substation will be a more permanent facility, given Government’s ownership of the land on which it will be built, and will serve as an operational centre for policing Rodney Bay and its environs.

The idea behind the initiative is to develop a best practices approach to community policing and law enforcement while also promoting an environment conducive to full community participation in safety and security programmes. The private sector partners hope that this initial step towards crime prevention would encourage a greater Government resolve to demonstrably repel the apparent bravado of the criminal element that seems bent on disrupting the peace of ordinary citizens, residents and visitors. All parties acknowledge that the economic viability of the country and the general welfare of its populace demand a zero tolerance to wanton criminal behaviour and a much more rigorous approach to the promotion of safety and security.

The list of corporate donors who have thus far pledged contributions of cash, labour or building materials to the effort are as follows: Bank of St. Lucia; Bay Gardens Bay Walk Mall; Edge/Fire Grill Restaurant; First Caribbean International Bank; Florida Caribbean Cruise Association; J Q Charles Group of Companies; LUCELEC; Memories of Hong Kong; Mr. Lindell Gustave (Guscomms Inc.); Mr. Michael Chastanet; Rex St. Lucian Resort; Rodney Bay Community Association; Spinnakers Restaurant; The Land Store; The Village Inn & Spa and The Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort. The pledged contributions to date represent about half of what is required to fully fund the facility but expectations are that other contributions would be forthcoming once the project gets underway.

Allen Chastanet Named Caribbean Travel personality of the Year



Source: Saint Lucia Tourist Board

Contact: Bevan Springer, Marketplace Excellence + 1 201 861-2056 or Email: bevanspringer@nj.rr.com



*Senator Allen Chastanet,
Saint Lucia's Minister of
Tourism and Civil Aviation*

ALLEN CHASTANET NAMED CARIBBEAN TRAVEL PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

LONDON (November 10, 2009) - Saint Lucia's Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Senator Allen Chastanet has been named the Caribbean Travel Personality of the Year. Senator Chastanet won the honor at the prestigious 2009 World Travel Awards in London, England. The World Travel Awards acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the global travel and tourism industry.

"It's with great humility that I accept this award on behalf of the Government and people of Saint Lucia," said the Senator, who saluted his fellow Saint Lucian nationals for their commitment to excellence across the hospitality industry.

At the Awards, Saint Lucia once again copped the Caribbean's and World's Leading Honeymoon Destination designations, while the Caribbean's Leading Spa Resort went to The Body Holiday LeSport. The Caribbean's Leading Hotel Brand and the World's Leading All-Inclusive Company went to Sandals Resorts.

"As a Saint Lucian, I am deeply honored to witness such a small destination create a big bang on the world stage," said Saint Lucia's Director of Tourism Louis Lewis, who acknowledged that the weekend awards were additional stimulus for the Saint Lucia Tourist Board to continue striving to improve in today's competitive travel and tourism environment.

Senator Chastanet, who is credited with starting the world acclaimed Saint Lucia Jazz festival, was Vice President of Sales and Marketing with Windjammer Landing in Saint Lucia before being appointed the island's Director of Tourism in the early 1990s. He became Director of Sales and Marketing at Island Outpost in the mid-90s before serving as Director, then Vice President of Worldwide Sales and Marketing at Air Jamaica for eight years.





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In 2001, Travel Agent magazine named Senator Chastanet "Caribbean Destination Person of the Year," and in 2003 he returned to his native Saint Lucia to open Coco Resorts in Rodney Bay Village. He was appointed to the Saint Lucia cabinet in 2006 and assumed the chairmanship of the Caribbean Tourism Organization. Senator Allen Chastanet holds a B.A. in Economics and Political Science from Bishop's University in Quebec, Canada as well as an M.Sc. in Development Banking from American University in Washington D.C.

Legendary Saint Lucia continues to capture Awards

Source: The Star Newspaper
October 26th 2009

Saint Lucia has been the recipient of numerous accolades over the past few years. One of the most noteworthy achievement is having been awarded the World's Leading Honeymoon Destination no less than six times in the last seven years!

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board, which is charged with the responsibility for promoting the island world-wide, credits these accomplishments to its successful year-round marketing initiatives.

This week Condé Nast Traveler, a US-based magazine with a readership of more than 820,000, announced that Saint Lucia had been ranked number six in the category of "Top Islands" in this year's annual Readers' Choice Awards poll conducted by that Magazine.

Up one spot from last year in the "Caribbean and Atlantic Island" category, Saint Lucia's many new developments, services, activities and amenities made a strong impact on visitors.

Director of Tourism Mr. Louis Lewis sees this as an important endorsement for the island. "This award from such a reputable and respected agency reinforces the fact that Saint Lucia is highly regarded as a leading destination with a top class tourism product.

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board prides itself on being able to set Saint Lucia apart from other Caribbean destinations by positioning the island as having more to offer than rest and relaxation. " Thousands of readers participated in Condé Nast Traveler's online questionnaire, voting on categories of activities, atmosphere/ambience, beaches, friendliness, lodging, restaurants and scenery.

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board also acknowledged three on-island resorts - Ladera, Anse Chastanet and the Body Holiday by Le Sport - which also received rankings from the Readers' Choice Awards. Ladera was ranked number 5 out of the "Top 10 Caribbean Resorts".

This is the second year in a row that the resort has held onto the fifth spot and prides itself on its award-winning cuisine, luxurious spa services and unique design that offers unobstructed views of the legendary Pitons. Anse Chastanet followed in sixth spot and The Body Holiday by Le Sport ranked 17th in this Category. Since 1988, the annual Condé Nast Traveler 'Readers' Choice Awards' poll has analyzed the travel preferences of the magazine's readership in various categories, including cities, islands, airlines, cruise lines, hotels, spas, resorts and car rental agencies. Complete award results are listed in the November issue of Condé Nast Traveler and at www.cntraveler.com





The Future of Tourism in St. Lucia

By Mchale S C Andrew



Tourism is no more than the expansion of a country or locality's market size through the presence of visitors who do not normally reside in that location. That presence therefore offers prospects for any local business or individual who produces a competitive good or service to benefit from such market expansion. Full appreciation and acknowledgement of that simple concept would help determine the future of tourism in St. Lucia.

The tourism sector is made up of a number of industries, sub-sectors and activities including the accommodation sub-sector; air, maritime and ground transportation sub-sectors, restaurants and dining establishments, arts & crafts industry, retail and wholesale distribution, duty-free shopping, car rental, destination management companies, tour guides, tour operators, travel agents, water sports operators etc. Those activities and industries that make up the tourism sector are necessarily connected through forward and backward linkages to the other major sectors within the economy. The extent of those linkages depends on the country's market size and its level of economic development.

However, it is in the interest of all tourism enterprises to ensure a healthy economic and social environment by seeking, as much as is feasible, to strengthen those linkages by facilitating the development and sustainability of domestic enterprises through, inter alia, the deliberate cultivation of mutually beneficial commercial relationships. Indeed, the evidence is clear that some of the most successful tourism businesses in St. Lucia and the Caribbean are generally those that have the highest local content in their product. Such success derives from their understanding of the significance of cultural authenticity and uniqueness to the well-informed, high net worth visitor. Just as well, those enterprises act in their own enlightened self-interest in seeking to bolster the economic and social stability of the communities in which they operate. They recognize that an economically robust community provides the most conducive environment for their commercial success.

While, like all other sectors, the tourism sector is susceptible to the vagaries of economic conditions in source markets, tourism is even more vulnerable to economic, political or social instability, whether real or perceived. Thus, the sustainability of the sector rests on three main pillars, namely: (1) the preservation of the physical environment through, among other things, maintaining the right ecological balance and ensuring the efficient use of natural resources; (2) economic sustainability, which includes realizing an adequate return on investment for both local and foreign investors and attaining the requisite international competitiveness; and (3) social stability, as defined by positive local attitudes and perceptions of tourism, which itself relates to the extent of participation and involvement of locals and residents in the tourism sector's processes and benefits.

Tourism is all about providing the visitor with a unique and memorable experience and the development of all sectors of the economy would almost always benefit the tourism sector, the wider economy and the visitor's overall experience. Indeed, improved political and corporate governance, enhanced education, development of the cultural industries, more efficient service delivery mechanisms in the public and private sectors, superior business facilitation systems, progressive social transformation practices, more rigorous infrastructural upgrades and improved strategies for agricultural and manufacturing sector advancement would all, in some way, redound to the benefit and comfort of the visitor, the citizenry and the tourism sector. This, in essence, is what is required to ensure a bright and stable future for tourism, and indeed for the entire economy, in St. Lucia.



Jalousie Initiative to Boost St Jude Restoration Fund

News Release

Jalousie, October 19, 2009



The Jalousie Plantation is supporting the Office of the Prime Minister in its efforts to raise funds for the rebuilding of St Jude Hospital in Vieux Fort. St Jude Hospital was severely damaged by fire on September 9th, resulting in the loss of three lives and the decimation of facilities. Hospital staff have been operating out of temporary facilities at the George Odlum Stadium since the incident but are ill-equipped to deal with major medical emergencies, making rebuilding a high priority. Plans for the restoration/rebuilding of St Jude are shortly to be finalized. In response to the crisis and recognizing the urgent need to raise funds, The Jalousie Plantation has launched a special accommodation package for St Lucian residents and will donate 100% of the proceeds to the St Jude Hospital Restoration Fund.

Under the special package, two guests can enjoy one of Jalousie's vintage accommodations and a full American breakfast for **US\$150 per night**. For just **US\$250 per night**, guests can upgrade to Jalousie's Luxury Villa category and enjoy bed and breakfast for two. (Rates are subject to availability and do not include 10% service charge and 8% government tax.) The offer is valid for stays up to December 17, 2009 and guests must be residents of St Lucia.

Normal rates for Jalousie's vintage rooms start at US\$240++ per night room only and at US\$540++ per night for the new luxury villas. This means guests not only have the opportunity to give back to the local community but they can enjoy real savings as well. For more information and bookings, contact The Jalousie Plantation's reservations department on telephone 456 8000. "The owner and managers of The Jalousie Plantation are delighted to support the Office of the Prime Minister in raising much needed funds to kick-start the rebuilding efforts in Vieux Fort," said Jalousie's General Manager, Andre Boersma. "We are galvanized in our resolve to do what we can to see these vital medical facilities restored as soon as possible for the benefit of the local communities, which rely on these services."

Meanwhile, the Office of the Prime Minister has opened four bank accounts to receive donations for the rebuilding fund and has set up a hotline to provide information about activities and efforts to re-establish health care services in the south of the island. Contact Kimberly Mathurin on telephone (758) 450-JUDE for more information and to make your donation.

St. Lucia an upbeat update

By Gay Nagle Myers

http://www.travelweekly.com/Caribbean/article3_ektid203612.aspx

September 22nd 2009

St. Lucia's tourism industry is upbeat as the destination approaches the winter season armed with a new campaign and slogan, a multi-city road show, increased airlift, robust cruise numbers and previously stalled hotel developments that are seemingly back on track. Allen Chastanet, minister of tourism, ticked off the rays of sunshine in the island's positive forecast while bluntly addressing the dark clouds that have hovered over St. Lucia this year in terms of visitor numbers.

"We've suffered along with the rest of the region," Chastanet said. "Our visitor numbers year to date are down about 8.5%, and we're projecting an overall decrease of 7% by the end of the year, which will translate to a total of approximately 90,000 U.S. arrivals and a total worldwide count of 350,000 visitors." [sic]

But the new initiatives, as well as the government stimulus package, which reduced import duties for a year and exempted hoteliers from collecting the hotel occupancy tax for the next six months, has helped pumped optimism into the tourism sector.





"Our new theme and slogan tie in with our image as an unspoiled, undiscovered paradise," Chastanet said. "The 'Legend Has It' campaign highlights our Arawak Indian origins, natural attractions, topography, our signature Pitons and our drive-in volcano."

St. Lucia's village tourism concept, introduced several years ago, encompasses the island's individual communities of storytellers, fishing villages and bustling markets. That's highlighted in a 27-city road show, which includes meetings and presentations with travel agents and operators.



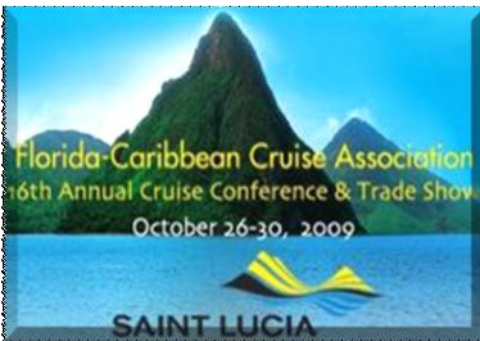
In addition, the tourist board will open a toll-free, on-island telephone sales office, manned 16 hours a day, seven days a week. "This is designed as a support centre for agents, especially home-based agents, who can call with questions that will be answered by local tourism people who are knowledgeable about all aspects of St. Lucia's tourism product," Chastanet said.

New airlift includes American's second nonstop Miami flight four days a week, starting in November, to complement the carrier's daily service. JetBlue launched three weekly flights from New York Kennedy. There is new service out of Canada, the U.K. and Germany. Bids are being taken for a new airport in the south of the island, to be built behind the existing Hewanorra Airport. Cruise visitors topped 618,000 in the 2008-2009 season, a figure that Chastanet expects will exceed 700,000 this season.

Hotel developments that stalled last fall when financing collapsed appear to be back on track, including the Ritz-Carlton and Westin projects. Several properties will debut expansion programs this fall and early 2010, including Rendezvous, RockResorts' Landings, and Discovery at Marigot Bay. The Tides Sugar Beach, the former Jalousie Plantation, will open in 2010. "Our newest property is the Hotel Chocolat near the Ladera resort on the west coast. Six rooms will open in January, and the property is connected to a real cocoa plantation where guests can watch cocoa being processed and sample the goods," Chastanet said. Regarding the issue of crime on St. Lucia, "we're proactive," Chastanet said. "We don't cover it up. We tell people where to go and not to go. More than 120 cops have been added to the tourist areas in Castries, Rodney Bay and Gros Islet plus lots of surveillance cameras."

6th Annual Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association Conference & Trade Show FCCA conference boosts island tourism efforts

Source: www.eturbonews.com
November 05th 2009



Caribbean and Latin American leaders, including Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Velez, committed to strengthening cruise tourism efforts throughout the region as nearly 1,000 industry experts from around the world convened in St. Lucia for the 16th Annual Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association Conference & Trade Show. "In times of economic downturn, those that remain aggressively in the forefront of the marketplace are those who are best positioned to prosper as our economy recovers," FCCA President Michele Paige told delegates. The record turnout in challenging economic times underscores the need for regional partnerships, Paige said. "Now, more than ever, we have to work together to get ahead."

Delegates from 42 Caribbean and Latin American destinations attended the event. Participants also came from as far away as Spain and Dubai. Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Velez made a special appearance to confer with cruise line executives.

Also at the conference were port officials, tour operators, tourism agencies and suppliers, and approximately 100 cruise executives from among the association's 15 member lines. Delegates attended standing-room-only workshops led by member-line executives and expert guest speakers. Topics covered marketing strategies in the recession; keeping up with trends, and developing innovative tour operations.

Contd. On Pg 11





They also sat in on private meetings with cruise executives to present tourism products, analyze industry trends and discuss developing issues. In addition, more than 75 players raised funds at St. Lucia Golf Club for the FCCA Foundation at the conference's annual golf tournament, which was sponsored by Rak Porcelain.

The Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association is composed of 15 Member Lines: AIDA Cruises, Azamara Cruises, Carnival Cruise Lines, Celebrity Cruises, Costa Cruise Lines, Cunard Line, Disney Cruise Line, Holland America Line, MSC Cruises (USA) Inc., Norwegian Cruise Line, Ocean Village, P&O Cruises, Princess Cruises, Royal Caribbean International and Seabourn Cruise Line. It was created in 1972 by cruise lines operating more than 100 vessels in Florida, Caribbean and Latin American waters to foster legislation, tourism development, and cooperation on ports, safety, security and other cruise industry issues.

Saint Lucia - Ready for the Mega Yacht Business

Source: Dainea Augier, Manager, Corporate Communications Te: 758 452 4094
03rd November 2009

Key Stakeholders in the International Yachting Industry welcome news of a Yachting Registration Desk for Saint Lucia

Castries, Saint Lucia, November 3rd, 2009 – The Saint Lucia Tourist Board was well represented at the 50th annual Fort Lauderdale Boat Show, which was held from October 29th through to Nov 2nd. Over \$3 billion worth of super yachts, boats, engines and thousands of accessories from every major marine manufacturer and builder, worldwide, were on show during the Event.

Representing Saint Lucia at what has become the largest boat show in the world was Cuthbert Didier, Board Member and Ian Herman, Marketing Manager, Special Markets. Also attending in his private capacity was Ben Saltibus, an entrepreneur from Soufriere who has been working within this sector for over 15 years. During this very significant maritime-based event, Saint Lucia's participants held discussions with some of the key players in the yachting sector.

"This may have been one of my most productive visits with a Saint Lucian delegation to this show," disclosed Cuthbert Didier. "It's indeed an exciting time for Saint Lucia as the yachting sector stands to benefit tremendously as a result of the island's participation. Most yacht Captains and yachting brokers that we met with are planning their itineraries and the island is on their radar for a possible visit within the coming months." Didier added, "The news of the yachting registration desk was also welcomed. Already, some key international businesses working within the sector have pledged their support towards this initiative which, once completed, will further enhance Saint Lucia's overall yachting product."

"Attending the boat show was truly educational," explained Ian Herman. "The magnitude of the opportunities and benefits that this business has to offer has yet to be explored and so Saint Lucians may be losing out as a result of their own reluctance." He added that, "it was worth noting, that Saint Lucia is slowly becoming the yachting haven of the Caribbean, given the first class facilities and amenities available at both the newly refurbished IGY Marina and Marigot Bay, complemented by the simply natural beauty of the island." However Herman is aware that "we must remain increasingly mindful that these facilities by themselves cannot be the do all and end all for the sector, and so the providers of ancillary services must begin to fully appreciate its importance and offer the best possible standard of service to each and every yacht that visits our shores because the competition is ever present and aggressive," he concludes.

Even in the midst of the worst global recession, the local yachting sector has to date attracted close to 5000 visitors, which is a 32% increase over the previous year. The Saint Lucia Tourist Board is cognizant of the fact that such positive trends must be maintained and in this regard will spearhead new initiatives in an effort to foster mutually beneficial partnerships with key local, regional and international agencies and businesses in its bid to further improve upon, and by extension, change the face of this all important tourism sector on the island.

One of the biggest yachting events in the world – the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers – takes place on Saint Lucia from November 22nd to December 18th. Over 250 boats are expected to sail to Saint Lucia from Las Palmas in the coming weeks. The Saint Lucia Tourist Board has hosted the ARC participants for the last 19 years and is looking forward to executing yet another exciting line up of activities which will be disclosed to the public shortly.





Totally Lucian Team in Trip Advisor top Ten

Source: Judith Verity; Tel 485 1621

Jean René Du Boulay; Manager Tel: 286 0511



Rainforest Hideaway in Marigot, one of St Lucia's most romantic fine dining restaurants, has re-opened for the season, with a totally Lucian team in charge. Manager, Jean Rene du Boulay, was born to the business, helping his father run restaurants in Castries and Gros Islet while he was still a teenager.

A Sandals scholarship in the US added academic qualifications to his practical experience and he eventually returned to Fair Helen with a burning ambition.

He was determined to create a fine dining experience in St Lucia that could compete with the most prestigious establishments in the rest of the world. "It's not easy to maintain both service standards and culinary excellence," he says, "but the crew I have here at Rainforest are exceeding all my expectations. Head Chef Myron has created an exciting and imaginative menu and Stephen Donnelly, the Maitre D' makes all our guests feel like VIPs."

It's certainly true that Chef Myron's blend of classical French cuisine, fused with the flavours of the Caribbean, attracts celebrity guests to the Hideaway as well as locals from all over the island and visitors from all over the world. But it's taken more than skilled management and inspirational cuisine to keep Rainforest Hideaway in the top ten Caribbean Restaurants on Trip advisor for the past year. "It's all about the guests" says Maitre D' Stephen,

"my challenge is to make sure they have a magical dining experience every time they step off the Marigot Ferry and on to our dock. When I left school," he adds, "I was a beach bum for a while, until I realised I had no prospects and I wasn't meeting interesting people. Right now, I'm proud to be fronting such a professional line-up here at Rainforest and I feel like I am an ambassador for St Lucia. Our guests have a wonderful evening with us and they go and tell the rest of the world about it. Then they come back next time they're in the Caribbean and it feels like meeting old friends again.

Rendezvous Refurbished and Unveiled

St. Lucia's newest renovated 5-star 100 room resort has emerged from its shadows.

Every section of the rejuvenated hotel, the brand new rooms in the Spa Water Garden boasting a beautiful private rockery-garden pool; the Terrace Buffet; the new Entrance; the Reception Areas and the Wedding Centre is guaranteed to take one's breath away.



Notice to Customers Hewanorra International Airport

The Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA) wishes to inform its valued customers that improvement works have commenced at the Hewanorra International Airport. As a result, the usual three lane vehicular traffic flow in front of Arrivals and Departure areas has been reduced to two lanes effective November 9th, 2009.

SLASPA apologizes for any inconveniences caused as we attempt to improve our services.

For further information, please contact the Hewanorra International Airport Management at 454-6355.

*Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority
Complementing your every move*





SLTB NEWS

Nerdin St. Rose joins Saint Lucia Tourist Board's Executive Team

Source: SLTB
8th December 2009



Nerdin St. Rose

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board announced the appointment of marketing and public relations specialist Nerdin St. Rose to the post of Vice President of Marketing and Sales.

Ms St. Rose a St. Lucian national, will move from her public relations and marketing practice in the Turks and Caicos Islands - where she currently lives, to spearhead the island's marketing charge on a full time basis starting in January 2010.

An authority on doing business in the Caribbean, having worked with and in islands such as Anguilla, the Bahamas, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Saint Lucia and the Turks & Caicos Islands, Nerdin St. Rose also has years of experience working in the North American marketplace.



In addition to working in the hotel sector in Saint Lucia, her career highlights include stints with several advertising and communications firms, including Travel Weekly - a major travel industry publication, and in television with BET Digital Networks where she was project manager for music festivals produced in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. She also worked on investment initiatives with the US-based office of the organisation of Eastern Caribbean States in Washington, DC.



All That Jazz In Saint Lucia This May

Source: Dainea Augier
Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 11th November 2009



All That Jazz In Saint Lucia This May

Legendary international artistes Foreigner and Steel Pulse down to perform at the May 1st – 9th Festival

Some of the jazz world's most iconic and legendary musicians are set to perform on the luscious tropical gem of Saint Lucia at the prestigious Saint Lucia Jazz in May 2010. The ten-day celebration will take place from May 1st to 9th, 2010 beginning with fringe events and climaxing with a powerhouse four day line-up performing 6th to 9th May on the main stage.

The annual Festival brings together the rich, dusky tones of jazz, sensuous soul, cool calypso beats and world rhythms from some of the greatest artistes in the music industry, and attracts music lovers from all corners of the globe. A thrilling line up this year includes **Earl Klugh, Jean-Luc Ponty, Maxi Priest, Steel Pulse, Foreigner, Carimi, Harvey Millar, Monty Maxwell, Carl Gustave and Teddyson John** for one of the best parties in the Caribbean.

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board is in the process of finalizing contracts with some other world renowned artistes. The full line up will be disclosed shortly. Visitors to the island at that time will be in for a two-for-one treat as Saint Lucia will be one of the host nations for the International Cricket Council's World Twenty20 Tournament (ICC WT20). The two Group Stage matches will take place before the main stage shows of Saint Lucia Jazz with the Super 8s. The Semi Final matches take place in the week following Jazz.

For additional updates on Saint Lucia Jazz 2010 I follow the Saint Lucia Tourist Board on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/SLTB2010> and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8235372705>.



Saint Lucia Courts Asian-American Market



Source: Saint Lucia Tourist Board

Contact: Bevan Springer, Market Excellence + 1201 861 2056 - bevanspringer@nj.rr.com

CASTRIES, Saint Lucia (November 27, 2009) - Saint Lucia's tourism authorities are ramping up efforts targeting the burgeoning Asian American market and are extending special welcomes for Taiwanese Americans. Louis Lewis, St. Lucia's director of tourism, said that on the heels of a recent familiarization visit of Taiwanese Americans spearheaded by Bay Gardens Resorts, the island was now eagerly anticipating the arrival of leading civil society activist Iris Ho who will be a participant at next week's Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Tourism (CMEx) being held at Coco Palm's Conference Centre.

Saint Lucia has often explored the potential for "ethnic" tourism in the Caribbean, and the tourism authorities are assessing the potential to market Saint Lucia to Taiwanese Americans. CMEx meets next week under a theme which examines multicultural tourism markets as well as climate change.

Saint Lucia is attractive to Taiwanese Americans not just on the strength of its natural beauty and merits as a vacation spot, but also because the island is one of a handful in the Caribbean that recognizes the Taiwanese government. Ian Williams, an acclaimed journalist who has defended the right of the Taiwanese to self-determination, and Iris Ho who represents a major Taiwanese American advocacy organization in Washington DC will be present at CMEx to explore opportunities.

Among others, they will meet with Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Senator Allen Chastanet, Director Lewis as well as Taiwanese diplomats on the island. "It's a long way from Taiwan, but we have hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese in America, who remain attached to their home country. They are now a prosperous community and include many professionals and business people. Like most middle class Americans, they like vacations and we think they might like to show their appreciation to Saint Lucia," said Iris Ho. Senator Chastanet pointed out that Saint Lucia has long been recognized as a legendary honeymoon destination, but with the addition of world recognized boutique hotels, new golf courses, additional shopping attractions and casinos, the destination is embarking on broadening its marketing appeal.

Saint Lucia Shares Legendary Campaign with Travel Trade

Source: Dainea Augier

Saint Lucia Tourist Board



NEW YORK (September 24, 2009) - Saint Lucia kicked off its Road Shows for travel partners with a lively première here in New York City last week, sparing no effort to promote the island's renowned products, services and attractions to the travel agent community.

Some enterprising members of the travel community, including agencies that specialize in selling travel to the Caribbean Diaspora markets, have joined the Saint Lucia Tourist Board and hotel representatives on the Road Show tour which will call at more than 25 cities in the United States and Canada. "Now's not the time to twiddle our fingers, ride out the fall and assume we will have a strong winter - rather, it's time to tell the world what's on offer on our island and encourage past and potential vacationers to visit Saint Lucia now," said Director of Tourism Louis Lewis, who was in New York City for the première last week.

Encouraging agents and consumers alike to "Live the Legend" of Saint Lucia, Lewis joined New York City-based tourist board executive Lorine St. Jules to share the dynamic developments on the island as Saint Lucia prepares to welcome 50,000 visitors this fall, thanks in part to the new thrice-weekly service from JetBlue Airways, beginning October 26, 2009. The Road Shows feature the destination's new ad campaign themed "Legend Has It" which highlights the legacy of this unspoiled island destination.



**SLTB
NEWS**





Regional Cruise Tourism Up in Down Economy

Source: <http://www.caribbeannewsdigital.com>
Sunday 08th November 2009



Cruise spending is up in a down economy in destinations visited by cruise line-members of the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association. Cruise tourism boosted revenues for ports and businesses in Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean

in one of the gloomiest financial years since the Great Depression, according to an FCCA-commissioned study from Business Research and Economic Advisors.

BREA reported that FCCA-regional cruise tourism in 2008-2009 generated more than \$2.2 billion in direct expenditures, 56,000 jobs and \$720 million in employee wages among 29 destinations surveyed.

The new study analyzed spending by passengers, crew members and cruise lines in destinations ranging from the Caribbean islands, Mexico, Central America and South America, said Andrew Moody, Ph.D., president of the Exton, PA-based research group.

According to BREA's findings, cruise passengers (17.56 million) spent \$1.71 billion in 29 participating destinations. An average of 52 percent of passengers bought shore excursions, generating \$328 million in total payments to tour operators. Passengers also bought watches and jewelry (\$634 million); clothing (\$168 million) and other goods and services (\$164 million).

Crew members (3.24 million) spent nearly \$289 million in the 29 destinations, mostly for clothing, food and beverages, as well as jewelry, electronics, perfumes and cosmetics.

Cruise lines spent an estimated \$279.9 million in participating destinations for port fees and taxes, utilities, navigation services and ship supplies.

BREA-surveyed destinations included Antigua & Barbuda; Aruba; The Bahamas; Barbados; Cayman Islands; Curacao; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Jamaica; San Juan, Puerto Rico; St Kitts and Nevis; St Lucia; St Maarten; St Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; Turks and Caicos and US Virgin Islands in the Caribbean; Acapulco, Cabo San Lucas, Cozumel, Ensenada and Huatulco in Mexico; Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua in Central America, and Cartagena, Colombia, in South America.

Confidence in Tourism Sector Improving UNWTO Says

Source: www.caribbeannewsdigital.com/en/Default.aspx
Monday 23/11/2009



The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is reporting that confidence in the sector is gradually picking up. It says while international arrivals worldwide are estimated to have declined by seven percent between January

and August 2009, the downward trend that started in September last year may have begun to bottom out. "Arrivals in the two high-season months of July and August declined by three percent compared with a decrease of eight percent in the first half of the year, and data available for September points to a continuation of this upward trend," the UNWTO says.

It added that the UNWTO Confidence Index is also improving after two periods at a historic low. The more than 330 experts surveyed worldwide by UNWTO confirm that confidence is picking up.

In the latest survey, the percentage of experts with a negative outlook for the next four months has decreased from 62 percent to 42 percent while, for 30 percent of experts, prospects are 'equal', and for 28 percent they are 'better' or 'much better'.

"Throughout this year, the world's tourism industry was faced with a large number of challenges, led by the global economic crisis, the credit crunch and rising unemployment, not to mention the influenza pandemic. Seldom in recorded tourism history has the industry had to contend with so many different issues at the same time," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

"However, the negative trend that emerged during the second half of 2008 and intensified in 2009 is starting to show signs of receding." As experienced in previous crises, tourism earnings have suffered somewhat more than arrivals as consumers tend to trade down, stay closer to home and travel for shorter periods of time.

Receipts from international tourism are estimated to have contracted in real terms by nine to 10 percent in the first six months of 2009 - that is, one to two percentage points below the decline in international arrivals during that period (-8 percent).





Awards & Recognition



The World Travel Awards 2009

Saint Lucia won the following:

World Leading Honeymoon Destination

Caribbean Leading Honeymoon Destination

Caribbean Travel Personality of the Year:

Senator Allen Chastanet, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation

Caribbean's Leading Spa Resort:
The Body Holiday Le Sport

Conde Nast Traveler

Ranked Saint Lucia six in the Category of "Top Islands" in this year's annual Readers Choice Awards Poll

Ladera ranked number 5 out of the "Top 10 Caribbean Resorts"

Anse Chastanet ranked number 6 out of the "Top 10 Caribbean Resorts"

The Body Holiday by Le Sport ranked 17 out of the "Top Caribbean Resorts"





the bodyholiday
LeSPORT

The Oasis The Body Holiday LeSPORT
named
Spa-Goers' Favorite Spa in St. Lucia and The Caribbean
In Seventh Annual Spa Finder Readers' Choice Awards

Jade Mountain Wins first ever GAVA Gold Award
at the inaugural award reception at
the Palm Hotel in Las Vegas



Global Aqua Tektur Visionary Awards salute the innovative spirit of artisans
from every segment of the globe, celebrating diverse concepts
from varying cultures and environments.

St. Lucia Distillers wins Major Awards
at the International Spirits Challenge in London

Admiral Rodney won Rum Trophy & Gold Medal for "The Best Rum" in a
competition feature well over 500 entries from around the world.

Chairman's reserve won a silver medal and St. Lucia distillers was nominated
for a trophy for "Excellence in Craftsmanship"; one of only three distilleries
from around the world nominated for such a high honor.



 ST. LUCIA DISTILLERS
GROUP OF COMPANIES






CHTA CORNER

New in the CHTA Data Center

- Smith Travel Research (STR) Construction & Lodging Report – November
- CTO Arrival Statistics – November
- Bahamas - October 2009 Hotel Performance
- Cozumel – October 2009 Statistics
- Puerto Rico - August 2009 Statistics
- St. Lucia – July, August and September Statistics 2009
- USVI - November, December and January Projected Occupancy Report

The above reports can be found in the [CHTA Data Center](#).

Members will be required to enter their log-in information before being redirected to the Data Center. Members experiencing difficulty with the log-in procedure can contact CHTA at 305-443-3040 for assistance.

CHTA 'M2M': Member - to - Member December Deals

If interested in participating for January, please contact [Gabi Doria](#) at 305-443-3040 for more information.

Caribbean Marketplace Pre-Scheduling Registration Deadline is December 14th 2009

The deadline to submit requests for the appointment pre-scheduling process for Caribbean Marketplace is Dec. 14. Submitting requests before the deadline will increase appointment schedule opportunities at the event. Booths and sponsorships are still available. Taking place in San Juan, Jan 10-12, 2010, Caribbean Marketplace is presented by CHTA, MasterCard Worldwide, Puerto Rico and Virgin Holidays, and is sponsored by AMResorts, Caribbean Travel + Life, Choice Hotels International, Eventstar, Green Globe Certification, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Interval International, St. Maarten Tourist Bureau, Starwood Caribbean Collection, Tropical Shipping and Utell Hotels & Resorts/Pegasus Solutions.

Registration For the Caribbean's Official Tourism Investment Conference Opens December 15th 2009

With the highest level of hotel and tourism leaders ever assembled for a Caribbean travel industry conference – at the most crucial moment in Caribbean tourism development – the 14th Annual Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Investment Conference (CHTIC 2010) takes place at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 4-6, 2010. Registration for the Caribbean's only official tourism investment conference opens Dec. 15, 2009.

The Caribbean Gold Book is Back!

These are challenging times, and travel agents have once again become the most trusted source when booking leisure travel. For 25 years, the *Caribbean Gold Book* (later known as *CaribbeanTravel.com – The Magazine*) has provided the travel trade community with the most comprehensive data on the Caribbean lodging industry. Due to continuing demand for this trusted reference source, this Caribbean-specific "bible" will be distributed to North American and UK travel agencies in January 2010 under its original brand name *The Caribbean Gold Book*. For full information contact Jill Jones at Tel: 305-926-5828; e-mail: jill@jilljonesmedia.com for more on co-op opportunities, inclusion in supporting digital media and added value on www.caribbeantravel.com.

CHTA Names Green Globe As New Strategic Partner

CHTA has signed a Strategic Partnership agreement with Green Globe Certification to work with and support the Caribbean hospitality industry. The agreement designates Green Globe Certification as both a Strategic Partner of CHTA and a member of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) Governing Council.

CAST Update

Caribbean Alliance For Sustainable Tourism (CAST) Executive Director Adolfo López provides an update on CAST activities including the <http://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/downloads/CASTenglish.pdf> soon to be launched CAST website. For more info visit: <http://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/downloads/CASTenglish.pdf>

CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION



Performance of Sector - October *Source: Saint Lucia Tourist Board



Stay-over arrivals for the month of October has fluctuated over the past six years. Preliminary figures released by the Saint Lucia Tourist Board reveal a 0.2% increase in arrivals for the month of October, increasing from 18,996 in 2008 to 19,031 in 2009. In reviewing performance by markets, declines were noted from two of the four main source markets, but on a much smaller scale than was recorded in previous months:

- Canada – visitor arrivals from this market was down by 163, falling from 818 arrivals in 2008 to 655 in 2009; a decline of 20%
- UK – this market recorded a 20% decrease in arrivals, dropping from 7,027 arrivals in September 2008 to 5,648 this month

The US market experienced a 6% increase in visitor arrivals from 6,515 in the same period last year to 6,884 this year. Increases were seen in visitors from Tennessee, Virginia and Atlanta Georgia, each recording a 61%, 23% and 19% increase respectively.

1 Colony House, John
Compton Highway
P. O. Box 545
Castries, St. Lucia
Phone: (758) 452 5978 or
453-1811
Fax: (758) 452 7967
Website: www.slhta.org

The month of October is the beginning of the cruise season opening with a sharp increase in cruise arrivals for the month. There were 9 more cruise calls this month in comparison to the same period in 2008. This resulted in a total of 32,892 cruise arrivals; a 102.3% increase from October 2008.

The Yachting Sector also recorded significant growth, with over 217 more yachts docking in Saint Lucia this month than in the same period of 2008; a 154% increase. This has resulted in 1,864 more arrivals – 120.3% more than last year. One may recall that the marina was under re-construction from June to November 2008, hence the drastic increase this year.

YEAR-TO-DATE FIGURES (JANUARY- OCTOBER 2009) *Source: Saint Lucia Tourist Board STAY-OVER ARRIVALS BY MARKET

Year-to-date figures for the period January to October 2009 show an overall 8% decline in stay over arrivals, from the same period one year ago, falling from 249,785 in 2008 to 229,379 in 2009. The greatest loss experienced was from the UK market, which fell by 14.6% from the same period last year.

The US market also recorded a similar decrease in arrivals over the ten-month period. A total net loss of 15.4% was realized, compared to the same period last year.

The Caribbean continues to perform relatively well, recording positive growths for the past four months. To date, 51,429 arrivals have been recorded from this market, indicating a 2.1% increase in comparison to 2008. The largest contributors thus far, have been Martinique (17,667), Trinidad & Tobago (7,839) and Barbados (7,789). Though the former two recorded a 10.8% and 3% increase respectively, arrivals from Barbados have actually fallen by 15%. Significant improvements have however been noted from the Bahamas (146%), BVI (51%) and Aruba (103.4%).

Canada is the island's fourth largest market, totaling 22,654 arrivals for the year. Despite this comparatively low figure, this is one of the few markets to record significant increases in arrivals over the one year period. To date, visitor arrivals are 13.4% higher than in the previous year, due mainly to the increased airlift from Canada earlier this year.

Visitors from Germany have increased by 12% from the previous year, and it is anticipated that this figure will continue to show signs of improvement, with the arrival of Condor's direct flight from Germany to Saint Lucia, commencing in November. France also showed a growth in arrivals of 27% for the first ten months of this year, compared to the same period last year.

CRUISE & YACHT ARRIVALS

The Cruise and yachting sectors continue to show consistent growth, with cruise passenger arrivals increasing by 15.6%, with a 32% increase in cruise ship calls. Significant increases have also been recorded every month for the last ten months in the yachting sector, with a general increase of 42.5% in arrivals from 2008.

Ferry Arrivals *Source: SLASPA

The number of ferry calls experienced in August and September 2009 corresponded with the confirmed totals for the same period in 2008. August 2009 witnessed 18 ferry calls as did August 2008. However, there was a slight decline in the number of passenger arrivals and departures. August 2008 documented (11, 970) arrivals and departures compared to 2009 total of (11, 549), a 4% drop. September 2009 witnessed 12 ferry calls similar to what was documented in September 2008. However, there was a 2% (3,055) increase in the number of passenger arrivals and departures compared to September 2008 (3,000) total. October 2009 saw 8 ferry calls, a slight decline in comparison to 9 confirmed for the same period in 2008. The passenger arrivals and departures also decreased slightly from October 2008 (2, 988) to October 2009 (2,949) a 1% drop.

