

July News Brief

2011

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2011 Destination Symposium Wraps



Familiar faces, and some new ones, joined the association last month at the annual Destination Symposium. This year's conference was hosted by Westin St. John with intermittent trips to St. Thomas,

and with a strong contingency visiting St. Croix. The Department of Tourism updated tour operator and other industry partners on its strategy to marketing the destination moving forward. Commissioner Doty discussed some of the new realities of traveling, and the traveler, air development, a proposed Governor's Conference in the fall, small hotels programs, social media efforts, and many other marketing avenues. The association delivered a creative presentation and highlighted the Blue Flag Initiative and Hospitality Degree Program beginning at UVI in Fall 2012. Thank you to all the sponsors for helping us to host another successful Symposium.

Doumeng ... New President-Elect of Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association



Richard Doumeng, managing director of Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, is the new President-elect of the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) for 2012-2014. The announcement was made during the recent Taste of the Caribbean Competition in Miami. He is the past Board Chairman of the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association.

"My #1 priority will be to reach out to as many people who are stakeholders in the Caribbean tourism industry as possible, said Doumeng. "First I will thank and acknowledge all the people who are still members of CHTA and who retain a vision and hope for a relevant regional organization. We then need to engage the people who should be members but, for whatever reasons, are not. Perhaps more importantly though, I want to connect with the people who used to be members of CHTA and who still love and care about the Caribbean, even though they have dropped out of our association. CHTA

wants and needs them back."

In 2009, Doumeng received the Hotelier of the Year Award from the CHTA, making him the 4th Virgin Islander to receive this distinction. His parents Dick and Joyce Doumeng, founders of Bolongo Bay, received the award in 1988.

The President-Elect position was created by CHTA to allow for a smooth transition from one administration to another.

Membership Corner

New Member

It's considered the most energy efficient air conditioner in the world and new member **Green Energy Distributor** has brought it to the U.S. Virgin Islands. This unique A/C is made out of fiberglass and is guaranteed to last at least 15 years. The unit uses very little water to operate and runs on less energy than a vacuum. They are available in a variety of sizes for both household and commercial use. Local inquiries can be directed to the Capri Group at 626-6569. For additional information on this cost saving air conditioning unit visit www.freus.com.



As of July 8th, Wyndham Sugar Bay has been rebranded as an independent hotel and is now **Sugar Bay Resort & Spa**. Within the next 12-18 months the property will undergo renovations and focus on increased service standards. Welcome to Donald Foste, the new Sales & Marketing Manager. We look forward to working with him and continuing the great relationship with the hotel. To stay updated on all the changes taking place visit www.sugarbayresortandspa.com.

ARDA Contributes to Scholarship Fund

The American Resort Development Association has donated \$5,000 to the Hotel & Tourism Association Education Fund. The ARDA-Resort Owners' Coalition (ARDA-ROC) is the first line of defense against legislation that may negatively impact timeshare owners and their well-being. Through ARDA-ROC, owners can be part of an effective grassroots lobbying coalition of timeshare unit owners dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing vacation ownership. "We are thrilled to be promoting excellence in education and service by contributing \$5,000 to U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel and Tourism Association Education Fund," said Howard Nusbaum, President and CEO of ARDA." This partnership shows just how strongly both sectors of the lodging community believes in giving back to the community and supporting the future generation of hospitality industry professionals."

DOT Announces New Air Service For the Winter

The Department of Tourism recently announced new air service this winter from Jet Blue and Air Canada. Effective December 15, 2011, Jet Blue will begin service for the first time with both regional and dedicated service. The airline will offer a daily flight between San Juan and St. Croix and two daily flights between San Juan and St. Thomas. Jet Blue will also launch five weekly departures from Boston's Logan airport to St. Thomas.

Also in December, new service will launch out of Toronto on Air Canada. The weekly non-stop flight arrives into St. Thomas on December 24 and will operate through April 14, 2012.

The DOT will support these new services by working closely on marketing initiatives, promotions and in market events. The new flights represent an addition of more than 90,000 seats to the USVI annually.

SAVE THE DATE

July 15	General Membership Meeting, The Westin St. John, 12:00 Noon
September	Travel Agent Month
November 5	10th Annual Tommy Star Awards Gala Frenchman's Reef Marriott Award of Excellence Recipient—Mr. Edward Thomas

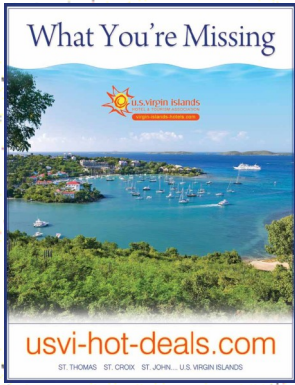


Recent statistics:

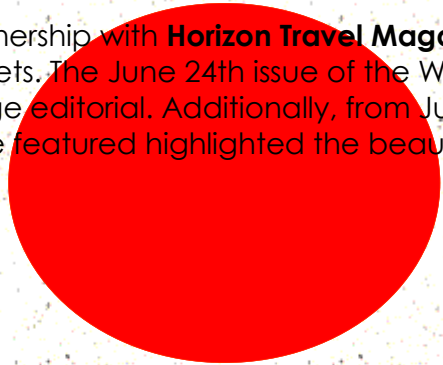
- 1651 active users 256 since last week
- 5074 people like this 1201 since last week
- 33 wall posts or comments this week 15 since last week
- 379 visits this week 9 since last week

Our next sweepstakes features a 4-night, 5 day stay at the Hotel Caravelle..

HORIZON TRAVEL



Through a partnership with **Horizon Travel Magazine**, the CMI received exposure in key media outlets. The June 24th issue of the Wall Street Journal included a full page ad and full page editorial. Additionally, from June 28-July 4th, the Giant ABC Screen at Times Square featured highlighted the beauty of the islands with 120, 5 second commercials.



The **Tommy Starfish Social Media Runway** is completed and fully operational. Visitors area able to gather information at the airport booth and also play games to win prizes. The goal of the games is to engage visitors, drive traffic to your establishment and also help you build your qualified database of USVI visitors. More than 2000 people have already played the games. Contact the association if you're interested in being a part of the action.



CHTA TIDBITS

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) are set to relaunch the marketing and business development unit, the Caribbean Tourism Development Company (CTDC), a jointly owned and operated private, for profit entity created in 2007. The revitalized CTDC will market the Caribbean brand through licensing, merchandizing, advertising, and the sale of vacations via its web site (caribbeantravel.com). The web site, which will be redesigned, will include among other features, an integrated booking platform that specifically caters to the Caribbean's smaller hotels. Funding for the CTDC will come from both the public and private sectors, with joint owners each committing see funding to be supplemented by CTO member countries. The new CTDC board of directors will comprise six members each from CTO and the CHTA, with the leaders of the two organizations—the CTO Chairman Richard Skerritt and the CHTA president Josef Forstmayr—as co-chairs.

VI Culinary Team



The Hotel & Tourism Associations' VI Culinary Team recently returned from the **Taste of the Caribbean Competition** with medals in hand. This year's competition was held in Miami, Florida featuring a new format which separated food categories—seafood, beef, cheese, pastry—allowing for

more individual recognition. Teams were still presented with a mystery basket of ingredients to use in creating their dishes in the respective categories.

The Team had a stellar showing, proving that months of practice and experience can place you center stage and, in the eyes of the judges, top of your game. Overall, the team won silver but individual chefs came home with the following medals:

- David Benjamin (The Ritz Carlton)- **Silver in the seafood category**
- Negust Kaza (Tutu Bene-St. Croix) – **Gold in the Certified Angus Beef category, Best use of Cheese**
- Dennis Vanterpool – **Chef of the Year – Silver**
- Afiya Augustus (St. Croix Complex graduate, Johnson & Wales student) – **Bronze Junior Chef**
- Al Boston (The Ritz Carlton) – **Bronze in the rum category, Bronze overall**

One of the most impressive showings was that of pastry chef Kunal Chakrabarti of The Ritz Carlton. Chakrabarti's impressive "A play of chocolate & island fruits" won him the **Albert Uster Imports Pastry Chef of the Year Award** and a place in the Hall of Fame. The creative dessert included chocolate scotch bonnet spirals, mango sorbet, guavaberry, and speculoos cookies.

The success of the team would not be possible without the support of the following sponsors: The Department of Tourism, Frenchman's Reef Marriott, Innovative, International Capital & Management Corporation, Merchants Market, Premier Wines & Spirits/Cruzan Rum, The Ritz Carlton, St. Croix Hotel & Tourism Association, Taste of St. Croix, and the West Indian Company Limited.



Kunal Chakrabarti—Pastry Chef of the Year



Negust Kaza—Best Use of Cheese