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# Caribbean Cruising

THE FLORIDA-CARIBBEAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

Fourth Quarter 2008

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*Michele M. Paige and family at the wedding of her daughter Nicole Terrero and Ryan Stender.*

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most responsive to change."

- Charles Darwin

A new year is the perfect time to embrace the president-elect's theme of change. It can provide an opportunity to completely reinvent yourself—or just focus on some minor changes. The best part about a new year is the way it lets you put the past where it belongs.

Everyone got seasick riding the rough waves of last year. Now we all need to see how the passengers react to steady seas. We need to reach out our hand to this cringing consumer. The dollar is rising again, but its real value can be seen in the hesitation to spend. People now truly appreciate what they have and want to hold on to it.

This is the market we must attract, and targeting the extreme will yield plenty of subsidiaries. By appealing to those who want to save, you also get those who are willing to spend. It is time to bring people to your destination, ship, or tour. If you offer a full package, supply it; otherwise make those necessary changes to make it that way. Make it so people feel they need to spend their money, that they have earned their break and will experience something special.

We must also plan our voyage. Sure, we can always hope for easy seas, but the important thing is to factor in all the obstacles. Though we never know what will happen, we should always be prepared for it.



Our articles in this issue of Caribbean Cruising should highlight the importance of customer care awareness in Vicky Rey's—Vice President, Guest Services, Carnival Cruise Lines—Working Together. It discusses how to evoke that WOW from passengers on shore excursions and utilizing the cruise tourism to improve Caribbean destinations along with more advice and information. Hopefully this issue will be beneficial to help fulfill a current goal or establish a new one in the route for change.

Respectfully yours,

Michele M. Paige







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## Expansion Efforts Underway at Port Everglades in Preparation for *Oasis of the Seas*



Terminal 18 at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale is currently undergoing expansion efforts to accommodate Royal Caribbean's Genesis class of ships, the largest cruise vessels ever constructed. The addition, designed by Miami based Bermello Ajamil & Partners, Inc., will add approximately 160,000 square feet to the existing facility and allow for greater capacity of passenger boarding and baggage processing. Scheduled for completion in September 2009 in time to homeport the first Genesis ship – *Oasis of the Seas*, Terminal 18 is poised to be the largest and most efficient terminal ever built.

## Dolphin Cove Jamaica expands to Grand Cayman- opening Phase One December 2008



On arriving at Dolphin Cove – through dense forest you stroll along the nature path where you will see a variety of birds, Iguanas and "others" that are indigenous to the Cayman Islands.

Dolphin Cove Grand Cayman will offer three dolphin interactive programs – a very special "up close encounter" where guests will get a kiss or two from the lovable dolphins. ... or there is an option to swim with one dolphin which will give each guest a "belly ride".

The Platinum swim is with two dolphins that will give each guest a dorsal pull and foot pushes in-between a kiss or two.

The shopping at Dolphin Cove can only be described as –"fantastic" with a great variety of jewelry, souvenirs, and unique items of interest.



Dolphin Cove Grand Cayman is wheelchair friendly to all areas.

Guests to Dolphin Cove Cayman can experience the Cayman famous Sting Ray Sand Bar by leaving from the Dolphin Cove's private pier.

There is much planned for phase two, so keep a close ear to the Platinum Highlights.

## New Identity For Cruise Industry's Premier Event

CMP Information, long time organizers of the Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention, have unveiled a new logo and branding message to better reflect the positioning of the convention within the global cruise industry. The new

logo and branding message updates the look of the leading cruise industry event and emphasizes a more modern image.



The Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention launched in 1985 with the pioneering first event held at the Vista Hotel in New York with some 100 conference delegates. Twenty-four years later, the 2008 show at the Miami Beach Convention Center drew more than 11,000 attendees and nearly 1,000 exhibiting companies from 117 countries and regions.

"The show's well-known 'diamond' logo has served it well through its rapid evolution, but the time is right to look forward to the next phase of its development and to acknowledge in the corporate identity the bond between the show and its established location," said Michael Kazakoff, group vice president of CMPi. "From 2009, the show title will be Cruise Shipping Miami and an exciting new identity has been adopted."

The event has firmly established itself as the cruise industry's leading annual exhibition and conference. Its Miami location is a vital element in the success of the show, as the city is the primary home port and hub of the cruise industry.

With a full line-up of new and exciting





products branded under the graphic element, the new identity will be on show March 16-19, 2009, at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Conference and exhibitor information for Cruise Shipping Miami is available online at [www.cruiseshippingmiami.com](http://www.cruiseshippingmiami.com).

## Puerto Rico Tourism Company Spearheads Visionary Cruise Industry Program



The business of promoting one of the world's most exciting vacation destinations takes into consideration many things, but chief among these is assuring that travelers can reach your destination as easily as possible.

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company (PRTC), with the help of the Government of Puerto Rico, has capitalized on its appeal as a No Passport Required for U.S. citizens destination and has introduced several initiatives this year to make the island the preferred port-of-call for the world's biggest cruise ships.

Currently, fourteen cruise lines visit Puerto Rico with ten ships calling San Juan their homeport: *Adventure of the Seas*, *Carnival Destiny*, *Carnival Victory*, *Caribbean Princess*, *Galaxy*, *Seadream I + II*, *Serenade of the Seas*, *Silver Cloud* and *Summit*.

In June of this year, a Cruise Incentives Law amendment was put in place by

the Honorable Anibal Acevedo Vila, Governor of Puerto Rico, that will continue to provide incentives through 2011 to the maritime service providers who safeguard existing routes and / or expand their operations to the region. This incentive has been extended to all of the ports on the Island. The Cruise Incentive Program also enacted by The Governor allocates a yearly \$10 million fund for the development of Puerto Rico's maritime industry. Further, provisioning incentives have been put in place for all goods purchased in Puerto Rico, a benefit that extends beyond the purchase of food and beverages on the island.

As a result of these efforts, the Port of San Juan welcomed 1,496,853 maritime visitors, representing an 8.9 percent increase over last year, with 118,161 more visitors to San Juan than the year before. Further, from 2005 through 2008, the island has experienced a 15 percent increase in the cruise sector with over 198,000 additional travelers making their way to San Juan.

The cruise industry currently generates 198 million dollars in homeport visits and stopovers for the economy of Puerto Rico. Its presence on the island is also marked by the creation of 5,830 jobs that represent 143 million dollars in salaries which results in a total impact of over 341 million dollars on the island's economy.

For more information on travel to Puerto Rico, visit [www.GoToPuertoRico.com](http://www.GoToPuertoRico.com)

## St. Kitts – A Captivating Cruise Destination!

2008 – 2009 Cruise Season began on Saturday, October 24 with the arrival of *Carnival Miracle*. With a total of 216 scheduled visits from cruise ships

with a combined passenger capacity of 483,208, this season figures are expected to surpass last year's totals of 177 calls and 356,664 actual passengers. This is exciting news for St. Kitts at a time when the Caribbean is losing market share to new destinations in Europe.



What makes St. Kitts such an appealing destination? Two major attractions continue to entice visitors and distinguish St. Kitts from all other ports. Built by slave labour in the 17th Century, Brimstone Hill Fortress rises majestically 800 feet above sea level. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, this formidable structure made of locally mined black volcanic stone is irresistible to visitors. Another lure is the Scenic Railway which takes enthusiastic visitors on a 30 mile tour along the island's coast. Tourists are in awe of the beauty of the island seen from the comfort of a refurbished locomotive (train) once used to transport sugar cane. The onboard experience includes refreshing beverages and live entertainment featuring local folk songs. These two unique and authentic attractions help set St. Kitts apart from its Caribbean counterparts.

The 68 square mile island with its unique experiences, heritage sites, vast natural beauty and friendly people will sustain the interest of cruise passengers. St. Kitts has embraced cruise tourism, and by responding to changing expectations from consumers, expects to define itself even more sharply as a leading cruise destination.





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# Cruising and the Caribbean: Thriving Through Partnership



By Terry Dale, President and CEO, Cruise Lines International Association

When I turn on the morning news all I can think is “Hang on

tight, we’re on quite a roller coaster ride.” The stock market is swinging wildly, home values have plummeted, consumer confidence is shaky, food and fuel prices have skyrocketed, and change is coming to Washington with a new president. Certainly, I can think of no other time in recent history this challenging.

What does this mean for the Caribbean and the cruise industry? Historically, despite obstacles that have included the Iranian oil crisis, the dot.com bust and 9/11, the cruise industry has seen a history of steady growth. Since 1980, its average annual growth has been an impressive 7.5 percent. In 2007, the CLIA fleet carried 12.5 million passengers and contributed over \$38 billion, generating 354,000 US jobs. A 2,500-passenger cruise ship generates an average of \$358,000 in passenger and crew spending per call in a home-port. A similar ship making port of call visits would generate approximately \$318,000 in onshore spending. In the Caribbean, the cruise industry generated \$1.8 billion in spending, for an average of \$94 million per destination, and created 41,500 jobs paying \$600 million in wages. And, it is interesting to note that as the cruise industry continues to globalize operations, the number of internationally sourced guests rose to over 20 percent of total passengers in 2008 after hitting the 2.3 million mark the year before.

Despite current economic turmoil, the cruise industry is looking ahead to fur-

ther growth. Seven new ships joined the CLIA fleet in 2008, many of them sailing in the Caribbean. These include MSC’s *Poesia* and *Fantasia*, RCI’s *Independence of the Seas*, Holland America’s *Eurodam*, the Carnival *Splendor*, Princess Cruises’ *Ruby Princess* and the Celebrity *Solstice*. In 2009, another ten new ships are scheduled to arrive for an additional seven percent increase in net bed days. In fact, among the member lines of CLIA, there are 34 new ships on order between 2008 and 2012. This represents a \$23.5 billion investment.

The cruise lines are clearly investing in the future and there are strong indications that the industry and the nations of the Caribbean are well-positioned for success. First of all, consumers need a vacation now more than ever; increasingly, they are even willing to defer payment on other budget items in order to get away. And, particularly in this time of economic uncertainty, they are looking for outstanding value for money spent.

We know from CLIA’s Cruise Market Profile Study that travelers understand that a cruise offers great value for money spent. Ninety-six percent of cruise vacationers consider a cruise good or extremely good value. Ninety-five percent report total satisfaction with their cruise experience. Coincidentally, nearly all traveler segments name the Caribbean as the top area to visit on a cruise. It’s no wonder that it remains the world’s largest cruise market. Among cruisers, 50 percent state that they returned to vacation on a Caribbean island that they first visited by cruise.

High satisfaction means repeat business – on cruise ships and in the Caribbean. But there is a vast untapped market out there as well. Only 20 percent of Americans have ever cruised before and in our latest survey of travelers, it is estimated that 34 million people intend to take a cruise in the next three years. Given the Caribbean’s popularity, a very large portion of that 34 million is likely to cruise there.

The secret to the success of the Caribbean as a cruise destination has been the ongoing partnership of cruise lines, CLIA and the nations of the region. This is reflected in partnerships to improve cruise infrastructure such as the St. Maarten pier project and in partnerships to protect our communal natural environment by teaming up, as CLIA does, with organizations like Conservation International. And it is reflected in the FCCA’s training and outreach programs such as the Caribbean Taxi Pride program and Service Excellence.

Partnership will remain the single most important factor in going forward, particularly in this most challenging of sales environments. It is only by working together to find cost-effective and creative ways to consumers’ worries and hesitations that we will continue to thrive. CLIA has 16,000 of the best partners imaginable, our travel agent members who sell 90 percent of all cruises. I have no doubt that we, in partnership with them, FCCA and the nations of the Caribbean have all that it takes to keep the Caribbean the number one cruise destination in the world.



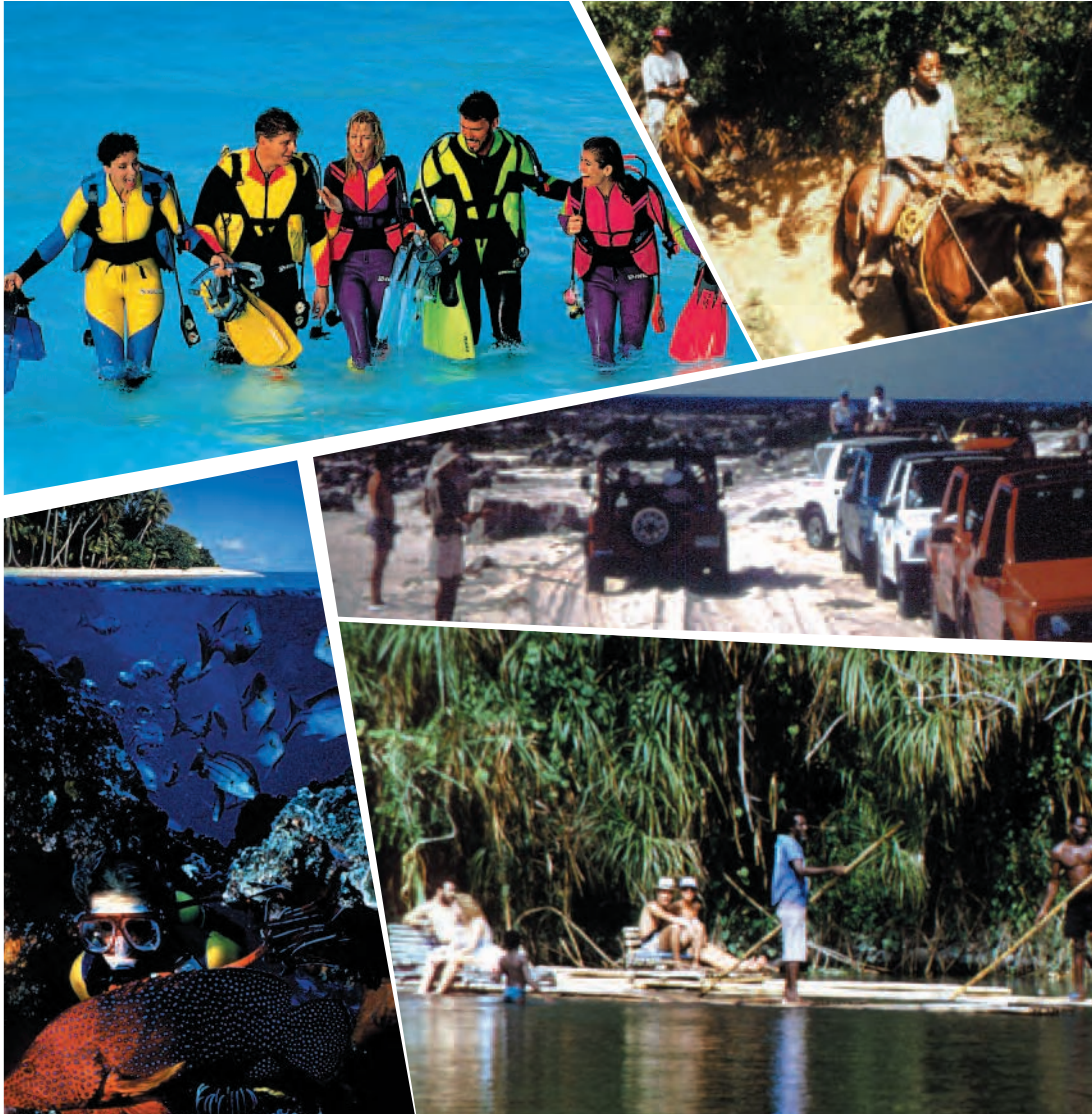


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Photo courtesy of Kevin Michael Connolly

## Costa Maya Celebrates Return of Cruise Passengers

Since opening in 2001, Costa Maya, Mexico's southernmost cruise port and second in passengers received, thrilled cruise ship guests from every major cruise line with an endless array of unique cultural experiences and adventure tours. In August of 2007, the fastest growing port was shut down due to extensive damages caused by Category 5 Hurricane Dean, which made landfall on Costa Maya's town of Mahahual. Since then, locals and Port officials worked around the clock restoring Port facilities, rebuilding the fishing village of Mahahual and repairing the region's infrastructure.

On Friday, November 21, 2008, Costa Maya celebrated the reopening of its shores during a ceremonial luncheon, more than one year after Hurricane Dean had temporarily shut it down. Welcoming cruise passengers alongside Port executives were Mexican government officials, including Quintana Roo Governor, Félix González Canto and cruise line executives Mike Ronan, VP government relations, and John Tercek, VP commercial development, of Royal Caribbean Cruises and Tom Wolber, SVP operations (COO) of Disney Cruise Line.

The reopening was hosted at the Port's restaurant, Mamacita's, with Holland America Cruises' Westerdam and Veendam set in the backdrop amongst the turquoise blue waters of Costa Maya.

Other officials included Carolina Cardenas, undersecretary of tourism planning of Sectur, and Captains Peter Harris and Albert Schoonderbeek from Holland America Cruises.

Governor González Canto thanked Teofilo Hamui, president of the Port of Costa Maya, for his quick efforts in rebuilding the Port. The \$16 million project was completed in less than a year, leaving the Port ready to receive ships by July 2008. The first ship back was Holland America Cruises' Westerdam, which docked October 31, 2008.

"We are delighted to see cruise passengers visit our shores once again," says Hamui. "The support we received from our cruise industry partners and previous visitors during our speedy recovery is much appreciated. We welcome everyone back to an enhanced Costa Maya."

The Port reopened 100% operational with several improvements made to its infrastructure. Costa Maya is able to accommodate three ships at once and its new berthing station makes it one of only 4 ports worldwide with the capability to accommodate the next generation of cruise ships such as F3 and Oasis class types. The Port's facilities are comprised of three grand pavilions, artisan and luxury shopping areas, a beach club, salt-





*Teofilo Hamui honors Captains Peter Harris and Albert Schoonderbeek of Holland America Line.*

water pools, fine restaurants and bars, and all the resources necessary to explore the surrounding jungle and coral reefs.

Mahahual, the Port's neighboring fishing village, also rejoiced in the excitement of returning cruise passengers. In preparation for their return, the village received \$4 million in federal funding that contributed to two new landmarks: A beachside board walk and scenic lighthouse. Costa Maya plays an important role in the sustainability of the surrounding areas, including Mahahual. It is expected that the area's population will increase by 212% following the Port's reopening.

The Port will continue to observe responsible developmental, economic and social growth guidelines to ensure sustainable growth of the region.

### What's new in Costa Maya?

Closing for repairs gave Costa Maya the opportunity to up-the-ante by creating new experiences that would draw returning cruise passengers and delight new guests. One such addition is BioMaya Bacalar, a unique zip-lining adventure through the Mayan jungle. Offered as a three-part excursion, BioMaya Bacalar greets guests with a symbolic soul-cleansing ritual performed by local Mayans, sending guests off on their zip-lining journey.

After soaring through the Mayan jungle alongside red-winged Macaws, the last platform leaves guests at the edge of the beautiful Bacalar Lagoon, known by locals as the birthplace of the rainbow. Guests cool off as they float across the calm waters, where the colors vary from light green to turquoise and electric blue. On the other side of the Bacalar Lagoon, native fruit juices and other Mexican delicacies await guests before they embark on a picturesque trek through the lush local jungle.

BioMaya Bacalar's four platforms are built on iron towers ranging from 656 feet to 2,559 feet, allowing for some of the tallest

jumping platforms available and making this zip line experience one of the most thrilling of its kind. This zip-line tour is the only one in the world that allows for tandem side-by-side gliding.

The safety of cruise ship passengers is a priority for tour operators, therefore strict guidelines are followed and top-of-the-line mountaineering equipment is used. All guests are given a safety briefing prior to their adventure through the Mayan jungle.

"Cruise ship passengers will return to new offerings that capture the uniqueness of Costa Maya and the surrounding region," says Hamui. "BioMaya Bacalar allows guests to experience everything that is great about this region – crystal clear waters, endless vistas of unspoiled jungle and wildlife in its natural habitat."

In addition to BioMaya Bacalar, Costa Maya plans to unveil exciting new projects during the upcoming year, including a Hard Rock Cafe and a tequila tasting factory.

### Costa Maya Classics

Costa Maya will continue to offer some of the same excursions that made it Mexico's 2nd most popular port-of-call. Returning passengers and first-time visitors will enjoy the area's rich history and culture, lush tropical jungles, unspoiled beaches, and award-winning dive sites.

Costa Maya is home to the largest indigenous Mayan population in Mexico. The Port will continue to offer the Mayan Culture Experience, a popular excursion amongst passengers that provides an inside look on modern Mayan life. Guests learn about herbal medicines and the area's history, and are invited to taste local Mayan dishes that include traditional buried earth-cooked chicken pibil, handmade tortillas and local exotic fruits and vegetables.



The Chacchoben ruins situated near the Belize border is an ideal site for passengers interested in an educational experience.

The ruins remain virtually unexcavated to this day and guests are invited to climb the tallest pyramid and explore the lush Mayan jungle that surrounds the area. Costa Maya also offers Uvero Beach Club for passengers looking to enjoy the amenities of a private beach. Many other excursions and local sites are available.

To learn more about Costa Maya and its unmatched beauty, please visit [www.costamaya-mexico.com](http://www.costamaya-mexico.com) or call 011 52 (998) 267-7700.



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# Trinidad & Tobago Hosts 15th Annual FCCA Cruise Conference & Trade Show

In the lower reaches of the Caribbean, the bar had to be set high to surpass previous Conferences. After all, many of the 800 attendees from over 40 countries had never been to the twin island nation of Trinidad & Tobago—the southern-most islands in the West Indies. Some were surprised by busy six-lane highways, a petroleum-based economy, Victorian architecture, Chinese construction workers, and local cuisine including shark sandwiches.

The full agenda allowed little time for *liming*. That's a local expression we learned which means to hang out. If anyone did, the superlative facilities of the Hyatt Regency Port of Spain offered a stunning venue along the largest enclosed harbor in the Western Hemisphere.

The Hon. Joseph Ross, Minister of Tourism for Trinidad & Tobago, provided a warm “Trinbago” welcome at the grand opening ceremony stating that this Conference was the first of its kind held in the country. “We are one country with two sets of experiences” says Ross, referring to the differing personalities of each island. Also at the ceremony, students who won a tourism essay contest, addressed the diverse audience of cruise executives, industry partners and government representatives.

Joel Anderson Jones from Presentation College (Trinidad) and Garrett Faircloth from Cornwall College (Jamaica) read their winning dissertations: “*What steps can we take as a destination to make cruise passengers feel more welcome while in port?*” This theme carried through organized seminars held during the week.



*Richard Sasso, President & CEO - MSC Cruises (USA) Inc. and Hon. Joseph Ross, Minister of Tourism, Trinidad & Tobago at the Trade Show Grand Opening.*

The first workshop featured a full-day focus on CARE Awareness Training—the delicate art of handling normal cruise passengers under extraordinary circumstances. The well-received session spearheaded by Carnival Cruise Line’s Vicky Rey, vice president of guest services, provided port and ground handling agents, as well as other cruise lines representatives, examples of how to manage guests under duress, in a personal emergency situation, and how to deal with trauma during a vacation gone-awry. Carnival shared with attendees an 11-point guest care checklist. At the top of the handout: Provide emotional and practical support to those disembarked for medical or bereavement.

Carolyn V. Coarsey, Ph.D., presented vivid case studies and emotionally moving video clips documenting recommended protocol and results. “A crisis is an event out of the ordinary,” says Coarsey. “People are not able to manage situations with their normal coping techniques, and resources may become inadequate.”





*Richard Sasso, Hon. Joseph Ross and Michele M. Paige meet with the Antigua Delegation at their booth.*

Other advice: Speak in soft, gentle tones. Allow the person who is upset to “win” even if they are making invalid claims. “Never tell a person who is upset to calm down,” says Coarsey. It is worth noting that whether guests are on an organized tour or not, cruise lines (and partner companies) have an obligation to address the fact of “you brought us here.” Beyond tour incidents, other sobering situations where CARE training benefits includes handling sudden severe illnesses or deaths which may occur onboard.

A popular destination-specific workshop *Guest Perception is Guest Reality* attracted an equally large turnout. Creating a memorable sense of arrival and seamless transition from ship to shore is incumbent upon everyone involved with the passenger experience. As one delegate noted, “Sometimes there is no payoff from having a mariachi band on the pier.” However, it was brought out that guests who step ashore are looking for a continuation of the “cruise story” developed on the ship. Every port should tell their own story keeping in mind that safety, health, and security are vital in any port.

Another enlightening session featured Erkunt Oner, CEO of Tura Turizm, who traveled from Istanbul to co-anchor a panel discussion with Joanne Salzedo, director of shore excursion product development for Norwegian Cruise Line. The workshop highlighted the need for standards, as well as creative and cost efficient tactics to deliver a value-added feeling for passengers on tour. Even a simple red carpet at the bus can make guests feel special.

Oner concurs that guides represent the most important component of any tour. “The person has to be informative, have good language skills, be a problem solver, great listener and great leader,” says Oner. “A dispatch must flow smoothly like a stream. It’s like an orchestra where all instruments need to play in tune.”



*Panama Delegation with Micky Arison during the FCCA Conference & Trade Show.*

Bill Roversi, vice president of Royal Marine Insurance Group, co-chaired a fundamental session about proper coverage for tour companies. “Passengers don’t know whose tour it is,” says Roversi. “That’s why the cruise line is usually the one singled out when there is a problem. Cover your bases, have a thorough incident report and note the names of witnesses who may be needed down the road.” Pointing back to the session on CARE training, and associated costs which can occur for operators, he also noted that policies with Royal Marine include a \$10,000 medical payments clause without regard to liability.

The Tourism Economic Forecast session was of interest to everyone. While cabin bookings remain on track, there is concern about the future and about passenger spending. Rovel Morris, general manager of Goddard Shipping & Tours Ltd., described the workshop as “timely and spot-on.”

The number of trade show exhibitors rivaled previous conferences. This year more than 55 participants signed up for the added exposure. Positioned among a strong showing of tourist boards, even Baptist Health South Florida joined the event for the fourth consecutive year. “We think the trade show results were fantastic,” says Kathleen Tuitt, marketing manager for the Caribbean and show organizer for Baptist Health, a collection of four hospitals including South Miami Hospital which treats crew members from Carnival, Royal Caribbean and others. “This year we may have saved a couple of lives by providing complimentary blood pressure and sugar screenings,” she proudly adds. “We performed some 75 screenings, more than last year, and provided results to a couple of people who realized they should get medical attention based on those results.”

One-on-one meetings with cruises executive and delegates are a mainstay for every Conference. This year was no excep-



# FCCA Partners at the 2008 FCCA





# Cruise Conference & Trade Show







*Conference Delegates attending the Care Awareness workshop. One of seven workshops presented at this year's conference.*

tion. Executives from the 11 Member Lines learned of new tours, services, and products. There was James H. Bass, chairman of a Texas oil company. He traveled to introduce his fleet of fishing boats in Cayman. Bruce Flamon, president of Certified Tour Guides Assoc. in St. Thomas, was touting a new religious tour. Maarten Spanjaart, director of operations for Bazz Fun Rentals, came from nearby Curacao to promote the latest design in trendy vehicles for buggy tours—stylish fiberglass bodies with pastel colors and convertible tops. Dr. Valma Jessamy from Grenada was introducing Jessamine Eden, a 60-acre tropical garden and serene organic farm just outside of St. George's.

For lively evening entertainment, the Trinidad Night Extravaganza showcased robust calypso music and colorful costumes. "We were dancing in the rain, but it was amazing," says Marcos Martinez, park director for Discover Mexico in Cozumel. Janet Griffiths with Atlantis Submarines commented, "I liked the way the entertainment built to an incredible finale." Alan Bishop from Blue Bubbles Watersports & Dive Center in St. Maarten attended with wife, Jane Hill. She smiles and says, "It was brilliant. The beautiful girls came out and my husband disappeared behind their feathers."

Since the majority of attendees were first time visitors to the country, a local guide from T&T Sightseeing Tours was asked, "What is there to do in Trinidad?" He responds, "I always say 'What is there to do in Trinidad & Tobago?'" Both destinations afford fascinating diversions and many took advantage of complimentary excursions. Some delegates ventured into the Northern Range to visit Asa Wright Nature Center, noted for its abundance of birds, fertile green



*Steve Riester, Norwegian Cruise Lines (left), meets with Charles Carvalho Sr., Trinidad & Tobago Sightseeing Tours (right), for one-on-one meetings.*

landscapes, and conservation of tropical wildlife. Some made their way to Pitch Lake, a unique natural resource where asphalt is processed. The lake, discovered in 1595 by Sir Walter Raleigh, is 25% liquid and 75% solid, constantly pulling things into itself. Nearby residents and infrastructure are even affected. Common are shifting home foundations and tar bubbles erupting on the approach road.

Reflecting on the 15th annual gathering, Tony Murray with Taras Consultancy says, "Each year it's always worth coming to renew contacts." Hans De Kruif, managing director of Fun Bini, Ltd., Curacao, adds, "To me the Conference was memorable, kind of a give-and-take experience, sharing each others ideas and perceptions." And Matthew Sams, Vice president Caribbean relations for Holland America Line, mentioned he appreciated the structure and flow of activities.

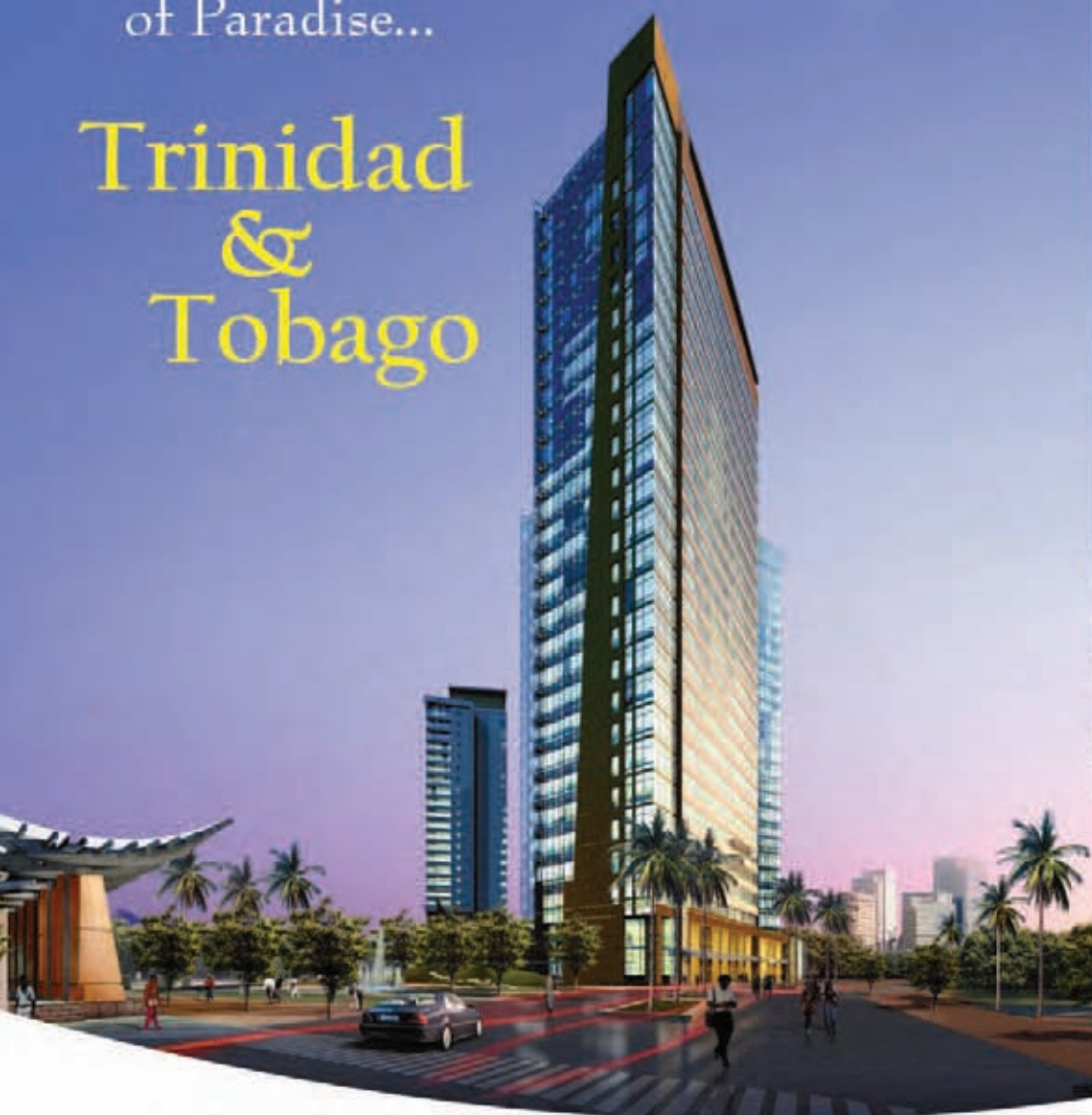
Perhaps T&T Sightseeing's veteran owner Charles Carvalho had the busiest cell phone of all, both before and during the Conference. As the primary tour operator for most cruise lines calling on Trinidad & Tobago, he was the go-to person for many special arrangements, but says, "There was no extra pressure, just because the Conference was held here. This was the best way to meet with my clients, have personal discussions, and be able to drive home at night." Sure, Charles, but stay off the expressways. The population of Port of Spain is 50,000 and grows to 300,000 at rush hour, as his knowledgeable tour drivers explain.

—Chris Roberts is a freelance travel writer and contributor to *Caribbean Cruising*



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# SAN ANDRES PROVIDENCIA AND SANTA CATALINA

## HISTORY

San Andres and Providencia consist of an archipelago of islands about 480 miles north of Colombia and 140 miles from the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. San Andres is the main island of the archipelago. Providencia and Santa Catalina are located 60 miles to the north, enclosed by an extensive barrier reef system some 22 miles in length, making it the third largest coral reef in the world.

It has been theorized that the islands were first discovered by Christopher Columbus during his first voyage in 1492. For 200 years control of the islands changed hands several times, falling under the domain of Spain, Britain, France, and The Netherlands at various times. The islands were visited often by pirates, among them the English pirate Henry Morgan who used them as a base of operations and, according to legend, as a hideaway for his much acclaimed treasure. In March 28, 1928, Nicaragua and Colombia signed a treaty that states that Nicaragua recognizes Colombian sovereignty over San Andres Island, Providencia Island, Santa Catalina Island, plus small islands and keys around the archipelago.

## SAN ANDRES PIER



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- It receives over 20,000 visitors a year from different cruise lines.
- City Tours are offered just outside the pier, the guides and most locals speak fluent English.



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# Working Together for a Common Goal



*By Vicky Rey, Vice President, Guest Services - Carnival Cruise Lines*

Competition is healthy for any industry, and given the current economic climate, it is more fierce than ever as cruise lines strive to attract and win over their fair share of the vacationing public. Yet, in the area of guest care,

there is no competition and the lines have forged a positive and collaborative relationship. The synergies of working together have resulted in the sharing of resources and the establishment of best practices that have as an underlying principle, the common goal of providing compassionate care to guests who find themselves displaced while facing a crisis away from home. This collaborative spirit was once again displayed during the FCCA Conference in Trinidad and Tobago where Carnival, Royal Caribbean International, Holland America, Princess, NCL and Seabourn co-sponsored a one day Care Awareness training workshop on Monday, October 27th for participating delegates.

We all know that vacations don't always go as planned and the purpose of this training was to increase care awareness among the partners that represent the lines in the various aspects of our business. By all accounts, the event was an overwhelming success resulting in a standing room only audience consisting of 167 tour operators, port agents, ground services staff and government representatives.

The workshop was facilitated by Carolyn Coarsey, Ph.D and Jeff Morgan, co-founders of the Family Assistance Foundation.

The Foundation, an independent, non-profit corporation based in Atlanta, Georgia, brings together businesses in the mass transportation industry for the purpose of teaching organizations worldwide on how to support individuals who have been impacted by a tragedy. Their approach is unique in that

it is based on Dr. Coarsey's 22 years of research on the experiences and long term effect of actual passengers or family members who endured or survived a disaster or other traumatic event.

Our training was focused on core Care Awareness concepts that identified the basic needs of an individual in the acute phase of trauma, usually the first 72 hours after a critical event, and what our partners can do to support them during the period of time when guests or crew, are away from their normal support network. Dr. Coarsey spent some time discussing the brain's physiological response to trauma and it was interesting to note, that while we are all unique and different, there are common elements that bind us together. Research indicates that those experiencing trauma will regress and be susceptible to feelings of emotional abandonment. Further, away from their loved ones and customary surroundings, their capacity to intellectualize is compromised.

This is why, as temporary caregivers, it is important for us not to judge anyone in a crisis since they are limited by their own body's ability to cope with the event. Providing genuine empathy, a safe environment and basic essentials such as food, lodging, connections to loved ones, access to spiritual care, information and guidance with logistical details are things we can all do to help someone in need.

The training session also featured video testimony from cruise passengers who validated the importance of receiving assistance from "informed helpers" who provided emotional and logistical support in a caring and safe setting at a time when they found themselves under significant stress or crisis.

The personal and often, moving testimony overwhelmingly confirmed the great power we have, as corporations and individuals, to positively influence those who have suffered a tragedy by how we take care of them when they are entrusted to us. This is a big responsibility for all of us,



cruise line personnel, as well as port agents, tour operators, ground staff and government agencies, who are often called upon to provide assistance. While we know it is the right thing to do from a humanitarian perspective, it is “good business” to do so.

The workshop was hosted by representatives from Carnival, Royal Caribbean and Princess, who were present not only to share key aspects of their companies’ Guest Care programs, but also to thank the delegates for all of their past efforts, on behalf of their guests and crew. It was clear from the level of engagement and participation, that there was extensive experience within the group of participants.

The delegates welcomed the opportunity to learn new information and were able to confirm much of what they are already doing right. After a delicious lunch, hosted by Royal Marine Insurance, the participants applied their learnings during a highly interactive session that featured discussions on actual historical scenarios.

With cruise line staff present, proper guidance was given on how the different scenarios would be handled by the respective lines.

Also discussed, was the topic of planning for critical mass incidents. Jeff Morgan spoke on the importance of each port having a good emergency plan that focused on the humanitarian aspects of managing an incident. Based on his extensive experience in mass casualty planning in the aviation industry, Mr. Morgan shared with us some key messages: the time for planning is over once the emergency has begun; the larger the event, the more control is needed and the importance of knowing our roles and those of others who we may come in contact with when dealing with a critical incident.

Although the industry has been criticized in the past for the unintended consequences brought about by well meaning but “uniformed” helpers, it has moved quickly to put programs in place to help passengers and their families. This training opportunity is just one more example of the many initiatives being worked on by the cruise industry. It is in our collective best interests to continue increasing awareness and when the time comes, to do the right thing by our guests and crew when they need us the most. On behalf of the participating cruise lines, our heartfelt thanks for your attendance and interest in helping us with our mission. We appreciate your spirit of partnership and look forward to continuing to work with you.







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# How Can Caribbean Destinations Best Leverage Cruise Tourism to Improve the Current and Future Impact From Cruise Visitors?

By Magaly Toribio, Vice Minister of Tourism, Dominican Republic Ministry of Tourism.

Since nearly all travel segments name the Caribbean as the top area to visit on a cruise\*, the Dominican Republic (DR) considers it a privilege to work with the cruise industry to share our amazing offerings in the DR, the second largest Caribbean nation. Located in the heart of the Caribbean and surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the Caribbean Sea in the south, the DR comprises approximately 30,000 square miles surrounded by beaches, ports, and idyllic cities, making it a very popular cruise destination.

The DR is committed to developing our cruise industry designing policies to promote cruising while also applying our principles of sustainable tourism to those policies. Since 1962, we have led the Caribbean in preserving sensitive inland and coastal eco-systems through partnerships with leaders like the Nature Conservancy, the United Nations, the Smithsonian and more. The DR's preserves and sanctuaries, like the Sanctuary for the Marine Mammals of the DR, the first whale sanctuary in the world located along the coast of Samana, are a vital tourism draw to the DR's fabled lush green surroundings. Our government's constant dedication to preserving the island's environment make a cruise to the DR so remarkable and exciting.

We also offer three major ports including Santo Domingo, La Romana and Puerto Plata. And the DR is very active in educating our tourism industry and leaders on the importance of the cruise industry to our country's economic development.

The DR's location at the center of the Caribbean is ideal for flexible itinerary planning and provides easy transfers and accommodations due to excellent road and airport infrastructure surrounding key ports. Recently the Santo Domingo ports of Sans Souci and Don Diego invested \$50 million in enhanced and new terminals.

A strategic location and important infrastructure are just a few of the many reasons cruising to the DR is increasing. Other factors include a year-round warm and lush tropical environment, diverse cities, and a rich vibrant culture that captures travelers' imagination and enriches their souls. In the DR, tourists can explore ports of call like the sophisticated Santo Domingo, discovered by Christopher Columbus and the first city of the New World, or Samana on the north coast that boasts amazing landscapes. They can also spend time in the port city of La Romana with its sparkling white beaches and the nearby historic Altos de Chavon, a Mediterranean style artist's village dating back to the 15th century.

Millions of tourists who come to the DR for the first time while on a cruise are charmed by our large island's unforgettable beauty. Converting these cruise passengers into land-based vacationers is a worthy goal. We look forward to working with our cruise industry partners in creating more land-based tourists and also encouraging our land-based passengers to try cruising.





An important part of the DR's effort to develop its cruise industry is the education of our community leaders and tourism industry about the favorable economic impact from cruise tourism. Passengers who stay and get to know an area of the DR, often return as land-based guests. Once they have a taste of the DR, these tourists want to come back and spend more time experiencing our vibrant culture. The DR is known for its warm and hospitable people and this warm welcome is a large part of creating satisfied visitors who want to return again and again.

The DR plans to participate in many of the cruise conversion programs that are currently in progress and those that were shared at the recent Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association Conference held in October. These programs include one by the Tropical Shipping Company with the goal of encouraging cruise ship passengers to return to the island they visited for a land-based vacation.

Tropical Shipping has implemented a coin program throughout the Caribbean. In this program, cruise passengers can be recipients of coins etched with a famous landmark or logo of the island. These coins can then be used by cruise passengers as "coupons" with values redeemable toward extended land-based stays and can be distributed by tour operators, employees of the tourist offices, selected retail shops and more.

The DR is also encouraging tour operators and cruise lines to offer cruise passengers the option of spending half of their

stay on the ship and half of their time exploring our breathtaking cities and vistas. For example, tourists can visit destinations such as Santo Domingo, La Romana or Samaná for a week and then have the opportunity to visit other Caribbean islands on a cruise for the second week. These programs are requested often by Europeans, who usually take two weeks of vacation or longer.

Another creative way the DR is working to convert cruise passengers into land-based vacationers is by offering tours of the amazing hotels in port cities as a way of introducing the traveler to land-based offerings.

The DR tourism slogan, "Dominican Republic – Endless" reflects the endless tourism assets on our large island. From baseball, to merengue to eco-adventures to world-class golf, to luxury hotels, marinas and more, the DR offers endless activities and beauty. Going forward, the DR plans to offer even more cruise options that position the DR as a complete cruise tourism destination.

As we develop our overall tourism marketing strategy, the DR is committed to developing cruise activity to the country as a vital component of our industry. Last season we welcomed 325,000 cruise passengers and we expect to double those arrivals during the 2008-2009 winter season. The DR has so much to offer the global cruising industry and its passengers and we look forward to sharing our magnificent and endless island country with cruise passengers and tourists from around the world.



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## Creating the "Wow" Factor In Shore Excursions

By Erkunt Öner, CEO - Tura Turizm, Turkey

In the cruise world, this silent floating industry is waking up every day in a new port, a new destination with a new agenda around the world! Considering the fact that by 2010, there will be approximately:

- 17 million people cruising
- 1 million children will cruise for the first time
- 35 brand new ships will be cruising in all waters of the globe.

The industry has moved both in demand and supply and has grown 8.2% over the last decade in passenger numbers. Between 2000 and 2004, sixty-two new ships were introduced to the North American market alone.

Regarding the changes that the industry has gone through, expansion of the client profile is the first striking difference. While the luxury sector still exists, the vast majority of cruises are now for the "mass market."

All indications show that cruisers are strongly receptive to the extraordinary range of different experiences both onboard

as well as ashore. Another observation proves that the destination – whole package including the shore excursions - is the primary criteria in the selection of any cruise for the majority. It is not all about the ship anymore, the best combination certainly is the ship and the tours offered ashore. This big shift is a result of the innovative ideas, projects and the "creative thinking".

In a world as such, all segments of the cruise and the providers are bound to be up to the highest standards as competition is getting tougher every year. A shorex agency such as we are, must make a difference, transform the adequate into perfect – CREATE THE WOW FACTOR – in its services in order to be successful in providing the best. The essence is to make an authentic experience for each guest in each port of call to overcome one major obstacle, the "been there, done that," syndrome.

### **The questions are: How?**

Here is the answer which I have come up with, because of my 43





years of experience in this line of business. The key to success goes through many stages but most important of all is the strategy or strategies that one should create and fully commit to.

In my case, the reference point was “nature” and nature was a source of inspiration for many reasons which I have established similarities with in our practice.

- Nature is the source of life as our business is the source for us
- Nature is a great source of inspiration which is all we need for seamless services
- Nature rejuvenates itself continuously and copes with every change so innovation must be our goal
- The flora and fauna is vast just like the extended work of any tour operator
- New plants and species are still being discovered like creativity is the source of our business and we explore everyday
- All the endemic plants need protection and conservation just like we aim protection for all; For our services and our guests

I believe it is all a matter of strategy how you implement the shore excursions and how you develop your product. As Tura, we have a framework consisting of the strategies covering all aspects of shore excursions.

#### **Pre set up Strategy:**

Nothing is successful if not planned. The preparation for the operation starts months ago and should be meticulously prepared.



#### **Meeting & Greeting Strategy:**

The approach that gives you the best shot of taking care of customers is the same one that takes care of you the best! When you take the initiative to act positively, you put psychological pressure on the guest to react positively.

The cruisers that you succeed to make feel special about the services will become your special guests!

A warm welcome is all that the guests need and it is sincerely given by our uniformed staff, who are easily recognized in orange. The Hospitality Desk is there to provide maps - a great relief for guests not on tour - along with complimentary post card mailing and small souvenirs.

**T.E.A.M. Strategy: Together Everybody Achieves More**  
Service excellence is giving what counts to the customer, in





order to achieve an authentic team working in harmony which is the make or break issue. We have to always keep in mind that the guests can tell a fake smile and a careless “thank you”. On the other hand, wearing, a uniform, name tags, blinking signs and friendly badges makes a great impression.

Guides need to meet the standards and even surpass them, because they can make a very good tour turn into a bad one and vice versa is applicable as well.

#### **Dispatch Strategy:**

Dispatch is our show time – the most crucial part of the whole operation, the orchestra needs all the instruments to play in tune conducted by the Maestro, a single bad tune spoils the whole so the “orchestra” should be perfect.

#### **Technology Strategy:**

Technology applied in shorex serves to increase the positive impact for guests as well as enabling us to handle operations smoothly.

Communication is the oxygen of the tour, equipment used to ease information flow are a key factor for success. In this sense, head sets and GPS are a unique breakthrough which are necessary for any tour that contains venue visits.

Head Set System, meaning THE WHISPERS are customer oriented, light and easy to use equipments convenient to provide homogenous information for all guests especially in crowded sites, avoiding noise pollution and guests getting lost while listening to their guide and strolling around to their liking.

#### **Preventive Strategy:**

Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter less...

We are very well aware that safety, health and security are vital in any port as we are handling large number of guests, therefore we should be prepared for any kind of unexpected situation. Then, we will only be happy when we use any of these preventive tools

Health services start with a reliable insurance which is a life saver at the end of the day. It is so good to have an ambulance ready with a health team in every venue and at the pier as well because you never know when you need it. Having a First Aid Kit available in all buses and with all the guides (all should have basic first aid training) during the tour makes the guests feel secure.

Security services are priority for any destination in the world. We consider security focused thinking in all tours as a continuity of the security focus on board the ships.

#### **Innovation Strategy:**

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step said Lao- Tzu so we need to recycle the world’s best ideas!

Innovation is our primary key to better service, not all ideas have to be original, but if we focus on what works the very best: the innovation comes naturally. We strongly believe that innovative implementations bring any given shorex operator a significant competitive advantage.

#### **Creativity Strategy:**

The best way to predict the future is to create it. Peter Drucker, Business visionary.

We target to defy the risk of the routine and always look for a new approach trusting that imagination will bring something





creative and different. Creativity is sustainable and infinitely renewable and also it adds value to any product and destination and as a result, it not only generates “creation of values” but also “value creation” which means economic wealth.

We strictly follow these rules in order to achieve creativity in services, to be authentic, unique and responsive to consumer demand, to focus on the “kind of experience” we want to deliver to the guests, to think outside the square and to present our offerings in a different way In short: “To think globally and to act locally”.

#### **Environmental Strategy:**

We Belong To The Earth, Earth Does Not Belong To Us...

Serving while supporting the environment is one of the pillars of Tourism, we accept our responsibility with our hearts and minds and try to implement in every way we can. Such as, involving more energy-saving and lower emissions form of transport, giving priority to the protection of the environment in any shore excursions- a must – being sensitive in Resource Management which is crucial in any tour planning in any destination.

We always keep in mind that the long term prosperity of tourism is locked in to the survival and preservation of the environment. An example of our environment friendly services is “Take a Tour” – Plant a Tree Campaign.

#### **Service Quality Strategy:**

Think the unthinkable, use everything you have got!

The customers satisfaction is our priority, although we practice mass tourism, each and every guest is important to us and by implementing our values in our business we pursue excellence.

Diversification is another key stone to reach overall service quality and can be realized by creating and carrying new tours - new products for each taste, a continuous search for new possibilities going beyond the cliché.

Naturally, we use several tools such as guest questionnaires, quality surveys, call center and GPS reports and ship feedback to measure what we achieved and what should be changed or evaluated in accordance with our strategy.

Personal touch is the magical touch in our field of practice so, that every item counts, the basics like hiring the best guides as well as the courtesy offerings like theme oriented gift sets containing wooden pencils, evil eye beads, a bottle of cold water and similar objects.

#### **Standardization Strategy:**

If performance is not measured, it is not being managed.

In this context, we use sound measures to help us to identify the output and gaps; to provide feedback, to identify performance to be rewarded and, as a result, to continuously improve.

Our strategic tools are: ISO Certification, staff with proper skills and training, quality maintenance, training on crisis scenarios, call center service, feedback to the cruise line by evaluations and questionnaires and setting up standards when choosing guides, transportation and safety and security services.

In summary, all of the above actually serves for one unique purpose – making the guests feel special – to make them become special customers. We aim to achieve this goal always keeping in mind one simple rule: “To fully and unconditionally think like a guest”.





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# Insurance Saving the Industry's Life



By Bill Roversi, Senior Vice President - Royal Marine Insurance Group

**R**oyal Marine Insurance Group presented an insurance overview at the conference. Panelists included Bill Roversi, Senior Vice President at RMIG, Bill Fay, Risk Manager at Royal Caribbean International, Jerry Hamilton a maritime lawyer with Hamilton, Miller, & Birthisel, LLP, Lynda Sanderlyn, the underwriter with ACE International Advantage, and Dave Humphries the Claims Manager at ACE International Advantage.

Bill Fay stressed the importance of US jurisdiction and listing the cruise lines as Additional Insureds. Injured guests will rarely bring suit against the tour operators, rather they will go after the deepest pockets, which are

the cruise lines. Local policies would not respond to a suit brought in Miami, thereby leaving the cruise lines exposed. Without the worldwide jurisdiction offered by Royal Marine Insurance Group and ACE, the cruise lines would have to defend these suits by themselves. Whether you work with Carnival, Cunard, Pullmantur, MSC, or AIDA, this policy would defend your operation in any country. The ACE product offered by Royal Marine Insurance Group includes the FCCA cruise lines automatically as Additional Insureds. Tour Operators can also add others as Additional Insureds at no additional cost.

We discussed the value of the FCCA membership and the importance of that membership to ACE and RMIG

in assisting with the vetting process. There are many tour operators around the world, but those that have been approved by the cruise lines and the FCCA are of the highest quality and must maintain procedures to insure the guest's safety.

We also introduced the new online system that can be used to request a certificate by the insured or can be used by the cruise lines to see if their operator's coverage is current. In the future this will be utilized as an online filing system for our clients. Policies and endorsements will be stored there as well as their loss history and current claims. If you have not already received your log in and password, please contact Royal Marine Insurance Group.



Lynda Sanderlyn described the coverages offered. Whether it is a horse-back riding operation, a zipline tour, a day sail, or a dune buggy adventure, this product's versatility is able to cover all of them through the three coverages offered: General Liability, Contingent Auto Liability, and Contingent Watercraft Liability. Limits can be obtained from \$1 million all the way to \$5 million for the coverages and there is no deductible. ACE pays claims from the first \$1. Also highlighted were the \$10,000 in No Fault Medical Payments, which can and should be used for immediate medical attention. Since inception, the rates have not changed. If your premium has increased, it only means that your business has grown and vice versa if your premium has decreased. ACE has also introduced a 5% No Claims Bonus for those operations that have been claims free for two consecutive years. With the current economic situation, Lynda reassured all that ACE was just recently reaffirmed by the S&P with a rating of A+ Superior.

Jerry Hamilton stressed the importance of Waivers and Releases. Any operation, no matter how mundane, should use a waiver (yes, walking tours included). The operators should allow the guest 3-5 minutes to read the waiver. The waiver should be clear in its language. The font size is important. Warning letters should be approximately 1/8 inch high or 1/16 inch caps. Color can also be used to highlight the disclaimer language. Waiver templates can be obtained directly from Jerry's firm at Hamilton, Miller, & Birthisel, LLP or through Royal Marine Insurance

Group. We stress that these are only templates and would need to be modified for each tour offered. Jerry also reviewed case law. One interesting precedent in Florida is that a parent or guardian's signature is not enforceable as to a child. As we know a court's opinion can change with the next case, but currently this is the precedent and would be argued by any lawyer worth their salt.

Finally, Dave Humphries described the claim's process. In the event of an incident, the primary concern should be that the injured party receive medical treatment. Once this has been accomplished, prompt notification should be sent to RMIG of the incident. The following list of items should be forwarded when you notify RMIG:

- Incident Report – including claimant's name, date of loss, description of incident
- Medical Expenses – designate who will be reimbursed. If claimant will be reimbursed, please provide their address & phone number. If the medical expenses are over \$10,000 and it is after hours, you should contact ACE directly.
- Signed Waiver/Disclaimer of injured party
- Any eyewitness account of incident
- Police report, if applicable

If the incident is of a serious nature and it has occurred after hours, you can report the claim to ACE at 1-770-

810-1130 or Toll Free in the U.S. 1-800-523-9254. After the incident has been reported to RMIG, ACE will assign an adjuster and claim number for that incident. RMIG will send you a Claim Acknowledgement Letter informing you of the aforementioned. You will be contacted by the adjuster shortly after this assignment. If you receive any documentation pertaining to the incident after the incident has been reported, send to RMIG's email [claims@rmig.us](mailto:claims@rmig.us). This will be attached to the file and forwarded to ACE for their perusal.

Dave then opened the floor for Q & A. Many operators asked about the Waivers in more detail. Can a waiver be signed after an incident? The answer being yes as long as the injured party is not on medication. The important thing to remember when an incident occurs and was also stressed by Tura Turism's workshop, is that you should treat guests like family. Your concern should be real and not faked. Remember these guests are in a foreign country, maybe there is not a common language, they are scared. Medical treatment should be immediate with a first aid kit and then moved to a medical facility. Another common misunderstanding is territories covered versus jurisdiction. This product excludes incidents that occur within the United States, however it covers the suits brought in the US and worldwide.

For more information regarding Royal Marines Shore Excursion insurance, please contact Bill Roversi at 786-364-9811 or [Bill@rmig.us](mailto:Bill@rmig.us) or visit our website at [www.rmig.us](http://www.rmig.us).





The Presentation By:  
Senator Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace  
Minister Of Tourism & Aviation  
The Commonwealth Of The Bahamas  
at

15th Annual Florida Caribbean Cruise Conference & Trade Show  
Port of Spain, Trinidad  
Wednesday, 29th October, 2008

## How Will the Caribbean Destinations & Cruise Lines Deal With a Challenging Economy and Rapidly Escalating Fuel Costs?

It will probably be shocking to our hotel partners to suggest that under these kinds of circumstances, destinations need to operate more like a cruise ship. Destinations are in the GDP business which means that for any given day, they need to maximize the number of transactions for goods and services for their economies to grow. Every day that goes by without 100% occupancy for all of its accommodations is a significant opportunity lost to its citizens and its businesses because tourism is simply that part of our GDP that is generated by the economic requirements of our visitors. Like a cruise ship, we need to focus more on all of those activities that lead to 100% occupancy.

Several years ago, we advocated for the Caribbean Hotel Association to change its business purpose to



that of enabling its members to achieve ever increasing occupancies and ever increasing yields at ever increasing customer satisfaction. We did not realize at the time that we were asking them to begin to operate more like a cruise ship. In that vein, we have also asked them the question: Why is it that a the VP of Marketing of a hotel gets a bonus for running 70% occupancy and the cruise VP of marketing gets fired for running 70% occupancies? Much of what we do, have to do with a particular mindset that has to change in these kinds of perilous times. Last year in The Bahamas, we ran on average the equivalent of a 3000 room hotel vacant every night. If we were able to fill those rooms, visitor spending would have increased by 50% and government revenues would have increased by a further 40%. It is clear that we have not yet come to either understand the cost of vacant rooms or we have yet to address the method of filling those vacant rooms every night of the year. We believe that we are beginning to approach the answer.

We have noticed that after 11th September, 2001, the cruise ships discovered that if people were afraid to fly it would be wise to open up many more departure ports along the eastern and southern seaboard of the United States as departure points. In that way, many prospective passengers could drive to their port of departure and they could fill their ships thereby. In the current downturn, we see cruise companies beginning to follow the same strategy. The very clear message is that if we make the cost of getting aboard the ship as inexpensive and as convenient as possible, people will continue to cruise. We should do no less as destinations. We should make it as convenient and as inexpensive as possible for prospective visitors to access our destinations. We forget too often that the cost and convenience of coming to my destination is a part of the total vacation cost which might act as a major deterrent to prospective visitors. We therefore have an obligation to make that cost as low as possible. We are following some approaches in The Bahamas that we hope will begin to bear fruit early in 2009.

You will have noticed that much of the acrimony between cruise ships and hotels has abated. A large part of the reason for this reduction has come from recognition that for the most part, cruise passengers are incremental visitors. Many cruise passengers are visitors that would not have come to the destination if cruise ships did not exist. It was clear in the past that many hoteliers saw cruise passengers as customers who would occupy their hotels if cruise ships did not exist. We now know that is not the case for the following reasons:-

1. The number of cruise passengers that come to the Caribbean is on the order of five million and not the twenty million that is regularly reported. The latter figure which is comparable to the number of stopover visitors is derived from individual destinations counting the same passenger at each stop. So if one were thinking in terms of conversion of cruise passengers to stopover visitors, the opportunity is one quarter of what was generally believed to be the case.
2. The understanding then is that many cruise passengers could not afford to take a land vacation in the Caribbean. In many cases, the cost of the entire cruise is substantially



lower than the cost of the flight to the destination from the individual's home market. This category of person cannot afford to be converted.

3. Many cruise passengers see the cruise as the low cost provider of a multi-destination experience. If one were to price the cost of providing such an experience on land, we see immediately that the cruise ship has a significant advantage, and few people would ever wish to pay that kind of significant increase in cost and inconvenience.
4. There are persons who simply like to cruise. They have no interest in land based vacations. Admittedly, this group is thought to be very small. There are of course groups of persons who have no loyalty in either direction. They simply buy what strikes them as the best value at the time and they can be persuaded in either direction.

From the destination perspective therefore, we have two (2) important tasks. We must provide experiences that will maximize the spending of cruise passengers coming to our shores and, of equal importance, we must ensure that the experience at our destination is such that visitors are prepared to recommend the destination to their friends and relatives on their return home. One related matter that we often fail to address is to ensure that the ship's crew is happy with our destinations because they become evaluators of destinations to the passengers on board.

It is for all of these reasons that we recently announced the "Downtown Revitalization Plan" for Nassau, The Bahamas. With the very large number of cruise passengers coming into the port of Nassau, it is most important that their opinion of The Bahamas from that very brief experience is the best that we can make it. So after twelve years of discussions, that project is now proceeding.

Finally, we are delighted to have had the assistance of cruise companies in establishing a pilot project to lower the cost of inputs by placing us into contact with their suppliers. We are now in the process of aggregating demand for various items that are used in the tourism sector and using the existing distributors to deliver these products to hotels at a significantly reduced cost.

If we manage to maximize our occupancies of all of our accommodations at our destinations and minimize the cost of inputs, we will have achieved much in mimicking the success of cruise lines coming into our region. If that is augmented by all cruise passengers going back home and telling their friends and relatives that every destination delivered a special experience, cruise conversion would be a very, very small part of the reason for our successes.



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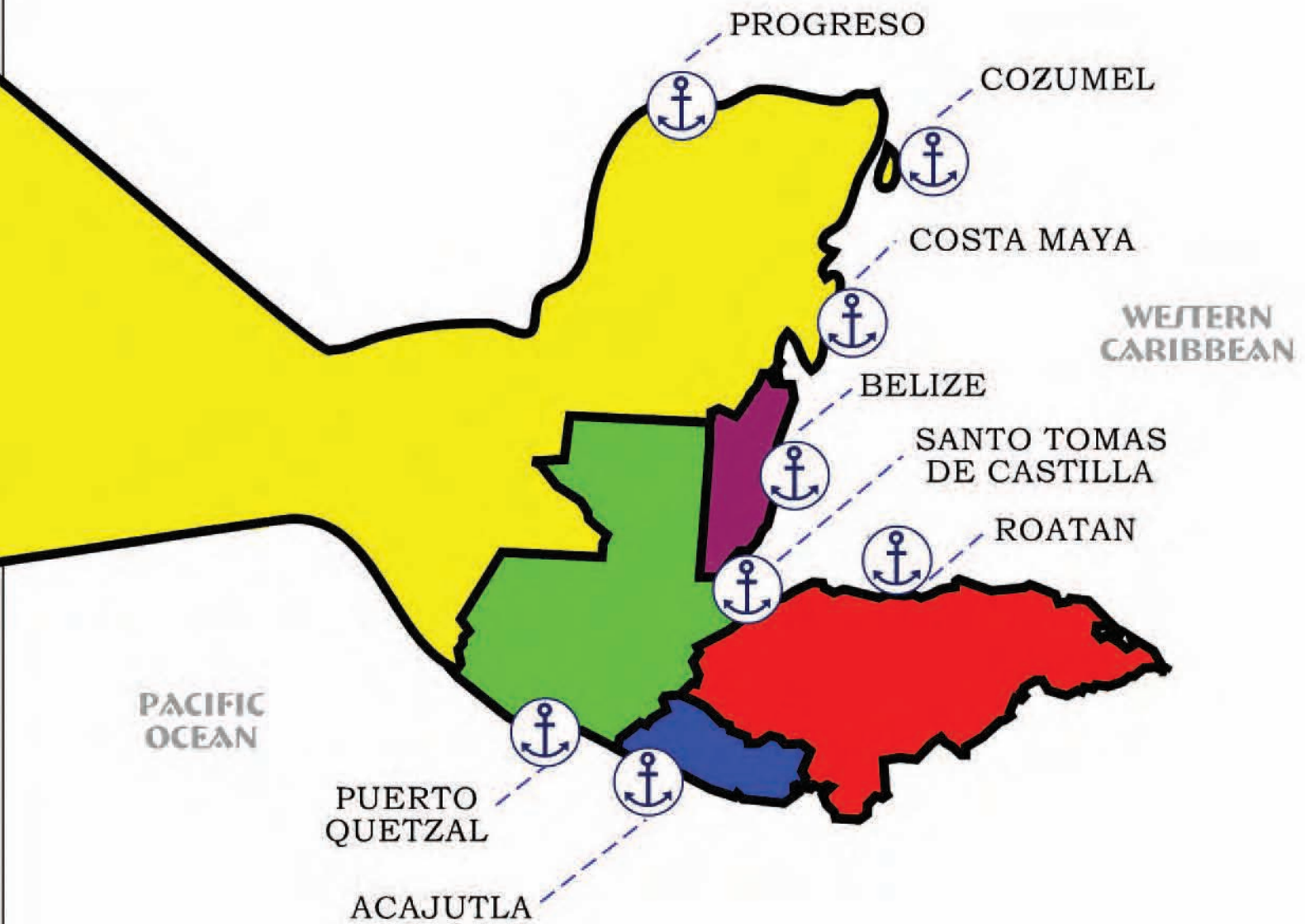
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# Guatemala to Host the 16th Annual FCCA Cruise Conference & Trade Show

By Ana Smith, Guatemala Tourist Commission



Guatemala is one of the republics of Central America placed to the south of Mexico and to the east of Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. This country offers a very diverse setting with 60% of the present day population being descendants of the Maya. The 16th Annual Conference and Trade Show will take place in Guatemala City. Our capital city is at 5000 ft (1500 meters) making for an ideal climate year around with an average temperature of 75 degrees day time and 60 degrees in the evenings. Guatemala is a very different destination with a varied natural landscape comprising mountains, lakes, rivers and tropical forests. The cultural setting is unique with many Maya archaeological sites the main attraction being Tikal known for the architecture and majesty of the temples, Antigua the Spanish colonial capital still presenting the architecture from the 16th century colonial era, the Caribbean coast presenting the Garifuna culture and the Pacific coast the setting for the best sail fishing in the world, to mention a few of the variety of attractions.

The modern day Maya with the unique form of dress are a big part of the colorful landscape as people go to market or greet guests to sell you their varied handicrafts with a big smile on their faces. You can tell which village a person comes from by the blouse or "guipil" as each village have their own unique design and shape.

The FCCA conference will take place in Guatemala City. There are various hotels which have conference facilities to house the capacity needed for the meetings with many other hotels in the immediate area with the available quantity of rooms needed.

The FCCA participants at the Conference will have the opportunity to sample and enjoy the different attractions Guatemala has to offer cruise passengers.

Guatemala City is very cosmopolitan with a variety of museums, a historic center from the 17th century surrounding the main plaza which houses the National Palace and the Metropolitan Cathedral. The hotel and restaurant area is bustling with activity as the city is the economic capital of Central America.

Many business men are here weekly representing many different multinational companies and banks. There are a large variety of restaurants to satisfy any taste, and the Guatemala beef is range fed and very tasty and popular.

Many tall buildings can be seen in the area with a magnificent backdrop of 4 volcanoes two of which are active. The country itself has 33 volcanoes 4 of which are active.

Participants will have to make sure to come before the Conference or stay over to have the opportunity to visit the northern area of Guatemala where most of the vestiges of the Maya Culture are found. Tikal can be visited on a day trip but for more enjoyment and discovery, overnights are recommended so you can see other sights for example Yaxha and Uaxactun. The monumental Maya City of the Mirador is in the north of this area but difficult to access unless you finance a ride in a helicopter or hike in for three days.

An extended stay in Antigua is very pleasurable to be able to browse the streets and discover the 16 century buildings and ruins, many shops with varied handicrafts, bags, jade jewelry and many restaurants with samples of food from many nations. To be able to stay at Hotel Casa Santo Domingo, a refurbished 16th century monastery or many other hotels (some of which are remodeled old homes that belonged to families whose owners are descendants of the first Spanish that came in the 16th century.) This town has been destroyed by earthquakes many times through the centuries so you may feel a slight





tremor. This is part of every day life here. The setting of La Antigua is spectacular nestled in a valley surrounded by three volcanoes one of which is active, aptly named Fuego.

Other attractions are Lake Titlan, a mountain crater lake surrounded by three volcanoes to make a spectacular setting. There are twelve Indian villages surrounding the lake that may be visited for you to be able to enjoy the production of primitive paintings as well as varied handicrafts. There are lovely hotels to enjoy in the area. A short drive from the lake is Chichicastenango, the famous Indian market where many people of the quiche tribe congregate on market days to exchange wares and produce. Today there are also many vendors with handicrafts for quests to peruse and enjoy. This town has been here for centuries and the costumes are spectacular and the people still adhere to their tradition brought down through generations. A visit to the Church of Santo Tomas is a must, this church is the only one in the country where both Maya pagan rites takes place alongside the Catholic rites brought in by the Spaniards. This town housed some very pleasant hotels furnished with antique Spanish colonial furniture and lovely wool blankets made by hand from natural sheep's wool in Momostenango.

There are two ports in Guatemala, Santo Tomas de Castilla on the Atlantic and Puerto Quetzal on the Pacific. At both ports, we have terminals to greet the cruise passengers with music provided by the marimba which represents the ethnic music of this country. At Puerto Quetzal there are many artisans, a jade shop and presentations of the colorful ethnic costumes for the enjoyment of the passengers. Options are available tofor passengers who can choose to visit Atitlan, Antigua, canopy riding, coffee farms, sugar cane factory and

plantations and charter flights to Tikal. On the Caribbean coast at the terminal, there is the local dancegroups like the Garifuna the special ethnic group of this area, and again many artisans from the Maya area of the country present their wares. Tours are available to the archaeological site of Quirigua, boat trips to Rio Dulce, Livingston and varied activities like horse back riding, kayak, hike a natural waterfall in a spectacular natural tropical forest, and simply enjoy a swimming pool or beach at various hotels.

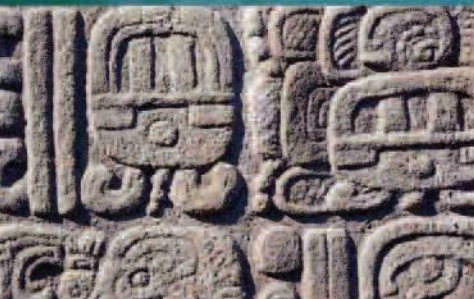
Throughout the year there are many festivals in the villages and towns of this country to celebrate the patron saint of the area. Some of these are very colorful and full of traditions in the form of ethnic dances in full costume that have come down through the generations.

Holy week is an outstanding event in this country full of pageantry and tradition in the form of processions coming out of the various churches carrying the saints on big wooden platforms. Antigua is spectacular as traditionally the members of the families make very colorful rugs out of sawdust and flower petals for the processions to pass over.

Guatemala welcomes you to the 16th Annual FCCA Conference and Trade Show and we know you not only will be very welcome but you will enjoy the venue and the Guatemala people who will make everything possible so you can feel and experience the culture, setting and variety this country has to offer. To quote some Cruise passengers "Oh this is so original" or "this is so different!" or "the people are so friendly" or "what good beer!"

Looking forward to being your hosts in October 2009!





# Guatemala

## Heart of the Maya World



Guatemala is a country with a very diverse ethnic culture and scenic beauty comprising imposing ancient Maya archaeological sites, Spanish colonial towns, Guatemala City a modern metropolis and mountain lakes surrounded by towering volcanoes, lush forests and many rivers meandering through cattle, coffee, sugar and banana plantations to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

You cannot miss a stop at Guatemala while cruising along the Central American coastline. The necessary infrastructure is available to receive Cruise ships and passengers at this magical corner of America.



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# Freestay Caribbean – A Cruise Conversion Program

By James Devers, Tropical Shipping

*“How can the Caribbean and Latin American destinations best leverage cruise tourism to improve the current and future impact from cruise visitors?”* This was the topic of the panel I had the pleasure of participating in at the recently held Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA), 15th Annual Cruise Conference and Trade Show in Port of Spain, Trinidad on October 30, 2008. I spoke about an exciting and innovative cruise conversion program called Freestay Caribbean that seeks to encourage cruise passengers, their friends and families to return to the Caribbean and Latin America for land-based vacations.

Freestay Caribbean (Freestay) is designed to encourage and support the growth and development of tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America in three ways: by stimulating and promoting the partnership between cruise lines and land-based tourism; increasing hotel occupancies, enhance tourism-related business, and providing increased market visibility by the participating destinations and vendors. And by stimulating and promoting the partnership between cruise lines and land-based tourism.

## How did Freestay get started?

In 2002, Tropical Shipping—in collaboration with FCCA, the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, Ministries of Tourism, hoteliers, tour operators and other tourism stakeholders—thought about what could be done to assist the Caribbean. The group decided that a sustainable tourism pro-

gram was needed to assist in supporting the development of tourism within the Caribbean.

Currently there are thirteen (13) member destinations which include Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Cartagena, Cozumel, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Croix, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Maarten and St. Thomas. Freestay entices cruise tourists back through special offers and discounts on accommodation packages, fascinating tours, duty free shops and delectable cuisine among other experiences and attractions.



*Freestay Caribbean Promotional Coins.*

## How does it work?

Freestay consists of three primary collateral components: (1) eye catching signage; (2) coin distribution; and (3) an attractive and enticing web presence at [www.freestaycaribbean.com](http://www.freestaycaribbean.com). When a cruise passenger disembarks at one of the Freestay participating ports, they are immediately greeted by an attractive and prominently displayed Freestay Caribbean sign which includes the name of the destination, toll free 1-800





### *Homepage for Freestay Caribbean website.*

telephone number, the website address and replicas of the coins. After completion of a tour or just before heading up the gangway, each passenger is given a metallic-like coin, which has on it the name of the destination, a replica of a local symbol or landmark and [www.freestaycaribbean.com](http://www.freestaycaribbean.com).

While this coin is being given to each cruise passenger, the tour operator, taxi driver or local tourism authority representative explains the program to the cruise passengers, answers any questions and encourages them to visit the website and return to the destination. The third component, the website that is maintained by Tropical Shipping. It is a key contributor as it gives the cruise passenger more information about the destination and the participating vendors. After visiting the Freestay homepage the visitor can easily select one of the destination pages to learn more about the destination. Using one of the links on the destination's page, the visitor can

navigate to the website of the hotel, tour operator, yacht operator, restaurant, tourist attraction or duty free shop.

I should point out that the topic of cruise conversion was most timely given that Caribbean and Latin American destinations were bracing for an uncertain 2008 to 2009 tourism season in light of the economic challenges that many countries are facing. In these economic times travelers and tourists are always seeking ways for getting the best value for money. Freestay is an innovative vehicle to achieve this by allowing tourists to experience a land-based tourism experience and enjoy a discount or special offer on a tour, accommodation, meal or some other attraction.

It is an interesting coincidence that when Rick Murrell, president of Tropical Shipping, and other Caribbean tourism stakeholders were creating Freestay Caribbean in 2002, it was on the heels of challenging global economic times. With the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and an economic slow down in the U.S. and parts of Europe, tourism in the Caribbean suffered because tourists were reluctant to travel by air. Exacerbating the problem were the US, U.K. and European economies which were not performing well while hotel utilization in the Caribbean was at an all time low.

For most destinations in the Caribbean and Latin America tourism is the largest contributor to the economy, therefore any initiative that can support these destinations' sustainable tourism efforts and strategies are welcome. Freestay Caribbean is a way to help in these efforts. With over 250 participating vendors and a website that has experienced over 2 million hits in its short time of being posted to the web, Freestay Caribbean is a ready and waiting vehicle to promote Caribbean and Latin American destinations to cruise passengers and support land-based tourism.





## Progreso's Importance in Mexican Tourism

If you want to understand the essence of Mexican culture, it is important to be familiar with the state of Yucatan, and what better way to know Yucatan than through its port, Progreso. Located on the northern shore of the Peninsula of Yucatan, Progreso is at the heart of the Gulf of Mexico and the perimeter of the Caribbean Sea. Its central location offers many beautiful views as well as different attractions for the visitor.

Progreso is one of the fastest growing cruise ports of Mexico and its importance has been increasing rapidly in the past few years. In 2006, 80 cruises called to this Port, while in 2007 the number increased to 115 representing a yearly growth of 43.7%. Progreso received 239,520 passengers in 2007, a shocking 48.9% more than the 160,842 passengers of the previous year. Given this exponential growth, the authorities, tour operators and community in general have designated tourism as one of the most important activities in the state. Accordingly, they now provide more quality services and offer entertaining activities to the visitors. Because of all these improvements, in 2008 Progreso has become the 6th largest cruise port in Mexico, surpassing other important ports in the Mexican Pacific.

The cruise terminal is equipped with many amenities to accommodate the visitors like shops, tour guides, taxis, rental car & tour agencies, immigration offices, customs facilities and even bars. It's important not to forget that this exciting

hub of activity would not exist without all the wonders that the state of Yucatan has to offer to their guests like Mérida, the state's capital located just 36 km from Progreso. This is an amazing colonial city with historic buildings and a touch of modern Mexico, incredible food and the warm hospitality of its citizens.

The Mayan culture is palpable at this location. The ruins of Dzibichaltun, Uxmal and Mayapan are easily accessible from Progreso. Chichen Itza, the mystical capital of the Mayan civilization for centuries and recently named one of the new Seven Wonders of the World is in the proximity of the port as well. Yucatan also offers the opportunity to visit ecological sanctuaries of pink flamingos, cenotes (underground rivers) and beautiful tropical beaches.

Visitors to Yucatan can also visit the historic Haciendas for an opportunity to see 18th century buildings that show the importance of the "henequen" to the region and to the world at that time. Visitors to the haciendas can also sample authentic Mexican cuisine and stay for lunch during their tour of the hacienda.

Regardless of how the visitor to the Port of Progreso chooses to spend their time, be it physical activities, historical tours, shopping, or simply relaxing on the beach, the visitor is guaranteed to embark on a unique culture and depart with a new appreciation for the beautiful state of Yucatan.



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## Nationality of Crew

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## Deployment

Western Caribbean and Mediterranean

**Inaugural Cruise:** November 8, 2008

**Shipyard:** Fincantieri Cantieri Navali Italiani

**Shipyard Location:** Monfalcone, Italy

**Country of Registry:** Bermuda

**Cruising Speed:** 21.5 knots

## Size & Capacities

**Tons:** 113,000

**Length:** 951 feet

**Passengers:** 3,080

**Crew:** 1,225

# Staff Profiles

## **Musa Charles** **Princess Cruises**



Musa is originally from Saint Andrews in the Grenadines and has been working for Princess Cruises since 2002. He started his career in a local hotel in the Grenadines, working in different departments for 4 years, learning as much as possible about the service industry.

His first job on board cruise liners was as Assistant Buffet waiter, and he has worked his way up the ranks to Buffet Steward, a position he achieved in 2006.

Musa's first job with Princess was on *Diamond Princess* followed by *Caribbean Princess* and since then he has proven his talent by earning special departmental incentives.

He describes his job as "fun and exciting – meeting different passengers that make you smile, and I sometimes wish they won't leave!"

## **The Grenadines**

He has always believed you should treat your co-workers the same as passengers and this is how he was nominated by the Medical staff to be Employee of the Month. He enjoys meeting different people from different countries and cultures, and always strives to learn more about them

A runner up for Employee of the Month in December 2006, Musa says he would still like to learn more about computers (his passion) and visit Singapore again, but most of all to bring his son on board for a cruise.



# Around The Caribbean





*(From left to right) Michele M. Paige, President, FCCA;  
Lic. Francisco Javier García Minister of Tourism, Dominican Republic;  
Michael Ronan, VP, Government Relations - Royal Caribbean International  
and Lic. Magaly Toribio, Vice Minister of Tourism, Dominican Republic.*




*FCCA Security Operations Committee meets with Andres Ruiz Morcillo,  
Mayor of Chetumal, Mexico (3rd from right).*





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