



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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**Heinz Simonitsch**

**HEINZ SIMONITSCH FIRST RECIPIENT OF PRESTIGIOUS 'ICON OF HOSPITALITY'  
AWARD**

MIAMI (July 13, 2017) - Legendary Caribbean hotelier Heinz Simonitsch, who defined luxury hospitality and environmental sustainability, will receive the first Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Icon of Hospitality Award.

Simonitsch of Jamaica's famed Half Moon resort in Montego Bay was conferred the high honor today, his 90th birthday, for his tireless and innovative contributions to the region's hospitality industry. Simonitsch is credited with pioneering the pairing of luxury resorts with ecological sustainability and community benefit approaches.

"Your countless contributions and achievements of your outstanding career have inspired CHTA's leadership to create the CHTA Icon of Hospitality Award. We believe it entirely appropriate to bestow the inaugural award upon you," CHTA's Director General Frank Comito stated in a communique to Simonitsch this afternoon.

"The depth and expanse of your work has forever shaped Caribbean hospitality. As a pioneer in luxury tourism, you set a new standard for others to emulate. Your commitment to the professional development of your employees and the health and welfare of your surrounding community has elevated local lives and the position of tourism in the region. CHTA and the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association are forever indebted to you for selflessly giving your time, talent and treasure to the greater good," he continued.

Karolin Troubetzkoy, CHTA's President, explained that the "Icon of Hospitality" title celebrates the careers and lives of extraordinary leaders whose work in Caribbean hospitality has stood the test of time and left its mark on CHTA and the region. "The association's new ultimate recognition honors legendary professionals who have not only achieved phenomenal business success but have also mentored and molded those aiming for excellence in this industry," she explained.

Simonitsch moved to Jamaica in 1963 where he leapt to prominence when he expanded The Half Moon Club into a 400-acre resort where luxury became synonymous with environmental sustainability and community benefit innovations, which included local access to the resort's medical facilities.

Prior to his iconic innovations in the region, Simonitsch enjoyed a distinguished career in the Caribbean tourism industry, earning many distinctions since he began in 1953 as dining room captain at the Elbow Beach Surf Club in Bermuda before he became the managing director of Half Moon Golf, Tennis and Beach Club in 1965 until his

retirement in 2002. Today, he splits his time between Jamaica and his home country of Austria, where he owns the Grandhotel Lienz, which opened in April 2009.

The former CHTA Caribbean hotelier of the year received many accolades, including the Honorary Order of Distinction, Commander Class (CD) conferred by the Governor General of Jamaica for outstanding contribution to tourism in Jamaica and the Caribbean; the Golden Cross from the Austrian Government for his long service as Honorary Consul General in Jamaica; the International Humanitarian Award from the American Friends of Jamaica for his commitment to helping the Jamaican population; the title of Professor awarded by the Austrian President for services and outstanding contribution to Austria; and the Blue Mountain award conferred for exceptional contributions to the continued growth and development of Jamaica's tourist industry.

His communication acumen and commitment to transparency was recognized by the Caribbean Media Exchange for Sustainable Tourism (CMEx), which gave him its top award.

In addition to his work in tourism, Simonitsch has played an active role in developing programs to assist the people of Jamaica. He is the founder of SOS Children's Village in Montego Bay and Kingston and the founder of the Heinz Simonitsch School in Montego Bay.

About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing tourism interests for national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 50 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working together with 1,000 hotel and allied members and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether navigating new worlds like social media, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, data and intelligence or looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on matters that matter most.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com) .

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