



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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**Sanovnik Destang of Bay Gardens
Resorts in St. Lucia**

CARIBBEAN HOSPITALITY FORUM TO OFFER UNIQUE SOLUTIONS TO INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

CHIEF conference will highlight tourism 'best practices' and provide professional development workshops

MIAMI (May 2, 2017) - Caribbean hoteliers and industry stakeholders will gather in Miami for the third installment of the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF), slated to take place from June 2 to 4 at the Hyatt Regency Miami.

Produced by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), CHIEF is a high-level forum, which features a number of educational sessions, where the region's hospitality industry assembles to network, learn, share ideas and collectively brainstorm creative solutions to current challenges.

"There's not another forum where you get to meet all these persons talking about energy efficiency, technology, social media and online marketing," said Sanovnik Destang, President of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA) and Executive Director of Bay Gardens Resorts in St. Lucia.

"You get a chance to interact with regional hospitality professionals and figure out what they're doing," Destang added. "Then you realize that you're not alone. You think that there's a problem that you're facing and you're the only one. You realize that we face all the same challenges. What's interesting is how people in different islands are dealing with it."



David Moore and Jessica Peguero of Hostal Casa Culebra in Puerto Rico

A rich learning experience, CHIEF has been invaluable to past participants David Moore and Jessica Peguero. The husband-and-wife team runs Hostal Casa Culebra in Puerto Rico, and attended last year's event in Puerto Rico for the first time.

"We really came here looking for educational opportunities to learn more about the industry ... to learn more from other people, and all that so far has been successful," Moore said.

Particularly beneficial for the pair was connecting with hotel supply vendors, a key component of CHIEF 2017 as well. The latest, most innovative products on offer for the hospitality industry will be presented at the CHIEF tradeshow.

"One of my favorite parts of this has been meeting people in the industry, which is a little bit difficult for us to do in Culebra when we just have our heads down working all the time," Peguero said. "This is a good break from that during the slow season to make new friends and new partnerships."

"CHIEF offers a priceless educational opportunity for hoteliers to create a customized plan of success," said Frank Comito, CHTA's CEO and Director General.

This year's CHIEF offers attendees the chance to be part of intimate professional development sessions and customize their experience with a choice of 16 industry-relevant topics. General session tracks focus on leveraging marketing potential, embedding sustainability into tourism offerings, and the purchasing power of the LGBTQ community.

Other more specialized sessions will highlight areas such as branding strategies, cost management, customer service, local sourcing and upselling.

"In a nutshell, CHIEF's educational sessions encourage discourse and inspire hospitality professionals to embrace change and pursue new opportunities," Comito said.

Attendees will be able to mix and mingle with peers, industry leaders and experts, and will benefit from the expertise of respected Caribbean hotelier Sir Royston Hopkin, KCMG, who will address the importance of excellence in Caribbean tourism when he delivers the keynote presentation at this year's event.

CHIEF will also recognize Caribbean businesses that masterfully implement best practices in the categories of Operations, Sales and Marketing, Environmental Sustainability, and Social Responsibility.

About CHIEF

Produced by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) is the premier educational forum for Caribbean hospitality and tourism professionals. CHIEF is where the hospitality industry assembles to connect, learn best practices, share ideas, brainstorm creative solutions to current challenges and build relationships. With three educational tracks covering a multitude of relevant topics, from the sharing economy to sustainability, and interactive roundtable and speed networking sessions, this event addresses issues affecting all businesses. The forum attracts hoteliers, vendors, government officials and industry experts focused on a stronger, profitable and more sustainable industry.

CHIEF is supported by host sponsors Interval International and JetBlue Vacations; platinum sponsors Cable and Wireless, Mastercard and STR; and gold sponsors Adara, BCV Social, Choice Hotels, Delta Air Lines, HeBSDigital, La Bottega, OBMI, Oracle, Rainmaker, Standard Textile, TravAlliance, Tropical Shipping and Virgin Atlantic.

For additional information about CHIEF, visit www.chtachief.com or call +1 305 443-3040.

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.

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