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For Immediate Release

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Contact: Darcel Choy, Marketplace Excellence +1 201 861-2056,  
darcel@marketplaceexcellence.com

## **CHTA Announces CHIEF 2023 Awards, Recognizing Best Practices in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry**

MIAMI, FL (December 11, 2023) – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has announced the winners and finalists of the prestigious Caribbean Hotel Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) 2023 Awards. The winners were revealed at the annual CHIEF event, which took place from November 29 to December 1, 2023, in Miami, FL. These awards recognize the outstanding initiatives in the Caribbean hospitality industry.

The CHIEF Awards were established to recognize successful practices of CHTA member hotels and tourism-related enterprises across five key areas – Environmental Sustainability, Innovative Sales and Marketing, People (Staff) Development and Support, Social Responsibility, and Tech Transformation.



**Kevin Cooper, General Manager, and Mary Calliste, Assistant Manager, True Blue Bay Boutique Resort in Grenada (center), with (from left to right) CHIEF Program Chair Bill Clegg; CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig, and Vanessa Ledesma, Acting CEO and Director General, CHTA**

The first-place CHIEF Award in the Environmental Sustainability category went to Grenada's True Blue Bay Boutique Resort for its dedication to environmental sustainability, demonstrating leadership in eco-friendly practices within the hospitality sector. True Blue Bay Resort's groundbreaking initiatives include a Biogas Digester project with KTH Royal Institute of Technology University, the expansion of rainwater collection systems, and a commitment to achieving zero plastic waste within two years.



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Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort owner and CEO Ewald Biemans (fourth from left) and his team with Bill Clegg, Vanessa Ledesma, Nicola Madden-Greig, and Kyle Mais, Chairman of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) (right).

Aruba's Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, which earned hall-of-fame CHIEF Award recognition for environmental sustainability, tied for runner-up with St. Lucia's Jade Mountain.



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**Sanovnik Destang, Executive Director of Bay Gardens Resorts (center) and his team with Vanessa Ledesma, Nicola Madden-Greig and Bill Clegg**

In the Innovative Sales and Marketing category, St. Lucia's Bay Gardens Resorts took the top spot for its inventive approach to sales and marketing. Their success is measured by a 40% YTD increase in booking engine revenue, driven by innovative digital marketing tools, including Triptease pop-up messages and engaging social media strategies that garnered over 15% growth on TikTok. Last year's top-placed Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort returned to the podium, copping second place this year.



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**From left: Bill Clegg; Vanessa Ledesma; Patrice Simon, Executive Director, Antigua & Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association; and Nicola Madden-Greig**

Recognizing the crucial role of People Development and Support, the Antigua & Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association took top place. Its inspiring “Unveiling Hospitality Professionals” project, leading up to Tourism Week 2023, highlighted the stories of dedicated individuals in various sectors, fostering talent and supporting team members while reaching over 20,000 views per video. Jamaica’s Half Moon and Mount Cinnamon Resort & Beach Club in Grenada were the runners-up in the category.



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Tambourine Sales Executive Jordan Iten (center) with Nicola Madden-Greig and Vanessa Ledesma

The Social Responsibility category was claimed by The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, and its digital agency Tambourine. Their “Our Ocean, Our Future” initiative, in partnership with Hidden Worlds, raised \$20,000 for marine sustainability and showcased the impact of immersive experiences on environmental awareness, achieving media coverage in 15 publications. Grace Bay Car Rentals in Turks & Caicos followed closely as this year’s runner-up.



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Pictured from left to right: Bill Clegg; Vanessa Ledesma; Nima Anvar, CEO, GuestChat; and Nicola Madden-Greig

In the Tech Transformation category, GuestChat took the top spot with its customized chat capability, enhancing customer engagement. GuestChat's innovative approach includes the incorporation of ChatGPT into the automatic messaging mix. This addition allows the system to utilize FAQs and internal documents, ensuring highly accurate answers that specifically adhere to the content in the documents, thus reducing the number of "hallucinations" and providing precise responses. Away Together, an app that allows for efficient and secure communication to enhance guest experiences in real-time, captured second place.



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President of CHTA, Nicola Madden-Greig, extended appreciation to CHIEF sponsors whose support was instrumental in making the event possible and advancing the region's hospitality industry. This year's sponsors included ADA Cosmetics, BWH Hotels, Figment Design, Interval, Marketplace Excellence, Mastercard, Saint Lucia Hospitality & Tourism Association (SLHTA), STR and Travelzoo.

"Celebrating excellence in hospitality and tourism, the CHIEF Awards illuminate the brightest stars in our industry. Their dedication to excellence not only elevates their own tourism entities but also inspires a new standard for the entire hospitality community. In honoring these champions, we recognize not just their achievements, but also the transformative power of innovation, sustainability, and commitment to people and community. Congratulations to all the winners and finalists," remarked Bill Clegg, CHIEF Program Chair and Regional Director of Development, Mid-Atlantic U.S. and Caribbean Regions for BWH Hotels.

For more information about the 2023 CHIEF Awards and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, visit [www.chtachief.com](http://www.chtachief.com).

#### About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 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 helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

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

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