

BERMUDA

TOURISM AUTHORITY



2019 Year in Review

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<http://annualreport.bermudatourism.com/2019/>

Year in Review

2019: Putting A-G-I-L-I-T-Y into action

Over its first year of activation, the National Tourism Plan proved to be a winning strategy to engage our community and take Bermuda's tourism economy to the next level. Aligning with the plan, the Bermuda Tourism Authority structured our 2019 Year in Review under its seven core themes that spell A-G-I-L-I-T-Y. Explore our past year's highlights and achievements via these focus pillars, our roadmap for success:



Awareness & Relevance

While many people have heard of Bermuda, relatively few know what makes us original. The BTA focuses resources to make the right target visitors more familiar with Bermuda—breaking through the sameness of competing destinations. In 2019, that strategy included partnering with pinnacle sports events to align with like-minded audiences; leveraging paid, earned and owned media content; staging market blitzes in select cities; and hosting journalists and global influencers who amplified our story on diversity, babymoons, food and culture, among other focus topics.



Greener

Paying attention to our environment is not only good for Bermuda in general—it's good for business. Eco-tourism is a fast-growing trend and our clean ocean and beaches and healthy reefs provide important draws for visitors. However, we can do better—and become greener. The BTA made some big steps in that direction last year through support for eco-tourism ventures and more electric vehicles; teamwork with a national blue-economy project; and advocacy via an inaugural climate event that could forge a thought-leadership legacy.



Infrastructure

A healthy tourism industry relies on a solid infrastructure to enable us to deliver our distinct experiences to visitors. While our infrastructure is generally good, there are important ways it needs to be upgraded, most notably in transportation, the waterfront, utility costs, technology, shopping/retail and accessibility for disabled visitors and residents. BTA achievements in this sphere in 2019 included progress in assessing accessibility needs and industry best practices; homing in on heritage-site management; and, most notably, developing a long-term, sustainable air-service strategy.



Local involvement

Tourism in Bermuda can only grow with the support of its residents. Visitors cite interactions with locals as one of the best parts of their trip. Yet many young Bermudians currently don't see tourism as an appealing career. And many locals do not yet view tourism as vital to our economy. As the largest private sector employer in Bermuda, and a proven growth engine, we need to change these perceptions and engage all residents. The BTA made progress in 2019, investing in homegrown entrepreneurs; building support for the National Tourism Plan; creating a dynamic stakeholder portal; and driving novel campaigns to match jobseekers with hospitality careers.



BTA Earns Re-Accreditation

The Bermuda Tourism Authority earned re-accreditation from Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) in July 2019—four years after first being recognised among the very best destination marketing organisations (DMO) worldwide. The designation, awarded to fewer than 200 of more than 2,000 DMOs globally, underscores the BTA's achievement of the highest possible standards in managing strategy and running its operation. The process involves verifying mandatory standards are maintained across 16 domains, from governance and finance to innovation, brand management and stakeholder relationships.



Innovation

The world of travel is shifting quickly and it's critical we keep up with new developments in travel and tourism and meet the evolving needs of our target visitors. This means we need to promote an entrepreneurial culture, use technology and data in new ways, and perhaps most importantly, think like a visitor as we develop new products, services and experiences. Examples of how the BTA did much of this in 2019 included opening a purpose-built Visitor Services Centre on Front Street; teaming with Airbnb Experiences; monetising cultural festivals; growing Restaurant Weeks; and leveraging African-American travel with a menu of new Black-heritage experiences.



Teams & Groups

MICE (Marketing, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions), sports teams and events are an important source of visitors throughout the year, not only contributing economic impact but also raising Bermuda's profile. The BTA attracted valuable group visits in 2019; most notably the second ITU World Triathlon Series in April that again delivered an impressive return on investment and put Bermuda on the global stage. Our sales and business development teams targeted trade shows, hosted familiarisation site tours, and trained travel professionals. Their efforts helped drive over \$16 million spent on-island by group business.



Year-Round

Bermuda's seasonality places significant stress on the island and tourism-related businesses that have to contend with massive ebbs and flows. Cruise ships, while important to Bermuda's tourism industry, contribute to this seasonality. We also often apologise for our non-summer months, but generally the weather is enjoyable year-round—especially to visitors from Canada and the Northeast US. In 2019, the BTA saw efforts to attract more ship calls in the spring and fall come to fruition. Long-waged efforts to build nautical tourism also saw a big win in the form of innovative legislation allowing superyachts to acquire cruise and charter permits—a game-changer for advancing strategy in that high-net-worth sphere.

2019 Overview

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Stakeholder,

Decreased air capacity contributed to a more challenging landscape for Bermuda's tourism industry in 2019, resulting in a measured year-over-year performance compared to 2018's record-breaking results. Yet, despite reductions in some areas, the island's overall visitor tally proved the highest ever, air arrivals were the second-best in more than a decade and increasing investment in our tourism sector moved the island strategically forward.

Certain metrics fell due to recent barriers forecast by the BTA early last year: Bermuda experienced a 5 percent decline in air capacity in 2019, for example, pushing down leisure air arrivals by 6 percent. Two airlines cut back flights from New York's crucial John F Kennedy hub, and flight schedules from Boston were also reduced. As a direct result of lower volume, spending performance by travellers was relatively flat, with \$417.5 million in leisure dollars (from both air and cruise visitors) injected into our economy, up 1.6 percent from 2018.

Taking the long view, however, 2019—with more than 191,000 visitors—was statistically the second-best in the past 13 years for the all-important metric of leisure air arrivals; only 2018, with 203,697, had more visitors arriving via air since 2006. Also notable was the record number of total annual visitor arrivals achieved last year: when cruise, air and yacht travellers were combined, the number grew 4.9 percent to an historic high of 808,242—the most visitors ever for the third consecutive year.

Cruise passengers made up the largest share of arrivals, but the greatest growth (15 percent) occurred in non-summer months (September to May)—underscoring the success of the island's cruise travel strategy to increase ship calls during winter, spring and fall seasons. That eased the burden on Bermuda's infrastructure and helped boost jobs and extended income for Bermudian businesses. Growth during the summer (June to August) was held to 5 percent.

The longer view highlights sustained successes, along with green shoots that pave the way to future growth on many fronts. More entrepreneurial ventures launched in 2019, boosted by investment for home-grown ideas. A modern new airport took shape. Several new hotels were also in the works to provide fresh tourism product. And reinvigorated Visitor Services Centres and curated activities around the island enhanced travellers' experiences.

Global awareness of the Bermuda brand was powered by a succession of big-name, multi-year partnerships launched last year. Bermuda's brand-aligned exposure during the US Open in the critical New York market, followed by the successful first Bermuda Championship, a PGA TOUR event, raised the island's profile among targeted audiences. The 2019–20 Clipper Round the World Race promised to take that baton forward with Bermuda as a Host Port and Team Partner for the epic spectacle.

Media collaborations with major titles like *Afar*, *Garden & Gun*, *Modern Luxury*, *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Town & Country* and *Buzzfeed*, shared Bermuda's story with millions of new consumers in 2019. Influencer visits from the likes of actress Yara Shahidi and family, a well-targeted press trip conducted in partnership with US-based Bermudian costume designer and stylist Shiona Turini, as well as hosting TV's *The Bachelor* couple Arie Luyendyk Jr and Lauren Burnham, garnered significant coverage to attract African Americans and babymooners, respectively.

The National Tourism Plan, having completed its first installment of a six-year vision, continued to engage Bermuda stakeholders and point the way towards shared goals—encompassing core focus areas from infrastructure improvements to greater year-round visitor balance and greener, more sustainable approaches to everything we do as a country in this industry. No matter what the future brings, that view should keep us all focused on fruitful longer gains amid near-term challenges.

Sincerely,



Paul Telford *Chair, BTA Board*



The National Tourism Plan, having completed its first instalment of a six-year vision, continued to engage Bermuda stakeholders and point the way towards shared goals

2020 Outlook

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

[NOTE: While this report's look-ahead includes many still-relevant facts and observations, it pre-dates the unprecedented global impact of COVID-19, and therefore does not reflect the changed post-pandemic tourism economy]



Dear Stakeholder,

The first two months of 2020 underscored a collective long-term optimism on the part of Bermuda's tourism industry, despite continued short-term headwinds. Anticipated barriers included further reduced airlift that will continue to challenge year-over-year growth and create a mixed outlook. Yet, increasing foreign and local investment, a new airport terminal, legislation to attract superyachts and high-net-worth guests, plus brand-boosting global events slated for 2020 and beyond, are sowing seeds for sustainable, long-term success.

Several new hotel properties are coming online in the next 18 months, including two on Warwick's South Shore. Azura Bermuda, a luxury boutique hotel and residential enclave, and Bermudiana Beach Resort, Tapestry Collection by Hilton, are both welcome additions to Bermuda's tourism product in 2020, modestly boosting the island's inventory. St Regis Bermuda Resort will add to that momentum the following year, with plans to open April 2, 2021. Thanks to the trio's addition, the number of hotel rooms in Bermuda is expected to rise from current levels of 2,400 to 2,673 by 2021.

The late-2019 purchase of the iconic Fairmont Southampton Resort by owners of Rosewood Bermuda, coupled with 2020 plans by St Regis developers HotelCo to acquire the St George's Club, also points to robust investor confidence in the island's tourism industry and signals the start of a new era for both properties. At the Fairmont Southampton, resulting enhancements will drive eventual growth in Bermuda's vital group-sales sector—but the disruption of renovation to substantially upgrade the property will need to happen first.

The new \$280 million airport terminal is taking shape and will open later this year. As a state-of-the-art gateway Bermuda can be proud of, the terminal will create a sense of welcome for arriving passengers and a longing to return when they leave, not to mention the industry buzz it will create among airline decision-makers. No matter how dynamic the East End portal may be, however, it cannot be considered a silver bullet for air service.

The BTA, in partnership with government, Skyport and the Bermuda Airport Authority, has taken a pro-active approach to closely manage airline relationships, working with experienced air-service development consultants to help shape a long-term, sustainable airlift strategy and execute it. Maintaining our strongest air routes while chasing new opportunities will be critical to our success, and time will be needed to reap the benefits.

On the water, legislation was passed by Bermuda's Parliament in 2019 offering superyachts charter and cruising permits. The new law was enacted in January 2020 with the intention of bringing back some of the high-net-worth traffic Bermuda benefitted from during the 35th America's Cup. Superyachts bring target visitors the National Tourism Plan identifies as "Jetsetters," and their visits, timed between Caribbean and Mediterranean schedules, would specifically boost our spring and fall seasons. BTA has already activated stakeholders in a working group that will plan 2020-21 strategy to take advantage of this promising sphere.

Between 2015-18, Bermuda enjoyed double-digit growth in air arrivals and visitor spending, a sustained comeback that has positioned us well to respond to the challenges of 2019-20. We look forward to working with industry partners and all our stakeholders to weather short-term adversities, keep the long view in sight, and continue to capitalise on every opportunity to build tourism's resurgence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Jones', written over a light blue background.

Glenn Jones *Interim CEO, Bermuda Tourism Authority*

We look forward to working with industry partners and all our stakeholders to weather short-term adversities, and keep the long view in sight



Awareness & Relevance

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Inspiring people with the allure of Bermuda

While many people have heard of Bermuda, relatively few know what makes us original. The Bermuda Tourism Authority focuses resources to make the right target visitors more familiar with Bermuda—breaking through the sameness of competing destinations. In 2019, that strategy included partnering with pinnacle sports events to align with like-minded audiences; leveraging paid, earned and owned media content; staging market blitzes in select focus cities; and hosting journalists and global influencers who amplified our story on black travel, babymoos, food and culture, among other focus topics.

PGA TOUR: Bermuda Championship

The PGA TOUR brought its first official annual event to Bermuda, adding the island to its 2019 schedule. The Bermuda Championship took place at Port Royal Golf Course October 31 to November 3. The BTA signed a five-year agreement, through 2023, as title sponsor of the Championship. The tournament, with a field of 120 professionals, carries a purse of \$3 million and offers 300 FedExCup points to the champion—Brendon Todd in 2019. It is broadcast on the Golf Channel and Sky TV. Port Royal Golf Course, owned by the Bermuda Government, designed by Robert Trent Jones and opened in 1970, serves as the host course.



The BTA set its sights on this partnership because of the significant economic benefits the event generates for Bermuda's economy

The Championship fulfills the role of a “pinnacle” event for the BTA’s golf pillar, one of four focus sports that align with the National Tourism Plan. The BTA set its sights on this partnership because of the significant economic benefits the event generates for Bermuda, as well as the worldwide exposure to an audience that aligns strongly with our visitor targets.

The Championship stimulated visitor arrivals and spending, bringing players, families and fans to the island. According to a KPMG study, the 2019 Bermuda Championship contributed a total positive economic impact of \$18.4 million, of which \$7.8 million accounted for direct spending. The event attracted 10,660 spectators, including 2,132 from overseas.

Fifteen hours of live television coverage on the Golf Channel in the US plus worldwide coverage in 221 countries—amid a week of spectacular weather—allowed TV viewers to witness the beauty of Bermuda. The fact this event is

staged in non-summer months is an added bonus, fulfilling our goal to bring greater balance to the tourism calendar. Advertising and content integration during and around the event invited viewers to travel to the island to experience Bermuda first-hand, and the Bermuda story was further told via digital, social media, public relations, and onsite branding—media exposure valued at \$3.5 million by the KPMG study. Over time, the Championship promises to leave infrastructure benefits and a sustainable legacy.



US Open Partnership



Bermuda signed a three-year deal to become the exclusive tourism partner of the US Open Tennis Championships. The partnership between the BTA and United States Tennis Association (USTA) was launched at the 2019 US Open (August 26–September 8) in New York City. Bermuda leveraged a significant presence at the event, with on-court signage in Arthur Ashe Stadium, presence on US Open digital properties, social media channels and on-site activation space for consumer engagement. The sponsorship netted Bermuda an estimated \$5 million in media value, according to an independent Nielsen study. In conjunction with the USTA, USTA Player Development and the USTA Foundation, the BTA is also creating a new, multifaceted event to take place in Bermuda featuring a Pro-Am and exhibitions with tennis legends and rising stars. The partnership underscores Bermuda's tennis heritage—Bermudian Mary Outerbridge is credited as the “Mother of American Tennis”—and integrates the Bermuda brand into one of the most culturally relevant events in NYC, inviting travellers to extend their summer season with a trip to Bermuda.



Clipper Round the World Race 2019-20

Bermuda partnered with Clipper Race in 2019 and is one of 15 Host Ports that will welcome 11 Clipper 70 yachts and their crew. Through the partnership, Bermuda promotes itself around the world as a leading visitor destination and highlights its maritime legacy while firmly cementing its position as a premier sailing hub. Working closely with community groups and the Clipper Round the World Race recruitment team, the BTA oversaw selection of two Bermudian “ambassador crew” to participate in the epic 40,000-nautical-mile sailing event. Duo Matthew Stephens, 28, and Chanara Smith-Rookes, 20, completed four weeks of rigorous training in the UK as preparation to sail Legs 7 and 8, respectively, aboard Bermuda’s debut race entry, GoToBermuda.



Bermuda promotes itself around the world as a leading visitor destination and highlights its maritime legacy

Bermuda Triangle of Sailing

A novel liaison with two other world-class sailing destinations introduced discerning travellers to Bermuda’s luxury and lifestyle. The BTA teamed with fellow destination marketing organisations, NYC & Company and Discover Newport, in a collaboration built around premier sailing events in each destination. Events included Bermuda’s hosting of the Argo Gold Cup, Antigua Bermuda Race, and Marion to Bermuda Race in May; New York’s hosting of SailGP Regatta in June; and Newport’s hosting of the 12 Metre World Championships and 175th-anniversary regatta for the New York Yacht Club in July. Marketing initiatives included coordinated digital placements, social media, public relations, trip giveaways and out-of-home advertising.

Place Brand of the Year nomination

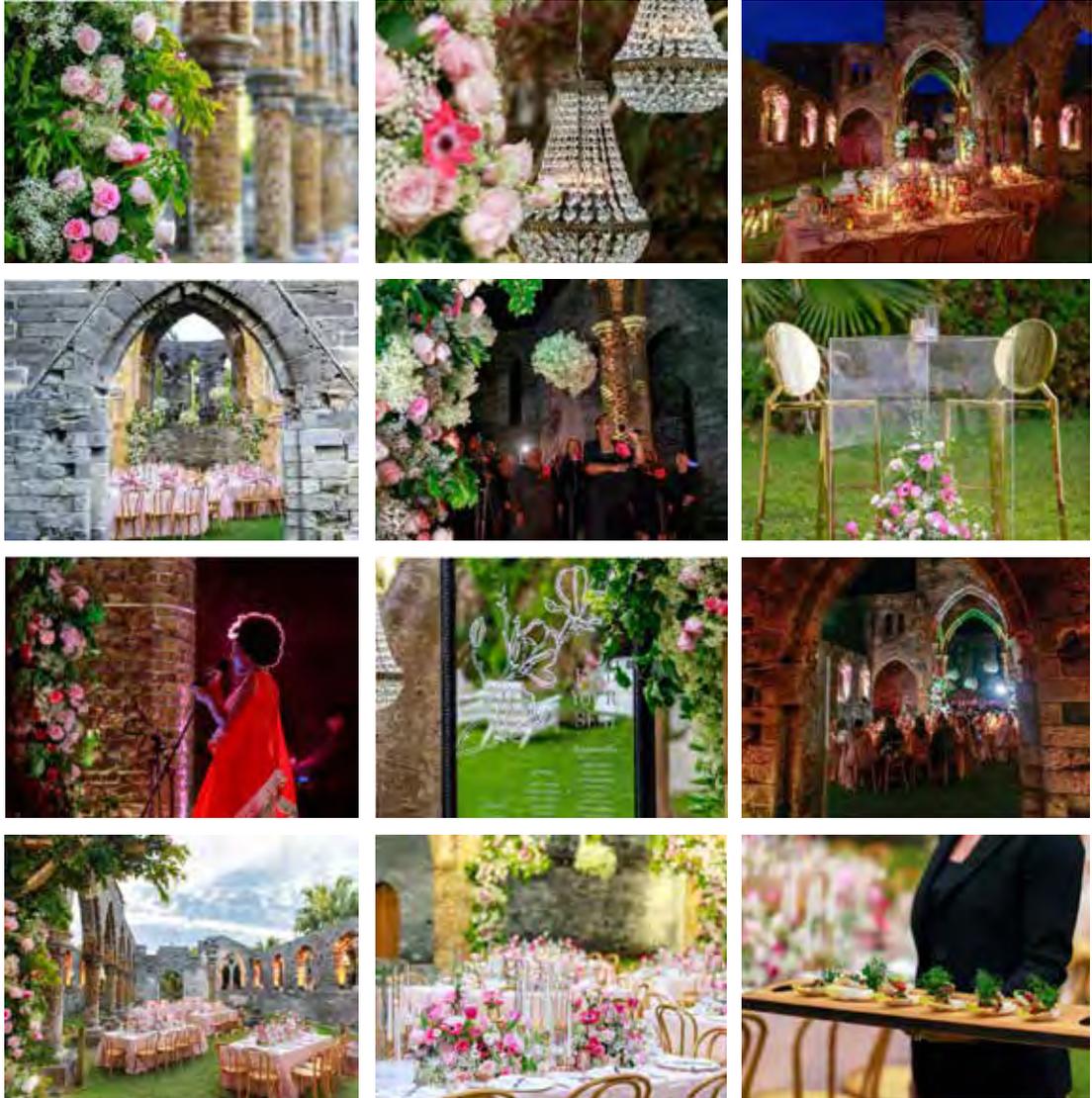
Bermuda’s National Tourism Plan was named a finalist for “Place Brand of the Year” by a top UK destination marketing think-tank. City Nation Place brings together tourism destinations from around the world at its global annual awards conference. Bermuda’s National Tourism Plan was praised among nine finalist strategies for its long-term strategic approach, clear framework, and the way it balances the needs of environment with those of citizens and visitors.



Influencers, Paid Media & Integrated Partnerships

Integrated partnerships with major media that aligned with Bermuda's brand and target audiences raised the island's profile across channels as part of the BTA's marketing strategy. An example was *Town & Country's* second annual Bridal Brunch held at The Plaza in New York, which hosted over 70 brides, friends and family for an exquisite event, along with 27 wedding planners. The elegant celebration featured a formal three-course brunch and conversation on modern wedding etiquette, offering brides insider insight to create the celebration of their dreams. The BTA also hosted David Tutera's Wedding Symposium at Rosewood Bermuda, showcasing the island to wedding planners from across North America who attended.

TOWN&COUNTRY



The BTA teamed up with two lifestyle publishing partners to focus on the solo and female travel trends and drive specialty group travel to the island. Bermuda was the first destination to partner with *Condé Nast Traveler's Women Who Travel* group for a curated trip to the island in May 2019, with destination host and Bermudian entrepreneur Kristin White. In the fall, a Women's Weekend, hosted with *Garden & Gun* magazine executives, drew close to 50 travellers who participated in a curated agenda that included workshops with a number of Bermudian female entrepreneurs.

Focusing on Markets that Matter

The BTA staged successful market blitzes in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Toronto and other key focus markets throughout the year. The events created Bermuda brand engagements for media, meeting and event planners and top travel-trade executives who inspire and target visitors to travel to Bermuda. Our Sales & Marketing team put together experiential, integrated promotions and events in which partners were able to participate and engage with visitor targets in key markets. The events were layered with broadcast and digital marketing for increased exposure. Group prospects, leads press and social media exposure were some of the KPIs tracked to measure the success of these initiatives.



Press Trips

BTA's Sales & Marketing division engaged with a wide spectrum of journalists throughout the year, pitching Bermuda stories that resulted in coverage in mass-market media outlets including: *OUT magazine*; *Food & Wine*; *Fortune*; *Allure.com*; and *Teen Vogue*.

FORTUNE



A Rum Swizzle is a rum-based cocktail often described as "Bermuda's national drink." BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY

Beyond the Rum Swizzle: Where to Find Bermuda's Best Cocktails
The island might be best known for its Dark and Stormy and buttery rum punches, but in the past few years, Bermuda's cocktail culture has flourished.

By Ryan Stephens
October 13, 2019

Days after Hurricane Humberto swept through Bermuda in September, locals were still cleaning up the damage. Besides downing branches, the 120-mile-an-hour winds emptied trees of their fruit all over the island. As a result, cab drivers were handing out bananas to passengers; a deluge of avocados became guacamole at restaurants, and at one bar, Stefan Gitschner was slicing sour oranges to turn into oleo saccharum, an ingredient that would eventually go into his craft cocktails.

Gitschner opened [The Blinks](#) in June, along with two business partners (his sister and brother-in-law, Selange and Matthew Strong). The indoor/outdoor cocktail bar overlooking Hamilton Harbor is perched at the top of what was once a container building owned by Swedens' Team America—the structure a remnant from 2011, when Bermuda hosted America's Cup.



A local entrepreneur founded the cocktail catering company I Fwasted Spoons in 2015 and then opened the Blinks—an elevated, open-air bar overlooking Hamilton Harbor—just four months ago. BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY

allure WELL
A Black Girl's Guide to Protecting Your Hair and Skin From the Sun
Melanin is cool and all, but have you tried giving it extra protection with a half of a SPF?
BY JUAN FERRER



I'm not big on holidays. Christmas? The winter solstice isn't my thing. Fourth of July? Excuse me, whose independence are we talking about? Halloween? She's cute, but I'm not shelling out money for a costume I'm going to wear once. But tell me that it's carnival season on an island and I'm ready to choose my costume (which, honestly, I will probably wear one to three times), throw on glitter, and hit the gym weeks in advance to make sure my stamina and endurance are on point. There are few things in life I enjoy [more than a good party](#). What's not to love about a nonstop party with great music, flowing drinks, and all the drink food you can shove into your mouth?

I mean, sea is great and all, but have you ever been on the hot city streets of an island, listening to soca music, twirling around in blinged-out bikinis and colorful leathers? Even before the big parade comes, there are days of fetes (parties) to attend: on the beach, in parks, in stadiums, in remote fields, in the streets, or at a pool. And yes, this is all before you turn on the road in all your glitter and plumes, twirling through streets lined with enthusiastic onlookers.

It's exhilarating, but it's a cultural tradition that's been going on in the Caribbean for years — [hundreds of years](#). In fact, depending on the island. These days, thanks to Instagram, Caribbean-style carnivals are more popular than ever and are quickly becoming a must-do trip for many travelers, particularly black travelers.

The Best Places to Travel in January



teenVOGUE

Bermuda's Carnival Showed Me That Curves Can Rock the Road

"When you make someone feel sexy and confident in whatever they're wearing, it shows and the whole confidence." BY ADA MILA WARD



There's no party quite like a Caribbean Carnival, but what's all the hype about? Carnival is a cultural tradition that dates back to slavery and celebrating freedom. This festival doesn't have Santa wheels or Road Choc. It's days of parties all leading up to "playing mar" on the road for carnival. Playing mar is simply celebrating by rocking a costume with a band and dancing through the streets of the carnival. The festival is deeply rooted in African and religious culture and happens annually in the Caribbean. From Trinidad and Tobago to Grenada and Bermuda's Carnival Weekend, the clearer islands know how to turn up whenever Carnival season approaches. From June 14 to 18, I had the pleasure of visiting Bermuda with the [Bermuda Tourism Authority](#), and it was an experience like never before. The small but mighty island is only in its fifth year of celebrating Carnival, but with the energy on the Carnival route — dubbed "the road" — you'd think it's been going on for way longer.



ROI Impact Study

The BTA commissioned a study by Longwoods to measure the direct impact of ROI on marketing spend. It was the second such bi-annual study carried out for the authority, comparing 2018 to the same time period and target markets as 2016. The study found ROI was up 7 percent between 2016 and 2018—from \$14.35 to \$15.46 in visitor spending and tax revenue returned for every dollar spent on marketing.

Target Audiences & Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted in key US gateway cities on various initiatives, including babymoons, travel for triathlon competition—and African-American travel, which the National Tourism Plan found makes up 11 percent of Bermuda's target consumer set in cities where we already heavily market; growing visitation from this segment is also a success indicator of the NTP. Focus group findings were shared within the organisation to help shape experience development and marketing strategies, including production of targeted videos and engaging local entrepreneurs in partnerships that brought influencers to the island for curated trips.

Bermuda Spa Month

The BTA coordinated a promotion with local partners of the first Bermuda Spa Month in February, leveraging our website, social media, printed and online publications, our seasonal guide *Out Here in Winter* and the monthly consumer newsletter that reached more than 220,000 readers. The goal was to encourage winter travel, while island residents also took advantage of the deals. The initiative was so popular, four resorts extended their special \$99 treatment spa offers through March.



Growing by being Pink, Blue and Greener

Paying attention to our environment is not only good for Bermuda in general—it’s good for business. Eco-tourism is a fast-growing trend and our clean ocean and beaches and healthy reefs provide important draws for visitors. However, we can do better—and become greener. The Bermuda Tourism Authority made some big steps in that direction last year through support for eco-tourism ventures and more electric vehicles; teamwork with a national blue-economy project; and advocacy via an inaugural climate event that could forge a thought-leadership legacy.

Bermuda Climate Risk Forum

The BTA successfully produced the inaugural Bermuda Climate Risk Forum, a high-profile, thought-leadership summit in association with the first PGA TOUR: Bermuda Championship and Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS). The half-day event took place October 30 at the Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, attracting 150 registered representatives from local and overseas governments, and the science and corporate communities. Climate champion Michael Bloomberg and Premier David Burt participated as keynotes, along with 13 other speakers. Delegates were invited to join the Pro-Am afternoon as PGA TOUR guests at Port Royal Golf Course as a wrap to the event.



The BTA aims to develop the event in tandem with the Championship to heighten the global spotlight on Bermuda and boost attendance and corporate support of the golf event. Ancillary benefits include:

- attracting more meetings & group business as legitimate business travel
- heightening Bermuda’s record on environmental protection and community resilience
- progressing “Greener” strategic priorities of the National Tourism Plan
- elevating the BTA’s position as a leader in Bermuda’s environmental strategy

The forum will be a slated annual feature of the PGA TOUR week, with BIOS one of several non-profit beneficiaries from the TOUR’s annual local philanthropy.

Eco-Tourism Offerings

From kayaking tours to Railway Trail biking and reef projects, more eco-tourism ventures are emerging in Bermuda—along with demand for them. Our Experience Team audited the island’s eco-experiences in 2019 and inspired new ones, with a view to helping curate more of them for promotion by Sales & Marketing in 2020 via our website, media trips, PR and social media.



Electric Vehicles

The BTA has supported the government’s plans to increase the number of electric mini-car rentals on the island. We surveyed current inventory and promoted licensing of additional vehicles. A total of 169 mini-cars were on the road by the end of the third quarter, and the Ministry of Tourism & Transport plans for up to 300 in the near future. According to the government’s Green Paper on Transport, 75 percent of local residents would like to see more mini-car rentals in Bermuda, and the National Tourism Plan calls for more visitor-related transport to the island to be powered by electricity or natural gas.



Bermi



Rugged Rentals



Tazzari



Twizy

Bermuda Ocean Prosperity

The BTA supplied data, background, stakeholder resources, and interviews to assist the Bermuda Ocean Prosperity Programme (BOPP), a partnership between the Bermuda government, Waitt Institute, and Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS). BOPP’s team, based at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is creating a pilot study that includes comparative market analysis of sustainable growth opportunities in Bermuda’s “blue economy” for tourism, commercial fishing and renewable industries.





Infrastructure

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Building frictionless experiences from arrival to departure

A healthy tourism industry relies on a solid infrastructure to enable us to deliver our distinct experiences to visitors. While our infrastructure is generally good, there are important ways it needs to be upgraded, most notably in transportation, the waterfront, utility costs, technology, shopping/retail and accessibility for disabled visitors and residents. The BTA achievements in this sphere in 2019 included progress in assessing accessibility needs and industry best practices; homing in on heritage-site management; and, most notably, developing a long-term, sustainable air-service strategy.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Site Committee (WHSC) finalised its updated management plan that will serve as a 2020–25 roadmap for future governance of Bermuda’s UNESCO site of the Town of St George and related fortifications. As a member of the WHSC, over the past several months, the Experience Team participated in stakeholder and strategic-planning sessions and has had extensive involvement on various working groups to provide input, direction and content to formulate this updated management plan.



Accessibility

Accessibility is considered an infrastructure issue critical to meeting objectives in Bermuda’s National Tourism Plan and the BTA has focused on raising public awareness to widen the discussion and provide a call to action. In 2019, the BTA formed an Accessibility Working Group, bringing together diverse Bermudians under the National Tourism Plan to develop a strategy to make the island more accessible to people with disabilities. With assistance from the BTA and supported by the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce Restaurant Division and the Bermuda Hotel Association (BHA), the Accessibility Working Group surveyed the island’s hotels and restaurants to better understand current accessibility. It also conducted an inventory review of transport.





Purple Tuesday

Bermuda recognised Purple Tuesday November 12—an international call to action to celebrate the spending power of disabled people and their families. It’s a milestone awareness moment for an issue that is relevant 365 days a year. Launched in the UK, Purple Tuesday aims to make customer-facing businesses more aware of opportunities and challenges and inspire them to make practical changes to improve the disabled customer experience. A video campaign featuring local accessibility champions, themselves disabled, was developed in collaboration with CITV.



Air-Service Development Strategy

Developing a long-term, sustainable air-service strategy has been a major BTA objective and a longtime goal for Bermuda. The Business Intelligence & Technology Division—which collects monthly data on air capacity, load factors, route performance, and schedule projections—led this initiative for the BTA in 2019, and onboarded Atlanta-based consultancy firm Ailevon Pacific Aviation Consulting (APAC) to undertake the project in a joint engagement with Bermuda Airport Authority.

As a kickoff to the project, the BTA hosted a series of well-attended workshops on airlift, with APAC presenting in-depth sessions for local stakeholder groups. Four sets of informational presentations were held over several days at Hamilton Princess & Beach Club; these included Bermuda Hotel Association members, global business associations and c-suite financial services leaders, travel agencies, and government stakeholders, such as Skyport.

Developing a long-term, sustainable air-service strategy has been a major BTA objective and a longtime goal for Bermuda.



The exercise, along with sessions at the Annual Tourism Summit, were constructive steps for both consultants and attendees, allowing a consultative process towards the shaping of a unified national strategy. Along with in-depth discussions with the Bermuda Government and airline partners, the collaboration helped progress work on the strategy, expected for release by early 2020.

Incoming travellers can complete the card online before they fly, saving time and making their experience through Bermuda’s airport more frictionless.

Online Visitor Arrival Form

The BTA helped promote the use of an online Visitor Arrival Card that was launched in late 2018, before being rolled out to more travellers this year. More than 9,181 visitors in 2019 took advantage of the new option. Feedback from visitors and airport officials was positive. Incoming travellers can complete the card online before they fly, saving time and making their experience through Bermuda’s airport more frictionless. Hoteliers, event managers and business meeting planners were encouraged to include a link to the digital form in their email communications to visitors, and the BTA also spread the word to industry associations representing global financial services companies in Bermuda. Currently, visitors who fill out the BermudaArrivalCard.com must print it and bring the document with them when they travel. In the next phase, the process will be paperless, allowing travellers to show their completed form on a smartphone. This initiative allows the BTA to communicate with travellers pre-arrival to inform them of events and activities available to them while on-island.



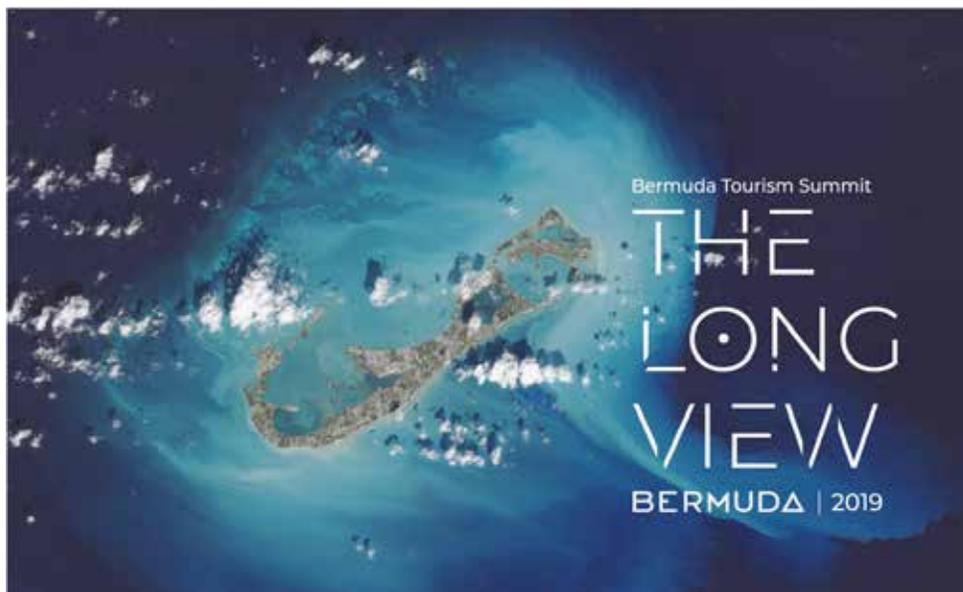
Local Involvement

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Growing through our People

Tourism in Bermuda can only grow with the support of its residents. Visitors cite interactions with locals as one of the best parts of their trip. Yet many young Bermudians currently don't see tourism as an appealing career. And many locals do not yet view tourism as vital to our economy. As the largest private sector employer in Bermuda, and a proven growth engine, we need to change these perceptions and engage all residents. The Bermuda Tourism Authority made progress in 2019, investing in homegrown entrepreneurs; building support for the National Tourism Plan; creating a dynamic stakeholder portal; and driving novel campaigns to match jobseekers with hospitality careers.

2019 Tourism Summit & Outlook Forum



The BTA welcomed 250-plus delegates to the October 15 Tourism Summit at Fairmont Southampton—with a focus of sustainable, long-term goals for the industry. Attendees joined local and international experts and influencers in a full day of informative sessions, active breakouts, and networking opportunities exploring all facets of Bermuda's tourism industry. Featured guest speakers included Adam Sacks, founder and president of Tourism Economics; Bermudian branding executive Daren Bascome; journalist Clare O'Connor; and hotelier Richard Tucker. Other spotlight sessions included "deep dives" into superyachts, frictionless travel, teams & groups and vacation rentals, plus insider lookaheads to hotel projects and the island's new airport debuting in 2020.

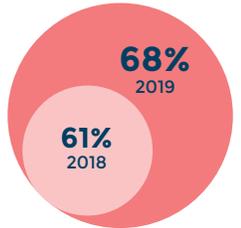
Earlier in the year, we staged a smaller stakeholder awareness event, Outlook Forum 2019. The two-hour forum, held at the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute, aimed to educate the local community on the challenges and opportunities in the year ahead—including airlift, major events, and 2019 priorities for the BTA team.

National Tourism Plan promotion—and support



A special series on the National Tourism Plan was featured in the first half of 2019 on ZBM's "The Breakdown" show. The BTA created accompanying 15-second TV spots to drive awareness on all aspects of the NTP's seven thematic pillars and how Bermudians can play a part in each of them.

We conducted a survey for feedback on the National Tourism Plan to measure resident support for tourism development, one of six major success indicators of NTP. Results showed support increased from a benchmark of 61 percent in 2018 to 68 percent in 2019.



Investing in Bermuda's Entrepreneurial Spirit



The BTA's Experience Investment Programme, which helps entrepreneurs get new ideas off the ground, was expanded to accept two rounds of applications in 2019. The first took place in March, targeting experiences to be launched in the third and fourth quarters of the year; a second round aimed to give flight to experiences in the first and second quarters of 2020.

That approach aligned with the National Tourism Plan's goal to encourage more year-round experiences, while also lessening the lead time for applicants. The BTA hosted familiarisation workshops in advance, walking attendees through the process. Four priorities for BTA experience investment in 2019's programme were: food tourism; re-imagining cultural sites & natural assets; experience & services in superyacht tourism; and historical ties to tennis. (Sports tourism promoters have a separate application process accessible year-round.)

Since 2014, about \$4 million has been allocated to home-grown ideas through the programme. Bermuda Heroes Weekend, Made in Bermuda Nights, The Supper Club, and luxury picnic provider Eettafel are among a host of entrepreneurial ventures that have received financial or marketing support.

Event Support

The BTA provided marketing and PR support for two weekly events bringing together locals and visitors during the summer months. Destination Dockyard, a free festival-style event, took place on Mondays in the West End, while Made in Bermuda Nights, staged at White's Island in Hamilton Harbour, offered ticketed admission to experience local musicians performing live outdoors on Thursday nights.



Since 2014, about \$4 million has been allocated to home-grown ideas through the programme.

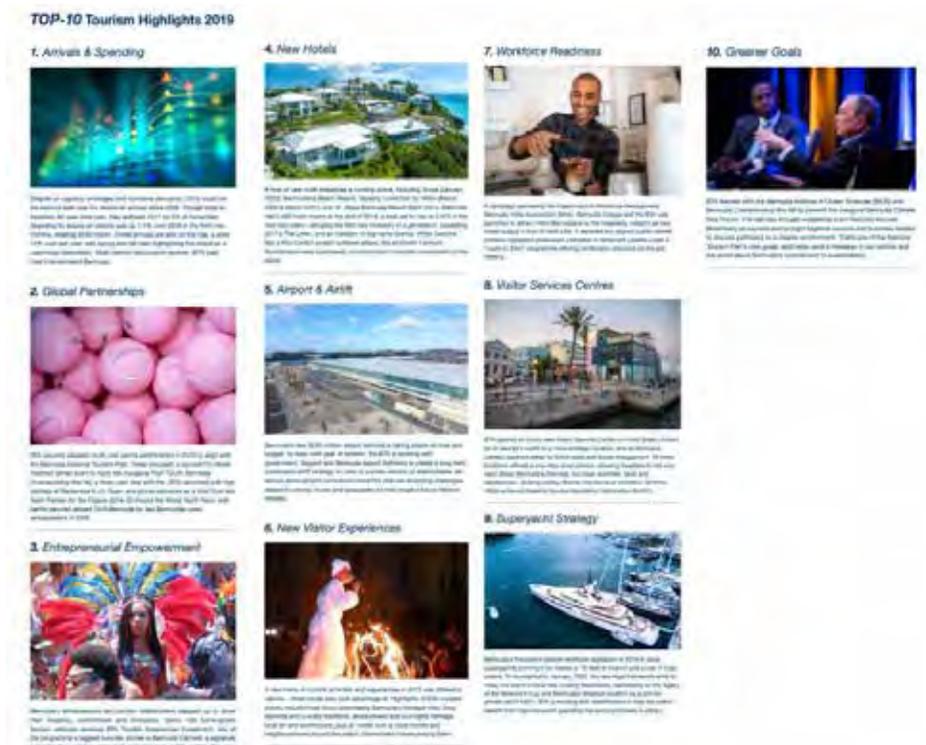


Corporate Social Channels

Corporate social channels, including @BTAInsights on Twitter, FB and LinkedIn, grew followers over 2019, and an Instagram feed with the same handle was launched and developed, with images illustrating our identity as a high-achieving DMO; it includes activities and news of our team and stakeholders, plus industry events and campaigns. Fresh on-brand banner art was also used to differentiate BTA corporate from @Bermuda consumer channels.

Corporate Messaging

Corporate Communications & Strategy supported all divisions across messaging channels, underscoring BTA achievements, promoting National Tourism Plan wins, educating stakeholders on news and events, and weighing into media coverage with BTA comment on key industry issues. Deliverables included press releases, e-alerts, commentary, stakeholder updates, speeches and social posts. A total of 91 BTA corporate press releases were distributed throughout 2019 to our local media and stakeholder database, some dovetailing with destination releases sent to external (consumer and travel trade) audiences via the BTA Sales & Marketing team. All can be found on the BTA website. At year-end, we issued an e-blast and press release of Top-10 Tourism Highlights 2019, celebrating tourism-market wins by the BTA and our stakeholders.



A total of 91 BTA corporate press releases were distributed throughout 2019 to our local media and stakeholder database



“Tourism in Focus”

Over the course of the year, numerous BTA team members joined Tourism & Transport Minister Zane DeSilva as guests on his weekly “Tourism in Focus” radio show airing on HOTT 102.7FM. Division members have participated to raise public awareness about key tourism issues or discuss new hospitality programmes and events. The call-in show allows engagement via Q&A with members of the public.

Stakeholder Portal

BTA Connect the stakeholder portal launched in 2018, continued to be an area of focus for outreach, education and engagement. The dynamic partner platform allows industry stakeholders (both companies and individuals) access to information such as the latest visitor statistics, a message board for engaging industry peers, and the opportunity to manage their business profiles and event details on gotobermuda.com. Vacation rental owners use BTAConnect to complete payment of their monthly fee.

Special resources and benefits allow BTAConnect users to:

- Gain access to customized reports
- Create and modify their web listings on GoToBermuda.com
- Add events to the BTA Events Calendar
- Post custom offers on GoToBermuda.com
- View and reply to service requests and RFPs
- Access exclusive reporting and content
- View partner benefits, including media mentions, website listing views and clicks
- Update contacts and details

In 2019, the BTA enhanced BTAConnect’s offerings, adding a new submission form for website listings; stakeholder workshops and presentations. Quarterly visitor arrival snapshots added to the reports section give users a one-stop resource of details about Bermuda visitors. Stakeholders wishing to create accounts just need to email btacconnect@bermudatourism.com for a login.



Strategy & Stakeholders



BTA Corporate Comms & Strategy was an active participant in liaison meetings with various stakeholder groups to share tourism market news, raise awareness of issues, and help shape national messaging on topics affecting the island. These included work with the Emergency Measures Organisation (EMO) during hurricane season, and the Bermuda Communications Group, a monthly ad-hoc collaboration of comms professionals across agencies and organisations, which includes the Government, Association of Bermuda International Companies (ABIC), Association of Bermuda Insurers & Reinsurers (ABIR), Bermuda International Long-term Insurers & Reinsurers (BILTIR), Bermuda

Bankers Association (BBA), Bermuda Business Development Agency (BDA), Bermuda Monetary Authority (BMA), Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, Government House, the US Consulate, and the Honorary Canadian Consul.

NewTourismJobs.com: Workforce Readiness



The BTA is driving a joint campaign alongside the Department of Workforce Development, Bermuda Hotel Association, and Bermuda College to attract more Bermudians to the hospitality industry. The campaign, launched in the fall of 2019, directs jobseekers to register online at NewTourismJobs.com to join a government database through which they will be alerted to job openings, training, and skills development opportunities. The effort follows a study done by PwC Bermuda for the BTA that projected Bermuda’s need for hospitality workers will increase by up to 800 jobs over the next two years as several new hotels open, including the St. Regis, Azura, and Bermudiana Beach Resort. Roles with the largest gap in supply and demand are housekeeping and food & beverage, representing 63 percent of the overall gap.

“Learn-to-Earn” Campaign

Part of the NewTourismJobs.com initiative is specifically geared to attracting Bermudians to restaurant careers. A public-private initiative was launched, funded by independent restaurant operators, the Department of Workforce Development, Bermuda College, and the Tomasz Tabor Memorial Fund, with administrative/promotional support by the BTA. The immersive, three-part training scheme was launched in the fall of 2019 and will begin intaking Bermudian jobseekers in 2020. It includes basic and industry-specific skills certification, followed by eight weeks of paid, on-the-job training in island bars and restaurants.



Vacation Rental Owners Advocacy Group

The BTA assisted the growing number of island resident owners of vacation rental properties to create their own advocacy group. BRAVO—Bermuda Rental Association of Vacation-Home Owners—launched at the annual Bermuda Tourism Summit in October. The new group aims to promote, support and represent a growing segment of the island’s tourism market—private vacation rental properties—and encourage economies of scale by working together in transport, taxes, supply ordering, and other services. The BTA has lent logistical and PR support to the group, which, in time, intends to be a self-sustaining, autonomous organisation with its own constitution, leadership and members.

Speed-Networking for Start-Ups

The BTA staged a “Speed-Networking Tourism Partners” event in October at Hamilton Princess & Beach Club. Sponsored by BTACONnect, the first-time networking session put entrepreneurs, investors and government decision-makers in the same room to facilitate fast, meaningful talks. A total of 17 partners and 30 entrepreneurs took part. The objective was to let officials give guidelines on how start-ups can navigate regulatory mazes to get hospitality ideas off the ground and foster better understanding of processes to execute events and other services in Bermuda.



Pride Parade

The first Bermuda Pride Parade was a dynamic event that demonstrated the island’s increasing diversity and inclusivity—qualities Bermuda target visitors seek. The BTA hosted a waterstop outside the Hamilton Visitor Services Centre for parade-goers in the Labour Day Weekend event.

The BTA also promoted numerous other events throughout Labour Day Weekend—from the Urban Culture Exchange at Fort Hamilton to the Eastern County cricket match in St. David’s and the annual Sand Castle Competition at Horseshoe Bay. Curated beach dinners, raft-ups, the traditional Labour Day Parade and a vintage auto and motorcycle show were further highlights. All highlight significant potential to showcase all these activities to North American visitors as a combined reason to choose Bermuda for a Labour Day getaway.



Labour Day Weekend
AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 2

FRIDAY Weekend Kick-off Reception FORT HAMILTON 📍	SATURDAY Eastern County Cricket Final ST JAMES'S 📍 Bermuda Pride Parade VICTORIA GARDEN, HAMILTON 📍 Bermuda Sand Castle Competition HOBBSLANDS BAY 📍 The Wave Beach Dinner & After Party SLIBOW BEACH RESORT 📍	SUNDAY Hot Girl Summer Pool Takeover SLIBOW BEACH RESORT 📍
		MONDAY Labour Day Raft-Up ON THE WATER 📍

FOR TICKETS: GoToBermuda.com/events

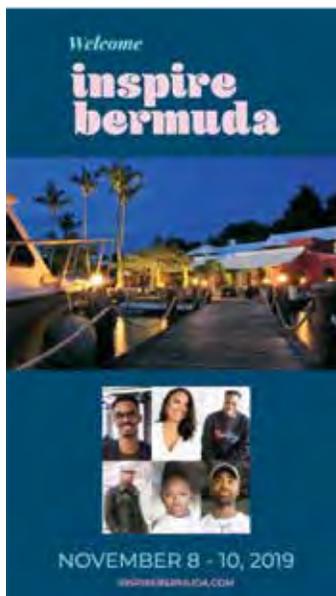
BERMUDA

Out Here
SUMMER LIVES BEYOND ITS EXPIRATION DATE



Inspire Bermuda

The BTA supported a two-day event for entrepreneurs organised by the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC). The BTA invited our entrepreneurial stakeholders to the two-day summit, “Inspire Bermuda,” at Fairmont Southampton November 8–10. The forum targeted creatives and entrepreneurs from the US and Bermuda and was presented in tandem with Driven Society, a New York-based group focused on multicultural millennials. Keynote speakers included Harlem Capital investor John Henry, author-speaker Alex Wolf, and Blavity founder Jonathan Jackson. Tickets were offered to Bermuda high-school students to encourage the next generation of innovators.



National Service Standards Programme (NSSP)

Twenty-seven businesses qualified for certification recognising top-level customer service standards. Created in 2015 by the BTA, the National Service Standards Programme (NSSP) benchmarks and promotes professional standards in the tourism industry. Companies that apply carry out various criteria over the course of a year—from customer, staff and management surveys to ‘mystery shopper’ visits and online ratings via portals such as Trip Advisor and Google. Those that meet annually assessed criteria are awarded accreditation and a valuable package of recognition benefits. They are identified on the BTA’s website with a pink star and appear at the top of search listings in their respective sectors.



Qualified NSSC holders to date include the BTA’s three Bermuda Visitor Services Centres (BVSCs), in Dockyard, St. George’s and Hamilton, along with these hospitality businesses: & Partners, Alexandra Mosher Studio Jewellery, Barracuda Grill, Beauty Queen Day Spa, Bermuda Bride, Bermuda Perfumery, Bermuda Transit Services, Devil’s Isle Café, Dolphin Quest, Dowling’s Marine & Auto Services, Flanagan’s Irish Pub, Frog & Onion Pub, Fun Golf, Hog Penny Restaurant & Pub, Inverurie Executive Suites, Island Tour Centre, Lili Bermuda, Newstead Belmont Hills Golf Resort & Spa, Pickled Onion Restaurant & Bar, PTIX, Rosedon Hotel, Royal Palms Hotel, Sail Bermuda, Strykz Bowling Lounge, Tobacco Bay, Tuckinn Rentals.



Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) Programme

The Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) programme allows hospitality industry workers to earn international certification—preparing them to provide world-class visitor experiences. The designation demonstrates badge holders’ knowledge about Bermuda’s attributes, features and attractions along with their ability to respond to visitor inquiries courteously and professionally. Currently, Bermuda counts more than 800 ambassadors certified under the scheme. In 2019, the National Tourism Plan was incorporated into the programme for CTA certifications and re-certifications.



Bermudian entrepreneur Dennie O’Connor won the 2019 International Certified Tourism Ambassador [CTA] Star Award, setting himself apart from other tourism ambassadors around the US. O’Connor was put forward to the Tourism Ambassador Institute (TAI), the accrediting body of the local CTA programme, after receiving three local CTA Star Awards, including Ambassador of the Year, in May of this year.



The BTA championed tourism awareness activities during Hospitality Month in April. Special community events promoted those on the front line of the industry, as well as relevant pillars of the National Tourism Plan—an example was an electric bike outing that emphasised both Innovation and Greener. A student video competition and PHC Community Fun Day also engaged public stakeholders.

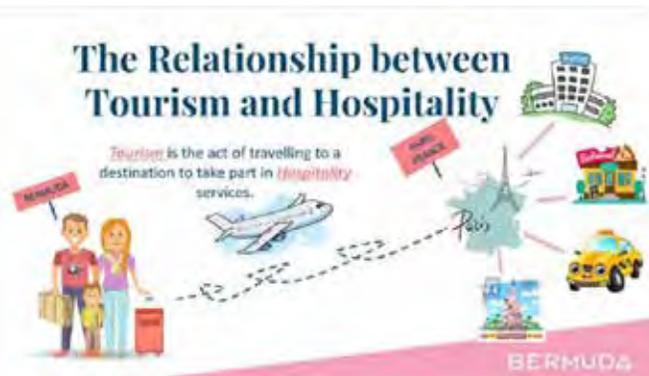


YOUTH PROGRAMMES

- **Hospitality Skills = Life Skills Programme**

Launched in 2012, the Hospitality Skills = Life Skills (HS=LS) Programme was developed to demonstrate for students the life-long impact of being hospitable and raising awareness of tourism job and career opportunities. The scheme received a refresh in 2019, incorporating input from students, educators and volunteers before reintroduction to its target audience of eight to 12-year-olds. The programme is facilitated in school classrooms by industry volunteers and delivered to students in the island's primary (P4 and P6) and middle schools (M2). BTA recruited volunteers and registered schools to relaunch the programme in 2020.

HOSPITALITY SKILLS | Life Skills Programme



- **Junior Chef Central**

Young participants in Jr Chef Central hone their skills to prepare nutritious meals, while learning how healthy cooking can also be delicious. The programme caters to students ages 10–15, building a solid culinary foundation that includes nutritional facts and table etiquette, with a view to developing their interest in culinary arts. The programme's summer camp was held in July for the fourth year in a row. Previously run by the Bermuda Hospitality Institute, this was the first year the programme was managed by BTA.



Thinking like a visitor

The world of travel is shifting quickly and it's critical we keep up with new developments in travel and tourism and meet the evolving needs of our target visitors. This means we need to promote an entrepreneurial culture, use technology and data in new ways, and perhaps most importantly, think like a visitor as we develop new products, services and experiences. Examples of how the BTA did much of this in 2019 included opening a purpose-built Visitor Services Centre on Front Street; teaming with Airbnb Experiences; monetising cultural festivals; growing Restaurant Weeks; and leveraging African-American travel with a menu of new Black-heritage experiences.

Airbnb Experiences

Airbnb and the BTA launched Airbnb Experiences for Bermuda, offering visitors an array of immersive experiences, all hosted by locals looking to share passions and interests with people from all over the world. More than 15 Bermuda Experiences are featured on Airbnb as a result of the collaborative effort, with more expected to be added to the platform. Experiences are marketed worldwide to millions of engaged Airbnb users who visit the company's website, social media, and email channels; locals serve as expert hosts, showing visitors the allure of the island's natural beauty and sharing Bermudian hospitality through interactive cultural excursions, while helping spread the benefits of tourism to all parts of the island. The initiative was part of a larger integrated marketing collaboration between the BTA and Airbnb that included PR, social media and marketing synergies.



Restaurant Weeks

Diners played a starring role on social media in Bermuda Restaurant Weeks (January 17–February 3, 2019). The culinary promotion, launched by the BTA, invited locals to share video testimonials about the eateries they visited. The BTA then shared the most engaging reviews with visitors as a showcase of residents' recommendations. The BTA also began building special food experiences for 2020: a dinner with Top Chef celebrity Eric Adjepong, a luxury picnic in the gardens of Waterville, and a fish fry at Dockyard's Transport Museum. A record-breaking 50 restaurants were lined up to participate in the 2020 festival; promotional content was finalised earlier than in previous years—providing the benefit of longer marketing exposure.

A record-breaking 50 restaurants were lined up to participate in the 2020 festival



Top Chef celebrity
Eric Adjepong

African Diaspora Heritage Trail (ADHT) Working Group

The BTA formed an African Diaspora Heritage Trail (ADHT) Working Group to meet the evolving needs of our targeted visitors and enhance visitor experiences. The group helped to elevate the ADHT experience for visitors; leveraged stories that highlight Bermuda's heritage and connect to African-American travellers; and created interactive, immersive and memorable experiences around ADHT sites.



New Experiences: Highlighting Black Heritage & Cultural Assets

A new collection of events and experiences was created around culture and heritage to inspire local stakeholders to dream up their own innovations. Ideas born from NTP working groups helped shape a 'Cultural Calendar' to make strategic executions easy for stakeholders to follow and consumers to find. The BTA team also held information sessions with concierges, VSC ambassadors and other stakeholders, including a press event to raise public awareness. Some of the most innovative included:

• **Sally Bassett Dramatisation**—four outdoor theatrical performances of the African Diaspora-related story of enslaved Bermudian heroine Sally Bassett were held at the Cabinet Office park, where her bronze statue stands. The dramatisation, complete with dance and fire, was free, while ticketed bus tours preceded the performance.



• **Government House Tour**—BTA Destination Services and Experience teams put together this new offering with the assistance of Government House. Guests included a mix of local residents and visitors who toured a variety of Bermudian neighbourhoods before gaining admission for a tour of the grand Pembroke residence of Bermuda’s Governor. The tours were so popular, the BTA aims to arrange additional dates for 2020.

• **Discover Days**—rolled out in October, this initiative saw the tourism industry invite visitors to get lost in Bermuda’s culture by geography: Hamilton (Fridays), St George’s/St David’s (Saturdays), and Dockyard (Sundays). The Experience Team worked with stakeholders in all three hubs to align a list of cultural events and experiences that are shared with VSC ambassadors to promote. A web page also rolls up Discover Day information for consumers.



Taste of Bermuda

A partnership with the City of Hamilton event presented an opportunity for bringing alive one of Bermuda’s rich cultural sites, as detailed in the National Tourism Plan. At Barr’s Bay Park, the site of the “We Arrive” monument that pays homage to slaveship survivors, the BTA held an October picnic in partnership with Eettafel and Discovery Wines. Eettafel was an Experience Investment Programme recipient, and partnering with that business to scale up for groups was part of the agreement. The event sold out with 48 attendees, of which almost half were visitors. The menu focused on local seasonal harvests to assist storytelling about Bermuda as a year-round destination.



Monetising Cultural Experiences

Curated (& monetised) experiences around cultural highlights and holidays were offered to visitors in 2019, including special access at the St George’s Peppercorn Ceremony (April), Bermuda Day (May), Cup Match (July/August), and Christmas Parade (December). Packages gave authentic behind-the-scenes access paired with only-in-Bermuda cultural immersion; the strategy satisfies the wants of experiential travellers while increasing visitor spending.

The Bermuda Day package, for example, aligning with the start of Memorial Day weekend in the United States, allowed ticket-holders to not only watch the parade in style from the new Visitor Services Centre on Front Street but also become part of the procession by riding on a parade float below. The initiative was the brainchild of the Experience Team in partnership with the Department of Community & Cultural Affairs.



Bermuda Visitor Services Centres

A purpose-built Visitor Services Centre was officially opened at 10 Front Street, Hamilton in 2019. Constructed of shipping containers with bold, branded wrapping, the three-storey site opened in April—the result of a multi-year process to align all visitor services under one management team and mission. Strategic enhancements incorporated into the new centre included experience booking via online credit-card payment and touchscreen functionality; accessibility for wheelchairs and strollers; highly qualified Bermudian staff trained as Certified Tourism Ambassadors; concession opportunities for local entrepreneurs and job opportunities as BVSC employees and seasonal contractors on the front line of hospitality.

A new Visitor Services Centre also opened on Duke of York Street, St George earlier in the year, while a revamped Dockyard facility opened in 2018. All three are managed by Bermuda Visitor Services Centre Ltd, a BTA subsidiary. Smart benches were installed in Hamilton and Dockyard in 2019, and new Bermuda-branded retail merchandise was added to the inventory of all.



BTA Internal Tech Updates

- Developed dashboards in Simpleview to automate measurement of sales and marketing activity
- Rollout of Microsoft Teams across the BTA to improve collaboration





Designing distinct positioning for groups

MICE (Marketing, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions), sports teams and events are an important source of visitors throughout the year, not only contributing economic impact but also raising Bermuda's profile. The Bermuda Tourism Authority attracted valuable group visits in 2019; most notably the second ITU World Triathlon Series in April that again delivered an impressive return on investment and put Bermuda on the global stage. Our sales and business development teams targeted trade shows, hosted familiarisation site tours, and trained travel professionals. Their efforts helped drive over \$16 million spent on-island by group business.

ITU World Triathlon Series Bermuda

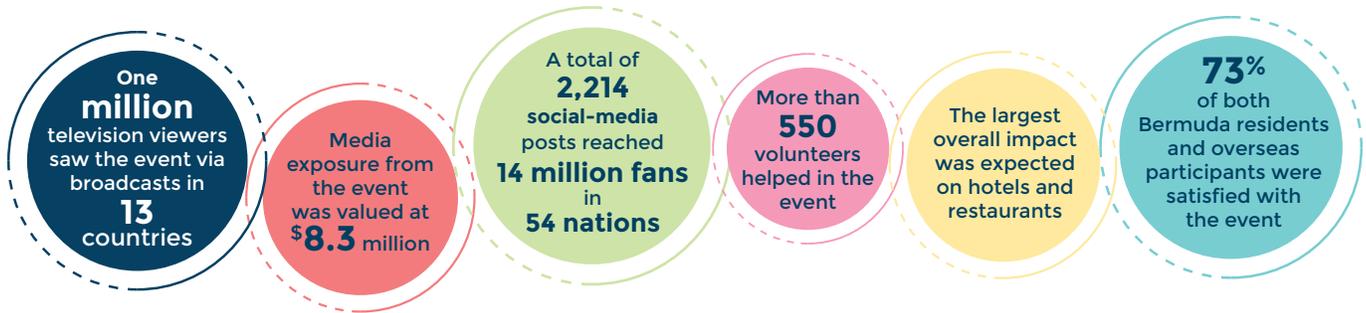
The 2019 MS Amlin World Triathlon Series (WTS) event in Bermuda generated an estimated \$4.7 million for the island's economy, along with another \$9.3 million in projected future tourism, according to PwC Bermuda. The April 27–28 event—one of three annual International Triathlon Union (ITU) World Triathlon Series races secured by Bermuda through 2020, followed by the Grand Final in 2021—contributed \$300,000 more to the island's gross domestic product (GDP) than last year's inaugural event.

Some 1,378 people travelled to Bermuda for the triathlon, including 352 overseas participants, 933 spectators, 45 organisers and 48 media representatives. Overseas spectators contributed \$1.6 million, and overseas participants \$600,000, to GDP. With participants from the US (64 percent), Canada (19 percent), the UK (13 percent), Switzerland (three percent), other countries (one percent) staying on the island nearly six days on average, the report estimated average spend per visitor per day was \$250.



Some 1,378 people travelled to Bermuda for the triathlon

Among other highlights, the PwC report found:



National Trusts Conference

Bermuda was chosen to host a major conservation conference in March. The International Conference of National Trusts (INTO) 2019 brought more than 100 representatives of conservation organisations from 32 countries to the island; the fourth Caribbean Conference of National Trusts took place at the same time to discuss regional issues. The four-day event put the spotlight on ways to re-energise the island’s cultural assets. Bermuda’s National Tourism Plan identifies 200 cultural sites, museums and annual events across the island. The visitors generated 500 room nights at the Fairmont Southampton and used meeting space at the World Heritage Site in St. George’s and National Museum of Bermuda in Dockyard. Local restaurants, transport and tour guides added to attendees’ on-island experience.



World Sailing Conference

More than 400 delegates from 68 nations headed to Bermuda for the nine-day World Sailing 2019 Annual Conference. The October 26–November 3 event at the Fairmont Southampton was the result of a winning bid in November 2017 by the BTA to host the prominent group, the global governing body for the sport. The conference brings together delegates in a series of meetings throughout the week to make key decisions impacting the future of sailing for both professional and recreational athletes. Attendees include sailors with experience in multiple disciplines of the sport, event organisers, Member National Authorities (MNAs), Class Associations, boat manufacturers and committee members.

Team Sports Training

More than 130 swimmers from four American universities travelled to Bermuda to train at the National Sports Centre in January 2019. Howard University, of Washington DC, together with the Stevens Institute of Technology, William and Paterson University and Ramapo College, all of New Jersey, sent student athletes to take full advantage of the NSC’s facilities to strengthen their skills.

The visits are part of an agreement between the BTA and NSC allowing sports teams to use the facility’s training facilities at little or no cost if the team size and length of stay provide an adequate economic impact for the island. The initiative is built into the BTA’s sports-tourism strategy and key goals of the Bermuda National Tourism Plan—with a focus on attracting teams & group business and delivering balanced growth with an emphasis on non-summer seasons. Beyond swimming, the strategy has attracted athletes in lacrosse, rugby, track & field, and other sports, helping solidify Bermuda as a leading sports-training destination.





Year-Round

Embracing all seasons

Embracing Seasonality—Bermuda’s seasonality places significant stress on the island and tourism-related businesses that have to contend with massive ebbs and flows. Cruise ships, while important to Bermuda’s tourism industry, contribute to this seasonality. We also often apologise for our non-summer months, but generally the weather is enjoyable year-round—especially to visitors from Canada and the Northeast US. In 2019, the BTA saw efforts to attract more ship calls in the spring and fall come to fruition. Long-waged efforts to build nautical tourism also saw a big win in the form of innovative legislation allowing superyachts to acquire cruise and charter permits—a game-changer for advancing strategy in that high-net-worth sphere.

Cruise Sector Strategy

Senior leadership from the BTA attended the annual SeaTrade Cruise Global Conference to conduct a series of meetings with key cruise line executives. Extending the cruise ship season beyond summer months continues to be a focus for the BTA; with the return of Disney and an increase in occasional scheduled visits, the 2019 season demonstrated the potential. A third (33 percent) of cruise ships visiting Bermuda arrived during springtime months of April, May and June, while nearly a quarter (24 percent) made port here in the months of October, November and December.



Overall, the majority, or 59.7 percent, of annual cruise visitors arrived in non-summer months (Sept–May) in 2019. The total projected number of ship calls fell slightly from 185 to 176 due to eight cancellations during recent hurricane activity in the Atlantic. The schedule for 2020 was to include more total calls, more passengers, and building on the trend of greater year-round balance.

Superyacht Strategy

The BTA welcomed a new framework of incentives that will allow visiting superyachts to cruise and charter in Bermuda waters. We worked closely with the Bermuda government, as well as the Bermuda Business Development Agency (BDA) and other related industry stakeholders, to develop the legislation tabled in July 2019 in the House of Assembly. It opened the door for the BTA to start putting in place a strategy-planning process to kick off in 2020. The “Superyachts and Other Vessels (Miscellaneous) Act 2019” sets new allowances based on size for superyachts (24m/78 ft) to acquire cruising and charter permits and stay in Bermuda without penalty during transit for bunkering and provisioning. This should include more visits at certain parts of the year as assets transition between the Caribbean and Europe.

Superyachts align well with numerous goals of the NTP, stimulating substantial spending in the local economy and creating increased job opportunities for Bermudians.



The BTA created an educative flyer for the Ministry of Tourism & Transport which led a Bermuda delegation, including tourism stakeholders, to the Monaco Yacht Show in September 2019 to spread awareness of the landmark legislation. Plans were also put in place to launch a collaborative series of working groups in 2020 to explore opportunities and challenges of attracting the superyacht sector. The strategic planning exercise, akin to development of the National Tourism Plan, would include representatives from across Bermuda’s maritime and high-net-worth community. Superyachts align well with numerous goals of the NTP, stimulating substantial spending in the local economy and creating increased job opportunities for Bermudians.

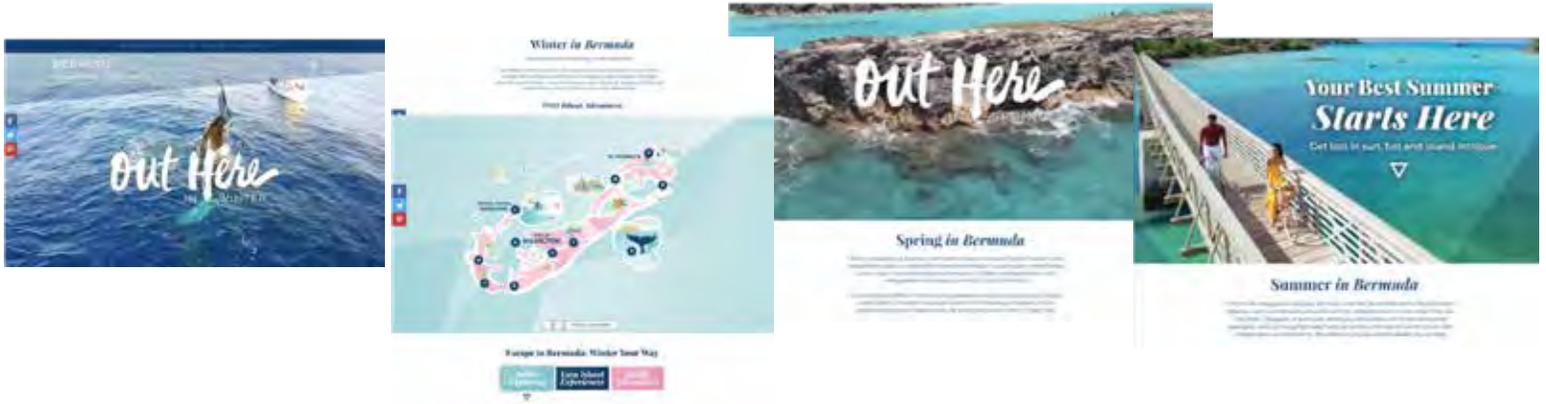
Taste of Bermuda

The BTA was lead sponsor of the annual fall food festival, helping stage a successful weekend alongside the City of Hamilton. Highlights included a luxury farm-to-table picnic at Barr’s Bay Park and an activation in the ‘Tasting Village’ on Front Street. At this event, the Experience Team also launched a Food Harvest Almanac featuring farmers, fishermen and foragers and demonstrating the year-round bounty of natural Bermuda.



Sales & Marketing

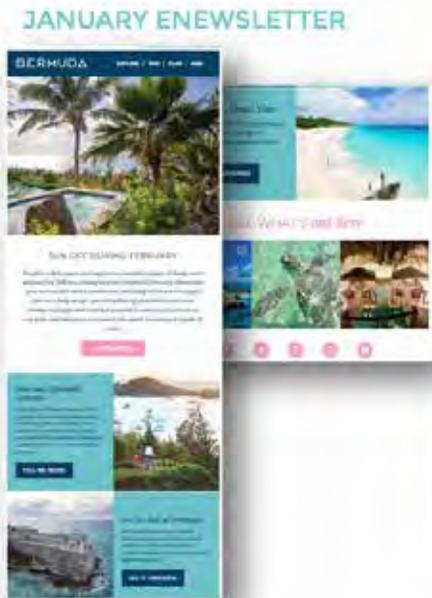
To highlight changing attractions, experiences, itineraries, events and highlights throughout the year, the BTA launched seasonal hubs on gotobermuda.com that illustrate the versatile, evolving nature of Bermuda in different months—aligning with the production schedule of our printed *Out Here* guides. Bermuda won a silver Adrian Award for the *Out Here in Winter* website landing page. Out of more than 1,100 entries submitted, work was judged to be exceptional by experts in hospitality, travel, tourism and media. Judges were asked to evaluate each entry based on its own merit and success in achieving its objectives.



Consumer e-newsletters

Features:
Spa Month
Free Activities
Flavourful Favourites
Best of Bermuda Deals

Open Rate: 16%
(Up 3% YOY)
Click-to-open Rate: 14%
Top Clicked Link: Deals



Features:
Family
Where to Stay
Watch & Wonder

Open Rate: 15% (Up 4% YOY)
Click-to-open Rate: 14%
(Up 1% YOY)
Top Clicked Link: Video

Seasonal guides



Year-Round Data Reporting

Our Business Intelligence & Technology Division carried out critical data collection through 2019:

- Reported monthly and quarterly on tourism key performance indicators: air, cruise, yacht arrivals, air service, visitor expenditure, visitor satisfaction, hotel performance, future projections
- Met quarterly with hotel partners to review data, trends identify opportunities
- Produced monthly reports on air service capacity, load factors and route performance; existing and potential new routes; future schedules for projections; future demand projections

Board of Directors



Paul Telford (Chair)

Paul Telford has 13 years' international management experience in luxury hotels. He began his career in Bermuda's hospitality industry as a teenage busboy and has since worked on the island and overseas. His postings include hotels and resorts such as the Four Seasons Washington, D.C., the Four Seasons Punta Mita, Mexico, The Kahala Hotel in Honolulu Hawaii, and Rosewood Bermudawhere he was a member of the opening team and held several roles, culminating as managing director. He currently serves as an independent consultant for the hospitality industry. In 2019, he was appointed General Manager of The Shore Club Turks & Caicos.



Stephen Todd (Deputy Chair)

Stephen Todd has more than 35 years of experience in the financial services sector, and since 2014 has served as Chief Executive Officer of both the Bermuda Hotel Association (BHA) and the Hotel Employers of Bermuda. He is a past president of the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce and Sandys Rotary Club. Todd has also held advisory roles in public policy on issues like immigration, labour and pensions. He is currently Chairman of the Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation (BDIC).



Phil Barnett

Phil Barnett is Managing Director and President of the Island Restaurant Group, operator of five restaurants, a brewery and an offsite catering operation. Prior to returning to Bermuda and founding IRG, he worked for the Spectra Group of Great Restaurants in Vancouver, BC. Barnett has served as a board member on the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, ultimately serving a full term as Chamber president. Formerly a member of the Board of Education, he currently sits on the Board of the Bermuda Festival of the Performing Arts and is a member of the global YPO leadership organisation.



Joseph Best, Jr.

Joseph Best, Jr. holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Marketing degree from Cornell University and a Masters of Business Administration degree from Endicott College. He holds certifications in Risk and Information Systems Controls, Information Systems Audit and is a member of ISACA and the Institute of Risk Management. His professional career includes experience at Morgan Stanley, Ernst & Young, the Bermuda Monetary Authority, and the Internal Audit Department of the Bermuda Government. He serves on the Board's Audit and Risk Committee.



Earl (Butch) Graves, Jr.

Earl (Butch) Graves, Jr. is President & CEO of New York-based multimedia company Black Enterprise. He is responsible for the strategic positioning and overall profitability of the corporation, which includes magazine publishing, television production, digital media, and business and lifestyle events. Graves joined Black Enterprise in 1988, was appointed president and chief operating officer in 1998, and became CEO in 2006. Under his guidance, the company has expanded the reach of its signature magazine to include over four-million readers and successfully launched broadcasts into TV syndication.



Jessica Mello

Jessica Mello is proud to be one of the original 2013 founders of the Bermuda Tourism Authority and the BTA's longest-serving director. She is a strategy consultant, having spent most of her career as a director at Deloitte Consulting and an economist at A ECOM. She currently advises tech start-ups in Berlin, and has also worked in London, Bermuda and the Middle East.

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