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Properties were voted by readers to have the best rooms, service, food, design, location and leisure activities.

Jamaican hotels gain high rankings

Jamaican hotels and resorts scored high marks recently, having been named on two definitive honour rolls for 2008. The **Condé Nast Traveller's 2008 Gold List** features nine Jamaican properties that were voted by readers to have the best rooms, service, food, design, location and leisure activities. The properties named to the Gold List are: The Caves, Royal Plantation, Rockhouse Hotel, Round Hill, Couples Swept Away, Couples Sans Souci, Half Moon, Jamaica Inn, and Sandals Dunn's River Villaggio Golf Resort & Spa.

Travel + Leisure (T+L) also gives high accolades to Jamaica in its sixth annual **T+L 500**, the comprehensive guide to the 500 highest rated hotels from their **World's Best survey**. Chosen by Travel + Leisure's readers, the properties were evaluated based on best rooms, services, amenities and special features. The six Jamaican properties listed in its January issue are: Couples Sans Souci, Grand Lido Braco Resort & Spa, Jamaica Inn, Rockhouse Hotel, Round Hill Hotel & Villas, and Royal Plantation.

[For further information visit: www.travelandleisure.com/worldsbest/ OR www.cntraveller.com/GoldList/2008/]

Air Jamaica Jazz & Blues stages its 12th show

The 12th staging of the internationally acclaimed Air Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival is set to take place on January 24 – 27 at the Aquaduct Rose Hall in Montego Bay. An exciting line-up of stars include the legendary Diana Ross, Rhythm and Blues singer Anita Baker, Jazz musician Hugh Masakela, international reggae band, Chalice and pop singer Billy Ocean

[For further information visit: www.airjamaicajazzandblues.com/]



Royal Plantation wins 1st Best All-Inclusive category in 2008 TripAdvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards

The 2008 TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Awards has named Royal Plantation in Ocho Rios Best All-Inclusive in the World. In this, the sixth year of the awards, TripAdvisor has added 'Best All-Inclusive' as a new category in the competition. Winners of the Awards are typically determined by a combination of TripAdvisor's Popularity Index and travellers' ratings of specific attributes.

Royal Plantation first opened its doors in the 1950's as the elegant Plantation Inn.

[For further information visit: www.tripadvisor.com/travelerschoice or www.royalplantation.com]

Half Moon introduces Pony Park

The 400 acre Half Moon hotel in Montego Bay has introduced a Pony Park for budding equestrians at the resort's Equestrian Centre.

The Pony Park features ponies, donkeys, goats, rabbits and birds for children of all ages to enjoy under the supervision of trained Park Rangers.

Guests can also take advantage of the equestrian centre's signature Beach Ride, which takes riders for an exhilarating swim on horseback into the sea as well as the Jungle Jaunt for beginners and those looking to refresh their skills. Private lessons are also available at the Equestrian Centre.

[For further information contact: (876) 953-2211 or visit: www.halfmoon.com]



Jamaica finishes ahead of Qingdao in Race 5 of Clipper 07-08

Jamaica's spirited crew showed their grit and dogged determination to miss coming in last place ahead of Qingdao in Race 5 of the **Clipper 07-08 Round the World Yacht Race**. They crossed the finish line 20 miles off Singapore in ninth place at 0555 GMT on Thursday, January 17.

Arriving in Nongsa Point Marina, the crew were presented with garlands in a traditional Indonesian welcome. Qingdao is the largest city in Shandong Province of China.

Jamaica is among ten teams involved in the nation versus nation, 35,000 mile Clipper Round-the-World Race which started on Sunday, September 16, 2007 from Liverpool in England. Amateur crews on ten 68-foot yachts representing eight nations have all placed their fate in just one professional, the skipper, whose role it is to lead his team to victory. This is the longest race in the world where cities and nations go head to head. The 2005-2006 Clipper races saw Jamaica welcoming the fleet to Port Antonio for five days; however this is the first time that Jamaica is participating in the competitions. The island's involvement was initiated by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and the Jamaica yacht has been branded with the JTB's brand mark **JAMAICA** and the JTB's tagline: **Once You Go, You Know**. Other participants are England, Scotland, Canada, South Africa, the USA, Australia, Singapore and China.

The Clipper Race comprises ten 'legs' and will last for ten months with stopovers in Europe, USA, Africa and Asia. The fleet's estimated time of arrival in Jamaica is May 19, 2008.

For further information visit: www.clipperroundtheworld.com

Prime Minister declares February Reggae Month

The Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Honourable Bruce Golding, has declared the month of February as Reggae Month. The initiative is a rather poignant one as February is the month in which reggae icon, Bob Marley was born. Activities to mark Reggae Month include a Global Reggae Conference at the University of the West Indies, Mona and a seminar entitled 'Africa Unite-Smile Jamaica Youth Symposium'. There will also be an 'Africa Unite-Smile Jamaica Concert'; a Bob Marley Creative Expressions Day and the staging of the first ever Reggae Academy Awards by the Recording Industry Association of Jamaica.

[For further information telephone: (876) 908-5939 OR (876) 908-5951]

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Upcoming Events

- High Mountain 10k/5k Road Races** Jan 27
- Reggae Month** Feb
- Bob Marley's Birthday** Feb 6

JANUARY 2008						
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FEBRUARY 2008						
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-Ends-

For details on these and other information of relevance to the JTB and the tourist industry please visit our information portal at www.jtbonline.org