

## June News Brief 2010

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### VI Seeking Blue Flag Certification

The USVI Hotel & Tourism Association is currently in the process of launching the Blue Flag Certification Program in the USVI. The certification program is a voluntary eco-label program tailored for beaches and marinas with international recognition and appeal. Beaches and Marinas that meet establish criteria including water quality, safety and services, education, and environmental management are afforded the label of "Blue Flag" certified. The certification process is very lengthy, and comes with some cost. We anticipate approximately \$30,000 in expenses for realizing the achievements in the St. Thomas/St. John district. Successful realization of the blue flag program depends on the support and dedication of all local participating agencies and stakeholders. The major associated costs we anticipate include: membership and application fee (\$3500), materials and administrative (\$6000), feasibility study (\$5000), and part-time staffing (\$15,000). We project that the derived benefits of the program would far out-weigh the suggested investments. The USVI would be only one of a few Caribbean islands to boast achievement in the Blue Flag Program. To lend support to this effort contact the Association office at 774-6835.

### 17th Destination Symposium



The time has come again for the Association to welcome our travel partners for the 17th annual Destination Symposium. Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa will host the conference, scheduled for June 14-18. For the past 16 years, hoteliers, tour operators, airline representatives, government officials, local and national media, and other key travel partners have met to discuss issues critical to travel & tourism in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The overall objective of the Symposium is to present a forum where we can openly discuss marketing and product development issues while improving communication between our key travel partners. The Symposium also gives us a chance to showcase the destination. This year's theme is **Paradise Thru Your Eyes**. The preliminary schedule includes:

**Monday**—Arrivals and the Governor's Dinner

**Tuesday**—Presentations by the Department of Tourism & the CMI, networking sail, and dinner

**Wednesday**—Business meetings and dinner at the Westin St. John

**Thursday**—Breakfast at Windward Passage, shopping, transfer to St. Croix and site inspections

**Friday**—Site inspections and departures

Interested persons can register for the marketing presentations on Tuesday, June 15. One day registration is \$95 and includes breakfast and lunch. Registration materials are also available from the Association office. We look forward to seeing our partners again and hosting another successful event.

## Membership Corner

### New Member

\*Visitors in search of a new interactive experience on St. John can turn to an interactive map created by our newest member **Island Treasure Maps**. Created by Denise Barbier and Jen Knowles, this exciting map takes you on 5 different adventures over 5 day. The tours involve not only site seeing but interaction with the island's hot spots, restaurants, shops, historic sites, beaches and hideaways. Visitors can also play the game with the opportunity to win a return trip to St. John for four. According to duo, the goal of the map is to engage customers, create memories and offer advertisers multiple opportunities for exposure. They are currently working on a similar map for St. Thomas. For 2011, added elements will include YouTube clip teasers and a downloadable pdf of the map so consumers can review it prior to arriving on island. Island Treasure Maps is offering membership card participants a 10% discount on ad rates. For additional information call 626-2505 or visit [www.islandtreasuremaps.com](http://www.islandtreasuremaps.com).

\*Ken Hopson, Executive Director of the VI Port Authority, addressed members at the **May meeting** held at Mafolie Hotel. In addition to historical data, Hobson discussed some upcoming actions by the Port Authority including cutting operating costs, limiting rate increases, continuing capital improvements at both the St. Thomas and St. Croix airports, and improving customer service.

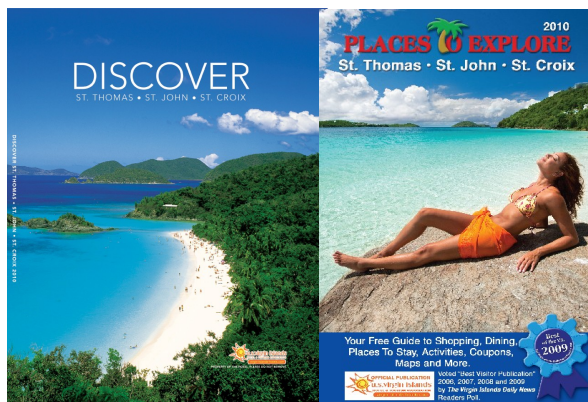
\*The June **Meet the Members** Reception will be held on June 23 at Wyndham Sugar Bay from 5:30 pm-7:00 pm. The reception is a great networking opportunity.

\***President Lisa Hamilton** was elected to the Board of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE) during the annual conference held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During the conference, executives focused on developing strategies for successful association programs, addressing budget challenges without compromising services, developing dedicated private sector leadership, effective government relations, improving member benefits and offering meaningful programs and educational training to association members. The Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE) is a professional association whose members include the top executives and senior managers from the region's private-sector led hotel and tourism-related organizations.

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## Advertising Opportunities Still Available in Discover & Places to Explore

Now is your chance to participate in the 2011 editions of the official publications of the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association, **DISCOVER** and **PLACES TO EXPLORE**. Your participation not only advertises your business, but also promotes the U.S. Virgin Islands with print media and supports the Association. **DISCOVER** is the prestigious hard cover magazine prominently displayed in guest rooms throughout St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John. The digest size publication, **PLACES TO EXPLORE** (voted the "Best Visitor's Publication in the USVI" for 5 consecutive years) is available at hundreds of locations throughout our islands. Both magazines are part of an integrated marketing and communications program that delivers combined newspaper and online promotion to the U.S. Virgin Islands through the vast network of McClatchy-owned newspapers and websites throughout the United States. Print ads having a value equal to 35% of Net Advertising Revenue will be provided to the Association annually to promote the territory. In 2009, newspaper ads valued at \$356,000 were displayed. Several advertising packages are available to accommodate businesses of all kinds and sizes. All participants will receive weblinks from the online versions. To reserve your space or for more information, contact Jennifer or Rita at Media Marketing, tel. 340-774-0920, or email [rjmedia@hotmail.com](mailto:rjmedia@hotmail.com).



## Culinary Team Update

The VI Culinary Team continues to test their signature dishes and cocktails in preparation for the 2010 **Taste of the Caribbean** Competition. The Taste event is scheduled for September 9-11 in Puerto Rico. Their signature dish is available at Frenchman's Reef Marriott and Bolongo Bay Beach Resort restaurants. A portion of the proceeds from each signature dish purchased is donated to the team. The St. Thomas Spice promotion also continues with participating restaurants offering a special \$39 meal with \$3 of that going to the team. Visit our web site for a listing of restaurants.

## Education and Training Opportunities

The Education and Training Committee are pleased to announce some upcoming seminars available to members.

- June 24– Department of Labor- "Wage & Hour Laws." The seminar will be held at Palms Court Harbor View Hotel from 8:30 am -11:00 am. To register, contact Barbara Wheatley at [bwheatley@vidol.gov](mailto:bwheatley@vidol.gov).
- June 30-Department of Labor Seminar at the Ritz Carlton .

## CMI Corner

- The **Island Escape and Danish Escape Packages** launched for the Spring/summer late last month. Components are similar to those offered for Island Escape in 2009, including free nights, resort credits, and discounts at our activities and attractions. The promotion will also extend into the fall.

### **For Spring/Summer:**

Booking dates: April 15-August 15

Travel dates: April 16-August 31

### **For Fall:**

Booking dates: July 15-October 15

Travel dates: September 1-October 31

- We now have over 1200 fans on our Facebook page. One of our fans, Terry Touchton-Utter of Plantation, Florida, was picked to receive a 3-night stay at Wyndham Sugar Bay. We will continue to offer these giveaways to generate interest in the destination and garner more fans. Our social media efforts are being managed by Javier Morales of Associates in Business



## **SAVE THE DATE**

<b>June 14-18</b>	<b>Destination Symposium</b>
<b>June 23</b>	<b>Meet the Members Reception, Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort 5:30 pm—7:00 pm</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Department of Labor Seminar- "Wage &amp; Hour Laws" 8:30 am—11:00 am, Palm Courts Harbor View</b>
<b>June 30</b>	<b>Department of Labor Seminar, the Ritz Carlton Hotel</b>
<b>November 6</b>	<b>Tommy Star Awards</b>