



BARBADOS Hotel Tourism Association (BHTA) chairman Roseanne Myers and CEO Rudy Grant with Rico Louw, client account manager with Smith Travel Research (STR), international data provider. (GP)



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Barbados Hotel Tourism Association Chairman Roseanne Myers with Ocean Hotels' Jacqui McDermott and Christie Burns and Expedia market manager for Barbados, Josea Browne, at the opening ceremony of the 2017 Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Caribbean Travel Marketplace. (GP)

BHTA stepping up its game

IN CONTINUED efforts to promote the island and its tourism product, a large Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) contingent is attending the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Caribbean Travel Marketplace in the Bahamas this week.

BHTA chairman Roseanne Myers, who is attending with chief executive officer Rudy Grant, explained that the Barbados contingent hit the ground running at the Caribbean's largest annual marketing event.

She said: "Our members are ready to do business and most have back-to-back meetings to pre-sell rooms for summer 2017 and 2018 during the packed three-day event."

"We have heard during the sessions that the Caribbean is losing market share – arrivals are up but hotel occupancies are either flat or down across the region. So we have work to do. Without a Caribbean-wide effort to market the region and respond to some of the challenges like intra-regional travel, this trend is likely to continue."

Myers added that the attendance at Marketplace, the Caribbean's largest and most consolidated effort to support the vital tourism sector, demonstrated that industry personnel are prepared to work together and continue to invest time and money to secure business.

CEO Grant said: "This event is beneficial for BHTA members and partners such as Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI) and Barbados Tourism Product Authority (BTPA). We are meeting with tour operators and online travel agents who sell vacation travel to Barbados as well as engaging with the media to promote the island as a tourism destination."

"In addition, we are having discussions with industry data providers to ensure that we can properly benchmark and evaluate our performance while also utilising the available data to design strategies which provide competitiveness and growth for our members."

The CHTA Caribbean Market Place provides the opportunity for tourism suppliers to meet face-to-face with wholesalers from around the world who sell Caribbean vacations.

During the event participants also have the opportunity to attend a number of educational sessions on topics including **Niche Marketing, Negotiating Your Future and Using Data to Turn Actions to Transactions.** (PR)

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