

# Island's Top Bartender heads to London

## Shane McClean's Story

By Krystal Penny Bowen

YOUNG mixologist on the rise and 2018's Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association's (BHTA) Top Bartender, Shane McClean is heading to London to showcase his talents.

On Sunday, *The Barbados Advocate* spoke to McClean about his pending European trip and his journey into the field of hospitality and mixology. In March of this year, the St. Michael School and Barbados Community College's Hospitality Institute alum took the top title at BHTA 2018 Barbados Culinary Competition. A highly motivated and ambitious individual, McClean explained that his trip to England is part of a showcase for The Rum Vault at Colony Club. This month, the local mixologist and culinary ambassador will also be a part of the annual Food and Rum Festival for the second time.

### Getting into the field

Thirty-year-old McClean (who will be thirty-one-years old today) said that he got started in bartending through a friend. During this time, he did not know a lot about the field but he sought out fellow mixologist – Jamaal Bowen – who trained him. His aptitude, high work ethic

and positive outlook have lead McClean to enter a management position at local fine dining restaurant, Buzo Osteria Italiana (past employer) and his BHTA Top Bartender title. He told *The Barbados Advocate* that he was inspired by top mixologists Jamaal Bowen, Philip "Casanova" Antonie and Rohan Hackshaw.

### "I create experiences for everyone"

A naturally gregarious person with a voracious appetite for knowledge, McClean described his bartending abilities as a combination of style and practicality. As he understands the importance of making his clients happy, the mixologist said that he creates experiences for everyone. During the interview, he took the opportunity to explain the differences between a bartender and a mixologist.

"The mixologist is a step up from the bartender... the bartender, he does regular drinks. The mixologist actually goes into the kitchen and looks at herbs and spices. He knows the anatomy of all the spirits, rums, gins, vodkas. He knows juices, what is the best juice to use, what are the flavours? So what we actually do at Food and Rum, we don't just make drinks, we actually [make drinks] that can be paired with food." said McClean.

### "Culinary capital of the Caribbean"



Top mixologist, Shane McClean is off to London to represent Barbados. In the future, he hopes to represent his country at global competitions like the Angostura Global Cocktail Challenge.

*The Barbados Advocate* asked McClean for his views about mixologists in Barbados in comparison to the rest of the world. He responded that Barbados is the "culinary capital of the Caribbean" and he credits this to fact that those in the culinary arts like himself use mostly locally-sourced products in their recipes. He added that this gives mixologists in Barbados an advantage since international mixologists do not get that opportunity.

McClean has had the privilege to travel the world through his work and he highlighted Panama as one of his favourite places to visit due to the fact that it is a Spanish speaking country. He admitted

with a smile that he knows enough of the language "to get by".

### Favourite ingredients

For this mixologist, he does not have a signature drink as he is always learning new techniques and recipes. However he mentioned that he likes to work with local fruits such as mango, tamarind, passion fruit and ginger. He also likes to use spiced rum in his creations. In the future, he would like to compete in the Angostura Global Cocktail Challenge and the World Class Challenge where he will have the opportunity to represent Barbados at the highest level.

# Over 30 BHTA members vying for 2018 Tourism Awards

**MORE than 30 Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) members are finalists in the prestigious 2018 Tourism Awards, which takes place on Saturday, October 13 at Sandals Royal Barbados at 6 pm.**

This event, which celebrates the outstanding contributions of BHTA members to the tourism industry, features two new awards, the Best On-line Brand Engagement and Agricultural Linkages.

The biennial event is hosted at the end of the tenure of each BHTA Chairman. This year's awards are being presented for the period June 2016 to June 2018, during which Roseanne Myers served as Chairman of the Association.

CEO Rudy Grant says this is the Association's way of recognising exceptional levels of excellence in the industry, "This is the perfect platform for our Association to showcase the best-of-the-best in local tourism, from our people to our accommodation, our attractions, restaurants and experiences.

"The addition of the two new awards gives us the opportunity to reward new areas of excellence. It is also in keeping with our recognition of the importance of both sectors to our industry as we continue to strengthen our linkages with agriculture and embrace the major benefits that our businesses can derive

through innovative online campaigns."

The other awards include Hotel of the Year – Luxury, A-Class and B-Class and Apartments; Restaurant of the Year, Member of the Year and Tourism Employee of the Year; Environmental & Sustainability, Staycation, Social Responsibility and Bravery awards; as well as the Business Excellence Awards for Industry Supplier, Tourism Activities, Tourism Attraction and Tourism Industry Partner.

There is also a Special Awards category which includes the Special Commendation of Appreciation and the coveted Lifetime Achievement awards.

To reserve tickets for the 2018 BHTA's Awards and Cocktail Reception, please contact the Association at telephone number 622-5041 or email membership@bhta.org.

The 2016 BHTA awardees were Ocean Two Resort & Residences, Mango Bay Hotel, The Sandpiper Hotel, Tapas Restaurant, St. Nicholas Abbey, Atlantis Submarines (Barbados) Inc., Tourism Development Corporation, Clifton Nicola Parravicino, Kevin Payne, Nico Hutson, Joseph Gazette, Jabarry Worrell, Heather Hinds, David Mapp, Nyree Lovell, David Rose and Lifetime Achievement awardee, Bernice Critchlow-Earle.

# Community tourism project to be replicated

CHIEF Executive Officer (Ag) of the Barbados Tourism Product Authority (BTPA) Marsha Alleyne has revealed that six additional communities will be included in the Community Tourism Experience initiative.

Her comments came on Sunday after the official launch of the Greater Holder's Hill Community Tourism Experience at the Desmond Haynes Sport Complex in St. James, which she noted was developed through the Barbados Community Tourism Network. According to Alleyne, the initiative is intended to empower Barbadians to take ownership of the industry and to reap the benefits that it can provide.

The other communities to be showcased include: Pinelands, Carrington Village, Grazettes/Black Rock St. Michael; Church Village and Crane St. Philip, All Saints and Mile & a Quarter, St. Peter.

Explaining that the goal of the BTA is to refresh and revitalise Barbados' tourism product to ensure that the industry is competitive and sustainable, Alleyne explained that it has been noted that the modern day traveller is changing.

Alleyne explained that this is as a result of a Community Training Programme for entrepreneurs, tourism stakeholders, educators and community development personnel with renowned community tourism expert Diana McIntyre- Pike.

According to the CEO, "We wanted to leave a long-lasting legacy for Barbadians so it was absolutely critical to ensure that the communities themselves are able to take ownership of their projects. This was the impetus behind the Barbados Community Tourism Network where we ensured that there was an element of capacity building and truly grass roots, community-driven initiatives."

"The new visitor wants more exciting and authentic experiences, they want to live like a local, and they want to get into the DNA of the destination. It is therefore our duty to unearth what makes us unique and build on this so that we not only set ourselves apart from the abundance of tourism destinations globally, but that we give our visitors an experience, which is memorable and uniquely Barbadians so that they will want to return." (JH)