

# TOURISM PULSE

A newsletter from the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority

New beginnings are often special moments we cherish in our journey. It is with this notion of new beginnings that we share with you our first quarterly edition of Tourism Pulse for 2023. This issue shares stories of momentous tourism developments, our organization's achievements, stories of our traditional Vincentian celebrations and international recognition of the splendor and diversity of destination SVG.

We are delighted to have you explore the hospitality and tourism escapades of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority for 2023 in this and upcoming issues of Tourism Pulse.



## More Flights to Destination St. Vincent and the Grenadines

With its towering green hills, hues of turquoise blue seas and the romance of an authentic Caribbean experience, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is what a novice Caribbean traveler dreams of, or an seasoned traveler's 'new' adventure. The multi-island destination's remote-ness added to its unspoiled charms were not adversely altered with the opening of the Argyle International Airport in 2017.

Having welcomed weekly flights from international carriers since its operationalization, the Argyle International Airport now has an addition to its services, with the commencement of daily flights from American Airlines. The Miami-St. Vincent non-stop route started on March 1st is a welcomed addition as international arrivals approach pre-pandemic levels. 2023 promises exciting tourism development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Similarly increased access to the destination is now available to regional visitors, with the increased services by InterCaribbean Airways on 12 March. The regional carrier's Embraer – 120 aircraft, with a seating capacity of 30, will operate on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, connecting the eastern and



western Caribbean. The additional flight complements the destinations increasing air accessibility with

services with Caribbean Airlines weekly Wednesday from JFK International, USA, and Air Canada Rouge's weekly Thursday non-stop flights from Pearson International, Canada.

Caribbean Airlines has also expanded its service between Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to 3 weekly return flights of Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

## Hola desde San Vicente y las Granadinas!!

Fueled by its launch of flights to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in April 2022, CONVIASA Airlines has since expanded its service to include weekly flights between Cuba and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Starting on 31st March 2023, the Venezuelan airline now includes a weekly arrival on Fridays. This offers an exciting and new route for Cuban and other

Latin Americans to discover the dreamy archipelago St. Vincent and the Grenadines, known for therapeutic black and powdery white sandy beaches which beautifully contrast its azure skies.

Additionally, the new route is expected to further strengthen the cultural exchanges and diplomatic relations between the two countries which was established in 1992.



## Regional travel gets a boost

Caribbean Airlines has announced increased ATR flights between St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados. Effective April 3, three flights weekly will operate between the two countries on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays to complement the three weekly flights from Argyle International Airport (AIA) to Port of Spain on those days. The new increase capacity in the Eastern Caribbean to regional travel market. The airline has also flight from JFK, New York to AIA for its summer schedule. From July, the direct flight operates from AIA on Fridays and from JFK on Saturdays.

schedule forms part of the airline's plan to meet the current demands of the added a second





## Myah Luxury Suites Hotel

Soon visitors can whiz 15 minutes from the Argyle International Airport to the deluxe Myah's Luxurious Suite Hotel in the developing tourist area of Diamond. The 35 room property owned by Vincentian Mr. Eliot Mc Dowall, will officially open its doors in May, 2023. The property boasts modern décor and design, luxe amenities inclusive of a spa, rooftop pool and restaurant. Combining a luxurious hospitality experience, with the conveniences and necessities for the modern business traveler, it also

boast a conference room with the capacity to host up to 100 persons.

The newly developed property further augments the room stock on mainland St. Vincent, and compliments other tourism investments within the Diamond area, with the ongoing construction of the Holiday Inn on the island's eastern coast. The western coast will also see tourism developments with the launching of internationally recognized hospitality giants Marriott International and Beaches by Sandals Resort.

# INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

## Toronto Raptors Caribbean Heritage Night

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the SVG Tourism Authority partnered with Toronto Raptors at Caribbean Heritage Night, for their game at Scotiabank Arena.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines was promoted at the event with a performance from Vincentian soca sensation Kevin Lyttle. E-board displays and branded merchandise for spectators as well as a booth was set up to supply guests with information on the destination.

Additionally, one lucky fan won two tickets to SVG, compliments Air Canada and seven nights accommodation (with meals), compliments Young Island Resort.



Kevin Lyttle- Vincentian soca artiste & Cultural Ambassador

## Lets Get Married ... in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Government of SVG has published the Marriage Delegation of Powers Notice 2022, which is now in effect and allows for the facilitation of locals and visitors obtaining a marriage license in the Grenadines.

The Marriage Amendment Act, and now the marriage delegation of powers notices, empower revenue officers and district officers in the Grenadines to issue marriage licenses on behalf of the Governor General.



## Tourism is Everyone's Business...Live It ! Love It! Embrace It!



**Hon Carlos James – Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development & Culture**

The Ministry of Tourism, is working to unite key public and private tourism stakeholders around a long term strategy to enhance the destination's competitive advantage.

As part of this objective, the Ministry is supporting the completion of a tourism master plan and the refurbishment of the popular historic site tourist attraction, Fort Charlotte. Other components of the consulatory undertaking will provide opportunities for the strengthening of partnerships with stakeholders, through the identification of challenges and fostering opportunities for greater collaborative initiatives. This announcement came from Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture, Honourable Carlos James in his February press conference.

Continuing his engagements with the public, Minister James in his March press conference shared that the industry marked 84% increase yacht arrivals with the first quarter of 2023 when compared with the 2022 figures. The Minister credited this increase, particularly on the Grenadine island of Bequia to the destination's resilience during the global pandemic.

Similarly, Minister James touted the initial inbound and outbound figures for the daily American Airline flights to the destination with a load factor nearing 80% for the first operational month. The impressive uptake of the daily flights and the contributing dedicated stakeholders were lauded by the Minister of Tourism.



## Sandals Recruits more Vincentians

During the month of January 2023 thirty-eight Vincentians were recruited by Sandals International for training. They left St. Vincent and the Grenadines and headed to a Sandals branch in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

This group will return to SVG to work at Sandals International's Beaches Resort at Buccament when the resort becomes operational by the end of 2023.

The recruitments by Sandals International are part of an agreement between the global hotel giant's Executive Chairman, Mr. Adam Stewart and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to hire 500 Vincentians in advance of the scheduled opening.



# Inaugural Cruise Calls



Ambassador Cruise Line Ambience



Rotterdam



MSC Poesia



AIDA Bella



Costa Fascinosa



MSC Seaside



## Union Island Conch Festival

Activities for Union Island Conch Festival took place from February 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>.

Events comprised Culture and Conch , Conch in the Street, Conch Festival Day with the legendary conch-blowing competition, Friends with Benefits, and Conch on the Beach.

The Conch Festival aims to generate economic activity on Union Island while highlighting the importance of the conch.



## National Heroes & Heritage Month

National Heroes and Heritage Month is celebrated annually during March with the highlight being the observance of National Heroes Day on March 14<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate National Hero – Paramount Chief His Excellency Joseph Chatoyer.

Celebrations included Fancy and Greiggs Heritage Festivals, GECCU Charity Cook-off Competition, Garifuna National Foundation activities, Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture, in collaboration with Vincy Moves Fitness Walk, Pilgrimage to Balliceaux and the annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at Dorsetshire Hill.



Garifuna descendants at Balliceaux pilgrimage during National Heritage Month. CREDIT: One News SVG

## Music Festivals

Over ninety musicians from around the region and SVG performed at the Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest, which took place from January 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.

The festivities included a Jazz and Candlelight Dinner at De Reef, ‘Steel Pan n Ting’ at Frangipani Hotel, Cocktail Jazz and Live Music on the Green at the Plantation Hotel.

Patrons were treated to musical performances such as:

Contagious, Dexter Rose’s Jazz Tropical Project, Dymez and daPixel, Dynamite, Gary Peters, Jan & Louis, Jay R, Krystian Mark, Kyron Baptiste, Li-Li Octave, Philip 7 and Masala, Samuel Toka, Skarpyon, Skinny Banton, Solid Band, Stephen Hart, The Shady Ladies, and Ultimate 5 Jazz Band.

The 2024 Bequia Music Festival is slated for January 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>.



Li-Li Octave  
Source : Bequia Music Fest Facebook

Meanwhile, the 28th Mustique Blues Festival ran from January 25th to February 8th. The lineup at The House of Blues at Basil's Bar included Ian Siegal, Eliza Neals, Murali Coryell, Matt Gest JC Smith, Peter O'Brien, Ken "Blues Boss"



Source: Caribbean Events <https://caribbeanevents.com/event/mustique-blues-festival/>

## DESTINATION SVG IN THE NEWS

### Sweet dreams are made of Palm ...Island!

Add Palm Island Resort to your bucket list worthy places to stay! The all-inclusive island resort snag a place on the Carib Journal 11th annual edition of the "Caribbean's coolest, most creative, singular, buzzy places to stay." The list showcases the diversity in the accommodation offerings within the Caribbean region, with the singular unifying trait is their embodiment of the "it" factor.

Dubbed the 'Maldives of the Caribbean' in Travel and Leisure. Other recent accolades securing the #2 spot in Carib Journal's '50 Best All-Inclusive Resorts in the Caribbean'.

With so many picturesque Palm Island's stunning white sand beaches, crystal clear waters and the rhythmic waves are the scene and soundtrack of any traveler's Caribbean dreams. The luxury resort fuses the authentic Vincentian hospitality magic, with the amenities and comforts rivaling other 5-star resorts.







## **Nine Morning is #1 in amazing Caribbean Festivals to Attend**

This annual unique festival is much more than a Vincentian celebration. Rather it's a defining feature for many young Vincentians, as your first escapade is etched in their memories.

Occurring pre-dawn daily for nine days before Christmas day, Vincentians gather in communities to revel in traditional games, concerts and 'oneness'. The unique festival was recognized by Fordors as one of the Caribbean's festivals to be experienced.

Nine Mornings ah coming...See you in 2023!



## **Caribbean Destinations shaping up to be the Hottest of 2023**

The destination's emergence within the Caribbean tourism market is evident in the slew of construction of international branded hotels specifically, Sandals International, Marriot International & Holiday Inn. Yet there remains the novelty of small boutique locally owned family properties, with the recent additions of Myah's Luxury Suites and La Vue Hotel. However, it is the joyful human connections and Vincentian hospitality which lure first time visitors to annually repeat their sojourn or set down stakes after retirement.

In recent times the destination claimed spots on coveted travel rankings; with recognition as one of the Caribbean's hottest places of 2023 by thetravel.com. The beckoning of the destination and diversity of its product can be credited for its acknowledgement as Lonelyplanet's 10 best places to visit in the Caribbean for families.

Brimming with Caribbean idyllic ambience are the islands of Bequia in the north and Mayreau in the Southern Grenadines. The larger Bequia, has been identified as one of the best places for couples to visit in 2023 by Greek City Times. Stretching across 7 square miles the island encompasses pristine and bountiful beauty of the Caribbean.

Similarly, the unfussy charm of Mayreau rendered it a place on the travel's list of The Caribbean's Best Kept Secrets By Cruise. Its unpretentious beauty is a must see, and a worthwhile linger amongst the closely knitted community of approximately 300 residents!



# VINCYMAS

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# ROUTES AMERICAS 2023

CEO of the Tourism Authority, Mr. Glen Beache, represented destination St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2023 Routes Americas Conference held in Chicago, Illinois from March 21-23. The annual event connects airlines, airports and tourism destinations, to engage in service strategy, future networking and enhancing the travel experience to the Caribbean region.

Mr. Beache's presence at the leading aviation event aligns with the destination's strategic goals of expanding air connectivity and trade to the multi-island state. The destination opened its first international airport in 2017, and has since been regularly serviced by international carriers American Airlines, Air Canada and Virgin Atlantic along with regional airlines Caribbean Airlines, LIAT, InterCaribbean and CONVIASA.



Routes - Tourism Authority CEO Glen Beache (center)

## SEATRADE 2023



CEO SVGTA Glen Beache, Island Routes Executive – David Shields, Minister James & PS Dr. Resa Noel-McBarnett



Minister Carlos James with – Russell Benford –Vice President of Government Relations Americas - Royal Caribbean Group

The premier annual event dedicated to the global cruise industry “Sea Trade Cruise Global” was held from 27- 30 March 2023. The four-day conference which was held in Miami, is the opportune event for discussions with high-level cruise executives and connects destinations and cruise executives for over 80 + cruise brands.

Our destination's contingent included both private sector and public sector officials. Minister of Tourism Hon. Carlos James led the delegation which also included, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Dr. Resa Noel-Mc Barnett and CEO of the SVG Tourism Authority Mr. Glen Beache. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is scheduled to receive a record 314 calls for the 2022- 2023 cruise seasons, with a record 13 inaugural visits to the destination.

# Discover SVG Diving in New Jersey



St. Vincent and the Grenadines staged its annual exhibit at the Beneath the Sea Dive, Travel and Oceans Exposition on March 25 and 26, 2023. The 2-day show attracted divers and non-divers and presented scuba diving updates, volunteer initiatives, equipment, and vacation destinations that offer diving as a tourism experience. The Discover St. Vincent and the Grenadines exhibit was among 11 Caribbean dive destinations and a total of 160 dive industry stakeholders who exhibited at the largest consumer dive exposition in the USA.

## Discover SVG in Washington DC

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has completed an exhibit at the Washington Convention Center in the US capital. The consumer travel exhibition, the Travel & Adventure Show, was held on February 4 – 5, 2023 and saw SVG exhibiting among 12 Caribbean countries. Some 15,000 persons attended the 2-day event, including close to 300 travel advisors and 1,100 travel trade professionals. Consumers and travel advisors were engaged through the distribution of marketing collateral and the sharing of general information on the destination. Contacts were also exchanged with travel advisors and travel writers/influencers.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CIVIL AVIATION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE  
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