



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL
ASSOCIATION

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Contacts: Lorraine Ortiz-Valcárcel, lortiz@caribbeanhotels.org
Melissa A. Rivera, mrivera@caribbeanhotels.org
Tel 787 725 9139/Fax 787 725 9108

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND TRINIDAD
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES HONORED**

MIAMI, Florida (June 17, 2007) – Two Caribbean nationals – Arturo Villanueva from the Dominican Republic and Bernadette Nathaniel from Trinidad, were honored by their peers for high professional standards in hotel association management. The 2007 “Caribbean Association Executive of the Year” awards were presented during a special “Salute to the Stars of the Caribbean” at the opening of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Conference (CHTC 2007) at the Hyatt Regency in Miami. “National Hotel Associations strengthen the local hotel and tourism industry by fostering unity in working toward common goals at the national level,” said Dianelys Rodríguez, VP Destination Business Development, Establishment Services International, American Express. “Together, they are the very bedrock of the Caribbean hospitality industry at large; that’s how fundamental is their role.”

Arturo Villanueva, Executive Vice-President, National Hotels and Restaurants Association of the Dominican Republic (ASONAHORES) – 2007 Caribbean Hotel Association Executive of the Year, Large Hotel Category.

Arturo Villanueva is a veteran executive at the helm of one of the largest, most sophisticated national hotel associations in the region. Over the past year, Arturo has overseen a broad agenda in three main areas, namely: technical program, social and developmental programs, and marketing programs. Among these, the social and linkages projects driven by ASONAHORES under Arturo’s leadership are worthy of mention:

- ☑ Training program geared to small businesses in three production areas related to tourism activity;
- ☑ Initiative for the general education and technical/professional development of the civil society in tourism areas of the Dominican Republic.
- ☑ Project to strengthen the linkages between tourism and agriculture.

His main priority moving forward is in the area of advocacy – specifically, as it relates to the impact of taxation on the industry’s competitiveness, vis-à-vis the economic impact of tourism on jobs and the economy in the Dominican Republic.

Bernadette Nathaniel, Executive Director, Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association – 2007 Caribbean Hotel Association Executive of the Year, Small Association Category.

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Bernadette Nathaniel is a dynamo of activity, sheathed in a soft-spoken, bubbly, warm personality. With almost three decades of experience in Caribbean tourism under her belt, she is a second-time winner of this award, having earned it for the first time in 2001.

As Executive Director, she has been successful in fostering a strong public-private sector collaboration working on a diverse list of projects, such as industry awareness through an annual Tourism Week; intra-Caribbean travel, promoted by a Caribbean Road Show that the Association administers; and extensive training in health, safety and security, customer service, language skills, and the culinary arts. The latter has become a source of pride for the Trini hotel and tourism industry, thanks to the stellar performance year after year of the Trinidad and Tobago National Culinary Team at Taste of the Caribbean.

The Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association also has much to be proud of as the entity responsible for managing the assets of the Trinidad & Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute. Ten years ago, the Association benefited from a US \$2million grant from the Interamerican Development Bank. At the time, there were 52 students at the then Hotel School. Today, enrollment stands at over six hundred students pursuing diplomas, certificates and Associate Degrees in Culinary Management, Sports Tourism, Hospitality Management, Food & Beverage Management, and Tourism Management. Under Bernadette's leadership, the Institute has established articulation agreements with several universities and is in the process of starting a full degree program. Meanwhile, the Government has approved funding for expansion works to the sum of US \$6m, to accommodate the growing demand.

Bernadette is also an active member of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE), where she has held a number of leadership positions over the years.

Criteria

Candidates for the "Association Executive of the Year" awards are evaluated taking into consideration their achievements in the following key areas: administration; communications; membership development; advocacy; destination marketing and promotion; product improvement; motivation of volunteers; meetings planning and management; fundraising; private/public sector relationship; regional tourism affairs; and relationship with his or her fellow hotel association executives across the region.

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Note to the editor :

Interviews with the winners, an American Express spokesperson and/or a CHA officer can be arranged by request.