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Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) Concludes 43rd Caribbean Travel Marketplace in Antigua with Strong Business Momentum and Collaboration
Region's Largest Meeting of Its Kind Spurs Robust Business Activity and Timely Dialogue



CHTA President Sanovnik Destang and Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez share a warm handshake at the 43rd Annual Caribbean Travel Marketplace in Antigua.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (May 29, 2025) – The **Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association** (CHTA) has concluded the 43rd edition of its **Caribbean Travel Marketplace**, bringing together tourism leaders from across the region at a pivotal time for the industry. Hosted this year by Antigua and Barbuda — the smallest nation by population to ever stage the event — Marketplace drew more than 780 delegates for two days of high-impact meetings, collaboration, and conversation that underscored the Caribbean's enduring value and collective strength.

Over 9,300 business appointments were conducted, making this one of the most commercially active Marketplaces in recent years. The event brought together 165 buyer delegates from 83 companies across 16 global markets. On the supplier side, 173 companies from 23 destinations, including many from the Eastern Caribbean, participated, reinforcing the diversity and resilience of the region's tourism product.

“This was a Marketplace of momentum,” shared CHTA President Sanovnik Destang. “We saw strong demand for Caribbean experiences grounded in authenticity, sustainability and value. Buyers came looking for meaningful partnerships—and they found them.”

“There was a buzz and energy across the selling floor, reflective of the seriousness and substance of the conversations happening between buyers and suppliers,” added CHTA CEO Vanessa Ledesma. “These weren't just meetings; they were market-shaping discussions that will influence how Caribbean tourism grows in the years to come.

This year, the selling floor reflected a bold, modern aesthetic, doing away with traditional pipe and drape in favor of sleek lightboxes and open-concept booths. The layout and ambiance encouraged both high-level business conversations and the human connections that define the Caribbean's warmth.

"This year was all about innovation — not only in design, but in how we connect people, technology and business opportunities," shared Karen Whitt, CHTA First Vice President and Marketplace Chair. "We reimagined every element of the experience to reflect the evolution of Caribbean tourism: tech-forward, human-centric, and unapologetically regional in focus."

In addition to the enhanced floor layout, newly added features included a Linkages Showcase, which brought together agriculture, manufacturing, arts, entertainment and tourism partners from destinations such as Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, fostering intra-regional business synergies. Other event highlights included Responsible Tourism Day, during which delegates had an opportunity to learn about the communities and culture of the destination as well as the first-ever Direct Booking Summit, Caribbean Edition. An expanded ecosystem of participants reflected the industry's shifting dynamics, including representatives from the destination wedding, MICE, and direct booking sectors.

Marketplace also offered destinations a high-profile platform to engage the media and spotlight their latest offerings, investments, and tourism developments. Throughout the event, press conferences allowed countries and brands to connect directly with regional and international journalists, helping to shape a stronger global narrative around Caribbean travel.

Despite the heavy rains and flooding in parts of Antigua that took place in the days leading up to the event, Marketplace proceeded as planned, thanks to the resilience, creativity and collaboration by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association and the Ministry of Tourism. In a show of solidarity, CHTA and its partners donated \$10,000 to support local recovery efforts—a gesture that marks the beginning of a broader responsible tourism initiative focused on resilience and workforce support.

"Our industry's true strength lies in its people," said Destang. "Our frontline workers are our superpower. Their commitment, even in the face of natural challenges, is why the Caribbean continues to punch above its weight."

"Beyond the numbers, Marketplace is about the people—our workforce, our communities, our guests," continued Ledesma. "The Caribbean's strength lies in its ability to connect with heart, and that was on full display in Antigua."

This year's Marketplace was made possible thanks to hosts the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority and the Antigua Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association; destination partners Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Turks and Caicos and United States Virgin Islands; platinum partners ABA Global Marketing, Interval International, Mastercard, Travelzoo and Triptease; gold partners Amadeus, Caribbean Journal, Discover Dominica Authority, My Booking Rewards, TaConnect and Tambourine; silver partners NexGen Guest and Questex Travel; and airline partners Liat 20 and Sunrise Airways.

Having now successfully completed its 43rd year, Caribbean Travel Marketplace remains the largest and longest-running tourism event of its kind in the region. As it continues to evolve, it is steadfast in its mission: to drive business, build relationships, and celebrate the rich diversity and unity of the Caribbean.

“As delegates return home from Antigua, they leave with more than contracts,” concluded Destang, “They leave with commitments—to collaboration, to resilience, and to a thriving Caribbean future.”

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About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean’s leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean’s future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most. For more information visit <https://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>

Media Contact:

Claire Kunzman / claire@anythingbutadvertising.com / +1 407 227 8867