

Bay Gardens Resorts serves up a feast at CHA 2009

On Tuesday January 20, 2009, as the world celebrated a historic presidential inauguration in the US, Bay Gardens Resorts, a small, locally owned hotel chain from the tiny island nation of St. Lucia, population 160,000, was writing a page in another world's history book.

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHA) Marketplace, the premier tourism marketing event and trade show for the Caribbean was held in St. Lucia from January 18 – 20, 2009 – the first time this huge event has been held in the Eastern Caribbean.

And for the first time in the history of CHA Marketplace, a small hotel chain won the bid to provide lunch at this event for close to 1,500 international, tour operators, hoteliers and other travel industry representatives from over 30 countries worldwide as well as regional and international media personnel. What made this even more spectacular was that this small St Lucian hotel chain, with St Lucian Executive Chefs and general managers was able to outbid larger international competitors. The management and staff of Bay Gardens Resorts were excited to have been given the opportunity to establish their brand in such a unique and up-close and personal way. But catering for this event came with unique challenges.

- Neither of three properties that make up the Bay Gardens Resorts group had ever individually catered to more than 500 people;
- The event was held offsite in a temporary building structure on the Pigeon Island Causeway with no refrigeration or onsite cooking facilities,
- All of the 170 of the rooms at the three hotels were fully occupied.

But with a little creativity and a lot of hard work from the management and staff of Bay Gardens Resorts it was able to pull off a minor miracle and serve close to 3000 lunches over the two days.

By all accounts, this tiny St. Lucian hotel chain may have set a new standard for future CHA Marketplace caterers with first class service from their friendly staff and sumptuous, exquisite Caribbean and international fusion dishes that have become their trademark such as Dasheen and Saltfish pie, West Indian Pumpkin Soup and Fresh Catch Mahi Mahi in a Passion Fruit Beurre Blanc.

"Excellent food and service, a cut above the rest," noted Alec Sanguinetti, CEO of Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association.

"Bay Gardens Resorts prepared a wonderful and eclectic spread of international and local cuisine."
"Spectacular!", according to Neil Kolton, Caribbean Regional Manager of Interval International.

The Bay Gardens Resorts team was headed by its Executive Chefs Franklyn Roberts and Alphius Edmund.

"We are all incredibly proud of our chefs and their kitchen teams and all of our staff. They were presented with a monumental challenge and were able to pull this off seamlessly and with only two weeks of preparation. Bay Gardens Resorts has arrived in a big way and this achievement serves as an example of what any locally owned business can achieve with planning, hard work, ingenuity and a dedicated team," said Sanovnik Destang, Assistant Managing Director.

Bay Gardens Resorts was founded in 1995 and consists of the award winning Bay Gardens Hotel, Bay Gardens Inn and its newest addition, the spectacular Bay Gardens Beach Resort and Spa. The chain offers several amenities including five restaurants, a spa, gym, watersports, the island's only anti aging clinic and a stay at one, play at three option. For more information visit www.baygardensresorts.com.