

Value for your meeting & a chance to win a \$50,000 charitable grant.

about us : magazine subscriptions : advertise : contact us : site map

Successful MEETINGS .com MeetingNews .com mimesite.com

newsletter sign-up

advanced

MiMegasite the Web

Go

home tools & resources news articles by topic destination guide industry research community career & lifestyle industry events special offers

June 7, 2010

international regions

SAVE | EMAIL | PRINT | MOST POPULAR | RSS | REPRINTS

Trinidad Meetings Buzz with Hyatt Regency

June 07, 2010
By William Ng

While most of the Caribbean suffered a slowdown in group business in 2009 as a result of the languishing economy and perception fears about extravagant business travel, the southern island of Trinidad, a major oil and gas exporter, benefited from its mostly business focus.

Underscoring its political and business influence, Trinidad in 2009 hosted both the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, a 53-nation summit, and the Fifth Summit of the Americas, which was attended by many South American heads of state and president Barack Obama. Both were boons to the island's economy, and this year the Trade and Investment Conference, International Court Administration Conference, and 35th Commonwealth Parliamentarians Conference are heading to the destination just off the coast of Venezuela.

One of the host hotels for last year's two high-profile government events, the Port of Spain-located Hyatt Regency Trinidad capped off a successful sophomore year in 2009, says general manager Russell George. "Business was steady, if not back to 2008 numbers," he told Successful Meetings in a recent New York visit. But, in conversations with his counterparts from other Caribbean destinations, he lightheartedly quips, "they wished they had our meetings."

Since its January 2008 debut, the 428-room Hyatt Regency Trinidad has stuck to the business of holding business meetings. With 43,000 square feet of function space, two ballrooms (16,000 sf and 8,000 sf, respectively), and business-centric features such as translation facilities, the hotel suits "planners looking to accomplish an agenda with a resort feel, whereas the Caribbean is traditionally casual," George points out. "We separate ourselves."

George says Hyatt Hotels positioned in Trinidad because of its gateway location with respect to South America and Central America, and the two countries have been feeding the property a range of business, from sports-related and association events to financial/insurance and oil-and-gas industry meetings. "We also get a large chunk of European business," he adds, while noting the hotel does some incentive business from the U.S. and Brazil.

But the general manager goes back to his and his team's hosting of those two major political summits as valuable learning experiences that have enabled the Hyatt Regency to serve large and VIP groups effectively. The hotel can accommodate gatherings for up to 1,700 attendees and 300-room groups.

After catering to president Obama, it is aiming to raise its level of American meetings. "We're making sure Trinidad is on the map, and we're getting the sales and network support from Hyatt," notes George.

George and the hotel will also be aided by the newly established Trinidad & Tobago Convention Bureau (TTCB), which is aiming to position the destination as "the meetings and conference capital of the Caribbean." Says Chantel Ross Francois, head of the TTCB, "We believe [we're] perfectly positioned to be the centralized meeting point for not just the Caribbean, but for North, South, and Central America, as well."

Later this week, the TTCB's parent, the Tourism Development Company of Trinidad & Tobago, with its president and director, Ernest Littles, will be in New York to promote the destination at the Caribbean Tourism Organization's Annual Caribbean Week. He will no doubt spearhead exposure for the island as an international meetings choice.

SAVE | EMAIL | PRINT | MOST POPULAR | RSS | REPRINTS

special opportunities

Make Green Meetings FUN

Click here to register for the Free On Demand Travel Portland Webcast!

Qualified Planners

click here to join us At the Brown Palace!

It's Better in the Bahamas! Join us at the Atlantis Bahamas for this Hosted Buyer Event!

Join us at the Atlantis Bahamas for this Hosted Buyer Event!

Find Event Suppliers and Request Quotes

- Select Metro Area -

Search

Advanced Options

powered by cvent

destination guide

start your search by clicking on the regional map below.

international destinations

