

PRESS RELEASE

MIASL & SLASPA PROMOTE YACHTING – IN FT. LAUDERDALE

The Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia (MIASL) and the St. Lucia Air & Seaports Authority (SLASPA) recently accepted an invitation to participate in the Westrec Sunrise Harbor Marina 6th Annual Captains & Crew Appreciation Party in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The April 8th event was attended by over 900 industry professionals representing hundreds of megayachts, the theme of which was “Navigating the Good Life Around the World’s Oceans.... the Westrec Way”.

The invitation was extended at the recently concluded Superyacht Symposium, itself part of the annual SeaTrade Cruise Convention held in Miami. St. Lucia was one of a group of 42 major sponsors, including Christensen Yachts, Dockwalk magazine, Dockwise Yacht Transport, and Westrec Marinas – operators of the Port Antonio Marina in Jamaica – to name a few.

The St. Lucia package comprised the ‘Simply Beautiful’ DVD, Jazz Festival brochures, ‘Visions’ magazine, which were included in the “goodies” given to more than 300 Captains and Crew. Additionally, Anse Chastanet Hotel and Ladera each donated a weekend for two at their resorts, which were prizes in a charity raffle drawn on the night. Megayacht crew heavily influence decisions on which destinations the yachts visit – yachting in St.Lucia will have recruited expert publicists from within the fraternity!

SLASPA General Manager Vincent Hippolyte and MIASL President Keats Compton were joined by Kent Hippolyte, the St. Lucia Honorary Consul General in Miami, at what the organizers described as “.....a specialized networking event and immeasurable for the contributing sponsors”.

As megayachts approach the size of the smaller Cruise ships, mooring in regular marinas becomes increasingly problematical, due to the inadequacy of existing facilities. This presents an opportunity for commercial ports to offer the sort of facilities demanded by these yachts, pending the construction of dedicated facilities. Yachting data is not readily available, but according to studies conducted in 2002 and 2005, the economic impact on the local economy grew from EC\$72.64 million in 2000, to EC\$139.2 million in 2004, an increase of more than 90%. Given the worldwide growth in megayacht construction, and the attraction of the Caribbean region as a cruising destination, the MIASL is convinced that this rate of growth is sustainable, and looks forward to working with SLASPA and other agencies to ensure that St. Lucia benefits from this growth.



Left to right: Gary Groenewold, Southern Regional VP for Westrec Marinas; John Louis, Managing Director, The Marina at Port Antonio; Vincent Hippolyte, General Manager, SLASPA; Keats Compton, President, MIASL; Kent Hippolyte, Honorary Consul for St. Lucia in Miami.

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