

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hotel And Tourism Association's Lisa Hamilton And USVI Chefs Honored In Miami

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USVI Hotel & Tourism Association President Lisa Hamilton was named Caribbean Association Executive of the Year during the June 2 opening of the third annual Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum in Miami, Florida, according to a recently issued release.

"This was an unexpected distinction that I was honored to receive," Hamilton said. "I have had the pleasure of working with the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives for the last nine years. Under the guidance of CSHAE, association executives throughout the region have collaborated to share best practices and insights, allowing me to better serve our membership here in the USVI."

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, which hosts the CHIEF event, evaluates candidates for these awards based on several points such as membership development, advocacy, destination marketing and promotion, private/public sector relationship and regional tourism affairs.

In conjunction with CHIEF, the association hosted the Taste of the Caribbean. Delicious culinary creations and ingenuity earned the USVI Culinary Team silver overall at the competition, held June 2-6. Team members also brought home medals in several individual categories.

Additional medals include silver for Chef of the Year Tatiana Connor-Peets, Pastry Chef of the Year Natalie Buckner, Bartender of the Year Christopher Bahash, Norman McPherson in the Seafood Competition and Shawn Riley in the Beef Competition. A bronze medal went to Natalie Buckner in the Chocolate Competition. Honorable mention was awarded to Junior Chef of the Year Nandi Furet.

"I'm very proud of our achievements in Miami this year," said team manager Michael Grau. "Our team saw changes with some first time chefs competing, but the results were really great. I'm looking forward to next year!"

The Taste of the Caribbean event has been hosted annually by CHTA since 1993. Chefs and culinary teams from all over the region participate in team and individual competitions which allow them to demonstrate their culinary skills and share the flavor of their Caribbean homes. The 2017 edition of Taste of the Caribbean also brought educational sessions for food and beverage professionals.

USVI Culinary Team members include team managers Executive Chef Michael Grau from The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas and Chef Kilian Werner from Frenchman's Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort, Chef Shawn Riley from Sand Castle on the Beach, Chef Tatiana Connor-Peets from Frenchman's Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort, Pastry Chef Natalie Buckner from Caneel Bay, Chef Norman McPherson from The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas, Bartender Chris Bahash from The Tap & Still and Junior Chef Nandi Furet from Ivanna Eudora Kean High School.

Feature Image: USVI Culinary Team Poses in Miami, Florida: (From left to right) Back Row: USVIHTA President Lisa Hamilton, Team Manager Kilian Werner, Chef Norman McPherson, Bartender Chris Bahash, Chef Shawn Riley, USVIHTA Manager Nicole Friday; Front Row: Pastry Chef Natalie Buckner, Chef Tatiana Connor-Peets, Junior Chef Nandi Furet