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Up and Coming Caribbean Destinations To Add to Your Travel Bucket List for 2015

Booming Eco-Tourism, Business Travel and Cultural Offerings Drive Interest in New Destinations in the Dominican Republic and Honduras

Houston, TX, October XX, 2014 – With the Caribbean Tourism Organization reporting over 12 million US visitors in 2013 and already citing an increase in international travelers for 2014, experts are looking ahead to distinguish the Caribbean destinations that will continue to drive an increase in travel to the region in 2015.

Travel specialists at Prohotel International, the Houston based hotel management company renowned for its bold designs at such iconic boutique hotels as the Riviera Maya's former Ikal del Mar and Esencia Estate, is naming its picks for the top Caribbean travel destinations for the year ahead.

Three New Dominican Republic Hot Spots That Continue to Drive Travelers to the Caribbean's Most Popular Island

As the Dominican Republic continues to attract nearly half of all visitors to the Caribbean, solidifying its status as the region's most popular island, three different experiences are beginning to attract new leisure and business travelers to the already popular island.

Santo Domingo, Where Modern Meets Old World, Attracting Business and Leisure Travelers

With a noticeable increase in North American investment in the city's tourism industry, Santo Domingo now offers the perfect mix of global hotel chains and enchanting luxury boutique hotel experiences, driving a noticeable tourism increase both among business and leisure travelers. Boasting the oldest city in the New World with the first cathedral, hospital, university and paved roads of the Americas, as well as a new city replete with shopping malls and gourmet restaurants, Santo Domingo represents the ultimate balance of old and new.

North American tourists are experiencing increased interest in Santo Domingo's newly opened boutique hotels, like the **seven**-room, Casas del XVI, which opened in the city's colonial zone in Spring 2014. "Certified and operated by North American companies

attuned to the importance of high quality service, management companies like Prohotel International and others are providing travelers to Santo Domingo with a world-class level of service,” says Marc Dalet Casal, General Manager of Casas del XVI, whose mayordomos (butlers) cater to guests’ every need in a private and luxurious environment reflecting authentic old-world charm.

With the Dominican Republic Ministry of Tourism investing heavily in the refurbishment of the streets and buildings of Santo Domingo’s Colonial City, boutique properties, like Casas del XVI, are experiencing a surge in bookings. With **seven** guest rooms currently spread between two houses dating back to the Colonial era, Casas del XVI will expand to include a collection of 20 homes within the next few years – one of which was originally inhabited by Pilot Alonso Perez Roldan, who traveled with Christopher Columbus on his early expeditions to the Americas.

For more information visit www.casasdelxvi.com or call (855) 849-6396.

Barahona’s Affordable, Chic Eco-Lodges Shine Light on Rich Eco-Tourism Potential on the Dominican’s Southwestern Coast

Just emerging on the global travel radar, the Dominican Republic’s southwestern coast is a haven for the eco-conscious tourist seeking a natural, all-encompassing Caribbean escape. “Travelers are showing an increased interest in ecological activities we provide both on site at our organic restaurant and spa, as well as excursions to National Parks in the region,” says Antonio Sabate, General Manager of Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge.

Adventure abounds with excursions including opportunities to tour nearby national parks within the Jaragua, Bahoruco and Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve, experience an organic coffee plantation, visit the Casa de Tarzán (Tarzan’s House), Las Aguilas Bay, Oviedo Lagoon and Lake Enriquillo, or explore caves with ancient tribal art.

Already established as the region’s leading eco-resort, the **13**-room Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge is a model in eco-tourism – featuring its own hydroelectric plant providing 30% of its electricity, a certified organic garden, organic river spa, hiking and mountain biking trails. Over the next couple years the hotel will build an additional 14 suites, each with its own private plunge pool and butler in order to accommodate more travelers. For more info visit www.casabonitadr.com or call 800-961-5133.

*****Samaná** Peninsula Draws Travelers with New Meeting Facilities, Pristine Beaches, Funky Towns and Easy Access***

Tucked away on the Dominican Republic’s northeastern coast, the **Samaná** peninsula is emerging as one of the Caribbean’s top new destinations. This longtime undiscovered hideaway of the French is as authentic a Caribbean destination as they come.

Spectacular beaches stretch for miles with no developments in site, as mountain ranges provide the perfect backdrop to a landscape teeming with natural wonders.

Sublime Samana Hotel & Residences, the region's top boutique hotel, offers unparalleled intimacy and seclusion with pristine, private beaches stretching for miles in an environment of absolute serenity. The perfect location both for leisure travelers looking for a relaxing tropical escape and corporate groups seeking an ideal oasis for team building and business development, the hotel is preparing for what is expected to be its busiest year yet.

In citing a resurgence of interest in international incentive travel, Jim Ruzala, director of marketing for Maritz Travel, one of the industry's largest incentive houses notes, "organizations are typically looking at international programs that are not going to put you in an airplane for a long period of time. They don't want to demote the programs motivational value, but at the same time, they are facing budget constraints."

As travelers enjoy new JetBlue routes offering quick and easy direct flights into the Dominican Republic's **Samaná** Peninsula, Sublime Samana Hotel & Residences has added a brand new Cocotero meeting room to accommodate corporate groups and events. With companies concerned about budget constraints but still interested in proximity and sun-and-fun destinations, incentive travel to the Caribbean is expected to grow in 2015.

For more info visit www.sublimesamana.com or call 888-896-9416.

The Next Costa Rica, Honduras, Enchants with Pristine Natural Wonders and Unspoiled Serenity

With spending on ecotourism increasing around the globe, it is clear that more international travelers than ever before are examining travel companies' commitment to sustainability when making travel choices. Undiscovered destinations like Honduras are currently on the brink of tourists' radar, but offer some very prominent advantages over their more well-known neighbors. Featuring untouched wilderness and mountain ranges while also home to one of the world's oldest and most pristine coral reefs, Honduras is the eco-conscious travelers dreamscape.

Dr. Dirk Glaesser, Acting Director of the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Sustainable Development of Tourism Programme, confirms that, "Both tourism stakeholders and tourists are becoming increasingly aware that the sector's future depends on the preservation of what is essentially tourism's own capital: pristine environments, cultural diversity and a thriving wildlife."

A pioneer in sustainable, ecotourism since its opening over a decade ago, Honduras' The Lodge at Pico Bonito offers its guests the opportunity to experience and explore one of

Central America's most astounding natural wonders – the ecological mecca of Pico Bonito National Park. Perched on over 400 acres at the base of Honduras' second largest national park, the Lodge at Pico Bonito entices guests with 22 inviting cabins seamlessly nestled in the jungle. The hotel's expertly trained, bilingual naturalist guides lead guests on hikes to astounding waterfalls and swimming holes and bird watching expeditions with stops at the property's three observation towers.

Already well established within the bird watching community with over 400 bird species spotted on site, the lodge will open a brand new yoga platform this month to increase its wellness offerings.

For more information visit www.picobonito.com, or call (888) 428-0221.

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