

PRESS RELEASE

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Guyanese Summer Evening Draws Large Crowd in London

London, England – In keeping with years past, Guyana followed another successful year at the British Birdwatching Fair by spotlighting its tourism highlights at the “Guyanese Summer Evening” event, which was held on August 25 in London.

Those in attendance – a capacity crowd of about 150 tour operators, media representatives, dignitaries, tourism industry delegates, and Guyanese on hand to celebrate their country – were treated to a night of Guyanese hospitality that consisted of presentations, a video, Caribbean snacks, and El Dorado rum.

This year’s feature presenters were Diane McTurk, who spoke about her work rehabilitating orphaned Giant River Otters into the wild at Karanambu Ranch, and John Gimlette, who talked about his off-the-beaten-path travels in Guyana.

Before the evening’s presentations, Edward Glover, Chairman of the Iwokrama Board of Trustees and former British High Commissioner to Guyana, introduced a video featuring Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development.

The 15-minute video, which was produced by Caribbean Airlines, a sponsor of Iwokrama, featured interviews and stunning shots of Iwokrama’s scenery, wildlife, and people. The film focused on Iwokrama’s ongoing research into climate change and how to sustainably use rainforests without losing them in the process.

The Honorable Laleshwar K.N. Singh, Guyanese High Commissioner to the UK, began the evening’s presentations with a welcome talk that highlighted the importance of rainforest conservation while touching on President Jagdeo’s Low Carbon Development Strategy for Guyana.

Paul Waldron then spoke about Iwokrama’s tourism offerings and their ongoing work in sustainable rainforest

use and management. Tony Thorne, Managing Director of Wilderness Explorers, provided an overview of new tourism products in Guyana, including the Eco-Lodges at Rewa and Nappi villages.

Judy Karwacki also gave an update on the Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative, a joint project of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) project.

Diane McTurk followed, taking the stage in an elegant dress and high heels that were in dramatic contrast to the



images she showed of herself at home at Karanambu Ranch, barefoot and swimming with otters. To loud applause and in front of several flashing cameras and an enchanted audience, Diane told

tales of living in Guyana’s Rupununi Savannas while caring for orphaned Giant River Otters.

Diane also showed photographs of Karanambu’s flora and fauna and spoke of her efforts in establishing the Karanambu Trust to help protect the pristine lands of her home and improve livelihoods in the Amerindian villages of the North Rupununi.



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John Gimlette closed out the evening with a talk and slideshow titled, “Guyana: Off the Beaten Track”. John traveled extensively in Guyana last year while researching an upcoming book on the three Guianas and two recently published travel articles on Guyana, one for Wanderlust magazine and one for the UK’s Telegraph newspaper.

John spoke about destinations and experiences in Guyana that are typically overlooked by the average visitor, including the Berbice River, a monastery near Bartica, a visit to the site of Jonestown, a cattle round-up at Dadanawa Ranch, and staying with a family at Surama village. John accompanied his talk with photographs from his journey and he urged those in attendance to “go home, pack your bags, and go.”



A capacity crowd attended the Guyanese Summer Evening event that took place at the Hill & Knowlton offices in London on August 25.

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Representatives of Bradt Travel Guides were also on hand selling the Guyana guidebook, the only one dedicated to the country. At the event, Bradt’s Managing Director, Donald Grieg, said that he has been keeping track of which destinations are currently drawing the most interest at Bradt and noted that Guyana is one of the top three.

The night was well attended by several freelance journalists and representatives of top international media, including the BBC Radio 4 show, Excess Baggage; CNBC European Business; Wanderlust magazine; and Food and Travel magazine. Duncan Mills, the editor of Traveller magazine, was also on hand with copies of an article on Guyana – “Jungle Jewels” – that appears in the Autumn 2009 issue.

“A Guyanese Summer Evening” was sponsored by Wilderness Explorers, a Guyana-based tour operator, in collaboration with the Guyana Sustainable Tourism Initiative (GSTI) – a joint program between the Guyana Tourism Authority and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) project – Demerara Distillers Ltd., the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, and Bradt Travel Guides.

For more information about tourism in Guyana, visit www.guyanabirding.com.

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