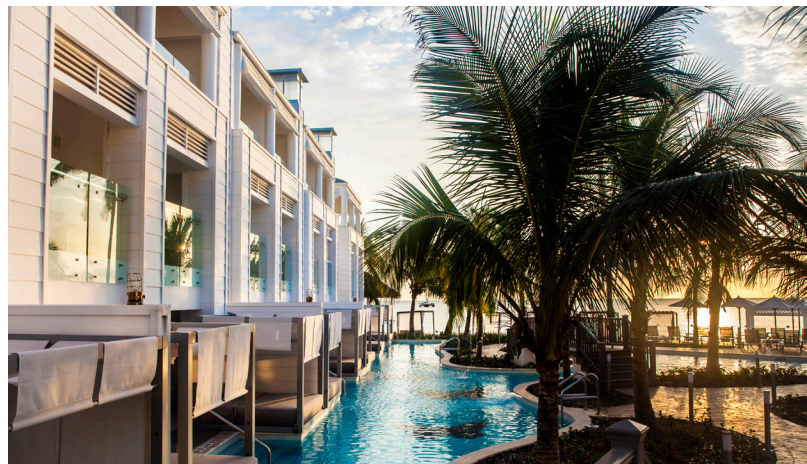


AZUL SENSATORI JAMAICA





The Azul Sensatori Jamaica

Where guest service has been raised to an art form

Rolando Miravete is the General Manager of the Azul Sensatori Hotel, located on the world-famous, Seven Mile Beach in Negril, Jamaica. The Azul Sensatori is one of the latest additions to the Karisma Hotel Group. Miravete recounts the genesis and growth of Azul's parent chain: "Our company has long experience in the business," he begins. "The principals started in a former company in the Dominican Republic and about 13 years ago, they decided to create their own company and that's when Karisma was born."

Miravete continues: "They were already in the fast-

growing tourism destinations, so they started to develop several brands and getting into management of their hotels. They had very good relationships with major operators in different parts of the world, which also helped to grow the Group. We already have ten hotels in Mexico, specifically in the Maya Riviera, so it was easy to expand to other destinations. That's when they started looking at other countries around the Caribbean. And by doing so, they went into expansion mode over the last two to three years, looking at and analyzing possible destinations, and deciding which of the brands that the company holds in its portfolio

would be the right fit for each one. They always were attracted to Jamaica, because it's a well-positioned brand when it comes to a desirable, tropical destination for many markets."

The property that Karisma spotted, and ultimately purchased in Jamaica, had been on the Seven Mile Beach for over 20 years. "It was handled for quite a long time by Sandals," says Miravete. "But the owner was local and when the contract came to an end, that's when we came. We didn't want just to operate the hotel; we really wanted to acquire the property and its assets. Sometimes the stars align in the right way; the owner was ready to hear options and we were the strongest candidate at the time. We took over the property and we operated it for a few short months and then we closed it for about eight months and practically refurbished the whole thing. We opened in December 2013."

AT A GLANCE

WHO: The Azul Sensatori Jamaica

WHAT: An all-inclusive hotel and resort

WHERE: Negril, Jamaica

WEBSITE: www.azuljamaica.com

According to Miravete, the Azul property was designed so as to capitalize on the successful models that Karisma was already operating in Mexico. "We already went through the exercise when we began offering our





product in Cancun,” he says. “There, the competition is even stronger. We were trying to create the particularity so that people would pick our product. We decided that we were not going to have the hotel too big, and that we were going to focus on a very high quality of food service. That’s when we came up with the Gourmet Inclusive trademark.”

Because the Azul Sensatori is an all-inclusive resort, its rates include all meals and beverages at its four restaurants. “In our hotels, you’re always expected to have a very fine dining experience in all of our restaurants,” Miravete explains. “You have a limitless number of the times when you can dine in a particular restaurant as opposed to many other competitors where you are limited to one visit per restaurant. We also are known for offering premium brands. Our company has struck some very important alliances with brands such

as Jackson Family Wines from Napa, and we have a very good relationship with Canada Beef.” Many of the hotel’s products are delivered to them by Overseas Freight Solutions, a Miami-based transport company. “So, we try to be very careful on our gastronomic offerings for our customers and have them feel at ease when they want to wine and dine instead of being limited to a certain schedule,” Miravete adds. The hotel also has two onsite coffee shops/cafés, a beach bar, two bar/lounges, and 24-hour room service.

Other amenities at the Azul Sensatori include: two adult-only sections with romantic honeymoon suites; a separate area with accommodations for families; four outdoor swimming pools; a spa and fitness center; a 32” plasma TV and DVD player in each room; free mini-bar items; wireless internet access; a business center; the Azulitos Play House for kids ages 4-12; the Breeze



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Miravete also touts the Azul's physical beauty and a unique architectural concept that was developed in Mexico but is new to Jamaica. "We're one of the first companies to come up with the swim-up concept where outside of your suite's terrace you can just plunge into a pool. It's like having your own pool, right at your doorstep. There's nothing like this in this area. The product that we are offering is so fresh, so new, and so different than what you can find in Negril," he exclaims.

The 4.5 star Azul Sensatori resort currently has 136



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rooms and has just begun its second phase of construction with plans to add another 149 rooms by May of 2017. All of its guests presently come from the United Kingdom, but Miravete says that with the expansion, the hotel will be able to provide enough inventory to be able to draw guests from the U.S. and Canada, as well. And while the ongoing development at the Azul will only exploit the space that already exists there, the Karisma Group is interested in developing five or six additional hotels on a big piece of land that it recently acquired on the northern part of the island. "Tourism is an industry that never stops growing," says Miravete.



te, "even though it is very sensitive to prevailing economic conditions. But Jamaica is begging to sustain its economic growth on tourism. So, this is a good time to be in Jamaica."

Miravete believes that the Azul has "broken the mold" in Jamaica and that in years to come, other hotels will follow its lead vis à vis design and décor. But he just as fervently believes that the real attraction of the Azul Sensatori is in the hands of the hotel's 250 employees. "It's a beautiful property," he maintains. "I can tell you about some of the features of the architecture, but at the end of the day, a building is building is a building. The building is not going to take care of you. Our staff is going to take care of you. We are known for having such a friendly and accommodating staff for our customers. We will attend to you like you were part of our family."



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