



Bespoke Homes Jamaica

For your practical property solutions

Spanish Town

6 April 2011

Dear Reader,

LETTER FROM JAMAICA (#3): THE JAMAICA JAGUAR

Can you believe it? First we had the Asian Tigers. Then there were the BRICs – Brazil, Russia, India and China. Then some MIST – Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey. But now I bring you the Jamaica Jaguar.

What's he talking about? Well, in mid-March I got myself over to the UK-Jamaica Investment Forum 2011. A bit of a mouthful! Boring you may think! But very good speeches from everyone. Three ministers – Karl Samuda, Edmund Bartlett and Christopher Tufton. Industry, Tourism and Agriculture. High Commissioners Anthony Johnson and Howard Drake. Gordon 'Butch' Stewart. Many more too.

But it wasn't so much the people. It was what they had to say. The little known facts. The opportunities. The things we take for granted. The great potential. Don't take my word. Judge for yourself.

We all know Jamaica has something special. The tourists think it's the sun and sand and the laid-back people. We know it's us the people and everything else under the sun. We all know about Bob Marley and Usain Bolt. The National Heroes. Ackee and salt fish. Rice and peas. Yam and cassava. Jerk chicken and pork. Scotch bonnet and escovitch fish. Oh, and the sun and the sea! And the hills and the valleys!

But did you know that our ginger is so top end that the Japanese wanted to buy every last piece? The Jamaican cocoa bean is in the world's top eight? Blue Mountain coffee doesn't get sampled at the docks – because buyers trust it.

Then we have the women's 100m, 200m and 400m (hurdles) Olympic champions. And the third fastest man, to keep the fastest on his toes! Six Olympic golds put us ahead of

every country on a per capita basis. Lots of writers, poets, musicians beyond Bob. Dancers, models. Cricketers, footballers. Which country of around 3 million people gets near us? Not Lithuania, Latvia nor Slovenia. Not Liberia nor Mauritania. Not even Cuba, with its four times bigger population. Maybe New Zealand, but they have 4.3 million.

Then there's the Chinese, Spanish, Americans, Canadians and Russians. They can't stop investing in hotels, farms, bauxite, cement, ports. In our country. Right now. There's a few Jamaicans on the island who invest big too. But there's so much more potential. If only we believed it!

Brand Jamaica was one of the big messages of the Investment Forum. Very big. Puma is wrapping Manhattan in Brand Jamaica. Billboards everywhere have Jamaica Brand trainers. With the Olympics fast approaching, more of us have a great chance to use the brand. A unique chance. But we'd better not be too slow out of dem blocks.

So Dr Tufton is encouraging farmers to go for new and higher value products. Don't be content with bulk honey – look at what else you can get out of bees and out of honey. Lots of money! Tufton sees the chance to double honey production. Loads of scope for adding to the 1,300 bee farmers across the island. But add value, make more money and export more too.

The same again and again. Cocoa, sugar, coffee, ginger, pepper, pimento, spice, ground provision. There could be many more than our 6,000 active coffee farmers. The basic product is such high quality. Brand Jamaica. Add more value, add Brand Jamaica and the world is your oyster.

Maybe you knew the government is the biggest landowner. By far. But did you know what it's doing to irrigate land? To help grow lettuce in greenhouses? To get the hotels to buy local? Did you know how it is helping farmers and anyone else to set up bio-digestors to get light from waste? You know, it will sell you farming land at a peppercorn rate if you have a good proposal. You may think it is selling land and other things just to get the cash. To flog it cheap! But it really thinks that you and I can do better.

Levi Roots told us how Jamaica Brand can sell well in England. Very well. Twenty million bottles of his original sauce in just three years. Outselling HP! And he has another eight varieties. His brand is mushrooming. Adding value all the time with books and films as well. Canada and USA to follow. Maybe he'll even conquer Jamaica too! All that and he could barely read when he left Content, Clarendon, for England. At

the age of ten. But thanks to his roots, he could always read the first word of many books. "Contents".

Again, opportunities all over the place. Paul Gladstone Reid MBE told us even more. About "the global essence of Jamaica...trade driven through culture". Having done Jamanga, he's now making a 24-part animated series for Team Jamaica. He's in partnership with the UK and Japan as well as Jamaica. But he wants it to be "made in Jamaica", with Jamaican writing, voice overs and much more being done on the island.

Next Gladstone Reid is writing "Radikal Family", where a spaceship arrives on the island. After zapping 120 people, 120 super heroes arise! You too can be a super hero. Just get zapped by Brand Jamaica. As PM Golding said at the PM Youth Awards in January, "Get up, stand up. Stand up for your rights and take your place in this society that is more yours than it is ours".

Creative industries are flourishing. Again using the Brand. You may or may not like it, but Rastamouse is big on the BBC. The film "The Harder They Come" will be 40 next year and the stage production will tour again in 2012. First around England. Then for three weeks in Kingston. New films, short and long, are also springing up.

And still there is more. Look at the many small internet and ICT businesses in Jamaica that advertise themselves via Twitter. Look at the telephone call centres that are now serving the US, gaining from the shared time zone and shared language. Some say that India's tiger days started in call centres. Jamaica's jaguar days are standing up here, there and everywhere.

Of course, some say they won't invest because of crime. Well, don't forget that all forms of crime were down 7% in 2010. And murder was 15% down. The head of Mavis Bank coffee - Peter de Bruyne - even praised Jamaica's great legal system! From Chile himself, he wanted us to compare Jamaica's very strong rule of law with what happens in Latin America and parts of the Caribbean. Maybe he knows what he's talking about!

There are various tax incentives. For foreign and local investors. To encourage industry and use of local resources. To improve competitiveness and boost economic growth. Tax incentives that help exports, hotels, resort cottages, motion pictures, industry and enterprise.

The Urban Development Corporation owns a lot of the government's land. In places like Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, Negril and Portland as well as in Kingston and Spanish Town.

This can be sold cheaply. Land and buildings in downtown Kingston attract extra special tax reliefs - now just extended by 3 miles.

So, are you convinced? If not, the government says you should go and talk to them. If you need more help. Know what they mean? Nudge, nudge!

What's stopping you then? Why not do that farming you always wanted to do? Ginger, cocoa, honey, coffee. Extend yourself up the chain to add value. Export some and replace some imports.

Think big or small. Can Ocho Rios become our Orlando? There's already Dunn's River Falls, swimming with dolphins, Mr Motivator's mini theme park, and jet-skiing. But what more could work there? Why not a single ticket to enter everything? Like a Travelcard or like Orlando.

Or why not more specialist furniture making? Why not more retirement communities? Even if you have a business in Britain, why not have your helpline or back-office in Jamaica? If you run a Caribbean restaurant in England, why not open up a branch in Kingston or Falmouth or Mandeville or Montego Bay or Portland? Why not build that dream Jamaica home and plant a field or two? Why not design your computer software by Emancipation Park instead of Villa Park?

Why not start by talking to Meet Jamaica 2012? JAMPRO and the private sector have come together to brand Jamaica. And to market 2012.

In the recent survey by Facilitators For a Better Jamaica (FFBJ), more than half said the best thing people in Britain could do to help Jamaica was to return or to invest there. As 'Butch' Stewart said, "If you want to make money, come to where the rum comes from". And he should know! So what's stopping you?

There's so much happening. There are so many tax reliefs. There's plenty of cheap land. There's Brand Jamaica. There's the build-up to the Olympics. And to the 50th Independence Day. There's so much more that could happen. Help make the Jamaica Jaguar leap forward. What's stopping you?

Stuart Taylor

Bespoke Homes Jamaica stuart@bespokehomesjamaica.com

To receive the Letter From Jamaica in your inbox, please register at:

<http://www.bespokehomesjamaica.com>