



## Press Release

### **HANLEY TOPS CLASS IN TABLE SETTING CONTEST**

**Road Town, Tortola, November 17, 2009** – After three hours of competition, contending in two categories, table setting and servicing, Deslyn Hanley emerged the winner of Sunday's Table Setting Competition hosted by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board.

Held at the Pavilion Restaurant at Rosewood Little Dix Bay Resort, over 30 guests and spectators came out in support of the 15 students competing in Virgin Gorda's second table setting contest. A five-member panel judged Hanley and her fellow contenders on their knowledge of setting the meal table, greeting and seating, beverage servicing, meal servicing, attire and accommodation of guests.

Acting Director of the BVI Tourist Board, Hadassah Ward, told students she anticipates that some will consider careers in the hospitality industry. "I hope that many of you will stay involved in the industry. From what you've shown us, the British Virgin Islands will have some of the better trained young persons in the industry."

Prior to the competition, students went through a vigorous one-week training session with professionals from the Virgin Gorda hospitality sector. Competitors ranged in age from 13 – 18 years old and all attend the Bregado Flax Educational Centre (BFEC).

Principal of BFEC and a guest at Sunday's competition, Carolyn O'Neal Alexander said she was impressed with the student's servicing. "Given that they only had one week of training to prepare, I am suitably impressed with what I saw today." O'Neal Alexander added, "I was particularly pleased with the way



they checked on guests during servicing of the meal, just to make sure we were all ok. I am very proud of these students.”

At 16 years old, the competition’s winner, Deslyn Hanley said she was very surprised that she won. “I’ve always wanted to be a chef, so doing this was fun, but I never expected to win.” Hanley adds that she likes the service industry and plans to stay involved in hopes of one day realising her goal of being a chef. Apart from the winner’s plate, Hanley will also receive two nights stay for her entire family from Leverick Bay Hotel.

Following Hanley’s first place finish, there was a tie for second place, going to Troya Audaine and Shirl-Ann Hamlet. Third and fourth place went to Monel Creque-Marcellin and Shakida Powell respectively. Other students competing in the competition include; Issa Alexander, Rachel Clifton, Jahnique Henry, Jeneil Jessop, Alexander Parillon Jr., Deondre Rymer, Donielle Sprauve, Jesany Tesheira, Tonya Vanterpool and Joshua Wheatley.

The judges for this year’s competition were, Chairman of the Tourist Board, Myron Walwyn, representing Moorings Mariner Inn, Rose Giacinto of Bath and Turtle and Chez Bamboo, Mark Sterner of Rosewood Little Dix Bay Resort, Sanxavier Simon of the Rock Café and Jermaine George of Biras Creek Resort.

Sister Islands Tourism Development Manager, Shereen Flax-Charles said the level of interest and talent of students that participated in the competition is encouraging. “The students were very keen on applying all they learned during the training to the competition. I am encouraged by what I saw and I am looking forward to these students taking on a greater role in our tourism sector in the very near future.”

Flax-Charles also expressed gratitude to Rosewood Little Dix Bay Resort for their continued support of youth development in the tourism sector. “This year was the second year that Rosewood Little Dix stepped forward and provided just about everything for us to host the event at the resort’s restaurant. We are



truly appreciative for this partnership that will continue the development of the Territory's youth in our tourism industry."

Throughout the years numerous hospitality professionals and businesses such as Rosewood Little Dix Bay and Biras Creek resorts, First Bank, Road Town Wholesale as well as the British Virgin Islands Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association (BVICCHA) have supported the event. Prizes for competitors were provided by Top of the Baths Restaurant, Rock Café, Leverick Bay Resort and Marina and Sugarcane Restaurant-Nail Bay Resort. All participants of the competition will receive a monetary donation from First Bank, exclusively to open a savings account at the institution. Additional prize money from sponsors will also go towards each student's new savings account.

Community volunteer, Janice Nibbs-Blyden, created the competition in 1998. It was her vision to help young people in the Territory develop a skill and gain insight into the hospitality sector, one of the largest contributor to the Territory's economy. It is anticipated that the competition will soon have participation from Anegada and Jost Van Dyke.

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**Notes to Editors:**

Caption for attached photographs:



**VG Table Setting Competition Winner:** Winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Table Setting Competition on Virgin Gorda, Deslyn Hanley with her winner's plate pictured with founder of the competition, Janice Nibbs-Blyden with Tourist Board members, Deputy Director, Malcia Smith Hamilton and Acting Director, Hadassah Ward (l-r).



**VG Table Setting:** Participants in Sunday's Table Setting Competition, Alexander Parillon Jr., prepares to set his guests' table.



**VG Table Setting Participants:** 15 students from the Bregado Flax Secondary School on Virgin Gorda participated in the island's 2<sup>nd</sup> Table Setting Competition. At the end of the afternoon, 16 year-old Deslyn Hanley (centre) emerged the winner.