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Grace Bay Beach and Beaches capture Travel OSCARS

By The Editorial Board

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The results of the World Travel Awards, regarded as the Oscars of the Travel and Tourism industry were announced at a star-studded ceremony on the December 12, 2007 at Beaches Resort & Spa in Providenciales. Once again, the country has been put to the map as among the world's best after being judged as having the World's Leading Beach, Grace Bay Beach and World's Leading Family Resort, Beaches Turks and Caicos.

The World's Leading Family Resort, Beaches Turks and Caicos boasts of ultra-chic French Village, complete with Parisian-style architecture, cuisine and ambiance, as well as top-of-the-line amenities for family members of all ages. Meanwhile, Grace Bay Beach, described as having breathtaking hues, inviting waters and beautiful white sand captured the World's Leading Beach Award for the second time in a row.

It was the second year running that the country played host to the Annual World Travel Awards Ceremony. The glitzy gala ceremony turned the spotlight on some of the people and companies behind the year's best travel products, 330 representatives from the travel trade, VIPs as and local and international media from 30 countries from across the globe.

"The Turks & Caicos Islands are a shining beacon for the global tourism industry," said WTA Founder & President Graham Cooke.

"They have grown into one of the most sought after luxury travel destinations worldwide. So it seems apt that we are gathered here tonight, to honour the laudable achievements of so many – in an industry that is one of the great success stories of the modern age", he added.

All-in-all, the Annual World Travel Awards Ceremony was packaged to entertain: Hosted by radio and television host Todd Newton, famous for his work on E! Entertainment Television, the prestigious event was graced by celebrities such as Canadian actress Jennifer Finnigan ("The Bold and the Beautiful"), her husband and actor Jonathan Silverman ("In Case of Emergency") and TV

host and model Adrienne Janic. Other TV stars in attendance were Eva LaRue ("CSI: Miami") and singer and actress Melora Hardin ("The Office"). Comedian Rodney Laney had the gathered crowd in laughter, while musical duo Ashford & Simpson wowed with dynamic and catchy tunes. The heady mix of entertainment also included saxophonist Jervon Laporte, the Turks & Caicos Cultural Group and the Royal Police Force Band, displaying the Turks & Caicos culture.

Among key guests were Gordon "Butch" Stewart, founder and chairman of Sandals Resorts International, and his sons Adam and Bobby Stewart who head up the company in the Caribbean. The Honourable Wayne Garland, Executive Chairman of the Turks & Caicos Tourist Board, the Honourable Floyd Basil Hall, Deputy Premier of the Turks & Caicos Islands, the Honourable Edmund Bartlett, Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, as well as Abdulla Mausoom, Director General of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board, were also in attendance.

The awards ceremony was preceded by a welcome party hosted at the Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort & Spa as well as the World Travel Golf Championship at the Provo Golf & Country Club. These events were arranged to provide industry movers and shakers the opportunity to mingle among fellow travel professionals. The welcome beach party was sponsored by TCI Invest and showcased what the stunning destination has to offer.

During the evening, WTA also honoured winners of the 2007 Caribbean Awards. Beaches Turks and Caicos and Grace Bay Beach were voted Caribbean's Leading Family All-Inclusive Resort and Caribbean's Leading Beach while Parrot Cay and Point Grace were awarded Caribbean's Leading Spa Resort and Boutique Hotel respectively.

World Travel Awards are especially coveted as, uniquely, the votes are cast globally by fellow professionals. The World Travel Awards are undoubtedly the world's most comprehensive awards celebration. And, winning a World Travel Award is one of the highest accolades a travel product or organization can achieve.

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