

AUGUST 2012

# Caribbean Today

CELEBRATING 25 Years

We cover your world Vol. 23 No. 8

THE MULTI AWARD WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE WITH THE LARGEST PROVEN CIRCULATION IN FLORIDA GUARANTEED

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO'S



OF INDEPENDENCE  
1962 - 2012

On Aug. 31 the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago marks its 50th anniversary of independence. As the land of calypso and soca celebrates this event, Caribbean Today puts a spotlight on a proud nation with a special feature inside.



A new report says the wealthiest people in the world have exploited loopholes in international tax rules, evading the taxman and sheltering \$21 trillion or more in offshore accounts in the Caribbean and other places. page 4A



For close to half century singer Marcia Griffiths has made beautiful music. As her home country Jamaica marks 50 years of independence, the 'Queen of Reggae' looks back on how far the music has come. page 11A

# FAST FORWARD



~ Caribbean sprinters once again conquered the world to win four of six medals up for grabs in the 100 meters at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England. Jamaicans Usain Bolt, left, and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce both won gold. Up to press time Caribbean athletes were in line to win several more medals. page 7A



## Caribbean Today

presents this award to

*Aston Lue*

IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

December 12, 2013



FRIENDS OF GOOD  
SHEPHERD MOBAY, INC.

Presented to

**Aston Lue**

In Recognition of  
Your Nomination  
for the

**2012 FOGS  
Life Time  
Achievement Award**

March 17, 2012  
Sunrise, FL

SUNRISE, FL



The Miami/Ft. Lauderdale MBEC

*PROUDLY HONORS*

**OCHO RIOS MIAMI, INC.**

***OUTSTANDING MBE  
OF THE DECADE***



**In Recognition of MEDWeek 2010**

**October 8, 2010**

**Miami, Florida**



“To the Good and the True”

**CMA “ALPHA”  
ASSOCIATION, INC.  
15th ANNIVERSARY**

Presented to  
**ASTON LUE**  
Ocho Rios Miami

April 17, 2010

With deep appreciation for your  
unwavering dedication and support  
throughout the years in assisting us  
with our Outreach Programs.  
Our gratitude transcends words.



**Corporate Citizen  
Award**

Presented to

**Ocho Rios Inc.**

For outstanding service  
to the Community

**Caribbean Bar Association**

2006

# Proclamation

## Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners

**Whereas:** Miami-Dade County takes great pride in saluting organizations that positively enhance and elevate the quality of life for all who reside here; and

**Whereas:** Our County actively participates in the revitalization of various neighborhoods, and local entities that have chosen to operate in our inner cities are of great assistance to the citizens who live there; and

**Whereas:** INC Magazine, in partnership with the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, a non-profit agency founded by Harvard Professor Michael E. Porter, have selected **Ocho Rios Miami** to appear in the *Inner City 100* for the year 2000, from nearly 2,000 nominations nationwide; and

**Whereas:** *Inner City 100* highlights the fastest growing companies, which are located exclusively in America's inner cities, for their major achievements, as well as success in business; and

**Whereas:** It is fitting and proper that official recognition be given to this outstanding corporation on this milestone occasion and applaud its commitment to serving persons who call South Florida home;

**Now Therefore:** BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, ALEX PENELAS, MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THIS COMMUNITY, do hereby proclaim Thursday, March 28, 2002, as

## *Inner City Business Day Ocho Rios Miami*

**In Observance Thereof:** I call upon the good people of Miami-Dade County to join me in honoring Ocho Rios Miami for its contributions to our society and wish it ongoing success in all of its future endeavors.



*Dorin D. Rolfe*

Dorin D. Rolfe  
Commissioner  
District 2

*Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler*

Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler  
Commissioner  
District 3

*Alex Penelas*

Alex Penelas  
Mayor

March 28, 2002

# The Miami Herald

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003 | 101ST YEAR, NO. 43 | ©2003 THE MIAMI HERALD | FINAL | 35 CENTS

## SMALL BUSINESS

# Success is a family affair for importer

Aston and Michelle Lue's food importing and distribution business saw \$7 million in revenue last year.

BY D.E. LAGER

DLager@herald.com

On a busy afternoon in the offices of Ocho Rios Miami, Michelle Lue was on the phone telling a supplier to make sure to send the pepper sauce in bigger bottles, and Edison Cameron looked a bit nervous as he prepared to make the first major purchase for his new Hi-low Grocery in Miami.

But Aston Lue, who co-founded the food importing and distribution company with his wife Michelle, knew exactly what to do. He gently put his arm around Cameron's shoulders and introduced him to a visitor as a "promising entrepreneur."

Lue, who serves as president of the 16-year-old company named after a popular Jamaican resort town, takes pride in his rapport with mom-and-pop grocers.

"The word community is important to me," he said.

Now he wants to bring corner grocers the world over into the Ocho Rios Miami fold, selling them an array of Jamaican and other international food products like jerk curry, spicy betchup and scotch bonnet pepper sauce. To that end, the Lues plan to spend \$100,000 in the next six years to increase staff, develop e-commerce capabilities and promote the company in Canada and Europe.

Meanwhile, Aston Lue "pounds the pavement" for new product ideas. He gets in his minivan and drives around Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Kendall, where the couple lives, with samples of new products like jerk curry or sweet plantain chips, stopping locals and asking them to taste.

### MODEST GROWTH

Ocho Rios Miami earned \$7 million in revenue in 2002 — the same as 2001, when the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks slowed the economy and his business, Lue said.

He projects revenue growth of 10 percent in 2003, a rate he called modest.

"It's been more difficult dealing with Customs, the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture after 9/11" for importing and distribution companies like Ocho Rios Miami, said Nestor Melgarejo, an import perishables specialist at Albatross, a custom broker who works with Ocho Rios Miami.

"Now companies often have to pay additional fees to pay for their products' movements around Customs. Since products are often pre-sold, importers sometimes lose clients who run out of patience. Importing is not as



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/HERALD STAFF

**HOT ITEM:** Ocho Rios Miami co-founders Aston and Michelle Lue hold their top seller, Jamaican hot sauce.

easy as ordering pizza and some people forget that," he said.

Ocho Rios Miami has a broad client mix, including 1,350 small grocery stores in South Florida alone, 650 in Georgia and 350 stores in New York, as well as 188 Publix supermarkets. Ocho Rios Miami also supplies 25 customers in California.

The firm is the Lues' third business. They started two snack wholesale businesses in Kingston, Jamaica, in the '80s.

"We work well together because she is very intuitive and very good with customers," said Lue, 52. Michelle Lue serves as the company's vice president.

### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR

Lue, who got his start sweeping floors in his father's grocery store, graduated from Fairfield University in Connecticut with a degree in mathematics. Born in Canton, China and raised in Kingston, Jamaica from the age of seven, he came to the United States when he was 19. He has lived here permanently since 1986.

He met his wife in Kingston in 1977 when he was working for Islandwide Distribution, a dry goods distributor. Michelle, who was a classical folk dancer in China until she was 17, fell into entrepreneurship after she met Aston.

In 1995, Ocho Rios Miami won the minority supplier/distributor of the year award from the U.S. Department of Commerce. In 2000, the firm was named one of the Inner City 100, an Inc. magazine award for the top 100

*"I don't think I can ever completely leave [the business]. I like seeing consumers' eyes open wide when they see something delicious."*

—ASTON LUE, co-founder, Ocho Rios Miami

most competitive inner city companies in the country.

Managing strong growth is the firm's current challenge, Lue said.

"Getting the proper skilled people in place to manage the growth is hard," he said. "The challenge is to pass on my enthusiasm to the team."

Most of company's 30 employees have been there an average of eight years, Lue said. Next year he plans to hire 10 more people in jobs ranging from customer services and sales to merchandising, accounting and truck driving.

Besides importing more than 1,000 products made by companies in Jamaica, Central and South America, and Asia, Ocho Rios Miami also produces more than 300 Ocho Rios branded products, he said.

### DEVELOPMENT KEY

Product development powered the company's 15 percent annual pre-Sept. 11 growth rate. Now producers in Jamaica supply 80 percent of its products, including breadfruit and Festival Dough Mix. To promote its goods,

### SMART BOX

#### OCHO RIOS MIAMI

##### THE BUSINESS:

Imports and distributes Caribbean seasonings and delicacies to mom-and-pop groceries in Florida, Georgia, California and New York, as well as Publix in Florida.

• \$7 million in revenue in 2002

• 30 employees

**LOCATION:** 2051 NW 5 Ave., Miami

##### MANAGEMENT:

• Aston Lue, co-founder and president

• Michelle Lue, co-founder and vice president

Ocho Rios Miami does radio spots, and the Lues donate food to church functions and high school and college reunions around South Florida.

Though he has four children waiting in the wings, Lue said he is in no rush to hand the business over to them.

"All four are very good students at the University of Florida," he said. "But they will have to earn their way into the business. I don't think I can ever completely leave it. I like seeing consumers' eyes open wide when they see something delicious."

**Ocho Rios Miami**  
Aston and Michelle Lue, Founders  
Featured In: The Miami Herald October 27, 2003

Department of Veterans Affairs

Certificate of Appreciation

Presented to


OCHO RIOS, INC.

In appreciation for your support and cooperation in ensuring that the special event held on Wednesday, May 26, 2006, at the Miami Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center was a total success. The Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Commemoration was sponsored by the EEO-Asian Pacific American Program Committee.

Your support and cooperation are sincerely appreciated by all of the employees and patients in attendance.

Your organization's contributions to our local community are hereby recognized and appreciated.



  
Stephen M. Lucas  
Director