

Building Brand Creole

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GUILLAUME ALBERT has been General Manager of CTS for the last three years, having previously worked overseas in the international banking sector and within CTS as marketing manager between 2004 and 2010, and subsequently as the Deputy General Manager between 2010 and 2011. He works closely with his father Joseph Albert, who set up the company in 1998 following the acquisition of a then parastatal Destination Management Company.

The group has three primary business activities; tour operator, hotel management and ownership of Fast Ferry services. Creole Travel Services is one of the largest Destination Management companies in the Seychelles with 290 staff of which 98 per cent are Seychellois, a fleet of 110 vehicles, and 12 boats. Cat Cocos – Inter Island Boats Ltd, is the largest Fast Ferry Services between the three main islands boasting three modern vessels with a capacity up to 472 seats including open air and business class decks. The group owns two boutique hotels: ‘Le Domaine de l’Orangerie’ on the island of La Digue and ‘Domaine de la Reserve’ on the island of Praslin, offering a true “Made in Seychelles” experience.

The Albert family has been established in the Seychelles for many generations, becoming well known in several business sectors from agriculture to building and construction. With our entry into the tourism sector in 1998, we created a range of products and services which would always reflect our heritage; the uniqueness and authenticity of our Creole culture, with an emphasis on personalized service. Those business ventures logically had to be innovative and had to contribute directly to the tourism industry’s needs within the Seychelles context. We had a clear advantage with our expert knowledge of the culture and business environment, and also a vision for developing new markets. We chose to promote the ‘Creole’ brand as a unique selling point, because we realised that Seychelles is not just about selling

holidays to a beautiful beach, but also islands where creole culture will attract visitors who wish to see what life is like where people from different races and cultures have blended in a melting pot of harmonious island living. CTS identified many ways in which we could contribute to the development of the country’s tourism in the areas of tour services, transport and accommodation. Despite the high initial costs of setting up hotels or services, the return on investment is good once a solid reputation is established.

While the traditional tourism markets of France, Germany, Italy and the UK continue to be important to us, we are seeing a steady growth in new markets such as China, South-Korea, the Middle East and Russia. Seychelles has also welcomed in recent years the opening of international hotel brands such as Four Seasons, Hilton, Banyan Tree, Raffles and Kempinski. The brand recognition and customer loyalty that comes with these has been very positive for the destination. Also with the increase in the bed capacity, we are able to offer a wider range of products, as well as benefitting from the modern savoir-faire which clients have come to expect from well-known brands. This has brought a lot of benefits to the Seychellois hospitality scene as it brought inspiration to the local entrepreneurs. While it is undeniable that these 5 star properties were essential to the growth of the industry, we also need to be mindful of the dangers of over expanding in one single sector, as we find somewhat an imbalance in the selection of properties

available. We have excellent 5 star properties, but the Seychelles today are lacking good 3 to 4 star properties which give value for money and which would exhibit more of local culture, themes and product; a “couleur locale” type of concept. We need to attract more of those travellers on medium budgets, and there is room for expansion in this sector for new products and services.



Yachting in Seychelles is a special experience