

Media Inquiries:
Amy Kerr
amykerr@revelconcepts.com



Honoring the Past by Planting the Future: Caribbean Eco-pioneer Celebrated

EAGLE BEACH, Aruba – September 15, 2020 – Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of [Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort](#) and noted environmentalist, often reminds people, “*We are in the nature business.*” In a fitting tribute marking his most recent trip around the sun, on Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020, members of Aruba’s community gathered and planted 75 trees, succulents and plants in his honor of decades of sustainability success. The special reforestation project took place in Noord.

More than 35 Bucuti & Tara Associates, friends, and members of the group [Restore Aruba’s Natural Beauty](#) came together armed with shovels, picks and good spirits to plant the trees. The indigenous seedlings included: Kawara, Tamarinde, Palo di Boonchi, Calbas, Shimaruku Ratonera, Dabariuida, Palisia, Wayaca, and Cashew Trees. These island beauties, providing the very oxygen Aruba’s residents and worldwide guests breathe, are a reminder of the essential give-and-take balance Biemans urges all to revere.

Leave only footprints

Early on Biemans recognized Arubans were essential stewards of the small island’s innate beauty and with this rare natural gift, that the island community shared the responsibility to proactively protect the fragile environment for future generations. In the early 1980s, Biemans watched multi-story cranes stretch up along the beach skyline. Massive towering hotels were quickly sprouting up, natural resources were being depleted faster than any other time, and there was a major shift in the job force, and therefore mindset, as tourism boomed and became Aruba’s dominant industry. With this rapid growth, he saw the need to ensure that the industry operates sustainably in order to avoid damaging Aruba’s pristine surroundings.

This spurred Biemans to act. One initiative – banning single-use plastic on Bucuti – kicked off his decades of sustainability initiatives benefiting both the island community and guests, alike. In the early 1980s Biemans created a radio show *Aruba ta Mi*, to focus national pride on Aruba’s gifts of natural beauty and human kindness, and to garner community support for their protection. He created the Sponsor-a-Mile program for roadside and beachfront clean ups. He became a leader in the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association and started its environmental committee. As Biemans educated himself on the dangers of not protecting the planet, he began heightening awareness of threats to the environment, actively creating initiatives to mitigate them, and position Aruba as a beacon of environmental responsibility. For his work, he and the resort have been rewarded with many positive international recognitions and accolades over the years.

As the [Caribbean’s most eco-certified property](#) and the first and only carbon neutral hotel, Biemans sought global best practices to outfit Tripadvisor’s No. 1 Hotel in the Caribbean with the healthiest, safest vacation experience. Bucuti & Tara soon became the first Green Globe certified resort. A substantial investment and effort, Green Globe helped create an organizational shift on the island and became the foundation for a systematic and informed

approach to sustainable operation. Green Globe ultimately declared Bucuti & Tara the Most World's Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort and the property currently carries Platinum certification. Along the way Bucuti & Tara earned ISO 14001, ISO 9001, LEED® Gold, and Travelife Gold certifications. Consistently, over the years Biemans invested substantially in technology such as solar water heaters, energy saving equipment, systems and technologies. Along the way, he shared his success with the Aruba community inviting his fellow-islanders to replicate the measures in their homes, businesses and organizations.

Following the planet's accelerated global climate change, which presents a significant threat to Aruba with rising seas, Biemans again stepped forward and took on the immense challenge of making Bucuti & Tara Resort carbon neutral. Bucuti & Tara was certified Carbon Neutral in 2018, after years of tireless work with his team to steadily reduce the property's footprint.

Biemans' ultimate hope is for all hotels on the island and beyond, to be inspired to join. Word about Aruba's progress with sustainability, spread around the world, and requests came in from throughout the Caribbean and beyond, by tourism entities, eager to learn more and follow Aruba's lead. To this day, Biemans continues answering calls for information and eagerly spreads his knowledge and experience whenever asked to speak at a conference, in the Caribbean, Europe, South America, and the United States.

Coming Together to Work Ahead

Restore Aruba's Natural Beauty group, founded by Bucuti & Tara's executive housekeeper Mickeal Mesker, searched for the best location for the Sunday planting, with his group members and friends he secured donated trees and plants with the collaboration of Aruba Aloe and Fantastic Gardens.

Inspired by his love for gardening, Mesker created his organization when looking for a positive focus for his energy, during COVID-19. An active participant with Bucuti & Tara's island and beach clean-ups, he noticed many damaged areas of the island that could be vastly improved with beautiful trees and plants. He quickly learned that many of his friends had a similar interest. The dedicated group's Facebook page now counts 735 followers and Mesker actively receives donations and carries out beautification projects throughout Aruba.

To learn more, visit Bucuti.com.

IMAGES

Dropbox gallery: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f5c5fs3re9pv3hb/AADG1svq6MSzitcG4XNhigjYa?dl=0>

Captions

GroupShot Volunteers from Aruba participated in a tree planting in honor of Aruba's eco-pioneer Ewald Biemans who recently celebrated his birthday

EwaldBiemans Event honoree Ewald Biemans participating in the reforestation project

Digging-vertical Volunteers prepare the ground for the new seedlings

Planting Volunteers provide sturdy foundations for the variety of succulents, plants and trees

About Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

Declared the [first CarbonNeutral®/net zero hotel in the Caribbean](#) in August 2018, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is one of the Top 10 Hotels for Romance in the World, No. 1 Hotel in the Caribbean, No. 1 Hotel for Romance in

the Caribbean (fifth straight year) and No. 3 Hotel for Service in the Caribbean. Aruba's premier adults-only boutique resort is led by celebrated hotelier and environmentalist, Ewald Biemans, named by Caribbean Journal as the 2017 Caribbean Hotelier of the Year. The resort is nestled on the powdery white sands of Eagle Beach, home to protected sea turtles and named one of the "Dream Beaches of the World."

Now home to the Caribbean's Safest, Healthiest Vacation Experience thanks to its physician-developed [COVID-19 safety protocols](#) and Aruba's Health & Happiness Code seal, Bucuti has 104 well-appointed guestrooms, suites and penthouses. It offers sunbeds and shade for every guest; freshwater infinity pool; spa; WiFi; and complimentary iPad with Skype for use during stay. Award-winning healthy dining is enjoyed at oceanfront Elements, Tara Lounge and private beach dining. Reserved exclusively for guests and their friends, the newly renovated open-air SandBar offers top-shelf cocktails and live music daily along with the Caribbean's first Healthy Hour. The resort is TAG Approved® as a LGBTQ-friendly hotel. Bucuti, a worldwide sustainable tourism leader, holds eco-certifications of LEED Gold, Green Globe Platinum, ISO 14001 and Travelife Gold and was named the World's Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort in 2016 by Green Globe.

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