



tourism ratios – 75 percent of them come from the U.S.; about 15 percent from Canada; and the rest from the rest of the world, primarily Europe. France tries to capture his share with a three-pronged approach: “First on the list is that we are a luxury property meaning that I would classify us as a four-star property out of five stars,” he states. “But we believe we always deliver five-star service. For instance, when people get to the area airport, we provide round-trip transportation for them. We greet them, not only at the airport, but, when they arrive, our staff is out there greeting them with a cool towel and a nice cool drink, and then we give them a private tour of the property. When they arrive in their villa, they have a fresh vase of flowers, a welcome card, chocolates from Belize, and those kinds of things. So, five-star service, is, and always will be, our target.”

“The other thing that we do to differentiate ourselves is that we’re the only resort in Placencia that offers a full-service resort operation, meaning we have a full-service kitchen, bar services, and concierge services right on the property that is reserved for the exclusive use of our guests,” France continues. “There is no other resort that provides those services exclusively to their guests. And even though we’re boutique - so that means that at most, we will have 50 people on the property at any one time - we don’t open our doors to the public for our services. That gives us the ability to enhance the services that we provide because we’re completely focused on the clients. Our staff is trained and expected to know when anybody arrives on the property, and everybody in the service area knows them by name before they even arrive. Everybody greets them by their name throughout their stay from the very first time they step foot on the property.



And that guest-service exclusivity is something that we market that completely distinguishes us from the other resorts.”

“Last but not least,” he concludes, “as in all real estate, location is extremely important. And we are the closest, full-service resort to the Village of Placencia, so people can walk there, down the beach. The other resorts that are in our category of quality and service are outside of the Village and further up the road, so their guests have to get some kind of transport. But within our property, people can just walk or take a bicycle or even a kayak down along the shoreline and go have lunch or breakfast. So, they have the ability to utilize all of the culture, the gift shops, the night life, and the restaurants that are available in the Village.”

France says that Chabil Mar books its guests direct-

ly, as well as through agents and wholesalers. It also works with one of the OTAs (Online Travel Agencies), Booking.com. “When I first wanted to make people aware of who we were, we utilized people like Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, and Jetsetter,” he says. “But I always hoped, someday, that I wouldn’t have to use them, except in unique situations. And the reason for that is because of the volume of commission that they charge – they were charging 25 percent, while a wholesaler would charge 20 percent and an agent would charge 10 or 15 percent. But maybe three years ago, we finally got to the point where we were getting so many bookings through direct, and through agents and wholesalers, that I discontinued the contract with Expedia, Orbitz, and Travelocity, because we wanted to focus our attention and what monies we had available in our budget for marketing towards the agents and wholesalers who gave us great value. They understand