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thecornerstone

Introduction

2016 has been a noteworthy year for RGM. We opened our new flagship building, Savannah East, designed to be the premier business office address in Trinidad and Tobago and the first-ever certified "green" building in the Caribbean.

The good news is that there is still some lease space at this elegant corporate address, so we'll fill you in on the areas that are still available for occupancy, both at Savannah East and at another of our properties.

One exciting – and useful – feature that we have introduced is the installation of traffic cameras at some of our buildings, because we're all looking for tools to help us avoid the traffic, especially at Christmas time!

While the season is always a time for giving, the country is in

the midst of a recession, so we've come up with smart, cost-efficient ways in which to give meaningful gifts – both corporate and personal – that don't break the bank.

If you're celebrating Christmas in Trinidad and Tobago, you'd better be familiar with the lingo; check out our Trini Christmas Glossary to make sure you've got everything straight!

Finally, 'tis the season to get inspired with a few heartwarming quotations that focus on the reason for the season. Here's to a 2017 that's merry and bright!

Gift-giving in a recession

CHRISTMAS HAS BECOME SO COMMERCIALISED THAT ITS FOCUS HAS SHIFTED -- FOR SOME, AT LEAST -- TO THE ACTUAL GIFTS RATHER THAN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING. THIS APPLIES JUST AS MUCH TO CORPORATE GIFT-GIVING AS IT DOES TO BUYING PRESENTS FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

It's a vicious cycle, really – even children sometimes expect Santa to outdo himself from year to year. In a contracting economy, however, and with pressing global questions about political stability in Europe, North America, and the Middle East, many people are cutting back in anticipation of downward markets. In belt-tightening times, how do you choose special gifts without breaking the bank? Here are a few cost-effective ideas...

1. Invest in experiences. Contrary to what advertising sells us, people generally don't need more things. In fact, they remember experiences and time spent with others much more than they would a trinket, branded item or bottle of alcohol, which are often popular corporate gifts. Instead, why not give business associates – or even loved ones – a couple of movie tickets? Or cover the entry fee at an outdoor activity like zip-lining? Gifts like these buy people – rather inexpensively – some much-needed down time over the holidays.

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2. Buy local. There are so many artisan markets around, offering a range of locally crafted items: food and drink; jewellery; fabrics; soaps; even toys! Not only do you have a wide range of gifts from which to choose, they are usually less expensive than imported items, you will be helping to stimulate the national economy, and you won't be subject to the 7% online shopping tax. Now that's a win/win situation!

3. Give gift vouchers. This may seem like an impersonal gift, but once you choose a store that speaks to the interests of your recipient, the upside is that you can dictate the dollar value of your gift.

4. Go homemade. We all love to feel special – and what's more thoughtful than a gift made with love? Bake a batch of Christmas cookies or delicious fudge. Make some sorrel or ponche de crème. Take whatever you do best, dress it up with a bit of Christmas sparkle, and bet your bottom dollar that your gift will be appreciated – and remembered.

5. Be financially focused. Which business – or individual, for that matter – couldn't do with improving their bottom line? You can offer clients a discount on the next product or service you provide to them, contribute to employees' retirement plans or give friends and relatives a monetary contribution towards any insurance or savings plans they may have in place. Kids can benefit too: why not consider opening an investment account for the children in your life?

6. Realise that health is wealth. So many people run themselves into the ground trying to earn a living that they forget to live well. For people on your list who want to make a lifestyle change, you can pay for a personal training session, an aerobics class or the first month's gym membership – and because Christmas is so close to Carnival, many fitness centres are currently offering great packages and discounts.

7. Spend time. Sometimes, a little time is what the folks on your gift list really need. Things are no substitute for one-on-one exchanges – so take a client out for coffee, meet a friend for a coconut water around the Savannah, spend some time playing with the kids instead of plopping them in front of a screen.

8. Give to the less fortunate. The fact that you're even reading this means that you have people on your list to buy for, and enough disposable income to do it with – but there are children whose only Christmas present may be the one you donate; families who may not have a Christmas lunch without the hampers you helped purchase. Do not let the season go by without doing something kind for a worthy organisation or even a stranger.

That's what Christmas is all about – not how much we can afford, but how much we can give of ourselves. Merry Christmas!

Eyes on the road

OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST YEAR, RGM HAS INSTALLED EIGHT TRAFFIC CAMERAS ATOP SOME OF ITS BUILDINGS IN PORT OF SPAIN AND ENVIRONS.

In the era of "Waze", the global positioning system (GPS)-based smartphone application that estimates travel times and suggests the best routes to take based on user input, traffic cams may seem redundant – but RGM realised that the cameras had the potential to provide a useful service for its buildings' tenants and visitors.

Each camera, from its unique position, provides a 24-hour view of traffic at key points in the capital city. You can click on the live video feed from the RGM website (www.rgm.co.tt).

Queens Park Plaza offers views of the south and southwest of the Queen's Park Savannah, while the cameras perched atop

Newtown Centre cover both the north and south ends of Maraval Road. Albion Court's camera is trained on the full length of Victoria Avenue, and Savannah East, which offers some of the most spectacular 360-degree views in the city, captures the goings-on from the western end of Lady Young Road all the way to the northeast and southeast ends of the Savannah.

The cameras also serve a useful purpose when it comes to monitoring the security of the areas surrounding RGM's properties, and should make all visitors to our buildings feel that much safer.



The Trinbagonian Christmas glossary

WE'VE HEARD IT SAID – AND SUNG – TIME AND AGAIN: “TRINI CHRISTMAS IS THE BEST!” WE MAY NOT HAVE SNOW AND MISTLETOE, BUT WE’VE GOT WONDERFUL, WARM WEATHER, A FESTIVE SPIRIT, AND A HEART-WARMING SENSE OF INCLUSIVENESS.

Everyone is welcome at a Trini Christmas table, so if you’re lucky enough to be celebrating Christmas in Trinidad and Tobago, here are a few terms you should know...

1. Black Cake: Often called a fruit cake, this is really more of a rum cake – the alcohol quotient is very high, and the cake therefore has a long shelf life. It is popular at Christmas, but also seems to be the cake of choice for weddings. It is made with all the usual baking ingredients, plus copious amounts of cherry brandy, rum and fruits like raisins, dates and orange rind.

2. Ginger Beer: A fermented ginger drink that rears its head around Christmas, you either love it or you hate it. The longer the ginger is allowed to ferment, the stronger and more tangy it is.

3. Old Year’s Night: This is how Trinbagonians refer to New Year’s Eve, and just as in most other countries, it involves great celebration. While some people may choose to go out to paid parties where food and drink are included, others have house parties and neighbourhood get-togethers, where everyone “brings what they’re drinking”, as well as a dish to share. The use of fireworks has also become more popular, but it is so indiscriminate – and often illegal – that some citizens are lobbying to have it banned.

4. Parang: A unique blend of folk music, sung in Spanish, that combines indigenous and Venezuelan influences with African rhythms, some parang hits have even intertwined soca (the soul of calypso) music into its beat, calling it “soca parang”.

It's impossible not to move your feet when parranderos (the singers and musicians who play parang) come calling.

5. Parang de House: Parang bands would traditionally move from house to house within a neighbourhood, serenading the residents in exchange for food and drink. Unfortunately, the custom is much less common now; parranderos tend to be paid for their appearances at Christmas gatherings.

6. Pastelles: A Spanish culinary legacy, pastelles are a must-have Christmas dish – meat (minced beef, chicken, pork, fish) or even peas (for the vegetarians), is seasoned with olives, capers and raisins in a cornmeal jacket and wrapped in banana leaves.

7. Ponche de crème: The local version of an eggnog, this is another Christmas staple in Trinidad and Tobago. It's unique thanks to its use of indigenous products like Angostura bitters and generous amounts of condensed milk, rum, lime and nutmeg, which add amazing flavour.

8. Sorrel: It just doesn't feel like Christmas until you've had your first glass of sorrel – a drink made by boiling the sepals of the sorrel plant and adding just the right mix of water, sugar, cloves and cinnamon.

Here's to a Trinbagonian Christmas!



Get inspired!

So this is Christmas...

“

Christmas is a tonic for our souls. It moves us to think of others rather than of ourselves. It directs our thoughts to giving.”

– B. C. Forbes

“

Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.”

– Winston Churchill

“

Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting. It is happiness because we see joy in people. It is forgetting self and finding time for others. It is discarding the meaningless and stressing the true values.”

– Thomas S. Monson

We've got space!

You know how they say you've got to make space for amazing things to come your way? Well, we've got beautifully inspirational and productive spaces for lease, in convenient and professionally managed locations.



SAVANNAH EAST

This modern, energy-efficient multi-storey, pegged to be the first LEED-certified, “green” building in the region, boasts lots of natural light, raised flooring for personalised data configurations, and top-notch support services – including meeting spaces, entertainment areas, fitness facilities, safety and security. Plus, you’ll fall in love with the views and it’s close to everywhere you need to be.

- **7 Floors – 77,901 square feet, able to be subdivided**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

ALBION PLAZA

This art deco building – the jewel of Victoria Avenue in Port of Spain – is always in high demand, thanks to its convenient location, top class facilities and of course, focus on security and HSSE. There is, however, available space on one level.

- **7th Floor – 3,392 square feet**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

All space for lease is rated as Class “A” office space, centrally located with underground parking. For further information, please contact:

- **Jean-Paul de Meillac at Terra Caribbean – 628.2391 or**
- **Bridget Jackson at Massy Realty – 628.0611**

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