

NEW GROWTH FOR FREEPORT

With visitor arrivals up by 8.4 per cent for the first six months of this year, Grand Bahama's hospitality industry is poised for new growth and several resorts are planning wide-ranging improvements and expansion.

Improved air access to Freeport, the Bahamas' second city now celebrating its 25th anniversary, includes American Airlines' five times a week service from New York, Air Florida's daily flights from Miami and Orlando and Twenty-One Tours twice-weekly charters out of New York which begin this fall. In addition, six cruiseships currently make 22 visits a month to Freeport.

Buoyant expectations for the coming winter season are reflected in the number of new investments in general product improvement and hotel renovation in Freeport.

Lucayan Bay Hotel has completed the redecoration and enlargement of its dining room — now called "The Edge of the Ledge" and raised to gourmet standards. A French-style cafe has been added to the reception area and the main bar has been refurbished and renamed the "Baha Bar". The hotel also features the only movie-bar on the island. For a two drink minimum patrons can watch current feature films nightly. Thirty guest rooms have also been redecorated.

The cost of these improvements is about \$250,000, with a matching sum earmarked for further room refurbishing and a new coffee shop. There are also plans to extend the shopping arcade beyond the present six shop.

The sports-oriented Arawak Hotel, originally a condominium complex, will soon complete its transformation into a conventional hotel. A spacious lobby and bar has been added, staff accommodations are being improved, and a small but elaborately-equipped disco has been completed.

The Arawak is building a jogging track to complement its already full sports programme, which revolves around 10 lighted tennis courts, the Grand Lucayan waterway literally at the back door, and the prestigious Shan-

non Golf Course. So far, \$1.5 million has been spent on improvements.

The Shalimar Hotel on Freeport's Mall now boasts a million dollar face-lift with a refurbished exterior, new landscaping, a redecorated lobby, a new boutique and fully-refurbished guest rooms and corridors.

The Bahamian-owned Castaways Hotel re-opened last December following a \$400,000 programme. A wholesale liquor store, boutique and newsstand have been added in the lobby. A Howard Johnson's restaurant has



FLOYD SWAIN, new general manager of the Shalimar Hotel in Freeport. The hotel has recently undergone a million dollar face-lift.

ECONOMY

replaced the old Driftwood Room and 'Lights' disco, currently leased from the hotel, will be replaced by a western disco, a la Travolta, by the end of the year.

The major hotel construction project in Grand Bahama is the renovation and new building taking place at the Lucayan Beach Hotel, which includes the new Monte Carlo casino. Completion is expected in mid-1981. The 260-room Lucayan Beach and its casino are expected to stimulate further hotel development in the Lucaya area.

The 500-room Freeport Holiday Inn, largest in the Lucaya area, has just completed one million dollars' worth of improvements and is poised to benefit from the opening of the Monte Carlo casino in Lucaya next year.

The main product improvement project on Grand Bahama for the coming year, outside of hotel construction, will be the expansion of Freeport's international airport, one of the largest privately owned airports in the world. This project will include enlargement of the terminal building and its facilities, such as ticket counters and arrival and departure lounges. A six-story control tower is to be added and a fully-equipped weather station will be built. These developments follow the extension of the runway 18 months ago to allow fully loaded transatlantic jets to land with ease.

The spectator-sport attraction of the ABC-TV Superstars programme taped here for some 3 years has been replaced by the New York Cosmos soccer team, which trains on Grand Bahama for several weeks a year, and the Michelob Light Grand Bahama 200 powerboat race launched in June of this year. Other sports developments include the addition of two squash courts at the Freeport Squash and Tennis Club and the reopening of the Seasurf Bowling Lanes in downtown Freeport.



THE HUGH SWIMMING pool of the Grand Bahama Hotel and Country Club in West-End is a favorite spot with guests of the resort. The 605-room hotel which is located just outside the quaint village of West End, is 25 miles away from the city of Freeport. (Bahamas News Bureau photo by Wendell Cleare)



JERRY JACOBY of Old Westbury, New York, guided his 37-foot cigarette, "Ajac Hawk", to victory in the First Annual Michelob-Light Grand Bahama 200 powerboat race. The 1978 offshore racing rookie-of-the-year averaged just over 66 mph for the 203-mile course which he covered in 2 hrs. 26 mins. The race was held here June 4 with 34 boats competing in both the open and production class. "Ajac Hawk" is pictured going through the Grand Lucayan Waterway, which was part of the course. (Bahamas News Bureau photo by Edward Ellis)