



Aruba Tourism
Authority

Aruba Product Update

June 2014

The Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) is the Destination Marketing Organization for Aruba.

Our Mission:
To be an innovative and effective DMO that positions the brand Aruba as a premier tourism destination, which meets interest of it's stakeholders.

Our vision:
For the ATA to be recognized as the leading and cutting edge Destination marketing Organization

Core Values:
Empowerment Productivity
& Ownership Professional
Respect Fun & Passion.

Below we offer a synthesis of some of the most prominent and important news during the month of June 2014

ATA News



ATA Business Sessions

On June 10, informative and interactive business sessions were held at the Renaissance Conference Center by the Aruba Tourism Authority with key stakeholder groups in the tourism sector – restaurants, transportation and activities.

Introduced by Ronella Tjin-Asjoe Croes, CEO of the Aruba Tourism Authority, the agenda covered key tourism performance indicators, ATA targets and key strategic priorities 2014 – 2017, enhancements and creation of experiences, current ATA initiatives

that stimulate on-island spending, and benchmarking of Aruba's competitiveness. Valuable breakout sessions followed during which each group identified challenges in their sector and brought forth creative solutions.

It was learned that the island continues to rank high in tourism satisfaction when compared to competing regional vacation destinations. Aruba's percentage growth in 2013 stay-over visitor arrivals (+8.3%) surpassed the percentage growth of the Caribbean and the world.





US market remains the primary source of visitors, followed by Venezuela, Canada, Holland, Brazil and Colombia. The strategy to grow the cruise ship market during low periods has yielded very positive results.

ATA's priorities are to grow average daily tourist spending, diversify markets, concentrate on airlift policy and strategy to ensure necessary capacity and available seats, attract the affluent traveler, and to transition to a Destination Marketing and Management Organization. Current initiatives to benefit tourism include the Aruba Certification Program, helping all those who interact with tourists to become knowledgeable and amicable ambassadors; the Aruba App providing visitors with destination offerings and information; VIP shopping Card Program for the group and incentive market; and island-wide One Happy Family Program and One Happy Honeymoon Program.

Awards

Aruba Convention Bureau

Platinum Partner and Pinnacle Awards

For the second consecutive year, Aruba Convention Bureau has won the Platinum Partner Award and the Pinnacle Award. The Pinnacle Awards celebrate hospitality excellence by identifying the convention and visitor bureaus, hotels, and conference centers that set the standard for others to follow. Winners will be announced in the August 2014 edition of Successful Meetings and Incentive Magazine. The Platinum Partner Award recognizes excellence in incentive travel.

Meeting planners and readers voted on domestic and international CVBs, Hotels/Resorts, and Conference Centers that have left a lasting impression on them. Aruba has long been recognized as a favorite international destination among meeting planners. The island has a reputation for its friendliness, safety, and beauty, with its beaches named among the top worldwide.



Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort

Zoover Award

Amsterdam Manor recently received their 2014 Zoover Award and the staff of the Amsterdam Manor Beach resort is very happy to announce that they have been chosen as the nr 1 Apartment hotel in Aruba!

MVC Eagle Beach has also been chosen as nr 3 of its category in Aruba. The team of MVC Eagle Beach is happy with this achievement and would like to invite everyone to experience the newly renovated charming hotel that offers an intimate environment to relax to the fullest while visiting Aruba.



Bugaloe Beach Bar

Trip Advisor Award

Bugaloe Beach Bar has been recognized as a top performing Beach Bar and awarded the TripAdvisor® Certificate of Excellence award. The accolade, which honors hospitality excellence, is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveller reviews on TripAdvisor.

Said Diederik Kemmerling, Marketing Manager at Bugaloe. "There is no greater seal of approval than being recognized by one's customers. With the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence based on customer reviews, the accolade is a remarkable vote of confidence to our business and our continued commitment to excellence."



Jolly Pirates

Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence

Jolly Pirates, well known for fun during sail and snorkel cruises, has been awarded TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence. Of the thousands of businesses listed on Trip Advisor, only 10 percent receive this prestigious honor. Captains Ronal, Julio and Edwin have delighted Jolly Pirates guests for more than ten years with their interactive hijinks. "We literally perform flips in providing our guests the most memorable Sail and Snorkel experience on the island," explains Fajardo.

Radisson®

Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa

Trip Advisor Award

The Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa is thrilled to receive a 2014 Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor, the prestigious award that recognizes businesses that consistently earn top ratings from TripAdvisor travelers. Businesses must maintain an overall TripAdvisor bubble rating of at least four out of five, along with recent and consistent positive reviews.



La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino

Platinum EarthCheck Certification

In attaining Platinum, La Cabana Beach Resort and Casino has been recognized for having consistently demonstrated commitment to the community and high standards of environmental care, over a period of ten years or more.

La Cabana's meaningful approach to sustainable tourism involved using EarthCheck science-based software and tools to measure the effectiveness of their environmental and CSR practices. Their staff has adhered to an internationally recognized standard of Best Practice.

Key indicators such as energy and water consumption, total waste production, and community commitment were measured and benchmarked against their peers.

Said EarthCheck CEO Stewart Moore of Platinum certified companies, "They're well ahead of most governments and industry players globally as a result of their efforts and serve as a leader in the field of sustainable practices. Their operations serve as an excellent example for how to gain buy-in from key stakeholders, achieve an excellent ROI, and increase asset effectiveness over time."



Resorts

Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino

Mobile Check-In and Check-Out

Marriott Rewards members can now check-in and checkout online at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino with Marriott's Mobile app. On May 6, the Marriott mobile check-in and checkout feature was launched internationally at the Marriott Resorts.

Marriott Rewards Members can check-in for their stay up to 24 hours in advance, select and update their anticipated arrival time, and receive automatic notifications when their room is ready. They can visit the Mobile Check-In desk upon arrival, pick-up their room key and checkout with this new app, skipping the front desk.

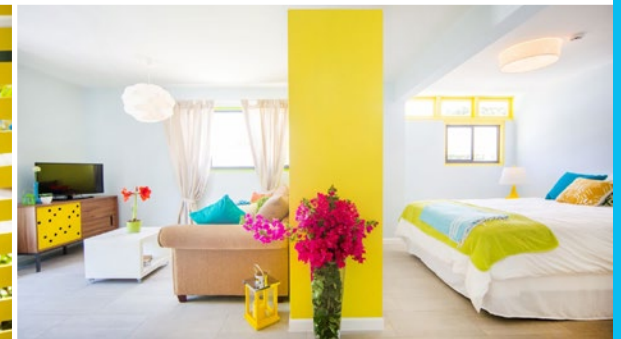


RIU

RIU Hotels & Resorts announced the incorporation of a second hotel in Aruba as of next winter. The Riu Palace Antillas will be located next to the Riu Palace Aruba, directly on Palm Beach, and will be exclusively for over 18s. The hotel will offer the acclaimed RIU All Inclusive 24-hour program, complemented by the luxury services available at the Riu Palace Adults Only hotels. These include a welcome glass of cava, concierge, 24-hour room service and free Wi-Fi Internet service throughout the hotel.

The new RIU hotel, which has 482 rooms, will offer a buffet restaurant with international cuisine, culinary stations with dishes prepared on the spot, and three speciality restaurants. Customers will also be able to enjoy soft drinks and cocktails at any of its three bars, including one by the poolside. There is also an elegant patisserie-cafe open 24 hours a day. As the two hotels are neighbors, guests of the Riu Palace Antillas will also be able to enjoy the Riu Palace Aruba's facilities.

The entertainment program will offer sporting and leisure activities during the day, and live music and shows at night. In addition, the Riu Palace Antillas will have a nightclub and a full casino.



Bubali Bliss Studios

The new, 10-unit Bubali Bliss Studios is the latest addition to small accommodation options in Aruba, open since May 2014. Consisting of 10 trendy apartments and studios in a retro-Caribbean style, Bubali Bliss offers all comforts for the modern traveler. It is ideally located within walking distance of Eagle Beach and right across from Superfood supermarket.

Bubali Bliss offers a choice of regular studios, spacious deluxe studios and apartments with a separate, locked-off bedroom. All units are air-conditioned and feature a living and dining area, full kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and a private, furnished patio. Free WIFI is available throughout the property. Once a prestigious Aruban villa, the property boasts a spacious swimming pool, sundeck and shaded lounge area, amidst an intimate garden.



Boardwalk Small Hotel

Special press visit

On May 19, a VIP Champagne Breakfast took place in honor of a USA-based press group brought to Aruba by the Zimmerman PR Agency. The OneHappySummer Press Group enjoyed a short tour of the property housed on a former coconut plantation. Popular Aruban band Datapanik provided the music for their new hotel video. Michael Lampe, frontman of Datapanik, was on hand with complimentary Fuente CDs. Hotel Manager Kimberly Rooijackers explained the 'act like a local' concept and Boardwalk's recently launched 'Treasure Box' providing the local scoop about island hot spots and hidden gems.



Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort

Innovative new look

New brightly colored pool chairs serve as the perfect complement to the modern and trendy look of the Horizons Bar overlooking the pool deck. Washed in vivid hues of green and blue, the color palette captures the shades of the Caribbean Sea just steps away.

Every Thursday, guests can mingle with the managers of different resort departments at the weekly Manager's Cocktail Party from 5 to 6 pm. Two-for-one drinks, free snacks, live music and fun conversations with fellow visitors and employees makes this cocktail party a popular one. The Horizons Bar is open daily from 4:00 pm to 11:00 pm.





Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa

Ready For Our Close-up

The Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa was pleased to host the crew and models from PWDR ROOM, a surf and snowboard apparel and gear company for women, available at a wide selection of retailers in the US, Canada and Europe. The team shot the models in various locations throughout the resort and Aruba for the upcoming Spring 2015 catalog.

FAMS

From May 15-20, the resort played host to two separate FAM trips, one for media and one for meeting planners. Both groups enjoyed exclusive workouts with hotel General Manager Mark Lyttleton-Frances, relaxing massages at the Larimar Spa, stand up paddleboard lessons, sunset cocktail receptions on the beach, a VIP reception on the penthouse deck, and plenty of daily excursions.

Larimar Spa Welcomes ESPA

The resort's Larimar Spa team has undergone extensive training to become ESPA-certified. ESPA products are developed to ensure skin looks its best at every stage of life. Body treatments are nourishing and detoxifying and ultimately relaxing. The new menu incorporating the natural skin care products officially launched in June.



Holiday Inn Aruba Resort

The Holiday Inn Aruba Resort completed a \$20 million renovation project. The nearly 600-room InterContinental Hotels Group property underwent changes that included upgrades to its guest rooms, lobby and landscaping, along with a new Palm Bar and other changes. The property's guest rooms now have 37-inch flat-screen LED TVs, new carpeting and bedding.

Said Alvaro Diago, COO for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Through IHG's significant renovation coupled with the oceanfront location and resort-style amenities, we have further positioned this resort to provide our guests with a memorable vacation experience as one of the best resorts on the island."

"With the latest enhancements to the property, we look forward to showcasing all of the new upgrades that the hotel has to offer guests and allowing them to continue to have a unique resort experience," said Heather Baisley, senior vice president for Americas at Holiday Inn Brand Family.



Restaurants

Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa

Ike's Bistro

To mark the completion of Ike's Bistro's US\$350,000 re-do and the inauguration of its brand new bar and lounge area, Chef Ever De Pena came up with the idea to fly in celebrity chef Yoji Tokuyoshi and create a festive, culinary event on June 7 & June 8 featuring a five-course tasting menu with wine pairing.

Venezuela-born De Pena grew up in Aruba, studied at EPI and finalized his AI-program in 2010. A chef at Manchebo since 2011, he was responsible for the transformation of former Italian restaurant Giorgio's into Ike's Bistro.

Chef Tokuyoshi briefly worked at the world's most famous restaurant, El Bulli, and holds eight years at Michelin Star Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, rated # 3 on The World's 50 Best Restaurants. Tokuyoshi practices the Contemporary Cuisine, adding techniques and cultural influences of his own Japanese background to each meal. De Pena's style is based on fusion cooking, blending a variety of (international) flavors and tastes.

Manchebo's 3-year, US\$ 3 million renovation project was recently completed with the all-new Ike's Bistro. "Our vision for Ike's Bistro is to make this restaurant a culinary hotspot in the Caribbean," said Edgar Roelofs, the Resort's general manager.

According to US-based interior designer Rachel Bowden of DesignYogi. "Our goal was to create a timeless, elegant, yet completely casual environment that would showcase the natural beauty of Aruba... We relied on nature for our earth-toned color palette, and used sustainably grown and harvested materials wherever possible." There are reclaimed wood, sea grass, rattan and bent bamboo furnishings in mellow browns, tans and ivory. Thick hand woven sisal rugs complement each sitting area. The center bar area features 3 custom hanging local driftwood light fixtures.

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The Hollywood Smokehouse

The Hollywood Smokehouse

The island's original smokehouse now has a fulltime location within the Alhambra Casino & Shops complex just off of Eagle Beach. Originally located in a historic building in San Nicolas owned and operated by the Bislick family since 1941, the closing of the refinery left owners Michael and Tina Bislick opting to keep their in-demand southern cuisine available to their loyal followers on the weekends under a tent in various spots of the island. The 5-star Trip Advisor restaurant went on to win the most recent Battle of the Food Trucks, prompting the couple to open a full-fledge restaurant again.

The Hollywood Smokehouse opened full time on Wednesday, June 18th, 2014. The menu includes hickory and apple wood smoked pulled pork, beef brisket, grouper, and burgers, as well as their award winning tacos, which can be washed down with unique, exciting hand-crafted cocktails—many made with freshly juiced fruits and moonshine from the bar menu!

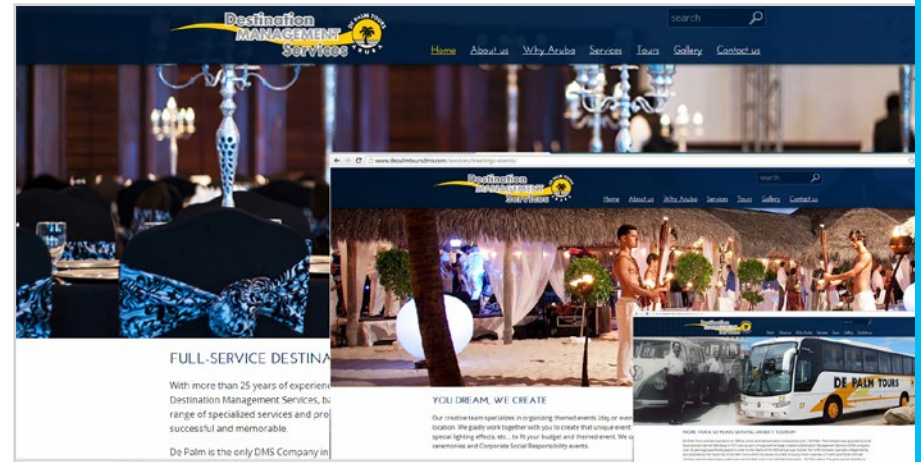


Activities

De Palm Tours

Launch of new website

The new website (www.depalmtoursdms.com) for De Palm's Destination Management Services (DMS) is targeted to the MICE market. The goal is to provide the products and services that event and meeting planners seek in order to run successful programs in Aruba. The content and layout is B2B focused and presented in a very simple, easy to navigate format. The website is also rich in video and photo content to give the planner a good idea of what De Palm DMS has to offer. The website was designed by CaribMedia and the video footage done by ArubaWorks Film & Music NV.



Environment

AHATA Recycled Art Competition-Exposition

The annual Recycled Art Competition-Exposition held by the Environmental Committee of the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association (AHATA) focused on the endless possibilities of recycling and re-purposing objects for aesthetic as well as practical use. At the 13th edition held in April 2014, there were 43 participants exhibiting 266 recycled art pieces, representing 19 schools, 11 hotels/groups, and 14 amateur and professional individuals. A host of prizes were offered by hotels, activities, and local businesses.

Among the winners, Kukwisa Kleuterschool (pre-school) took first prize in its category for its feathered and bejewelled carnival headpiece created from discarded Coca Cola cans. Sint Anna School's (elementary school) colorful jewelry was fashioned from discarded magazine paper. Juliana School (secondary school) came in first in its category for decorative food created from all kinds of material including foam, cardboard, paper and plastic. In the category of Hotel/Business/Groups, Maroeschka Cornelie's art named "This is It!" was a multi-media collage of debris such as broken cell phones, glass shards and metal scraps depicting the life of Michael Jackson, including the iconic white glove.





Jolly Pirates

Protect the Reefs bracelet program

In cooperation with Aruba's Marine Park Foundation, Jolly Pirates has implemented an especially worthy "Protect the Reefs bracelet" program. The simple concept of a set of three awareness bracelets has been initiated to develop more reef care awareness and educational programs on the island. A donation of \$15.00 towards the attractive bracelet trios will show your support for the Marine Park Foundation. 100% of the donation will be given to the Marine Park Foundation for the Save the Reefs Programs and the bracelets can be used as a special gift or as an Aruba souvenir. Bracelets also make great souvenir gifts and can be purchased at the Jolly Pirates Souvenir shop located at MooMba Beach.



Air Travel

Insel Air

From its homebase in Curacao, Insel Air connects the Caribbean region by offering reliable and affordable airline service. InselAir will start operating weekly flights from Curacao to La Romana (Punta Cana) as of July 7, 2014. Tickets to this new destination can be purchased at any InselAir ticket office, at Cpost in Punda and Otrabanda (Curacao), at local travel agents and online via fly-inselair.com. Passengers from other destinations, such as Aruba and Bonaire, can conveniently travel via Curacao to La Romana with a minimum transfer time.

Until September 30, 2014, InselAir offers introductory fares to its newest destination; from Curacao, ANG 417 (round trip, excl. Curacao airport tax), from Bonaire, USD 268 (incl. taxes) and from Aruba AWG 529 (incl. taxes). Travel period is from July 7 to September 30, 2014.



Arke Fly

With the introduction of the Dreamcatcher, Boeing 767, the largest of three new planes of the Dreamliner fleet of Arke Fly, Aruba will realize a 10% increase in visitors from Europe. This important addition will raise the quality of tourists from Europe, one of the goals of the Aruba Tourism Authority aimed at growing an elite market. The Boeing planes fly to Aruba from Europe four times a week.

On the auspicious occasion of the inaugural flight, Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croees, ATA CEO, stated, "This additional airlift reflects the continuation of a growing partnership between TUI and Aruba. This year, ATA and TUI are co-executing a marketing plan that will bring a growth in tourism from Holland and more business out of Europe. Our key partner remains Holland since many flights originate from there." ATA explained that it is also their intention to attract charters from England, Italy and Scandinavia. Europe currently represents 7.6% of Aruba's tourism business.



Incentive Travel

Workshops by SITE/ Florida & Caribbean

Workshops by SITE/ Florida & Caribbean (Society of Incentive Travel Executives) took place for the first time in Aruba, at the Marriott Resort & Casino, organized together with Aruba Tourism Authority, Eco Destination Management Services and Red Sail Sports.

Advancing excellence in the incentive travel marketplace, the goal of these workshops is to give participants the opportunity to network and learn about the MICE industry (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions). This event was especially aimed at those in Aruba who do not have the opportunity to attend conferences abroad, from hotel, DMC, watersports and restaurant staff to tourism organizations, hospitality students, and event organizers. The program featured speakers covering sustainable practices, incentive trips, green meetings, and the latest trends in the incentive market.



Retail

MasterCard announces the return of Priceless Aruba

Last year, Aruba was the fifth country in the Caribbean to join MasterCard's Priceless Cities program. According to Lorena Holguin, Marketing Vice President for MasterCard in the Caribbean, "Priceless Aruba aims to provide cardholders with unique offers and benefits that make every moment in Aruba a Priceless experience."

At a May event at Windows on Aruba at the Divi Golf Resort, MasterCard shared the results of their 2013 Priceless Aruba program and also announced the launching of an educational program especially for the hospitality industry.

During 2014, visitors used their card at more than 74 businesses including restaurants, stores, hotels, tours and entertainment companies. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO of Aruba Tourism Authority, emphasized how the Priceless Aruba promotion is of great value to members of MasterCard and to participating businesses and how the rapid growth of this program has enriched the vacation experience of visitors.





Diamonds International

The largest jewelry retailer in the Caribbean, Diamonds International has been part of Aruba for over 16 years. Their Lend-A-Hand Projects reflect their strong sense of corporate responsibility and are aimed at the community and the environment. DI offers their valued workforce to worthy projects that need a few extra hands to get a job done.

Recently, DI employees were proud participants in the second Lend-A-Hand Project in Aruba. They helped renovate, organize, clean, paint and beautify the library of the Maria Regina Basisschool in San Nicolas, building new tables and bookshelves.

“Our company feels very strongly about embracing our local communities. The true heroes of these projects are our employees who show a beautiful team spirit. We look forward to making an ongoing difference here in Aruba,” says Keisha Williams, General Manager.

Other DI Lend-A-Hand Projects in the Caribbean have included Belize – Queen Street Baptist Primary School classroom facelifts; Grand Cayman – collaboration with the Red Cross on damaged hurricane supplies; Jamaica – Falmouth Public General Hospital cleanup; and Honduras – Pirates Bay environmental cleanup.

Culture

Dera Gai

A much-loved Aruban tradition, Dera Gai celebrated the Feast of Saint John to visitors staying at Caribbean Palm Village Resort.

Every year on June 24, the nativity day of St. John the Baptist, bonfires are lit all across the island to herald the arrival of Dera Gai, a unique folkloric festival. Dera Gai is filled with both pagan and Catholic symbolism, reflecting the influences of the island’s indigenous Arawak natives and the Spanish missionaries, two cultures blending and fusing into a cultural heritage.

Blindfolded revelers are given three tries, using a long pole, to decapitate a rooster buried up to its neck in the ground. At community centers today, a more humane approach to the ritual is taken in the form of a game wherein blindfolded players try to locate a flag staked into the ground while shimmying to music. Decked out in traditional yellow-and-red costumes, folk groups also perform several harvest dances, including the intricate ribbon dance, and guests at Caribbean Palm Village Resort were privileged to see the charming cultural tradition in action. The resort often includes folkloric and cultural shows in its weekly Manager’s Cocktail Party allowing guests insight into island life, song and dance.



Events

Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival

The first confirmed acts include popular Latin singer Prince Royce, top-saxophonist Candy Dulfer & Band, LiV Warfield & The New Power Generation, African jazz sensation Richard Bona, Colombian band Gualao and local bands Tsunami and N'Fuzion.

The 8th Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival will take place at the Renaissance Festival Plaza on Friday, October 3, and Saturday, October 4, 2014. The festival can host up to 6,000 visitors per day. General admission is \$55 per night, per person. Standing VIP tickets are \$100 each (Prince Royce only). Upper Deck VIP tickets are available online in pre-sale at \$175 each. VIP Tables in this section are \$2000 per table, seating 10 guests.

Performances take place at three different stages, two outdoors and one indoor. On 'Latin Night', October 3, the most popular Bachata singer Prince Royce will perform, as well as the 13-man band Gualao from Colombia and the Caribbean jazz band Eric Calmes & Friends from Curaçao. October 4, 'Jazz Night', includes top-performances by internationally renowned Candy Dulfer & Band, and LiV Warfield & New Power Generation Horns, along with superstar Prince. The Richard Bona Quintet will also take the stage.

The Festival Plaza offers a food court, refreshments at various bars, and a local art exhibition at the festival's indoor art gallery. For online tickets and more info visit www.caribbeanseajazz.com or facebook.com/caribbeanseajazzfestival.

To our tourism partners:
Thank you for providing us
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by the 25th of each month.

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their contributions.



National Polesitting Championships

Cees Verwater has won the 2014 National Polesitting Championships, which were held at Café the Plaza in the Renaissance Marketplace. The ex-marine proved that he was the strongest, not only physically, but also mentally, breaking the record of 79.45 hours.

The polesitters received great support from the VIP-sitters, among them Minister Michelle Hooijboer and Youth Carnival Queen Dana Arends. The good cause of the 2014 polesitting event was Bon Nochi, Drumi Dushi, a foundation that promotes reading to and by young children.