

Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel: A Catalyst for Development in Grand Riviere

"Mt. Plaisir is small and unobtrusive but has become an important engine for sustainable economic growth and natural resource conservation"
- *Tending Animals in the Global Village (A Guide to International Veterinary Medicine)*



Piero Guerrini - Proprietor Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel



Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

Summary

Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel (Mt. Plaisir) is an idyllic retreat for the eco-tourist¹ and the first of its kind in Grand Riviere on the North Coast of Trinidad. In its 14 years of existence, the hotel has played a major role in transforming this poor rural village into a vibrant self sustaining community. Since its establishment in the mid 1990's, Mt. Plaisir has seen visitors from all over the world and all walks of life, each coming to experience nature and feel the warmth of a community. This case examines the background of the organization and looks at the challenges and opportunities encountered in seeking to establish a viable business while at the same time developing, empowering and training a community to become self sufficient and sustainable.

Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago

¹ "Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations" (Ceballos-Lascurain, Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas, Union for the Conservation of Nature(IUCN) (IUCN), 1996)

Trinidad and Tobago, the most southerly of the Caribbean island chain, has a vibrant energy sector, and is the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas to the United States. Trinidad, the larger of the two islands provides the base for tourism; however Tobago is driven primarily on this sector.

The World Trade Tourism Council estimates for 2005 indicated that Travel & Tourism in Tobago was expected to account for 46 per cent of the island's GDP and 57 per cent of total employment. Furthermore, Travel & Tourism Visitor Exports were projected to account for nearly 96 per cent of Tobago's total exports².

Travel & tourism in Trinidad is primarily business tourism³, but Trinidad would like to increase tourism activity overall, and there are a few still undisturbed natural areas throughout the island that are ideal for eco-tourism activities. Italian expatriate and founder of Mt Plaisir Hotel, Piero Guerrini, discovered one of these areas and transformed not only an estate house but also a community into the "bright village" of the North Coast of Trinidad.

Background

Piero Guerrini first came to Trinidad in 1993 on a photo journalism assignment to create a photo essay on the home of Derek Walcott, Nobel Prize winner in literature in 1992. On this trip Piero visited several Caribbean islands; however, he fell in love with Trinidad.

"When I came to Trinidad I felt something different, something not felt in the other islands"

Piero Guerrini - Proprietor Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

During this visit Derek Walcott told Piero about the village of Grande Riviere, "one of the few places where the untouched Caribbean of his youth still existed"⁴. When Piero visited this remote village it marked the end of his journalistic career; he completed his assignment and returned to Grand Riviere to open the Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel (Mt. Plasir). Five years later (in 1998), the hotel was awarded the prestigious Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in the Tourism and Hospitality Category.

² Trinidad and Tobago: the impact of travel and tourism on jobs and the economy – World Travel and Tourism Council, 2005

³ A business tourist is a traveler whose main purpose for traveling is to attend an activity or event associated with his/her business or interests

⁴ Fran Severn. 1998. Getaways: where you can pitch a tent. <http://www.outside.away.com/outside/magazine>

Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

Mt. Plaisir sits quietly behind the Northern Range of Trinidad, in Grande Riviere, which was, a sleepy village with unrealized potential in 1993. The property was an old boarding house and cocoa estate, and it took loving co-operation from his friends and members from the community to slowly transform the old cocoa estate into an eco-resort one room at a time.

Piero was unable to obtain a loan from any financing or government agency. No one was willing to lend an inexperienced entrepreneur the money to create an eco-resort (a new concept at the time). So with his initial personal investment of US\$30,000 he purchased the property in partnership with Cyril James (who eventually left the partnership to establish his own hotel in Grand Riviere). Together they renovated each room, one at a time and the revenue from completed rooms was reinvested into further renovations. The hotel opened to the public in 1994, and was a success from the start. Within three years Piero broke even on the initial investment. Most of the help to renovate Mt. Plaisir came in the form of labour provided by village members thanks to the relationships he developed. Even though on a tight budget, Piero managed to pay each worker a daily rate for the services provided.

Mt. Plaisir now includes thirteen rooms with a view of the Caribbean Sea. These rooms can accommodate four to six persons and are available throughout the year, with peak season running from December to August. Rates to December 2007:

Accommodation only (per room, per night)

- Room - double occupancy – USD\$90
- Suite – maximum four persons – USD\$100
- Beach Loft – maximum six persons – USD\$125
- Additional person – USD\$20

The accommodation rates charged at Mt. Plaisir are comparable with other similar type hotels in Grande Riviere. However being the largest hotel in the area, Mt. Plaisir's revenue earning potential is higher. Piero also notes that he is not concerned with profit but rather with efficiency levels at which the hotel operates. He achieves this by ensuring that resources are not wasted.

The hotel also has a restaurant that offers primarily local cuisine using local, organic ingredients grown on the Mt Plaisir Estate lands. Homemade pizza is served on Sundays, baked in a Neapolitan oven built by Piero's father.

Piero describes the hotel as a "showpiece for work produced in the Grande Riviere community", he sees it as a tool to develop and stimulate entrepreneurship within the rural village. Visitors to the hotel who are interested in the anything from the art on the walls to the placemats on the breakfast table are easily directed to the person in the village who produced the piece. More often than not, it results in an order. The lobby of the hotel also displays craft-carvings, statues, jewelry and paintings from local artists.

Piero has developed a viable model for sustainable tourism⁵ through his interaction with the local community. From the construction phase more than a decade ago, to the day-to-day operations of the estate, the village has provided the resource base for raw materials, labor and innovation. Most of the materials used for construction came from the village, using traditional methods. For example all the wood was supplied from the nearby forest and “cut in the new moon”, because the villagers believe this is the best time to remove the trees from the forest.

When Mt. Plaisir was first established an English aristocrat approached Piero to use the model in some small English villages that needed to be “saved”. Even though the Englishman did not follow through with his initial idea Piero was very optimistic that the model would have worked. He suggests that his model can also work in many rural villages all around Trinidad and Tobago like Blanchisseuse, Las Cuevas, Morouga, or any village with a “strong community spirit”. To date no one has taken the initiative to adopt the model in any of these communities.

Piero sees his function as not simply to provide employment but also to empower people to move away from the “*dependency syndrome*”⁶ that often plagues rural communities. He encourages employees to develop their skills and become entrepreneurs under his guidance and training. The potential of this model is evident in Piero’s former business partner, Cyril James, who now owns and operates a similar type of lodging establishment just opposite to Mt. Plaisir Hotel.

On receiving the Entrepreneur of the Year award in 1998, Piero commented “it is possible to build a thriving enterprise while benefiting the employees and the community”. Ask anyone in the village about Piero Guerrini and you can feel the love and respect they show for this man.

Mt. Plaisir also places heavy focus on environmental conservation and wildlife preservation. The beach front on which the property sits is a major nesting site for the leatherback turtle. Mt. Plaisir gained global recognition in 1999 when it was invited to join Green Globe 21⁷. Green Globe recognizes and promotes companies that have achieved substantial savings through waste minimization and conservation of fresh water. Mt. Plaisir spent two years listed as an “affiliated hotel” with Green Globe 21, however a formal assessment and evaluation of the property was never done and to date Mt. Plaisir is no longer on that list. In December 2006, Piero hired a consultant to perform an audit of the parameters stipulated by Green Globe to complete the membership process.

⁵ Sustainable tourism: an industry which attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems. It is responsible tourism which is both ecologically and culturally sensitive. – The Global Development Research Development <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/eco-tour.html>

⁶ The “*dependency syndrome*” is an attitude and belief that a group can not solve its own problems without outside help. It is a weakness that is made worse by charity.

⁷ Green Globe is the worldwide benchmarking and certification program of the travel and tourism industry.

Drivers for establishment

"If things are done right, profit will follow"

Piero Guerrini - Proprietor Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

Piero does not describe himself as a businessman and he makes it clear that he is not driven by profit but believes that through the development of his staff and the community, profit will undoubtedly follow. He is mostly interested in social and environmental return. Together with feeling that "something different" in Grand Riviere, Piero also saw an opportunity for an interaction with the community that could be mutually beneficial.

Creating Employment

The employment potential was one of the major drivers for the establishment of Mt. Plaisir. Piero saw the opportunity to provide meaningful employment to a community which was traditionally agricultural based, but suffering from a significant decline in the industry.

In the early 1970s more than one third of the villagers were agriculturalists. Cocoa continued to be a major source of income even though the estate (Mt. Plaisir), the only cocoa estate in the community, provided direct employment for less than a dozen men. In the late 1970's when cocoa prices fell many villagers were left unemployed and people began leave the village. Alternative sources of income for the villagers came from hunting wild meat and the occasional turtle. Some villagers also worked as casual or permanent labourers on the government's road programme.

In 2006, the hotel employed twenty (20) people from the village on a fulltime basis (seventeen (17) females and three (3) males). The females generally worked in the areas of house cleaning and food and beverage while the males tend to be involved in areas such as maintenance and landscaping. In a community of approximately three hundred and seventy five (375) people this accounts for more than 5% of the population. Mt. Plaisir was the first hotel set up in the area and since its establishment three other hotels and several guest houses have opened. In addition, other spin-off employment opportunities have been created, including tour guiding and beach patrolling as well as the provision of fresh produce for the restaurants. As a result, the tourism industry employs approximately 160 people from Grande Riviere, or more than 40% of the population. The opportunities created because of tourism has also encouraged people from neighboring villages come to Grande Riviere in search of employment.

Training Workers

Piero prides himself on his employee training. In an article in Macco magazine Piero describes Mt. Plaisir as the "Free University of Grande Riviere". Since there are no schools nearby for villagers to gain formal education on guest relations, the hotel provides hands on learning for staff. Piero himself offers training and although he was never professionally trained in guest relations, his interactions

with the guests reflect his values and sense of caring to ensure that they are well taken care of. Staff also benefit from government facilitated training programs through organizations like the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC). The driver for Piero is the opportunity to empower employees to develop long term careers, resulting in a sense of independence, achievement and accomplishment.

Creating Entrepreneurs

One of Piero's goals is to develop the community to become self sustaining⁸ and embedded in the Mt. Plaisir's business model is an aspect of enhancing and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit. Apart from the members of the community that he employs directly, he uses the hotel as a "market" for local craftsmen and artisans to display their work which is on show for thousands of guests each year. Piero recognized the villagers' artisan talent, and everything "Grande Riviere" can be seen at the hotel where visitors can purchase directly from the hotel (artwork, crafts, batiks etc) or they can be connected to the producer to place an order. Piero estimates that ten thousand dollars (USD\$10,000) worth of art and craft is sold through his hotel every year. He takes a small commission (10%) of this for the use of his lobby as a selling point for their art. All the decorations and artwork at Mt Plaisir hotel were made by and purchased from the artists in Grande Riviere.

Caring for the environment

The motivation for Mt. Plaisir was also driven by a keen interest in protecting the natural environment. Integral to the Grand Riviere environment is the endangered Leatherback turtle.

The hotel sits adjacent to the Grande Riviere beach which together with Matelot, (another rural community on the North Coast) provides one of the largest nesting sites for Atlantic leatherbacks in the world. Piero's avid involvement in the protection of this endangered species is of mutual benefit since leatherback turtles are one of the main attractions to Grande Riviere and more than 6000 people purchased permits to see the turtles during their nesting season in 2005. From March to August the hotel burns no bright lights in the nighttime, since it would disturb the turtles when they beach for nesting. Table 1 shows the number of permits granted to allow visitors to see the nesting of the leatherback turtles in Grande Riviere.

⁸ Self-sustaining – the ability to sustain oneself or itself independently

Table 1: Total Number of Permits Issued in Grande Riviere

Year	Total
2000	2506
2001	3824
2002	3334
2003	3207
2004	3710
2005	6,507
2006	9,400

Source: Grand Riviere Tour Guide Association

Protecting the Grande Riviere Brand

Piero respects the Mt. Plaisir environment and community that led him to his new life as an hotelier. Grande Riviere has a strong community spirit, together with a beautiful pristine environment. However mass tourism, particularly in a sensitive area like Grand Riviere, can lead to degradation of both the environment and the community. Piero is mindful of this. He believes “smaller is better” and tries to balance development of the area with maintaining the harmony of the society and the environment.

Piero has been very careful to ensure that his hotel operations are environmentally friendly and adopts practices such as collecting biodegradable kitchen waste for composting. This compost is then used on the Mt. Plaisir farm which grows much of the fruits, vegetables and livestock for the hotel.

From a societal perspective Grande Riviere is a very small village that is strong and firm in their beliefs. Piero recalls an old saying “it takes a village to raise a child” and confirms that the village of Grand Riviere will not allow tourism to corrupt their way of life or change their values. He related the story of a young local girl who offered “sexual favours” to tourists for a fee. She was eventually forced to leave Grand Riviere since the community would not accept that type of activity which tarnished their reputation.

Overcoming the Challenges Facing Mt. Plaisir

“The whole effort was a success because of a lot of luck and a lot of hard work for the customer”

Piero Guerrini – Proprietor Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

Mt. Plaisir’s success was not easily achieved. When Piero decided to establish the hotel, some people - specifically potential financiers and a few villagers - thought that he would fail miserably. However, with the support of his friends,

family and the majority of the community he was able to turn an abandoned estate into a very profitable business. During the start-up and throughout its operations, Mt. Plaisir had many challenges to overcome.

Financial

Obtaining financing was the first and perhaps largest obstacle that Piero had to overcome in his venture to establish Mt. Plaisir. All the traditional business financiers such as banks and other lending institutions turned him down outright. At the time Piero was freelance photo journalist with no prior experience working in the hospitality industry. The only collateral that Piero had to offer was a love and a passion for Grande Riviere and a desire to develop and empower this rural community. He admits that a lot of his success was due to "luck". He managed to raise the money for the estate from his friends and family with most of the financing coming from his own pocket.

Establishing business operations in a foreign land

Even after obtaining adequate funds for the start up of Mt. Plaisir, Piero knew little about the details of establishing a business in Trinidad and Tobago. Being a foreigner and having visited only once before, Piero sought the support of a Grande Riviere local, Cyril James, who had all of the necessary contacts. Piero subsequently invited James to join the business as a partner and Mt. Plaisir opened to the public in 1994.

Earning Trust

Another challenge for Piero, especially as a foreigner in a small rural community, was earning and building the trust of a village that was traditionally very cautious towards outsiders. When Piero came to the village in the early 1990's to start up his establishment, the village was very suspicious of his intentions and very skeptical of him. He earned and built trust through providing a number of services to the villagers; Piero had the only car in the village and would often use it to take people to the doctor when medical emergencies arose. He also became an informal lending agency which built mutual trust, with borrowers always paying back everything that was loaned. Slowly in the eyes of the villagers, Piero became someone they could rely on and they embraced and supported his efforts in their community.

Lack of Qualified Employees

At the time of Mt. Plaisir's establishment, skilled workers were not readily available in the village; however, since the desire to develop the people of the community was one of the Piero's motivations, he played a leading role in training his workers to improve their skills and develop their competence. With no formal hospitality training himself, Piero's guidance to his employees was always focused on doing whatever was required to enhance the guests' experience through the services offered at the hotel.

Formal training is also provided to the employees. At the beginning of every season (mid December) Piero invites international chefs to visit his kitchen to train

the Mt. Plaisir chefs and cooks. The hotel chefs are trained to be consistent, so that every time a meal is prepared, it is prepared to the same standard. The consistency of the meals is very satisfactory to Piero, and his guests often comment that the quality rivals that of international restaurants.

Piero says many villagers who begin working for him believe that they will fail. To combat this paradigm he constantly challenges the employees so that they see that they can achieve the tasks assigned. Thus the workers build confidence and independence through empowerment, and slowly their attitudes begin to change. Piero notices that as the employee builds self esteem, it reflected in new tasks that the employee is willing to take on.

Piero sees learning is always continuous at Mt. Plaisir and he intends to further train his staff. One area that he wants to develop is that of Food and Kitchen Management, specifically reducing the levels of waste. Due to the distance of the hotel to markets and groceries it is very important to ensure that food is not wasted and this is one area that Piero sees for improvement. Guest Relations is another area that Piero would like to be upgraded. He makes it clear that his staff performs satisfactorily; however, there is always room for improvement.

As a result of this training and empowerment Piero has developed a loyal staff and achieves a low employee turnover. He also offers his staff wages that are comparable with some of the larger hotels on the island (e.g. Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre) which are higher than those generally offered in Grande Riviere.

Distance from Capital City

Mt. Plaisir is almost a two hour drive from Piarco, the only international airport on the island. In the early years of the hotel's establishment, Piero had concerns as to whether International visitors would be willing to make this long journey after arriving on the island. These fears were soon allayed when arrivals to the village and the hotel started increasing rapidly. The Grande Riviere Tourism Development Organization⁹ (GRTDO) estimates that in 2006 some eighteen thousand (18,000) tourists visited the area, with fourteen thousand being non-nationals.

Distance proved to be a challenge in terms of logistics for the purchase of supplies and materials, both in the building, and day to day operations of the hotel. However this obstacle led to increased innovation in the use of locally available resources. Piero encourages his employees to be as self sufficient as possible and to find creative ways to use locally grown or produced inputs in all operations. For example fabric from replaced curtains is recycled into table cloths, pillow cases or other linen.

⁹ Grande Riviere Tourism Development Organization: Established in 2000, to plan and coordinate Tourism Activities in the village of Grande Riviere.

Most materials used for the building of Mt. Plaisir came directly from the village, including lumber which in most cases was used in its raw form due to the absence of a sawmill in the area. Fresh fish and meat are purchased from neighboring villages and as much as possible, grown locally on Piero's own farm. Piero usually fosters good relationships with his produce suppliers to ensure that the quality is kept up to standard. He also purchases more than he needs to cater for any produce that is deemed "not good" after careful inspection. These are then used for feed for the pigs at his farm.

Personal Changes

Piero confessed that he had to make many personal changes before he could make Mt. Plaisir a success. A foreigner to the community, he had to adapt his lifestyle to that of a simple rural village rather than the more sophisticated areas he was accustomed to. For him it was imperative to understand and adjust to the ways of the community because the village is so tightly intertwined in his business operations.

Changing Trends

The hotel is appealing to eco-tourists because of its natural feel and its pureness to the environment. However, within the last few years many requests have been made for more "up-to-date" amenities - most notably air-conditioned rooms. While this was not in line with Piero's original concept for the hotel, the number of properties in the area now offering these facilities has forced him to redesign his rooms to accommodate air conditioning units. He is in the process of replacing the existing wooden shutters in the guest rooms with glass panes to properly insulate the rooms to install air conditioning units.

Competition

"I do not see competition I only see opportunities to benefit to the community"

Piero Guerrini – Proprietor Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel

While Piero does not view it as competition, there are a number of similar type establishments that have opened in the community. For example, in 1996 while still in partnership with Piero, Cyril James purchased a piece of land opposite to Mt. Plaisir and together with his wife, opened a host home which became Le Grande Alamandier in 2000. Both operations co-existed with the latter often accommodating the "spill-over" from Mt. Plaisir. In 2001 Cyril James opted out of the partnership and concentrated solely on his hotel. Although Piero trained Cyril and his wife at Mt. Plaisir, he says that he does not see their establishment as competition.

The challenges and opportunities are similar for all hotels operating in Grande Riviere and while they do not all adopt Piero's model, particularly in their social interactions with the community they do all appear to be sensitive to maintaining that delicate balance between the environment and their operations.

Growth of Grande Riviere Tourism

The impact that Piero Guerrini and Mt. Plaisir have had on the Community of Grande Riviere is notable, and while quantitative economic data does not exist, the community and its people have visibly been impacted for the better.

The property has received international acclaim in many travel guides and environmental publications and this has helped to give the community a voice to lobby the government for facilities and services that enhance the quality of the eco-tourism product, and by extension, the quality of life of its members.

In 1991 the Grande Riviere Environmental Awareness Trust (GREAT), was formed by passionate villagers, and funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Small Grants Programme, organized themselves to patrol the beaches to prevent the slaughtering of turtles and sensitize the public about the leatherback turtles. Piero supported the villagers and was instrumental in making a plea to have access to the Grande Riviere beach controlled during the leatherback nesting season of March to August each year, to protect the endangered species. In 1997, access to the beach during nesting season, between the hours of 6pm to 6am was only allowed through the purchase of a permit¹⁰ which ensured that an official tour guide would oversee the visit. Again with Piero as a strong advocate, tour guides and patrollers to check for permits were trained and certified by the Wild Life Section of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

Over time GREAT experienced internal conflicts and became less effective. Some of the members then formed a new organization, the Grande Riviere Nature Tour Guide Association (GRNTGA) in 1999. The primary focus of which is the preservation of the nesting leatherback turtle. GRNTGA took over responsibility for the issuance of permits to access the beach in 2005. Other services of the GRNTGA include tours into the forest to allow tourists to see the various flora and fauna that exist in Grande Riviere and even to catch a glimpse of the Pawi¹¹, a rare bird species that is endemic to the North Coast of Trinidad.

The GRNTGA is overseen by the Grand Riviere Tourism Development Organization (GRTDO) which was formed in 2000 to monitor and develop tourism for the benefit of the village. The GRTDO runs an information centre that is designed to gather information on tourism in the area such as number of visitors, distribution of permits and number of turtles that come ashore to nest. The GRTDO also disseminates the information to all stakeholders including tourists and government agencies.

The creation of Mt. Plaisir has paved the way for many similar type establishments. Mc Eachie's Haven was opened in 1999 and Acajour was opened in 2004. As the number of tourist arrivals increased to witness this unique

¹⁰ Obtained from the Wild Life Section – Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Affairs

¹¹ Pawi (Trinidad Piping Guan) is considered Trinidad's only endemic bird, but is also considered critically endangered, so many birders make an effort to see them where possible.

eco-tourism experience, villagers also began to offer rooms for rent, in some cases adding on guest rooms to their homes to provide accommodation. Tourism development seemed to be embraced by the Grande Riviere community and arrivals have been steadily increasing and in 2006 the GRTDO recorded visitors from 101 countries. Table 2 shows the growth in visitors to Grande Riviere over the last six(6) years and Table 3 shows the growth of guests at Mt Plaisir over the last two(2) years.

Table 2: Number of Visitors to Grande Riviere

Year	Total
2000	3,800
2001	4,800
2002	7,400
2003	7,654
2004	8,200
2005	14,303
2006	18,000*

* Estimated

Source: Grande Riviere Tourism Development Organization

Table 3: Total Number of Guests at Mt. Plaisir¹²

Year	No. Guests
2005	4790
2006	5270

Source: Mt. Plaisir

¹² Data not available pre-2005

Expansion Opportunities

Over the years Mt. Plaisir's revenues have been growing and Piero sees potential for improvement and expansion. Table 4 shows the growth of revenues experienced by Mt Plaisir Hotel between 1995 and 2002 (the most recent audit figures to date).

Table 4: Mt. Plaisir Revenue

Year	Revenue (Trinidad and Tobago Dollars (TTD))
1995	\$358,497
1996	\$636,219
1997	\$696,599
1998	\$871,507
1999	\$1,225,716
2000	\$1,494,892
2001	\$1,618,718
2002	\$1,591,699

Source: Mt. Plaisir

Room additions and conference/retreat centre

Piero has plans to expand the facility while at the same time striking a balance between development with environmental and community preservation. He intends to increase his room capacity by six rooms, which would be built just to the west of the current structure. The proposed two story building would be designed with a large conference room on the ground level for retreats, seminars etc.

Increasing self-sufficiency

To be more self-reliant, Piero has established a small farm where he grows fruits and vegetables and rears animals for his restaurant. He is very excited about the potential of this farm and would like to turn it into a separate guest house. The intention is to develop the farm as an agri-tourism project.¹³ This venture will provide lasting educational experiences for tourists together with a variety of outdoor activities and alternative forms of recreation. The intention is for this establishment to operate independently of Mt. Plaisir with its own name and brand and marketed differently.

¹³ Agri-tourism refers to a "commercial enterprise at a working farm ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner".- Agritourism Pure Holiday. <http://www.agritourism.in>

A project of this nature would also benefit the community since more jobs would be created. Piero also hopes to turn the farm into a school where agriculture can be taught to the young people in hopes of reestablishing a vibrant agriculture community in Grande Riviere.



Pigs reared on the farm



Fruit trees on the newly established farm



A turkey reared on the farm

Conclusions

The establishment of Mt. Plaisir Estate Hotel seems to have ignited a spark in the community of Grande Riviere that has significantly transformed the village. While Piero is modest in accepting credit for this transformation he admits that the village today is much different from what it was ten years ago.

The community of Grande Riviere is now a vibrant village – the “bright village” on the North Coast, fueled by tourism and pride yet remaining true to the values and beliefs that provided the foundation for its development.

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