Jamaican success story
Jamalco sets benchmark

Jamaica has a long, proud history of extracting bauxite from the earth and refining the mineral into alumina for export to international markets, including the US.

Experienced bauxite mining major and refiner Jamalco is one of Jamaica’s most established industrial names, with its alumina exported to markets for smelting into aluminium and subsequent consumption by scores of manufacturing companies in a multitude of sectors and countries.

The ambitious company has an impressive annual alumina production capacity of approximately 1.4 million tonnes, meaning its raw materials are upgraded into around 700,000 tonnes per year of aluminium metal.

Building for a bright future
Six decades after its first export cargo, Jamalco has bounced back well from a fire at a key powerhouse in 2021. A larger and more modern powerhouse is due online in the next couple of years, an occasion that will mark the conclusion of a long process.

The phased resumption of activities allows for significant new investment in the latest technologies and equipment that will boost power generation capacity.

Such is Jamalco’s reputation in international circles, that in April 2023, US-based Century Aluminum Company agreed to purchase a majority stake in a move that opened an exciting new chapter in its long history.

“Century has assets in the US and Europe,” explains Austin Mooney, Jamalco Managing Director. “They’re in the same business as us, so understand the challenges associated with commodities. Their operational background means we’ll benefit.”

Booms of Century were just as enthusiastic about the strategic acquisition given it secures them a predictable, long-term supply of its most critical raw material and achieves increased supply chain transparency and control.

“Jamalco is a well-known and well-regarded organization with a world class operational team,” says Century’s President and CEO, Jesse Gary. “It has historically proven its competitive advantages through its consistent production of high-quality alumina, strategic geographic footprint in the Atlantic alumina market, and strong corporate culture focused on safety, integrity and employee well-being.”

Such deals underline the increasing high level of business confidence that foreign investors have in Jamalco and the Jamaican economy, according to Mooney.

“The government is very business-friendly and strives to achieve the right balance between sustainability and business development,” he says. “With the quality of the workers in Jamaica and proximity to the US, there is a great opportunity for any company that invests.”
Maximizing the potential of Jamaica’s rich resources

Jahama Bauxite Mining Ltd (JBM) is leveraging valuable legacy assets to diversify into new areas, like a premium bottled spring water that epitomizes Brand Jamaica.

Mining sector embraces key diversification drive

New projects will not only boost output and efficiencies, but comprise a big push into other metals and minerals markets with the help of a revamped rail network.

“Many of our diverse projects are a result of a resource-centred strategic plan, driven not only by structured goals and alignment with Vision 2030 but also by a deep understanding of the immense global opportunity. “Our strategy for diversification and resource optimization strategically positions JBM for sustained success across diverse industries and markets,” Howe emphasizes. “The port expansion plan represents a pivotal development that will significantly impact our business, propelling us into new realms with greater efficiency for all stakeholders.”

“Presently, our port serves a dual purpose, with the east side exclusively catering to cruise tourism, showcasing visually captivating scenes including a promenade. Simultaneously, the western side is dedicated to limestone stockpiling and the loading of industrial vessels. “This means we can work towards reducing carbon emissions and maintaining a net-zero carbon footprint. “Upon joining JBM, I was pleasantly surprised by its immense potential. Our journey continues to see us unlocking value and turning this vision into a reality,” Howe adds.