

## **The future of dining is here**

**Enjoying meals in local homes**

**By Heather Barker**

Eat With a Stranger (EWAS) apps are popping up all over the digital landscape. A subset of ICT-enabled mobile apps, EWAS apps essentially provide a means to book and dine at the homes of people you've never met.

What's the appeal, you ask? Like Uber, Lyft, and AirBnb these apps are part of the “sharing economy”, a peer-to-peer exchange often facilitated through community-based or online services. The “sharing economy” benefits both the service provider and the end-user. In the case of dining, for example, hosts earn extra income and road-test new menus while diners experience a more cultural and varied experience, often at a cheaper rate than a restaurant. Mobile apps or mobile-adaptive platforms make doing so easier and seamless.

Isle&Dine is a mobile-enabled web platform for people dining in Barbados. Currently in “concierge” phase we’re inviting diners, singly or in groups, to enjoy meals in local homes and meet new people. Our guests so far have been a combination of adventurous, savvy locals and visitors to the island who want to try immersive and off the beaten path experiences. They want more than the sun, sea and sand and Isle&Dine creates a platform for visitors to engage more intimately with a key selling point of our tourism product - Bajan people. And what is more intimate than eating and enjoying a meal in the home of a stranger or soon to be friend?

ICT-enabled mobile technology enhances the Isle&Dine experience by allowing hosts to have access to a wider pool of potential diners, and diners a wider range of events to choose from. The technology can also facilitate meal selection based on location. The overall beneficial impact is ease and choice and a peer review system online that helps to create credibility and trust.

Isle&Dine has the potential to bring much-needed foreign exchange into the local economy. We also give back, recently participating in Charity Chicks’ local initiative #Food4Change to raise funds for nutritious foods for communities in need.

We also participated in the PitchIT Caribbean Challenge 3.0 in St. Kitts and Nevis organized by the Caribbean Mobile Innovation Project. Over 20 entrepreneurs from across the region gathered for an intense boot camp that included having our pitch decks broken apart and rebuilt, networking and mentoring followed by pitching before judges.

Isle&Dine made it to semi-finals and was part of the top five who were awarded grants to help take their startups to the next level. It was a grueling but rewarding process, and reinforced the validity of Isle&Dine’s value proposition.

We look forward to you dining with us and joining our community of #DineAdians. Because life tastes better shared!

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***She enjoys traveling, writing fiction, painting en plein air, and experimenting with desserts. Peoples' desire for her chocolate tarts, flapjacks and peanut butter bars are quelled with 'Keep calm. You can have seconds'. Reach her at: [heatherb@isleanddine.com](mailto:heatherb@isleanddine.com). Visit [www.isleanddine.com](http://www.isleanddine.com) and [www.facebook.com/IsleandDine/](http://www.facebook.com/IsleandDine/) for more.***

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