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Happy New Year --- #1026 --- Monday, 1/4/2016 -- News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



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St. Maarten and St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News

*St. Maarten & St. Martin's Most Relied-Upon Source
for Tourist-Oriented News & Information*

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Get Important SXM News as it Happens & Lots of Pictures Too from our Facebook and Twitter Pages:



Protect your vacation and business travel with SkyMed Emergency Medical Evacuation Membership



Download PDFs of Recent Editions ---- Attention iPad, iPhone, and Android Users

This format has been further narrowed so it is now easily readable on all mobile devices. Scroll down for this week's news.

You can also download PDFs of all recent editions here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

On that page, the link beginning with the highest number is the most recent edition.

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This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' *St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News*, published every Monday all year long (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks). You're receiving this because you subscribed or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Scroll Down for Full Table of Contents; this edition features many new stories about your favorite island:

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-- *Time To Kick The SXM Government Into Gear on Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection*

-- *Last Call for Low Prices on 240+ Discounts: Holiday Membership Sale Must End Mon. Jan. 4*

-- *JMB Discount Voucher Conversion Completion Update*

-- *For Canadians, a Huge Welcome You Can Bank On From Pierre Ferland's Sushiiitto and Pineapple Pete*

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-- We're Giving Away Nine SXM Vacations... and Tons More

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Timeshare Rentals and Sales of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml and features them here.

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else, worldwide, at no charge, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 237+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits, and your subscription also helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental / Sale of The Week:

Not published in archives.

SXM Timeshare Sales of The Week:

Not published in archives.

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

See them all at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents.](#)

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"Like" Our "Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin" Facebook Site:



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6297726366/>

"Like" Our Facebook SXM Timesharing Group People for Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection in St. Maarten

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_205834172765083

Search the **SXM Weekly News** Archives:

Current Archives (Since 4/2014) in PDF Format (New):

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

<http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?flavor=archive:list=sxmweeklynews>

Check Out Our Linked-In "St. Maarten and St. Martin Travelers" Group (Free; Timeshare Focus):

www.linkedin.com

Get a growing list of 210+ Money-Saving SXM-focused travel discount benefits through JMB Website Supporters:

http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

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- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads: Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

Section Five: Where To Find Background Information for Travelers (*For New Readers*)
(Revised 12/31/14)

How To Get a ***GROWING LIST of 230+*** Money-Saving St. Maarten- and St. Martin-Focused Travel Benefits

Visit <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> , the *secret* site for JMB Website Supporters members only, for low fares to SXM from cities across the USA, Canada, and Western Europe, plus a total of a growing list of 200+ additional major travel benefits, including reduced-cost access to

Not a member yet? See http://everythingsxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for five full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

Now a growing list of 200+ benefits... and more coming soon.

Contact Us:

[Revised 2/24/15]

All member discounts and benefits are explained in detail on the members-only *secret* website, <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> . If you're a JMB Website Supporters member and have a question not answered there, please contact us at support@jmbcommunications.com

NON-members who wish to contact us should write to jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com with the subject *Free Newsletter Recipient,* but due to the huge volume of mail received, we may not be able to respond individually.

Our main St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com .

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members (including *Low Airfare Bulletins*) read *From JMB* in the subject area so you won't misinterpret them as spam.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

SECTION 1: Getting There: Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather

1. Now, The Winter Weather Changeover...

The next couple of weeks marks a significant weather change here in SXM -- to winter.

Daytime temps will usually top out around 84, though lately they've been higher, and nighttime temps -- now around 77 or so -- may plunge to the bone-chilling 74 or 73 degree range. Locals wear sweaters, coats, and hats -- and complain a lot.

We'll let you know when one of these cold snaps hits.

2. Open Enrollment In The SkyMed Travel Club For One Month Only: How To Join

We're bringing back Open Enrollment in the low fare SkyMed Travel Club for one month only... January. Here goes:

JMB Website Supporters now gives you access to a private, "members only" travel wholesale club that offers incredible prices not only on airfares but on packages not just to the Caribbean, but worldwide.

Retail travel sites — the ones whose names you know very well — are heavily regulated. But private travel clubs like this, which normally charge members prices for membership/admission, are regulated differently and consequently, can offer much better pricing.

The organization providing these travel benefits has been traveling under the radar for 25 years and is only now making its travel reservations prowess publicly known. It's SkyMed Travel Club and it is entirely separate from the SkyMed "takes you home" medical evacuation service we've been recommending to you since shortly after the millennium.

The SkyMed Travel Club offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have been testing it for the past few weeks and have found the pricing to be extraordinary — even on the wildly popular river cruises that are a tourism phenomenon throughout Europe and are quickly gaining popularity here in the US.

And normally, this organization charges you \$99 to join plus \$99 annual renewals. But for our JMB Website Supporters members, and during a brief introductory period for everyone else, the cost to join is zero as will be the cost for renewals. Exclusively through us, you get access to a world-class global ticketing mechanism without paying one cent to get in the door.

This is a new benefit for JMB members. During this Open Enrollment, everyone can join by going to www.SkyMedtravelclub.com, clicking the sign up link on the top right corner of the homepage, and providing the requested information. It's very important to complete the first sign up item (SkyMed Membership Number or Representative ID) by entering the code 391330 — entering that code is what ensures that you pay nothing to be a member of the SkyMed Travel Club. If you fail to enter that code, you will not gain free entry to the club's phenomenal pricing.

Do join — you will not be disappointed once you've booked travel through them.

3. "FlyTravelGo" Is The Easiest-to-Use Travel Reservations Website

Check it out; it's remarkably fast and easy. All profits from our www.flytravelgo.com site help support *SXM Weekly News* and our SXM island discount program, JMB Website Supporters.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

4. Sitbons Say Sapphire Story Not Yet Over

Last week, we reported what sources inside Sapphire told us about the future of the resort: that it would not be sold and that the Verdiers planned to return it to its former fine state at their own expense, after having ignored it for an extended period while litigation was underway.

But Sapphire's opponent in litigation, with whom we're meeting this week, says the story is not over.

Bruno Sitbon and his family, from French Canada, want to buy the resort and say they had an agreement to do that. They put down money and allege that things went sour from there. The schism goes to court in about a week and a half and it has not been settled.

We'll have much more coming on this.

5. Numbers of Impatient Sapphire Owners Bailing Out...

Background:

Some timeshare resorts here in SXM have had a very rocky road, souring many timeshare owners against the industry as a whole. Only recently has Pelican / Simpson Bay Resort approached the completion of its heavy renovations after two decades of lawsuits and an endless emotional roller-coaster.

Sapphire is in the same boat. Accused by timeshare owners of not maintaining the property or its timeshare units, developers Jean and Philippe Verdier have hired people over time to set things right -- but those people and the Verdiers never achieved the expected results.

We've heard from a number of Sapphire timeshare owners who have already bailed out or have sold their units at a significant loss. The reason: there is little market for the units thanks to years of what they say is unresponsive management. They allege that calls have not been returned and maintenance issues weren't addressed.

Now:

That all changed drastically while the Sitbons were managing Sapphire. Everything improved markedly, according to timeshare owner reports. But some owners are tired of waiting for expected results and are bailing. Many others are contemplating a move. We're interviewing the Sitbons this week and will keep you posted on what's planned....

RCI:

A source inside Sapphire says RCI will reinspect the property in March, 2016, at which time reinstatement of normal RCI activities may resume. We'll let you know.

6. Kick The SXM Government Into Gear on Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection?

When Pelican Resort suddenly went bankrupt and was shut down several years ago, the government took no obvious public dramatic steps to step in and solve the problem. The resort was taken over by the contractor that had been hired to run it, Royal Resorts of Mexico, the culmination of a chain of events that could be the basis of a good book. They renamed the place and spent millions on timeshare unit renovations -- without the express consent of timeshare owners. Many timeshare owners sold at a loss or walked away.

Sold at auction by the bank that took it over after its prior owner went bankrupt, Caravanserai was renamed Alegria, "The Place of Happiness," by its owner, a New York credit card processing tycoon. His first official act was to email timeshare owners telling them their contracts were null and void, which is why the property has been something of a ghost town for the past year. That situation is still in the courts. Many timeshare owners never returned to SXM since -- once again -- the island didn't raise a finger to help them.

Sapphire is another story, covered in this issue. And there are others -- Atrium and Royal Palm, for example.

St. Maarten has no timeshare owner consumer protection legislation. In each of the above situations, the government did nothing to help timeshare owners who happen to be the single biggest pillar in its tourist-centric economy. Timeshare owners are "stayover tourists" who buy things, unlike cruise ship passengers who look at jewelry but seldom spend money on it, watch planes land low, Google people at Orient, then follow "Back to the Ship" signs.

If you're a timeshare owner who's fed up with the lack of attention to your plight by SXM, let your voice be heard. Yet another new government is in place now and theoretically it should want to preserve what's left of the island economy. You can send letters to the editor to editorial@thedailyherald.com and to Today Newspaper Editor editor@saintmartintoday.com.

Let's get loud until they actually do something. Timeshare owners are what keep SXM afloat and the island needs to stop "screwing them" as a well-known TV talk show host in SXM characterized it last Spring.

7. Renting Out Or Buying SXM Timeshare Weeks Directly from Owners

We do not recommend buying timeshare weeks / intervals directly from timeshare developers. Timeshares are a notoriously bad investment (save perhaps for Hard Rock properties), and in SXM most timeshare intervals sell for a fraction of their original purchase price *when they were bought directly from the resort*. If resorts present evidence contradicting this, claiming a profit on resales for timeshare owners, treat that claim with skepticism.

See everythingsexm.com and you'll find hundreds of timeshare weeks for rent or for sale *directly from the timeshare weeks' owners*, our JMB members. Most SXM resorts are well represented. You'll find the prices are far less than the resorts would charge when you buy directly.

8. Last Call From Jeff for Week Three Sleep Four Studio at Sapphire

Like many other timeshare owners, JMB's Jeff Berger no longer uses his unit (hasn't in years) -- week 3, in January -- and is ready to walk away from it if it isn't rented or sold *now*.

Here's the ad:

Enjoy Gorgeous Caribbean Sunsets, Both a Textile and a Clothing-Optional Beach Nearby, Great Nightlife, and Even a Jacuzzi Whirlpool on Your Deck In This Sleep-Four Studio

RENTAL: January 16 to January 23, 2016 (week 3) Sapphire Beach Resort on Cupecoy Beach, sleep-four unit faces sunny Cupecoy Beach and the Caribbean Sea. Includes a genuine Jacuzzi whirlpool hot tub on the balcony, king size bed, full a/c, cable TV, DVD player, refrigerator with ice maker, marble bath, beautiful furnishings throughout. Resort has shops, restaurants, mini-mart, plus a large pool, whirlpool, and bar -- all on the ocean. Close to Starz Casino (formerly Atlantis World), many great restaurants including Dino Jagtiani's multi award-winning Temptation, plus Mullet Bay Beach, the Cupecoy clothing-optional beach, Baie Longue, and Baie Rouge on the French Side, with famous Orient Beach not much more than 20 minutes away. And did I say incredible restaurants? Asking only \$849 to rent or *buy it -- closest to \$1999 wins. We will turn this unit back to the resort if it is not rented or sold in the next few days. New owner must pay 2016 Maintenance fee (around \$800) and any transfer fee from Sapphire.* Photos available. Phone Jeff at (721) 588-4188 or (faster) email jeff@jmbcommunications.com

SECTION 3: Island

9. Almost Over -- Last Call for Low Prices on 250+ St. Maarten / St. Martin Island Discounts -- Holiday Membership Sale Ends Mon. Jan. 4

It's almost over -- your last shot at great prices in our Holiday Sale. Ends Monday January 4.

What You Get:

- A growing list of over 250 discounts for restaurants, shopping, hotels, car rentals, activities, jewelry, art, and tons more
- Benefits including free ads to rent out or sell timeshare or other condos you own in SXM and worldwide
- Low Fare Guidelines to help you know what fares are worth buying -- and which are just too high
- Big Discounts on SkyMed, the world's premier provider of medical evacuation services for Americans, Canadians, and ex-pats virtually anywhere you travel, including Cuba (see stories in this section).
- Buy Now: Holiday Sale Prices Now In Effect

Holiday Sale New memberships:

3 yrs. \$75; 5 yrs. \$109; 7 yrs. \$139 (one year is \$59)

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Holiday Sale Renewal memberships:

One year \$33; 3 yrs. \$64; 6 yrs. \$107 -- our best offer by far

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

Holiday Sale Membership Reinstatements:

One year \$39; 4 yrs. \$88; 6 yrs. \$107

<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

10. SXM Business Down in November and Much of December; Improved Christmas Week

Jewelers and restaurants -- which constitute a majority of the places for discretionary spending by tourists -- have told us that tourist spending was down from last year in both November and in December until close to Christmas. Some reported seeing fewer tourists, while others said tourists were here "but instead of eating lobster thermidor, they're ordering wraps."

Business picked up considerably during Christmas week and most are saying sales have been brisk ever since. We're hoping it stays that way,

11. JMB Discount Voucher Conversion Completion Update

We've just completed our announced changeover of all current JMB Website Supporters SXM discount vouchers to a new format which includes these words:

"Valid JMB Website Supporters Membership Card and Photo ID Required to Use This Voucher."

If you're a JMB member and are going to SXM soon, we strongly urge you download the new vouchers before leaving. We've given all members numerous heads-up about this voucher conversion both in emails to all members and in several articles in *SXM Weekly News*.

There will be a brief transition period in SXM during which our partners may accept old vouchers. However that transition period ends late in January. So...

1. Be sure to download, print, and take the latest vouchers with you to SXM. All vouchers on the site as of today bear the new language (except GoKarts).
2. Always carry your current, valid JMB Website Supporters Membership Card with you. It was emailed to you as an attachment from tracy[at]jmbcommunications.com after your most recent JMB membership purchase or renewal. The subject was "Thanks for Renewing - New Membership Card Inside" or "Welcome to JMB - Membership Card Inside." Without your valid Membership Card you will not be able to obtain JMB member discounts anywhere.

12. The Importance of Making Reservations and of Cancelling Those You Won't Use

A number of restaurants on SXM have stopped accepting reservations called in by a particular name-brand hotel. "They don't show," one prominent restaurateur told us.

If you find your hotel is unable to make reservations for you, go to the establishment where you want to reserve and make them yourself. No-show, no-cancel reservations cost restaurants money and increase prices for everyone. If you make a reservation and can't go, cancel it. That goes for hotel concierges, too.

13. For Canadians, a Huge Welcome From Pierre Ferland's Sushiitto and Pineapple Pete

Thanks to the strength of the US dollar, the CDN dollar has hard times. On Wednesday night it took CDN\$1.38 to buy one US dollar.

But Pierre "Pineapple Pete" Ferland, who hails from Quebec, is accepting Canadian dollars at a USD equivalent of \$1.20 at both his Pineapple Pete restaurant in Simpson Bay and at his Sushiitto Restaurant at Port de Plaisance Restaurant in Cole Bay. Currency markets may affect this slightly, but Pierre intends to continue offering this exact kind of bargain to Canadians going forward.

It's a huge deal for all Canadian visitors to SXM, eh?

14. A Big Mess With New Restaurants & Bars at Orient Beach

Never has the Collectivite (French Side government) treated the development of the new bars and restaurants / shops at Orient Beach with anything resembling a sense of urgency. Had it done so, they could have been opened

in mid-November, as they were supposed to be.

But because it isn't, a key part of the French Side's appeal to tourists is unavailable, businesses are losing money, and no one is happy.

There is a lot about business that the Collectivite doesn't get. It never considered doing anything about the huge disparity that existed between the Euro and dollar a few years ago, driving most people to buy on the Dutch Side and driving many businesses to the Dutch Side as well (or out of business).

The Collectivite just told the contractors who built the new shops that they have until mid-January to finish (about two months late) though it says it will give keys to businesses sooner so they can begin to prepare. It notified accepted businesses by mail, when email would have been smarter and faster. The businesses will lose two months of high season, a terrible blow since rent is about 2500 Euro/month. How the businesses can / will survive under that pressure is a huge unknown. Despite its blunders on this project, there's no sign the Collectivite will budge on the rent.

The goose that lays the golden egg on the French Side has just had its tubes tied. It's a case study in blundering. (We wrote about the counterproductive sea wall last week.)

15. Yet Another New Discount for JMB Members: Moomba

Soprano's Restaurant in Maho closed a number of months ago but Moomba at Maho is now offering many of the pizzas from Soprano's that you grew to love. In fact in the next few days, Moomba will join us as a discount partner, offering dining discounts to our JMB Website Supporters members. We reported on several other new partners here last week and still more are coming....

JMB members, watch your email for members-only updates on new discounts and benefits... now about 250 with more coming.

16. Big Discounts on The Best SXM Maps from Cartographer Michal Kasprowski

Cartographer Michal Kasprowski -- the creator of those large framable-wall-hanging-suitable road maps of SXM that we've recommended for years -- is continuing to offer JMB members significant discounts when ordering by mail.

We use Michal's maps when researching locations in SXM and there's a framed one in our office. The maps are updated every year, are durable, accurate, and very reasonable with our discount. The updated link for these maps will appear on the Secret Site in the next few days (Jan. 5-6 or thereabouts).

17. Return to Spiga

At this point, Spiga has become one of the island's very best restaurants. Dover Sole was a special last week, prepared in a very light lemon butter sauce with roasted potatoes and asparagus / broccolini. You can't get a better meal anywhere. As always, Spiga bends over backwards to accommodate dietary preferences. From appetizer to dessert, nothing disappoints. Spiga is located in Grand Case at the far northern end of town, opposite Tijon Parfumerie. It is not just another Italian restaurant . . . we urge you try try it and see for yourself. It's quite spectacular dining.

18. The New Year's Dive: Same But Different

In colder states and provinces in cold countries, brave souls dive into frigid waters to celebrate New Year's Day.

Now the tradition has spread to Simpson Bay Beach, where some 800 souls have signed up to do it at El Zafiro and a lesser number at Karakter, both right on the beach. Difference: Water here is about 81 degrees.

19. Friday Fun Sail to Tintamarre Aboard Celine Too

Tintamarre is a deserted tropical island NE of SXM, visible from Orient Beach beyond Green Key. It is reputed to have a rich history including as a stopping point for German U-boats during World War II.

Now it's a favorite day cruise destination for cruise boats including the Celine Too under Capt. Neil Roebert. We've been on it many times. The all-day trip includes breakfast aboard, a relaxing sail through the French Side drawbridge and up the island's rugged NW coast, beach time at Tintamarre, lunch, a stop for snorkeling at Creole Rock on the return trip, and another stop at Happy Bay. It's a wonderfully scenic and relaxing trip. Clothing optional too, if you like. See www.sailstmaarten.com. JMB offers discounts on all of Capt. Neil's cruises, too; see more on our Secret Website. Not a member? See story 9.

20. Carousel: Great Ice Cream, SXM's Only Merry-Go-Round, and a JMB Member Discount

We're posting a ton of new discounts as we move into high season. Carousel in Simpson Bay offers discounts to members on its incredible home made ice cream, created right on the premises and offered with all kinds of toppings. This new discount goes live in the next day or two (Jan. 5-6). Now over 250 SXM discounts; see story #9 to join.

21. A New Choice for Mexican: Pancho Villa in Cul-de-Sac (JMB Members Get a Discount)

At the urging of the Grand Prize Winners in our last vacation giveaway, Bill and Susi Sahlman, who are still turning in certificates for dinners for two (Spiga and Temptation among them), we visited Pancho Villa in Cul-de-Sac last week and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Joey Shulman from Ottawa wound up here after a stint at Royal Caribbean (like many other fine SXM restaurateurs) and elsewhere. Everything is made from scratch and is super fresh. The gazpacho is luscious -- you'll want to savor it without doing anything else. The salsa is delightful -- fresh, crisp, cold, and very tasty. Fajitas, generous and delicious. Fresh veggies. Homemade guacamole that is about the best we've ever tasted. Quesadillas that are a meal unto themselves.

Pancho Villa is in Cul de Sac, French Side, next to Ti Bouchon, on the road to the Pinel Island ferry. See it on [Facebook](#). Cash only; prices are very reasonable and portions are generous. Go....

22. Restaurant of the Week: Series Resumes Next Week

See past Restaurant of the Week selections below. Most of the listed restaurants offer discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; see the Secret Site for details. We'll cover another restaurant here next week. Sill not a member? You're spending way too much for practically everything you buy in SXM. Get hundreds of discounts and other benefits at great Holiday Sale prices: see story 9 for details.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 12/14/15)

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 3/23/15)

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 6/15/15)

Cugini (12/7/15)

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 5/11/15)

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.com (featured 11/16/15)

Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 8/11/14)

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 12/21/15)

Fusion, www.fusionrestaurant-sxm.com (featured 1/26/15)

The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 4/28/14)

Stone Restaurant, www.thestonerestaurant.com (featured 9/2/14)

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15)

Temptation, <http://www.rareandtemptation.com/EN/temptation/>

Lal's Curry In A Hurry Indian Restaurant, Airport Road, Simpson Bay (featured 1/19/15)

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 2/23/15)

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 5/18/15)

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 2/2/15)

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 5/4/15)

Coconut Grove (formerly SPN Cafe), <http://www.pineapplepete.com/sport.html> (featured 8/18/14)

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path from the far side of Ocean Club to get there). (featured 4/27/2015)

FIG, Cupecoy opposite Rainbow Beach Club

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com (featured 4/13/15)

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 11/10/14)

Topper's / Topper's By The Sea <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 6/29/15)

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/> (featured 4/20/15)

Bylbos, Simpson Bay

Sushiitto Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance <https://www.facebook.com/sushiitto.sxm> (featured 1/12/15)

23. Questions & Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Updated 1/1/16)

Here are constantly updated questions and answers about SkyMed, the folks who fly you home on an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. *It's a life-saving flight that could easily cost you upwards of \$45,000 in cash in advance without SkyMed. Thousands of you have bought it through us.* To learn more, see www.getskymed.com.

Q. What's so special about SkyMed? Aren't these companies all the same?

A. *Not by a long shot.* Most other programs take you to "the nearest appropriate facility," *not* home like SkyMed. If you're in SXM, that means *SkyMed competitors* would likely take you to Puerto Rico. Some others also raise prices after you reach a certain age. Or they cancel you on a particular birthday, or cancel your membership when you get sick. *SkyMed does none of that.* Sign up for SkyMed today and when you reach age 109 you pay the same price as everyone else. Once you're a member, there's no age or health discrimination -- as long as you pay your membership fee you're good to go. (Applies to all annual and longer memberships. Short-term memberships, lasting only a few days, require medical requalification when you buy another.)

Q. What other evacuation-related services do you offer besides the evacuation itself?

There are 18 other services, some of which you've never even thought about but all of which are quite important. You'll find them on our downloadable SkyMed Benefits PDF, now on our [SXM Weekly News PDF Archives](#) page.

Q. You mean they don't cancel me if I get really sick?

A. *No, they don't.* Once you're a member, as long as you continue to pay your membership fee your membership continues regardless of your health or age, if you buy an annual or multiyear membership and keep it in force. SkyMed does not throw you out if you get sick. If you allow your membership to lapse, you will need to reapply to determine if you're still medically acceptable -- so just don't let it lapse.

Q. I have a few medical issues and I'm in my 70s. Will SkyMed accept me?

A. In its brief application process, completed online or by phone or in person with a rep, SkyMed asks for your name, DOB, current Rx medications, medical conditions, and hospitalizations in the last six months. It also asks where you want to be transported when you need an emergency medical evacuation. It now also requests your

passport number to help expedite customs / immigration should you require an international medical evacuation flight. *The vast, vast majority of applicants are readily accepted.* You do not have to be in "phenomenal" health at all. By the way: if you travel very little and only for short periods, you can apply for SkyMed's short-term memberships. They cover all pre-existing conditions.

Q. We travel for weeks at a time. Do we have to tell SkyMed where we're going?

A. No, you don't. As long as you're home in the US or Canada more than six months per year, you're fine. If you spend more than half of each year away (in aggregate), then you're considered an expatriate (ex-pat) and would need a program custom-tailored for ex-pats because you're away a majority of the time and that means you represent increased exposure. That program is called X-Pat - the program for American and Canadian expatriates living overseas. Even as an ex-pat living in SXM, you can still be transported back to your city of choice in the USA or Canada.

Q. Does SkyMed cover pre-existing conditions?

A. Yes, right away for short-term memberships and after just a 90 day waiting period for all memberships lasting a year or longer. To make sure you're covered for everything when you travel, including pre-existing conditions, just buy your annual or multi-year Ultimate SkyMed membership more than 90 days ahead of your initial date of travel.

Q. Do you require a physical exam for renewal or when I reach a certain age?

A. No, SkyMed requires neither. Once you join and buy an annual or multiyear membership, we'll renew it every year upon payment of your renewal fee. No physical exam is required regardless of your age or health if you've paid your membership on time. You can be age 109 and still be protected by your SkyMed membership.

Q. I seldom travel now. Do you have short-term plans?

A. Yes, at about \$18/day per family or about \$9/day for singles. Since they only last a specified number of days, they end when the term of coverage ends. If you want another short-term plan later, you must apply again and medically requalify. Annual plans cost roughly \$1.30/day for your entire family (parents and minor kids); plans for singles are less. *Annual* and multiyear plans are renewable without medical requalification, assuming they haven't lapsed.

Q. I'm from Canada. May I join SkyMed? I have to get back to my province if I'm seriously ill or my health insurance won't work.

A. Both Americans and Canadians are eligible to join SkyMed. American and Canadian ex-pats living overseas also are eligible.

Q. What types of policies are there?

A. SkyMed Memberships (often called policies by members though they actually are memberships) come in several flavors: short term, for people who travel little and for short durations; "annual" for people who want full-year protection that is guaranteed renewable for life when you pay the membership fee on time regardless of age or health at the time of renewal; and Ultimate multiyear memberships which offer low annual cost, maximum benefits, and global coverage and are also renewable for life regardless of age or health when membership fees are paid on time.

Q. Which membership gives the biggest bang for the buck?

You clearly get the most for the least with our three-year or five-year Ultimate memberships. Coverage is global, guaranteed renewable, and can not be cancelled due to increasing age or declining health - ever. You'll also pay the same fee as all other members -- there's never an increase related to your personal health or advancing age. And annual memberships are upgradeable to Ultimates at any time.

Q. Is there a best time to buy?

A. Yes -- exactly like fire insurance, buy it before you need it! Now is a particularly good time because JMB is offering special benefits and discounts; see next story. Those incentives won't be around forever.

Q. Does SkyMed cover us no matter where we travel?

The basic SkyMed plan covers you in the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba, plus Costa Rica and Belize. The Ultimate membership covers you globally -- or you can add a global rider to annual memberships (at \$100/year) which adds rest-of-the-world coverage.

SkyMed does not cover countries where there are open hostilities -- Iraq, Iran, Syria, Somalia, North Korea, etc.

SkyMed *Takes You Home*TM; What else matters?

For more, see skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members) or www.getskymed.com (non-JMB members) or email Jeff Berger directly at jeff@jmbcommunications.com with the subject SkyMed. If you include your phone number, he'll call you about SkyMed as well, to answer any questions you may have including all pricing options. You can also call SkyMed directly (in Scottsdale AZ, Mountain standard time year round.) Their number is 1-800-475-9633; ask for Nan. If you're a JMB member, say so and have your membership card ready, **All multiyear plans offer major discounts to JMB members.**

24. Our New *Triple* SkyMed Bonus

----- SkyMed On Sale: Lots of Life-Saving Benefits, Low Cost -----

If you've been thinking about buying SkyMed but just haven't done it, this is the time.

SkyMed takes you home when you become critically ill or injured while traveling — home to doctors and hospitals you know and trust. With rare exceptions, your medical insurance from the US or Canada isn't valid in St. Maarten. Credit Card evacuation programs take you to the nearest appropriate facility; what good is that? There is also no trauma center in SXM, and the sophisticated medical care available at leading US and Canadian hospitals is not present in St. Maarten / St. Martin. So if you become critically ill or injured, you really do need to get home to the US or Canada and that's exactly where SkyMed takes you.

Thanks to this sale, that has now become a whole lot easier. Here's why:

First, for every year of SkyMed medical evacuation protection you buy from us during the sale, you get an equivalent year of JMB Website Supporters membership free, on us, which brings you an increasing spectrum of benefits and discounts, soon to number close to 250. If you are already a JMB member, we will extend your membership on us for a number of years equal to your new or upgraded SkyMed membership. If you are not a JMB member and buy SkyMed through us, we will establish a JMB Website Supporters membership for you equal to your new or upgraded SkyMed membership's duration of one year or more. See below for how this works.

Second, for a five-year SkyMed Ultimate, non JMB members pay \$3495 in advance; JMB members pay only \$2495 through us (or only \$59/month) — and remember, because of the bonus we mentioned above, when you sign up we will also give you a five-year JMB membership *enabling you to save that \$1000 on a five year Ultimate membership. That discount is not available to non JMB members.* So... the #2 advantage of buying through us is low cost, no matter how you buy.

For contact info (answers to questions about SkyMed), see the last paragraph of the previous story.

Third: When you sign up for the bonus SkyMed memberships shown above, email support@jmbcommunications.com and tell us. We'll verify the signup and that it is through us, then process your JMB membership extension bonus. But do it soon... this won't last forever. The third benefit: a dream vacation. Email us after you're signed up through us and for a limited time SkyMed will give you a vacation for a small fraction of its usual cost. (Oyster Bay Beach Resort is one of their vacation sites.)

25. We're Giving Away Nine SXM Vacations... and Tons More

Our giveaway has expanded again with three new items...

First, the all-new El Zafiro Boutique Hotel, operated by a couple from Boston, is opening on beautiful Simpson Bay Beach. It will offer the ninth vacation in our upcoming giveaway to celebrate our SXM site reaching 4.5-million visitors early in 2016. We toured it; it's quite a beautiful property with the beach right outside the door of every room.

Here's a complete list of everything we're giving away as of now -- the list has grown since you last saw it:

Vacation prizes (almost all are eight days / seven nights):

- [Mary's Boon Beach Resort](#);
- [Oyster Bay Beach Resort](#);
- [La Vista or La Vista Beach](#)
- [Summit Resort](#)
- [Baker's Suites](#)
- [Club Fantastico](#)
- [Hotel L'Esplanade](#) OR [Le Petit Hotel](#) OR [Blue Pelican](#)
- [Simpson Bay Resort](#)
- El Zafiro Boutique Hotel, Restaurant, and Bar, Simpson Bay (new)

Here are our newest items:

- Sunset Cruise for Two about the [Classic Schooner Passaat](#) (new)
- One-week car rental (Hyundai i10 or equivalent) from [Leisure Car Rental](#) (new)
- Dinner for two at [Mario's Bistro](#), Porto Cupecoy
- Dinner for Two at [Temptation](#), Cupecoy Beach
- Dinner for Two at Big Fish, Oyster Pond
- Dinner for two at [Spiga](#), Grand Case
- Dinner for two at [Le Pressoir](#), Grand Case
- Dinner for two at [Beau Beaus](#) (Oyster Bay Beach Resort)
- Dinner for two at Infinity (OBBR)
- Dinner for two at Sushiiitto
- Dinner for two at [Pineapple Pete](#)
- Dinner for two at [Daniel's by the Sea](#)
- Dinner for two at Lal's Curry In a Hurry
- Dinner for two at [Toppers](#)
- Dinner for two at [Toppers By The Sea](#)
- Dinner for two at [Vesna Taverna](#)
- Dinner for two at [Fusion Restaurant](#), Simpson Bay
- Dinner for two at [iZi Ristorante Italiano](#), Simpson Bay
- Massage from [Tricia Altenau of AIA Massage Therapies](#), the island's most sought-after massage therapist

To enter:

We'll draw the vacation winners live on the air on Island 92 radio in late March. After we give away all nine vacations, we'll call the winners back randomly. The first person picked gets our selection of some of the prizes above; that will be our first prize winner. The second person called at random will get our Grand Prize, which has our selection of dinners and other prizes.

As always, anyone who doesn't answer loses and will not be called again.

Enter here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml

Full rules are on that page.

26. Interact With Fellow SXM Visitors on Our Everything SXM Facebook Page

Our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#), which has been around for several years, covers SXM happenings in words and pictures from its thousands of users and enables people to ask questions, get answers, post trip reports, etc. We also post things there between issues of *SXM Weekly News*.

27. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

Look here for our PDF archives: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

28. Introducing Your Trip Reports

We want to publish your SXM trip reports, JMB members: favorite places, things to do, you name it. Mail them (max 250 words) to susan@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "SXM Trip Reports" and we'll take it from there. Your first name and last initial only will be published. Tell us what you think.... JMB Website Supporters members only.

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Frequently Updated

JMB members can run up to 10 free ads on our website per 12-month period to rent out or sell St. Maarten / St. Martin timeshare weeks they own -- or any timeshares, anywhere worldwide. If you're not a member, learn more about membership here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml .

Want to rent or buy a week?

2015 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale are posted at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml Listings are now updated every few weekdays. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.

Meet Our Sponsors (updated 9/27/13) Returns Next Issue

SECTION 4: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)

- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot / change password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com. To change your password, click that same link.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads or Update the Price in an Ad: See www.everythingsxm.com/secret .

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 10/18/15

See www.everythingsxm.com.

CONTACT US

JMB Website Supporters members wishing to contact us should visit the secret site, www.everythingsxm.com/secret , for detailed JMB Website Supporters information. JMB members can email us at [support\[at\]jmbcommunications.com](mailto:support[at]jmbcommunications.com). If you have misplaced your password, you can get a new one by clicking the orange "forgot password" link below the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com.

About Email Address Changes / How To Unsubscribe (Updated 9/7/13)

To unsubscribe, click the Unsubscribe link here: <http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> You CAN NOT unsubscribe either by replying to this email or, if you are an AOL user, by clicking the *spam* button on AOL.

To change your email address, visit <http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> , select *2015-16 St. Maarten Weekly News* list, and follow the unsubscribe instructions. Then, subscribe your new email address. JMB Website Supporters members no longer need to notify Membership Services of the new email address for continued Secret Site access. We'll be notified automatically.

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<http://www.everythingsxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?>

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