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#1033 --- Monday, 2/22/2016 -- 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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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com)

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***the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. We now have over 260,000 readers around the world...***

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



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This narrow format is easily readable on all mobile devices. Scroll down for this week's news.

You can also download PDFs of recent editions here:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free\\_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml](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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## TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

Scroll Down for Full Table of Contents; this edition features many new stories about your favorite island:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' *St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News*, published every Monday (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks).

*In This Week's SXM Weekly News:*

- *Jet Blue To Drop SJU-SXM Flights***
- *Sapphire Court Decision Due in Two Weeks***
- *Orient Beach Businesses Protest French Side Mismanagement***
- *Le Galion Hotel To Be Demolished After Easter, Taking "Tropical Wave" With It***
- *Has Zika Disappeared from St. Martin / St. Maarten?***
- *What Exactly Is So "Ultimate" About The SkyMed Ultimate Membership?***
- *Some Orient Beach Bars Become Instant Profiteers***
- *Make Your Own Perfume or Cologne at Tijon Parfumerie***
- *Make Your Own Rum at the Toppers Rhum Distillery***
- *About Iguanas, Mongoose, Wild Monkeys, & Raccoons***
- *Traveling This Spring Or Summer? How To Handle SkyMed's 90-Day Pre-Existing Conditions Exclusion***
- *Questions & Answers about SkyMed Medical Evacuation***
- *We're Giving Away Ten SXM Vacations... Drawing is March 21***

**35** news stories this week

Scroll down for our complete Table of Contents

## 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](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](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 Rentals of The Week:**

Not in archives.

### **SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:**

Not in archives.

### **Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:**

See them all at [http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare\\_rent\\_sale/index.shtml](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](#)

## This Week's Stories

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest. This week's Table of Contents follows these links:

"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](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](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](http://www.linkedin.com)

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

[http://www.everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://www.everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

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2. Important: Why It's Urgent to Renew Your 2016 Expiring Passport Now
3. "FlyTravelGo" Lets You Compare Fares Easily Online & Buy What's Best for You

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6. What's New at Sapphire?

7. Where To Rent or Buy an SXM Timeshare

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

**Section Three:** Island [Go To This Section](#)

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9. Le Galion Hotel To Be Demolished After Easter, Taking "Tropical Wave" With It: What's The Problem?

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**Section Four:** For Members Only (Revised 12/31/14)

A. Where to Get Member Info: [www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://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 password" in the orange login box near the masthead at [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com).

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://everythingxm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxm.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](http://www.everythingsxm.com) .

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**All JMB Newsletters Read *\*From JMB\****  
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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. Jet Blue To Drop SJU-SXM Flights

Jet Blue Airways has announced that it's discontinuing flights between St. Maarten and San Juan airport effective early in May. .

When it introduced the flights several years ago, JB talked of ramping up to three flights daily. But multiple weekend nonstops from Boston and multiple daily nonstops from JFK reduced the need for SJU-SXM service, and local business was insufficient to sustain it.

The airline's popular nonstops from New York and Boston are unaffected. If you have reservations on this route, contact Jet Blue.

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#### 2. Important: Why It's Urgent to Renew Your 2016 Expiring Passport Now

In 2006, US Customs and Border Patrol mandated passports for US citizens traveling to the Caribbean. Those millions of passports come up for renewal this year, so renewals are likely to take up to six weeks - possibly more.

If yours expires this year, renew it soon. Expedited service is available at a premium. Forms are available at many post offices.

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#### 3. Our "FlyTravelGo" Travel Website Lets You Easily Compare Fares, Buy What's Best

Our [flytravelgo.com](http://flytravelgo.com) website has been redesigned to give you clear preferences when you buy airfare. Now, you can quickly and easily select what's important to you: getting there fast with a minimum number of stops (or none); price; specific airline; time of day. The site also lets you look at fares for specific dates or nearby dates, which may save you money.

FlyTravelGo has become a favorite of many of our readers and their families and friends. Check it out at [www.flytravelgo.com](http://www.flytravelgo.com).

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#### 4. Where to Find Current Weather Observations & Forecasts

Weather the last couple of weeks has been unusually showery. At this point weather usually is getting drier by the day, but not this year.

For current weather, go to [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com) -- the SXM forecast is on our home page and on our Weather page; you can click those links for detailed forecasts. Our Weather page also includes constantly updated satellite images and radar loops for SXM and the Caribbean.

### **SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares**

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#### 5. Sapphire Court Decision Due in Two Weeks

March 8 is the date when the courts in St. Maarten are expected to rule on Sitbon versus Verdier, where the Sitbon Family, which has managed Sapphire for the last few years mostly with its own money, will be told whether the courts will enable it to take over the resort per a purchase and sale agreement it says binds the Verdiers, original Sapphire developers.

If they succeed, the Sitbons promise a new level of quality and timeshare owner satisfaction with the facility, which has been the subject of intense criticism from timeshare owners alleging misuse of maintenance fee monies.

Thousands of Sapphire timeshare owners have either walked away from their weeks or have sold them for pennies on the dollar. Its image, timeshare owners allege, is worse than Pelican Resort was when it was at its worst under the old Martin Vleitman management regime. Taken over by Royal Resorts after bankruptcy and renamed Simpson Bay Resort, that property has been totally renovated and is receiving rave reviews from timeshare owners who stuck with it.

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#### 6. What's New at Sapphire?

Jan Borsje, acting GM at Sapphire under the Verdier family on a three-month contract, appears to be making significant progress there. Recent timeshare owner reports have been positive concerning room cleanliness and some new refrigerators. A model unit shows what the Verdiers are thinking for renovations they have said they will pay for. "Lord knows they have the money," one Sapphire timeshare owner told us. "They've collected it from us for years and there's no evidence they did anything except sit on it."

Others are even more pointed. "They clean the place up a bit every year, but at the end of the day it's the same old place with the same crew of unresponsive owners. Most of them don't even bother to answer their phones." Another called the current changes "lipstick on a pig."

The court will decide what happens next and we'll report on their verdict in our first issue after March 8. We've interviewed Jan Borsje and the Sitbons and will have much more on this next month.

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#### 7. Where To Rent or Buy an SXM Timeshare

If you want a SXM timeshare condo for a fraction of what the resort would charge, buy directly from the timeshare owner -- not the resort. Go to our [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com) and click Timeshare Rentals / Sales and you'll find hundreds of them. Most are for sale for far less than the timeshare owner paid, and way less than you'd pay the resort.

We also accept ads only from our JMB Website Supporters members, people who are not strangers to us.

If you're the seller, how much should you ask? Look at the hundreds of ads on our page and keep your prices competitive with others for the same size unit at the same resort.

N. B., despite total renovations, prices at Simpson Bay Resort remain depressed. In the resale market weeks are plentiful and they may currently offer the best bang for the buck.

Want to advertise your timeshare for sale or for rent? Members only can do that:

New memberships:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal memberships:

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

Membership Reinstatements:

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

### **SECTION 3: Island**

#### **8. Orient Beach Businesses Protest French Side Project Mismanagement**

If Harvard Business School ever wants a case study on how to screw up a country's economy by bungling renovations in an area where tourists congregate and spend, this is it.

The French Side's decision to demolish and replace about a dozen and a half businesses between Pedro's and Kon Tiki on Orient Beach has been a disaster of galactic proportions.

The demolition, site prep, and construction processes were apparently done with little input from restaurant designers or owners, or from architects knowledgeable regarding building oceanfront businesses. The businesses that were to occupy the buildings claim lots of design noncompliance with French law. Others say that seawalls built in the project will exacerbate erosion, not stop it. Rents, businesses say, also border on profiteering -- €2500/month.

But the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back just happened. Businesses owed keys by the builders / Collectivite can't get them because they guy with the keys took a long vacation. Also, businesses had to pay for electrical and water connections to be set up. The Collectivite didn't fund that.

Business owners not yet in their buildings, who have now lost most of high season, are livid. They threatened a protest last Thursday on the main paved road into the area to dramatize their grievances.

It gets worse: see next story.

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#### **9. Le Galion Hotel To Be Demolished After Easter, Taking "Tropical Wave" With It**

As if the Orient Beach Disaster weren't bad enough, now the Collectivite says after Easter it will finally demolish the derelict Le Galion Beach Hotel on Le Galion Beach. It was walloped by Luis and other hurricanes and has been an eyesore for years. They say they want to clear out asbestos and develop a park.

What took so long?

Tropical Wave Restaurant has been doing business at that location for about 39 years and it gets it water and electricity from that building. No problem, the Collectivite says; it can move next door.

There, the Collectivite says Tropical Wave must pay €3000/month plus health premiums plus taxes. "I'll be working for the Collectivite," the owner says, adding that there would be nothing left to live on after paying such a huge rent. And his prices would have to skyrocket. He sells at low prices to locals, mostly; but the Collectivite clearly wants to "upscale" the property following on its Orient Beach activity -- and we all know how successful *that* was.

This will spill over into the streets and into the courts. There are a lot of unhappy business owners on the French

Side. The economy remains bad there despite the near parity of the dollar and Euro, and the government seems to be doing little to help.

We'll keep you posted.

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## 10. Has Zika Disappeared from St. Martin / St. Maarten?

The bad news: no, it hasn't. The good news: there have only been two confirmed cases here, one from the French Side and the other, confirmed this week, from the Dutch. The person in the Dutch Side case had traveled recently and may have contracted Zika overseas.

Zika shows no symptoms in the majority of cases. Except for pregnant women or those attempting to become pregnant, it's no big deal. It comes and goes and you may not even notice it.

But for pregnant women it's huge. It is suspected of causing microcephaly, a birth defect where the brain is unusually small and the baby dies weeks after birth.

If you are pregnant (especially first trimester) or trying to become pregnant, you should see your doctor for travel advice. For others it is not a big deal.

Bear in mind, however, that this mosquito-vector disease can also be spread by having sex with an infected person. Researchers are investigating other modes of transmission; vaccine development; and genetic modification of the vector mosquito (*aedes aegypti*) to stop the spread of the disease.

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## 11. What Exactly Is So "Ultimate" About The SkyMed Ultimate Membership?

If you ever need an emergency medical evacuation -- something that happens to SkyMed members several times a day -- prepare to come up with \$25,000 to \$45,000 to **pay for it in cash in advance in the middle of a life or death emergency**. That is, of course, if you're able to make the arrangements: find a plane capable of the journey; quickly find a qualified crew ready to fly you home; get someone US-certified to give Intensive-Care-Unit-equivalent care to you at 40,000 feet; obtain and transfer your records to your destination hospital; make sure a bed is available and that the doctors know about your medical situation; arrange ambulances at both ends of the trip; and handle customs and immigration on both ends of the trip.

Look at what the SkyMed Ultimate includes: <http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/SkyMedServices.pdf>

Nobody else comes close to this level of service. Want peace of mind when you travel? Here it is. See [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) and see the other SkyMed articles later in this edition.

*There is a profound difference in medical evacuation providers. Only SkyMed "Takes You Home®".*

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## 12. Some Orient Beach Bars Become Instant Profiteers

Over on beautiful Dawn Beach, Dutch Side, two beach lounges and an umbrella will cost you about \$12 total. But at some of the bigger, older establishments on Orient Beach, the beach boys are talking \$30 for two chairs. We don't know whether it's high government fees, greed, or arrogance behind a \$30 fee, but we urge you to shop around. Life is too short to waste your hard-earned money just to line somebody's pockets.

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## 13. Enjoy The Island's Absolute Best Massage Experience...

Ever heard of TripAdvisor? Look up the Ti Spa at L'Esplanade Hotel in Grand Case and you'll find 16 reviews about



Tricia Altenau: <http://tinyurl.com/zhyvykt>

She is an immensely gifted, empathetic, talented young lady. Look at TripAdvisor and make a reservation. You'll want to see her on every visit. My two cents: she's the best massage therapist I've ever encountered anywhere -- the absolute best. Just go....

Tricia last week received our 2016 Everything SXM Award of Excellence.

Tricia gives discounts to JMB members. Still not a member? Join here:

New memberships:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal memberships:

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

Membership Reinstatements:

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

## 14. Make Your Own Perfume or Cologne at Tijon Parfumerie, French Side

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to select various fragrances and test combinations that yield something special -- a fragrance that uniquely says "you"?

Every day, men and women are creating their own colognes or perfumes at Tijon Parfumerie diagonally across the street from Spiga Restaurant at the northern end of Grand Case, French Side.

Owners John and Cindy, who now also have parfumeries in the US, give you simple instructions so you can do it yourself in their Grand Case lab. It's fascinating, educational, and lots of fun. My wife did it two years ago and I did it one week ago and loved it. Named my cologne "Orient Sunrise" and have been wearing it every night since.

Tijon just received our 2016 Everything SXM Award of Excellence.

Learn more about Tijon at [www.tijon.com](http://www.tijon.com).

Tijon gives discounts to JMB members. Still not a member? It's time you joined:

New memberships:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal memberships:

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

Membership Reinstatements:

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

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**St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW):**

[Click to access our recommended real estate agent](#)

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## 15. Now You Can Make Your Own Rum at the Toppers Rhum Distillery

Years ago, "Topper" Daboul asked his wife Melanie if she could create a rum he could use as an after dinner drink

at his Topper's Restaurant in Simpson Bay.

Customers loved it and asked to buy some to take home. That's when Toppers Rhum was launched.

Now they have their own distillery in Cole Bay and can blend and manufacture thousands of bottles of rum every week. It's already distributed in many parts of the USA and distribution is expanding.

We did some taste-testing last week and took lots of pictures; you'll find them posted this weekend (Feb. 20-21) on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#).

There are several great flavors already offered and many more are being tested including a delicious new -- oops, we can't tell you (not yet anyway). Go to Toppers and ask there how you can take a tour of the Toppers Rhum Distillery. You'll love it...

By the way the word "Rhum" is rum -- just the French spelling. Toppers and Toppers Rhum this year received our coveted Everything SXM Award of Excellence.

Toppers gives discounts to our JMB members. Still not a member? It's time you joined:

New memberships:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal memberships:

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

Membership Reinstatements:

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

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## 16. St. Maarten / St. Martin's Best Ice Cream

There are two: Etna Ice Cream, crafted by hand in the St. Louis area on the French Side (you won't find it, no signs) -- and sold in most island markets is the best.

Almost equal (very close) are all the homemade flavors at The Carousel, Cole Bay near Fedex and Cugini. Many delicious flavors and toppings. And the owner, Diego, offers discounts to JMB members -- voucher from the Secret Site and your current, valid JMB Website Supporters membership card required.

Luscious stuff...

If you're still not a JMB member, it's time you joined:

New memberships:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal memberships:

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

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

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## 17. St. Maarten's Best Supermarket

Without a doubt, the single best supermarket on the island is Super U next to McDonald's in Marigot. It's clean; very well stocked; has some of the most reasonable pricing on the island; very fresh fruits and vegetables; and helpful employees who are happy to answer questions. (No deer-in-headlights looks when you ask.)

Go. It's on the French Side but you'll find lots of Dutch Side folks there as well.

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## 18. Why You Should Try to Pay Cash on the French Side

When you buy by credit card on the French Side, your bank exchanges currency and you lose, regardless of the fact that most markets accept dollars at par with Euros *when you pay cash*. Many banks also tack on a fee for international transactions.

Instead, get debit card cash advances and pay cash. You'll save quite a bit of money. (B of A account holders, use Scotiabank ATMs; reciprocity means no Scotiabank ATM charges.)

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## 19. Use Your Wireless Phone With Caution in SXM...

Roaming charges really add up. People who are here for a while often buy a local phone and use it instead; it's much cheaper. Or, get your smart phone unlocked and plunk a local SXM SIM card into it; that's the best of all worlds. (If you're here a while, suspend service on your home cell phone to save \$.)

We think Chippie is the best provider.

If you'd rather rent than buy, go to Sharon's Cell Phone Rentals at Royal Palm Beach Hotel. Prices are very low and the service is excellent.

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## 20. High Tide and Low Tide in the Tropics

In the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick, Canada, the total amount of water flowing when tides change is 160 billion tons. It looks like a 50 foot wall of water there. See more: <http://bayoffundytourism.com/tides/>

Fortunately, the closer to the equator you get the lower the tides are. In SXM you don't even notice any tides, which is quite convenient. The only thing affecting water here now is storms moving up the US East Coast; they can and do create rough conditions here. "When Boston gets a storm, my beach gets washed away," says Dany, owner of the Cupecoy Beach Bar. He's absolutely right....

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## 21. Review of Local & Regional Airlines

There are three principal local airlines here. In terms of numbers of flights, Winair, the national airline, is the biggest. It operates mostly small, rugged Twin Otter airplanes capable of getting into the small and challenging airports in St. Barths, Saba (Google / YouTube them), and other islands. Winair is dependable, safe, courteous, and quite likable, according to locals we talked to about it. Twin Otter flights are quick so prop noise is no big deal.

LIAT (Leeward Islands Air Transport) is most widely known for missing its schedule and sometimes stranding people, as the *Daily Herald* reported a few weeks ago. Some locals have told us it should change its name to *Leave Island Any Time*.

The last airline on this short list is Insel, which flies to a number of locations, most of them from its hub in Curacao. The most memorable info we have on Insel is its mechanical issues. Twice in the last year or two, we've seen aging Insel DC-9 aircraft stuck in SXM with an engine removed. No one was hurt, and the airline says it maintains its planes by the book, but why would planes with disabled engines happen at least twice in so short a period?

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## 22. Where to Feed Iguanas, Where to Feed Donkeys

Iguanas: Two places; first, the tiny pond opposite the gate house at the Westin Resort and casino, Dawn Beach, Dutch Side; and second, the area near the pond between Orleans, French Side, and the scenic overlook at Baie Lucas, French Side.

Donkeys: On the road to the French Side dump at the top of the hill. You can see the hill by looking to the left from the Pinel Island ferry landing.

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## 23. About Iguanas, Mongoose, Wild Monkeys, & Raccoons

SXM has interesting wildlife which includes everything noted above.

Iguanas are noted in story #22. They are all invasive... they displaced the local iguanas some time ago. Most are green but older ones can also be orange. Bright green ones are young. They are fierce-looking vegetarians.

We've seen about eight mongoose this trip, all in the Dawn Beach / Oyster Pond area. They have rust-colored to light brown fur and are low slung and quite long including their long tails (as long as some iguanas). A good picture of a light-colored one is here: <http://tinyurl.com/h3snm4k>

Yes there are wild monkeys here, descendants of former pet monkeys. We've seen two on our current trip, one near Oyster Pond and the other near Orient Beach. They seem to have weathered the drought fine. Estimates are that there are about 2,000 on the island. Are you likely to see them in a two-week trip? Probably not. Most likely spot: Loterie Farm near Pic Paradis, French Side. We saw about two dozen chowing down on small fruit trees there two years ago.

Raccoons are here too. We saw an expired one a few years ago and one evening last week, we saw one slowly ambling across the road near the Cadisco gas station in Grand Case. They also are believed descended from pets.

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## 24. Speaking of SXM: Hear Jeff Berger Every Monday Morning on Island 92

Jeff is live on the air every Monday on Island92 radio, 91.9 FM between 930 and 10am Atlantic time (one hour ahead of EST). You can also listen on their website, [www.island92.com](http://www.island92.com).

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## 25. Food Talk: Hear Topper Every Thursday Morning on Island 92

Topper is a fascinating guy who loves cooking and talking about the best ways to make great food. We count him among our closest friends on SXM. His restaurants are Topper's in Simpson Bay (near Royal Palm Resort), and Toppers by the Sea at Flamingo Resort, on the beach. Melanie, Topper's wife, runs the Topper's Rhum distillery.

Topper is on the air on Island 92 (91.9FM) most Thursdays somewhere between 10 and 11 with food/menu guidance and advice. It's plain talk about ingredients you already have at home and it tells you very simply how to make better food -- which is exactly what Topper does every day in his restaurant.

Topper is great to his people and their loyalty and quest to give excellent service is obvious. He hired a young lady 10 years ago who asked for a job. She started by picking up cigarette butts and other stuff in the parking lot. She did a great job so a year later he moved her to dishwasher -- equally great job. Then short order cook: ditto. Then after a few years chef. Now, 10 years later, that young lady is head chef at Toppers, one of the busiest of all SXM restaurants. She beams. It's a great thing to see and Toppers food is very reasonable and delicious. Try his lobster (way less per lb.. than many other places) and his filet mignon, tender and delicious. He's known for his home cooked brisket (which he cooked kosher for a certain island Rabbi not long ago) and for his meatloaf, but he has lots of choices for all appetites.

Both Toppers and Island 92 are winners of our 2016 Everything SXM Awards of Excellence.

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## 26. Want to Help Island Dogs? Here's How

Although the stray dog situation here has improved, there are still too many. People adopt island dogs and others

simply pitch in to help. Just check Jeff Sochrin's [www.teamgoldendog.org](http://www.teamgoldendog.org) and pitch in what you can; every donation helps. Thx...

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## 27. Restaurant of the Week

Easily one of the best restaurants you'll ever encounter in the Caribbean is a quintessential tropical experience in a class by itself. It's on the beach in a breathtaking setting under a palm tree canopy, sprinkled with comfortable gazebos; it has gentle tradewinds (supplemented by ceiling fans in the gazebos, just in case); an experienced staff; and a huge menu with everything you'd expect in a top-drawer beach bar that's open for both breakfast and lunch.

The lady in charge here is LuLu (also known as Laurell) who over the years we've also dubbed "Wonder Woman" since she does so much so well. Her smile is worth the trip but of course the food and the view are what you come here for. The view is amazing (just look up between the gazebos) and the food easily matches it. Busby's has lots of sandwiches, fish, salads, and much more at lunch, with eggs, sandwiches, french toast, and pancakes at breakfast. Go for either meal. Their Island Pizza is next door, where experienced chefs build great thin-crust pizzas. We visit Busby's dozens of times during every trip to the island.

At night, Busby's morphs into Daniel's By The Sea Italian Restaurant. Cushions soften the seats and candles add to the atmosphere. Great stuff.

Busby's, Daniel's, and Island Pizza are all winners of our 2016 Everything St. Maarten Awards of Excellence. Make sure they're on your short list on your next SXM trip.

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: see story 16.

Big Fish Restaurant [www.bigfishsxm.com/](http://www.bigfishsxm.com/) (featured 2/8/16)  
IZI Ristorante Italiano, [www.iziristoranteitaliano.com](http://www.iziristoranteitaliano.com) (featured 12/14/15)  
Canoa, [www.canoasxm.com](http://www.canoasxm.com) (featured 2/1/16)  
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](http://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](http://www.spiga-sxm.com) (featured 12/21/15)  
Fusion, [www.fusionrestaurant-sxm.com](http://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](http://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 2/19/16)  
Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 1/25/16)  
Pineapple Pete, [www.pineapplepete.com](http://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, Maho complex at Le Terasse  
St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge  
Jimbo's, [www.jimboscafe.com](http://www.jimboscafe.com) (featured 4/13/15)  
Vesna Taverna, [www.vesnataverna.com](http://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)

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## 28. Traveling This Spring Or Summer? How To Handle SkyMed's 90-Day Pre-Existing Conditions Exclusion

SkyMed "Takes You Home"® one-year and multi-year memberships include a 90-day waiting period for pre-existing conditions. Most members want to be sure any pre-existing conditions are covered when they travel so... if you are traveling 90 days or more into the future .. get SkyMed now so when you're ready to go, everything is covered.

Got questions? Email [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com). If you want us to call you to talk SkyMed over, include your phone number and best time to call as well as your time zone (SkyMed is available to Americans, Canadians, and ex pats only.)

For details now, see [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com).

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## 29. Age Is No Deterrent to Getting SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection

SkyMed has no upper age limit on applications for its medical evacuation protection. It does not matter if you're 89 -- apply anyway, there is no charge for unsuccessful applications. SkyMed Takes You Home® to doctors and hospitals you know and trust when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. See [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) for more but read the next few articles; they answer many questions. You can also contact Jeff for more info at [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com).

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## 30. Questions & Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Updated 2/19/16)

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](http://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. What is the maximum age for applying for membership?**

A. No maximum *at all*. Apply away.

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

A. Yes, at about \$9/day per person or maximum \$18/day per family. 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. That's a big advantage over short-term plans.

**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 "Takes You Home®" plan covers you in the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the

Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. The Ultimate membership covers you globally through SkyMed Global -- or you can add a global rider to annual memberships (at \$100/year) which adds rest-of-the-world coverage, also through SkyMed Global. SkyMed does not cover countries where there are open hostilities - Iraq, Iran, Syria, Somalia, North Korea, etc.

SkyMed Takes You Home®: What else matters?

For more, see [skymed.com/jmbspecial](http://skymed.com/jmbspecial) (JMB members) or [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) (non-JMB members) or email Jeff Berger directly at [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.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.** Please tell them you're calling because you heard about them from Jeff Berger.

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## 31. Got Other SkyMed Questions? Here's Where to Ask

If you have questions about SkyMed not answered above, email [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com) and Jeff will get back to you. Please also include your phone number and best time to call; he'll be in touch. *Please use the subject "SkyMed" in your email.*

SkyMed Takes You Home® - what else matters?

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## 32. 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 over 260. 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 for the family plan (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](mailto: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.)

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### 33. We're Giving Away Ten SXM Vacations... and Tons More

Here's a complete list of everything we're giving away as of now...

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

- [Club Orient](#) Naturist Resort, Orient Beach (Must be taken May, 2016)
- [Mary's Boon Beach Resort](#);
- [Oyster Bay Beach Resort](#);
- [La Vista or La Vista Beach](#)
- [Summit Resort](#)
- [Baker's Suites](#)
- [Club Fantastico](#) (Naturist)
- [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 aboard the [Classic Schooner Passaat](#)

One-week car rental (Hyundai i10 or equivalent) from [Leisure Car Rental](#)

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 Sushitto

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

NEW Dinner for two at The Palms Restaurant, 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 on March 21. After we give away all 10 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. *You must give us a phone number you can answer regardless of where you are when we call.*

Enter here:

[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting\\_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml)

Full rules are on that page.

#### The Drawing:

It starts March 21 at 9:15 a.m. Atlantic time. We know that's early but to give away 10 vacations by 11 a.m. Atlantic

Time we must start early. Answer your phone when we call... if you don't answer (the call will be from Island 92's US line), we hang up and you lose. You must answer your phone to win.

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## 34. 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*.

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## 35. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

Look here for our PDF archives: [http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free\\_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml)

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### 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](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](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](http://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](http://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](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret)

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

See [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com).

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#### 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.

### Get Your Own Free Copy Of St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News:

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

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