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#1040 --- Monday, 4/4/2016 -- 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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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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is a send-only email address. For Contact info, see Contact Us
at the end of this newsletter.

Important Note:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' **St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News**, published every Monday (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks). **You are receiving St. Maarten and St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at 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:



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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

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

Get Your Own Free Weekly Copy of SXM Weekly News:

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

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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 260+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits, and your subscription also helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

RENTAL 11/5/2016 12/3/2016 weeks 45 to 48 Belair Beach Hotel We love St. Maarten and over several years have acquired four consecutive weeks (45 through 48) at Belair. We in 2016 plan to travel in a different direction and would like to rent out our four weeks. With daily maid service and a large two BR unit, the beach front location is beautiful and relaxing. I have used this Resort twice in the last three years to recover from major surgery. The calm warm salt water and a beach side massage does wonders for the body and soul! The resort web site provides many details, but please call the owner at 804-462-9916 to answer your specific questions. This time period covers Thanksgiving and must include four weeks at \$5000 total. \$1,250 Frank 804 462 9916 fdsmithnavy@gmail.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 11/14/2015 12/12/2015 Weeks 46,47,48,49 Simpson Bay Resort and Marina Conveniently located on third floor, no elevators required to reach unit, steps away from parking. Laundry facilities across from unit entrance. Master suite has large bedroom, king sized bed, living room with two murphy beds, dining area, full kitchen, bathroom with separate double vanity area. Junior suite is a lockout, with access to main unit, plus separate entrance to outside, therefore able to be rented out. Two double beds, mini kitchen, bathroom with double vanity area. Balconies off both units. Scenic view of Simpson Bay, Kim Sha Beach. \$22,500.00 per week Pearl 506 866 5324 prnowlan@yahoo.ca

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](#)

This Week's Stories

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

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

- 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 password" in the orange login box near the masthead at 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://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. Seasonal Weather Update

April is when typical "winter" weather in SXM starts changing to Spring weather, which is normally dry and hot early-on. But this year has been odd -- as weather has been everywhere, seemingly -- so we'll see what we see.

To talk about weather or anything else island-related with other SXM fans, visit our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). Lots of pictures are there, plus it's a great place to ask questions and give / get answers.

2. Jet Blue Is Continuing New York & Boston Nonstops to SXM & Will Probably Add More

Lots of folks got thrown into a tizzy last week when SXM's Minister of Tourism incorrectly said that Jet Blue was cancelling all its flights to SXM. The comment was incorrect.

As we previously reported, Jet Blue, which runs more flights than any other airline in San Juan (where it has its own terminal), is discontinuing flights between SJU and SXM. AA did the same years ago. Jet Blue had been flying 100-seat E190 jets on that route and could not fill them off-season.

Talking about that, Tourism Minister Arrindell said "all" flights were being discontinued (incorrect) instead of all *SJU* flights, a big difference. We almost immediately posted a note on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) saying her statement was incorrect.

Here's what's happening...

First, JB is cancelling all SJU-SXM flights in the next few months. Smaller airlines will continue to provide flights but not on jets. It's possible JB will bring back these flights at some point, but don't hold your breath -- especially with equipment needs for looming flights to Cuba.

Second, JB does make seasonal adjustments (frequency and route changes) to many of its Caribbean routes as do most other carriers. Some Boston nonstops may change during summer to connections via JFK, but on weekends there are still multiple flights to choose from in both directions. BOS nonstops to SXM should resume some time in October and in fact Jet Blue's website is already showing nonstops for October 29.

Third, a JetBlue contact with whom we spoke this past week told us, inadvertently, that nonstops will be coming to SXM from Ft. Lauderdale. He did not say when, but noted that Lauderdale, a major Jet Blue "focus city," will offer connections to SXM from numerous other Jet Blue cities. Service to SXM from Lauderdale has not been announced but our guess is that it may start in 2017, though sooner is possible. This could certainly change if JB is awarded flights to Cuba....

3. Lack of Promotion Will Hurt SXM Airlift to South America, a Critical Problem

During winter, SXM relies heavily on flights from the USA, Canada, and Europe to get its customary high season "bounce." In Summer, business drops but this year's drop could be worse than usual. Four reasons:

First, Zika. Although *aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the principal carriers of Zika, are expected to increase the portion of the US where they're found (as far north as metropolitan New York this summer, some scientists are saying), it's still much more common in the Caribbean and that knowledge may stop some US summer vacationers.

Second, SXM during the Summer relies increasingly on tourists from South America, where it's winter. But Copa Airlines, a Panamanian carrier that carries traffic to SXM from South America, is complaining about the lack of tourism promotion by SXM and may wind up cutting flights rather than increasing them. If SXM goes after other large South American carriers, their due diligence will show a lack of promotional budgeting by SXM which will turn them off. What goes around comes around and SXM cannot get the increased tourist visits it wants and needs without spending big money -- think \$25-million/year -- to promote itself. Until the island *gets it* about promotion, it will continue to suffer. (See next story.)

Third, counterproductive inaction by the French Side government in allowing two days of demonstrations to paralyze much of the French Side, causing a number of tourists to be stuck there and miss planes. Some tourists caught in the melee vowed not to return. Statistically significant? Probably not, but regardless of that it did hurt tourism and bad news travels fast in Social Media and is always remembered longer than good news. The French Side has still not settled the matter of the Orient Beach bars/restaurants/shops so the disruptions may not be 100% over.

Fourth, counterproductive inaction by the Dutch Side government on timesharing consumer protection. It has been obvious to millions of people for a number of years that St. Maarten needs timeshare owner consumer protection legislation. The Dutch Side government has said it agrees but has only given the topic lip service. The history of a number of resorts provides ample evidence of why such legislation is essential: Atrium, Sapphire, Caravanserai, Diamond Resorts, and Alegria all provide examples. Thousands of Caravanserai timeshare owners "screwed" out of their property (that word came from the island's top TV commentator) by the individual who bought the resort at auction have said that the island ignored their pleas for help so they will not return.

See other tourism stories elsewhere in this edition.

4. Cuba May Affect SXM Much Sooner Than The Island Expects

Some island officials and some businesspeople say "it will be years" before Cuba affects SXM and the island has plenty of time to react and prepare.

Our short answer to those two assertions are simply: no it won't and no it doesn't.

When it became obvious that Barack Obama was going to liberalize the relationship between Cuba and the US, many people reacted that it would be years before the infrastructure that Americans expect to be realized in Cuba, so the impact of this liberalization would be a long time coming.

But the point is that millions of Americans want to see Cuba *as it is right now*, stuck in 1957, before all the changes have occurred. That big wave of initial post-liberalization American tourists will start later this year when flights and cruise ship visits begin. (We hate to say it but Front Street's problems this year could well be worse next winter.)

The first wave will last a few years even as the second wave begins to build -- as infrastructure morphs into the 21st century.

There is no good news coming from Cuba for St. Maarten / St. Martin unless SXM gets its act in gear and starts working. So far it has shown no signs of doing that. A number of businesspeople we talked to in the last few weeks were attracted by the possibility of opening up shop in Cuba.

But one seasoned business owner summed it up very nicely. We'll paraphrase what he told us: "I've been on this island for many years," he said. "Here we can hire knowledgeable individuals with some rudimentary knowledge of hospitality and show them how it's done. I've been to Cuba. In Cuba the focus on hospitality to meet American expectations does not even exist. The kind of service we deliver here does not even exist there, in any form. Any entrepreneur from SXM who wants to start up there will have a far tougher road doing it than they can possibly imagine."

5. Where to Find Current Weather Observations & Forecasts

For current weather, go to 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 entire Caribbean.

6. Our "FlyTravelGo" Travel Website Makes Reservations Fast & Simple

Our 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.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

7. Court Decision on Sapphire Beach Resort Ownership Likely This Week

Lawyers for the Sitbon family, litigating against Sapphire developers Jean and Philippe Verdier, are saying they do

not expect any more court delays in a decision on the litigation.

At stake is whether Sapphire Beach Club in Cupecoy will be changing ownership. Originally slated for March 8, the decision was delayed until Tuesday, March 22, then delayed another two weeks.

The Sitbon family, which ran the resort for a few years under contract to resort developers the Verdier family, should find out then whether they get to buy Sapphire Beach Club.

We'll post results as soon as we have them on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#) and in *SXM Weekly News*.

RCI recently reinstated the trading privileges of Sapphire Resort timeshare owners. See next story.

8. We Poked Around Sapphire & Here's What We Saw

Timeshare owners unable to trade during the winter either visited the resort themselves or rented out their units -- but many of them did visit the island.

Apparently few stayed around the hotel during the day. The few times we walked out to the pool area it was nearly deserted. Bar / restaurant / and other public areas were very quiet.

Early in January we visited our old room which was unchanged in the prior 10 years. It was clean but smelled of mildew and the hot tub was empty, as were all balcony hot tubs at the resort at that time. New acting GM Jan Borsje told us that week that all a/c's were to be thoroughly cleaned that week after not having been touched for an extended period. He was in charge of the cleanup and some renovations apparently including new refrigerators.

The changes at Sapphire were sufficient to convince RCI to reinstate the resort for trading.

9. We Poked Around Alegria, & Here's What We Saw

For a two-hour period last week, we went into the Alegria Resort ("the place of happiness," the sign says), formerly Caravanserai, and nosed around.

The place was clean and we saw a number of folks concentrating on keeping it that way. Truth is, they should have little problem because the place was virtually empty. During the entire two hours, we saw exactly two families and two other couples -- one of which appeared to be visiting the other.

Sunset Bar was busy as usual but its visitors were cruise ship passengers, not hotel guests. Pictures in walkways show a megayacht port which no captain is likely ever to use (many reasons) as well as a tall parking garage near the airport runway which the airport is prepared to fight in court. Pictures will soon be posted on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#).

Someone who was with us inside Alegria said, "This place is a ghost town." She certainly got that right.

10. Attention Caravanserai Timeshare Owners: You Can Still Join The Litigation Group

Former Caravanserai resort timeshare owners: the door has reopened for you to join the group of other former Caravanserai timeshare owners that is litigating against Alegria, the entity that took over the resort and attempted to declare their timeshare contracts null and void.

If you "owned" timesharing at Caravanserai and didn't sign the form Alegria emailed you, you really ought to join this group.

And if you owned timesharing at Caravanserai and did sign that form, you ought to contact Lexwell attorneys in SXM directly. It seems to us that Alegria's mailing of that form may have been done without following due process. If so, it may have been illegal and therefore void.

If you are a former Caravanserai timeshare owner and would like more information about what is being offered by TOCA, the association of litigating timeshare owners, and about costs of participation, contact tocagroup@gmail.com. Make sure you provide all the info they might need about your Caravanserai timeshare ownership.

Their communications will answer most of your questions.

11. Simpson Bay Timeshare Owners Who Hung In Got a Great Deal

Floor-to-ceiling renovations are about to start in the final Simpson Bay Resort building, Flamboyant, that will convert the last of the resort's rooms to the same state-of-the-art shape as the rest of the resort.

Owners are highly impressed with the results. The resort looks and feels like an entirely new place -- which it really is.

Annual Maintenance Fees have remained close to former rates as well, with small increases. The Resort has been very busy with high occupancy. For short money per week, timeshare owners have a brand new resort.

We'll have more news on Simpson Bay late this year when Flamboyant finishes and another new project, adding to the attractiveness of the resort, begins. Stay tuned.

SECTION 3: Island

Get Your Free Trip Home

in a Private Medical Evacuation Jet

When You Become Critically Ill or Injured While Traveling:

SkyMed Takes You Home® in an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet for exactly \$0 -- home to doctors and hospitals you know and trust. When you need SkyMed in a hurry, it's only a phone call away IF you're a SkyMed member. So... get your SkyMed membership now, **before** you need it. See more at <http://www.getskymed.com>.

Membership is as little as about \$1.25/day.

Major discounts on all SkyMed multiyear memberships are available to JMB Website Supporters members; see next story:

New memberships:

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

Renewal memberships:

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

Membership Reinstatements:

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

Announcing Our 14th Anniversary Membership Sale - 260+ SXM Discounts at Sale Prices

Special 14th Anniversary Sale pricing for new memberships, renewals, and membership reinstatements is in effect starting April 1 at 8 pm Eastern time.

Great pricing for every type of membership:

New memberships:

One year, \$44 (our reg. \$59); four years, \$89 (not normally offered) = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

Renewal memberships:

One year, \$35; three years, \$59 (our reg. \$69); seven years, \$109 (our reg. \$139) = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; five years, \$99; seven years, \$129. = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

12. Carnival Time in SXM

Carnival is more of a local event than the Heineken Regatta, which catered to international sailors and fans. But many tourists come to enjoy Carnival with locals.

Some events have already occurred and others are imminent. Look: <https://www.facebook.com/sxmcarnival/?fref=ts>

13. Our "Five Million Smiles" SXM Vacation Giveaway Will Begin This Month

To celebrate everythingxsm.com surpassing five million visits next year, we have a very special giveaway in the works. We're calling it Five Million Smiles, a name suggested by SXM chef / restaurateur Ciro Russo. We expect it to be the biggest giveaway we've ever done.

Our 10 vacation giveaway, held March 21, celebrated [our site](#) surpassing 4.5-million visitors. The 10 vacation prize winners were:

- [Club Orient](#) Winner Tami M., Indiana
- [Mary's Boon Beach Resort](#); Winner Jerry P., Wisconsin
- [Oyster Bay Beach Resort](#); Winner David E., Utah
- [La Vista or La Vista Beach](#) Winner Roy M, New York
- [Summit Resort](#) Winner James S., Pennsylvania
- [Baker's Suites](#) Winner Joe D, Georgia
- [Club Fantastico](#) Winner Sandy S., Arizona, traded to the winner of Club Orient; First Prize Winner
- [Le Petit Hotel](#) Winner Marco F., St. Martin
- [Simpson Bay Resort](#) Winner Lara R., St. Martin, Grand Prize Winner
- El Zafiro Boutique Hotel Simpson Bay Winner Donna G., Pennsylvania

Details on all the prizes won by the First and Grand Prize Winners were published in last week's *SXM Weekly News*.

14. The Horseman of Marigot

If you thought you might have seen a horse with no saddle walking around Marigot, you were probably right.

A gentleman there has a very well trained horse and walks all over town with him. The horse stays about six paces behind his owner, and waits on the sidewalk when the man goes inside. It's all business; for small change, you can have a picture of the horse with you in Marigot.

15. The Best Places to Get Delicious French Pastries & Fresh Baguettes

One wonderful thing about SXM is that it has an abundance of pastry shops.

We'll start off in Simpson Bay and go clockwise around the island:

Sucriere next to Fedex and Island 92 is a favorite haunt of business owners and tourists. Delicious pastries and breads, good drinks, nice setting at the water's edge.

Next, up the road apiece, offering more selections is Taste Factory, with a/c inside. Great coffee too. A short distance away on the ocean side of Airport Road is Cafe Atlantico, offering a variety of breads (many restaurants buy here).

On the French Side just north of the French Side Drawbridge is the Simply Market (another is between Grand Case and Orient). Both bake their own baguettes and a small variety of pastries.

Opposite the entrance to Super U market in Marigot (the best stocked, best-priced, best fruits/vegetables/cheese etc. on the island, in our opinion), is Au Pain Gourmand, an excellent small bakery with cakes, pastries, many kinds of breads, sandwiches, and drinks. Great stuff, excellent pricing (one dollar equals one Euro).

Downtown Marigot has both another Sucriere (different ownership) and Sarafina, which is the busiest pastry shop on the island. Enormous selection.

In Oyster Pond near the "Culinary Village" on the road to Oyster Bay Beach Resort is Pier Grocer, where pastry chef LuLu starts baking really early every morning. The best thing to do is order the evening before and arrive early, since most everything is sold out quickly. Lots of croissants, breads, and rolls. Delicious stuff.

Carl's Bakery in Cole Bay, down the street from Prime Cash and Carry, has wonderful doughnuts -- light and quite delicious. Get a dozen ... one or a few are never enough.

16. Where to Buy Gas

Gas prices on the Dutch Side are usually higher than the French Side. Cadisco stations at Orient and diagonally opposite the Simply Market in Marigot charge 1:1 for Euros and dollars (not all Cadisco stations do that); we usually buy at the one near Simply. Very good prices but still far higher than the US.

17. Enjoying the Serenity of Colombier

Drive north from Marigot and just beyond the left-side road to Friars Bay you'll find a sign pointing to Colombier: go. Take your camera. This is a beautiful, natural area with a small village at the end. Great place for photographing SXM much as it was 200 years ago....

18. SXM's Best Take-Home: Island Paintings from Roland Richardson

Roland Richardson is the world's foremost plein air impressionist painter. Born and raised on the French Side, Roland's paintings permanently capture that which he *paints from life*, using live subjects exclusively -- whether radiant flowers blooming across the island or people from all walks of life.

One of our great pleasures on our SXM trips is watching the artist at work in his gallery/museum in Marigot. Speaking freely with his guests, he explains what he's doing, answers questions, and talks about the richness and diversity of colors on his native island.

See his site, www.rolandrichardson.com and plan to visit the studio. Paintings and high-quality Glycees are available for purchase. They will help you bring a gorgeous part of the Caribbean back to your home or office....

19. Have You Seen My Etchings?

When visiting a Grand Case restaurant a few years ago, we noticed some etchings on the wall which depicted Grand Case as it was more than 100 years ago. We thought they were antiques, stunning in detail and accurate to the period.

They weren't. They were etchings created in recent decades by Sir Roland, by hand. He doesn't include objects like cars in his pictures -- objects which could / would date his work. He seems to prefer timelessness, and at the end of the day his work is quite extraordinary.

See his site, www.rolandrichardson.com and plan to visit the studio. Etchings, original paintings, and high-quality Glycees are available for purchase. As we noted in story #18, they will help you bring a gorgeous part of the Caribbean back to your home or office....

20. SXM's Only Zipline is at Loterie Farm

Although the island is likely to have another Zip Line later this year, currently the only one darts through the pristine forest at Loterie Farm on the French Side. The views from the top of the zipline course are tremendous and adventure lovers will relish the entire experience.

See and learn more here: <http://loteriefarm.com/>

21. The Restaurants at Club Orient

Club Orient, the most popular naturist resort in the Caribbean, has two restaurants, both open to the public.

The Perch, on the beach close to the northern end of the resort, is a very small and simple bar / restaurant which serves sandwiches and some other items on its limited menu and has a busy bar. It's open daily but closes after the beach crowd goes home.

Papagayo, at the southern end of the Club Orient property, has a far more extensive menu since it's a full restaurant open for both lunch and dinner, and it has occasional holiday parties. We've been to Papagayo many times and the food is excellent. Bring towels to sit on.

Since these restaurants are inside a naturist resort, clothing is optional.

22. Why You Shouldn't Go In The Water Alone...

Virtually no SXM beaches have lifeguards. Therefore, if you plan to swim do it near a number of other people or with friends, so if you have any problems there's someone to help you.

We know of three drownings on SXM beaches this past winter. Please do be careful out there.... and see story 23 and 34.

23. SkyMed Evacuates More Than Three Dozen SXM Visitors...

In the last several years, at least three dozen SkyMed members have required emergency medical evacuations from SXM to the US or Canada so their sudden critical illnesses or injuries could be dealt with by doctors and hospitals

they know and trust -- and where their health insurance actually works.

Every day SkyMed handles multiple evacuations, either from within North America or elsewhere in the SkyMed Universe. Don't risk having to come up with \$45,000 in cash in advance to pay up front for an urgent medical evacuation. SkyMed is your free ticket home: see article 34 to learn more. Never travel anywhere without SkyMed protection.

24. Culinary Magician: Mario Tardiff, Mario Bistrot, Porto Cupecoy

There are some extraordinary restaurants on SXM and we often tell you about them here. One of the very best is Mario Tardiff's Mario Bistrot now relocated to beautiful new quarters at Porto Cupecoy. Parking is easy and views are classic and beautiful.

But the real joy here is the food, from the beginning of the evening to the last morsel. In fact, Mario Bistrot (his old location in Marigot was called Mario's Bistro) already is what thousands of other restaurants want to be when they grow up....

We will name Mario a future Restaurant of the Week. Fabulous, creative appetizers, dinners, and desserts covering the spectrum of French fine dining with fish, beef, poultry, and vegetarian selections. His hummus is amazing -- and it has great competition elsewhere but it does come out on top.

We visited Mario multiple times this trip and will increase that on our next trip. Our upcoming Restaurant of the Week feature on Mario will name and detail a number of his top creations. In the meantime, just go. One of the best....

25. Taking a Day Trip to Anguilla

It's easy: go early in the morning to the Anguilla Ferry Terminal at the Marigot waterfront. There are plenty of places to park. Bring your passports and camera. You will find people at the Blowing Point Ferry port in Anguilla who can rent you a car, or rent one in advance by recommendation of your SXM car rental company. Ride around and enjoy. It's a pristine island with many beautiful, quiet beaches and excellent restaurants. Get a map and find your way to Shoal Bay, the most beautiful of the beaches... you'll have a great day.

Anguilla is British so they drive on the left and there are no clothing-optional beaches.

26. Not Much News About Sargasso Seaweed

We saw hardly any of it the last few weeks. We're not saying it's over, but this past winter overall had less than the last couple of years. It's also selective, hitting east-facing beaches harder than west. Most beaches have equipment now to remove it so it is not really much of an issue.

27. About Your Safety in SXM

Go to this page on our site: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/sxm_news/crime-in-st-maarten-st-martin.shtml

28. How You Can Benefit From Giving Us New SXM Discounts

JMB members who give us contact information (including email address and the name of the owner) of businesses that might offer discounts to JMB members get a one-year extension when the referral agrees to join the program, assuming the referral was not contacted previously. To contact us about this email susan@jmbcommunications.com

with the subject JWS Business Referral. Sorry, nonmembers are not eligible for this business referral bonus.

29. Best SXM Car Rentals

Four different St. Maarten car rental companies offer discounts to JMB members, some up to 15% a week. Tropical/Tropicana, now with an almost entirely new fleet, was the first to join us many years ago. This winter we were joined by both Leisure Car Rental, a local woman-owned business, and Thrifty Car Rental, for those who prefer a global provider. JMB members will find everything they need to obtain JMB Website Supporters discounts on the Secret Website. Login using the orange login box below the masthead on all pages of everythingsxm.com.

Great pricing is in effect for every type of membership:

New memberships:

One year, \$44 (our reg. \$59); four years, \$89 (not normally offered) = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

Renewal memberships:

One year, \$35; three years, \$59 (our reg. \$69); seven years, \$109 (our reg. \$139) = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; five years, \$99; seven years, \$129. = Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

30. What Will Happen Next at Orient Beach?

Although both sides recently reported progress toward solving the issues that vendors have with the new restaurant, bar, and shop buildings built by the French Side government between Pedro's and Kon Tiki on Orient, the solution is still nowhere near complete. We'll keep you posted but if this is not resolved to the vendors' satisfaction, another demonstration could easily occur. All parties should do their best to avoid that....

As always we'll keep you posted.

31. Check Your JMB Membership Card: No Card, No SXM Discounts (How To Get Yours)

Every JMB Website Supporters member receives an updated Membership Card by email (from tracy@jmbcommunications.com) whenever there's a membership transaction. Check yours. Discount vouchers must be used with your current, valid Membership Card; no card, no discounts, which is noted on all vouchers.

If you don't have yours, check your email from Tracy -- it was sent to you. It also shows your Expiration Date. As always, all membership questions should be addressed to support@jmbcommunications.com. That is the fastest way to contact us. Do *not* reply to this email (Jeff1620) to contact us; that "send" address for Weekly News is unmonitored.

32. Restaurant of the Week

Because of the restaurant article in this issue, we are skipping a "ROW" this 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 or scroll below the restaurant list.

We'll cover another restaurant here next week.

Sill not a JMB member? You're spending way too much for practically everything you buy in SXM. Get hundreds of discounts and other benefits: see below the restaurants list.

- Big Fish Restaurant www.bigfishsxm.com/ (featured 2/8/16)
- IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 2/29/16)
- Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 3/22/16)
- SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 3/7/16)
- 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 2/19/16)
- Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 1/25/16)
- Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 2/2/15)
- Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 5/4/15)
- 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 (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)

Join JMB Website Supporters today for hundreds of discounts across SXM:

Great pricing for every type of membership:

New memberships:

One year, \$44 (our reg. \$59); four years, \$89 (not normally offered) == Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

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

Renewal memberships:

One year, \$35; three years, \$59 (our reg. \$69); seven years, \$109 (our reg. \$139) == Starts 10 p.m. EDT 4/1/16

www.everythingsexm.com/secret Go to the Membership Renewal Center

Membership Reinstatements:

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

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

[Click to access our recommended real estate agent, Arun Jagtiani, featured on HGTV:](#)

33. No Matter Where You Travel or When, Make Sure You Have a Free Trip Home...

SkyMed "Takes You Home"® on an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. That's a free trip home exclusively for SkyMed members which gives them huge peace-of-mind.

Got questions? Email jeff@getskymed.com. If you want us to call you to answer your SkyMed questions, 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. (We're repeating this because many families are traveling now on school vacations.)

For details, see www.getskymed.com.

34. Questions & Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Heavily Updated 3/2016)

Here are constantly updated questions and answers about SkyMed, the folks who fly you home in 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 say in their fine print that they 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 low 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 -- which is why we recommend annual or multiyear memberships. *Why risk the hurdle of medical requalification?*)

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 important. You'll find them on our downloadable SkyMed Benefits PDF 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, when 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 in the US or Canada 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 in full, immediately. *Just remember that you must medically requalify every time you need a new short-term membership, which is why most of our members buy and renew annual or multiyear Ultimate SkyMed memberships instead of short-term.* Those memberships cover all pre-existing conditions in full after only 90 days. More on that is below.

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), out of your home country (USA or Canada) 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 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 that SkyMed approves, they'll renew it every year upon on-time payment of your renewal fee. No physical exam is required regardless of your age or health if you've paid your membership renewal 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. There is no maximum. 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 key 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, not policies) 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. **Ex-Pat and "Silver" memberships also are offered.**

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, assuming renewals are paid on time. 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. **Multiyear memberships give you more benefits than annual memberships but cost less when paid at inception. They're quite a bargain.**

Q. Is there a best time to buy?

A. Yes -- exactly like fire insurance, buy it before you need it! Why gamble? The peace of mind alone is worth every penny.

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

The basic annual 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.

Got Other Questions?

If you have questions about SkyMed not answered above, email 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?

For more, see skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members) or www.getskymed.com (non-JMB members) or email Jeff directly at 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.

35. Interact With Fellow SXM Visitors on Our Everything SXM Facebook Site

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*.

36. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

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

Updated weekly.

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.

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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