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#1046 --- Monday, 5/16/2016 -- 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
of 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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to be sure you receive this newsletter every week.

IMPORTANT: "Jeff1620" 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:



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



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

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?>

Enter your email address at the top and click SUBMIT. When you receive the confirming email, click the confirming link and you're in.

TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

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

In This Week's SXM Weekly News:

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[28](#) 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 and features them here.

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else, worldwide, for no ad charge or commission, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_xsm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 260+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits -- and your membership subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

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

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

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 260+ Money-Saving SXM-focused travel discount benefits through JMB Website Supporters:

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

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2. Current SXM Weather
3. JMB Completing Arrangements to Move Flytravelgo Travel Website

Section Two: Accommodations (**Hotels, Inns, Timeshares**) [Go To This Section](#)

4. SXMs Best Large Timeshare Resorts
5. Hard Rock Hotel Development Update
6. New Hotels for SXM
7. Discounted Hotel Stays for You from JMB

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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25. Interact with Fellow SXM Visitors on Our Everything SXM Facebook Site
26. Where To Find past Issues of SXM Weekly News
23. Where to Get Answers about SKYMED Medical Evacuation

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://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 260+ benefits... and more coming soon.

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members 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. Hurricane Season About to Begin

The 2016 Atlantic hurricane season is about to begin, and meteorologist Rob Lightbown is predicting that it will be busier than previously expected due to La Niña conditions.

Here is [the full story](#). We urge you to read this from beginning to end, since the news for St. Maarten appears to be good but the news for the US East and Gulf coasts is not so good. If you're unable to read Rob's commentary, see our [Facebook page](#); the essence of his comments is there.

2. Current SXM Weather

For current SXM 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.

Early in May we added Hurricane Preparation Advice to our site, courtesy of Crown Weather. That page is here: <http://everythingxm.com/sxm/weather/hurricane-preparedness-building-your-hurricane-kit.shtml>. Crown Weather is our go-to site for accurate, up-to-the-minute information about major storms including tropical storms and hurricanes. For more about what Crown Weather does, look [here](#).

3. JMB Completing Arrangements to Move "FlyTravelGo" Travel Website

We are currently moving the flytravelgo.com travel website to a different, more technologically dependable booking engine to increase its uptime. We'll let you know when this is done; it should be early June. We urge you to try the site in the interim; if you encounter any reliability issue, we apologize.

If you have reservations made through FlyTravelGo, *make sure you have contact info for its Customer Service*, which is currently handled by folks from Orbitz. Contact info is on the current FlyTravelGo site. We at JMB have no information about flights you book through FlyTravelGo.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

4. SXM's Best Large Timeshare Resorts

Thanks to substantial renovations, there has been a recent resurgence in interest in accommodations at larger St. Martin timeshare resorts.

Here, in no special order, are our reviews of the best:

First, Simpson Bay Resort. For years, Simpson Bay was the goat of St. Maarten timeshare resorts. Today, thanks to nearly finished wall to wall and floor to ceiling renovations, the resort has become a showcase for timeshare done right. If you're considering renting at any large SXM timeshare resort, Simpson Bay should be atop your list. It has all the amenities you want, great service, superb leadership, and top-notch accommodations. To buy a timeshare week, they continue to be available at relatively inexpensive pricing from current timeshare owners on our site, www.everythingSXM.com.

Second, Bel Air Beach Resort is conveniently located between Philipsburg and Simpson Bay on its own beach. Raved about by its timeshare owners, Bel Air is a quiet resort that just keeps people happy. Due to its location, it's quiet and restful but close to a lot of action.

Third, La Vista and La Vista beach are two related resorts on Pelican Key with rather different accommodations — condos on the beach, and intimate chalets on the hillside. We've stayed there and loved it and think you will too. Their restaurant is renowned as well, and their experienced staff knows what it's doing. They are an Everything SXM Award of Excellence winner, too.

Divi Little Bay Beach Resort, fourth, is on the same Peninsula as an historical Fort — the only resort on the island to be so situated. Divi has all the amenities, excellent food on site, gracious service, and modern accommodations. It's well worth your attention.

Fifth, the Royal Islander resort includes two sections, one named for the beach (La Plage) and the other named for the hillside, La Terrasse. If you like activity, this is the place. It's in the middle of the Maho district with lots of stores, a casino, piano bar, and restaurants. Royal Islander is the closest quality resort to Maho beach, made famous by videos of jets landing at SXM Airport.

Sixth, Oyster Bay Beach Resort, on Dawn beach on the eastern side of the island, has a beautiful very private physical plant, multiple restaurants with more outside the resort's gate, and scenic Dawn beach which offers great snorkeling plus a killer view of the Caribbean and St. Barth's. Oyster Bay is also a winner of our Everything SXM Award of Excellence.

Seventh, Atrium Resort is another excellent property on Kim Sha beach, Simpson Bay. One of its best features is its location, not only on the beach but in the heart of Simpson Bay. We also hear virtually no complaints about Atrium, always a good sign.

It's entirely possible that we missed a few places here, and if so we apologize. Bear in mind that we are focusing primarily on larger, better St. Maarten timeshare resorts.

Now, comments about some large timeshare resorts not included above:

First, Sapphire Beach Resort. Sapphire is in the middle of a court battle to determine its future ownership and course. It was in RCIs dog house for a couple of years, which meant that people could neither trade into or out of it as a result of many issues. RCI just reopened it to trading, a sign of improvement. It has not been out of the doghouse long enough for us to recommend it.

Second, Diamond Resorts owns both Flamingo and Royal Palm Resorts on SXM. Google Diamond Resorts and you'll find a lot of interesting things. The reason we're not recommending either resort now is their astronomical annual maintenance fees, which make it difficult for owners to rent or sell their units. Although the facilities and staffs are good, that's not enough for us to recommend either resort.

Princess Port de Plaisance, third, is undergoing major changes. Its renovations should be finished before long, and at that time it's entirely likely that we'll recommend them.

5. Hard Rock Hotel Development Update

The Seminole nation drives the Hard Rock Hotel empire which has expressed interest in locating a year-round hotel and casino on St. Maarten. Working with Simpson Bay Resort, the two tried to make that happen a few years ago but the idea wasn't practical for the Seminoles. On its own, Simpson Bay has done a great job of upgrading (see previous article).

The Seminole tribe continues to have an interest in expanding in the Caribbean. We've heard that it's about to announce a major development -- but not in St. Maarten.

See story #11; we're sure Theo will not be happy.

6. New Hotels for SXM..

On a number of occasions over the last year, we wrote here about several new hotels that are planned for the island, almost all of them on the Dutch side. There are three projects that we fully expect to be realized — one near the port of St. Maarten, next to the cruise ship facilities; another in Cay Bay near the indigo Bay development; and the third would be part of the massive redevelopment project that will start within the next year in Marigot, supposedly.

As always, we'll keep you posted.

7. Discounted Hotel Stays for You from JMB

One of the most popular benefits of JMB Website Supporters membership is discounted hotel stays on the Dutch

side of the island. See the secret website for details on available discounted accommodations. If you're not yet a JMB member, see article 13a — our 26th anniversary sale is now underway.

SECTION 3: Island

7a.

Summer Vacation Season Is Coming: How Do You Pay \$45,000 In Cash, In Advance To Fund a Medical Evacuation Jet Home When You Become Critically Ill or Injured While Away?

SkyMed *Takes You Home*®

If you're a SkyMed member, SkyMed *Takes You Home* for free. One phone call is all it takes.

If you're not a SkyMed member, you must find and pay for the medevac jet, fuel, flight crew, medical staffing, medical supplies, ambulances, fees, etc. -- which could easily top \$45,000 or more, often far more -- in cash, in advance, before anything even begins to happen.

If you're a SkyMed member, 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>. Or call Jeff Berger at 508-747-8281 (normal business hours, Eastern time) or email him at jeff@getskymed.com for answers to any SkyMed questions. (Please use the subject SkyMed Inquiry.)

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

Major discounts on all SkyMed multiyear memberships are available to our JMB Website Supporters members, who get more than 260 other SXM island discounts & benefits:

New JMB memberships:

Membership Sale begins Sunday night 5/15

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

Renewal JMB memberships:

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

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

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

8. A Series of Travel Disasters in SXM

Not every trip to SXM winds up the relaxing event you'd expect.

A recent Summer trip ended in disaster when a child visiting her grandmother in Grand Case was bitten in the head by the grandmother's bulldog, imperiling the girl's eyesight. She was flown to Miami in a medical evacuation jet for emergency eye surgery that saved her sight. *Flight cost to the patient: \$0.*

A woman from Virginia shopped at an island grocer and headed back to her car carrying two bags of groceries. She tripped and fell on a curb and knew at once she had fractured her hip. After being stabilized locally, she was flown home on a medical evacuation jet from SkyMed where she had the surgery she needed. *Flight cost to the patient: \$0.*

Two men were riding their horses on a hill in Cole Bay when a car backfiring spooked one of the horses, which threw its rider. The other rider got off his horse to check his companion when the car again backfired, spooking the horse again which led it to kick its dismounted driver in the head, luckily causing "only" a severely dislocated jaw. The local hospital had no ability to solve that problem so the victim was airlifted by SkyMed back to Pennsylvania for surgery. *Flight cost to the patient: \$0.*

A member of the clergy fell down cement stairs and broke her leg. She too was airlifted home by SkyMed for surgery. *Flight cost to the patient: \$0.*

A man suffered severe respiratory failure and lapsed into a coma on the island. He too was airlifted and returned to Texas where he recovered. *Flight cost to the patient: \$0.*

Not all trips end well: anything can happen when you travel. Being a member of SkyMed was the common thread in just about all these cases. SkyMed took its members home in a private, ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet -- home to doctors and hospitals the patient knows and trusts -- and home where their health insurance works.

All this is why we always recommend SkyMed. Call Jeff Berger today at 508-747-8281 and leave your name, phone number, and time zone. Jeff will call back at a mutually convenient time and answer all your questions. He can also sign you up by phone. You're eligible to apply regardless of your age or health if you are a U.S. or Canadian citizen or an American or Canadian expat living in SXM.

Anything can happen. Do it today. To learn more, visit www.getskymed.com. *JMB members get big discounts off SkyMed's regular pricing: see story 9.*

9. SkyMed Is On Sale for JMB Members Only

If you're a JMB member, you get big discounts off SkyMed's regular low discount prices on any multiyear SkyMed membership.

Call Jeff at 508-747-8281 for answers to questions about SkyMed. He'll help you determine the best type of membership for your situation and he'll tell you the members-only discount.

If you're still not a JMB member, go here:

New JMB memberships:

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

Renewal JMB memberships:

Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year

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

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

Low-cost reinstatements

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

10. Should You Get a Short-Term or a One-Year SkyMed Membership?

--- Why It's Such An Important Decision

SkyMed is available in a variety of flavors:

Short term memberships cover you while you're on short trips, usually a week or less. The cost per day per person is roughly \$9, with a maximum of about \$18 per family per day.

Although the cost is low, it's far higher than the per-day cost for an annual membership: *that* cost is only about \$1.25 per day *per family*. Short-term memberships also expire when the term ends which means you must requalify medically when you want to buy another short-term membership. At some point, your health could deteriorate to the point that you don't qualify for medical evacuation protection *from anyone*. That's the key reason we always recommend annual memberships over short-term memberships.

Annual memberships are like permanent insurance. To continue your coverage, all you need do is pay the annual fee. Regardless of your age or health, you're covered, which means you could renew easily until age 109 and be in poor health *and it doesn't matter* — you pay the same membership fee as everyone else pays at that time and your coverage remains in place.

What's more, if you stay on the island for a couple of weeks as many people do, the cost of an annual plan is pretty close to that of a short-term plan *but you get the key advantage of permanent coverage.* No need to medically requalify as long as you continue to pay your membership fee on time.

Got questions? Ask Jeff: 508-747-8281 or jeff@jmbcommunications.com.

11. MP Theo Heyliger Blasts Government Ineffectiveness...

Theo Heyliger has been part of the SXM government for 20 years. He has been buffeted lately as a consequence of other ministers moving between parties. That movement has caused three Dutch Side governments to fall.

In terms of overall governmental effectiveness, the result has been chaos.

Bear in mind that Theo is the most tourism-savvy, progressively thinking elected official in the entire Dutch side government. He has been the driving force behind virtually every progressive action taken on the Dutch side starting with the Dr. A. C. Wathey cruise and cargo facilities; the new airport terminal; the beautification of Front and Back streets in Philipsburg; the restoration of Great Bay beach; and, last but not least, the Simpson Bay Causeway.

More than anyone else, he knows how to attract and retain the interest of tourists on St. Maarten. What drives him is doing what it takes to drive the entire St. Maarten economy -- and tourism is the linchpin.

He has been critical of coalition governments elected in recent years in which some ministers have changed parties willy-nilly. The consequence is government instability and a lack of progress on many fronts.

Recently, Heyliger was visibly upset about competition in the cruise sector from other islands as SXM's favorable rating in that sector fell. The result has been the loss of some Disney cruises to other islands as well as the placement of some cruise stops to St. Maarten behind stops at other islands, which means tourists have less money to spend when they reach Front Street.

That's bad news for the entire SXM economy.

His fire was aimed at coalitions: he would rather see a strong majority government run by his party, UP, which he believes would address all of these tourism issues aggressively. In our opinion his record on tourism speaks for itself.

As always, we'll keep you posted. In the meantime, please help keep *SXM Weekly News* coming each week:

New JMB memberships:

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

Renewal JMB memberships:

Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year

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

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

Low-cost reinstatements

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

12. Slow Response To Dump Fire Just Tip of The Iceberg

The government paralysis about which we've spoken on a number of occasions affects a lot of things. To tourists, the most important items affected are infrastructure as well as the ability of the government to respond to competition for tourists from other islands -- i. e., the overall quality of SXM's tourism product.

One good example of slow response was the recent fire in the Dutch side dump which took days to put out. We're not minimizing the challenge of dump fires, but had this event been given the priority it needed by top government officials it seems to us that it could've been handled more effectively.

13. Great Jewelry Bargains on Front Street

If you're a JMB Website Supporters member, the bargains available to you are even better at some jewelry stores than for nonmembers. Go to the secret website and look under jewelry shopping in the Discounts Master Index. There, you'll find multiple \$50 gift cards you can use at certain Philipsburg jewelers. Buy away — we picked these jewelers carefully and they deliver top quality.

For details, login to the secret website. Your username and password are required. If you're still not a member, look; [a sale is now underway](#) -- see next story.

New JMB memberships:

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

Renewal JMB memberships:

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

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

Low-cost reinstatements

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

13a. JMB's 26th Birthday Means ***You Could Win an SXM Vacation for Our Birthday ---***

Plus ***It's Our Biggest Membership Sale of the Year!***

About the Sale: JMB Communications turns 26 on June 2. Our 26th Birthday Sale -- our biggest sale of the year - gives you extraordinary sale prices on new JMB memberships, renewals, and membership reinstatements.

What You Get: See article 15 in this issue. Currently 264 discounts & benefits bring you low pricing on virtually everything you do on SXM -- and many more discounts are coming. There are loads of savings no matter how long or short your vacation is.

New memberships are just \$49 for one year (\$10 off) or \$109 for five full years (a full \$16 off our regular price of \$125 for five years). Join here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml Prices effective 8 pm EDT Sunday 5/15/16.

Renewal Memberships are just \$34 for one year; \$64 for three years; and a super-low \$124 for seven years,

Renew here: <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> and go to the Membership Renewal Center. Prices effective 8 pm EDT Sunday 5/15/16.

Membership Reinstatements are just \$35 for one year; \$95 for five years; and \$139 for a full seven years.

Reinstate here: <http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml> Prices effective 8 pm EDT Sunday 5/15/16.

About the Giveaway: We're putting the finishing touches on our biggest giveaway ever, to celebrate us surpassing five million visits to our site, www.everythingsxm.com, next year. It should happen somewhere between March and May of 2017 but [entries are now open](#) (effective 8 p.m. EDT Sunday 5/15). Click [entries are now open](#) to enter.

For this year's giveaway -- celebrating us passing 4.5-million visits -- we had 91,000 entries. From that group we picked at random 70 finalists, and our winners were picked from the finalists.

The only requirements to become a finalist this time are are: 1) you subscribe to *SXM Weekly News*; and 2) you enter the giveaway. But -- we're also going to pick two people from among those who buy new, renewal, or reinstatement memberships in our birthday sale, going on now; those two people will be among our 70 finalists. ***Click one of the membership sale links above. Once the sale ends, we'll pick two names from among all sale membership buyers and those two names will become finalists.****

[Enter here.](#)

The Fine Print:

*No purchase necessary. Complete rules are on the online entry form which you must complete to be eligible to win. To become a finalist without making a purchase from JMB, send a picture postcard to 2017 Giveaway Finalist, c/o JMB Communications, P. O. Box 1812, Plymouth, MA 02362-1812. On the card you must print your name, date of birth (you must be over age 21), email address (print it), daytime phone number (clearly!), street address, city, state / province, country, and postal code. And you must write "I want to be a finalist." We will not notify people selected to be finalists; you must read all issues of *SXM Weekly News* to see when the drawing is. We will phone all winners during the drawing. If you don't answer, you lose. If you do answer, you win. Good luck to all entrants.

14. Visit "Yoda Guy's" StarWars Museum on Front Street

If you're a Star Wars fan — and even if you're not, you will enjoy the Yoda Guy Star Wars Museum near the Eastern end of front Street in Philipsburg. You'll find lots of memorabilia concerning both Yoda, the character designed by the Yoda guy, and Star Wars in general. It's fascinating stuff....

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.](#)

15. A Slew of Discounts for JMB Members Only: See The Secret Site

JMB Website Supporters delivers discounts in virtually every conceivable category of purchase you make while you're on the island. That involves everything from three meals a day to shopping for everything you buy to activities and even items you bring to the beach. There's also souvenirs, clothing, medicines/sundries, liquor, tobacco, gifts, and an infinity of other things.

If you're already a member, look at the Secret Site closely and you'll find a lot more than you expect. We're in the process of adding discounted helicopter rides, too.

To save money on your next trip, join JMB Website Supporters today: our big [JMB Communications Birthday Sale](#) is now underway.

16. A Critical Look at Fast Food in SXM

Both sides of SXM offer incredible restaurants with both great service and outstanding food. Sometimes, though, when you're in a rush, you may decide to stop at a fast food emporium. As is the case globally, the food there doesn't compare with what you can get in one of the island's 400 or so quality sit-down restaurants. In some cases the service is slow and inattentive, in other cases you get a free side order of attitude, etc. This seems to be particularly true of global chain burger joints.

There is one notable exception: Domino's. The service there is fast, attentive, and usually dead-on accurate. The pizzas and sandwiches are quite tasty and reasonably priced as well.

If you need fast food Domino's is your best bet. Domino's also offers discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; if you're not yet a member, [go here](#).

17. Gourmet Ice Cream on SXM

There are two sources of great tasting gourmet ice cream on St. Maarten.

In no special order, they are, first, the Carousel in Simpson Bay next door to FedEx. Although as the name implies this business has the only authentic carousel on the island, it's also widely known for outstanding homemade ice cream and its almost limitless list of toppings. Definitely go.

The second is Etna Ice Cream, a long-established gourmet Ice Cream creator and manufacturer located on the French side. They distribute to virtually every market on the island and to many restaurants.

Because of its high butterfat content and its fresh, all-natural ingredients, Etna ice cream is incredibly creamy and delicious. In some previous JMB giveaways, the favorite item that winners received was a tour of the Etna Ice Cream factory with samples. It's really great stuff.

18. Best Japanese Restaurant

Without a doubt, this honor goes Sushiitto on the Dutch side at Princess Port de Plaisance resort, near the casino. The restaurant has everything you'd want — from miso soup to a number of nigiri sushi selections to delicious hand rolls and even Teppanyakki by experienced chefs.

There are other Japanese restaurants on the island and other places that serve Japanese food as an ancillary item, but for our money the best Japanese restaurant is definitely Sushiitto. [Look here.](#)

19. Best Chinese Restaurant

Wherever there is conversation about the best Chinese restaurant on St. Maarten, the answer is always the same: the White Swan, conveniently located in Simpson Bay.

Check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIOfWACxvYA>

20. Best Indian Restaurant

Without a doubt, the best Indian restaurant on St. Maarten is Lal's Curry in a Hurry in Simpson Bay, on the lagoon near the end of the airport runway. The pace of service is leisurely, the food is outstanding, and the prices are low. This is also a perfect place for people who are new to Indian food; the servers explain what the dishes are in a way that makes newbies confident of what they're ordering. Whether you like super spicy, normally spicy, or bland, they customize your dinner as you prefer. Lal has been around Simpson Bay for years and we highly recommend his restaurant. Lal's was featured here last week as our Restaurant of the Week. See next article.

21. Restaurant of the Week: Big Fish

Selling far more than fish, Big Fish, located in the culinary village at dawn beach/oyster pond, is open seven days a week for dinner. Reservations are recommended even in low season, especially for large parties, since this place is just about always really busy. And it's not just busy with people seeking fish.

Regardless of whether you're a vegetarian or someone who's happy with different varieties of beef, poultry, or other meats, big fish has the versatility in its menu to deliver above your expectations no matter what you order.

They have extraordinarily creative appetizers and desserts, too; that includes both their renowned hurricane shrimp

appetizer (which you can get as a main course) as well as Nigiri sushi (fresh and delicious) and a variety of nicely crafted Japanese hand rolls.

Big Fish offers two very different dining rooms — one inside with air-conditioning, and the other outside where you can enjoy gentle tradewinds off the Caribbean and some pleasing sounds of nature.

Big Fish is one of the island's best restaurants, offering a huge variety of food to suit any diet or appetite. Beyond that, the new management — Teresa and Mike - really know their stuff and are ready to serve you. Give them a try soon and tell them we sent you.

Most of the restaurants listed below 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.

See the end of this article for JMB Website Supporters membership info / signup links.

Big Fish Restaurant www.bigfishsxm.com/ (featured 5/16/16)
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 5/2/16)
Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 8/11/14)
Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 4/18/16)
Fusion Restaurant has now closed.
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 5/9/16)
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 4/25/16)
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; sale now underway.

New memberships:

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

Renewal memberships:

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

Membership Reinstatements:

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

22. Reminder: Current, Valid JMB Membership Card Required for All SXM

Discounts

Regardless of when your JMB membership expires, we've told our business partners in SXM that only JMB members with current, valid JMB Membership Cards are entitled to member benefits. Without your Card, you could be anyone; your unexpired card (and a current government-issued photo ID) are required to receive JMB benefits/discounts.

Cards are always sent by email and are updated whenever you have a membership transaction affecting your Card's expiration date. *If you're renewed or joined in the last week or so, your new card will be coming in the next few days.*

Members: Always let Membership Services know if you change the email you have registered with us and if you change your physical address. We use that info when processing membership-related transactions. You can always contact them fastest by email, support@jmbcommunications.com.

23. Where to Get Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Updated 5/2/16)

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?

A. 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. How fast are the evacuations?

A. That depends on a number of factors. First the patient must be medically stable and ready to fly. Even though emergency medical evacuations are aboard ICU-equivalent medevac jets, the patient's stable health during the trip is of paramount importance. He / she must be medically stable to take that trip. Although arrangements for the electronic transfer of medical records, reserving flight and medical crews and the jet itself, making hospital arrangements at the destination hospital, and setting up ambulances at both ends of trip must all be completed beforehand, nonetheless it generally takes only a matter of hours before you're in the plane on the way to hospitals and doctors you know and trust near home. Bottom line is that SkyMed does it as quickly as it can be done assuring the patient's health and safety during the medical evacuation and the flight home.

Q. Do they 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 or phone him at 508-747-8281. Please also include your phone number and best time to call; he'll be in touch. *Please use the subject "SkyMed Inquiry" 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.

24. Download The Complete List of All SkyMed Features & Benefits

Read it for yourself: it beats every would-be competitor hands-down. Look:

<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/SkyMedServices.pdf>

This is an Adobe Acrobat PDF Document. Your system most likely already has a PDF Reader (free) but if not you can get one here: [download Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

25. 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*.

26. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

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

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Want to rent or buy a week?

2015 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale are posted at http://everythingsxm.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 .Your username and password are required.

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)

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To change your email address, visit <http://everythingsxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> , select *2016 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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Our email headers also contain subscribe / unsubscribe / address change links.

Contact Us: [Revised 4/23/16]

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 .

To see the JMB Communications Privacy Policy, visit http://everything.sxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml

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