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Timesharing Special Edition

#1050 --- Monday, 6/13/2016 -- 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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From: www.jmbcommunications.com

Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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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.

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TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

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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, for no ad charge or commission, 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 membership subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

Shown only in emailed version.

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

Shown only in emailed version.

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

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24. Where to Find Past Issues of *SXM Weekly News*
25. Win SXM Vacations and Much More in Our "Five Million Smiles" Giveaway

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. Current SXM Weather; Hurricane Outlook Changing

In the last couple of weeks, there have been two very interesting, important developments in the outlook for the upcoming hurricane season.

According to meteorologist Rob Lightbown, conditions across the tropical Atlantic now appear to be hostile to the development of Cape Verde storms, the ones that normally threaten St. Maarten most seriously. That's great news, if it holds up.

On the other hand, the news for the US East and Gulf coasts is less positive. There, conditions appear to be ripe for the formation of storms close to the coast — similar to both Bonnie and Colin.

As always, we'll watch this for you. Here's more getting additional weather info:

Current St. Maarten weather is always available from the Weather page of our website. Just go to the masthead of www.everythingSXM.com and click Weather for current island weather information plus satellite loops, radar, and hurricane information.

Our go-to source for accurate and dependable hurricane forecasts related to St. Maarten and both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the US, as well as the Caribbean, has long been www.crownweather.com, headed by Rob Lightbown. This excellent site has an enormous amount of weather information updated around the clock.

The site contains watches, warnings, numerous satellite images, animated radar loops, hurricane forecast models, and much more. The cost per year is really tiny and the value is enormous, especially if you're in a hurricane-exposed area. Check it out.

2. Get SkyMed Travel Club Membership on Us (Usually \$99/year)

It's back: Open Enrollment in the low fare SkyMed Travel Club is back for one month only... June. Here goes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do join — you will not be disappointed once you've booked travel through them. See last week's *Weekly News* for a review from one of our readers.

2a. AA Makes Big Changes to its AAdvantage Program

Once again, the "new" AA isn't necessarily winning any popularity contests with users of its venerable frequent flyer program, AAdvantage.

Here are the details of the latest changes: <http://tinyurl.com/hxz3znk>

2b. Air France May Cancel 30% of Flights in Planned Four-Day Pilot Strike

Air France will cancel between twenty and 30% of its flights starting Saturday 6/11 and ending 6/14 as a number of its pilots strike.

It is not known whether any canceled flights affect SXM.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

3. Court Update Regarding Caravanserai Timeshare Owner Suits Against Alegria

There are two major lawsuits in progress regarding Caravanserai / Alegria, brought by the association of Caravanserai timeshare owners, TOCA.

Association head Carol-Ann Lee says they are:

a) "The injunction petition which TOCA won last August which is an urgent request to the court to deal with the illegal & unilateral nullification of our long lease agreements. As expected Alegria appealed that decision. We are still waiting for the court of appeals to render a ruling on that injunction appeal." The should happen this Summer, we think, but don't hold your breath -- SXM decisions often do not happen on schedule.

b) "The merits petition (the main case); the first hearing was scheduled for last Thursday. It could take up to one month for the judge to render a decision." The Judge said after the hearing that he will have a ruling on August 9, 2016 -- but see the next two stories.

Our understanding is also that the litigants placed a lien on the property to prevent any demolition / reconstruction / renovation which would have affected the status of their units at Caravanserai/Alegria, which is one of many reasons that nothing is happening on the property -- in our opinion, a very good thing.

As always, we'll keep you posted on both cases and any other news about this property.

4. If You're a Caravanserai Timeshare Owner, What Can You Do? (Commentary)

Although we've been covering the Caravanserai Debacle since it began, unfortunately not every Caravanserai timeshare owner is aware of the existence of *SXM Weekly News*. So they may not know what has happened.

TOCA for starters is the organization of Caravanserai timeshare owners that is fighting Alegria over its decision to cancel, outright, all timeshare ownerships, leaving former Caravanserai timeshare owners with nothing to show for their investments, sometimes totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars per timeshare owner. The St. Maarten government did nothing to mitigate this action despite loud pleas for help from timeshare owners, a number of whom then organized and went to court.

There is no such thing as class action lawsuits in St. Maarten — only associations of individuals. If you are not a member of the Association, you are not part of the lawsuit and are not entitled to its benefits. However there is such a thing as precedents in Dutch SXM, however, which may mean that individuals not involved in the suit can take legal action once it is decided in the favor of timeshare owners to get back what is theirs.

If past performance is any indicator, the government of St. Maarten appears to be interested in reaping benefits in taxes from the presence of timeshare owners but it has provided no evidence that it intends to do anything substantive in terms of timeshare owner consumer protection legislation, which timeshare owners have been clamoring for for many years. In our opinion that is not a wise decision: you do not kick sand in the faces of your best customers with any expectation that they'll long sit for it. Many tens of thousands of timeshare owners have already abandoned SXM, largely selling their units at huge losses to far less affluent individuals who don't buy jewelry on Front Street and rarely if ever dine out. What goes around comes around and our anecdotal evidence suggests the trend has not slowed at all, which is not positive for SXM. As we reported last week, airlines aren't happy, either.

A few months ago, we spoke with Richard Sutton who is chief honcho of Royal Resorts, owner of Simpson Bay Resort in St. Maarten (see separate story, below). He said it was astonishing to him that such consumer protection legislation had not yet been enacted; he felt it was essential to the industry.

But we digress....

Given the fact that lawsuit enrollment is no longer open, what can you do? Here is the letter that TOCA president Carol-Anne sends to people who ask her that question:

Hello,

Over the past 1 1/2 years our association TOCA (Timeshare Owners at Caravanserai Association) has invited former Caravanserai Owners on many occasions (who have NOT signed Alegria's letter) to join our our ongoing legal battle regarding the unilateral & illegal nullification of our long lease agreements. The last opportunity to join our group was May 1st and was widely publicized on social media sites (including Jeff Berger's weekly newsletter) before that closing date.

For those who wish to pursue legal action we are recommending that you contact Lexwell legal firm in SXM. We continue to remain pleased with the professional services that they have given us & wish you luck with your future endeavors.

*Best regards,
Carol Anne Lee-Desmarais
(president of TOCA)*

If you have not joined TOCA, we strongly urge you to follow Carol-Anne's advice.

5. Sapphire Lawsuit Sitbons versus Verdiers Still Undecided by Courts, Months Later

Bruno Sitbon and his family had run Sapphire Beach Resort for the Verdier family for several years, and had in fact made an offer to buy the resort. They also put down a substantial deposit based upon contractually required receipt from the Verdiers of an audited financial statement.

Although the Verdiers, the Sitbon say, never supplied the financial statement that was required, they also kept the deposit since they said the Sitbon's never met their part of the bargain.

For obvious reasons, the Sitbons were not happy and took the Verdiers to court last winter. A decision was supposed to be reached in March but, ever since, the court has claimed it is inundated with work and has not yet completed its decision.

Throughout this drama, the resort appears to have seen only a fraction of its normal occupancy as timeshare owners either sell off, rent out, give up (walk away from), or simply don't bother to go to the resort. RCI has reinstated Sapphire in its rental program after Sapphire made sufficient improvements, RCI said. There have also been a number of long overdue room upgrades, including new refrigerators in some rooms (building by building).

Gradually, the resort has been cleaning all air-conditioning to remove the mildew smells from the rooms that was caused by alleged neglect by the Verdiers, who were the original developers of the project and still own it. Jean Verdier, the father, apparently has been in ill health and has not been in the resort in quite some time. His son, Philippe, is rather aloof and doesn't hang with timeshare owners and he hasn't been around lately either. Jan Borsje has been managing the resort for months, under short-term contract; he is a seasoned pro.

As promised, we'll keep you posted when the court finally makes a decision.

6. Former Ugly Duckling, Simpson Bay Resort, Now a Showplace

St. Maarten's original timeshare was Pelican Resort, first established in the 1980s. Founded by Martin Vleitman, the resort was astonishingly successful, building through a sophisticated marketing program in the Northeast quarter of the US and beyond.

It originally consisted of the current Simpson Bay Resort (minus Marina Residences), Atrium Resort, Flamingo Resort, and Royal Palm Resort, which had originally been envisioned as a quarter share and full-share residence.

We're not going back through history, but those other resorts broke off over time and the result was that Pelican resort became an aging, creaky, complaint-ridden resort owned by its timeshare owners who were dedicated but not competent at running a resort.

They brought in Royal Resorts of Mexico which, though its initial association with the resort had some drama (mainly because of politicking and grandstanding by certain timeshare owner members of the board) ultimately did an awesome job of rescuing the resort from oblivion or outright disintegration.

The news today from Simpson Bay is outstanding. Of all the timeshare resorts on the island, it has clearly become the best large scale operation. This year, the Flamboyant building will complete a full renovation, which means the entire resort will have been 100% renovated since the beginning of that program a few years ago. Far from being the island's ugly duckling, Simpson Bay has become a showplace large resort for SXM.

Because it is still so huge — more than 300 rooms, it still has many units available from people who have been there for many years and either no longer need their weeks or want to rent them out. Our site, www.EverythingSXM.com, always has Simpson Bay units for rent or for sale throughout the year, concentrated of course in the winter.

And there is more news from the resort. Our friend Julieta Sanchez there says: "We are behind schedule due to the extreme improvement of the Marina plaza. We believe (the new Mexican restaurant) will be open by the latter part of August." What's coming there is a complete rebuild / renovation / replacement of the old Pelican Reef restaurant with an authentic Mexican restaurant (no Tex-Mex) with a very good chef from Mexico. It will be open all day and should be amazing.

"We do have good news in the lobby. Caffe Britt lobby coffee shop will open its doors for our guests next week," Julieta added. We will soon publish pictures and a description on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook site](#).

More to come on Simpson Bay.

7. So You Want to Build An SXM Resort? Here's Where To Do It (Repeat)

So it will set you back several million; you can't take it with you. Go: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNxsZAgjcao>

Great spot for a hotel, casino, or both. Just reduced from \$15-million to an easy-peasy \$7.5-million. Contact our friends at Island Real Estate Team for more. Tell them Jeff Berger referred you:

<http://www.ireteam.com/listing/hotel-casino-beachfront-land/>

8. Want to Buy or Long-Term Rent a Hilltop Villa Featured in HGTV? You Can...

SXM hilltop [Villa Onyi](#) -- featured on HGTV at least three times, and one of the most beautiful hilltop villas we've seen in SXM -- offers unrivaled ocean views including beautiful sunrises, stunning vistas of St. Barths, and even a front-row seat when Heineken Regatta gunboats go screaming past during the height of competition every March.

At this writing it is still available for a long-term lease or sale but that may change soon. See pictures on our Facebook site, here: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.10152941169976367&type=1> and email jeff@jmbcommunications.com with the subject Onyi; we'll put you in touch with the right people. Most likely this is your last shot so act quickly. It is nowhere near as pricey as we think it should be. :)

SECTION 3: Island

9. Heyliger Blasts Government Over GEBE's Abysmal Performance

GEBE has about five generators currently out of service which translates into decidedly mediocre electric service on the Dutch side of the island.

Even though the utility is government owned, seasoned government officials are not amused and are getting increasingly critical of those in charge. Particularly pointed in his recent remarks is Theo Heyliger, long one of the island's most popular politicians. Heyliger did not mince any words in his recent anti-GEBE comments:

<http://tinyurl.com/hlphmuv>

10. World's Largest Cruise Ship, Royal Caribbean's Harmony, Due in November

Harmony of the Seas, Royal Caribbean's largest cruise ship ever, will sail to SXM this November. This article doesn't say when, but it does tell you a lot about the ship. You can find out when by checking the Royal Caribbean website. Here's the article about Harmony: <http://tinyurl.com/jjt5pbn>

11. Richard Branson Coming to SXM -- It's an Opportunity The Dutch Side Shouldn't Blow

We know from top sources on the island that aviation entrepreneur Richard Branson (Virgin Airlines) and some of his top people visited St. Maarten within the last few years seeking to make a major investment on the island itself and launch service between London and SXM. All we'll say about what happened is that he wasn't greeted warmly, a fact that flies in the face of what would be good for the island — and as a result, nothing happened.

Branson returns to St. Maarten this month. Whether he is still interested in doing anything there is unknown, but in our humble opinion it behooves the Dutch Side government to do everything possible to meet with him, apologize (if they will), seriously court him, and demonstrate that the island is committed to growth and that it would be a highly profitable country partner to Virgin in any development venture.

As we reported, airlines are complaining that St. Maarten doesn't support them — and that is a bad reputation to have when you're struggling in a highly competitive environment where Zika and Cuba may both be ready to pounce without further warning. The island needs the airlines far more than the airlines need the island and the island needs to play better with businesses that support it.

Here's more on why Branson is coming: <http://tinyurl.com/go24seb>

12. Controversial Rainforest Adventures Project on Emilio Wilson Estate Progressing

The Dutch St. Maarten government has also been widely criticized for allowing and promoting the development of an eco-park on a small part of the Emilio Wilson estate, an area left natural for many years which nature-related organizations on the island had hoped would remain totally natural in perpetuity.

Here's the story on what's happening now: <http://tinyurl.com/huv8zsv>

13. No Enthusiasm In SXM for Legalizing Marijuana

Contrary to what some Americans were undoubtedly hoping, there is no enthusiasm in St. Maarten for legalizing marijuana. We don't think this is going to change anytime soon.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/zsq43vl>

14. Repeat Warning Concerning Turtle Nesting on SXM Beaches

As we reported here a few weeks ago, sea turtle nesting season is underway, which means you may encounter marked or unmarked sea turtle nests on St. Maarten beaches. The animals are critically endangered, so you should not approach any nests or any baby turtles attempting to walk to the sea. Stay away: any human intervention is disadvantageous to these animals.

15. Another Nudge About Renewing Your Passport

Early in April, when we sent in our passports for routine renewal, they were processed in about three weeks, half the time expected. We don't know if turnaround continues to be that fast but we do know this year is the 10th since passports were first required for Caribbean flights, which means there will be heavy renewals all year.

We urge all readers to renew passports quickly to avoid unexpected delays and to minimize the need for expedited service at extra cost later.

Also, if you don't have Global Entry, apply for it; it may well enable you to speed through security in virtually all larger US airports and in international arrivals halls in US airports when returning from overseas. It's well worth doing, in our experience.

16. SkyMed On Sale: And the "SkyMed Bonus" Is Back!

If you're not a JMB member and would like to join SkyMed, we have a deal for you...

a) Buy an annual family SkyMed membership at \$499 -- it covers you for a full year. You must buy it from us at www.getskymed.com.

b) After you receive your membership materials from SkyMed, forward your SkyMed "welcome" email to us at support@jmbcommunications.com plus your street address and home phone number. We'll give you a one-year JMB membership on us (it will take a few days). *Applies only to nonmembers of both JMB and SkyMed. Offer expires June 30, 2016.*

c) You'll then be able to upgrade your annual SkyMed membership to a three- or five-year Ultimate membership, with global coverage, at our heavily discounted JMB members-only pricing. To learn more, email jeff@getskymed.com and include your phone number; we'll set up a brief phone call and take your application by phone if you like. We'll be happy to answer your SkyMed questions.

Annual SkyMed memberships cover you throughout the "SkyMed Universe" with SkyMed "Takes You Home"

emergency medical evacuation services. The "Universe" includes the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. You can add specialized coverage for the rest of the world for \$100/year but it's better to upgrade to a SkyMed Ultimate which includes global services and quite a bit more for the same price, for JMB members only. Jeff will be happy to explain SkyMed or SkyMed Ultimate features and benefits. (Also see the Q&A later in this issue.)

For more on JMB memberships, look below. **A sale is currently underway offering exceptional pricing on new, renewal, and reinstated JMB Website Supporters memberships.**

New JMB memberships -- One year, \$49; Five years, \$109 (other durations available)
http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships -- **Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year:**
1 year \$34; 3 years \$64; 7 years \$124
www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

JMB Membership Reinstatements -- **Low-cost reinstatements**
1 year \$35; 5 years \$95; 7 years \$139 (our best offer)
<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

**17. Sale on JMB Memberships Extended One Final Week: Five Years Just \$109;
Must End 6/19 - Next Sunday**

About the Sale:

JMB Communications turned 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. But it's now in its final week...

What You Get:

About 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. What's more, the discounts and benefits are good for a full 12 months.

New JMB memberships -- One year, \$49; Five years, \$109 (other durations available)
http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships -- **Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year:**
1 year \$34; 3 years \$64; 7 years \$124
www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

JMB Membership Reinstatements -- **Low-cost reinstatements**
1 year \$35; 5 years \$95; 7 years \$139 (our best offer)
<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Ends Soon, Join or Renew / Reinstate Today

About our Latest SXM Vacation 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](#). Click [entries are now open](#) to enter.

The only requirements to become a finalist 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.

18. Who Is JMB, Anyway?

SXM Weekly News is published by JMB Communications of Plymouth, Massachusetts. But, who is JMB, anyway?

"JMB" was named for Jeff Berger, who founded it in 1990 as a high-tech PR company. It morphed into a marketing company in short order, producing marketing collateral, website content, entire websites, product and service publicity and PR, backgrounders, customer case studies, and much more for a wide spectrum of industries worldwide.

To learn much more about JMB, please visit www.JMBcommunications.com. If you're specifically interested in our web content creation or website design services, see www.websitesthatworkUSA.com.

You can contact JMB directly by emailing JMBweb@JMBcommunications.com. That address should not be used for JMB Website Supporters membership services inquiries, which always go to support@JMBcommunications.com.

More stories follow.

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.](#)

19. Restaurant of the Week: Big Fish

Restaurants usually need to be around for several years before we feature them here in *SXM Weekly News*. Or, if there are changes in management, we need to see how they work out before we check them out closely.

When we heard a year ago that Big Fish was being taken over by new people, it took us a while to get there.

Wow, how Big Fish has changed under Mike & Teresa.

We visited big fish early in our last trip, took a look at each other and agreed that this was one heck of a change for the better.

Not only was the restaurant totally redesigned inside and out, its menu was turned upside down, it's kitchen staff was turned upside down, and it's attitude changed 180°. We absolutely loved everything about it — the look, the attitude, the staff, the service, the quality of the food, the presentation, the flavor, the temperature — which is just about as complete a level of satisfaction as anyone could have for new, totally changed restaurant.

We liked it so much that it received our 2016 Everything St. Maarten Award of Excellence only a month or two after we first visited, which is a record for any St. Maarten restaurant.

The hurricane shrimp and the sushi appetizers were both totally unexpected treats — two of more than a number we

could possibly mention in one simple article. Next time you go to SXM, be sure to visit Big Fish in the "culinary village" at Oyster Pond on the road to Oyster Bay Beach Resort (OBBR), Dutch side. It will be well worth your visit. Please tell them you were sent by Jeff Berger's *SXM Weekly News*. Great place.

The Culinary Village also features Daniel's By the Sea (great Italian), Mr. Busby's Beach Bar, Island Pizza, Canoa (Caribbean meets Continental, great stuff), and Infinity at OBBR (a super new addition to area dining).

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 6/13/16)
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 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 5/30/16)
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 6/6/16)
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 JMB memberships -- One year, \$49; Five years, \$109 (other durations available)
http://everythingshm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships -- **Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year:**
1 year \$34; 3 years \$64; 7 years \$124
www.everythingshm.com/secret Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

JMB Membership Reinstatements -- **Low-cost reinstatements**
1 year \$35; 5 years \$95; 7 years \$139 (our best offer)
<http://everythingshm.com/sxm/reinstatement/index.shtml>

20. 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.

21. Where to Get Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Newly Updated 6/13/16)

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.getsky.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.

Q. I already belong to SkyMed but I'm pretty sick now. Will SkyMed drop me?

Once you've bought an annual or longer SkyMed membership, that membership stays in force as long as you pay renewals on time regardless of how old you get or how sick you get. When you're in, you're in -- declining health is not an issue. And no, you do not have to tell us about changes in your health that occur after you join.

Q. I'm an American [or Canadian] xPat now living in SXM. Since I live there, can I still be brought "home" to Canada or the US?

As long as you've purchased our xPat Membership (for people who live in SXM six months or more per year) , you absolutely will be taken home, back to the US or Canada, to the hospital of your choice when you become critically ill or injured. Just be sure you've specified your preferred home hospital in your SkyMed application.

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.

22. 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](#).

23. 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*.

24. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

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

Need a Great Website or Other Marketing Services?

Use [JMB Communications](#), the company behind Everything SXM.

25. Win SXM Vacations and Much More in Our "Five Million Smiles" Giveaway

A complete list of all prizes will appear here soon — but you can enter now, if you are a direct (not pass-along) subscriber to *SXM Weekly News*... Click the link to enter now:

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

Entries from pass-along subscribers will be printed on rice paper and fed to goats. Don't let the island's goats get any fatter: subscribe directly now by clicking "Free Newsletters" at www.everythingsxm.com. *Only direct subscribers are eligible to win.*

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_xsm/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 .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)

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 *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.

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

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

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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://everythingxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml

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