

Happy Thanksgiving ! == #970 --- November 24, 2014 -- News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



This Week's Stories

Airfare, Airlines & Weather News

Everything SXM Home Page

Island News

Lodging News

Members SECRET Website Login

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

Weekly Tourist-Oriented News & Comments from SXM

Copyright ©, JMB Communications, 2014. See [Legal](#) for reprint requests, page bottom.

Part of www.everythingstmaarten.com

Add jeff1620@jmbcommunications.com to your address book to be sure you receive this newsletter every week.

Important Note:

You are receiving St. Maarten and St. Martin 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 210,000 readers around the world...

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



twitter

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



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

This format is easily readable on most mobile devices; scroll down for this week's news. You can also download a PDF 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?>

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

TOP STORIES

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

This is issue #970 of Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' *St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News*, published every Monday all year long (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks). You're receiving this because you subscribed or are a JMB Website Supporters member.

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

- ***Black Friday Sale - 200 Discounts Across SXM At The Lowest Prices of the Year for New Memberships, Renewals, and Reinstatements; Join To Keep These Newsletters Coming***
- ***Bought Out: Ti Provençal, Rainbow, & Sol e Luna; What's Coming***
- ***Orient Beach & Le Galion - Past, Present, & Future***
- ***Attention Bank of America ATM Customers Using ATMs in SXM***
- ***On Thanksgiving & Later Go Nowhere Without Taking SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection With You***
- ***JetBlue To Increase Seating Density and Add Bag Fees -- But It's Not a Bleak Change***
- ***How To Get The Lowest-Cost Airfares, Hotels, Cruises, and Tour Packages Worldwide (Repeat)***
- ***Judgement Coming on Caravanserai: Where To Read The Bottom Line***
- ***Just Who Is The New Owner of Caravanserai / Alegria?***
- ***"Restaurant Of The Week": Spiga (Big Changes This Year)***
- ***26 News Stories About Your Favorite Caribbean Island***
- ... ***and much more***

26 new 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, at no charge, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 200+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits, and your subscription also helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rentals of The Week:

RENTAL 1/17/2015 1/31/2015 Weeks 3 & 4 Ocean Club Hotel at Cupecoy Beach . www.oceanclubs.com Deluxe Garden Villa= Large 1 Bedroom Unit, King Bed plus Queen Sofa Bed, Unit sleeps 4.Full Large Bathroom,Shower,Double Sinks and Bidet.Full Kitchen, 2 Flatscreen TV + DVD Unit. Access to Large Furnished Balcony thru Bed or Living room. WIFI + Cable.Onsite Private Beach, Restaurant,Bar, Maid & Towel service. Very close to Restaurants, Shopping, Entertainment and Area Beaches. Located in quiet semi-residential upscale secured area. \$950.00 USD per week or \$1700.00 USD for both weeks. Canute or Julie Distin : 561 504 3788 or 416 932 8288 cedistin@aol.com

One Week RENTAL -- January 31 to February 7, 2015 (week 5)-- Exceptional cliff-top unit 4B at Summit Resort Hotel offers unobstructed panoramic views of the northern lagoon, lowlands, Marigot, even Creole Rock and Anguilla from a central convenient location in Cupecoy.

Gated resort has a restaurant and friendly bar on the pool deck with phenomenal lagoon views and beautifully landscaped grounds. Many beaches and restaurants are nearby... Beaches: Cupecoy, Mullet Bay, Baie Longue, Rouge, Maho, Simpson Bay. Restaurants: Temptation, FIG, La Gondola, and many others. Breezy recently renovated unit is fully air-conditioned, has a king size bed, stove, refrigerator, microwave, cable TV, free wired and wireless internet, privacy and serenity. Want a quiet midnight swim? Pool is open all night. More photos available! Reduced to only \$1099. Jeff, 508-747-8281 or jeff@jmbcommunications.com. **This unit and week 4 in the same unit are also both for sale.**

SXM Timeshare Sales of The Week:

SALE 2/21/2015 2/28/2015 Week 8 Simpson Bay Resort and Marina A sleep 4 studio overlooking the Marina pool, the ocean and sunsets from the 4th floor. Full bath, fully equipped kitchen, living room and dining area, a/c, satellite TV, free WiFi. Steps from the Casino. Resort has all the amenities with a beach, 6 pools, swim up bars, restaurants, tennis courts, kids play area, spa and health club, the Peli Deli convenience store, the Red Piano Bar nightclub. A full marina with water sports, scuba diving, fishing, day and evening sunset boat trips. Ocean catamarans and high speed ferries leave daily to other islands and snorkeling trips. The beach has 2 beach bars with great food and a breathtaking view of the sunsets. \$999 Michael 516-764-1715 mcmahonconair@aol.com

Sharply Reduced! About To Be Renovated Unit Available At A Fraction of its Future Price; Steps from the Caribbean With All The Amenities You'd Expect Must Sell:

SALE: 1/31/15 to 2/7/15 (week 5) Simpson Bay Resort Marina 207, a sleep-four studio overlooking both the Marina pool and Pelican beach (a short walk to Marina Residences, next door). Many beaches, great restaurants, piano bar (The Red Piano), more nightlife, casinos, a Deli, and other shops and nearby. A clothing optional beach is about two miles away. Unit features stove, microwave, cable TV, WiFi is on site, sleeps four, very convenient. Reduced to only \$1099 and this unit is also for rent for just \$1099. Timeshare tax for renters (\$50) is renter's responsibility. Please contact Jeff at (508) 747-8281 or email jeff@jmbcommunications.com Updated November 2014.

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

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

This Week's Stories

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

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



<https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

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

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

Section One: Getting There: Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather [Go To This Section](#)

1. JetBlue To Increase Seating Density and Add Bag Fees -- But It's Not a Bleak Change
2. Colorado State Talks About the 2014 Hurricane Season
3. Slight Dip in Cruise Arrivals Expected; What It Means to You and To SXM
4. How To Get The Lowest-Cost Airfares, Hotels, Cruises, and Tour Packages Worldwide (Repeat)
5. Why Airfares Are Going Up -- Reason to Buy Now (Why We Repeat This)

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

6. Judgement Coming on Caravanserai: Where To Find The Bottom Line
7. Just Who Is The New Owner of Caravanserai / Alegria?

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

-- **Black Friday Sale - 200 Discounts Across SXM At The Lowest Prices of the Year for New Memberships, Renewals, and Reinstatements; Join To Keep These Newsletters Coming** (Story 8 Below)

-- **On Thanksgiving & Later Go Nowhere Without Taking SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection With You** (Story 9 Below)

[Go Nowhere Without SkyMed MedEvac Protection -- About \\$1.25/day Protects You For a Full-Year](#)

10. Ti Provençal, Rainbow, Sol e Luna Bought Out; What's Coming
11. Orient Beach & Le Galion - Past, Present, & Future
12. Theo Heyliger Withdraws from Prime Minister Contention
13. A Convenient Place To Get Quality Souvenirs in SXM
14. Attention Bank of America Customers Using ATMs in SXM
15. Where To Hear Caribbean-Style Christmas Music
16. Greek Night Returns at Vesna Taverna
17. Why People Make U-Turns on "The Hill"
18. Best Place to Watch Sports: SPN
19. Sargasso Seaweed on SXM Is Limited
20. Why You Should Tell Your Credit Card Company Before You Travel Overseas
21. Why You Might Want to Stroll Down Back Street
22. A "Tail" of Two Iguana Farms
23. Where To Find New England Style Fish & Chips
24. French Side Go-Kart Track Rebuilt; When Will It Open?
25. Fresh Sushi, Reasonable Prices
26. "Restaurant Of The Week": Spiga (Big Changes This Year)

Scroll down for indexes to sections IV and V, and scroll further to get a growing list of 200+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel discounts.

Rent Out or Sell Your SXM Timeshare

Meet Our Sponsors (Updated 9/7/13)

Section Four: For Members Only (Revised 12/17/13)

- A. About Low Airfares We Post On The *Secret Site*
- B. All the Answers for JWS members: Just Click the Link
- C. Members: Why Check Airfares Daily?
- D. Members: Password Recovery Info
- E. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads

Section Five: Background Information for Travelers (**For New Readers**) (Revised 12/17/13)

How To Get a **GROWING LIST of 200+** 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://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml. Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for five full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

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

Contact Us:

[Revised 12/17/13]

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

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

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

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

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

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

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

1. JetBlue To Increase Seating Density and Add Bag Fees -- But It's Not a Bleak Change

JetBlue will be replacing its current traditional thick-design aircraft seats with thinner seats which it says will maintain user comfort at current levels while enabling the airline to add two new rows of seats per A320 aircraft. The latter addition should placate the airline's shareholders, who have been after a change like this for years.

Passengers may be concerned that the additional two rows of seats will substantially cut legroom. In fact, legroom will be only slightly less than it currently is, JetBlue offers by far the most generous legroom of any low-cost carrier; that will not be a problem.

In addition to this change, the airline will move to a three-tier pricing strategy, updating something that it has been experimenting with. Here's JetBlue's press release: <http://investor.jetblue.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=131045&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1991164>

2. Colorado State Talks About the 2014 Hurricane Season

Hurricane activity in the Atlantic basin was below average in 2014, matching predictions made throughout the year by the Colorado State University hurricane forecast team.

Eight named storms, six hurricanes and two major hurricanes formed during the 2014 Atlantic basin hurricane season from June to November. The CSU team originally called for nine named storms, three hurricanes and one major hurricane. It later revised its predictions to 10 named storms, four hurricanes and one major hurricane.

The CSU team attributed the relatively quiet season to several factors:

- Tropical Atlantic sea surface temperatures were slightly cooler than normal.
- Mid-level air was much drier than normal.
- Vertical wind shear, especially in the Caribbean, was quite strong.
- Sinking motion dominated the tropical Atlantic and Caribbean.
- Though an El Nino did not develop as predicted, the large-scale circulation in the tropical Atlantic resembled conditions typically seen in El Nino years.

A brief qualitative outlook for the 2015 hurricane season will be issued on Dec. 11 with a first full forecast for next season issued on April 9, 2015.

3. Slight Dip in Cruise Arrivals Expected; What It Means to You and To SXM

As we reported last week, a senior official of Royal Caribbean Cruise lines has said that that carrier will be reassigning some ships from Caribbean duty to China, helping to relieve the overcapacity it currently sees in the Caribbean market.

It could be that some other carriers will follow suit, but in any case the number of ships coming to St. Maarten will be decreasing starting next year.

This isn't necessarily bad news. To fill the glut of staterooms available in the current overcapacity situation, cruise lines have been cutting prices, enabling a less robust demographic to take cruises. Consequently, when people in this demographic visit Front Street, or other places on the island, they tend to have less money to spend. Once the overcapacity situation has been relieved, cruise lines expect higher prices and a higher demographic of passengers aboard. If that expectation pans out, Front Street and the island could benefit from less congestion and heightened income, a good thing.

As this moves forward, we'll keep you posted.

4. How To Get The Lowest-Cost Airfares, Hotels, Cruises, and Tour Packages Worldwide

This is the single biggest piece of membership news we've had in the past 12 years and it bears repeating: JMB Website Supporters now gives you access to a private, "members only" travel wholesale club that offers incredible prices not only on airfares but on packages not just to the Caribbean, but worldwide.

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

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

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

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

This is a new benefit for JMB members. During this introduction, 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 through them.

5. Why Airfares Are Going Up -- Reason to Buy Now (Why We Repeat This)

From The Editor: We originated and ran this story a week ago. A number of national news organizations read this newsletter and we saw the same story picked up last week by numerous US newspapers and even *NBC Nightly News*. We love it when that happens and we'll keep doing our best to deliver stories that matter to our readers around the world. -Ed.

Airlines at the moment have quite good fares to the Caribbean; do what we suggest in article 4, above, to get them. With jet fuel prices plummeting and more new, efficient planes coming into service, airlines are doing quite well and the need to have sales has diminished.

Most planes are uncomfortable as dense seating seems to be a permanent malady. Jet Blue will keep its leadership in legroom even as it, too, soon adds seats to its mainstay A320 airbus aircraft. The new seats are thinner but just as comfortable as current seating. So they continue to deliver the "Jet Blue experience" (extra legroom and more) while adding more paying passengers to each flight. Airline shareholders want profits after years of losses and that's exactly what the airlines are delivering.

But we digress. Do what we recommend in story 4, and buy your tickets now. At worst, airfares will stay flat -- but over the long term *demand is high, capacity is controlled, and that inevitably means higher prices.*

See the top of section 3 for important information on travel costs and on medical evacuation.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

6. Judgement Coming on Caravanserai: Where To Find The Bottom Line

About a week and a half ago, the judge hearing this case in St. Maarten told representatives of Alegria and timeshare owners of the former Caravanserai resort to continue talking in an effort to resolve the current impasse over the discontinuation of timesharing by the new owners of Caravanserai.

The judge said that if the two parties couldn't agree, he would make a ruling. A number of people on the island believe that his ruling could favor timeshare owners — but it ain't over until it's over, and our bet is that this case has a long way to go and it may well be held up in Dutch courts. We all hope to be surprised by an agreement — and we'll report whatever happens quickly on our Facebook page; see the link, above.

7. Just Who Is The New Owner of Caravanserai / Alegria?

His name is Ray Sidhom, and he's the head of EVO Payments International which is based in the US. His bio is here:

<http://evopayments.com/about-evo/leadership/ray-sidhom/>

Mr. Sidhom's vision for Caravanserai is that of an upscale resort hotel, not a timeshare, and he believes the circumstances under which he bought the property allow him to proceed accordingly. Many disagree and this will be decided in the courts.

There is absolutely no question in the minds of consumers that SXM must have timeshare owner consumer protection, something that has been discussed for years but never adopted.

The timeshare industry, and the hundreds of thousands of timeshare owners who are the *de facto* backbone of tourism in St. Maarten, are all critical to the island's future as a prime tourism destination. Timeshare owners currently are vulnerable to takeovers like this that torpedo their investments, sabotage faith in the island, threaten the island's reputation, and threaten the long-term viability of St. Maarten is a tourism destination.

If you bought a new Jaguar, you'd love to take it out on the highway and see what it could do. We're sure that Mr. Sidhom has a similar vision for Caravanserai/Alegria, though he certainly could have done a better job of handling his initial interaction with Caravanserai timeshare owners.

It's Mr. Manek, the previous owner of Caravanserai, who is the focal point of most consumer outrage by Caravanserai timeshare owners. It was Mr. Manek who collected millions of dollars from timeshare owners and who has since all but vanished.

The island needs to figure out a way to ensure that timeshare owners never again are victimized as they have been by recent events. See much more here: <https://www.facebook.com/Caravanseraitimeshare>

SECTION 3: Island

[Just \\$59/month Gets You Global SkyMed Medevac Protection: Go Nowhere Without It](#)

Story 8:

Black Friday Sale Brings You The Lowest Prices of the Year **On The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package --** **200+ Discounts Across SXM -- Just \$39 for One Full Year**

Starts This Coming Wednesday Night at 9 pm EST; new memberships, membership renewals, and membership reinstatements will be at their lowest prices of the year. [Details will be posted on our site](#) Wednesday at 9pm Eastern and through a special Wednesday evening edition of **St. Maarten / St. Martin Weekly News**.

Get The Best SXM Discount Package: Get about 200 discounts across the island including sizable jewelry gift cards, half-off members-only lagoon sunset cruises, discounts at dozens of restaurants, plus many activities, art, shopping, and other discounts on both sides of the island.

And it's just \$39 for one year (new memberships) in our Black Friday Sale but much less per year when you buy multiyear memberships. Low prices for renewals and reinstatements, too.

New memberships: Learn more here: http://everythingxml.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Your JMB membership keeps these newsletters coming every week and gives you tons of discounts across SXM. Starts Wednesday night at 9pm Eastern.

Reinstate a former membership: <http://everythingxml.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml> . Starts Wednesday night at 9pm Eastern.

Renew your current JMB membership at the Membership Renewal Center on the members-only [Secret Website](#). Starts Wednesday night at 9pm Eastern.

Not applicable to prior purchases. No further discounts taken. If you have recently bought or renewed, renew again... these prices are that good and will soon disappear forever.

Story 9:

On Thanksgiving & Later, Travel Nowhere Without Medical Evacuation Protection From SkyMed International -- **Now On Sale!**

Having your own medical evacuation membership enables you to get home in a hurry when you or your spouse / partner become critically ill or injured away from home. Without membership, you must pay for the evacuation in cash, in advance -- if you can set it up -- and the cost can easily be \$45,000 or more, sometimes far more.

Only SkyMed guarantees to take you home should you become critically ill or injured throughout the SkyMed universe, which consists of the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba, plus Belize and Costa Rica. Should you need protection anywhere in the world, you can get that, too. But the point is simply this: don't travel anywhere without making sure you have medical evacuation protection from SkyMed.

And now the best SkyMed plan is deeply discounted for our members.

There are a number of SkyMed plans available. Short-term plans are the least expensive in initial outlay, but you must be medically requalified every time you want a new short-term plan. By contrast, both SkyMed annual and Ultimate plans require only one medical qualification when you first apply.

When you renew SkyMed, your membership continues uninterrupted and is renewable indefinitely without further medical requalification regardless of your age or health. There are also never any increases in membership fees (premiums) related solely to your age or health: everyone pays the same low rates.

Six Big Reasons To Buy SkyMed Now: The first five -- we are giving away vacations to destinations worldwide to the next five people who buy new five-year SkyMed Ultimate memberships from us between now and December 15 (just expanded and extended.) You get a one week vacation (airfare not included) at your choice of many resorts worldwide and pay only the cost of maintenance *for one day*. That's a deal and a half. (Email us at jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com immediately after buying the new five-year Ultimate for us to tell us.) There's another reason to buy a new 5-year Ultimate: a 5-year free extension of your JMB membership. More on that is below.

The Sixth Reason: Buy any new SkyMed membership other than short term now and even pre-existing conditions are covered once the 90-day waiting period (for pre-existing conditions coverage) has passed. If you're going to SXM in February or after, that's gangbusters news for you right now.

Let's repeat one critical item: The cost of SkyMed never increases solely because of your advancing age, nor is SkyMed ever canceled solely for declining health -- in sharp contrast to other plans. SkyMed *Takes You Home*® -- what else matters?

Here's that steep discount. For five years of "Ultimate" SkyMed global protection, you'd prepay the five-year rate of \$699/year. But JMB Website Supporters members get \$1000 off -- they pay just \$499/year when prepaid in full, or \$2495. (If you'd rather pay monthly, it's \$59, \$49, or \$39/month depending on what you need /want). Get yourself protected against the high cost of medical evacuation and you will simultaneously find yourself with great peace of mind.

Call SkyMed any weekday Mountain time at 1-800-475-9633 and ask for Nan or Jim. Tell them you're a JMB Website Supporters member to get the best rates. If you're not a member, join; it's just \$99 for four years or \$59 for one year. Sign up for JMB here: http://everythingxml.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . The cost of the best SkyMed plans is deeply discounted for JMB members. SkyMed verifies your JMB membership.

For one-year or other duration memberships, buy online at www.skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members only) or www.skymed.com/jmbxml (everyone else). Do it today, before you forget... It's great peace-of-mind when you travel.

Five-year Free JMB Membership Extension With New Five-Year Ultimate Purchase: Once you've joined SkyMed through

us, email support@jmbcommunications.com and tell them you've bought a new SkyMed Ultimate five-year membership. Upon verification, we'll extend your current JMB Website Supporters membership for five full years. Offer open to U. S. and Canadian citizens only. You must join JMB first to be eligible for both the SkyMed JMB-members-only discount and this JMB membership extension. And you must join SkyMed only as described above and not by any other means to qualify for the JMB membership extension. Offer extended; ends December 15, 2014. The five-year JMB membership extension will be terminated if you cancel your SkyMed Ultimate membership before its five-year term expires. Vacation offer expires when we run out of vacations; limited quantity available. Join now...

10. Ti Provençal, Rainbow, Sol e Luna Bought Out; What's Coming

We've heard from very reliable sources in Grand Case that three long-time culinary institutions there have been bought out by the same French company.

The word is that both Ti Provençal and Rainbow will be converted into boutique hotels, while Sol e Luna will continue as an upscale restaurant. Sol e Luna will in fact have a swimming pool outside the building, apparently with a swim up bar. These are rather radical changes for Grand Case and as always, we'll watch the progress and keep you posted.

11. Orient Beach & Le Galion - Past, Present, & Future

When we first visited this island in 1977, naturists flocked to Le Galion beach hotel at Embouchure near Orient beach. They followed the well-worn footpath to the beach, where a few dozen naturists constituted a busy day. There was not a single building on the entire beach, just a little refreshment cart called Pedro's. There soon appeared a sign proclaiming the imminent construction of Club Orient, the now world famous naturist resort at the far southern end of Orient beach.

In those days, you could walk "nood" from one end of the beach to the other, and you would likely encounter no one wearing any clothes.

Now the beach is heavily built-up, and regulations about being clothed mean that only at Club Orient can you stay naked.

Le Galion was destroyed by a hurricane, causing naturists to scatter to other locations. Based upon the spectacular success of Club Orient, development sprang up from one end of the beach to the other. The French side government has expressed concern about this and seemingly would "like" to return the entire area from Le Galion through parts of Orient to its pristine state, were that possible.

Because of the extent of development on Orient, more regulations are inevitable but removing the current businesses is not bloody likely, though change is to be expected. Its *definition* is an open question.

The situation is much different over at Embouchure, where Le Galion is located. As we noted last week, the building will be demolished within the next 12 months or so (sooner, not later) and it will be replaced by what amounts to a nature reserve with parking and a refreshment stand.

This does not sit well at all with the owner of Tropical Wave restaurant at Le Galion, who hasn't even been formally told yet that he's going to be thrown out next year. The proprietor, Patrick Turner, is bewildered at how, after 30 years of legal operation there, he can simply be told to get out.

That's not the only problem. Other businesses in the area, including the Butterfly Farm, may well face a similar fate.

To us, it seems like the dictionary definition of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

This story, like Caravanserai on the Dutch Side, seems far from over.

12. Theo Heyliger Withdraws from Prime Minister Contention

Elections were held on the Dutch side many weeks ago, before hurricane Gonzalo struck if we remember correctly, but a new government has yet to be installed.

We don't quite get the parliamentary system that's used here. Theo Heyliger was the top vote getter and initially said he would become Prime Minister. Some politicians in the Netherlands, of which St. Maarten is a part, has been making a lot of noise lately about integrity though some of the members of the Netherlands government seem to have issues in that area. In any case, Mr. Heyliger has announced that he'll be a member of Parliament but not Prime Minister -- for now, anyway. There have been rumors about who the Prime Minister will be, but nobody really knows. Neither does anybody know when this situation will be resolved and the new government installed.

By contrast, the US practice of knowing the results of an election before some of the polls even close is refreshingly expeditious.

We do not yet have any idea what effect, if any, Mr. Heyliger's removing himself from potential Prime Ministership will have on the future of timeshare owner consumer protection legislation.

13. A Convenient Place To Get Quality Souvenirs in SXM

Until it went out of business a while back, we used to recommend Rima, a beachwear and gift emporium on the pond fill in Philipsburg. Rima continues to function online, but no longer has a retail store on St. Maarten. (Rima online will soon offer JMB members discounts, one of a number of new businesses joining our discounts program, JMB Website Supporters.)

Last week, we walked into the Promenade "Mall" which in reality is a small retail alleyway next door to Little Switzerland in the heart of Philipsburg. We found Ashwin Sakhrani's Dimples Gift Shop, a place that offers embroidered T-shirts, sterling silver, Cuban cigars, resortwear for people of all ages, souvenirs, snorkeling equipment, and more. One difference we noticed quickly with some other retail establishments is that Dimples carries really high-quality stuff, the kind of product you expect to last for years. We were quite impressed.

Since our visit, Ashwin and Jeff have been discussing a benefit for JMB Website Supporters members which would probably be in the form of a free gift to JMB members making certain purchases. We expect this benefit should go live in the next couple of weeks, when we will add it to our Master Benefits Index on our JMB members-only secret website.

We are about to add a slew of new benefits and discounts. That's why taking advantage of our about to launch Black Friday sale is an even better investment this year than it ever has been before. Check out our Black Friday information at the beginning of this section.

14. Attention Bank of America Customers Using ATMs in SXM

If you're a customer of Bank of America using a Bank of America ATM card/debit card on St. Maarten, know that Scotia bank, the bank of Nova Scotia, is a partner of Bank of America and as such, you can use Scotia bank ATMs to withdraw money from your Bank of America account without the customary Interbank fees.

15. Where To Hear Caribbean-Style Christmas Music

Ever since we returned to the island before the middle of this month, when channel surfing on our car radio we have noticed Caribbean Christmas music, particularly on stations from neighboring Anguilla. If you like Caribbean Christmas music or have never heard it and want to, channel surf any time and you'll find it, probably until after New Year's.

Among the perennial favorites are "I want a piece of pork, I want a piece of pork for the Christmas," "Don't be like Santa and come just once a year" (a girlfriend's plea), and the unforgettable "All I get is a card," from a spurned boyfriend.

It's always interesting down here, and there is no snow to shovel.

16. Greek Night Returns at Vesna Taverna

It was only a couple of years ago that we first met Vesna and Yannick, the married couple who are behind Vesna Taverna in Simpson Bay, located a couple of hundred yards north of the Simpson Bay drawbridge.

Vesna is open seven days a week for breakfast and lunch and is now open for dinner as well from Wednesday through Sunday, as we noted last week. Vesna normally serves American, French, and Greek food, but read on.

One of the highlights of the week at Vesna is Saturday night, which is Greek night. Vesna spends the day cooking a significant number of Greek specialties, both meat and vegetarian, which she serves during the dinner hours. We'll say just three things here: first, make reservations since this is a very busy night; second, explore new menu items, letting your taste buds guide you; and third, leave room for dessert.

Vesna Taverna is also excellent for any meal during the day, as well as dinner Wednesday through Sunday.

17. Why People Make U-Turns on "The Hill"

If you're heading toward the union road in Marigot from Philipsburg, the customary way to get there is to drive over the hill into Cole Bay.

But sometimes, the hill isn't the best way to go, particularly during rush hour. (Yes, St. Maarten has rush hours.) Along the road on the hill, there is a 90° turn to the left. At the heart of the turn, you see what looks like a glorified driveway going uphill. If you watch the driveway, you'll find that it's actually a road taken by a number of cars, mostly local. The road in fact used to be dirt until several years ago when it was paved; we took it when it was dirt, which can be quite challenging and also a tad unwise.

Even today, we don't suggest taking the alternative to the hill on rainy days, since the road can get quite slippery. But that root is the reason many people occasionally do U-turns when going over the hill; they're simply detouring to the other route to Marigot.

18. Best Place to Watch Sports: SPN

If you are among the thousands of people who receive this newsletter by Sunday, November 23, and want to know the best place to get your fix of Sunday football, the answer is the SPN Sports Bar next to Pineapple Pete in Simpson Bay. Other than casinos, which can be smoky, SPN is a superb location with excellent and inexpensive sports bar food and reliable television reception.

St. Maarten is on Atlantic Standard Time, an hour later than the US East Coast. It means the game between the Lions and the Patriots starts on Sunday at 2 PM St. Maarten time.

19. Sargasso Seaweed on SXM Is Limited

Although it is still hanging around and some East-facing beaches, the amount of Sargasso seaweed now on the island seems to be slowly diminishing, as we've been reporting over the last couple of weeks. We're also seeing sand on beaches which had eroded from hurricane Gonzalo now replenishing itself around the island.

Will keep you posted.

20. Why You Should Tell Your Credit Card Company Before You Travel Overseas

Banks today are more conscious than ever about credit card fraud, especially given the screw ups this year by Home Depot and Target, among others.

For that reason, banks keep a close eye on unusual account activity and they may slam the door on any charges where they see such activity, even if the dollar amount is small.

Consequently, we suggest you contact your credit card companies and tell them in advance when you're traveling, to avoid unnecessary inconvenience. Also, keep an eye on the charges shown on your electronic credit card statements. You don't want surprises.

One final important reminder. We often see people putting pocketbooks, camcorders, cameras, laptops, iPads, and other valuables into their car trunk. They seem to think nothing of it. If we see it, so do bad guys. Never leave valuables in your car. If you have a Kensington lock and a laptop in your hotel room or timeshare, please use it; if you don't have one, Blue Point sells them inexpensively on the island.

21. Why You Might Want to Stroll Down Back Street

Although the commercial heart of the Dutch side is Front Street, downtown Philipsburg, many locals also shop on Back Street, where you can find low prices on everyday cosmetics, toothpaste, soap, nail clippers, etc. They also have good prices on inexpensive cologne -- think smelly sneakers. Check it out.

22. A "Tail" of Two Iguana Farms

Long story very short, the iguana farm is coming along very nicely at the 90° eastward turn on the road to Dawn beach/Busby's/Oyster Bay Beach Resort / Westin from the Philipsburg area. It had been built a couple of years ago, then was torn down and moved next door, we think because of border issues. In any case, the buildings are white and green and do not yet have signs. A woman who we think was an employee told us she thought it should open sometime in December, though we doubt it. We don't have any idea what the price will be but we did wander around one morning and found a number of iguanas, all skittish about visitors.

There is no other iguana farm but, if you go to the stream across the street from the Westin Resort and Casino at Dawn beach, you'll see a road sign warning of an iguana crossing and about a dozen iguanas in or near the stream. Within the past year, these iguanas have become accustomed to people and will look to you for their morning baguette or other suitable snack. They also are happy to hang out should you want to take pictures. Many more are in the big tree that's in the swampy area.

23. Where To Find New England Style Fish & Chips

One of our past Restaurant of the Week selections, Skip Jack's in Simpson Bay, widely regarded as one of the best spots for seafood on the island, is the only place here that might have traditional New England fish and chips featuring cod and haddock. But cod stocks new New England are collapsing, so fresh cod will be increasingly difficult to find. Skip Jack's is still an excellent place for fish and chips even if they choose another fish.

Vesna Taverna, which we mentioned elsewhere in this issue regarding the Greek night, also has fish and chips, but theirs is made with grouper. When we saw it a couple of weeks ago, we ordered it well done, or crispy, and it was quite delicious. It doesn't taste like cod, but it's quite good anyway and even more flavorful.

24. French Side Go-Kart Track Rebuilt; When Will It Open?

The French side go kart track administration building burned down more than a year ago. We noticed a few days ago when we went by the area that the two-story building had been reconstructed. No one was around, so we couldn't find out when the track will reopen. The track provided discounts to our members so we will let you know when it reopens.

25. Fresh Sushi, Reasonable Prices

Just a quick reminder to the sushi lovers among our readers that Sushiito at Princess Port de Plaisance Casino is, in our opinion, the best place to get sushi on the island. It has great food, very reasonable prices (unusual for sushi here), and Elisa, formerly of Bikini Beach on Orient beach. Definitely give it a try and let folks know we suggested you visit.

Sushiito is owned by Pierre "Pete" Ferland, the "Pete" of Pineapple Pete Restaurant and the SPN Sports Bar in Simpson Bay. You will find them among the dozens of SXM restaurants offering discounts to our JMB Website Supporters members. If you own a SXM restaurant, email us at [jmbweb\[at\]jmbcommunications.com](mailto:jmbweb[at]jmbcommunications.com) for more info on how to connect with our JMB members in a mutually profitable way.

26. "Restaurant Of The Week": Spiga (Big Changes This Year)

Every year Spiga surprises us. When you think it can't possibly get any better than it already is, it surpasses your expectations. Again.

The first thing we noticed on Saturday night was toward the back of the restaurant, where there's a new, second dining room and beyond it, an all-new, larger kitchen. Interior decoration is 98% done and the "sand" coloring is instantly relaxing and welcoming. The room should enable Spiga to turn away fewer people this year since it adds 26 comfortable new seats. The room can also be configured to handle parties; ask for details.

One hallmark of a restaurant that cares about the happiness of its patrons is its responsiveness to special dietary requirements. Spiga knows what it's doing and it excels at delivering consistently above expectations.

Although I normally order steak here -- which is always butter-tender and beyond delicious -- this time we went for Dover Sole and shrimp risotto along with Brussels Sprouts. The sole was perfectly cooked and flavored and the Brussels Sprouts were cooked to perfection, tasty and succulent without being overdone. Of course we started with our long-time favorite, Lara's pumpkin ravioli.

If you try only one recommendation from this edition, make it Spiga -- easily one of the island's top restaurants. Gourmet Italian at

reasonable prices (Dollars are accepted at par with Euros). Just absolutely extraordinary dining. See <http://www.spiga-sxm.com/>

Like so many other SXM businesses, Spiga, located at the northern end of Boulevard de Grand Case on the French Side, gives something special to JMB members -- as do dozens of other SXM restaurants; bring your JMB Website Supporters Membership Card.

Not a member? Get hundreds of discounts; it's time you joined JMB -- learn more about membership here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Recently featured Restaurants of the Week:

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 4/21/14)

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 3/10/14)

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachxsm.com (featured 11/17/14)

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

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 11/24/14)

Fusion, www.fusionrestaurant-sxm.com (featured 4/7/14)

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

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 6/23/14)

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

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 2/24/14)

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

Lal's Curry In A Hurry Indian Restaurant, Airport Road, Simpson Bay (featured 1/6/14)

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachxsm.com> (featured 6/28/14)

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachxsm.com> (featured 6/28/14)

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 2/3/14)

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 5/5/14)

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

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

FIG, Cupecoy opposite Rainbow Beach Club

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 3/31/14)

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

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 11/2/14)

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/>

Soprano's Restaurant, Maho Plaza, <http://www.sopranospianobar.com/stmaarten/restaurant/> (featured 3/3/14)

Bylbos, Simpson Bay

Sushiito Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance (featured 3/17/14)

We'll write about another SXM restaurant here next week as we continue our weekly SXM restaurant coverage.

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Page Updated Every Other Weekday

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

Want to rent or buy a week?

2014 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 other weekday. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.

Meet Our Sponsors (updated 9/27/13) --- Returns soon.

SECTION 4: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)

Please see www.everythingsxm.com/secret .

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 12/17/13

Returns soon.

CONTACT US

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

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

To unsubscribe, click the Unsubscribe link here: <http://everythingxm.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://everythingxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> , select *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 and to receive Low Airfare Bulletins. 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?>

LEGAL:

Entire contents copyright (c), JMB Communications, 2014. World rights reserved. Excerpting, quotation, and republication, in any form, print, electronic, or archival, is expressly prohibited without written advance permission. You can forward this newsletter in its entirety only to your friends. For reprint permission, email us. JMB vigorously defends its copyrights. *Everything St. Maarten* and *Everything St. Martin* are service marks of JMB Communications. *JMB Communications* is a trademark of JMB Communications, P. O. Box 1812, Plymouth, Massachusetts 02362-1812 USA. Join our free St. Maarten / St. Martin newsletter mailing list at <http://www.everythingsxm.com> . You cannot join by emailing us.

Our email headers also contain subscribe / unsubscribe / address change links.

To see the JMB Communications privacy policy, visit http://everythingxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml

11/23/14 1100AAS #970 7.9

| [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of use](#) |

Copyright ©, JMB Communications, 2014. World rights reserved.