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

Weekly Tourist-Oriented News & Comments from SXM

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Part of www.everythingstmaarten.com

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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

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

This is issue #973 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.

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30 new stories this week

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Timeshare Rentals and Sales of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml and features them here.

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else, worldwide, at no charge, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 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 1/11/2015 1/17/2015 Week 2 La Vista Beach Gorgeous 2nd floor studio/1br/1ba unit at La Vista Beach. One of the best places on the Island to enjoy the beautiful Island of St. Maarten. La Vista Beach sits on the beach and provides unobstructed views of the Caribbean Sea, Saba and the cruise ships coming in and out. Only 18 units provide small family atmosphere that can't be beat; pool is right outside your door as is the beach. All amenities of La Vista are also at your fingertips including Hideaway Restaurant and Bar. \$850 David 631-513-0903 david@ligaly.org

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: 1/24/2015 through 3/21/2015: Weeks 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 Simpson Bay Resort & Marina 2 Bedroom Villa: 211A - 211B (Master and Junior Suites) together accommodate 6 people. Master suite consists of King size bed/master bedroom, 2 Murphy beds/living room, full kitchen, dining/living room, spacious bathroom with separate double vanity area. Beautiful, large deck overlooks Simpson Bay. Junior suite – (lock out) 2 full beds, a small kitchen, dorm size refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee maker. The bathroom is spacious with a separate double vanity area. Decks overlook Simpson Bay & Pool. Sale price per week: \$19,000.00 Matthew O'Donnell 609-780-6845 mess113@yahoo.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. Please contact Jeff at (508) 747-8281 or email jeff@jmbcommunications.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

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

This Week's Stories

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

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

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Rent Out or Sell Your SXM Timeshare

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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://everythingxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for five full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

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

Contact Us:

[Revised 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. Airport Bomb Hoax Sends Passengers Into The Heat

About a week ago, after our last *Weekly News* had already been transmitted, a KLM 747 was on the tarmac at Princess Juliana airport with a technical problem that had caused the previous flight to be canceled. Someone made a phone call saying there was a bomb aboard the plane and emergency plans were immediately put into place. A meticulous search of the aircraft and beyond found no bomb. However, following normal procedures, air traffic to Princess Juliana was halted and passengers were immediately evacuated from the terminal. They waited outside the northern end of the terminal in the blazing sun, and some complained later about dehydration.

The call was a hoax, but thousands of passengers were inconvenienced both in the airport and aboard incoming aircraft diverted to other locations. Once the all clear was sounded, a mass of passengers returned to the terminal to slowly funnel back through security. Police are still investigating; no arrests yet.

2. Weather Stays Hot, Humid

Weather in St. Maarten this past week was generally hot and humid with partly cloudy skies. Daily high temperatures were in the 80s, with nighttime lows around 77, typical for this time of year.

There were no reports of snow, ice (except in drinks), freezing cold, etc.

If you're not in SXM -- why?

3. How To Get The Lowest-Cost Airfares, Hotels, Cruises, and Tour Packages Worldwide (Repeat)

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.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

4. Why Baker's Suites Is Such a Huge Hit

Before it opened about a year ago, we took a tour of Baker's Suites in Simpson Bay. We had watched as the all new building had been constructed and outfitted. Everything was new from the ground up.

There are only two all suites hotels on the island: Princess Heights in Dawn beach, and Baker's Suites. We wrote about Princess Heights a few weeks ago; it offers a commanding view of the ocean plus outstanding accommodations.

Baker's Suites was opened to provide modern suite-style accommodations in Simpson Bay near popular beaches at reasonable prices. It has done that, and it has hit quite a home run in the process. Not only is it excellent as a place to stay for those waiting for their timeshare to be available, it is so central and so comfortable that it's an ideal place itself for an enjoyable vacation. It's also reasonable price-wise, less than non-suites hotels in the area.

We have highly recommended Baker's Suites since it opened its doors. Of course, Baker's, like about 210 other St. Maarten businesses, gives discounts to our JMB Website Supporters members. If you are not already a member, our holiday sale is now underway: membership can save you a small fortune during your next trip to St. Maarten. That sale ends December 24, so get a new membership, renew an existing membership, or reinstate a prior membership today at the lowest prices of the year.

5. Caravanserai Sign Gone, Alegria Coming

The archway into the old Caravanserai complex is being rebuilt, presumably to accommodate signs for Alegria resort. We have no idea when the sign will actually be changed, which might not be until planned upgrades have been completed.

6. Which SXM Timeshares are Best?

There have been a number of changes over the last several years in the timeshare business on St. Maarten, and some resorts have abandoned that concept or have simply stopped selling new timeshare intervals.

We know there are people interested in buying timeshare weeks at current depressed prices, and we are often asked which resorts are the best. We base our opinion of that on two factors: first, we've made our recommendations from active timeshare resorts only; and second, we're recommending only resorts about which we have heard virtually no complaints from timeshare owners.

To those not familiar with the property, the choice of Royal Islander as the number one timeshare property on the island might be surprising given its proximity to the airport. But we have never had a single complaint about Royal Islander since we have been publishing *St. Maarten Weekly News* — not one. That's quite remarkable. We've also often received emails from timeshare owners there who have sought to reiterate how much they love that resort.

The rest of the top level resorts are all tied for number two, since all of them have about one complaint over the last 10 years. In this category are La Vista and La Vista Beach in Pelican Key; Divi Little Bay Beach Resort at Little Bay; and Oyster Bay Beach Resort.

We have excluded Mary's Boon and Summit Resort from this list because we don't regard either as timeshare resorts (no current timeshare sales that we know of, but there are resales) — *but both of these are quite outstanding properties which we have long recommended.*

We have also excluded both Diamond Resorts properties, Royal Palm and Flamingo, not because there's anything wrong with the properties themselves but because their annual maintenance fees are through the roof and because they seem to have a contentious relationship with some of their full share owners. We have also left Atrium off this list because of its slow response to timeshare owners concerns a number of years ago which resulted in court action by timeshare owners. But -- we have had zero complaints from Atrium or Diamond Resorts timeshare owners in recent years about issues other than those noted here.

We should also add that Simpson Bay Resort could easily have been included in our top resorts category if its renovations were further along. Praise for that resort has been unanimous among its timeshare owners who own units that have already been renovated, although many are not enamored of the cost of the renovations.

Lastly, Sapphire continues to progress; we'll keep you posted on how it's doing.

7. New Dutch-Side Government Still Not Installed; More Non-Progress for Caravanserai Timeshare Owners

As we've reported, an election was held on the Dutch side last September to appoint a new Parliament and Prime Minister. September, of course, was four months ago, and the new government has yet to be sworn in.

The Hague has required integrity assessments of all candidates and, according to local newspapers, four candidates didn't pass muster. The entire list was to have been formalized tomorrow, Tuesday, December 16, and sworn into office theoretically shortly thereafter. Since those four candidates apparently must be replaced, Lord only knows when the new government will take office.

None of this affects tourists or any aspects of Dutch side daily life much, but the fact that there's no new government is an unpleasant reality for Caravanserai timeshare owners who have been hoping for government intervention to help them. The current caretaker government has expressed compassion, but it hasn't wanted to take any concrete steps simply because it is a caretaker operation. And the new government hasn't been sworn in so it can't do anything, either, leaving Caravanserai timeshare owners rather helpless.

For more information about the Caravanserai situation, see our Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/caravanseraitimeshare.

SECTION 3: Island

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

Story 8:

Don't Miss Our Holiday Sale -- Ends Dec. 24: **Only \$39 For The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package --** **210+ Discounts Across SXM**

Get The Best SXM Discount Package: Get about 210 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) but much less per year when you buy multiyear memberships. Low prices for renewals and reinstatements, too.

New memberships: Learn more here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Your JMB membership keeps these newsletters coming every week and gives you tons of discounts across SXM.

Reinstate a former membership: <http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Renew your current JMB membership at the Membership Renewal Center on the members-only [Secret Website](#).

Story 9:

SkyMed Now On Sale: Travel Nowhere Without SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection -- Gift Memberships Available

SkyMed takes you home in a hurry on an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet when you or your spouse / partner become critically ill or injured. Without membership, you must pay for the evacuation in cash, in advance -- if you can set it up -- and the cost can easily be \$50,000 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 join.

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 from 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.

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 have 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 JMB member, join; it's now on sale at Holiday / Black Friday prices (usually it's just \$99 for four years or \$59 for one year). Sign up for JMB here: http://everythingxsm.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 SkyMed memberships, buy online at www.skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members only) or www.skymed.com/jmbxsm (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 31, 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 SkyMed now...anything can

happen anywhere you go.

10. Kool & The Gang To Headline 35th Heineken Regatta

The legendary band Kool and the Gang will be the headline act performing at the 35th Heineken Regatta March 3-8 of next year.

Always branded as serious fun, the Heineken Regatta is the biggest sailing event in the Caribbean and one of the world's most popular. It brings hundreds of sailing craft to the island for many races and lots of nonstop partying and it's the busiest week of the year on the island. If you haven't been here for Heineken Regatta, plan on it.

Here's where you'll find much more about the Regatta: <http://www.heinekenregatta.com>.

11. Christmas Gifts for Members: Magnetic Bracelets, Opal Earrings

Once again this year, both Caribbean Gems and Zhaveri Jewelers are offering our JMB Website Supporters members special holiday gifts at a fraction of their usual cost.

For example, high-quality opal earrings at a small fraction of their regular retail cost — and magnetic bracelets in a variety of colors also at a fraction of their usual cost. Both of these items are available by phone order or in person to JMB Website Supporters members at exclusive members-only prices. In addition to sending the detailed information to our JMB members earlier last week, we also posted the information on our everything St. Maarten Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

Orders are still being taken. Throughout the winter, we will be offering additional deeply discounted specials from both Zhaveri Jewelers and Caribbean Gems exclusively for our JMB members. While supplies last, you can also go into the stores to pick up these items. However, you must bring your JMB Website Supporters membership card with you along with a photo ID to verify your identity. Your membership card was e-mailed to you from Membership Services earlier this year or last year, or since then when you joined JMB.

If you're still not a member of JMB Website Supporters, you're spending far too much on everything you buy in St. Maarten. See the ad above for our holiday sale and join today; sale ends December 24.

12. Iguana Park Finally Opens; Great Souvenirs at Low Prices

The St. Maarten Iguana Park in the oyster pond area has finally opened.

Construction of the park started about two years ago and it was virtually completed but never formally opened when it was torn down and rebuilt slightly South. Now it has opened, but when we walked through it the grounds were nice but there weren't many iguanas. Perhaps more will be there when it formally opens, which is supposed to be this week.

The park has cages which appear to be for monkeys, an iguana nursery, two donkeys named Monica Lewinsky and O.J. Simpson, and a neat souvenir shop with lots of quality Iguana Park souvenirs at extremely reasonable prices.

When we visited, the cost of entry not been established but we expect it to be low.

You can also see iguanas at the very small pond across the street from the Westin St. Maarten resort.

13. Repeat: Perfect Month for Flower Pictures

We know that many of you have arrived on the island this week and look forward to taking many pictures while you're here. We want to repeat -- this is an outstanding month for photography, since many winter blooming flowers are at full bloom. Tour the island from top to bottom and you'll find a lot of subjects for photography — including Monarch butterflies.

Our other Facebook Everything St. Maarten page encourages you to post your photography, which we often use in our masthead on that same page. Here is the address: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6297726366/>

14. Swim With The Iguanas

Not dolphins -- iguanas.

On Saturday night we met a young lady from Milwaukee who told us that while swimming in the pool at her Orient beach resort, she came face-to-face with an iguana.

That's a rather unusual experience for tourists, but it happens to people who live on the island fairly frequently. A friend on the island once told us, "at the end of the day they like to take a swim just like we do, and to them a pool is just another body of water."

Although they look like small alligators, iguanas are docile, generally shy reptiles that love salads. They run from people unless they have been tamed by being fed.

15. Why Many Locals Are Giving Up On Vegetable Gardens

People like vegetables. So do monkeys and so do iguanas. Since there are more than 1200 monkeys on the island according to a recent professional estimate, and since there are no doubt a like number of iguanas here, both monkeys and iguanas are delighted when people have vegetable gardens since that gives them a handy place to relax and have a great meal.

Vegetable gardeners, of course, take a dim view of these uninvited guests. But it is almost impossible to stop either monkeys or iguanas from getting into vegetable gardens and feasting. If you live here for an extended period and were thinking about having a vegetable garden you may want to rethink that.

16. Christmas In The Caribbean - Got Everything But Snow

Jimmy Buffett is totally accurate in his "Christmas in the Caribbean" song, which reports that the holiday has everything here but snow. See it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Os6wu85r-l4>

Around Thanksgiving, container loads of Christmas trees arrived here, from both Canada and spots in the USA. Supplies in some places were running low last week, but there were Christmas trees offered everywhere. Christmas decorations are being put up across the island and in one rather large decorated area right near the turn off to Friars Bay on the road between Marigot and Grand Case.

Except for a large snowman display at Vesna Taverna, which has its own self generated snow, you'll find no snow down here unless you scrape the inside of a non-defrosting freezer.

17. Where To Hear Unending Christmas Carols

As always, our favorite radio station is island 92 at 91.9 FM. But if you're looking for Christmas carols, either the traditional kind or lots of Caribbean Christmas carols, search on your radio dial for FM stations in nearby Anguilla. We won't give you the FM frequencies because it's fun to just search for them yourself. We reported on some unusual carols here over the last couple of weeks, including "I want a piece of pork for the Christmas" and "Don't be like Santa and come just once a year" from a lady who apparently felt ignored.

18. SPN Sports Bar: Great Fun, Food; Friendly Staff

St. Maarten today has only one real sports bar: SPN in Simpson Bay.

It has plenty of televisions where you can watch playoff football and other games with many other fans, and enjoy burgers, chicken fingers, pizza, beer, and much more at reasonable prices while you cheer on your team from the tropics. We've been to SPN a few times so far on this trip and it is always enjoyable.

19. Take Your Clothes Off at Dinghy Dock at Your Own Economic Risk

The menu at Dinghy Dock in Oyster Pond, a very popular and very informal place, reads "Naked people drink free, but we reserve the right to charge double if it isn't pretty."

Do it and let us know what happens. No, we will not provide bail money. Email us story responses at [jmbweb\[at\]jmbcommunications.com](mailto:jmbweb[at]jmbcommunications.com).

20. Butterflies Back by the Thousands

We arrived in St. Maarten only a few days after the 10 inch rainstorm that hit early last month. We saw almost no butterflies for a few days and figured they were either washed out of the sky or it wasn't the season.

Regardless, they are here now. Little yellow butterflies by the thousands are now across the island particularly just North of the border when you're driving toward Orient beach on the French side, light yellow butterflies are some larger orange butterflies -- and larger still Monarch butterflies. The latter are becoming rare in the US because of habitat problems in Mexico, their main home.

If you want to help them, plant milkweed; it's their favorite food.

21. Topper Performs SXM Weddings; Hear Him On Island 92

Topper Daboul, who runs one of the most popular restaurants on St. Maarten, is a licensed ship captain and as such can perform weddings -- and he periodically does.

We don't know whether he has time to do renewals of vows or even ceremonies for people he doesn't know, but you can always ask you when you visit his restaurant. We know he has done a number weddings on the beach but during high season, that may well be difficult because his restaurants are very busy. Just thought you'd like to know. (There are paperwork requirements to get married in SXM and they take time.)

22. Followup on Cugini Ristorante Italiano

We reported a week ago about our first visit to Cugini restaurant in Simpson Bay, recently relocated from the Marina Royale in Marigot. Bottom line, we thought the restaurant was excellent and we offered observations about its unique ambience in our review.

We returned to Cugini last week and while there, met a total of 16 of our Weekly News readers who were trying the restaurant for the first or second time based upon our review. They also gave it rave reviews.

See the related article in this issue about when you should visit restaurants we recommend. See next article and story #26.

23. Take Romantic, Authentic Gondola Rides on Simpson Bay Lagoon

Something new has come to Simpson Bay lagoon: rides on an authentic Venice-type gondola, docked behind Cugini restaurant. The boat is available for romantic charter runs or for special occasions. For more information, see www.tropicalvenicegondolas.com or send an e-mail to info@tropicalvenicegondolas.com. Mention Jeff when you get in touch -- this business will soon be offering discounts to JMB members, too. If you haven't joined JMB Website Supporters -- do it; see the beginning of this section for details.

24. Indulge Your Party Animal Side on the St. Maarten Party Bus (Advance Reservations a Must)

The St. Maarten Party Bus is one very busy nighttime adventure.

Except when it is providing fun to cruise ship passengers during the day, the St. Maarten Party Bus is on the streets of both sides of the island practically every night providing fun for visitors and locals alike.

Take a close look at www.theStMaartenpartybus.com for particulars on all their tours, which are inexpensive. Like 210 other businesses, the St. Maarten Party Bus offers discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; if you haven't joined, you're spending too much on your SXM vacation. For more on joining, see the ad at the beginning of this section. For much more information on the St. Maarten Party Bus, visit

their site. It will be a night you'll long remember.

25. SXM Christmas Displays

You'll find holiday Christmas displays across the island, but perhaps the biggest and best is the one we mentioned earlier, near the Friars Bay cut off along the road between Marigot and Grand Case.

26. When To Visit Restaurants We Recommend

One thing we've heard from members repeatedly during this trip is that they wish they had tried a restaurant we had recommended earlier in their trip. They had saved it until last but enjoyed it so much they wish they had visited earlier so they could've visited multiple times before leaving SXM.

So, when you read articles here about a restaurant that is new to you in St. Maarten, go soon; you definitely won't regret it.

27. Bagels: Where To Get Authentic, Fresh, Delicious, Homemade Bagels on SXM

Although St. Maarten doesn't have an authentic New York style deli (yet), it does have a place where any morning of the week you can get authentic New York style bagels and cream cheese and lox. The bagels are fresh and cooked on the premises and they are quite delicious - even by US standards.

The bagels are made fresh every morning but are generally in limited supplies to be used with breakfasts ordered at the restaurant. If you want to get bagels just to take out, contact the restaurant the previous afternoon to pre-order them and ask for Sally.

The place: Vesna Taverna in Simpson Bay, a couple of hundred yards north of the drawbridge on the lagoon side of Airport Road. See www.vesnataverna.com.

28. In a Week, Simpson Bay Lagoon Causeway Celebrates its First Anniversary

In a week or so, the St. Maarten lagoon Causeway will celebrate its first anniversary. We haven't seen anything in local papers yet about any kind of celebration but if you're here, you might check the papers and also our main Facebook page for St. Maarten:

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

29. Seaweed Update

Seaweed made an encore appearance here last week, but we think that encore is short-lived. The seaweed seems to come to the island from the Northeast and move down the coast. It was diminishing on Saturday from the Coralita area northward and hopefully will disappear from the rest of the East Coast of the island in the next few days. The southern end of Orient beach, the clothing-optional Club Orient area, was unaffected by seaweed.

Seaweed comes from the Sargasso Sea and is usually never seen in the area after about mid-October. Sea currents bringing Sargasso seaweed to St. Maarten may have been affected by hurricane Gonzalo in October.

30. Restaurant of the Week: Canoa

When you see lots of repeat visitors at a restaurant -- and lots of first-timers coming on the recommendations of others, smiling grateful smiles to the owner on their way out -- you know you're at a winner of a restaurant.

In fact Canoa -- located on the road to Oyster Bay Beach Resort -- was a recipient of our Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin Award of Excellence this year, a very well deserved accolade.

Canoa serves continental food with a Caribbean twist. Chef Sherman Marten knows his stuff and his recipes are extraordinary. He brings such incredible flavor to each dish that you'll want to go beyond your usual dining boundaries and try new things; it's that good and he has earned that level of confidence. If you have special dietary needs the restaurant bends over backwards to accommodate you. Lots of menu choices from appetizer to dessert. We had sashimi-grade seared tuna for the entree after enjoying their lobster and cod cakes. The non-meat eater in the group got shrimp kabob with Creole sauce plus a delightful fresh salad. Dessert, creme brulee cheesecake.

Like 210 other businesses, Canoa offers something special to JMB Website Supporters members. If you have not yet joined JMB Website Supporters now is the time; our Holiday Sale ends December 24.

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 12/15/14)

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

Cugini (featured 12/8/14)

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

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.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.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/28/14)

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.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

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

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 12/1/14)

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.

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Rent St. Maarten Villas is the website of Villalady Bobby Valins, showcasing her villas in Burgeaux Bay and in Grand Case. See her site at www.rentstmaartenvillas.com.

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Emerald Cove Villas provides a one-of-a-kind vacation experience in Oyster Pond. See their website at www.emeraldcovevillas.com . Learn why *Emerald Cove* is the name.

Caribbean Days provides luxury villa accommodations throughout the Caribbean. See www.caribbeandays.com .

Villa Journeys offers JMB readers villa accommodations (and much more) not only throughout the Caribbean, but across the USA and in Europe. See www.villajourneys.com

Oyster Bay View Villa, overlooking Oyster Pond and Captain Oliver's Marina, delivers great accommodations near Dawn Beach, a quick ride to Orient Beach and the dozens of fine restaurants at Grand Case. See their site at www.oysterbayview.com

Club Fantastico, www.clubfantastico.net, overlooking Orient Beach, gives you fine villa-like accommodations in a totally clothing optional ambiance, inside and out. It's the perfect place for a *no tan lines* vacation.

Summit Resort Hotel, atop a cliff in Cupecoy, is a favorite. See why; check out www.thesummitresort.com

Shopping: (Updated 9/7/2013)

DK Gems on Front Street (*opposite and not far west of the historic Court House*) offers extraordinary eye-popping gems in a rainbow of exquisite settings. Not to be missed on your next trip. See www.dkgemsint.com .

Zhaveri Jewelers on Front Street opposite Little Switzerland (near the historic Courthouse) offers an incredible inventory of the finest gems in the Caribbean. Offering the island's largest selection of elegant jewelry for men, women, and kids. Visit www.zhaveri.com .

Fine Food, Pastries, Wines/Liquors, Yacht Provisioning:

Le Grand Marche has several Dutch Side locations to conveniently serve you -- at the roundabout near the Bush road, next to Port de Plaisance off the Union Road near the French border, or their *Gourmet Marche* store in Simpson Bay. For all the details see www.legrandmarche.net .

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.

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