



This Week's Stories

Airfare, Airlines & Weather News

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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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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 224,000 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 #976 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:

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22 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 01/10/2015 01/17/2015 week 2 Diamond Resorts Flamingo Beach Resort Deluxe beachfront studio (7140)at beach level facing Simpson Bay; just a few steps from the beach. Fully equipped kitchen, king size bed and convertible sofa. Sleeps 4. Veranda with table, chairs and chaise lounge. 2 TVs and DVD player. The resort has two beautiful beaches, a large infinity swimming pool, on premises restaurants, a French Bakery a deli and many other amenities. Many excellent restaurants very close by; close to airport. Convenient to shopping in Philipsburg and Marigot. (Sat-Sat) \$1100/wk plus \$50 timeshare tax. Call Arnold at 732-985-2906 or email at

arnold10@hotmail.com

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:

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 but we will accept any reasonable offer. Please contact Jeff at email jeff@jmbcommunications.com - leave phone number and we'll call back.

SALE 2/15/2015 2/22/2015 week 7 Simpson Bay Resort Marina Building M419 a one bedroom fully equipped kitchen, dining area, living room which leads to a balcony with a beautiful View. \$3,500.00 Tom cell 516-410-4266 tlaundri@optonline.net

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 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

Meet Our Sponsors (Updated 9/7/13)

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

- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads: Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

Section Five: Where To Find Background Information for Travelers (*For New Readers*) (Revised 12/31/14)

How To Get a **GROWING LIST of 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. Jam-Packed Airport Tarmac Gets Some Relief

Think of your favorite route to work and how jampacked it gets during commuting hours.

That's just about what happened lately at Princess Juliana airport, where the tarmac was loaded with private jets here for Christmas and New Year's. Many of those took off just after New Year's, bringing a sense of normalcy back to the airport.

Lots of people were around, if only to stop in St. Maarten on the way to mega parties on St. Bart's. There, P Diddy,. Russell Simmons, and Roman Abramovich all hosted spectacular New Year's Eve parties which included fireworks visible from eastern St. Maarten, which had its own fireworks displays on New Year's Eve at midnight.

Among the folks on the island were many Hollywood types, the "rich and famous," plus Tommy Hilfiger, who enjoyed a great dinner the other night at one of the top restaurants on the island and one of our long-time favorites, Spiga. See story #21.

2. Milestone Two Millionth 2014 Cruise Passenger Recorded 12/31

At the end of last month, the Dutch side celebrated something it has never achieved before: two million cruise ship passengers being processed through the A C Wathey Cruise and Cargo Facilities in Philipsburg.

The folks who were picked out of line as the two millionth passengers received a fair amount of hoopla and were rewarded with a free cruise for two, presumably returning them to SXM.

3. Weather? Nothing Changing...

The weather during the last week has stayed pretty much as it was the week before — hazy, hot, and humid, with daytime high temperatures in the lower 80s, and nighttime temps in the mid to upper 70s. Weather has generally been partly cloudy and windy with rare brief showers.

4. 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

5. Caravanserai Timeshare Owners Appear To Be Voting With Their Feet

Over the last several weeks, we have suggested that Caravanserai timeshare owners who are dissatisfied about their timeshare weeks being declared null and void by the new resort owner speak up about it in the island's newspapers.

We realize that this has been a busy period — because of the holidays and everything associated with them. So, we will again provide e-mail addresses of the editorial page editors of the newspapers, below, so Caravanserai timeshare owners can express themselves properly.

Many Caravanserai timeshare owners have expressed their opinions on our Caravanserai timeshare Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Caravanseraitimeshare> .

Many others have written to us personally. The heart of what they have said to us is that they blame the island government for failing to protect their timeshare investments. They feel that if the government cared about timeshare owners, it would have made sure this kind of outcome could not possibly ever have taken place.

For those who missed the earlier stories, some 2300 timeshare owners at the former Caravanserai resort were told their timeshare investments — many of them tens of thousands of dollars — were suddenly worthless. The new owner had decided to turn the place into an upscale hotel and was discontinuing timesharing. That investor, Ray Sidhom from New York, had bought the resort at auction from the Bank of Nova Scotia.

"We have lost everything," one timeshare owner wrote to us. "I can't imagine why the island apparently doesn't care about timeshare owners, since we spend a lot here every year regardless of anything else that's going on." She was referring to recessions, hurricanes, economic downturns, etc., through which timeshare owners always return. "We are always here for the island, but at the end of the day, they were not here for us."

Another wrote: "I'm not coming back to St. Maarten after this year. I know that most Caravanserai timeshare owners are going away and that will hurt some businesses. But if those business owners really cared about us, they would bang on the doors of government people to fix this instead of complaining about the loss of business. In my opinion, they are as much to blame as the government since none of them did anything to stop this and help us. Do I feel guilty about leaving them? Not one bit."

Another wrote us to say that he personally had lost over \$50,000 at Caravanserai. "There is no way I will ever go back to St. Maarten, not after this. Nobody helped, so I'm not spending one more cent on that island."

Timeshare owners may not be writing to the newspapers — at least not yet — but they appear to be voting with their feet in this situation, leaving SXM.

If you're a St. Maarten timeshare owner, particularly a timeshare owner at Caravanserai, we urge you to make your views known to the people of St. Maarten via letters to the editor pages. It does matter — far more than you think.

Contact the Today newspaper at: todaymanagersxm25@gmail.com

And contact the Daily Herald newspaper at: editorial@thedailyherald.com

Please feel free to share this information with other St. Maarten timeshare owners.

SECTION 3: Island

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

Story 6:

Holiday Sale Extended for Final Time: Only Days Left -- Only \$39 For The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package -- 210+ Discounts Across SXM -- Gift Memberships Available

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](#).

To get a Gift Membership -- simply buy via PayPal and use the "Comments" area to tell us who you're buying for (name, address, email). Bonus: buy a Gift Membership and we'll extend your own membership for a full year on us.

Story 7:

SkyMed Now On Sale: Don't Gamble When You Travel - Take SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection With You

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 while traveling. 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 -- and they are far less per day on an annual basis.

And when you renew SkyMed annual or Ultimate plans, 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 January 31 (just expanded / 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 will ask for your JMB membership number.

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... 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 January 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.

8. SkyMed Offers End-of-Year Bargain Renewals to Current Members; Act Quickly

Thousands of readers of *St. Maarten Weekly News*, as well as many of our JMB Website Supporters members, have opted to join SkyMed, which gives them enormous peace of mind when they travel. SkyMed takes you home when you become critically ill or injured while traveling — in our view, nothing else matters.

SkyMed members who joined through us have received a letter in the last couple of weeks offering them membership extensions at a very special year end low price. If you have not responded to SkyMed's mailing, you should do so now: this bargain membership extension will likely not be repeated and it offers you exceptional pricing on SkyMed's superb annual or multiyear memberships.

9. Heads Up To American & Canadian Expatriates Living in St. Maarten or Elsewhere Overseas

If you're an American or Canadian expatriate living in Dutch or French St. Martin, it's critical for you to protect yourself against the possibility that you will be stuck on the island if you become critically ill or injured while living here. Although there is quality medical care available in SXM, it's not what you get back home -- and **Americans and Canadians to a huge extent prefer being home with doctors and hospitals they know and trust** when they become critically ill or injured – home when their insurance works, which is almost invariably not the case overseas

American and Canadian expatriates living in the Bahamas, any nation in the Caribbean, or Mexico are eligible for SkyMed's NATO plan — its North American Transport Option. Despite the fact that expatriates are living most of each year outside of the US or Canada, expatriates are eligible to be flown home on a medical evacuation jet to the US or Canada when they become critically ill or injured while away, from these areas.

To protect yourself, please phone SkyMed directly at 1-800-475-9633 and ask for Nan on weekdays, mountain time. Tell her you are a Jeff Berger St. Maarten member or that you read about this in Jeff Berger St. Maarten Weekly News. She can tell you about NATO and help get you protected.

10. Great News: No Seaweed on Most SXM Beaches

We did a rather complete tour yesterday of practically all St. Maarten beaches frequented by tourists and we have great news: there is no seaweed on most St. Maarten and St. Martin beaches.

At Mullet Bay, Cupecoy beach, Bay longue, Plum Bay, and Bay Rouge, the water was crystal clear and beautiful, and earlier we had reported to you that the situation was exactly the same up in Friars Bay and in Nettle Bay — and, as well, at the southern end of Orient beach.

The most widely used other beach on the east shore of the island is Dawn beach, where both the Westin St. Maarten resort and casino and Oyster Bay beach resort are located. That beach has had quite a bit of Sargasso seaweed which is being removed by tractors every morning. Conditions in front of the Westin are quite good once their tractor finishes.

People who live here say they have never before seen a situation when there is any Sargasso seaweed beyond mid-October. As for the folks at Oyster Bay, they are either moving down the beach a bit for chairs away from the seaweed, or they're using the Oyster Bay pools, or they're going to one of the island's many other beautiful, pristine, seaweed-free beaches.

The good news is that right now most other beaches are in beautiful shape.

11. Entry Deadline for Our Nine-Vacation Giveaway Extended to 1/8; On-Air Drawing Set January 12

EverythingSXM.com is giving away nine SXM vacations and many more prizes in Thanks Four Million, which celebrates the site surpassing four million visits. The last day to enter has been extended to January 8.

Everyone can enter once per email address and JMB Website Supporters members can enter up to 10 times. Fifty entrants will be picked at random from all entries and will not be notified in advance. It will be from the "final fifty" that we will draw our nine vacation winners. You can still enter to be part, possibly, of the final 50. Just go to our homepage to see the prize list and enter. Again, entries end January 8.

The drawing will be live on the air on [island 92.com](http://island92.com) at 10 am island time on Monday, January 12. The first name we draw wins the grand prize, a one-week vacation on St. Maarten, round-trip airfare from any JetBlue city to St. Maarten for two, and many other prizes that you'll find listed on our homepage. You must answer the phone to win — we won't leave messages or call back (no exceptions). After the Grand Prize winner has been drawn, we'll call the other eight vacation winners live on the air....

12. Coming This Summer: A New Vacation Giveaway To Celebrate **SXM Weekly News'** Issue No. 1,000

St. Maarten Weekly News started publishing in the early 1990s — irregularly. It soon became a weekly and has been publishing steadily ever since, and next July it will publish its 1000th edition.

We'll tell you the details of our new giveaway soon, but for now know this: we will be giving away at least one additional St. Maarten vacation come July, to celebrate our thousandth edition. We think that's kind of a big deal — don't you? Details will come soon on who can enter and how.

One stipulation — you must subscribe to *St. Maarten Weekly News* to win. If you are receiving this as a pass-along reader, you are ineligible to win. Weekly news subscribers only can win; it's free, so subscribe today on the homepage of our SXM website, www.everythingStMaarten.com.

13. Tan Lines or No Tan Lines? Our Facebook Followers Vote -- With Nearly Unanimous Results

Tongue planted firmly in cheek, this past weekend we asked readers of our main St. Maarten Facebook page a simple question: "tan lines or no tan lines?"

We had no idea what to expect in response, but the answer was far more one-sided than we had ever imagined: it was a landslide in favor of no tan lines — with lots of emphasis and exuberance.

See for yourself: <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

13a. Trying Naturism for the First Time at Club Orient, French St. Martin (Repeat)

See our story -- you may well identify with it:

<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/beaches/tryingnaturism.shtml>

14. Do It: Caribbean Deep-Sea Fishing With Rudy

Rudy Sierens is SXM's most knowledgeable and experienced deep sea fishing captain. It's an adventure you will long remember -- and Rudy's is one of more than 210 businesses providing discounts to our JMB Website Supporters members.

Learn more about Rudy's trips here: <http://www.rudysdeepseafishing.com/>

And learn more about JMB Website Supporters at the top of this section; our holiday sale is almost over so do it now, while you're thinking of it.

15. For Neil Roebert, The Journey to "Celine II Ocean Mist" Is Just About Over

Neil Roebert was delighted to say goodbye to 2014.

His labor of love in retrofitting Celine II – Ocean Mist went on for the entire year, far longer than he or anyone else had hoped. And then, tied up for what was predicted to be a tropical storm, his venerable Celine catamaran was sunk when another boat tore loose from its moorings during hurricane Gonzalo and slammed into Celine.

This is the week when Celine II may formally enter service. We saw it while he was retrofitting it and we expect to be on the boat again this week. It is quite a showpiece.

Once the boat is formally in the water and ready to go, we'll shoot a bunch of pictures and put them on our Facebook page, here:

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

16. More Good News: Cupecoy Parking Reopens

Many users of Cupecoy beach were startled some time ago when boulders were placed along the road they had used for parking entry.

You can still park in the lot just to the north of ocean club and walk to either of the two Cupecoy beaches. But now, you can also drive right in, after early morning, and park right next to the beach of your choice, like you had been able to do for many years. It's your choice where to park, and you'll still get the same outstanding and responsive service that John and Dany have long provided — along with great "LoLo" food and drink as well as inexpensive rental lounges.

If you've never tried Cupecoy beach, it has always been our favorite clothing optional beach on the island. Give it a try.

For more information on trying a clothing optional beach for the first time, look here:

<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/beaches/tryingnaturism.shtml>

17. Restaurant Comings & Goings: La Gondola Closes

Many years ago, in the area south of Marigot called Sandy ground, David Foini opened his first St. Maarten business — La Raviolina, a small manufacturer of ravioli and other Italian pasta. He first sold his pasta to Daniel Jurczenko (then at Da Livio in Philipsburg, now at Daniel's By The Sea in Dawn Beach) and the two have become very close friends ever since. Based upon demand from his own customers, David soon opened a tiny restaurant in Sandy ground called La Gondola which was an instant hit despite being located in a less than wonderful neighborhood.

More than 10 years ago, La Gondola relocated to the Atlantis casino, where David ran it as a gourmet Italian restaurant which was

spectacularly successful. About five years ago, he sold it after opening is IZI Ristorante Italiano in Simpson Bay, which he still operates.

La Gondola was bought by other parties but it was never the same, and now it has closed. But it will be very fondly remembered for the days David ran it and the excellence of its food, which is perfectly reflected over at IZI — where two of the former chefs from La Gondola now work behind the scenes making amazing dining.

18. Restaurant Comings & Goings: "Melange International Grill" Coming to Forner Peg Leg Pub Location

For several years, Peg Leg Pub and Steakhouse was an immensely popular fixture on the Dutch side culinary scene, closing last year. Since then, owner Linda Parker has spent time here in St. Maarten as well as back home in Arizona.

She and the rest of us have been wondering what would move into her former location at Port de Plaisance. Here's the answer: Mélange International Grill.

We know what mélange means, but we have no idea what the new Grill will actually offer. It's not yet open, and in fact the only evidence of a new restaurant coming to the location is its sign. The Peg Leg Pub canoe is still hanging from the ceiling.

We'll keep you posted, as always.

19. Warning About Using US Cell Phones in SXM

How would you like to pay four dollars a minute or more for cell phone calls back to the US from St. Maarten?

If you are a user of AT&T or Verizon or several other American wireless providers, that's what you'll pay for roaming.

When we bought our new Samsung android AT&T phone about a year and a half ago, we were told by the salesperson, by AT&T, and by AT&T customer service that the phone was unlocked and we would have no problem using it with a local Sim in St. Maarten.

As it turned out, all of those AT&T people lied to us. Many hours on the phone and more than \$600 in refunds later, we got what we were told we had at the time of purchase — an unlocked phone we can use to switch the Sim for local calling in St. Maarten.

Without a local line — and without an unlocked phone — you'll have difficulty making cheap telephone calls in St. Maarten, unless you're using Skype.

Chances are your roaming program isn't cheap. You can buy local Sims very inexpensively and use them over a period of years. If you do buy an unlocked phone in the US, get it in writing on letterhead.

20. You Can Have a Local SXM Phone Number - If Your Smart Phone is Unlocked

We explained this in the previous article — but we simply wanted to make sure you knew you could do this. See above for details. If your US phone is not unlocked, you cannot use an SXM Sim in it.

21. Restaurant of the Week: Tommy Hilfiger's Choice?

We've talked about Spiga many times over the years -- it is clearly one of the island's very best restaurants, where the quality of the food and the exquisite attention to detail in its preparation are unmistakable with every selection every night.

Word of the now extraordinary dining experience Spiga offers has spread far and wide, and it is absolutely no exaggeration to say that people from the world over come here to share the experience. Saturday night Tommy Hilfiger stopped by for dinner. Who's there tonight?

Call for reservations; you'll find their website below. Just an outstanding, memorable dining experience....

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 12/24/14)

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 1/5/14)
Fusion, www.fusionrestaurant-sxm.com (featured 4/7/14)
The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 4/28/14)
Stone Restaurant, www.thestonerestaurant.com (featured 9/2/14)
Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 12/25/14)
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/>
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)

Emergency Medical Evacuation Protection:

SkyMed Takes You Home® if you become critically ill or injured while traveling more than 100 miles from home in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Caribbean, plus Belize and Costa Rica. Learn more at www.skymed.com/jmbxsm . Highest recommendation by JMB.

Travel Arrangements & Accommodations:

For The Best Prices On Individual and Group Tours to St. Maarten & St. Martin, as well as stays at B&Bs, condos, hotels, and villas, visit our sponsor: [Sandy Molloy at SXM Travel Specialists](http://www.stmartin-stmaartentravelspecialists.com) --- <http://www.stmartin-stmaartentravelspecialists.com> 704-567-6661

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.

Villas in Paradise is your one-stop source for great St. Maarten Villa Accommodations. See many choices at www.villasinparadise.com or call Marilyn Pulito directly at 508-533-1388.

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)

- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads: Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 12/31/14

Please see our site, www.everythingsxm.com.

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)

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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.

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