

From JMB / SXM Weekly News 11/19/18: Many Airline Updates; Hotel / Timeshare Reopenings & Updates; Last Call for Relocation Seminar; T-Day Dinners; Tours; Ships; Restaurant Reopenings; Club O; Pizza; New Carrefour Opens

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Vol. 2, #1177 --- Monday, November 19, 2018
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM



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Member News

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

*St. Maarten & St. Martin's Most Relied-Upon Source
of Tourist-Oriented News & Information*

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From: www.jmbcommunications.com

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

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

IMPORTANT: "Jeff1620" is an unmonitored send-only email address. For Contact info, see [#Contact Us](#) at the end of this newsletter.

Important Note:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' St. Maarten & St. Martin / SXM Weekly News, published every Monday (Tuesdays during most holiday weeks). You are receiving St. Maarten & St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. Now read by more than 308,000 people around the world...

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This narrow format is easily readable on all mobile devices. Scroll down for this week's news.

You can also download PDFs of recent editions here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

On that page, the link beginning with the highest number is the most recent edition.

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JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program Membership Sale

Delivers 300+ SXM Discounts & Other Benefits

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Timeshare Rental and Sale of the Week

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

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else worldwide, for no ad charge or commission, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of about 300 St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits -- and your membership

subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

RENTAL 11/24/2018 12/1/2018 Week 47 **The Villas at Simpson Bay Resort** B side Jr suite. \$600.00 Linda 978-337-1037 lvassil@comcast.net

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 1/20/2019 1/27/2019 Week 3 **Divi Little Bay** Two Bedroom ground floor beachfront Villa. Beautiful views of Little Bay Beach from the two balconies; one in the living room one in the bedroom. Sleeps 6; king bed in both bedrooms and a pull out sleeper/sofa in the living room. Two balconies, two full bathrooms; one w/jetted tub, washer and dryer, full kitchen plus a half kitchen in second bedroom, flat screen tvs. Resort has three restaurants, three pools, hot tubs, on-site market, gas grills, spa and water sports available. Close to Phillipsburg shopping. 18,500 Karen (413) 4431958 mzdayzee@aol.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

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

Villa Rentals Now Offered On Our Site Too:

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mysxm>

"Like" Our Facebook St. Maarten Timesharing Group

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

Search the SXM Weekly News Archives:

Current Archives (Since 4/2014) in PDF Format:

http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

<http://everythingsexm.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 group of about 300 SXM-focused island discounts and other SXM-related benefits through JMB Website Supporters membership:

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

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- C. **How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads:** Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

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How To Get a GROWING LIST of 300+ 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 growing list of 300+ additional major travel benefits.

Not a member yet? See http://everythingsxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for three full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

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

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

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

*****Lead Story*** 'AW&ST: '17 WestJet 737 Came W/In 40 Feet of Crashing in SXM**

Business and Commercial Aviation magazine (*Aviation Week & Space Technology*) has just run a feature article on the near crash of a WestJet Boeing 737-800 jet on approach to SXM Airport in 2017, a story which we broke within about two hours of it happening after being contacted by two eyewitnesses on the ground and multiple passengers on the flight.

We are working to get a copy of the complete article so we can publish excerpts from it here that will be meaningful to our readers.

The airline originally did not report the incident to Canadian authorities, publicly regarding it as a routine go-around. It was not a routine go around: apparently the flight crew was distracted by bad weather and was approaching lights it thought were the runway but the reality was that it was approaching Sonesta Maho Beach Hotel. The airliner was flying below minimum altitudes and came as close to 40 feet above the ocean when it executed a "missed approach" and flew around to land successfully 45 minutes later.

After seeing photography of the original approach from two angles, we alerted some aviation writers and pilots we know about the incident and contacted the *Toronto Globe and Mail* about it. Canadian government officials responsible for airline regulation in Canada also were alerted. We have previously published their findings here in *SXM Weekly News*.

We're mentioning this AW&ST article because of the likelihood that it includes new insights into what happened and hopefully information on what is being done to prevent a repetition. Our understanding is that Canadian authorities blamed pilot error for this incident.

Thankfully, the go round was safely executed and none of the aircraft's 169 passengers was hurt.

This was not the only incident at SXM Airport involving missed approaches. They're a common occurrence at airports worldwide, caused by a variety of changing circumstances as pilots approach runways. Sometimes other planes are in the way. Weather is often to blame. Pilots have also been known to land on wrong runways, taxiways (neither of which is possible in SXM), or even wrong airports.

1. Another Busy Hurricane Season Is Almost Over

The 2018 hurricane season will finally end on November 30, after having spawned 15 named storms, none of them significantly affecting SXM.

The 2017 hurricane season, of course, was just as busy — and it included hurricane Irma, from which SXM has now largely recovered.

Our thanks to Rob Lightbown, chief meteorologist of Crown Weather, our primary source of up-to-the-minute tropical weather information. We will continue to work with Rob through the winter to make JMB Website Supporters members and members of our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) aware of any winter storms hitting the US or Canada which could impact travel plans to SXM. Rob will also post such information online directly.

If you are ever in the path of any major storms, it will pay you many times over to become a user of Crown Weather's private weather service which is remarkably inexpensive and remarkably useful, whether your interest involves your business or simply your personal activities.

OUR BLACK FRIDAY / CYBER MONDAY

MEGA SALE STARTS TUESDAY NIGHT

AT 6 p.m. EST.

**WATCH FOR OUR SPECIAL BULLETIN
FOR DETAILS OR SEE OUR
EVERYTHING SXM FACEBOOK SITE
ON TUESDAY.**

**Get 300+ SXM Discounts
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& (P. S.) Invitations to Members-Only Island Parties:**

**Get, Renew, or Reinstate YOUR JMB Membership
Today:**

New JMB memberships:

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

Renewal / Reinstatement JMB memberships:

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

2. Why Plane Ticket Prices Vary Widely

An official from a major US airline who has read widespread criticism about the cost of airline tickets provides this interesting perspective to readers of *SXM Weekly News*:

About those airfares folks. Always book direct with the airlines. Fares are tiered and go from low to high. For

instance say there are ten tiers of fares. They sell so many at the lowest price and then when those are gone it goes to the next level to the top level until the flights are sold out. So you may find that 99 dollar fare but the person that books after you may pay 129 and the one after that 159. And so on and so on. It's based on supply and demand. Also there is an even bigger picture and that is what can the island accommodate? The airlines actually talk with the tourist boards on the island and see if it would be feasible to add more flights. Again supply and demand.

If SXM gets to be fully functional they will add flights and have more deals to fill up the extra aircraft they are sending in. They can't afford to send in aircraft that are only 75 percent full with the cost of fuel tripled today. They can't make a profit if they do. Let this sink in also about the price you pay. It's not we don't like our customers but we are in it to make a profit. Not only the cost of fuel but the cost everything from workers to airport takeoff and landing fees. A lot goes into it. You would be surprised at how little money actually goes to the airlines. Taxes make up the majority of your ticket costs believe it or not. Look at the breakdown on your ticket. Even if you are only going from the East Coast of the United States you are actually flying in a chair at over 36,000 feet over 1700 miles. Within the same day! If you could drive your car (which you can't) it would cost you about 320.00 each way and then the cost of parking. Two days later!!! Well you get the picture. Add to that the cost of extra weight (Luggage) and carry on that stack onto the equation. Sorry for the rant. Happy fare hunting to all!

3. Airlines Adding Flights As Resorts Reopen

The number of flights headed to SXM by various airlines continues to increase, even as the availability of accommodations further accelerates. For example, JetBlue has announced the addition of new flights from its third US port of embarkation to SXM, Fort Lauderdale, which is in addition to New York Kennedy and Boston. And an American Airlines overnight flight that arrives from Miami late each evening and returns the following morning also is coming back. American also recently announced the return of its Charlotte nonstops.

Consult your airline for more information on flight availabilities. Please also see the prior article for some perspective on flight fares.

4. Best Places for Tropical Updates; Hurricane Tracking Chart

You'll find detailed observations and forecasts by visiting our main SXM website, www.everythingsxm.com, and clicking either of the weather observations at the top of the page.

The four sources of current weather info, beyond the two above, are:

1) [Crown Weather Services](#) whose very inexpensive subscription service is, we feel, the best in the business.

2) Our "Weather" page at www.everythingsxm.com -- it has current satellite images and radar loops and now all the latest NHC weather forecasts, outlooks, and advisories as well. There are now also active weather widgets on the site's home page.

3) Our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#), which publishes the latest advisories, watches, and warnings when SXM is threatened by any storms.

4) On or off the island, listen to Island 92 -- 91.9FM or see www.island92.com. They report island warnings at once and know exactly what's going on. You can listen on the web anytime through live streaming.

Get a quick, current satellite look at the Atlantic basin anytime: <http://www.goes.noaa.gov/GIFS/ATWV.JPG> .

N. B.: *Again...Never rely on any website if you're in the path of a storm; always heed warnings from local authorities.*

Download your own NHC Hurricane Chart:

Years ago, before we were all saturated with weather information from cable TV to local (redundant and repetitive) news and forecasts plus weather updates and bulletins on our smart phones, gas stations and television stations offered printed hurricane tracking charts so people at home could try to figure out for themselves whether they were about to get slammed by the latest hurricane.

We haven't seen hurricane tracking chart handouts for years, but if you want one they are easy to get.

The exact charts used by the National Hurricane Center (NHC) are available for download from the NHC [here](#). Select "Atlantic" and you're good to go. You can print out the chart and use it repeatedly, or simply print a bunch of them and use one for each storm that may approach an area of interest -- like, SXM. Bear in mind that this hurricane season may well be frontloaded — so you might want to print a few of these now and *not* save doing that for later.

5. Get The Lowest Rates for Hotel Rooms & Car Rentals Around The World

SkyMed Travel offers you a **110% Lowest Rate Guarantee** for both hotel and car rental reservations worldwide. You can't lose with this, so read this article, sign up free and make your travel reservations directly through *SkyMed Travel*.

What it Is - How to Join (free for Our Readers & JMB Members):

We're now giving JMB Website Supporters members and *SXM Weekly News* readers access to a private, "members only" travel wholesale club that offers incredible prices not only on airfares but on travel reservations and packages worldwide.

The SkyMed Travel Club offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have found their pricing excellent across the board and their 110% low rate guarantee on hotels and car rentals is real news.

Normally, SkyMed Travel charges \$99 to join plus \$99 annual renewals. But for our JMB Website Supporters members and now for *Weekly News* readers, the cost to join is zero as will be the cost for renewals. Join the Club by going to <https://www.skymedtravel.com/register>, sign up, and provide the requested information. Complete the first sign up item (SkyMed Membership Number or Representative ID) by entering the code 391330 — doing that ensures that you pay nothing for your SkyMed Travel Club membership. No code, no free entry to the club's phenomenal pricing. If you are a SkyMed Member, however, enter your SkyMed Membership Number here to get the absolute greatest possible discounts.

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SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Resorts, Timeshares, Villas Etc.

6. Last Call for Our 11/20 Party/Seminar on Relocating To SXM

On November 20 in St. Maarten, we will hold an important, well-detailed seminar designed to help people who are

interested in relocating to SXM; buying a vacation home there; buying a retirement home; acquiring an income property on SXM; or even starting a business there. .

The seminar will be led by Arun Jagtiani, head of Island Real Estate Team and widely regarded as SXM's top realtor and will feature other subject matter experts. The Seminar will be opened by Jeff Berger.

Although it is expected to last only two hours, the seminar will be packed with information that applies to both sides of the island. Subject matter experts are creating this event in such a way that it will answer all your questions — even many you may not have thought of. Nonetheless, there will be a substantial audience question and answer period as well following the presentations.

In the past, our audiences for special events like this have always been JMB Website Supporters members, in most cases exclusively. **We have decided this event, however, will be different: we are opening it up from the get-go to both JMB Website Supporters members, who can register now at no cost, and to others interested in possible relocation or property investment on SXM.** Nonmembers can register now as well, and they will be approved on a space-available basis at a cost of \$35 per person assessed by the venue and collected by the venue upon check-in on the day of the seminar. **The complete seminar agenda appears below.**

Preregister Now. Attendance will be strictly limited to 100 people. To preregister, send an email to susank@jmbcommunications.com with the subject Relocation Seminar. We will need your JMB Website Supporters membership number if you are a member, plus the full names of all attendees and their email addresses and telephone numbers. JMB Website Supporters will be allowed to bring two guests to the seminar — two people who are also interested in relocating to SXM or buying property there. Children are not invited to and are not welcome at this event. The nonmember guests must pay the fee noted above (though they can of course join JMB and avoid it). We will acknowledge attendance quickly for JMB Website Supporters members and we will add nonmembers to a wait list. They will be contacted in the order in which they registered soon, at which time we hope to accommodate everyone to the maximum of 100 total attendees. **YOU MUST REGISTER BY 11 a.m. EST on Monday 11/19 to be able to attend.**

One free drink per person plus light refreshments.

AGENDA:

- Legal Requirements for purchasing property in St. Maarten
- Financing Options to purchase real estate
- Pros and Cons of renting vs buying
- Pros and Cons of owning on the French Side / Dutch Side (Presentation with Pablo Yahuda)
- Finding the right property (price, amenities, neighborhood)
- What to look for in an agent (why choose IRET)
- Absentee Ownership Challenges (property management / vacation rentals)
- Getting used to island time!
- Legal Requirements to move here full time (retired / residency process)
- Legal Requirements to work in SXM (Dutch / American Treaty, presented by Soc from Island 92)
- Legal Requirements to open a business
- How to open a bank account in SXM
- Insurance (health, property)
- Sky Med (Presented by Jeff Berger, about two minutes)
- Sneak Peak of new development coming soon, special price incentives for anyone at this event!
- Introduction to Norman & Sue... Emilio's plug
- Q&A

We will record this event and make it available to JMB members only on our passworded Secret Site.

7. Grand Case Beach Club Reopens

The recovery of Grand Case Beach Club from the devastation it suffered from hurricane Irma in September, 2017, has been flat out astounding. The resort is more beautiful than ever and has now reopened; here are [the details](#), from a very good piece in *Caribbean Journal*.

8. Reminder: Royal Islander La Plage Reopening Dec. 8

From the Royal Islander Timeshare Owners Group:

Update November 10, 2018

The News You Have Been Waiting For From Royal Islander Club Royal Islander La Plage opens December 8th 2018

We are very happy to share our positive news with you! On December 8, 2018, week 49, Royal Islander Club will reopen La Plage, following the devastation sustained by Hurricane Irma over one year ago.

Despite the unprecedented damage sustained throughout the resort, our passionate team and construction crews have been working above and beyond to ensure that the renovation is completed for you.

You will return to a newly refreshed La Plage! All of your favorite amenities including the hot tub and Tortuga Beach Café have been reconstructed and improved.

Throughout the resort, most units are now equipped with upgraded windows and doors, and the 38 units that were severely damaged are fully outfitted with new furniture. All units are now equipped with upgraded WiFi.

Also, we have made significant progress in the reconstruction and restoration efforts at La Terrasse, and we are now focusing on the interior of the units. We hope to be able to set a reopening date for La Terrasse very soon.

Maho Village is also making remarkable progress and it's getting to be its busy, buzzy self again. Casino Royale underwent a massive renovation and its façade is one of the island's most stunning contemporary architectural masterpieces. Some of your favorite restaurants are also now open.

It has been a major endeavor and, while there is still much to be done, we hope that you will be pleased with the massive work that has been done to restore the resorts to their original Caribbean splendor.

Thank you for your patience and your overwhelming support during the past months. We look forward to welcoming you back to your home away from home.

Management

9. Reminder: Sonesta Ocean Point Reopening Dec. 15

Sonesta Ocean Point Resort in the Maho area of the island has announced that it will be reopening on December 15. Here is [complete information](#) directly from the resort.

10. Royal Palm, Flamingo T/S Owners Going to SBR

Both Royal Palm Resort and Flamingo Beach Resort were originally part of what is currently known as Simpson Bay Resort.

Both Royal Palm and Flamingo remain closed as they recover from the effects of hurricane Irma 14 months ago. More on their recovery is in a separate story here, #12 below.

What's interesting is that timeshare owners from Royal Palm and Flamingo have chosen not to endure more time away from their favorite island, so many owners from both resorts have gravitated this fall to Simpson Bay resort.

11. Key to SBR Owners Getting Space: Move Early

Some 80% of the timeshare owners at Simpson Bay Resort who had owned weeks in the Dieffenbachia, Croton, and

Calladium buildings there — all of which were destroyed by hurricane Irma — converted to the resort's points program, enabling them to reserve time at the resort. In fact, many of them are enjoying a vacation there this fall and plan to spend additional time at Simpson Bay Resort during the winter.

The key to their success at reserving time has been contacting the resort early, well ahead of the season, to make their reservations. Those who have done that have had no issues at all, given some flexibility on dates.

12. Delays at Royal Palm & Flamingo

Timeshare and other SXM resorts that were gung ho about resolving their issues in the wake of Irma, completing all their renovations, and reopening in time for the upcoming high season have been effective in doing so. Those resorts include Simpson Bay, Royal Islander la Plage, Atrium Resort, Divi, Belair, Oyster Bay Beach Resort, Grand Case Beach Club, and many others.

Conspicuously absent from that group are Royal Palm and Flamingo. We realize that many resorts had serious insurance and permitting issues and that others were destroyed altogether — like Ocean Club and Summit Resort. There has also been some difficulty on the part of some resorts in obtaining the materials necessary to completely renovate and rebuild. But it strikes us that if Royal Palm and Flamingo had decided early on that they wanted to be open now, they would be opening now, and not just getting started on their renovations. We don't know what their motives are, but they don't seem to be focused on customer satisfaction or helping the island economy or their employees...

13. What's Going on at Sapphire?

Sapphire Resort is another good example of a resort that could have been completely renovated by now had it been going in that direction — but that's not in the case.

Philippe Verdier, in fact, has repeatedly failed to answer questions sent to him by this newsletter, which is read by thousands of his timeshare owners. The resort ownership has a long history of ignoring the interests, needs, and wants of its timeshare owners — but we'll save exploration of that topic for another day.

The fact is that right now, the resort is refusing to be open and candid with the public about its exact plans for reopening. In the lobby, a few people with towels give the indication that some units are open and that the hobbled resort is functioning, at least in some measure. The on-site manager, Jan Borsje, refers all inquiries to Mr. Verdier, who routinely seems to ignore them. Only he knows why, and only he knows what his personal definition of Public Relations is — it certainly is not communicating with people who have bought timeshare weeks from him.

Do what you want. Ask current timeshare owners, perhaps through our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). But, if we were in the market for SXM timesharing in SXM, Sapphire right now would not even be on our list.

14. Places to Stay: Many Available, Take Your Pick

With several timeshare resorts back online — Belair, Sea Palace, Divi, Atrium Resort, Simpson Bay Resort, and Oyster Bay Beach now open too -- timeshare owners continue to post units available for rent on our [timeshare rental site](#) on [everythingSXM.com](#) and on our new companion Villas for Rent page, also on [everythingsxm.com](#). Check them out: they have just been heavily revised.

Get your rental weeks now. Note: ads on those pages are from JMB Website Supporters members exclusively.

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

15. JMB Member Discounts / Benefits News & Updates

This section of *SXM Weekly News*, which appears weekly, will provide detailed information about current JMB Website Supporters discounts and benefits both for current members and for people thinking about joining JMB.

We now offer about 300 discounts (including some now being rolled out). We think you'll find many surprises here that will be of great interest and value. Please check this section in the coming months as we continue to roll out a number of entirely new discounts and benefits.

We recently started adding new discounts and benefits. Please stay tuned; special messages will be sent to all JMB Website Supporters members as more new benefits are rolled out.

For more info on what you get with your JMB membership, [go here](#).

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

OUR BLACK FRIDAY / CYBER MONDAY

MEGA SALE STARTS TUESDAY NIGHT

AT 6 p.m. EST.

WATCH FOR OUR SPECIAL BULLETIN
WITH DETAILS OR SEE OUR
EVERYTHING SXM FACEBOOK SITE
ON TUESDAY.

New JMB memberships:

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

Renewal / Reinstatement JMB memberships:

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

16. Where To Go for Thanksgiving Dinner

If you are on the island or headed there this weekend, have you already made your Thanksgiving reservations? They're a must.

For that matter, have you reserved your Rent-A-Car? If you haven't, you should right now at one of the companies providing discounts to our JMB Website Supporters members; you'll find them all listed on our JMB Website Supporters members-only secret website. Login using the orange login box below the masthead on every page of everythingSXM.com.

But we digress. If you haven't yet reserved space for your Thanksgiving dinner, get a move on. The most popular Thanksgiving feast on the island for years has been at Toppers Restaurant, operated by Topper (and his family) who hail from Massachusetts — home of Plymouth, where it all began in the 1620s with the harvest feast of Thanksgiving. Topper puts on quite a shebang starting at lunch and going straight to dinner and into the night.

Many other places provide Thanksgiving lunches and dinners as well. We've been told that La Patrona at Simpson

Bay resort will also put on a Thanksgiving feast, as will Vesna Taverna in Simpson Bay, Jimbo's in Simpson Bay, iZI Ristorante Italiano in Simpson Bay (Thanksgiving dinner served during dinner hours only), and others; see details published on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

The only difference between Thanksgiving here and at home is that you don't have to wash the dishes, the variety of what you get is huge without the drudgery of putting it all together, and there is no snow or ice to screw up your trip to the restaurant or stop people from going to visit relatives.

As you can probably guess, (dare we repeat), reservations are an absolute must — this is one of the busiest weeks on the island every year, and this year will be no exception.

17. Top Two Activities: Rum Distillery Tour, Sentry Hill Chair Lift

The Toppers Rhum Distillery in St. Maarten has long offered tours — and they have become one of the two most popular activities on the island for visiting tourists. Here is the description of the distillery tour direct from the Toppers family:

Visit the home of the "World's Best Tasting Rhum" handmade right here in St. Maarten. A tour guide will walk you through our 6000 sq. ft. distillery. You will learn a little history of rum making in the Caribbean. After that you will see our blending process and how we expertly bottle our handcrafted rhums. You will then visit the lab and learn how we ensure that our products meet the highest quality standards and see how we create our different flavored rhums and try a new flavor that is in development. Following the tour you will be invited to our tasting bar where you be welcome to taste all of our artisanal products. You will even have the opportunity to bottle your very own Topper's Rhum to take home!

For much more, [go here](#). Rhum, by the way, is just the French spelling of Rum.

The second highly popular SXM tour involves the chairlift at Rainforest Adventures, which takes you up the side of Sentry Hill at the Emilio Wilson estate. Much more on that [is here](#).

In fact, Rainforest adventures has agreed to give us tickets to free rides to give away to some of our lucky JMB Website Supporters members this winter; if you're a JMB Website Supporters member, stay tuned to learn how you can win.

If you're not a JMB Website Supporters member, what's keeping you? See the previous stories about our Black Friday/Cyber Monday sale which starts Tuesday night — and become JMB Website Supporters members now. You'll get 300 plus SXM discounts and invitations to exclusive parties we are holding for members only this winter on the island.

18. 11 Cruise Ships Bring 25,000+ Tourists in Two Days

The middle to latter part of this past week brought five cruise ships one day, to the island, and six cruise ships the next — delivering way over 20,000 day tourists to the island in a two day period. Cruise ships were one of the first mass modes of transportation to bring tourists back to the island — and the numbers of tourists being brought here has been increasing steadily.

Have you made reservations yet?

19. L'Astrolabe Restaurant Reopens

The renowned L'Astrolabe Restaurant at Orient beach on the French side, part of the Esmeralda Resort, has now reopened. For much more information, [go here](#).

20. SkipJacks Gets Permits, Prepares for Reopening

In recent months, much conjecture has surrounded the recovery of SkipJacks, the nearly legendary SXM seafood restaurant in Simpson Bay not far from the drawbridge. The restaurant's main dining deck was ripped off by hurricane Irma and little progress seemed to be happening.

As has been the case with numerous other Dutch side companies, SkipJacks has been held up in the permitting process for rebuilding. Its permits have now been issued, and work on rebuilding SkipJacks has begun. Estimates are that it will take at least a solid six weeks for the work to be completed — so it's reasonable to expect that SkipJacks will be back close to the time when we celebrate the new year of 2019.

It's one of our favorite places and we'll be peaking in the door between now and then — so we'll keep you posted.

21. Lee's Has a New Site and is Preparing to Reopen

There hasn't been any huge announcement, but the news is out there — Lee's Roadside Grill is building at a new location on Billy Folly road opposite atrium hotel. The structure appears to be going up fairly quickly, though any official opening isn't expected until early next year.

As always, we'll keep you posted. Parking may be a challenge.

22. Club O Reminds Visitors about Beach Nudity

Many years ago, Orient beach was totally clothing optional and deserted — no structures at all.

That was then. This is now: the only place on Orient beach where nudity is acceptable is the beach in front of Club Orient at the far southern end of Orient. Nudity is not allowed anywhere else on the beach, or in businesses on the beach away from Club Orient.

23. An Ideal Spot for a Relaxing Tropical Vacation...

Looking for a quiet, small, friendly, family run hotel on a quiet SXM beach near everything? Azure Hotel is EXACTLY what you want.

We haven't talked about it much -- you'll see us writing about it more in the months ahead, but the AZURE boutique hotel on Simpson Bay Beach merits your attention. Here's more info:

Michael and Fawnette invite you to The Azure Hotel & Art Studio , a boutique hotel centered on the most beautiful beach in Sint Maarten. The Azure houses an art studio where they create original works of art (by appointment only). Located within a few minutes walk to all the action in Simpson Bay Village and nestled in a perfect piece of paradise, Azure is the place to be. All units include:

- FREE high speed Wi-Fi (it works on the beach too!)
- FREE international calls from the cordless phone in your room (to most countries)
- Free Hawaii beach loungers with umbrellas
- Air conditioning (silent wall mounted)
- Kitchens or Kitchenettes
- Satellite TV with Premium channels

Each room is uniquely adorned with original paintings by Michael and Fawnette

The Azure Hotel is a proud winner of Certificate of Excellence! Many travelers on TripAdvisor chose The Azure Hotel as one of their favorites. More: <http://azurehotelsxm.com/>

24. Busy Week in SXM Draws Megayachts, Private Jets

SXM is usually busy during Thanksgiving week, and this year is no act exception thanks in large measure to the island's extraordinary recovery from 2017's hurricane Irma. Many megayachts usually arrive early in the week and lots of private jets take up tarmac space at SXM Airport.

Why stay home and freeze? There are places to stay — now and through the rest of 2018 and into 2019. See everythingSXM.com and look at our timeshare rentals page which also includes links to our Villa rental partners on SXM, IREvacations.com and Jennifer's Vacation Villas.

25. Allesandro, Cugini's Pizza Maker, Now at Isola

Many of SXM's Italian restaurants have long sold pizza alongside the island's chain pizza restaurants.

Pizza connoisseurs gravitated to Sam's Cugini Restaurant particularly when it moved to Simpson Bay a few years ago. All of us greatly miss Sam, but *the pizza making wizardry that was available at Cugini lives on at Marco Ferrante's Isola restaurant next to Hollywood casino in Simpson Bay.*

Allesandro, chief pizza maker at Cugini when it was a Simpson Bay landmark, is now with Isola, making dozens of great pizzas every night. We had two last week and they can simply be described as the best you will taste anywhere — and that includes New York, Boston, and Federal Hill in Providence. Great stuff — don't miss it. Available to go as well.

26. Happy Birthday to Topper!

Topper — the Massachusetts ex-pat who has been living in the Caribbean for decades — namesake of Topper's Restaurant -- celebrates his 80th birthday on Sunday, November 18. If you stop in to his restaurant -- open every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (home of the \$29 lobster dinner every day) -- say Happy Birthday!

27. Taste Factory Closed Permanently?

Word on the street here is that the Taste Factory restaurant in Simpson Bay is closed permanently. We've seen no announcement to that effect and there is no sign on the building so indicating, but the place is boarded up and work does not appear to be underway renovating it. That said, the permitting process on both the Dutch side or the French side of the island is a quagmire so anything is possible. If we learn more, we'll pass it along.

28. Boeing Failed to Disclose Critical Max 8 Info

The Boeing Max 8 is one of the most advanced airliners in the sky and also one of the newest — but Boeing now is coming under a microscope because it apparently failed to disclose key information about new MCAS technology on the plane to airlines and the pilots who are flying the Max 8.

Details from the *Seattle Times* are [here](#) and [here](#). This is in the wake of the recent Lion Air Max 8 crash.

29. Bomb Threat Hoaxer Gets Suspended Sentence

When you read about prison sentences given to perpetrators of various crimes on SXM, you would be perplexed since they are far lighter than sentences for similar crimes in the US.

Case in point, the penalty recently given to someone convicted of calling in a false bomb threat against the JetBlue flight at SXM Princess Juliana Airport. His penalty was a suspended sentence, probation, and a fine. In our view, that kind of sentence gives the wrong message to people who might be thinking about doing something similar...

Here is [the story](#).

30. Il Nettuno Gone; Barranco Debuts

Il Nettuno, one of the oldest Italian restaurants on SXM and a mainstay of the Grand Case strip, had been for sale for some time. Now it has been sold and replaced by Barranco, an eclectic restaurant on the strip. Reaction was that that the decor is beautiful, the food good, but the prices high. We'll keep our ears open to see what others think. More is on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

31. New Carrefour Market Delivers Unprecedented Shopping Experience

Wegmans it isn't, but the new Carrefour market near Philipsburg is as close as SXM has ever come.

Completely reimaged and redesigned following a roof fire a few months ago, the entirely new Carrefour looks much more like the best US markets than anything else in SXM.

It has by far the largest variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and poultry, seafood, and baked goods of any supermarket on the island. It has the entire Carrefour line of branded merchandise, we believe, as well as a huge variety of traditional US branded groceries carried in the US and Canada and previously carried at Le Grand Marché. The market has more checkouts than before, and even during busy times we have been able to move through them quickly.

The new Carrefour market in Philipsburg should be first on your list should you need groceries during your next SXM visit.

32. Traveling Next Winter? Why It's Critical To Get SkyMed Now

Traveling Next Winter? Beat SkyMed's 90-day exclusion for pre-existing conditions by joining SkyMed now.

On its guaranteed renewable annual and multiyear memberships, SkyMed has a 90-day waiting period for coverage of pre-existing conditions -- everything else is covered in full as soon as your SkyMed membership has been approved, per SkyMed's member services agreement.

If you're traveling in January or later, you can beat that one-time 90-day pre-existing conditions exclusion by joining today. That way the 90-day exclusion period will be over by the time you travel -- so you're covered in full, including pre-existing conditions, at that time.

SkyMed Takes You Home® when you become critically ill or injured when traveling. There is no age limit to apply, and once you're enrolled you can renew without further medical checks regardless of your attained age or your health at the time of renewal. Without SkyMed, if you need an Emergency Medical Evacuation, you must pay for it in cash, in advance. No cash, no evacuation. And the cost without SkyMed can be astronomical. Why risk that?

By contrast, if you're a SkyMed member, you call SkyMed directly and they make all the arrangements for all the services they provide. SkyMed Takes You Home -- what else matters?

And there is *no age limit to apply*. Call us at 508-747-8281 and ask for Jeff; he'll answer your questions and can take your application by phone, usually in under 10 minutes.

It's available to Americans, Canadians, and ExPats from both countries. Short-term and annual coverage includes the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. Global coverage is available on annual memberships for a \$99 additional yearly fee, but global coverage is standard on multiyear SkyMed Ultimate memberships, which are both SkyMed's best and its least expensive medevac memberships.

You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Benefits here:

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

Got questions? Call us daytimes (EDT) at 508-747-8281. Again, we can answer your questions and take your application by phone in about 10 minutes. We can set up evening phone appointments too. It's like fire insurance -- get it before you need it.

Get The Current Low Price
on SkyMed's Best 5-Year Ultimate Membership
and keep the current low price on your first 5-yr. renewal.
That's a 10-year price guarantee.
More benefits... same price.

Ask Jeff for details -- call him at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only, reg. hours Eastern time.) More info? See getskymed.com. SkyMed is the Principal Sponsor of JMB SXM programs.

See the [rundown of all SkyMed Features & Benefits](#)

33. Are You Military?

If you're U. S. Military with a DD214, you're able to get a Platinum-Status Military JMB Membership for \$16.99/year, the lowest we ever charge anyone. You get instant Platinum Status which is permanent as long as you're a JMB member plus 300+ SXM discounts and other benefits. All you do is pay for four years to start and renew in four-year increments (\$67.96). Nobody else pays so little -- our small way of expressing how grateful we all are for your service.

Visit everythingsexm.com and click the page curl to sign up for your JMB military membership. We'll also need a DD214 with your SS# obliterated for security. We'll be delighted to welcome you.

34. Less Money, More Benefits, Ten Year Price Guarantee on SkyMed Ultimate

Get The Current Low Price
on SkyMed's Best 5-Year Ultimate Membership
and keep the current low price on your first 5-yr. renewal.
That's a 10-year price guarantee.
More benefits... same price.

Ask Jeff for details -- call him at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only, reg. hours Eastern time.) More info? See getskymed.com.

35. Please Patronize JMB Sponsors (Updated)

CAR RENTALS:

[Leisure Car Rental](#)

[Tropical-Tropicana Car Rental](#)

Starlite Car Rental (Belair Resort; just joined)

Sax Car Rental

CIGARS HAND-MANUFACTURED ON SXM:

[Das Cigars](#)

CUBAN CIGARS:

[Cigar Mack](#)

[SXM Cigars](#) (New)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS::

[SkyMed International](#) (Scottsdale, Az.)

JEWELERS:

[Zhaveri Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

[Little Europe Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

Caribbean Gems

Oro Diamante

[Ray's Jewelers](#)

Art of Time (new)

Artistic Jewelers (new)

Alpha Jewels

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES:

[Island Real Estate Team](#) is widely regarded as SXM's top real estate organization. A JMB Sponsor, they offer both residential and commercial real estate in every price range. Call the number that follows and ask to speak with the agent who handles what you seek: 1 721 520 7284. Please let the agent know that you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*.

RESORTS:

Simpson Bay Resort

Baker's Suites

Azure Hotel & Art Studio

RESTAURANTS:

[IZI](#)

[SPIGA](#)

[VESNA TAVERNA](#)

Melange (new; Port de Plaisance)

LA PATRONA (Simpson Bay Resort)

MARIO'S BISTRO (Porto Cupecoy)

VILLA RENTAL COMPANIES:

If you're interested in making a villa reservation (doing it with close friends can be fun and more economical than you'd imagine), contact our top recommended Villa rental/sale partners at [Island Real Estate Team](#). Call the number that follows and ask to speak with the agent who handles villa rentals: 1 721 520 7284. Please let the agent know that you're interested in a rental and you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*. Hundreds of villas are now online.

[Jennifer's Vacation Villas](#) has also joined us as a villa rental partner. *Jennifer's Vacation Villas* is a licensed management, real estate and villa rental company specializing in the rental of private villas and condos on both French and Dutch St. Maarten. Its proprietor, Jennifer, is a New Yorker who has been residing in St. Maarten for 40 years and whose goal is to provide guests with personal attention and to ensure that their vacations are memorable. Jennifer's Vacation Villas also does Weddings, Private Events, and any additional services including massages, boat trips, and private catering. Their aim is to make your vacation stay as comfortable, accommodating, and easy going as possible. Call 1 (721) 544-3107 | +1 (631) 546-7345. When you contact them, please tell them you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*.

Heavily Updated 10/1/18

36. Use Our Weekly News Archives

Our recently updated *SXM Weekly News* PDF archives enable you to download any issue of Weekly News published in the last four years, including our amazing *2018 April Fools' Day parody* and our *SXM Airport Special Edition*, which has a great deal of useful future information on what's going to happen at the airport.

Check it out [here](#).

37. Got SXM Questions? Here's Where The Answers Are

Check out our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and our main SXM website, everythingsxm.com.

38. Restaurant of the Week: Isola

A veteran of the SXM restaurant scene for about 20 years, Marco Ferrante now heads the completely redesigned Isola Italian Restaurant and pizzeria next to Hollywood Casino at Simpson Bay Resort.

The restaurant has an extensive menu that offers sufficient entrees to please the most finicky palates. Plus, they've acquired Allesandro, formerly pizza maker at Cugini We can honestly say that pizza in New York, Boston, or Providence's Federal Hill has a very strong competitor in SXM.

Service is responsive and the food is served hot, as you'd expect. We just tried it and thoroughly enjoyed it -- that pizza did it for us. [Try it soon and say hi to Marco for us.](#)

[Coming soon: Pineapple Pete, Domino's.](#)

Here are recently featured SXM restaurants:

Isola next to Hollywood Casino in Simpson Bay Resort, **11/19/18**. 100% redesigned, inside and out, floor to ceiling and everything inside. Just go.

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 8/26/18 Mario's Bistro reopened a few weeks after Irma hit and looks forward to your return. Phenomenal dining.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 11/12/18, David is back and the restaurant has reopened. Great food from one of SXM's very best restaurants. Fun atmosphere, too. Now open for lunch and dinner.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 7/2/18) Skipjack's main dining deck overlooking the lagoon was wrecked by Irma and is being rebuilt. They should be open late 2018 or early 2019.

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 6/25/17; added 1/17) La Patrona is SXM's only truly authentic Mexican restaurant. Highly recommended.

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushitto) (6/18/18) is the new name of Sushitto, now relocated next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great food/service.

Emilio's at Emilio Wilson Estate (featured June 4 2018) is the new property run by renowned chef Dino Jagtiani, whose Temptation Restaurant was wrecked by Irma.

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 5/14/18) Avantika is open. SXM's best Thai.

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 4/9/18) Reopened as Cafe Spiga, new menu; redesigned. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food. **Closed for the season until October.**

Enigma C3 luxury Catamaran, www.sailstmaarten.com (featured 8/7/17). Neil's new boat is as big as Celine Too was and it has now entered service. Neil is known for amazing cooking on board his boats.

Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 9/16) Open.

The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 10/31/16) Open; contact the restaurant for details and reservations. Updated 3/2/18.

Melange International Grill (featured 2/20/17) Reopened.

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15) Reopening late 2018.

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 7/31/17) Reopened.

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 10/17/16) Club Orient was wrecked by Irma; rebuilding is planned. ETA not yet known.

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path the turn near Shore Pointe to get there). (featured 4/17/2017) Reopened. Their sign blew away in Irma -- to Virgin Gorda's airport 192 miles away.

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge Reopened.

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com (featured 6/12/17) Recently reopened.

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 1/22/18). Reopened. Now open Wed through Sunday B/L; dinner reopens in October (annual closing for Dinner).

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 2/27/17) Reopened quickly.

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/> (featured 4/20/15) Reopened.

You will find hundreds more restaurants from both the Dutch Side and French Side listed in the Files area of our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Site](#). Our thanks to our Admin

there, Contessa Aiello, who edited the restaurant entries on that site.

**Your Business
Deserves a Marketing-Centric, Customer-Focused
Website That Works.**

That's what we do:

www.websitesthatworkusa.com

**In business since the web began --
a unit of JMB Communications.**

39. SXM Business Owners: How To Increase Foot & Web Traffic

SXM Weekly News, our everythingSXM.com website and its Hurricane Center, and our everything SXM Facebook site — along with our many Vacation Giveaways and hundreds of benefits of JMB Website Supporters membership — are all made possible through our partnerships with our JMB Website Supporters members and our Sponsors.

Our Sponsorships enable SXM businesses to present their products or services to a huge, responsive audience of tourists from around the world, but primarily the USA and Canada. If you own an SXM business and want to look into and take advantage of this unique marketing opportunity, please email susan@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "JMB Sponsorships". We'll get complete information to you quickly. Summer is here and with it, plenty of opportunity to bring more tourists into your business not only in the short term, but especially as tourist business increases throughout this year and into 2019. Contact us today for more information.

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW):

[Click to access our recommended real estate agent, Arun Jagtiani, featured on HGTV.](#)

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Frequently Updated

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

Want to rent or buy a week?

***2017 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale* are posted at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml Listings are now updated every few weekdays. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.**

SECTION 5: For Members Only

- A. **Where to Get Member Info:** www.everythingsxm.com/secret
B. **Password Recovery Info:** Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot / change password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com. To change your password, click that same link.
C. **How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads or Update the Price in an Ad:** See www.everythingsxm.com/secret. Your username and password are required.

SECTION 6: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 7/2017

See www.everythingsxm.com.

About Email Address Changes / How To Unsubscribe (Updated 4/17/17)

To unsubscribe, go here: www.sxmweeklynews.com. 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 www.sxmweeklynews.com; unsubscribe your old email address and subscribe your new one. *JMB Website Supporters members should notify Membership Services of the new email address for continued Secret Site access.*

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

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

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

Contact Us (Revised 5/25/18)

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, contact 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 respond individually.

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

Privacy Policy http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml (Updated 5/25/18)

11/18/18 #V2-1177 1000 pm EDT 11/16/18

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