

From JMB / SXM Weekly News 1/7/19: AA & Delta Shenanigans; Sonesta Maho Progress; P-Burg; Lee's; Blue Mall; Cupecoy Lemondroppers; Casino Royale; Make Perfume; Mama Pizza; Vesna, Avantika, Spiga, SkipJack's; Donkeys [37 News Stories]

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Vol. 2, #1184 --- Monday, January 7, 2019
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM

High Season Is Here!



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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

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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 about 315,000 people around the world...

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



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



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

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.

Get Your Own Free Weekly Copy of SXM Weekly News:

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

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

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- ***Delta's Arrogant, Absurd, Abhorrent Decision***

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- *SkipJack's Moves Closer & Closer to Reopening*
- *Why You Need to Check Restaurant Bills...*
- *Attack of the Killer Donkeys*
- *Restaurant of the Week:*

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-- *SkyMed Holiday Sale Extended*

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---- *Protect Against Emergency Medical Evacuation w/ SkyMed: Customer Stories*

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-- *Less Money, More Benefits, Ten Year Price Guarantee on SkyMed Ultimate*

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-- ******HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP SALE EXTENDED, BUT MUST END 1/15******

*JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program Membership Sale
Delivers 300+ SXM Discounts & Other Benefits*

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-- *Please Patronize JMB Sponsors*

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-- *Got SXM Questions? Here's Where The Answers Are*

-- *SXM Business Owners: How To Increase Foot Traffic*

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37 News Stories This Week

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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 1/19/2019 2/2/2019 Weeks 3&4 **Divi Little Bay Beach Resort** Deluxe studio, sleeps 4,Air conditioning,Flat screen TV,internet access,fully equipped kitchen,in room safe,Private balcony, four swimming pools,three hot tubs,Stunning beaches,three open air beachfront restaurants, Deli,3 bars,Water sports center with snorkeling&diving equipment,Boat pier& excursions,Full service spa,Fitness center,on-site car rental,close to Phillipsburg shopping. 1200 per week. Timeshare& electricity taxes due upon checkout. ED (413)-443-3218 edwnorma@msn.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 2/16/2019 2/23/2019 Week 7 **Simpson Bay Resort** and Casino Marina building deluxe one bedroom with king bed and two twin murphy beds located near Marina pool/bar and beach. Unit has the only extra large terrace in the Marina building. This Week 7 often falls during the Washington's Birthday holiday week. \$9,900.00 Rita (646)284-5217 rdk713@aol.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

See them all at http://everythingxsm.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://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 group of about 300 SXM-focused island discounts and other SXM-related benefits through JMB Website Supporters membership:

http://www.everythingxsm.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.)

Section Six: Where To Find Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) (Revised 8/2017)

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://everythingxm.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

1. American Airlines Changes Itineraries W/O Telling Passengers

For airlines to make sure their passengers are made aware of changes in flight itineraries, relatively simple automated procedures need to be followed.

American Airlines does a lot of things right, but for years it hasn't quite managed to make sure *all* impacted passengers get the word about itinerary changes. In fact, their history of not completing some notifications is one of the reasons that for years we have recommended all passengers repeatedly contact their airline to make sure their flight information has not been changed without them being notified.

Case in point... Three SXM-bound passengers flying from the US were told when they arrived at the airport to check-in last week that their flights had been changed and they had missed their plane, which was flying to Charlotte for their connection to SXM.

The passengers were not the least bit happy, but they did the right thing by remaining calm and working with the airline to rebook — making sure the airline was made fully aware of the fact that *they had not been notified of any itinerary change*.

Regardless of which airline you are flying to or from SXM, make sure they know how to contact you regardless of where you are, and also make sure you confirm dates, times, and flight numbers up to a week before you're scheduled to fly.

Assume that the airline will change your itinerary without telling you. Although the changes they make will usually be minor, sometimes they won't -- forcing you to fly on a different day or with different connections. It happens and you do need to be prepared for it.

2. Delta's Arrogant, Absurd, Abhorrent Decision

A French student who was born in French St. Martin and who was studying in Paris wanted to come home to SXM between years in college. When he compared prices flying nonstop from Paris to SXM versus doing a connection in Atlanta using Delta Airlines, the Delta price was so much lower that he elected that option.

Delta unilaterally and without prior notice later changed the ticket by which the student would return to Paris — making it several months earlier than the student had planned. Delta told the student he needed a visa since he

would be in French St. Martin more than 90 days. He told them he was a native of French St. Martin and was simply returning home, but Delta refused to listen. Consequently, the student's family had to buy a new ticket to get him back to Paris in time for his semester since the return ticket Delta provided was useless

The student's family has complained to Delta, the FAA, and others. Upon hearing of this incident, officials in the French side government offered to intercede, though we don't know whether their intercession will be successful. The student did volunteer to produce documentation of his birth in French St. Martin but apparently Delta wasn't interested.

It is the business of airlines to provide comfortable, dependable, and safe transportation from point-to-point for their customers. It is also the business of airlines to do their best to make the experience of passengers one that they will remember favorably, so they will want to fly the airline again. In this case, Delta didn't listen; it unjustifiably canceled a passenger's ticket for reasons which were dead wrong and contrary to fact; and it refused to pay attention to authoritative information which should have swayed its opinion.

Delta needs to fix this. Why would anyone in their right mind want to fly an airline that ignores its passengers? More on this story is [here](#).

3. One by One, Private Jets Head Home After New Year's

Luminaries, dignitaries, and billionaires gathered by the thousands here in SXM, in neighboring Anguilla, and on St. Barths during New Year's week to celebrate the arrival of 2019.

Many of them arrived in various flavors of corporate jets ranging all the way up to mammoth 777s, but mostly the more traditional twin engine corporate jets. Many switched to their own or hired megayachts for a week of partying, which ended for most this past weekend. One after another, the airplanes departed. Yesterday (Sunday) morning, we saw some unnamed "fancy people" (rich and famous) having their pictures taken outside a Winair airplane that we believe had just flown in from St. Barth's, before switching to their own private jet home; who they are, we may say later.

A quick look at flightaware.com, the air travel tracking website, over the weekend showed a number of additional private jets headed here. High season has begun and a lot more megayachts, luminaries, dignitaries, and billionaires are sure to follow.

=====FINAL SALE EXTENSION=====

HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP SALE

*******MUST END TUES. 1/15/19*******

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

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

New JMB memberships: 6 yrs only \$139 (our best offer); 3 yrs. \$79; one year

\$33

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

Renewal JMB memberships: 7 yrs. \$139 (our best offer); 3 yrs. \$69; one year \$33

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

Reinstatement JMB memberships: 6 yrs. \$129 (our best offer); 3 yrs. \$73; one year \$35

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

4. January Weather Takes Over, & It's Gorgeous

Two weeks ago, the weather was very rainy here in SXM. But last week it was generally gorgeous, with only a few brief showers until some deluges came overnight on Saturday night.

By mid January, normal winter weather should be in place. It promises daily high temperatures of around 83 or 84, mostly blue skies with scattered clouds, and occasional widely scattered light showers — the kind of weather you expect in SXM and one of the reasons you come here.

Great weather is here; are you?

5. Buying Fares, Simplified

In all honesty, buying fares is something of a crap shoot. It's a matter of supply, demand, and competition.

In SXM, there is high demand for Saturday travel since there are so many timeshares on the island and they generally operate Saturday to Saturday. So, Saturday airfares tend to be high.

Holiday periods, school vacations, and high season travel also all tend to be high.

But some days are better than others, and midweek travel is often cheapest of all. Don't necessarily assume that it's essential for your travel to be on Saturdays if that's when your timeshare week begins. You might well save money by arriving a couple of days earlier and staying a couple of days later to avoid high Saturday fares. Most airline websites now enable you to compare fares for different days, which makes it easier for you to extend your trip and actually lower your fare costs.

Give it a try...

6. Current SXM Weather / Weather (Updated)

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.

7. 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.

You won't be disappointed.

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at our Site: www.sxmweeklynews.com**

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

8. Sonesta Maho Makes Astounding Progress Toward Reopening

For many months after Irma had struck SXM, the skeletal remains of the Sonesta Maho tower stood there, a stark reminder of the power of Irma.

Although scaffolding surrounded the building when we arrived here two months ago, now an all-new façade surrounds the building and much of it already has new windows. The changes made to the tower over the last few weeks have been no less than astounding.

People have wondered aloud whether the resort would be able to meet its announced opening date, previously reported both here and on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). In our humble opinion, it has a real opportunity to make that happen. For more, please see our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

9. Surprise Mystery Guests at Belair and Simpson Bay...

Normally there's a barbecue at Belair resort late every Monday and at Simpson Bay there's a similar event on most Tuesdays. If you're a guest at either property, go -- from now through the end of March.

You'll see someone there that you know; introduce yourself

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

With most 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.

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

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

11. JMB Member Discounts / Benefits -- New Update

We're updating the site right now to reflect new discounts and recently reopened properties. The Secret Site update should be complete in the next week.

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

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

=====FINAL SALE EXTENSION=====

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*******MUST END TUES. 1/15/19*******

**Get 300+ SXM Discounts
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Reinstatement JMB memberships: 6 yrs. \$129 (our best offer); 3 yrs. \$73; one year \$35

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

12. Excellent Police Presence Reassuring in P-Burg

Making their way through Front Street and Back Street on foot and on bicycles, members of the Dutch side police force are showing their presence all over the downtown area, answering tourist questions, giving directions, offering a friendly smile, and in other ways making a shopping sojourn to the Dutch side capital a relaxed, pleasurable, rewarding experience.

Whether you're looking for great jewelry selections, authentic high-end handbags, watches of all descriptions, gifts, or simple souvenirs, Philipsburg offers a spectrum of opportunities to acquire them all at very reasonable prices and, we think, the best high quality jewelry bargains anywhere in the Caribbean.

Plus, there are also many places to have tropical lunches on beautiful Great Bay on the Great Bay beach promenade, often referred to as the Philipsburg boardwalk.

Make it a memorable part of your next SXM visit.

13. Lee's Is Returning - With Parking

Until almost a year ago, when Lee's landlord threw Lee out after a long court battle, Lee's Seafood Grill had been a Simpson Bay landmark for decades.

The finishing touches are now being put on a new Lee's in front of an island home near Baker's Suites on Billy Folly road, opposite the Atrium resort. The new Lee's will be walking distance from Royal Palm, Atrium, Simpson Bay Resort, Flamingo Resort, and La Vista — in addition to Baker's Suites —but we've heard it will also have parking at the rear of the building, for which land should be cleared shortly. The amount of available parking is not currently known.

14. What's In Store for Blue Mall?

As we had reported here in *SXM Weekly News* prior to the arrival of hurricane Irma, the Blue Mall in Cupecoy, located opposite Cupecoy beach, was on the verge of being bought by and converted into a major hotel — a Hilton — until Irma virtually destroyed it.

Owned by a group from Venezuela, Blue Mall was never much of a commercial success. People don't come to SXM to do mall shopping — and malls in the US itself seem to be hurting, with few exceptions, as a result of the phenomenal growth of online shopping.

The Hilton deal fell through, but the site is still for sale and is likely to wind up a name-brand hotel.

The site is also the location for "Blue Mall Residences," condominiums on the top floors of the building. Those condominiums offer commanding views of the island, a rooftop swimming pool, and lots of amenities including a rather fully equipped gym. We expect to publish more information about the Residences property in future issues of *SXM Weekly News* and on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

We will keep you posted as we hear about further developments at Blue Mall.

15. Lemondroppers Returning to Cupecoy Beach

SXM lemondroppers — naturists who visit Cupecoy beach every year and have been doing so for decades — are now returning to this famous beach opposite Blue Mall and Porto Cupecoy.

Lemondroppers are friendly lot, and readily welcome "newbies" to their group. In fact, starting sometime this week, newbies are expected to be welcomed in a special ceremony roughly an hour before sunset.

If you want to enjoy a truly gorgeous beach, friendly people, and look forward to the possibility of coming home without tan lines, check out the lemondroppers at Cupecoy starting this week; they will be there until before Valentine's Day.

16. "Casino Royale" Looking Great

Casino Royale at Maho was pretty much blown apart by hurricane Irma, but the Maho folks worked hard to rebuild it and reopened it late last spring.

It still needed some cosmetic touches and those now appear to have been completed outside in the main Portico. It's a beautiful building; check it out on your next trip to SXM.

17. Create Your Own Perfume at Tijon Parfumerie

John and Cyndi Berglund have created something truly magical at Tijon Parfumerie in Grand Case opposite Spiga restaurant at the northern end of town.

Not only do they offer a spectrum of classy cosmetics, perfumes, and other beautiful souvenirs and gifts custom tailored for the Caribbean, they also offer brief courses in creating perfume which will enable you, in a single afternoon, to create a fragrance that is uniquely yours — whether you're a woman or a guy.

We've done it and we both love the results. You can take home your perfume with your own customized name on it, and you can also reorder it when you need more; they keep a database of the ingredients you used and the amounts, so they can re-create it for you when you need a new bottle.

Make reservations today so you can make perfume on your next visit. You will love and long remember the experience. See www.tijon.com.

18. What Happened to "Mama Pizza"?

Over the years, Mama Pizza had created a small local chain of pizza emporiums on SXM. Most have now closed because of Irma, but there's one new one you may not be aware of — it's on the plaza inside Porto Cupecoy, along with Altro (from the original owners of Sol e Luna), Thai Savanne, and the globally renowned Mario's Bistro. If you're one of the many fans of Mama Pizza, now you know where to go.

19. A Further Look at Guayabera Beach Club

Once you figure out how to get to Guayabera beach club on old Simpson Bay Road in Simpson Bay, you'll be there often. The ambience — on the water on Simpson Bay beach, the staff — experienced and empathetic, and the food — which is healthful, delicious, and reasonably priced — are all top-notch. Perhaps in part due to lots of recycled materials, history, and attention to the environment, the *Gestalt* here is something very special.

Old Simpson Bay Road leaves Airport Road at the Simpson Bay police station, immediately North of the Dutch Side drawbridge. The road veers South and then north; Guayabera is only about 100 yards north on the left-hand side of the road. Try it and tell them we sent you. For more, look [here](#).

20. Souvenir Charm Bracelets

Every week, you'll find a number of jewelers from Front Street posting their wares on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). Something you will particularly want to check will be SXM charm bracelets featuring island maps and many other memorable items. We started one year ago at Zhaveri jewelers and we now have two — loaded with memories. Do yours soon, and check out the jewelers mentioned on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

21. Why Reservations Are Essential

Right now, it appears that SXM could be headed for one of its busiest seasons in years. All the restaurants that we've spoken with are reporting brisk business, to the point of turning away potential diners who arrive without reservations.

We urge all readers to make reservations at your favorite restaurants and at any new ones you may want to try, instead of risking disappointment. Of course, cancel any reservations you can't use - as early as possible.

The island is very, very busy.

22. A Plea to Restaurateurs to Slam No-Shows

A leading SXM restaurateur told us that on New Year's Eve, his restaurant was fully booked including one party of 30 who never bothered to show up or even cancel. Of course, if you can't use a reservation, cancel it as early as you can so the restaurateur can leverage its availability.

We also urge restaurateurs taking reservations for large groups to take a credit card to secure the reservation. What they do from there on is their business, but in our opinion, restaurants should be free to charge reasonable fees to anyone who makes and subsequently dishonors reservations (doesn't show or cancel). Restaurants holding space for people should be entitled to reasonable compensation if the people don't show/cancel and they shouldn't get away with it.

23. Why Vesna Taverna is Off-the-Charts Busy

Serving breakfast and lunch every day and dinner from Tuesday through Saturday, Vesna Taverna — long one of our favorites — offers Continental, American, French, and Greek specialties, with a special Greek night every Saturday and with fresh mussels and salmon flown in from Nova Scotia every Friday. Vesna's desserts are the stuff of legends, all homemade, highly creative, and delicious.

Again: make reservations. It's one of the best. See www.vesnataverna.com.

-- Finally, Salsa Classes For Adults, from Experts

If you thought that the Soggy Dollar Bar (behind Vesna Taverna in Simpson Bay) was only for kids, you'd be wrong — adults also love it.

One of the reasons is that on Latin night, they have salsa dancing lessons from 7 to 9 PM for a cost of only \$10 per person — wicked cheap, as they say in Boston. **Every Tuesday Soggy Dollar celebrates Latin Night with a Live Band in addition to the 2 for 1 drink specials on Brugal and El Jimador with FREE entrance and Margarita for everyone!** Come that night to Vesna's for dinner at 5pm, then walk back next door to Soggy at 6:45 for the Salsa Lessons. No need to register in advance.

It's every Tuesday night... stay tuned.

24. Return to Avantika

Avantika, the Thai restaurant across the street from Toppers in Simpson Bay, is easily the top Thai restaurant on the island -- for good reason.

It has a hip ambience, great service, reasonable prices, and great food with sizable portions. Get one of their appetizers and one of their fried rice specials and you'll be in business. The spring rolls and coconut shrimp are especially good. There are also lots of vegetarian selections.

If you have any difficulty walking, ignore the stairs; you'll find an operating elevator toward the back of the building on the right-hand side. Tell the manager, Mark, that we sent you.

25. How Does Spiga Do It?

Spiga Restaurant, opposite Tijon Parfumerie in Grand Case near the northern end of Boulevard de Grand Case, has been one of the island's very best restaurants of any kind for years.

Their menu offers a spectrum of exquisite dishes designed to satisfy the most discriminating appetites. It seems that the key to everything Spiga does is creativity, which for them is endless.

They take high quality ingredients flown in daily and deliver amazing flavors, textures, and aromas. From their highly creative appetizers to their sumptuous main courses to their unrivaled rich, decadent, and delicious desserts, everything reflects a tremendous amount of effort and pure perfectionism.

Simply put, Spiga is easily one of the Caribbean's most creative and purely enjoyable places to dine, regardless of genre. Go early in your trip; it's the kind of place you want to visit repeatedly during your highly memorable SXM vacation.

We don't know how they do it — we're just grateful they do. See www.spiga-sxm.com.

26. SkipJack's Moves Closer & Closer to Reopening

SkipJack's Restaurant in Simpson Bay, on which we posted a mini photo essay recently at our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#), has been working long hours every day to finish the rebuilding of its main dining deck so it can reopen this month.

One of the busiest and most popular seafood restaurants on the island, SkipJack's has a well-earned reputation for quality, superb service, reasonable prices, and sizable portions. It's flat out does not disappoint.

We will publish information on their final opening date — expected this month — as soon as we hear it, on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and also here in *SXM Weekly News*. Watch for it soon.

27. Why You Need to Check Restaurant Bills...

Some restaurants in SXM, particularly on the Dutch side, include a service charge/gratuity in the bill they give you. Read the bill carefully; if a gratuity has been added, you don't need to add more unless you feel compelled to do so.

Most credit card signature slips include a space for "tip" *even if a gratuity has automatically been added to the detailed check from the restaurant*. That has been the case for years. So, check your check carefully to see if a gratuity has been included. If so, mark a big X where it says tip on the credit card slip since you've already paid the tip.

You can use some of the money you save on your current vacation thanks to this admonition *to avoid duplicate gratuities* by extending your JMB Website Supporters membership or buying a new one — our membership sale must end January 15, so please do it now. Much more on JMB is at the beginning of this section.

28. Attack of the Killer Donkeys

So Sunday morning we went to feed donkeys on top of Anse Marcel Hill (near the French Side dump); we had some stale baguette pieces. As I was preparing to throw the baguettes into their pen, another dozen donkeys that had escaped the pen, started heading toward me on the road. I dumped out the bag and went back to the car with them quickly closing in.

Once inside I started looking at our camera, on which Ilene was trying to record the event. Then we heard a snort and a slightly loud "Yikes!" from Ilene as one of the donkeys tried to push his face into her almost closed window.

There were now 16 donkeys surrounding the car. I put the lights on and tooted the horn and that didn't seem to

impress them. We agreed that it was a good time to leave; the question was HOW.

I very slowly moved the car forward, enough for them to know it was moving but not enough to hit any. Very, very slowly they parted -- except one -- and we got in the road and headed away.

Note *except one*. He may have been the hungriest. He decided to gallop beside the driver's door and only gave up when he saw a truck coming toward him.

We're fine. The donkeys are fine. But we probably won't be feeding them again soon....

29. Restaurant of the Week: Wasabi Charlie

Pierre Ferland -- the "Pete" of Pineapple Pete -- for years has also owned/operated Sushiitto and now Wasabi Charlie next to Pete's, and it is fabulous; we will return this week.

Whether you like their spectrum of hibachi specialties or sushi/sashimi specialties, the hibachi chefs are entertaining, the food is great, the sushi top-notch, and the ambiance is outstanding.

Haven't tried sushi? Try a California roll; no raw fish and great taste. Or go for Tekka Makki, tuna roll, with fresh tuna, sushi rice, and wrapped in roasted seaweed. Delicious & addictive.

Just go. Tell Ivan, the manager, that Jeff sent you.

Here are recently featured SXM restaurants:

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushiitto) (1/7/18) is the new name of Sushiitto, now relocated next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great food/service.

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 12/30/18) La Patrona is SXM's only truly authentic Mexican restaurant. Highly recommended: great food, great service, not to be missed.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 12/24/18) SkipJack's main dining deck overlooking the lagoon was wrecked by Irma and is being rebuilt. They should be open early in 2019.

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 12/17/18) Avantika is wonderful; SXM's best Thai.

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 12/10/18) Reopened as Cafe Spiga, new menu; redesigned. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food. Everything is great, appetizers are out of this world.

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 12/3/18 Mario's Bistro reopened a few weeks after Irma hit and looks forward to your return. Phenomenal dining.

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.

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.

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.

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 some time in 2019.

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) 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.

30. SkyMed Holiday Sale Extended

SkyMed Takes You Home® when you become critically ill or injured when traveling. Without it, an emergency medical evacuation by air ambulance will cost you from \$35,000 to \$50,000 or more, sometimes much more, payable in cash in advance. Worse, you must get it before you need it - just like fire insurance.

Buy a new SkyMed multiyear five-year membership from us from now through January 15, 2019, at getskymed.com or by phoning us at 508-747-8281 (at about \$1.35/day price guaranteed for 10 years when we take your application by phone) and we'll give you a 10 year new or renewal JMB Website Supporters membership on us.

Of course we'll be happy to answer your questions and we'll tell you about everything SkyMed offers. Totally up to you what type of coverage you select. Much more info about SkyMed is in the next story.

You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Benefits [here](#).

See next story for much more on SkyMed. Offer ends soon.

31. Protect Against Emergency Medical Evacuation w/ SkyMed: Customer Stories

Emergency medical evacuations are payable in cash in advance and often cost upwards of \$45,000 -- unless you have a SkyMed membership. SkyMed Takes You Home® to doctors and hospitals you know and trust, and where your health insurance actually works. It's available to Americans and Canadians and to ExPats of both countries, taking them home from throughout the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. Global coverage is available covering every country around the world except those on the U. S. State Department watch list. SkyMed makes all medical evacuation arrangements and pays for them directly...you just pay for your SkyMed membership.

Here are examples of SkyMed in action:

Mary Beth and her partner Don were vacationing in SXM when Don fell and broke his hip -- only about a month after they had bought SkyMed. SkyMed flew them home on a medevac jet for the hospital care he needed. Flight cost to the patient: \$0. Savings: over \$35,000.

An MD from Florida who always visits SXM was on a cruise vacation to the Greek Islands with his wife when he broke his femur aboard the ship. He was rushed to the hospital in Corfu but called SkyMed *which arranged and paid for* an emergency medevac flight to Athens for urgent surgery. A few days later SkyMed evacuated him again, with an excellent male nurse, all the way home to Florida, where an ambulance took him home for recovery. Required flight cost to the patient: \$0. Savings: huge.

A Summer trip ended in disaster when a child visiting her grandmother in Grand Case was bitten in the head by the grandmother's bulldog, imperiling the girl's eyesight. She was flown to Miami in a medical evacuation jet for emergency eye surgery that saved her sight. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

A woman from Virginia shopped at an island grocer and headed back to her car carrying two bags of groceries. She tripped and fell on a curb and knew at once she had fractured her hip. After being stabilized locally, she was flown home on a medical evacuation jet from SkyMed where she had the surgery she needed. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

Two men were riding their horses on a hill in Cay Bay when a car backfiring spooked one of the horses, which threw its rider. The other rider got off his horse to check his companion when the car again backfired, spooking the horse again which led it to kick its dismounted driver in the head, luckily causing "only" a severely dislocated jaw. The local hospital had no ability to solve that problem so the victim was airlifted by SkyMed back to Pennsylvania for

surgery. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

A member of the clergy fell down cement stairs and broke her leg. She too was airlifted home by SkyMed for surgery. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

Not all trips end well: anything can happen when you travel. Being a member of SkyMed was the

common thread in all these cases. SkyMed takes its members home, usually in a private, ICU-equivalent medical

evacuation jet -- home to doctors and hospitals the patient knows and trusts -- and home where their health insurance works. That's just one of up to 18 benefits received by SkyMed members for not much more than \$1.30/day for annual or multiyear memberships.

All this is why we always recommend SkyMed. Call Jeff Berger weekdays at 508-747-8281 and leave your name, phone number, and time zone. Jeff will call back at a mutually convenient time and answer all your questions. He can also sign you up by phone in about 10 minutes. You're eligible to apply regardless of your age or health if you are a U.S. or Canadian citizen or an American or Canadian ExPat living in SXM or certain other countries.

Nobody is immune: anything can happen anywhere. Do it today. To learn more, visit www.getskymed.com. JMB members get big discounts off SkyMed's regular pricing: see the story about JMB Website Supporters in this section.

More Info on SkyMed...

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

32. 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 everythingxsm.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.

33. 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.

34. 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

35. 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](#).

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

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

**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.

37. 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://everythingSXM.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)

1/7/19 #V2-1184 0600 pm EST 1/6/19 9.3

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