

From JMB / SXM Weekly News 2/25/19: SXM Airport; Royal Palm; Divi; OBRR; Maho; Westin; C/O Yacht Hotel; Toppers Rhum Voted Caribbean's Best; Theo Heyliger; Grand Case; Mario's Bistro; SkyMed [35 News Stories]

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Vol. 2, #1191 --- Monday, February 25, 2019
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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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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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 315,000 people around the world...

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

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- **\$220 Round Trips from FLL; \$313 Round Trips from ATL**

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 -- *Traveling in Late May or Later? Beat SkyMed's 90-day Exclusion on Pre-Existing Conditions Coverage by Buying Now*
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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*

-- *Please Patronize JMB Sponsors*
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35 News Stories This Week

Scroll down for our complete Table of Contents

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 12/14/2019 12/21/2019 week 50 **Royal Islander La Plage** 1 bedroom, sleeps 4, lobby level, ocean/pool view \$895.00 plus \$50.00 timeshare share tax collected at check-in Sandy 704-567-6661

molloytravel@carolina.rr.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 11/23/2019 12/7/2019 Weeks 47 & 48 Sat. to Sat. **Simpson Bay Resort and Marina Don't waste a day moving--stay in the same Unit for 2 weeks--Hard to find.** Sleep 4 Studio in lower "B" Building, 1st floor, parking at your front door. Close to 2 pools, short walk to beach, Casino, Deli and many restaurants. Week 47 usually occurs during Thanksgiving Week. Both weeks \$7000.00, will not sell separately. MF paid for 2019, ready for your November arrival! \$7000.00 for both weeks, will not separate Carol 631-724-7036 Genduff@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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- A. **Where to Get Member Info:** www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. **Password Recovery Info:** Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com.
- C. **How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads:** Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

Section 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

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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. SXM Airport: Is Govt Sitting on a Figurative Time Bomb?

A number of weeks ago, we published a story here about a prospective \$100 million total loan that was available through the Dutch government to be used by SXM Airport for recovery.

Despite what appeared to be significant discussion between the Dutch side government and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, it seems that the Dutch side government still has not pulled the trigger on the deal — leaving the airport underfunded at a time when it is striving to move ahead vigorously with its continuing renovations.

A key fact to remember is that to date, as far as we know, the airport has received nothing in insurance and no loans whatsoever for recovery. Recent acting CEO Ravi Daryanani had told us that SXM Airport was using its own reserves to fund its recovery, while it awaited for needed funds to come from its insurance company and the government, neither of which had happened at the time of our interview a few weeks ago.

Mr. Daryanani, who was CFO and acting CEO at the time, returned to his job of CFO when Brian Mingo became permanent CEO a few weeks ago. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Daryanani resigned from his position as CFO and left St. Maarten to pursue a new position in Curaçao.

Mr. Mingo, now acting CFO as well as CEO, is seeking a new full-time CFO with airport experience from Holland. But he has already said that the airport is very low on money and needs funds quickly to continue restorations and move the terminal forward. The airport had said previously that Preclearance is a part of the future there, and one tourism official at a recent meeting said that Preclearance for passengers bound for the US was expected to become a reality by the end of 2020. Despite some press coverage indicating a potential delay in Preclearance due to the lack of current funding, we've seen or heard nothing substantiated to indicate a change in that intention.

With the arrest of a key government official last week (see story 19) and the real possibility that there could be another failure of another coalition government on the Dutch side in the next several weeks, there is the possibility of further disruption that could impact the speed with which the airport is able to recover.

Instead of arguing with each other, members of the Dutch side Parliament and its ministers need to pull together and start working to solve the nation's problems in a meaningful way.

Also, as we've said for years, the government's shortfall of funds is its own fault because of its chronic failure to promote tourism effectively. If it prioritizes tourism promotion — as Aruba has for many years — it would get the funding it needs to fix infrastructure, fix the airport, and do all the other things it needs to do to make SXM better for everyone. To paraphrase US President Reagan many years ago, politicking is not the solution to the problem, it is the problem. We hope the Dutch side government resumes doing its job instead of wasting everyone's time and endangering economic stability by practicing politics as usual.

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

Renewal JMB memberships: Low Prices!

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

Reinstatement JMB memberships: Low Prices!

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

2. "MyRadar": Tracks Winds, Storms Everywhere

The application My Radar, available free for wireless phones as well as computers, shows you the position and movement of weather as well as wind direction — very serious stuff if you're planning a flight anywhere or if you're on vacation. It's very useful throughout the year and you can find it by searching My Radar.

3. \$220 Round Trips from FLL; \$313 Round Trips from ATL

From March through May, jetBlue is offering \$220 roundtrips from Fort Lauderdale to SXM, a sharp contrast to current fares between Miami and SXM offered by American Airlines. Those AA fares are often in the neighborhood of \$500 round-trip, but JetBlue is expected to grab much of the non-connection traffic that formerly went to Miami by virtue of the sharp competitive difference its \$220 roundtrips bring to the market.

Meanwhile, roundtrips from Atlanta have recently been offered for a fare of \$313. Details are [here](#) -- these flights also involve jetBlue.

4. See Current SXM Weather / Weather

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.

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

5. Is Royal Palm Finally Doing Something?

Diamond Resorts, for a number of years the owner of both Royal Palm Beach Resort and Flamingo Beach Resort in Simpson Bay, has been suspected of dragging its feet on the restoration of both resorts in order to encourage timeshare owners to walk away, so it could sell virtually new highly renovated timeshare units at full price, increasing its own revenue.

Hurricane Irma hit the island a year and a half ago, and the only thing that Diamond appears to have done at either of these resorts is remove debris and perhaps a little exterior painting.

Now, instead of a few people occasionally walking around with hardhats but accomplishing nothing apparent, there are actually workers who appear to be doing something at the top floor of Royal Palm. In fact, metal braces capable of handling wall installations seem to have been put in place for several rooms within the last week or so.

That's nothing substantial, but it's an improvement. We'll keep watching — and we hope that Royal Palm is finally going to get its act in gear.

6. A Closer Look at Divi Little Bay

We've been doing a number of site inspections at SXM hotels and at properties on other islands, and had a chance to look more closely last week at Divi Little Bay.

Anne-Marie Brooks and her staff there have done a remarkable job restoring virtually every room and in the property and beautifying the resort, where we took a number of pictures. You can expect to see those pictures — and pictures of other properties — soon on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

We just wanted to give these folks some well-deserved kudos, as we previously did with their next-door neighbor, Belair Beach, which has had an equally remarkable recovery orchestrated by Director Edna P. "Energy" Evans.

7. Up On The Roof at OBBR

We recently also did a site inspection at Oyster Bay Beach Resort in the Dawn beach area. That resort is now 100% restored from the effects of hurricane Irma, though its neighbor, Coral Beach Club is still a work in progress.

While we were there, we visited some suites in the Mainsail building and saw their rooftop Sundeck complete with sunning area, a huge hot tub, and an outside grill. The view was tremendous although the circular stairway back to the deck on the suite might be a bit challenging for some people. We had seen video when Irma was passing through, and the situation there was stunning. OBBR's recovery has been simply incredible.

Our congratulations to Ricardo Perez, Anju Snow, and their great crew for some remarkable work. OBBR looks amazing.

8. Timeshare Association Wants Noise Ordinances Enforced

As tourists/foreigners, it is sometimes astonishing to us — and we're sure to you — that the government of St. Maarten doesn't take a more active role in consumer protection and in enforcing existing laws and ordinances to protect its people. This shouldn't be anything huge — but it does seem to us that the government should be making sure that people obey the law relating to noise pollution.

A very large cement slab was installed off Welfare Road at Kimsha beach some time ago which was said to be to help improve parking in the area: it was called a *Parking Lot*.

We're not sure what exactly happened, but a number of small portable bars have now appeared on the property that was to have been used for parking and at night, the parking lot has become one huge noise generator, blaring obnoxiously loud noise to every nearby property. It shouldn't be necessary for people to complain before the government fixes such ludicrous, irresponsible behavior. But it seems to keep its hands off — just as it did during the Caravanserai Debacle (which we named), during the immense problems at Sapphire Resort, and now this.

The St. Maarten Timesharing Association — fearful that music to be played late at night at the new Roxxy Bar directly next to Royal Palm beach resort will aggravate area noise pollution — has urged the government to curb area noise pollution. That request shouldn't be necessary, and in fact in the permitting process it should have been considered (as should a number of other impacts) — but again, the government seems to maintain a hands-off attitude, to the serious detriment of its country.

We fully realize the government is busy dealing with a financial crisis and the recovery from Irma — but this is routine stuff that ought to be handled routinely and not left give locals and tourists ongoing major headaches.

More, look [here](#).

9. Why the Maho Parking Garage is Closed

We recently spent some time taking a closer look at Sonesta Ocean Point resort, which is beautiful, and at the immense amount of work that's going into bringing Sonesta Maho back online in the coming weeks.

We knew that the parking garage associated with the Maho shopping area was closed but we didn't know why. Now, we do.

The ground floor of the garage is packed with enormous quantities of construction materials being used in the rebuilding and restoration of Sonesta Maho; it's a mammoth staging area and it's one of the reasons restoration of that property is moving so quickly now. Both Royal Islander properties are now back online as is Sonesta Ocean Point, and Sonesta Maho will soon follow.

It's great to see that area even better than it was before Irma -- and now fully capable of withstanding any future category 5 storms.

10. New Clothing-Optional SXM "Yacht Hotel"

If you're getting tired of lugging heavy suitcases on your trip, this place just might offer a rather liberating solution.

Hint: it's off Orient beach.

Here's a look at [all the details](#).

11. Why No Word From The Westin?

For many months after the Westin Dawn Beach Resort and Casino was slammed by hurricane Irma, spokespeople for the property were saying the delay was caused by insurance and they would be talking soon.

That argument has worn thin since the resort continues to say nothing about its future.

Clearly, there is work being done at the Dawn Beach Club, the partially reopening timesharing partner of the Westin. But since a year and a half has passed, it seems to us the resort has had ample time to settle its insurance, decide what it's going to do, announce it, and start working.

Work being done on Dawn Beach Club shouldn't exclude the ability of the resort to work on the Westin simultaneously.

The only thing we've heard, unofficially, is that once Dawn Beach Club renovations have been finished, the owners will decide what to do with Westin and announce it; that would be the end of 2019, more than two years after Irma hit.

Why the delay and why the wait?

12. SXM Needs Real Hospitality Training ...

The best run businesses on St. Maarten -- of all kinds -- carefully train their employees to make sure their interactions with customers and prospective customers are optimal from the perspective of the business.

In a country where the dominant business is tourism, there are clearly subject matter experts across the island who could enrich the fabric of the country by sharing that knowledge via specialized training for high school and college students in the hospitality business.

Hospitality isn't simply being polite to people. It's far more than that, involving management, organization, culinary arts, accounting, and far more. Some locals do go away to college in the United States or in Holland for training in all of these areas. Indeed, Johnson and Wales University has seen a fair number of people from SXM arrive for true in-depth training.

We hope some entrepreneurial folks will make it possible for highly qualified local people to leverage their extensive knowledge to create a much larger pool of people available with the talents necessary right here for great hospitality careers.

As the island continues to grow and new hotel and condominium properties open, the opportunities will be almost boundless. There's a HUGE need for highly trained people to fill those current and future jobs.

13. Get Lowest Rates for Hotel Rooms & Car Rentals Worldwide

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.

14. Meet 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.

If you see someone there that you know; introduce yourself

15. Places to Stay: Many Available, Take Your Pick (Revised 2/19)

With most timeshare resorts back online — Belair, Sea Palace, Divi, Atrium Resort, La Vista, Simpson Bay Resort, Port de Plaisance, 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 everythingxsm.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

16. JMB Member Discounts / Benefits -- New Update

We're updating the site to reflect ongoing changes on the island.

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

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

About Our JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program:

**[Get 300+ SXM Discounts
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<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Reinstatement JMB memberships: Low Prices!

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

17. Toppers Rhum "Best in the Caribbean": *USA Today* Readers

If there is one thing the Caribbean is known for as much as its beaches, is its rum. The spirit was first distilled on the islands during the 17th century when sugar plantation owners discovered molasses, a by-product of the sugar refining process, which could be fermented into alcohol. Caribbean rum producers have spent centuries since perfecting the process of distillation, aging, and blending. Many of the world's best rums come from the Caribbean.

USA Today has awarded St. Maarten's Topper's Rhum Distillery 1st place in its 10 Best Caribbean Rum Distillery contest. This prestigious competition is among some of the most famous rum brands in the world including Bacardi, Brugal, Angostura, Cruzan, Mount Gay, Appleton Estate, and Barbancourt.

USA TODAY's 10Best.com, provides travelers with original, unbiased, and experiential travel content around the world. At its core is a team of well-traveled and well-educated experts who in their fields are known for their discriminating tastes.

Topper's Rhum, a truly locally made product, is a world-class, multi-award winning, premium rum that is

handmade, bottled, and packaged with precision right here in Cole Bay, St. Maarten. Topper's Rhum only uses all natural premium ingredients and no preservatives. They are committed to producing the world's best tasting rum and flavored rum spirits, using the highest standards of quality. They are re-inventing rum by continually innovating and delivering unique products to their customers worldwide.

Topper's Rhum is very environmentally conscientious and well known for their signature reusable swing-top bottles. This official St. Maarten rum is the only international multiple award-winning spirit distilled and exported from St. Maarten. They currently export to 7 countries and 23 states in the USA and are the official rum of the Dutch Army. Their products are also sold online throughout the world. Topper's Rhum has already won 24 international medals awarded by the most prominent rum tasting contests in the world.

Through their tours and their continuing expansion overseas, they are notably promoting St. Maarten internationally. Topper's Rhum Distillery is one of the top unique places to visit on St. Maarten, according to the St. Maarten Tourism Bureau.

Come by and visit their newly installed and soon to be world famous Rhum Tap which offers 12 specialty flavors, ready for sampling or enjoy one of their hands-on tours. A guide will take you through the 6,000 sq. ft. distillery where you will learn the history of rum making and you'll get a behind the scenes look at how they ferment, distill, age, blend and bottle. At the tasting bar you can try some of their 50 unique flavors that are in development and enjoy unlimited samples of all their artisanal products as well as their delicious rum cake. Visit their boutique where you can purchase unique St. Maarten gifts and of course plenty of rum including limited edition flavors that are only available at the distillery.

Topper's Rhum distillery is open for free rum tastings and shopping from 9:00am – 4:00pm Monday – Friday and from 9:00am – 12:00pm on Saturdays. Tours are available for \$20 at 10:00am and 4:00pm, Monday – Saturday. Sundays are available by appointment only. Call 721-520-0008 for an appointment or book it online at www.toppersrhumtours.com.

For more information about the Topper's Rhum Distillery please contact the Topper's Rhum Press Officer at: press@toppersrhum.com or visit their website www.toppersrhumtours.com
###

About Topper's Rhum:

Topper's Rhum, established in St. Maarten in March 2008 is committed to producing the world's best tasting rum and flavored rum spirits using the highest standards of quality. Topper's Rhum Distillery was established in Cole Bay in November 2012. We strive to continually innovate and deliver cutting edge products to our customers worldwide and are experts in delivering unprecedented customer service. For more information, visit our website at www.toppersrhum.com or www.toppersrhumtours.com.

18. Be Careful Swimming: Tourist Dies at Mullet Bay Beach

A 74-year-old female American tourist passed away last week while swimming at Mullet Bay beach. Her identity was not immediately released, and authorities did not know her cause of death. People nearby said she appeared not to be moving in the water, so she was brought to shore where ambulance crews unsuccessfully attempted to resuscitate her by performing CPR.

Our condolences to the woman's family and friends.

19. SXM's Most Popular, Productive Politician Arrested

The grandson of the man who has been described as the father of tourism in SXM, Dr. A. C. "Claude" Wathey, was arrested last week here in SXM and is currently in detention in the Philipsburg jail, despite the fact that some have called the jail unfit for human habitation.

Theo Heyliger, whose many accomplishments have been covered extensively here in *SXM Weekly News*, in our opinion has accomplished more than every other Dutch side politician combined and has long been the most popular

elected official on either side of the island.

Mr. Heyliger was the driving force that established the A. C. Wathey cruise and cargo facilities in Philipsburg; the Simpson Bay promenade, popularly known as the boardwalk, which is on the verge of being extended all the way to the cruise port; the redesign and beautification of both Front Street and Back Street in Philipsburg; the all-new Princess Juliana Airport Terminal that was completed several years ago; the Simpson Bay Lagoon Causeway, which some have suggested be named after him; and the new St. Maarten General Hospital, construction of which is expected to begin soon.

He also has been tirelessly devoted to the promotion of Tourism, the dominant portion of the entire island economy.

We don't normally report much about island politics here. Quite frankly, our hope is that Mr. Heyliger will be able to continue to be a highly productive proponent of SXM tourism for many years to come. The island does need his tremendous foresight and productivity, during one of the most challenging times in its history.

20. Is The Dutch Side Govt About to Fall AGAIN?

The detention of Theo Heyliger, covered in the previous story, was originally not expected to reverberate through the Dutch side government, which has tremendous challenges still in managing many economic problems lingering long after the island was hit by hurricane Irma in September, 2017.

The island now is in the middle of its best tourism season in many years, but recovery from Irma has been an incredibly expensive, Herculean task. The last several Dutch side governments have been coalitions whose fragility has led to continuous government structural instability.

But St. Maarten is a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, not an independent entity, so from a tourist perspective it continues to be quite stable. Nonetheless, total stability with the government laser-focused on total recovery — would be a far better alternative than the possible collapse of yet another coalition. *We hope the politicians pull together to maintain stability and ensure that the incredible progress the Dutch side has achieved continues at an accelerated pace.* The people of SXM deserve nothing less.

Of course we are watching this potential story as always, and will keep you posted.

21. Progress Toward Grand Case repaving

French side officials for the end of January promised that Boulevard de Grand Case, the main drag in that famous seaside culinary village, would be repaved before Mardis de Grand Case, popularly known by its original name of Harmony Nights, restarted earlier this month.

That didn't happen.

There appears to be work being done preparatory to repaving, but the government appears to be mum about when the repaving will actually be completed.

In the meantime, expect the Boulevard to continue to be a bit bumpy. At least some new streetlights have been installed near the main parking lot in the vicinity of Le Pressoir, though increased nightly patrols by gendarmes would also be welcomed.

22. Protecting Your Valuables in SXM

SXM is paradise, not utopia, and there are a number of things you can and should do to protect your valuables.

First, use room safes to store valuables at your hotel or villa.

Second, never leave what may appear to be valuables visible inside your car.

Third, never, ever store handbags, camcorders, cameras, or any other valuables in your car trunk. If we see you do

that, as has been the case dozens of times, so do people who might want to acquire that merchandise.

Fourth, never hang cameras, handbags, or anything else on the back of chairs in restaurants where they can easily be picked up by someone else. This is especially true for restaurant seats facing public walkways or the street.

Fifth, avoid flashing wads of cash or glitzy yellow gold jewelry anywhere: again, SXM is paradise, not utopia. Crime rates against tourists are minimal; let's keep them that way.

23. On Orient, No Photos Means No Photos

Crowds have been increasing at the southern Club Orient end of Orient beach, long the island's most popular beach for all-over tans.

Some tourists think it's a dandy idea to take pictures of naturists despite the fact that there are large signs on the beach that bluntly read, No Photos. But No Photos means No Photos, and security personnel are likely to take action against you should you choose to take pictures in restricted areas — and those actions can include seizing or wrecking your camera....

24. Introducing Blue Paradise Real Estate (blueparadiserealty.com)

Relocation rates to SXM have been soaring and with that, the demand for highly qualified, knowledgeable people to help throughout the relocation process has also been increasing.

Island Real Estate Team and IRE vacations were our first real estate partners on the island. They were soon joined by Jennifer's Vacation Villas.

Nico NG Cisneros at Jennifer's has been joining Maia Pilzer at IREvacations as both have been independently helping many of our readers and readers of our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) relocate to SXM or acquire investment or vacation property there.

Now, Candi Billant, who formerly worked with Island Real Estate Team, has started Blue Paradise Realty in the Cupecoy area and they are our newest real estate partner, offering properties on both sides of the island. We also urge you to contact **Vivian Chamas at Bright Path**, a company heavily involved in executing all of the details of relocation so you get the benefits without the drudgery. Bright Path is also a sponsor of JMB's many services to SXM tourists.

25. Restaurant of the Week: Mario's Bistro

When people talk about the best restaurants on SXM — or even the entire Caribbean, the conversation invariably includes Mario's Bistro in the busy Mediterranean-style culinary and shopping village of Porto Cupecoy, Dutch side. Mario moved his restaurant a few years ago from an over-water location at the Marigot drawbridge to its current gorgeous location in Cupecoy. Although the site is amazing, the dining experience is downright spectacular — among the very best anywhere. The restaurant is immaculate; the service is exemplary; and the food is consistently creative and unfailingly delicious, no matter your tastes.

Ilene had the Mahi as a main course -- ordered spicy, of course — after an appetizer of bruschetta that reached new heights of creativity: try it and you'll see. My main course was perfectly prepared salmon, lightly seared on the outside, perfectly flavored, and juicy on the inside, with lightly spiced French-style cut baby green beans and a cauliflower puree as accompaniments. I pride myself on being able to cook a mean poached salmon but I can't come close to approaching the excellence of Mario's cooking, which is at a level few others can match.

The pear tartlet for dessert with imported French salted caramel ice cream was superb. Don't wait to go to Mario's for a special occasion. Go early in your trip, since you'll want to return multiple times while you're here. You will not be

disappointed....

Here are recently featured SXM restaurants:

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 2/25/19 Mario's Bistro is one of the most spectacular culinary experiences you'll ever have. Go. Phenomenal dining.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 2/18/19). Open for lunch and dinner except Monday, when they're closed. Great food from one of SXM's very best restaurants. Fun atmosphere, too.

Mama Pizza & Pasta, featured 2/11/19, Porto Cupecoy.

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 2/4/19). Now open every day for through B/L; dinner is offered Tuesday through Sunday.

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 1/28/19) One of SXM's oldest and busiest restaurants, Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and late dining. Open morning until late night. Sports on TV. Karaoke some nights.

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach); follow the road toward Shore Pointe and turn near Shore Pointe to get there. (Featured 1/20/2019) Parking, drinks, chairs and umbrellas, lolo-type food, and an all-over tan. What could possibly be better?

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushiitto) (1/7/19) 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 triumphantly reopened with an entirely new dining deck late in January, 2019. Great place - go!

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) New menu; redesigned. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food. Everything is great, appetizers are out of this world. Not to be missed.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

26. Restaurants Very Busy; Reservations Essential

SXM continues to be busier than it has been in several years. Regardless of what your practice was in the past, this year it makes sense to make reservations to be sure you're not disappointed. If you're making them for a specific holiday or special occasion make sure you make them several days in advance at least. And if it turns out that you can't go, please make sure to cancel your reservation — that's only fair to the restaurant, enabling them to sell seats they reserved for you to someone else.

27. Ensure Best SkyMed Deal - Jeff Berger / GetSkyMed.com

Our SkyMed website is www.getskymed.com: please be sure you bookmark **getSkyMed.com** and not any other site. *When you're ready to sign up for SkyMed, be sure to call us and let us take your application by phone.* It takes under 10 minutes, and we submit it electronically. We know what SkyMed is looking for and we can make sure you submit it efficiently and effectively; that way we also get credit for the purchase, which in a small way helps fund this newsletter and everything else we do for you.

SkyMed calls only can be received at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time.. Thank you.

28. Traveling in Late May or Later? Beat SkyMed's 90-day Exclusion on Pre-Existing Conditions Coverage by Buying Now

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 now 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](#).

By buying annual protection now at only about \$1.35/day, pre-existing conditions will be covered in full after a brief 90-day waiting period. SkyMed covers you in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global coverage is available as well. For answers to your questions, call us today at 508-747-8281.

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

Our SkyMed website is www.getskymed.com: please be sure you bookmark **getSkyMed.com** and not any other site. *When you're ready to sign up for SkyMed, be sure to call us and let us take your application by phone.* It takes under 10 minutes, and we submit it electronically. We know what SkyMed is looking for and we can make sure you submit it efficiently and effectively; that way we also get credit for the purchase, which in a small way helps fund this newsletter and everything else we do for you. SkyMed calls only can be received at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time.. Thank you.

29. 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.

Our SkyMed website is www.getskymed.com: please be sure you bookmark **getSkyMed.com** and not any other site. *When you're ready to sign up for SkyMed, be sure to call us and let us take your application by phone.* It takes under 10 minutes, and we submit it electronically. We know what SkyMed is looking for and we can make sure you submit it efficiently and effectively; that way we also get credit for the purchase, which in a small way helps fund this newsletter and everything else we do for you. SkyMed calls only can be received at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time.. Thank you.

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

30. 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.

31. 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.

Our SkyMed website is www.getskymed.com: please be sure you bookmark **getSkyMed.com** and not any other site. *When you're ready to sign up for SkyMed, be sure to call us and let us take your application by phone.* It takes under 10 minutes, and we submit it electronically. We know what SkyMed is looking for and we can make sure you submit it efficiently and effectively; that way we also get credit for the purchase, which in a small way helps fund this newsletter and everything else we do for you. SkyMed calls only can be received at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time.. Thank you.

32. Please Patronize JMB Sponsors (Updated 2/19)

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

Artistic Jewelers

[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*.

Candie Billant does condo and villa rentals and sales. You will be seeing her posts on our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Site](#).

Relocation / "Papers" Consulting Companies

Bright Path is already posting on our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Site](#)

Updated 2/25

33. Use Our Weekly News Archives

Our *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](#). Updating soon.

34. 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.

35. 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. (Our site is based in the U. S. and is focused on the needs of tourists traveling to SXM.) If you own an SXM business and want to look into and take advantage of this unique marketing opportunity, please email susank@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "JMB Sponsorships". We'll get complete information to you quickly. Winter 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 2020. Contact us today for more information.

Updated 2/19.

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://everythingxsm.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)

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