



Best Jewelry Deals

Shop while there are no cruise ships in town...
Details Page 5



Local Rum Wins Award

Topper's Rhum wins major international award... Details Page 6



Rock, Blues & Good Time Radio - 91.9FM

Category 5 Plus - St. Maarten's Cocktail



Hundreds of smashed bottles of the finest liquors and only a few left intact. Our resident mixologists had to be truly creative during the first days after Hurricane Irma hit the island this past September. They had to come up with some new cocktails with very limited resources.

Who could blame the bartenders for naming their concoctions 'Category Five Plus' or 'Irma Special'? Now the dilemma is we have a few too many Cat 5's around and need to find out which one deserves the name. Category 5+ Hurricane Irma is part of our history. We made it through, and we don't mind vicious Irma being remembered as a drink that causes a serious hang-over.

If you are a hardcore bar hopper, or only an occasional aficionado of fine spirits: the ball is in your court...

Continued on Page 10

Where to 'Pop' the Question?

We are giving you the Top 5 places on St. Maarten to create the moment she dreamt about her whole life. You want it to be perfect, you already purchased the ring. You know exactly how you'll ask her and now need to find the picture-perfect backdrop to propose. St. Maarten has so many incredible locations to choose from...

Continued on Page 8

Island Tipping Rules

Tipping is a special challenge on our multi-cultural island. The Dutch side follows the American style, where the tip is not automatically included into the price of a meal, and the staff very much depends on tips. French St-Martin follows European law, where waiters are making a decent salary independent of tip...

Continued on Page 4

Please use the QR code with your smart phone in order find participating locations and to send in your vote.



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Editorial: Welcome to St. Maarten 3.0

March 2018

Let me be the first to say, thank you for picking up and reading the ST-MAARTEN.COM WEEKEND EDITION! We are proud to be producing a newspaper that will help shape and redefine our beautiful island in the eyes of tourism.

Not technology, but nature created the latest version of St. Maarten/St-Martin. After the passing of Hurricane Irma in September 2017, we are now working on the third reincarnation of one of the Caribbean's most popular destinations. It was Hurricane Luis in 1995 which moved the original St. Maarten 1.0 to version 2.0... which has now expired.

The new St. Maarten is a bit more modest in its initial offerings. We can't hide the scars of nature's recent assault yet. Nevertheless, much of what island visitors love about SXM has been preserved: many of the great restaurants of Dutch St. Maarten, the nightlife, the casinos and the amazing shopping in Philipsburg are all still here.

Most importantly, even in hardship, the residents of 'the friendly island' have shown that the tolerant, open-minded and cosmopolitan spirit is well and alive.

There is a consensus that the 'new' St. Maarten will be a vastly improved version of what visitors and residents had come to love about version 2.0.

Each restaurant, bar or store you'll find open right now has made a tremendous effort to be ready for your visit. All businesses listed in the ST-MAARTEN.COM WEEKEND EDITION and on our web portal ST-MAARTEN.COM are fully endorsed by us and we encourage your patronage.

Walt Disney once said, "if you can dream it, you can do it". We are thrilled to see our dream coming to fruition. As a brand-new newspaper, we hope to share our love for the island, allowing you to see St. Maarten through a local's eyes. By providing high quality content and imagery, the WEEKEND EDITION hopes to set the standard for journalism on our picturesque island.

Enjoy our first edition!

Jan Thaelke
Publisher

ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekend Edition

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Tipping Rules of St. Maarten vs. St-Martin

Photo: Nowhere Special Rum Bar & Grill, Simpson Bay

Continued from Page 1



But this is where it gets confusing. Some scrupulous restaurant owners keep tips for themselves and pay their staff only a pittance of a salary. We hope that this article will help you to better understand the service charge, and protect the hardworking service industry.

Also, many restaurants that accept credit cards have the line to add tip after they have charged your credit card, but cannot add tip after the fact. So, if using your credit card, ask if you can add the tip after or if you need to give them the amount ahead of time. Or, it's always safe to leave a cash tip!

Tipping in Dutch Side Restaurants

Tipping on the Island's French Side

Restaurants on St. Maarten's Dutch side follows the American system for paying servers: very low base salary, tips not included in prices on their menus, and the expectation that the guest is adding at least 10-20% tip to the bill. There are a few establishments on St. Maarten which try to confuse the issue. They use standard US point of sale systems for their dining bill, which includes a line for 'tax'. In many cases, a 15% charge is added to this line. This is a service charge and NOT tax, as there is no such tax on the island! To make matters worse, service staff is NOT getting this fee in many restaurants.

Even though European laws state that the service charge has to be INCLUDED in the price of a meal, most restaurant owners on French St-Martin are relying on the American way of handling this issue. Legally, the price posted on the menu includes service and there is no obligation to pay more.

Most Europeans just round up and leave a few Euros, pretty much what an American guest would pay on top of the customary 15% in the US, to show extra satisfaction.

The truth is: staff of the restaurants on the French side expect American visitors to tip well (or over-tip) and don't expect too much from their European countrymen. You will keep everyone happy with an amount around 10%.

If you notice this, don't be shy. Ask your server if they are getting their tips paid out. In some restaurants, they are instructed not to give an honest answer. If you feel this to be the case, ask for the manager to get to the bottom of the issue.

Do not feel uncomfortable asking about the house policy regarding tipping.



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Smart Jewelry Shopping

Many repeat visitors to St. Maarten wait to make their jewelry purchases until they are back on island and can visit their favorite jeweler on Philipsburg's Front Street.

Before you plan to shop, check the cruise ship schedule; you don't want to hit town while five ships offload 15,000 passengers, turning quaint Philipsburg into a hectic, overheated shopping mall.

There are days when there are no ships docked and you have the stores basically to yourself. You will find the sales people to be more relaxed, might even offer you a beverage and there will be less attempts for a hard sale.

Some of the major stores advertise heavily with the cruise lines. This kind of marketing is highly efficient for them, but also incredibly expensive.

As a customer, you pay this expense, even if you are not a cruise ship passenger. This is why you should prefer to shop in stores which focus more on hotel or vacation villa guests in their marketing efforts.

There are jewelers carrying famous international brands; here the profit margin for the stores is slim and you won't find a lot of room for bargaining. Other stores feature non-branded designs, offered for a fraction of what the fashionable originals cost, and there is also more room for you, the customer, to negotiate.

All jewelers featured on ST-MAARTEN.COM have been in business for decades and are fully endorsed by us!



Topper's Rhum Wins Major Award

Continued from Page 1

Rum is the official liquor of the Caribbean; centuries ago it had been invented on sugar plantations as a way to ferment the refinery by-product of molasses into alcohol.

St. Maarten's very own Topper's Rhum Distillery is now listed among world-renowned brands such as Barcardi or Mount Gay as an award winner of USA Today's 10-best distilleries contest, scoring a top-5 position.

Topper's Rhum committed to creating the world's best tasting rum and it is paying off: the deliciously flavored spirits are now available in six countries and 21 states in the USA, making it one of the very few items produced right here on St. Maarten and actually exported. Even the Dutch army made Topper's their choice of rum.



Enjoying the Rhum tasting experience!



For more information, please scan the QR code with your smart phone in order to visit TOPPERSRHUM.COM

Do You Know St. Maarten?

ST. MAARTEN - ST-MARTIN CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Test your island knowledge here!

ACROSS

- 1 Tex-Mex restaurant in Simpson Bay
- 4 Currency of St-Martin
- 12 Which ocean borders the island's East coast?
- 14 Beach to watch the airplanes take off and land
- 15 Title sponsor of big regatta
- 17 Beach bar on Simpson Bay Beach
- 19 Which island is called the 'Unspoiled Queen'?
- 21 Who is the airport princess?
- 22 Rhum Cocktail
- 23 Tropical cyclone
- 25 Best healthy breakfast in Simpson Bay?
- 26 Airport code for St. Maarten
- 27 Liquor produced from a fruit only in St. Maarten

DOWN

- 2 French side capital
- 3 Large, old trees
- 5 Nude Beach
- 6 Fruit which can kill if it falls on head
- 7 Music style of the French Caribbean
- 8 Beautiful beach close to Maho
- 9 What is the language of Curacao?
- 10 Dutch side capital
- 11 A large private vessel
- 12 What island is located 5 miles north of St. Martin?
- 13 What casino is themed after carnival?
- 16 Famous for jewelry shopping
- 18 Of what country is St. Martin part of?
- 20 What entertainment is offered at Topper's?
- 24 Large lizard

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ST. MAARTEN - SAINT MARTIN

A Night Out in the Capital

During daytime a busy cruise port and the island's administrative center, during evening hours a quaint Caribbean town: this is Philipsburg, St. Maarten's capital.

The Boardwalk along Great Bay beach is lively until 8 PM, and longer on weekends. The Holland House Beach Hotel with the Ocean Lounge Bar and Restaurant is traditionally the most popular hot-spot for later hours, serving as the perfect place for a sumptuous dinner and cocktails at the well frequented bar. On Friday evenings a DJ plays romantic tunes to set the mood for a perfect Caribbean night.



The Jump Up Casino at 'the head of town' (the beginning of Front Street) is famous for its free entertainment with always changing shows.



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Philipsburg Nights



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5 Best Spots to 'Pop the Question'

Continued from Page 1

1. Loterie Farm

Whether you choose to pop the question mid-zip lining or lounging at the pool, Loterie Farm is one of the most romantic spots on the French side. Surrounded by lush greenery, this relaxing oasis is ideal to propose at. After you propose, order a bottle of champagne to celebrate her saying yes! For the occasion, you might want to reserve a private cabana.

2. Karakter

With more of a lounge atmosphere, pop the question over lunch and a bottle of rosé at this Simpson Bay beach restaurant. With tasty food and lively music, the ambiance will keep you calm, cool and collected as you ask her to marry you.

3. At an Italian Restaurant

Nothing screams romance more than Italian cuisine. Maybe it's because we think of the Disney movie, "Lady and the Tramp" where they share the spaghetti noodle...we digress! Two of our favorite Italian fine dining restaurants are Isola Ristorante located in Pelican Key on the Dutch side, and Rendez-Vous Lounge in Porto Cupecoy. Hint: propose before you get your appetizers so you can enjoy your meal as a newly engaged couple!

4. Sunset Cruise

Take a coastal cruise with the catamaran Tango and sail into the sunset with a glass



Photo: Aqua Mania Adventures

of champagne in your hand. Pop the questions while the sun sets behind the Caribbean Sea. Make sure that the skipper offers a 'round on the house' after she says yes. SV Tango (SV stands for 'sailing vessel') is operated by Aqua Mania Adventures at the Simpson Bay Resort in Pelican Key. Alternatively to the Sunset Cruise, a dinner cruise is also available.

And if you feel that a leisurely sail is too quaint for the occasion, check out Caribbean Marines: let them whisk with a fast powerboat to a secluded beach.

5. Rainforest Adventures

Ask her to marry you on top of the island! Rainforest Adventures is located in Rockland Estates and features different adventures to choose from. This exhilarating proposal spot will be a day she'll remember forever. Celebrate your engagement afterwards at the new restaurant Emilio's Restaurant, which is located on site.


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'Category 5 Plus' Cocktail Contest

Continued from Page 1

Visit bar after bar and ask for their version of the Category 5 Plus special cocktail. There are three easy ways to vote: visit our website, scan the QR code at the end of this article using your smartphone or call in to Island 92.

Calling All Bars on Island

We believe that now is the time to put St. Maarten on the map with our very own international cocktail. This is why ST-MAARTEN.COM, with the support of our friends from Island 92 radio, is launching the offi-cial Category 5 Plus Cocktail Contest. We in-vite all St. Maarten/St-Martin mixologists, ambitious bartenders and bar owners to participate.

(Contact Roy at roy@st-maarten.com)

In our next issue, we will publish a list of participating bars and restaurants!



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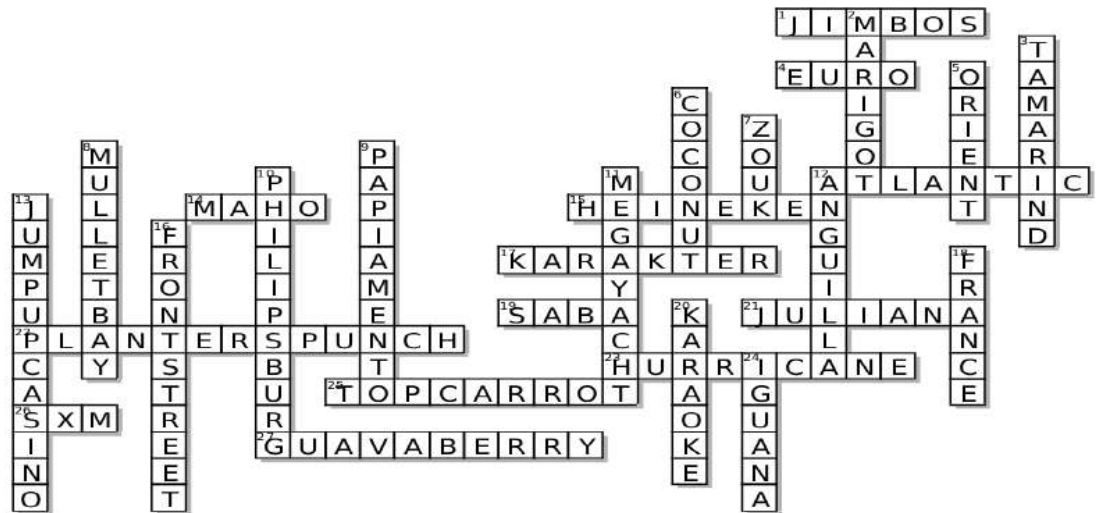
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'Nowhere Special' - New Bar in Simpson Bay

'Nowhere Special' is the evasive response if one's whereabouts are questioned... and also the name of the latest restaurant and bar in Simpson Bay. The large dining deck is right on the waterfront and overlooks the glam-

orous mega-yachts of Isle del Sol marina. Nowhere Special Rum Bar & Grill has rapidly gathered a loyal following and is the newest hotspot in Simpson Bay for Happy Hour drinks and a Caribbean dinner.

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Porto Cupecoy: A Corner of Tranquility



Nestled into the far western corner of the Simpson Bay Lagoon, Porto Cupecoy remains an oasis of peace and tranquility on an island otherwise occupied with rebuilding.

Bordering onto an elegant marina, the central plaza is home to several renowned restaurants and boutiques. Many of the luxury condominiums of the complex are available as vacation rentals.

Rendez-Vous Lounge is the popular meeting spot for any time of the day; serving breakfast, lunch and dinner from 8 AM to 10 PM. Our island is famous for its culinary delights and Rendez-Vous Lounge strives to offer a gourmet experience in a casual setting. There is frequently live entertainment at night.

Mario Bistrot is a fixture on the island's fine dining scene, with a stellar reputation built over many years. Mario's offers exceptional quality meals in a warm setting overlooking the marina. Open all weekdays for dinner from 6 PM to 10 PM, Sunday's lunch only.

St-Martin Sotheby's International Real Estate handles most of the vacation rentals. Their main office is located right next to Porto Cupecoy. Stop by and maybe they can arrange for you to have a look at one of the patrician units - definitely a grand way to spend a vacation in style! And if a luxury condo is not good enough, the villas of Terres Basses are only a block away!

Cars for Sale

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People You Might Meet: Ela



Photo: Sarina Gito

Every year in November, Ela arrives with a new collection of fashion jewelry or personal gadgets on St. Maarten.

She walks from one restaurant and bar to the next all over Simpson Bay, Pelican Key and the Maho region to offer her wares.

Originally from Hong Kong, Ela stays during the winter season on St. Maarten, and returns in May to her main residence in the posh town of Cannes in the South of France. There, she is the mainstay of the local Buddhist community.

If you stay more than a few days on Dutch St. Maarten, you will surely see Ela on her

route. The prices of her unique, handmade products are as modest as Ela herself and it would be wonderful if you would consider purchasing something from her.

We were delighted to see Ela arriving as usual in November. She came, even though she is well aware that it will be difficult to sell as much as years past during this post-hurricane winter season. Yet, despite knowing this, she decided that she needs to be on the island in order to support it with her energy and her prayers.



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Orient Beach: Still St-Martin's Most Impressive Beach?

We say that Orient Beach will remain St-Martin's most famous beach: a broad expanse of sand, stretching for 2 kilometers (1.3 miles).

For the past decades, Orient Beach has been compared to the famous strands of Southern France, with chic St. Tropez frequently mentioned as a reference point. After last year's visit of Hurricane Irma, these comparisons have stalled: Orient is back to just being St-Martin's greatest beach.

The southern end is clothing optional and is presently the only area where beach chairs and umbrellas are rented. The famous Perch Bar has found a second incarnation as 'Perch Bar Light', with great BBQ dishes and a full assortment of cocktails. Admittedly, the backdrop of the destroyed Club Orient Resort adds a bit of an apocalyptic mood to this part of the beach.

It is up to you if you can disengage your senses from the recent destruction and are able to enjoy the regular elements Orient Beach has to offer: tropical sun and sea to be enjoyed unencumbered by clothing.

The remaining stretch of Orient Beach is wide open and both residents and return visitors can't help but to notice the beauty of the bay being back in its natural state. Wind- and kite-surfers have returned in droves and there are a lot of sporting activities to be found.

The adjacent development of Orient Village is rebuilding with several restaurants at the central plaza already open again.

Plantation Bar & Lounge is only about one block away from the beach and has become the entertainment hot-spot for the area. Centered around the swimming pool of

Hotel La Plantation, the Sunday pool parties especially have brought back the fun to Baie Oriental.

Several of the villas overlooking the bay are back available as vacation rentals and provide a fantastic way to experience life on the island. The clothing optional boutique resort of Jardin d' O is also open and offers charming cottage-style accommodations in a private tropical setting.

ORIENT VILLAGE
PLANTATION
RESTAURANT BAR & LOUNGE

Opening Hours
Tuesday - Sunday
Breakfast 8am - 11.30am
Lunch 12pm - 3pm
Dinner 6pm - 9.30pm
Mondays CLOSED!

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