Shiver Me Timbers! The Other St. Martin

By: Chris Morvan

It’s a small island called St. Martin and it’s fringed with beautiful beaches. Sea birds wheel overhead and the silence is theirs to break, with the gentle washing of sea on sand the only other aural background.

But if you’re thinking of going for a swim in the crystal clear, inviting water you might get a shock, because it is cold cold cold. By Caribbean standards, that is.

That’s because this island is in the Atlantic, but on the other side of it from us. If you set sail from Oyster Pond or Guana Bay and head east-north-east you might just find it one shivering, seasick day.

If you Google “the island of St. Martin” you don’t only get this island, the Caribbean one. There is also one in the Scilly Isles, off the coast of south-west England. In a typically British way, it comes with apostrophe s, so it’s St Martin’s, in fact, and it certainly isn’t also known as Sint Maarten because, although the Dutch were seafaring rivals of the English back in the day, they didn’t seem to make much of an impression on the Scillies.

Part-Time Merperson?
Learn to Snorkel Like A Pro

By: Leslie Hickerson

One of the best things about visiting a tropical island like St. Maarten is being able to enjoy the underwater marine life! Whether you join a boat tour for a full day of snorkeling or explore the island’s beaches on your own; the tips below will help you be more comfortable and have more fun in the sun! From start to finish, h you will find everything here that you will need to snorkel like a pro.

Bistrot Caraibes: Leading the Recovery of Grand Case

The village of Grand Case in St-Martin presents itself as the culinary capital of the Caribbean. It takes hard work for the countless restaurants to return to pre-Irma glory. But by now, life has returned, and the lights are back on in many of the eateries which line Boulevard de Grand Case.

It is especially reassuring to see that Bistrot Caraibes continues to welcome their guests.
Letter From the Editor
June 29, 2018

With July upon us, I hope you are all seeking refuge in our enjoyable, cool tropical waters! Please make sure to stay hydrated and wear sunscreen during this summer – it is going to be a hot one!

There are just a few weeks left of our Cat 5+ Cocktail Contest, nine and a half to be exact! Please visit the participating bars and restaurants, as they have put a lot of hard work into creating new a new cocktail that will tantalize the palate! Be sure to vote for your favorite by using the QR code to the right.

If you are watching the World Cup, check out our list of locations that will be airing the games on page 8.

If you’re leaving the island soon, safe travels and please visit ST-MAARTEN.COM to subscribe (it’s free!) to the Weekend Edition to keep up to date on island happenings.

Hilary Grant
Editor

Online Portal
For in-depth information about our island, consult ST-MAARTEN.COM - the official online portal. Please use the convenient QR codes with any smart phone to access individual pages directly.

Emergency Phone Numbers

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Part-Time Merperson?  
Learn to Snorkel Like A Pro

Continued from Page 1

First thing, before you have arrived at your snorkel site, stop and put on sunscreen! The rays of the sun are powerful and people often get burnt faster than anticipated. Use a high SPF and Reef Safe Sunscreen! This will protect the coral and keep you from having embarrassing burn lines for the rest of your trip. Sunscreens can have a huge impact on the health of the marine life, so look for brands that don’t have harmful chemicals. You can also layer up with something like a rash guard that protects from UVA and UVB rays!

Put a float and a wrist strap on your waterproof camera! That way if you get distracted by someone passing you a drink, you don’t lose your new camera over a Rum Punch!

Check your pockets for things you don’t want to lose or get wet! Jumping in with your rental car keys can cost you a replacement fee and trigger the rest of the day to be a bust while you wait on spares.

De-fog your mask! If you rent snorkel gear from a company ask them if they have mask de-fog. If you brought your own snorkel gear you can purchase anti-fog at dive centers, or you can make your own with some diluted baby shampoo. Put your anti-fog of choice on each lens spread it around to cover all the glass then dunk the mask in the water to get rid of any suds or extra product. You want to leave a layer on the lens so don’t wash out completely.

Take a flotation device. Pool noodles, life-jackets, snorkeling jackets or inner-tubes all work great! Even if you are a comfortable swimmer a float will make it easy to relax and take your time!

How to enter the water like a Pro- If you are entering from a boat listen closely to the directions from the crew and they will tell you the best way in and out of the water! If you are coming from the shore entering gracefully can be tricky, it’s easy to make a wrong move and end up covered in sand and wearing less clothing than when you started!

Step One: Scan the beach for the easiest and safest entry point. Watch out for high waves and concealed rocks.

Step Two: Prep your gear. Grab your mask, snorkel, fins and flotation device and head for the water. Easiest method: put the mask on before you get to the waves. Carry your fins and float with you.

Step Three: Time to swim! Once you are about waist deep you can let your float sit on the surface, then put your fins on one at a time. Walking in and out of the waves with the fins on is difficult and takes extra time.

It is best to explore with a buddy or in a group so you can help each other and take photos. As you explore stick to the edges of bays where boulders act as shelter for marine life. Open stretches of sand are not ideal places for viewing marine life, as there isn’t cover to protect them.

Take your time and travel slowly! Rushing just tires you out and can cause you to miss things on the sea floor. Don’t look down, tucking your chin to your chest causes the top of your snorkel to dip in the water. If some water does come into your mouthpiece clear it out by exhaling forcefully!

All done exploring the mystical water and ready for some lunch? When you head back to the beach, scout out the calmest area to exit. When you are shallow enough to stand, stop and take off your fins. Then use the waves to help yourself climb out. If you time it properly the waves will push you in. If you don’t you’ll be fighting for your footing- and your swimming mates will likely have a good laugh.

Extra Tip for Beginners: If you are not a very strong swimmer, try the full-face mask snorkels! These are great for people who are nervous or for those that have trouble getting comfortable with the traditional mask and snorkel. With the full-face version, you can still breathe through your nose and mouth. They are more buoyant so it helps poor swimmers float comfortably. And they have dry snorkels on the top so you don’t have to worry about water leaking in around your mouth or nose. Several dive centers on the island have these available to rent or buy.
Bistrot Caraibes:
Leading the Recovery of Grand Case

Continued from Page 1

with the best features of French cuisine and hospitality.

This longstanding pillar of St-Martin's gourmet community was opened a quarter century ago by the brothers Thibault and Amaury and continues to impress with impeccable service and exceptional food. The 50-seat restaurant is set in a warm and romantic Caribbean theme; the modest size is the only part of where the classic definition of the term 'bistrot' or 'bistro' still fits. Initially, bistros were small French eateries in residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on casual, fast and cheap. Maybe the English term 'pub' covers the old meaning best.

But when was the last time you ordered Lobster Thermidor or Sauteed Beef Tenderloin with Duck Liver in your neighborhood pub? You would also not expect an extensive wine list there or be able to request a bottle of Roederer Cristal to celebrate a birthday.

'Casual' still applies, as we are in the Caribbean and stiff formality is not a part of our culture. But there can be some elegance in casual attire, and this is why it won't be a mistake for the ladies to dress up in a light summer dress, and for gents to put on a polo or cotton shirt. As a minimum effort, despite the Caribbean casual vibe, leave the flip-flops back in your hotel room, vacation villa or home and put on some real footwear.

Once you enter Bistrot Caraibes, it is one of the owners, Thibault or Amaury, who will greet you and guide you to a table. As with many of the leading restaurants on St-Martin, consider reserving a table ahead of time.

This restaurant is the perfect setting for a romantic dinner, and we heard that many proposals have been met with enthusiastic acceptance during a dinner at Bistrot Caraibes.

Call: +590 590 290 829 or +590 690 536 144
Email: BistrotCaraibes@yahoo.fr
Do You Know St. Maarten?

Cheating? Find solution to the puzzle on Page 14

Please enjoy the thirteenth edition of our crossword puzzle. You will notice that all of the questions are rooted in the Caribbean hemisphere and might take a bit of research to answer if you haven't spend much time here. It also means: the answers are valid for St. Maarten/St. Martin, but could also be for neighboring islands.

For example, if we are asking for an island to the North of our location, it can only be Anguilla.

If you try to solve the puzzle as a visitor to our island and you get stuck: don't be shy! Approach a local and ask! You might find they struggle to answer as well. Or strike up an interesting conversation and learn a bit about our very unique region.

Mistakes do happen, even though our puzzle is produced right here on island. If you detect a mistake, don't be shy and drop us a line! But be aware that some of the questions are a bit tricky on purpose.

ACROSS

6 Chartering a sailboat without crew
7 British dependency to the north
9 In what town is the Howell Center Ma
13 Beach on golf course
14 Main shopping street
18 What is the language of Aruba?
19 Where is AUC located
20 Iconic local liquor company
23 Philipsburg casino with bingo
24 We don’t want another visit of th-
25 n what town is the Holland Hous
26 What happens after dinner at Topper'

DOWN

1 It barely fits through the bridge
2 Location of Dutch side hospital
3 Carib-Mex restaurant with pool
4 On what island is the world’s shortest
5 Which EU country administers St-Marti
8 To what country does Saba belong
10 Orient Beach is on what ocean?
11 Beach bar named after pirates
12 Clothing optional
15 What is 97150?
16 Tropical fruit to eat or drink
17 Airport code for St-Martin
21 Which princess named the airport?
22 French Caribbean music
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Madame Estate:
1. Rembrandt Café: BIG SCREEN TVs, INDOOR. All games ++

Philipsburg:
1. Holland House Beach Hotel: BIG SCREEN TVs OUTDOOR & SHADED. All games! +
2. St. Rose: BIG SCREEN TVs OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games after 9 AM.
3. Jump Up Casino
4. I love SXM Beach Bar

Cole Bay/Simpson Bay:
1. Buffalo Wings: BIG SCREEN TVs INDOOR. Games from 10AM! ++
2. Pineapple Pete: TV SCREENS OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 10AM
3. Rhythm & Booze: PROJECTOR, TV SCREENS INDOOR. Games from 2PM +
4. Topper’s:
   TV SCREENS: OUTDOOR SHADED.
   Games from 9 AM
5. Marty’s: PROJECTOR, TV SCREEN OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games fr. 11 AM
6. Fat Turtle Bar: BIG SCREEN TVs INDOOR/OUTDOOR & SHADED. All games! +
7. Snoopy’s: BIG SCREEN TVs OUTDOOR & SHADED. All games from 10 AM +

8. The Boon Beach Bar: BIG SCREEN TVs INDOOR / OUTDOOR & SHADED. All games! +
9. Soggy Dollar Bar
10. Lagoonies
11. Princess Casino
12. Q Lounge

Pelican Key:
1. Replay Sports Bar: BIG SCREEN TVs INDOOR.
2. La Patrona

Maho:
1. Taco Macho: BIG SCREEN TVs. OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 10AM
2. 3 Amigos: BIG SCREEN TVs INSIDE / OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 10AM
3. Rusty Rocket

Marigot:
1. La Main à la Pate, Marina: BIG SCREEN TV OUTDOOR - SHADED.
   Games from 10AM
2. Le Sous Marin (snack bar) Marina: TV SCREEN. Games from 9AM
3. Chez Dounce, Rue de Hollande: BIG SCREEN TVs. All games +
4. Arawak, Blvd de France: BIG SCREEN TVs OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 9AM +
5. Bruno’s Place: Blvd de France: TV SCREEN OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 11AM
6. Chez Raymond: BIG SCREEN TV OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 9AM
7. Wine Bar: BIG SCREEN TV OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games from 11 AM

Pic Paradis/Rambaud:
1. Loterie Farm: BIG SCREEN TVs OUTDOOR & SHADED. Games fr. 10AM

Grand Case:
1. Le Snack Shack: PROJECTOR & BIG SCREEN TV. All games ++
2. Max Place: BIG SCREEN TV. Games from 10 AM
3. Blue Martini: BIG SCREEN TVs.
4. Tony’s Snackbar: BIG SCREEN TVs. All games ++

Hop Estate:
1. Bacchus L’Express: BIG SCREEN TVs. All Games ++
2. Chez Maguy: TV SCREEN. Games from 10 AM

Cul de Sac:
1. Stachy’s Hut: PROJECTOR & BIG SCREEN TV. All games ++

Orient Bay:
1. SAO: Projector & BIG SCREEN TV. All games from 7 AM ++
2. CODA BAR: BIG SCREEN. All games from 7 AM ++
3. Bikini Beach: PROJECTOR. All games from June 20th after grand reopening.
4. La Plantation: All games. *after game pool party! ++
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That is, if it were a square, each side would be less than one mile.

Population? While our tropical outpost is heading towards 80,000 people, at the last count in St Martin’s there were 136. And here we were, talking about not being able to do anything without being seen by someone we know.

The similarities, though, are equally clear. The Caribbean doesn’t have a monopoly on beautiful beaches and those in the Scillies are as breathtaking as any in the world. It’s just that low temperature you have to contend with. To go for a swim in St Martin’s, as throughout the southern UK, involves tiptoeing into the water and seeing if your ankles go numb. If they don’t, you may venture further in until, particularly for men, there comes the mid-height sensitive zone, and if you can stand to get the crown jewels wet, you might as well go the whole hog.

That’s how I used to do it, anyway, while my teenage son would simply run down the beach and hurl himself in. In the north of the country, I might add, even he would hesitate before making such a rash move. Go swimming in Scotland, for instance, and the people handing you a towel when you come out are likely to be wearing white coats and bundling you into an ambulance, bound for the emergency room and on to the psychiatric unit.

A hardy few do things like going for a swim on Boxing Day, after which you will find them in the pub across the road, hugging a radiator and mumbling “Never again” through chattering teeth.

Not that there are many pubs on St Martin’s. There are not many anythings, and even the visitors who temporarily boost the headcount only come during the summer.

There are bigger islands in the Scillies, such as the capital, St Mary’s, which is positively metropolitan by comparison. But there is no “action” in this part of the world, so if your idea of a good time is knocking back the margaritas to a booming soundtrack of r&b and soca, St Martin’s is not for you. You might find a bartender who can make a margarita and is willing to turn the music up if there’s no one else in, but that is missing the point.

Many islands share a murky history, but while in the Caribbean it was pirates with their own brand of derring-do, in St Martin’s they didn’t go in for that so much. They weren’t averse to a spot of wrecking, though: lighting fires in misleading places to lure passing ships into areas they should avoid, only to be smashed on the rocks while the locals waited for the cargo to be washed ashore.

There were plenty of fishermen in times gone by, and a few remain to this day. And their predecessors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may well have got a taste for a life on the ocean wave and headed out to the tropics to make some money. So, it is entirely possible that men from St Martin’s found themselves on Bluebeard’s ship, robbing and killing and coming ashore in Cay Bay, knives between their teeth, looking for rum and women.

So, we are not alone and there is nothing new under the sun. Christopher Columbus may never have made it to the Scilly Isles. But he and his crew doubt heard about it and that other St Martin, the one that was sunny but cold.
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The color change is a magic trick we can thank Mother Nature for: Due to the way the gemstone’s crystal structure interacts with different light sources, we see different colors in natural versus artificial light! During the daytime, or natural light, this stunning gem will be a rich bluish green color; and in the evening in artificial light, Alexandrite will be purplish red.

Although it was originally found in Russia, the Ural mine deposits did not last indefinitely. Thankfully, there are several sources around the globe that Alexandrite comes from including East Africa, Brazil and Sri Lanka. Because of its color changing property as well as rarity, this valuable gem is highly sought after.

You should see a distinct color change from a cool color to a warm color. Also, know that most Alexandrite’s are under one carat; anything larger is of fine quality and the price can increase dramatically.

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The Category 5+ Hurricane Irma is now part of our history. We made it through and we don't mind Irma being memorialized as a drink causing a horrific hangover.

Here is how it works:
Go on a bar crawl and visit the participating bars and restaurants from all around the island and order each different version of Category Five Plus. (Please make sure that you have a designated driver for the occasion!) Happy drinking!

To view a list of contestants and to vote, visit ST-MAARTEN.COM by using the QR code to the right:

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