Mount Scenery: Tallest Mountain of The Netherlands

The Netherlands' tallest mountain is Mount Scenery, rising out of the Caribbean Sea with dramatic cliffs to a height of 887 meters (2,910 feet). How is it possible that a Dutch mountain is located in the Caribbean? Because Mount Scenery is on the island of Saba, which is a Dutch community and even part of the European Union.

Saba has been labeled the Caribbean's 'Unspoiled Queen' by some tourism marketing guru, and, for a change, the nickname fits this unusual island. While the other Antillean islands attract visitors with white sand beaches and a carefree tropical lifestyle - and our own St. Maarten is one of the most successful ones doing so - Saba marches to the beat of a different drum. The island has never relied on tourism, and throughout its history has been prosperous in a quiet and unassuming way.

It was in the 1600s that this forbidding dormant volcano was said to be settled by disgruntled Scottish pirates, with only a few Dutch settlers allowed to remain. This is why English is the language of the island.

The initial settlement is called The Bottom and in the old days could only be reached by walking 800 steep steps carved out of the rock from the only possible boat landing site. The Bottom was connected by even more steep paths and steps to other communities, among them the village of Hell's Gate, which has now been renamed to Zion's Hill.

Blues Meets Rock 'n' Roll on Island

From school bands in Milan to world tour gigs at the Sydney Opera House and the Royal Albert Hall, meet St. Maarten rock guitar wizard, Gianfranco Segatto.

By Chris Morvan Read on Page 4

Good Bye Floatie, Hello Floating Trash

Ever wonder what happens to the toys that get left behind at the beach? Plastics that float out to sea don’t just disappear, they end up in giant floating garbage islands.

By Leslie Hickerson Read on Page 6

Continued on Page 16
Letter From the Editor
December 7, 2018

Thank you for reading the ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekly Edition. With just a little over three weeks left in 2018, I am ecstatic that during the last year we have been able to deliver dozens of issues that allow our readers to have a glimpse into what the island life is like. All of our previous issues are available on the ST-MAARTEN.COM website. Additionally, if you enjoyed our publication and would like to continue to read from home, wherever that may be, please use the QR code to the right to access our digital publication.

This issue is laden with artists, the beauty of nature and of course a bit of fun with our dating column. While I always encourage you to visit our advertisers, I also welcome you to seek out the artists we write article about as they are a large part of the fabric of St. Maarten/St-Martin culture.

I wish you a pleasant week, and enjoy your holiday shopping- only 17 shopping days left until Christmas!

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.

What does the number on each advertisement stand for?
Please refer to the map on Pages 10/11. Regions of the island are marked with a number which corresponds to the number you see on ads.

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Hospital: +590 (590) 52 26 29
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Email: h.grant@st-maarten.com

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An Italian Blues-Rocker in St. Maarten: Gianfranco Segatto

By Chris Morvan

Musicians wash up on these shores like modern-day shipwrecked sailors. And because it’s a music-friendly place with a vast array of nationalities, there is a market for pretty much any style. I’m sitting in a deserted Marty’s in Simpson Bay with one such displaced European, Gianfranco Segatto. It is deserted because it’s 11:30 in the morning, but last night there was a decent crowd here, listening to Gianfranco and another familiar face on local stages, singer-guitarist Lee Hardesty.

Fervent AC Milan fan Gianfranco has been in St. Maarten “since before Luis – 24 years” but it wasn’t his original destination. He left Italy and landed in the Dominican Republic, but didn’t like it there.

“I don’t know, maybe it was just the change from Europe to the Caribbean.”

Whatever the reason, DR’s loss was SXM’s gain as the wandering guitarist came here for a week and liked it so much he stayed.

“Maybe I just needed a little bit of European flavor in a Caribbean style,” he concludes.

Having acquired his first guitar at the age of 11, after seeing his brother playing one, like any good musician he became obsessed with the instrument. Gianfranco’s first big influence was Johnny Winter, the albino American blues player.

“The first time I saw him on TV I was shocked,” he recalls. He also likes Gary Moore, the Irishman once of Thin Lizzy and a bluesman in his own right. Of the current crop, Gianfranco singles out another American, Joe Bonamassa, who has played in St Maarten twice. On one occasion, at Port de Plaisance, Gianfranco organized the post-gig jam and shared the stage with Bonamassa.

This might seem daunting until you hear the Italian’s back story. After working his way through several local groups in Milan, including a Sex Pistols-influenced punk band, he auditioned as guitarist with Italian superstar Umberto Tozzi, who wrote and recorded the original version of the Laura Branigan hit, Gloria. The young guitarist toured the world with Tozzi’s band for 10 years before finally tiring of being on the road all the time. And that soon led to the move to the Caribbean.

Music fans who have been here more than a few years will recall Iguana Soup, the band featuring Gianfranco and an English singer, John Rolls. As is the case with several guitarists working here, Gianfranco plays an acoustic even though he prefers electric guitars, which have a different feel and are in some respects easier to play. The one he was playing last night was by an Australian manufacturer, Maton, loaded with light-gauge strings to enable him to bend notes.

Gianfranco and Lee play at Marty’s every Thursday, at Lagoonies every second Friday and at the Blue Martini in Grand Case on the other Fridays. Then there’s Snoopy’s on Sundays and Gianfranco does occasional solo gigs too.

While the duo’s performances feature two guitars and make use, on some songs, of a drum track, when playing alone Gianfranco uses not much more than a loop pedal, which records the chord sequence the first time around and plays it back repeatedly, so the player is essentially accompanying himself. If you’ve ever heard someone who sounds like two guitarists at once, that is what’s happening. But of course you can sound like two bad guitarists or two great ones. The solo gigs are purely guitar. “I don’t sing,” he says. “Just a bit of background vocals sometimes.”
A Creative Afternoon with Carla Templeton

By Chris Morvan

So, stage one is the tracing, then it’s on to the background, which in this case is blue sky.

Concentration descends like a warm mist and the chit-chat begins; because this is as much a social event as it is a class.

The leader’s advice is simple: “There is no wrong in art,” but that is immediately cast into doubt by the fact that one budding artist starts painting the cow blue, rather than the sky.

Someone else has forgotten that, the canvases being on wooden frames, there is more than just the front to consider.

“Mary, don’t forget your edge at the top,” calls the boss. Then “leave the white and grey to last.”

There are cans of soft drinks and plates of snacks, the odd bottle of beer and a lot of laughter.

Anyone interested in joining in should look for Carla Templeton on Facebook and click on the one that says The Silver Door.
Caution: Left Behind Pool Floaties Do Not Become Life Preservers

Continued from Page 1

Living on or visiting an island like St. Maarten around the holiday season has several perks. Not needing to shovel your car out of the snow to get to work is at the top of the list. Being able to enjoy the sun and beach on Holidays and for parties follows as a close second. Those people that take advantage of the beach on their days off are normally well prepped with toys to enjoy the day. Lounge chairs, umbrellas, coolers, pool noodles, sand toys and inflatables are great gifts to give beachgoers for the holidays.

But what happens to these items when we are finished with them? A few are recycled by more the eco-conscious, many end up in the landfills on the island and some are ‘lost at sea’.

Hundreds of times throughout the year floating rafts and loungers get blown away by the wind around St. Maarten/St-Martin. This is especially common at Maho beach where the jet stream of the airplanes taking off from the island creates a wind tunnel, blowing towards the open ocean. Giant inflatable slices of pizza or unicorns get picked from the beach by the wind and float out to sea.

Where do all these things end up? Every minute, one garbage truck full of plastic is dumped into the ocean. The more buoyant and durable pieces that float on the surface and get picked up by the ocean’s current streams and most will end up in one of the five floating garbage patches now around the world. The largest of these 5 masses is called The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP). According to The Ocean Cleanup the GPGP has an estimated size of, “1.6 million square kilometers, an area twice the size of Texas or three times the size of France.”

As you may have learned from the Reduce & Reuse project by the St. Maarten Nature Foundation, plastic products do not break down like other material. Plastic breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces becoming micro-plastics while biodegradable products eventually break down into the soil or sand.

“If current trends continue there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050. Single use plastic bags, straws, balloons, cups, cutlery and Styrofoam food containers are some of the most environmentally damaging products on the island. These items do not biodegrade and stay in the eco-system and oceans forever, causing impacts to the environment, animals and humans. Plastic releases harmful chemicals when it breaks down into smaller pieces that are ingested by marine life and eventually humans,” says project manager Melanie Meijer Zu Schlochterm.

Now that you know what happens to your products you can prevent your items from joining those plastics floating in our oceans which cause damage to marine and bird life.

When you go to the beach make sure you stock up with bio-degradable products rather than Styrofoam and plastic. Bring drinks in glass bottles and make sure you dispose of them properly so there are no lingering shards that might cut future visitors.

Throw your bags or shoes on things that might get picked up by the wind like floaties or towels when not in use. Serve foods on paper plates rather than plastic or foam. Always pick up after yourself and your guests before leaving, doing a sweep before sunset will make it easier to ensure you haven’t left any personal belongings or garbage behind!
Nowhere Special offers incredible menu items which include Caribbean lobster, traditional stewed oxtail, conch fritters, grouper creole, and so much more.

Along with the best Johnny cakes, fried plantain and funchi you’ll ever find on the island.
Karat, Carat, Carrot: What is the Difference?
By Hilary Grant, GIA Graduate Gemologist

Try eating two of the three above listed and you’re sure to have an upset stomach. When you walk into a jewelry store you’ll hear the word used frequently. But does the spelling matter—do they mean different things? Absolutely.

Carrots have no place in the jewelry industry. While they are a delicious and healthy snack enjoyed by humans, dogs and rabbits alike; this crunchy vegetable has nothing to do with precious metals or gemstones.

Carat is a weight measurement that has been used since the late 1500s; which conveys to the salesperson that you want a two carat diamond, or a five carat tanzanite. It is important to note that carat is a weight and not a diameter measurement. If you really must own a 6.5mm twinkling diamond it will be approximately one carat.

One metric carat equals 200 milligrams. Each carat can be subdivided into 100 ‘points.’ This allows very precise measurements to the hundredth decimal place. A jeweler often describes the weight of a diamond under one carat by its ‘points’. For instance, the jeweler may refer to a diamond that weighs 0.50 carats as a ‘fifty pointer.’

Diamond weights greater than one carat are expressed in carats and decimals. A 1.05 carat stone would be described as ‘one point oh five carats.’

Karat refers to the purity of the gold you want that stunning rock set in. 24 karat gold is pure gold-100 percent. To discover the purity of lower karats, simple arithmetic must be done:

18 karat gold / 24 karat gold = .75 or 75 percent

14 karat gold / 24 karat gold = .58 or 58.5 percent

The other percentage mixed in with the gold is called alloys. Alloys are used for several reasons including to make the metal more malleable for the goldsmith or to change the color for the consumer, as gold only comes out of the ground one color: yellow.

To create certain colors of gold you would use specific metals: copper for rose gold, silver for green gold, and typically nickel or palladium for white gold.

Now you are armed with the information on how to use karat, carat and carrot correctly. Enjoy the jewelry shopping experience!
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Turning a Hobby into a Profession: Romeo Carty and the Artist’s Dilemma

By Chris Morvan

All down the ages artists have faced the issue of earning a living while doing what they love as a sideline. In past centuries the lucky ones found patrons: wealthy people who would support them because they believed in their talent.

In 2018 that is not a realistic proposition, so many of our local artists have a “proper” job and paint when they can, evenings and weekends. Such is the case with Romeo Carty, whose work is currently exhibited at the Silk Cotton Grove Art Gallery at Friars Bay.

Romeo Carty and his son Jonelle

By day, Carty is a familiar face at the Government Building, where he works as a security guard. When he gets home, though, this wiry sometime fitness instructor takes up his canvas and his pastels to produce paintings on a wide range of subjects.

“I don’t paint for myself,” he explains. “I paint what I think people will like.”

This accounts for a diversity that contrasts a 1950s street scene featuring an old black car with the warring faces of Conor McGregor and Floyd Mayweather, who staged the 2017 money-making exercise of a fight between a boxing legend and a mixed martial arts champion.

There’s a painting of a prominent rasta and then there’s the almost-finished portrait of The Queen. It’s a remarkable range and the excellence of their execution belies the fact that Carty had no art education, not even the basics at school.

“No one taught me,” he says. “I always just challenged myself.”

Recent years have seen him learning under the wing of Ruby Bute, owner of the gallery where the exhibition is.

The paintings of scenes from times gone by show that he has a willingness to embrace the past.

“Sometimes I work from old photographs,” he says. “If I see something interesting I put it in a file for later.”

Carty is a collector by nature, an old-school hoarder of bits and pieces, so it is not surprising that he also has a sizeable stamp collection – stamps being in many cases miniature works of art.

The choice of pastel as his medium is not purely for aesthetic reasons. He likes the effects it gives and clearly understands it, but the fact that he doesn’t work in, say, the more common medium of acrylics is due to bad physical reactions to some chemicals.

Even more unusually, Carty works on black paper, which he says gives different colors and “more real textures”.

Born in Aruba, he came to St. Maarten in 1976. Now, as retirement looms, he dreams of setting up the unique pairing of a gym and an art shop, but finding the right premises is proving to be a challenge.

Meanwhile, he has at least 25 paintings at home, waiting to be framed. He puts his work behind glass because pastels are delicate, vulnerable things.

Carty draws and paints because that is his passion. “And it’s relaxing,” he says. “It takes the tension off.”
The Unique St. Maarten/St-Martin Crossword Puzzle

Find out if you are a truly knowledgeable about our region and its culture, history and geography.

Please enjoy another edition of our cross-word puzzle. You will notice that all questions are rooted in the Caribbean hemisphere and might take a bit of research to answer if you haven't spent much time here. It also means: the answers are valid for St. Maarten/St-Martin and the neighboring islands. For example, if we ask for an island directly 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 the island. If you detect an error, drop us a line at info@stmaarten.com. But please be aware that some of the questions are a bit tricky on purpose. Good luck!

Puzzle Solution on Page 17

---

ACROSS

2 Boat with accommodations
5 Where to lose money
9 Where do boats park?
10 Closest Spanish speaking island
15 Not falling here in winter
16 Close-by island where they drive on the left
18 Beach bar in Simpson Bay
20 Public institution in Point Blanche
21 Amerindian name for St. Maarten
23 Legal to smoke
24 Waterfront restaurant and bar in Cole Bay
25 Suburb of Marigot

DOWN

1 Main product before tourism
3 Keeps a boat from moving
4 Who represents the King?
5 What do they open to let boats into the lagoon?
6 Language of Saba
8 Tribe settled on SXM in pre-Colombian times
11 Family name of the founder of St. Maarten's capital
12 Taco Macho features food from Mexico and which other country?
13 Where is Mobay?
14 Fruit only harvested and processed on St. Maarten
17 What beer brand sponsors the regatta?
19 Capital of the island of Saba
22 Still not legal to smoke
Adventures in Sex and Dating on St. Maarten/St-Martin: 
Serving More Than Just Delicious Alcoholic Drinks

By Leslie Hickerson

Have you ever heard that people want what they can’t have? That is even more true when it comes to people they can’t have. Story time!

Kristen had just arrived on the island, 22 years old and ready for an internship in one of the most beautiful places in the world that she could find. She had an aunt that had lived on the island for years named Tina. When she arrived, Tina put her up and helped her find her way around, and she only had two rules for Kristen:

- Don’t do cocaine
- Don’t sleep with Kevin

While the ‘Kevin’ rule was seemingly out of nowhere, the cocaine rule was a bit easier to understand. So, who was Kevin?

He was a great bartender at a popular place in Simpson Bay. It could have just been because they were friends, or maybe Tina knew Kevin was a bit promiscuous, or maybe they had a history no one had heard of. But those were the rules plain and simple.

Kristen behaved herself for a while and dated around the normal crew her age on the island. Pretty soon she was a regular at Kevin’s bar, after all he was a wizard with vodka cranberries... the secret to Kristen’s heart.

A few months after living with her Aunt Tina and abiding by the rules, mayhem was about to happen. Kristen enjoyed a few too many vodka cranberries and woke up to her dismay, in Kevin’s bed. Maybe it would have been worth it to break her Aunt’s rule if she could just remember what happened.

Kevin sent her on her way in the same dress she had gone out in the night before, forced to partake in the Walk of Shame. Aunt Tina found out through the grapevine that the rules had been broken and she told Kristen to not ask her for any more favors. Apparently, blood may be thicker than water but certainly isn’t thicker than vodka cranberries.

---

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www.ThePalmsSXM.com
Continued from Page 1

One can only wonder about the reasons to change from the cool original name to something a bit lame. But the settlement being the closest one to the tiny airport with the shortest commercial runway in the world might not have inspired confidence in aviation safety with its name; it would be difficult to convince people to fly to Hell's Gate.

Speaking of infrastructure: one of the biggest accomplishments for the Islanders was the construction of The Road in the 1940s. Local stubbornness succeeded over the assessment of Dutch engineers who insisted that the island was not suited for any kind of car-friendly roads to be built. (Maybe the Sabans should have asked Swiss engineers in the first place...).

But the locals studied up on engineering and were able to create a high-quality road wrapping around their island and connecting all settlements. The daring airport was built a decade later with equal determination and to this day offers the only way for a regular person to experiencing the thrill of landing on an aircraft carrier.

There is an impression of an almost intimidating social balance to the outside visitor. Doors are not locked, and keys can stay in the car. The island is nearly as tidy as Disney World, with all houses painted white, all roofs red and all window trims green. And yet, this is a place where real people live and thrive in a community as small as 1,900 souls.

Formerly part of the Netherlands Antilles, recent political changes have brought some discontent. The NA was resolved as a nation in 2010 and Saba became part of The Netherlands as a regular town. It appears that the local leaders were a little naive about the about the multitude of legal changes, one of them being a consistent implementation of a tax regime. They never took outside consultations by experienced attorneys in The Netherlands, which could have negotiated a more favorable deal.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands didn't bother to send their top diplomatic talents to a Caribbean outpost of fewer than two thousand people. Instead, bureaucrats on the lowest rung of officialdom were writing the new rules and came in constant conflict with the locals, to the point where they couldn't get a ride on a bus or in a taxi. But all this brief struggle hasn't taken away the magical spirit of the Unspoiled Queen.

Visiting Saba is a bucket-list-worthy obligation to anyone loving the Caribbean, and there are several ways to get there. Winair has frequent flights with their reliable and safe Twin-Otter planes. Aqua Mania operates the ferry Edge out of their Pelican location, and the ferry Dawn is leaving from their Chesterfield’s dock in Philipsburg. Saba is only about 28 nautical miles from St. Maarten and the flight time is just a few minutes. From the southern coast of St. Maarten, Saba can be seen as the tall island with other islands located to the left. On days with very clear air, even houses are visible on the tiny island.

---

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We publish the solution to our crossword puzzle in the same issue as the puzzle itself.

This is for a good reason: Many of our readers are vacationers who won’t have a chance to wait for the next issue of St-Maarten.com Weekly Edition.

[Crossword puzzle image]

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The SXM Name Game: Part II

By Chris Morvan

Last week’s six explanations included two false ones: Marigot and Sucker Garden.

We’re not sure of the origin of Marigot (so in fact our fanciful story about a loose woman called Marie being banished, i.e. told to go, could actually be true. But probably not.)

As for Sucker Garden, it has nothing to do with the round-ball football game, soccer, and everything to do with suiker, the Dutch word for sugar.

See which four of the following you believe and which two are the results of a warped imagination:

**Cole Bay**
An anglicized version of Kool Baai, the Dutch way of saying Cabbage Bay. So presumably they grew a lot of leafy green vegetables here.

The Dutch word (or perhaps its German relative, kohl) has crept into English via coleslaw, the side salad made of shredded cabbage, mayonnaise and vinegar.

**Kim Sha Bay**
There was once a Chinese restaurant of that name in that location.

**Cupecoy**
In the 18th century an English trader named George Cooper set up a quarrying company, Cooper Co, there, taking advantage of the coastline’s distinctive white stone. The people of St Martin just couldn’t spell his name.

**Pic Paradis**
Literally “paradise mountain”, the French pic meaning (and being pronounced like) peak.

**Mullet Bay**
It’s a bay, mullet is a kind of fish commonly found in the Caribbean, and bays contain fish. Case closed.

**Concordia**
A relatively recent name, this was once the home of legendary French accordion player Andre Verchuren. Born to Belgian parents at Neuilly-sous-Clermont, near Paris, Verchuren’s phenomenal success – he sold more than 70 million albums – led him to move to the French West Indies after World War II as a tax exile.

Find the answers to this week’s name game on page 18.
Take the Bus: Karakter Beach Bar on Simpson Bay Beach

Admittedly, the premise is a bit absurd; but what do you do if you drive with an old school bus right onto a Caribbean beach and the bus breaks down? Here on St. Maarten, the answer is obvious: you turn the bus into a beach bar!

It is unclear if this is how the iconic Karakter Beach Bar started. But the school bus is right there on Simpson Bay Beach. The old clunker represents the core structure of what has become the area’s most popular institution to take in the sun while sipping tropical cocktails and enjoying surprisingly sophisticated beachside cuisine.

The cushioned lounge-chairs are comfy, and service is super friendly, fast and efficient. This is where vacationers and island residents alike enjoy the beach and sun.

Karaketer doesn't stop at night, but turns into a premium beachfront restaurant, perfect to enjoy a romantic candlelit dinner or to party the night away to live music.

The island’s best-known entertainers perform here to a frequently sold-out house. Reservations are highly recommended.

It was the Karaker Beach Bar which brought life to a rather sleepy Simpson Bay Beach a few years ago. The 2.2 kilometers (1.4 miles) long sweep of white sand is dotted with private homes and boutique hotels. Half of the beach follows the airport runway and is undisturbed by any structures. The western end stops at the cliffs of Beacon Hill. To find Karaker while in Simpson Bay, turn from Airport Road into the road closest to the end of the airport runway. Go to the end of this road and turn right on the last intersection. Follow the winding road until you pass Mary’s Boon Beach Resort and enter the parking lot of Karaker Beach Bar.

Weekends are often very busy at Karaker, and parking space is at a premium. As a first time visitor, check it out during a weekday, enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner there.

During certain weather conditions, the surf at this beach can be strong and is best suited for competent swimmers.
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75 Front Street, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten
Tel.: +1 721 542-5946 Email: sxm@shivasjewelers.com
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