Behind the Scenes: The Glitz, Glam and Magic of Carnival Costumes

In a quiet room, sitting amongst thousands of colorful feathers and sparkling rhinestones, were two men that are instrumental in the Carnival costume business. True artists, both owner and lead designer of Crepe Art Designs Deangelo Butler, as well as George Wilson; bring to life the pageantry of this cultural event on St. Maarten. We are thrilled to have the exclusive, behind the scenes look at an otherwise very closely guarded secret: the magic of making Carnival costumes.

DeAngelo and George hail from the Bahamas, where Junkanoo reigns as the supreme event. Their friendship began over 20 years ago, while participating in the Junkanoo festivities. They both honed their craft, and grew in the custom design work.

Just over five years ago, they decided to bring their costuming expertise together and take the show on the road, so to speak. They wanted to share their passion and enthusiasm with the world and saw a need in St. Maarten, as we are an island known for our Carnival celebration.

With Carnival being a huge part of the culture, it seemed odd to them that getting supplies to make elaborate costumes was so challenging...

Mother's Day is Upon Us: Time to Get Shopping

Mother’s Day is a traditional celebration of mothers, maternal bonds and the influence that women have on society. This distinctive day is just a few short weeks away on Sunday May 13. But what memento can you give her to let her know how exceptional she truly is? Jewelry has been used for many years to commemorate special occasions. Here are our top three ideas that will let her know how much you appreciate her and everything she does for you...

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Letter From the Editor
April 2018

First I’d like to say, thank you for reading ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekend Edition!

In this issue, we have many captivating articles; including taking you on a journey through the history of Tintamarre, highlighting the nightlife that the Maho area has to offer, favorite local refreshing drinks and giving thoughts on the perfect gift for Mother’s Day.

We are honored to have the exclusive look into the artistry of Carnival costumes with renowned Crepe Art Designs. Stay tuned over the next couple of issues as we showcase the goings on behind the scene.

The Cat 5+ Cocktail Contest has successfully launched, thanks in large part to the Island 92 radio station.

Please check page 15 in this newspaper for participating contest locations.

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

Dutch Side
Ambulance: 912 or +1 721 542 2111
Hospital: 910 or +1 721 543-1111
Police: 911 or +1 721 542-2222

Fire Department: 919 or +1 721 545-4222

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Police: +590 (590) 87 88 33

Entire Island
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ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekend Edition

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Editor: Hilary Grant
Email: h.grant@st-maarten.com

Advertising Sales: Roy van Zutphen
Email: roy@st-maarten.com

Graphic Design: Ros-Anne D. Sagnia
Email: t.artisthouse@gmail.com

Photography: Sarina Gito
Email: s.gito@st-maarten.com

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Hearts! The history of hearts being the symbol for love dates back to ancient times. The heart was thought to be the center of all human emotion. Since love is the strongest emotion, the heart became the bearer for the symbolism of love.

The necklace shown above is available at Shiva’s Gold and Gems on Front Street. It is made in 18KT white gold with 1.17 total carats of sparkling diamonds. They offer many unique and high end pieces.

Next idea, Alex and Ani. These contemporary bangles are available in white or yellow tones, and are a fabulous way to honor Mother’s Day.

You can opt for three diamonds, three colored gems or a mix of both! Have it set in her favorite color of gold. Hint: white will emphasize the brightness of diamonds, and rose gold pairs nicely with many colored gems like ruby, sapphire and morganite! For a large selection, visit Majesty Jewelers on Front Street.

No matter which idea you select, every time she looks at her new piece of jewelry she will think of the lovely sentiment behind the purchase. Happy shopping!
Tintamarre: The Strange History of a Deserted Island

Only two miles off St. Martin's eastern coast lays the uninhabited island of Tintamarre. The flat, brush covered 80 acre islet features a gorgeous main beach. There is a calm anchorage for the day charter boats, which frequently visit for a few hours. On the southern coast, there are several sandy coves with complete privacy.

A little exploration of the island will reveal that Tintamarre was not always without permanent residents. Walk or hike around a bit and see plenty of strange ruins.

In the old days, there was agriculture and some commerce. Up to 150 people made their living on Tintamarre and it was ruled by its owners as an almost independent territory. Even a currency was installed about 100 years ago when 30,000 Dutch cent-coins, not circulating as currency in the Caribbean, where imported as cheap tokens with a new value assigned to them.

During the years of Word War II, the island was governed by the French Vichy administration and it is rumored that it provided shelter and provisioning services to German submarines.

Commercial aviation for the much larger main island of St. Martin started right here after the war, on an airstrip in the center of Tintamarre. The true nature of these activities are not too clear. It was a short-lived venture due to a string of fatal accidents, which shut down operations only a few years later. Remains of one of the crashed planes can still be found on the former runway.

Nowadays, the beaches and mud baths are the attraction for most visitors. Secluded and only a short boat ride away from clothing-optional Orient Beach, it is just natural that many visitors enjoy the beach on Tintamarre in the nude.

So, how do you get there? There are several boat operators offering trips to Tintamarre. Some of the day charter boats are running on a schedule, others can be booked for customized excursions.

Check out the fast speed boats of Caribbean Marines. It’s great fun and surprisingly affordable for groups.

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Do You Know St. Maarten?

Please enjoy the third issue of our crossword 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 spend much time here. It also means: the answers are valid for St. Maarten/St-Martin, but not necessarily elsewhere.

For example, if we are asking for an island to the North, out of the point of view 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 to approach a local and ask! You might find they struggle as well. Or strike up an interesting conversation and learn a bit about our very unique region. This island is a melting pot of many cultures and languages; setting St. Maarten/St-Martin apart from other Caribbean islands. This is why we love it here.
Watching the Sunset for a Green Flash

Continued from Page 1

The green flash is an natural phenomenon occurring in the latitudes close to the equator during the final second of the sun setting into the sea. It is a very rare event and only happens if the atmospheric conditions are just right: no clouds on the horizon and the air should be crystal clear. If this is the case, during the last split second of sunset, a bright green light covers the Western portion of the sky; so short that blinking your eyes means you'll miss it.

Because sunset and Happy Hour go together in the Caribbean, many times the sighting of a Green Flash has been attributed to the generous consumption of rum punch and the general public views any report with a healthy dose of skepticism. Even by spending a life time close to the water, the lucky ones might see the flash once or twice.

Waiting for the phenomenon has been turned into true rituals in some areas. The town of Key West in Florida for example, has large crowds gathering during the late hours of the afternoon, all in anticipation of their chance to become a member of the Green Flash Club. And once the sun has set, usually without providing the extra satisfaction of flashing, the crowd applauds (for what reason exactly is unknown).

The best spots on St. Maarten to watch sunset would be the Maho beach area. The Driftwood Boat Bar offers a perfect view during most months of the year, as does the Sunset Beach Bar.

You can also watch the sun set during several months of the year in Baie Rouge and Grand Case.

Quench Your Thirst Caribbean Style

Coca-Cola and its derivatives are as American as it gets... and of course you'll find it in any supermarket, bar or restaurant on island. But what sodas and other beverages are rooted in the Caribbean and locally from St. Maarten, if any?

First and foremost there is Ting - a grapefruit based fizzy that comes from Jamaica, but is also bottled in St. Kitts. Ting has won international awards and is superbly suited to be mixed with Vodka as a long drink on the rocks.

Jamaican Ginger Beer is another strong contender for the favorite Caribbean soda; drink this non-alcoholic 'beer' and find out how Ginger Ale is really supposed to taste.

Even though tap water is safe to drink, filtered and bottled drinking water has become the standard for most. Heavenly Water operates their own plant on Sint Maarten. No need to purchase water shipped from Fiji if local water is readily available. Recently, Heavenly Water has introduced its own label of Chia Seed and Coconut Milk flavored beverages.

You will find canned coconut water in the coolers of any convenience store and supermarket. Yeah... its imported from Thailand, but it still has a certain Caribbean feel to it.

You might find a new favorite drink, if you are willing to experiment a bit.
Interestingly enough, their costumes are not just for the ladies. Men! Deangelo and George are ready to get you looking your best with a chest piece, headpiece, muscle bands and so much more.

For the 2018 Carnival season, they are working with two troupes and are looking forward to debuting their masterpieces. For any other Carnival troupes or leaders that need supplies, these are your guys! They have everything you need including all sizes and types of feathers and rhinestones, appliques, and other related items and are happy to assist you. You can reach them via cell phone or Whatsapp at +1 721 526-2445.

If you are not going to be here for the parades and want to follow their journey of bringing the fun of Carnival to life, check out their Facebook page, CrepeArtDesignz and Instagram account @CrepeArt, to see their visions come to fruition.

This is when they decided to share their talent with our island.

Deangelo and George come to St. Maarten yearly to create extravagant and intricate costumes. Every year they anticipate they will use close to 4,000 pounds of feathers and 500,000 gross of rhinestones; that is a lot of bling!

Being on island allows them to do much more than just mass produce. They are flexible with their schedule, which allows them to travel to wherever the costumes are needed. This results in less stress for the client, as they stay to assist with any last minute adjustments or additional needs!

A custom costume can run anywhere from $275 to $5,000 USD, and includes the full head to toe look: a headpiece or tiara, swimwear, body jewelry (anklets, thigh pieces, cuffs, and chokers just to name a few) and a backpiece or collar.

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But if you want to eat like a local, try an arepa, which is cornmeal shaped like a pancake and topped with ingredients like lettuce, cheese and a protein. Try one of their hot sauces if you like it spicy!

Another classic is nachos. Sounds simple enough, but these tortilla chips are accompanied with a fresh and light pico de gallo.

After dinner, in the same parking lot is Dunes Casino. Enjoy the enchanting sounds of the slot machines as you rack up the wins. They also have table games, and of course if you’re playing you can enjoy cocktails, beer and wine for free.

In the mood to party at a lively bar? Visit Maho favorite, 3 Amigos. While they do show sporting events, you’ll be listening to songs that will inspire you to get up off the barstool and dance. 3 Amigos is a fully stocked bar, with an endless list of cocktails the bartenders can make.

Also a must visit, especially if you like the feeling that everyone knows your name, is Hole in the Wall. Pouring great drinks, this bar might be ‘newer’ to the Maho area but it certainly delivered as a fast favorite.

Curious as to what one of the gentlemen's clubs on island is like? Platinum Room in Maho is open late night, every night. Enjoy yourself in a lounge type atmosphere with beautiful women surrounding you. Don’t be shy to strike up a conversation or ask the one that catches your eye for a dance. They’d be delighted!
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Weekend Edition
Issue 3, 2018

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'Sand Gravity' is a physical phenomena unique to Caribbean islands blessed with white sand beaches. This sort of gravity puts an enormous pull on human behinds resting in beach chairs while the tropical sun is grilling them. Its effects can be exponentially increased through the consumption of modest amounts of liquor, making it virtually impossible for a person to pull themselves out of a chair or lounge.

"Who cares?" remarks the happy vacationer, until she or he notices that sand gravity also added some permanent pounds to the body.

The real answer to this dilemma is of course, to maintain ones exercise regime. To do so, there is no better solution on St. Maarten than to book sessions with a personal trainer at the island's latest fitness facility.

The Atrium Beach Resort and Spa just opened the island’s first 'Crossfit Box', a studio completely equipped with products from world renowned manufacturer Rogue. Visitors staying at the Atrium Resort can use this unique gym for free. The expertise of fitness coach and local Crossfit athlete Dayana Mota is available to both resort guests and individuals who book personal training sessions.
What Did They Say? Learn the St. Maarten Lingo

As a multicultural island, sometimes it can be unclear whether someone is speaking in Dutch, French, Creole, Papiamento, English, Spanish or a different local lingo. One thing that is clear, once you have mastered these speaking customs, your time on island will be that much more enjoyable.

It is not very often that you pass someone on the street or enter a business in North America and greet people. Usually this custom leaves you feeling uncomfortable and odd, like something is wrong with you. On St. Maarten/St-Martin, this is expected! Greeting one another is one of the many reasons we are known as ‘the friendly island’. So, get out of your comfort zone and give it a try!

Use ‘good morning’ until noon, ‘good afternoon’ until six pm, and use ‘good night’ after six. And yes, that is written correctly! Saying ‘good night’ is a greeting and not a dismissal. By using these simple phrases, you will connect to the people of our beautiful island on another level.

Now, let’s dive in and cover some of the most important phrases that you need to learn:

- Open 7/7: This means the business is open 7 days a week
- Coming just now: I’m on my way
- 2 persons: 2 people
- When I reach: When I get there
- You getting through: Do you need help? / Any problems?
- Tell me: What would you like?
- It finish: We are out of that
- Mashed: It got destroyed
- Current: Electricity / Power
- Come: Follow me / Come with me

Bear in mind these shorthand sayings are not meant to be curt or abrupt, although sometimes they sound like it. Good luck mastering your new keywords and phrases.
Save A Little While Grocery Shopping on Island

One tiny island, two countries and many shopping options for groceries. The Dutch side stores offer mostly goods produced for the North American market and mirror to a degree, standard US supermarkets in their product line-up. The Carrefour organization is represented with a major outlet in Philipsburg and a smaller gourmet market in Porto Cupecoy and adds a number of Dutch specialties to their shelves as well.

It might surprise you, but the small shops typically run by Chinese families very often have the best prices for standard staples. Not much glamour in shopping to be found here, but you get what you need fast and cheap.

On a more sophisticated level, the Market Garden in Simpson Bay has an amazing section of fresh produce and gourmet items; there is also a large liquor and wine department.

On French St-Martin, Monoprix in Bellevue located at the entrance to Marigot, offers high-quality, upscale products in a very elegant shopping environment. The other French shopping center brand is Super-U at the Howell Center in Marigot, which has captured a big market share with its reasonable prices and product quality. Shop here if you would like to experience standard groceries from a European perspective.

One would assume that the prices for staple foods are pretty similar among the supermarkets, considering the fact that it is so easy for consumers to compare.

But they are not! While prices for groceries increased dramatically during the past decades on St. Maarten, the French side can offer values comparable to mainland Europe; except for produce. We compared prices for some basic products between markets on both sides of the island and found absurd differences: Identical items can cost four times as much, depending in which supermarket you are shopping. With this article we don’t want to criticize and point fingers, just informing you that by doing a quick price comparison before shopping makes a lot of sense on our island.

If you are a visitor, you might not worry about the cost of groceries during your stay. But, you must wonder how the locals can afford it. It’s difficult, and really healthy nutrition is not available to many. Most resort to less expensive meals, high in fat and carbs. We feel that the prices of quality groceries especially on the Dutch side, are an issue the local government should address.

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'Category 5 Plus' Cocktail Contest Launched

The category 5+ Hurricane Irma is now part of our history. We made it through and we don't mind if vicious Irma is remembered as a drink that causes a serious 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!)

First there was a big hurricane, the strongest ever measured. Our island was shaken up severely. And among the many bars we have here, hundreds of bottles of the fine liquors were smashed, leaving only a few intact. Our resident mixologists had to be truly creative during the first days after the hurricane to come up with some new cocktails with very limited resources.

Who could blame the bartenders for naming their concoctions 'Category Five Plus'? Now we have a few too many Cat 5's around and this is why we need a contest to decide which one is the public favorite.

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

THE BOON BEACH BAR
Simpson Bay

BUFFALO WINGS
Simpson Bay/Cole Bay

DRIFTWOOD BOAT BAR
Maho Beach

JIMBO'S ROCK AND BLUES CAFE
Simpson Bay Yacht Club

LAGOONIES
Cole Bay

OCEAN LOUNGE
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