



### Island Map Inside

With all the pertinent details while on island...

Page 12 and 13



**Wishing You a Happy and Prosperous 2019!**



### Poppin' Bottles

Why champagne is the NYE drink...

Details Page 4

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## A Different Kind of Cruise Ship: The Stad Amsterdam



The gentle swell of the Caribbean Sea moves through Simpson Bay. On this day around Christmas, a large fleet of elegant mega yachts are anchored about half a nautical mile offshore, glistening in the tropical sun. Their lines appear to be drawn with a sharp pencil, sleek space-age shapes, designed to cut through the ocean with speed and efficiency.

One vessel stands out as if transported from another era into the present; a three-masted clipper, representing the sailing ships of yesteryear.

The tall-ships of the nineteenth century were the fastest commercial sailing ships ever conceived, connecting the globe's continents with relative efficiency until steamers replaced them.

Getting closer to the ship, it becomes apparent that there are modern elements to it; the hull is not wooden, but made of steel. Discreetly installed but still visible are an array of satellites dishes and radar antennas.

This is the clipper Stad Amsterdam; a ship built not long ago in The Netherlands. The design is inspired by the lines of the historic square-rigged De Amsterdam of the mid-eighteen-hundreds but executed with the latest technology and materials. For a few days, she has stopped in Sint Maarten for re-provisioning and picking up passengers to continue her Caribbean tour. Flying the Dutch flag, the Stad Amsterdam represents the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

### Charming Caribbean Style and Tasty Food



This restaurant may have started with family recipes and flavors reminiscent of the owner's Trinidadian heritage, but The Palms Restaurant now has an identity of its own.

Full Article on Page 19

### Sea Life Protected in Dekker Jewelry



After living on the island for over five years Joanne Dekker decided to start a line of island inspired work without harming the environment.

By Leslie Hickerson Full Article on Page 15

Continued on Page 20

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Letter From the Editor

December 28, 2018

With the New Year just a couple days away, it seemed appropriate to fill this issue with countdowns of our own. I hope you enjoy our thirtieth issue as much as I do!

With our first year of print coming to an end, I am honored to be the Editor of a publication that is enjoyed island-wide by island visitors and locals. Working on a print publication has been an enjoyable endeavor, and I look forward to continuing our vision of showing you the island through the local perspective.

I would be remiss by not mentioning the hard work of our Publisher, Jan Thielke, who had a vision for what the Weekly Edition could be and made it his mission to assemble a team that could see the vision through.

All of our previous issues are available on the ST-MAARTEN.COM website. 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.

Wishing you a Happy New Year!



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?

11

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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ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekly Edition

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

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NOMOS GLASHÜTTE

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# Pop the Cork and Start the New Year Countdown



Toasting with champagne has long been a New Year's tradition; which begs the question: why do we drink champagne as a celebratory drink? We have the answer! So, pop the cork and pour a glass of fizzy fermented grape juice while we look at how champagne became a New Year's Eve institution.

Champagne comes from Champagne, France; and it was first a fizz free wine before becoming the bubbly drink we love and adore today. Its origin began with a local monarch, King Clovis, who used wine from the Champagne region to mark his conversion to Catholicism in the late 5th century.

Decades later in 1662, English scientist Christopher Merret developed a technique to add bubbles to casks of wine. Adding sugar to the bottles, the yeast in the wine consumed the sugar to produce carbon dioxide which created the effervescence.

Sparkling wine grew in popularity, primarily amongst royals and aristocrats during the subsequent years. One widespread problem though, was that bottles of sparkling wine tended to burst. Glass produced at the time wasn't strong enough to contain the pressure. But the creation of stronger coal-fired glass in England made it possible to consistently keep the newly popular drink safe.

Another intervention by French royalty strengthened Champagne's claim as the sole producer of 'champagne'. In 1728,

King Louis XV who loved sipping on this fizzy drink, announced that only wine from the Champagne region in France could be shipped in bottles, allowing France to become the leader in the sparkling wine market. That meant that the wealthy would need to get their bubbles from Champagne or be forced into getting a regular wine barrel from somewhere else. With the French market in sparkling wine essentially cornered, Champagne houses like Moët & Chandon and Veuve Clicquot rose in notoriety and continued to refine their champagne making techniques.

But the appeal of champagne had nothing to do with its bursting, sparkling bubbles or that it was the newest, hottest drink on the market. It was because champagne is a specific type of wine, with certain restrictions regarding the location of the grapes and the fermentation process. When you buy champagne, you're buying into the science of this sparkling wine, which is every bit as controlled and elite as the flavor itself.

Champagne became the ultimate New Year's celebration beverage when the producers of Champagne started to link the bubbly to festive occasions in popular advertising campaigns and now champagne is synonymous with marking paramount life moments.

We fully encourage you this New Year's Eve to toast to the past year and look forward to the year ahead, all with a fabulous bottle of bubbly.

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# Gym or Fresh Air for Your Fitness Regime in 2019?



*Cross-Fit themed gym at the Atrium Beach Resort with equipment by Rogue*

Most new year's resolutions stereotypically include being healthier, fitter or stronger. The purchase of gym memberships soar in January in the United States, predictably increasing 40-50% more between December and January. But while the membership sales skyrocket, the foot traffic sees a spike as well- albeit temporarily. It is well known that majority of new members will only attend gym for a few short weeks, and by mid-February the gym will be back to the usual year-round attendees.

But what the fitness industry doesn't want you to know is that their success depends on you purchasing and not using the membership. While it sounds bizarre, the

gym has the calculation down pat to be profitable: memberships used versus memberships wasted and the large sum that gyms typically pay in rent.

If you're one of the few who really do go to gyms, you will get a great deal by purchasing a start of the year membership. The people who also purchase it, but sit at home on their couch versus hitting the treadmill are subsidizing your membership.

Gyms normally need space: equipment, changing rooms, classrooms and an appealing location. Hence every gym has the same task to lure in the ideal customer: People who intend to work out, but don't.

So, thank them for enabling you to pay less for your membership than what the gym services truly cost.

If you are concerned you cannot commit to a membership (and actually use it!), perhaps it is worth considering exercising in the great outdoors. Our island is filled with breathtaking scenery and everything you would need to keep your resolution to yourself. Walk across the causeway, or along the boardwalk in Philipsburg. Do some lunges in the soft sand, swim in our warm tropical ocean or walk up and down the stairs at your apartment.

A very attractive alternative to a gym membership is available at the Atrium Beach Resort in Simpson Bay. Here the regionally well known Cross-Fit competitor Dayana Mota operates a private studio, only available for personal one-on-one training (and to resort guests, of course), following the cross-fit method. There is no membership required and only a reasonable monthly fee for personal lessons to pay. Dayana will evaluate your fitness level and create a workout suited to your needs and ability. Clients tell of amazing results by following her method. If you enjoy a VIP environment and are willing to work out hard, contact [sxm@email.com](mailto:sxm@email.com) for more information.

Regardless of what you decide to try, taking in the beauty of St. Maarten/St-Martin while you do it is the best promise you can make to yourself.

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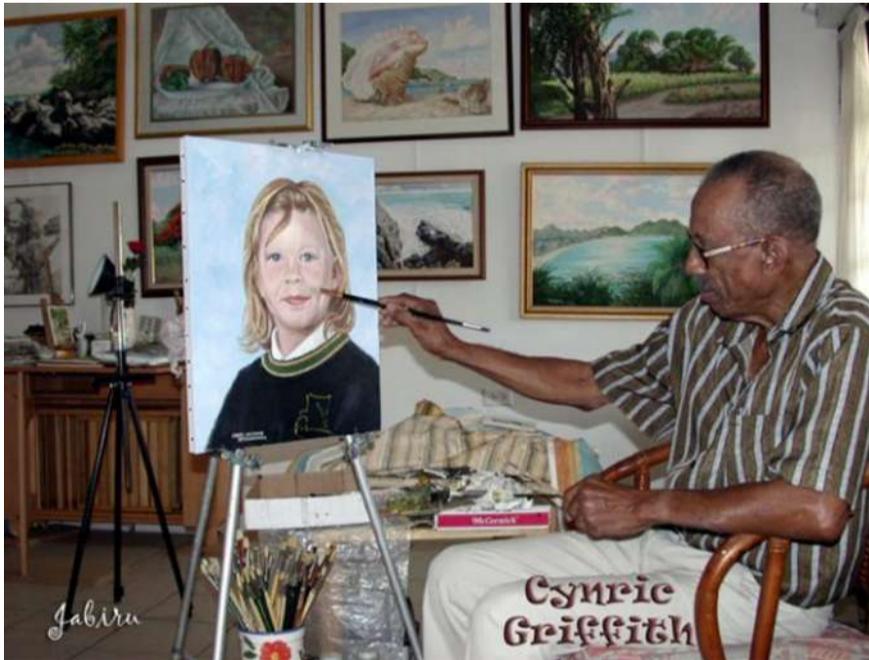
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# Local Artist Cynric Griffith Passed Away



Only a few weeks ago on October 7th, we published a feature article about the island's ninety-nine years old painter, Cynric Griffith. We described the incredible energy this icon of the local art scene displayed, by still working on his pieces every day.

We are saddened to report that Griffith (this is how he preferred to be called) has passed away only ten days shy before turning one hundred years old. He was born in St. Kitts on January 1st, 1919 and moved to Sint Maarten in 1956.

Read more about Griffith in Issue 19 of St-Maarten.com Weekly Edition, available online at [www.St-Maarten.com](http://www.St-Maarten.com).

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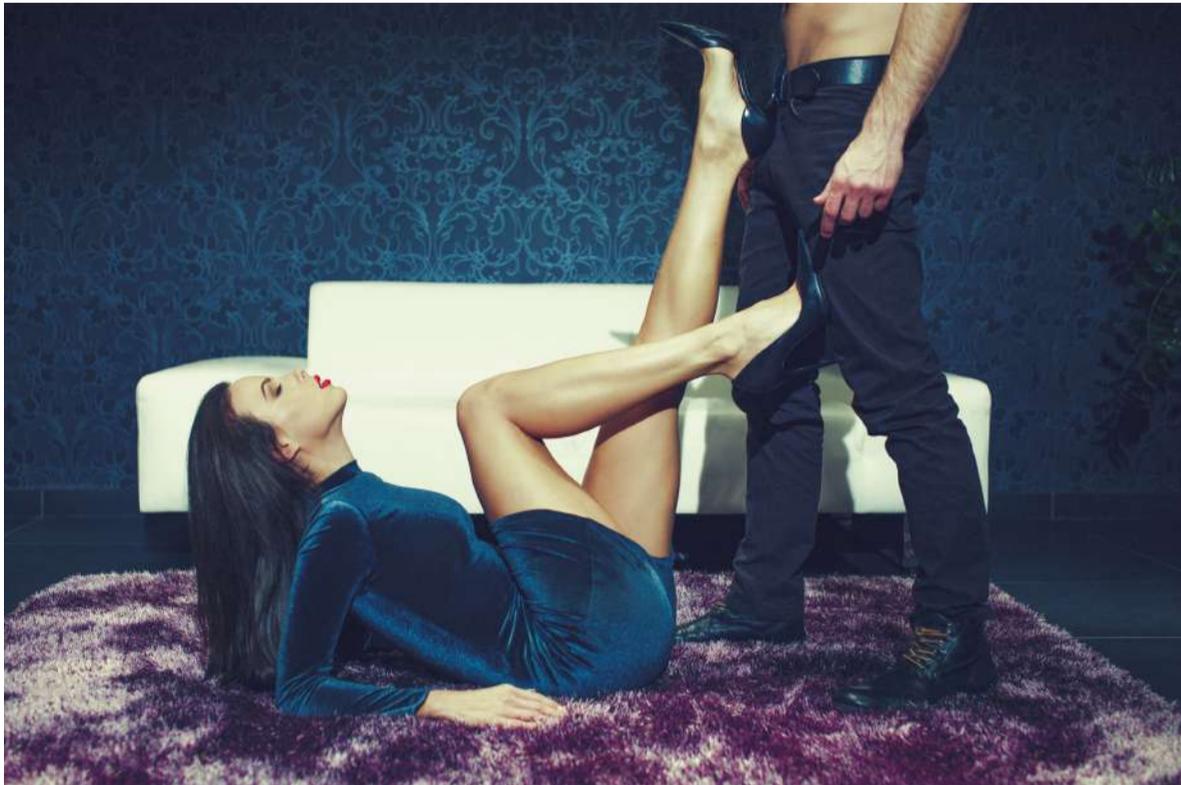
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# Sex and Dating in St. Maarten: Sometimes the Private Dance is Worth the Money

By Leslie Hickerson



St. Maarten has no shortage of adult entertainment venues. Strip clubs stay open later than most bars and can be a great place to finish the night, if you want to keep drinking after you've heard last call.

A couple, Dan and Kerry, were out on the town one night when bar after bar started to close. Hoping to keep the night going they ended up at a busy club, let's call it Pink Sapphire.

While they were drinking Kerry mentioned that one of the dancers was really pretty. "If I were to ever date a girl..." were Kerry's famous last words. Dan jumped on the idea and volunteered to pay for a private dance.

In one of the secluded rooms at the back, the couple settled in for a good show with several drinks each.

As the dance started the stripper decided to go the extra mile and as she undressed she began to take off Kerry's clothes as well. Luckily the night had been long and Dan and Kerry had plenty of liquid courage to roll with it.

One thing lead to another and before they knew it the couple was doing the nasty in the private room with the dancer still giving one hell of a show to keep them going. For Dan it was well worth the money and Kerry still keeps the memory fresh in her mind for private use.

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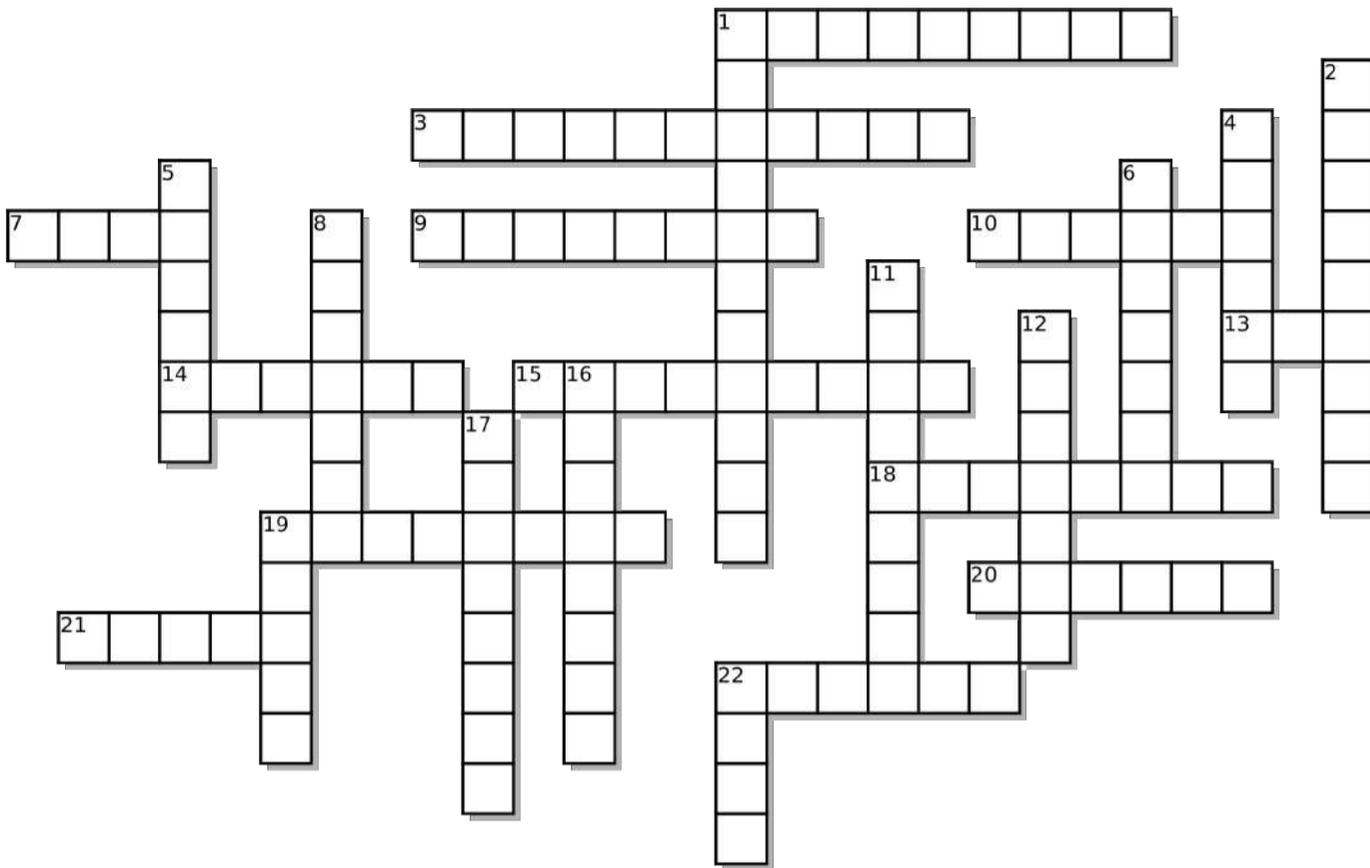
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# The Unique St. Maarten/St-Martin Crossword Puzzle

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



Please enjoy another edition of our 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 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@st-maarten.com](mailto:info@st-maarten.com).

But please be aware that some of the questions are a bit tricky on purpose. Good luck!

*Puzzle Solution on Page 22*

**ACROSS**

- 1 Gourmet shop in Hope Estates
- 3 Where is Great Bay Beach?
- 7 Where are the Three Amigos?
- 9 Connecting Simpson Bay with Cole Bay
- 10 Who should party at The Platinum Room?
- 13 Forward part of a ship
- 14 Continent east of St. Maarten
- 15 What sea is Simpson Bay at?
- 18 Tourist day cruise boat on the Lagoon
- 19 What starts with a Jump Up?
- 20 Kitchen on a yacht
- 21 What did Loterie Farm produce centuries ago?
- 22 What food is served at the Bavaria Restaurant?

**DOWN**

- 1 Capital of St. Barths
- 2 After which town in California is this casino named?
- 4 Charlie likes something spicy
- 5 When does the church rock at Red Piano?
- 6 What type of ship is the Stad Amsterdam?
- 8 Airport named after what princess?
- 11 Bedroom on a yacht
- 12 What kind of food serves Isola?
- 16 What ocean is Orient Beach at?
- 17 Daughter of a king
- 19 New name for Scarlet internet service
- 22 Dutch side utility company

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## It's All Good: St. Maarten/St-Martin Real Estate

There are several competent and reliable realtors on St. Maarten/St-Martin, but there is no conclusive Multiple Listing Service available to buyers. Searching for that perfect piece of property in paradise is a time-consuming journey, through numerous real estate offices.

The Dutch side of the island, St. Maarten, is leading the strong real estate market. Around the coast, new luxury developments are being constructed. There are gated communities with waterfront access, boat slips, and world-class amenities. Taller buildings with comfortable condominiums are becoming more common as well.

The hurricane of 2017 damaged a lot of properties and - in the mind of many - should have resulted in several fire sales. Amazingly, the market proved them wrong; investor confidence is strong, and market values have not dropped. For the time being, there is a bit less inventory, until all damage has been cleaned up, and this might take another year or until early 2020.

The resilience of the present market is similar to the one during the worldwide financial crash of 2008; St. Maarten's real estate weathered this crisis as well without much of a dent. Owning a piece of property on both sides of the island has proven to be a steady investment.

American buyers seem to prefer the Dutch side for now, because on the surface there are similarities to life in the US: English is the universal language, power is 110 Volts, the currency is the US Dollar, the supermarkets carry a large selection of American products, the typical fast food restaurants are ever present and US cable TV is standard. Most importantly: many of the properties have been designed with the American buyer in mind.

French St-Martin covers the northern two-thirds of the island. Governed from the much larger island of Guadeloupe, St-Martin is a fully integrated European

territory and follows the same standards and laws as continental France, except for some significant tax incentives and the absence of import duty.

The French side had initially been slower in development and has retained, to this day, more of its natural beauty. Both sides of the island depend on each other, and without the attractiveness of the French side, Dutch St. Maarten would not be very successful on its own. At the same time, the non-stop entertainment and action of the Dutch side is important to residents and visitors of the French side.

Citizens of any member state of the European Union can settle and work in St-Martin without special permission. For foreigners, Americans and Canadians, owning real estate is no problem at all. Amazingly, English is the (unofficial) first language of most locally born French St-Martiners, and American investors will not encounter any issues in dealing with the administration and public services.



*Pool villa in the French Low Lands*

Dutch side realtors frequently try to discourage buyers from venturing into the French part by throwing out the trigger term, "But they have property tax!" - while pointing out that the Dutch side doesn't have one. But, the French property tax is tiny and not comparable at all with the outrageous amounts US property owners are used to dishing out to finance their communities annually. The drawback of French homes and condominiums might be their floorplans. Rooms can be small, and some condominium complexes have kitchens

installed on the patio. This weird set-up is the result of French tax incentives which encourage the construction of hotel properties, which can only be turned into condos after five years.



*Condominium on Dutch side Cuescoy*

The positive is that there are modestly priced units available, which are an easy entry point to the Caribbean property market. Just don't be in a rush to close after signing the contract; the administration is overwhelmed and needs months to process documents.

An interesting aspect for the American buyer is the fact that they don't have to bring their own attorney to the closing. On both sides of the island, the transaction is handled by a notary - and this title is hugely more powerful than a Public Notary in the United States. European notaries are lawyers of the highest qualification, and the title is assigned to them by the government. The fees they charge for closing a real estate deal is the equivalent to what Americans would consider title insurance.



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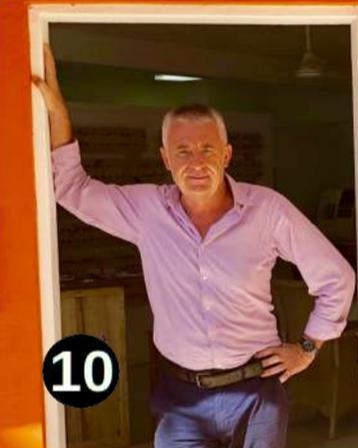
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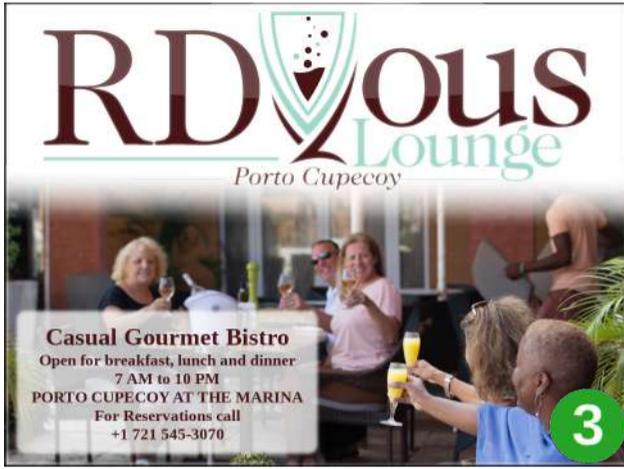


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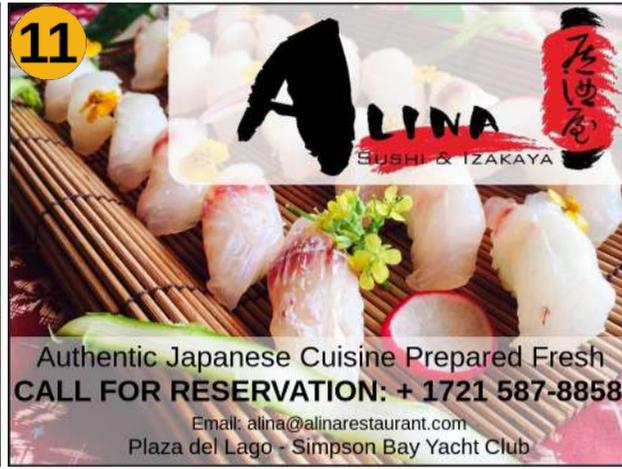
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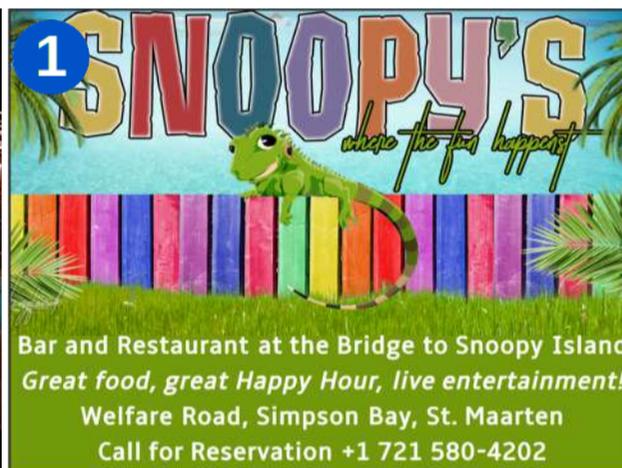


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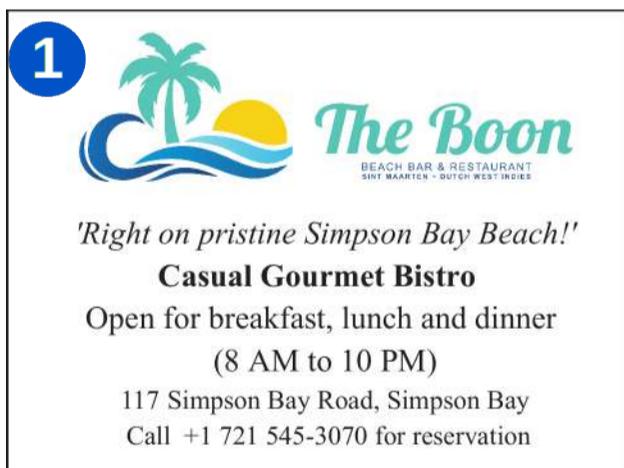
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# Sea Life Protected in Dekker Jewelry

*Continued from Page 1*

*By Leslie Hickerson*

Joanne Dekker is a lawyer by trade but an artist by passion. After living on the island for over five years she decided to use her background in jewelry making to start a line of island inspired work without harming the environment.

Taking a shell off the beach and putting it on your table at home seems like an innocent act. After all it is just one shell, right? Unfortunately, nearly everyone else is thinking the same. Over the five years Joanne has lived on St. Maarten/St-Martin, she had become very familiar with the beachcombers as she watched the practice from her home in Simpson Bay.

"I was living on Simpson Bay Beach and I would notice that after a storm the whole beach would be filled with shells, corals and even sea cucumbers. Then a lot of people would come and beachcomb, then everything disappears. The most beautiful things are gone the same day and after a week there is almost nothing anymore."



As an artist Dekker has wanted to make a line of jewelry inspired from the nature of the island for years, but didn't want to take anything that belonged in the ocean or on the shore to do so.

"People can do what they want, but I don't want to do that. It does not feel right to me. You are robbing the ocean of everything that makes it. The sand on the beaches comes from corals and dead animals. Everyone knows better than to break off a piece of living coral and take it home but when they find on the beach they think it's fair game. But I don't want to make money off that."

To create work inspired from the shells and corals of the island, Dekker started to research which techniques she could use to fabricate the objects she didn't want to take from nature and which materials would be the most ecofriendly. Through this research Dekker has created three jewelry collections.

If you are looking to take a slice of paradise home; instead of taking a part of nature that will never be returned where it belongs you can choose a piece of Dekker's art to keep without guilt.



Octopussy's Garden is a series of rings, earrings and pendants made in resin that are molded from pieces of coral that are then returned to the beach. Dekker pours colored resin into the molds creating an exact copy of the original shells, sea fans and bits of coral. The inspiration for the name comes from the common habit of the octopus collecting shells or other objects and keeping them around their den.



A second series featuring pieces of driftwood picked up from the beach incorporated into necklaces with handmade silver chain. This series is called Beachcomber. Small pieces of driftwood become pendants or parts of the chain that create a beautifully natural contrast to the silver links.

The final collection includes pieces of Zinc collected after Hurricane Irma as pendants and parts of necklaces. After the storm Dekker knew she had to find a way to incorporate some of the destruction into her work to create something beautiful, and so the series called 'Rise and Shine' was born. You can find sterling silver and precious stones throughout all of her work. You will never find actual pieces of coral or shells, only her replicas.

You can find Dekker's work for sale at Joga and The Art Box, both located in Simpson Bay. For inquires about her pieces or custom work you can follow her Facebook or contact via the website at [joannedekker.com](http://joannedekker.com).

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# Tourist Traps: Proceed with Caution

Let's start this article upside down and arrive at the right conclusion: there are not many tourist traps on St. Maarten/St-Martin.

The island is blessed with a relatively affluent population, with consumption habits like the ones of our visitors. Locals go out for dinner, enjoy upscale shopping, and even if there are no visitors on the island; go out to nightclubs and bars. This is a stabilizing factor for the island's entertainment industry and keeps the prices in check; if they want to be somewhat busy in summer (off-season), they must stay reasonably priced during the winter months so the don't lose the goodwill of the local crowd.

Liquor is cheap and profitable. Bar owners know that they might get away with charging \$5 for a beer to a visitor from New York. But they also know that they would be abandoned by the locals one Happy Hour later. That's why beer in a bar should not cost more than \$3, in most places it's served for \$2. If the price approaches \$4, look out for other signs that this is a tourist trap.

Notoriously unreliable are restaurant reviews on TripAdvisor. Hurricane Irma in 2017 was a severe business interruption and caused many businesses to disappear. Yet, on TripAdvisor, we could read glowing reviews, published months after the storm about pla-

ces which had been completely flattened by Irma. It became evident that these eateries had commissioned fake reviews to push them up in ratings and that the contracted party to produce such reviews was not informed in time about the destruction of their client's property.

We don't like incorrect names for attractions and activities; if a visitor books a zip line adventure in a rainforest, there should be a rainforest. No matter how glorious the installation of the zip line is, the business should be honest and explain that the customer will only see dry brush. Or say nothing. But what about the name of Loterie Farm, the location of the island's original zip line which actually does go through the only remaining rainforest on St-Martin? It's not a farm, is this also wrong advertising? No. It was a farm in earlier centuries, and therefore the original name is still applicable.

It turns out that resort and vacation rental guests have a low risk of being exploited through tourist traps. It is the cruise ship passengers who are taken advantage of, but the villains here are mostly the cruise lines. They sell the cruises for minimum prices only to bleed their passengers of all remaining cash while onboard. The cruise lines market the excursions onboard but bully the local providers into paying up to 50% comm-

issions. With such a high payment, it becomes virtually impossible to create a product which reasonably reflects the price. For instance, a bus trip from the cruise ship terminal to Kimsha Beach in Simpson Bay (8.7km or 5.4m) costs \$70 pp with a modest lunch included. Wouldn't a first-time visitor, who stays only for a few hours, be better advised to enjoy Great Bay Beach in Philipsburg (for free) and have lunch at one of the great beach bars there?

Certain retailers also pay exorbitant fees to the cruise lines to be their officially recommended partner. Obviously, these marketing fees have to be added to the price of the products they sell. Cruise ship passengers following the advice of the onboard orientation are not getting the best deals in town, that much is certain.

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## What is Your New Year's Resolution for 2019?

After weeks of enjoying the comforting and delicious food and beverages that the holidays bring, most people make fitness their resolution for the new year. Often times, resolutions are not kept because they are unattainable, even with the best intentions.

For 2019, we have ten uncommon resolutions that might be worth a try. Pick your favorite, and commit to seeing it through. Make your 2019 New Year's resolution that you stick to your resolution.

### Turn off your phone

Smart phones have become our demise. Reachable 24-7 by email, text and social media networks; we have forgotten what it is like to unplug from the world. Try making a rule that Monday through Friday you put your phone on 'do not disturb' from 8PM-8AM.

### Read a book

Doesn't have to be a long novel, but let your imagination and mind wander through reading. It can be a great way to de-stress.

### Smile more

This is self-explanatory...right?

### Commit to something

Whether it is to participate in a group fitness class or getting to those Toastmaster meetings you keep saying you will, just do it.

### Try something new

What happened to our inner kids that wanted to try everything and explore everything the world has to offer? Maybe you've wanted to learn a new language, eat those sea snails everyone says are delicious or take up scuba diving; 2019 is the time to make your inner kid proud.

### Hug

Human contact is vital. One study has shown that hugging lowers blood pressure. While we aren't sure about that statistic, isn't it worth a try?

### Volunteer

Think outside of yourself and your family, and find an opportunity that you would enjoy

while giving back to the community. Some fun options would be beach cleanups, canned food drives, working with stray animals and mentoring our youth.

### Take photos

Take one photo a month, and at the end of 2019, look back on your twelve photos as a journal to what happened in your life the last year.

While there will be ups and downs, it is nice to see photos to remind ourselves that we had good times.

### Make the usual unusual

If you normally take the same route to work, change it up and enjoy the new scenery. If you only drink vodka soda's, try a new libation.

### Pay it forward

Maybe you will pay for a cup of coffee for someone unexpectedly, but the important part is to do it from the kindness of your heart- no thanks required.

# The 2019 NYE Party Scene Countdown

Counting down to the new year while in St. Maarten can seem overwhelming, with so many different social scenes to choose from.

Here is our countdown of five venues that are sure to be lots of fun!



### #5: Avantika

If you are looking for a dinner and party combination, look no further than Avantika. Featuring a live DJ, ring in the new year with open bar and buffet. Reservations are required with a price of \$120 per person, but the tasty Thai food alone is worth the ticket cost. For reservations call: call: +1 721 584-1444.



### #4: WE Lounge

Former resident DJ of SKY Beach, Jayson Miro, will be spinning all night bringing the party level to an all-time high. Presale tickets are \$75 USD but includes a premium open bar and each person gets a 75cl bottle of Moët & Chandon champagne. Ticket price raises to \$120 at the door. To purchase visit WE Lounge any time they are open.



### #3: Lotus

Several DJ's will be spinning live at this venue. Open to the 18+ crowd, be sure to dress to impress. \$30 USD presale tickets are available. For VIP reservations or to purchase call: +1 721 588-7977.



### #2: D-Boat

Get a premium viewing spot for the fireworks over the lagoon at this new hotspot. The presale ticket price of \$120USD gives you a lot of bang for the buck: tapas from 9PM-2AM, premium open bar including Veuve Clicquot champagne and a specialty Grey Goose and Patron bar. Party the night away with Ryan Sayeed (from Miami) and DJ Classy D. Ticket price raises to \$150 USD at the door. For reservations call: +1 721 523-2628.

## Taxi Service:

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### #1: The Red Piano

The island's favorite night, CHURCH on Monday, happens to fall on New Year's Eve this year. But this night at CHURCH will be different from all others, with party favors and the ultimate countdown to midnight. This venue boasts free entry with a champagne toast at midnight. VIP tables are \$75 and accommodate four people, which includes a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne. DJ Petty will be spinning the after-hours; you won't want to miss out on this party. For reservations call: +1 721 527-4266.

No matter where you party on the island, make sure to drink responsibly and have a designated sober driver. Cheers!!





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# The Truth About Champagne Diamonds

By Hilary Grant, GIA Graduate Gemologist



Does hearing the words ‘champagne’ and ‘diamond’ in the same sentence make your heart swoon? If so, marketing geniuses have accomplished their goal. Diamonds that are a light brown with a tinge of yellow can be quite stunning and live up to the celebratory mindset their name evokes.

Fancy color diamonds have been a trivial part of the diamond business for decades with popularity and availability growing every year. In the 1980s Australia’s Argyle mine (you may have heard of it as the major source of incredibly rare, natural pink diamonds) began publicizing the brown stones discovered under names like Champagne and Cognac. Using descriptive words to describe colors are what are called “trade names” in the industry. These can be confusing because the color of champagne, for instance, might be different from one person to the next. This makes it tricky when looking for a colored gem.

The truth is, in the past, natural fancy brown diamonds weren’t especially trendy. However, champagne diamonds have managed to gain increasing attention in recent years from collectors and investors.

When the Argyle Mine determined that nearly fifty percent of the diamonds in their deposit were brown, it was clear that some marketing tactics were required to alter consumers' perceptions about these colored diamonds. They coined the term "champagne diamonds," which suggested luxury, elegance and affluence like the celebratory beverage they were named after.

Not surprisingly, sales for these diamonds gradually and steadily increased.

All natural fancy colored diamonds get their color due to an element's presence in the crystal structure, which affect the way light absorbs. Champagne diamonds contain a very small amount of nitrogen, less than one percent. The more nitrogen in the diamond, the deeper the intensity of the brown color.

It is important to know that a ‘fancy color’ diamond is not on the normal D-Z Scale, these diamonds are just what the name implies: fancy. So, any color diamond with the word fancy in front of it will not only increase in rarity, but coinage as well.

You will never see the word "champagne" on a grading report from the Gemological Institute of America (GIA). Instead, the color would be described as Fancy Light Yellow Brown, Fancy Yellowish Brown, or a similar phrase that indicates the depth of the color.

On the other hand, The Argyle Mine has devised a different color scale specifically to grade champagne diamonds, which ranges from C1 to C7. C1 to C2 are a light champagne, C3 to C4 are medium champagne, C5 to C6 are dark champagne, and C7 is now called "cognac."

Since many jewelers use the term "champagne" to make a low-quality diamond look more attractive, it's best to always purchase one with a gemological certificate - ideally from the GIA - so that you have assurance of the stone's actual color and value and that you aren't buying a low color diamond at a fancy color price.

One of the most famous of champagne diamonds is called the “Golden Jubilee”. It weighs a staggering 545.67 carats and holds the title as the largest faceted diamond in the world. This magnificent rock was discovered in South Africa's Cullinan Diamond Mine in 1985. Originally known as the “Unnamed Brown”, it was gifted to the King of Thailand in 1997 to celebrate his reign, and was then given its new appropriate title. It is estimated to be worth between \$5 million and \$12 million.

# The Palms Restaurant: The Perfect Blend of New and Traditional Cuisine

*Continued Page 1*



*Greg's signature dish, Drunken Ribs*

This restaurant may have started out as a family affair with family recipes and flavors reminiscent of owner Greg Holder's Trinidadian heritage, but The Palms Restaurant is now known for more than dishes that remind you of home. Some meals are inspired by the way mom used to make them, using a blend of spices common in Trinidad.



*House Salad with Shrimp*

Sometimes it is best to use minimal ingredients, but do them well. A perfect example of this is the house salad. While some may argue that a salad isn't a meal we would argue that you haven't tried this plate of veggies. Have it plain or top with chicken or shrimp. And of course, the homemade balsamic dressing is off the charts delicious.



*Goat Curry*

Locals go crazy for these offerings, like the goat curry and pholourie.

But other menu items are more internationally based, perfected by chef and owner Greg Holder. Greg's training at culinary school opened his eyes to just how great food can be when you blend familiar with new.



The Caribbean charm of this restaurant mixed with the warm and welcoming staff make The Palms Restaurant an unforgettable choice. Come here once, and you are bound to come time and time again for the atmosphere and delightfully tasty food.

To view their menu and make reservations visit their website:

[www.ThePalmsSXM.com](http://www.ThePalmsSXM.com) or call +1 721 554-2375

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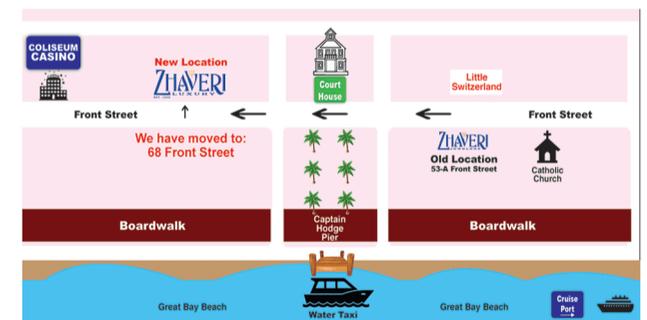
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# A Different Kind of Cruise Ship: The Stad Amsterdam

*Continued from Page 1*

There is another flag displayed, red background with black bar and the white text 'XXX'. To clear up any potential misunderstanding: this is the flag of the city of Amsterdam, which owns and operates the ship together with the world renowned Randstad corporation, a multinational with headquarters in The Netherlands.

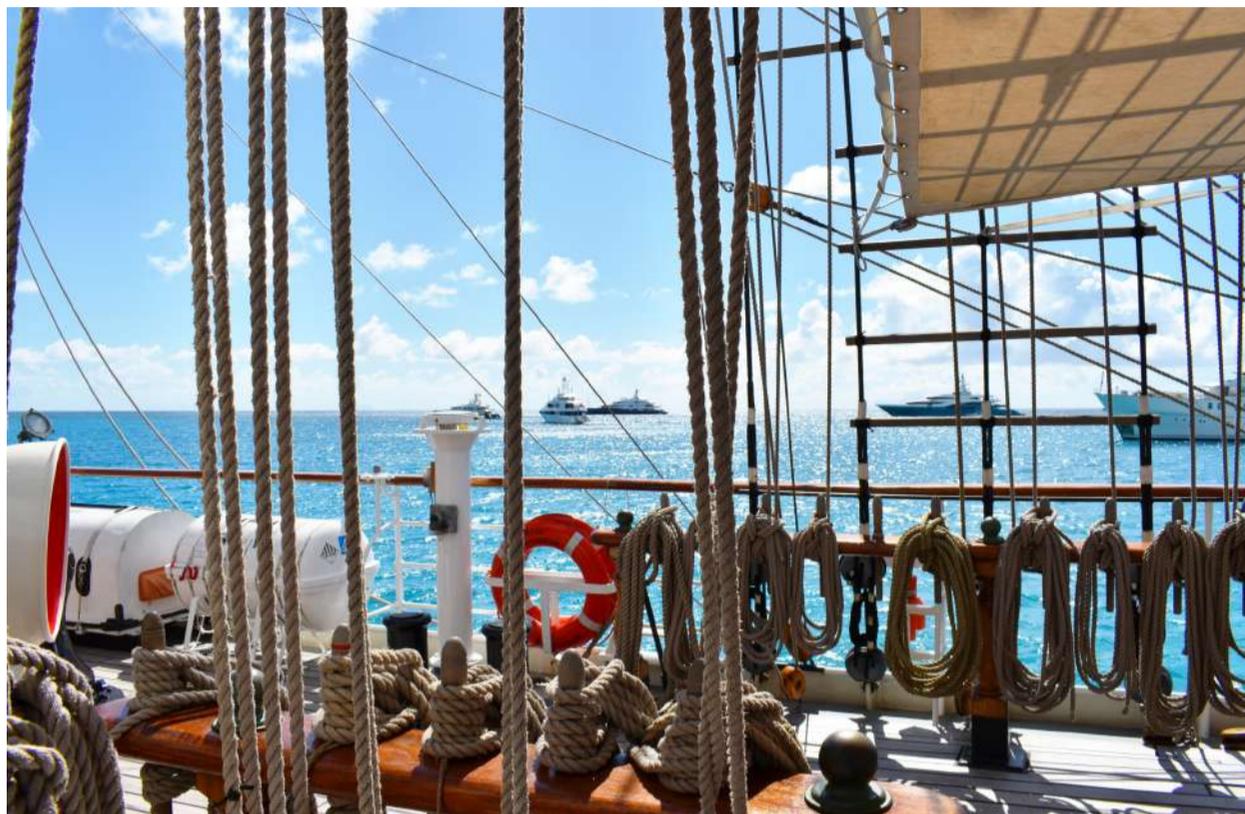
If you ever dreamt of taking a cruise, you know that there are many options. You could share huge floating resorts with up to three-thousand guests. Or you could go on a real adventure, which only a few have experienced. The Stad Amsterdam is a passenger ship with fourteen luxurious double cabins with private bathrooms. Part of the year, cabins can be booked like a cruise ship. The ship's itinerary includes ports of call around the world, representing The Netherlands in semi-official functions but also hosting events and day sails as business incentives. National naval forces operate most tall ships today; not so with the Stad Amsterdam, which balances operational expenses with cruises. There are other times, where she is used as a school ship to teach the art of sailing to young students.

Boarding the 76 meters (250 feet) long ship, the first impression is the overwhelming amount of rope visible; 16 kilometers (10 miles) of it are used in the rigging and to operate the twenty-nine sails. It takes a crew of thirty to handle the ship, but this includes the hospitality aspect as well.



*Andi Manser, Captain of the clipper Stad Amsterdam*

Captain Andi Manser is a Swiss national from the Lake Constanz region, commanding the ship for almost ten years. Asked about communication with crew and



*Stad Amsterdam anchored in Simpson Bay*

passengers, he explains: "The official language on board is English because we have an international crew. But yes, I do speak Dutch. The Swiss-German dialect I grew up with has similarities to Dutch, so it was quite easy to pick up for me."

Modern and much larger cruise ships with sails use them mostly for decoration. How often is the Stad Amsterdam really sailing? "Almost always," responds Capt. Manser. "We have a one thousand horsepower diesel engine installed, but ninety-five percent of the time, the ship sails. She is fast, cruising with up to fifteen knots." Which translates into 29 km/h or 17 standard miles/h.

The outside helm station is to the aft, and visibility into the direction of travel is precisely zero, the view blocked by the massive masts and the raised bow.

"This is why we have to place one crew member on the bow, anytime we operate in close quarters. But the helmsman has a raised hatch he can stand on to see a bit more if needed."

The main bridge is protected from the elements, and here we find all the treasures of cutting-edge marine electronics installed. Walking down a mahogany staircase, we enter the longroom, considered the heart of the ship.

This is the room where dinner is served, where seminars are held and passengers can pass their time reading books and surfing the Internet while on a cruise. The central installation is a bar, and there is a separate space for a buffet.

Chef Mick Baumann is responsible for the gourmet meals served. In the past, he was a popular chef with a loyal following in Sint Maarten, where he lived and worked for seven years.



*The 'longroom' for dining and entertainment*

The interior shows beautifully executed wood-work, stylish and certainly not tacky by attempting to create a fake antique feel. It should be noted that the crew quarters are outfitted and sized equal to the passenger cabins – mega yacht crews could be jealous.

The walk-in engine room hosts two massive generators and the main engine.

"But I feel that the Stad Amsterdam is a very green operation," states Capt. Manser. "As we travel mostly under sail, it is only the diesel generator running, and this is needed to power the amenities onboard."

"We do explore other cutting-edge solutions, and we have researched auxiliary propulsion with a hydrogen-powered engine. But at this point, running a diesel still is the most ecological way for us."



*Cabin on the clipper Stad Amsterdam*

The Stad Amsterdam will spend the winter months in the Caribbean, cruise up to the USA, where she will be port hopping from Miami northwards along the Eastern coast where she finally will dock in New Amsterdam... sorry, it's called New York today.



If you are interested in learning more about this ship, visit the website [www.stadamsterdam.com](http://www.stadamsterdam.com). YouTube has videos, which will give you an even more complete impression.

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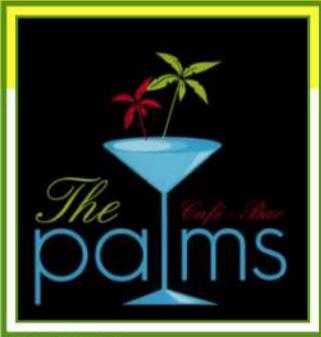
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Welfare Road - Simpson Bay - Right next to Pineapple Pete



# THE PALMS RESTAURANT

## CARIBBEAN & INTERNATIONAL CUISINE



1

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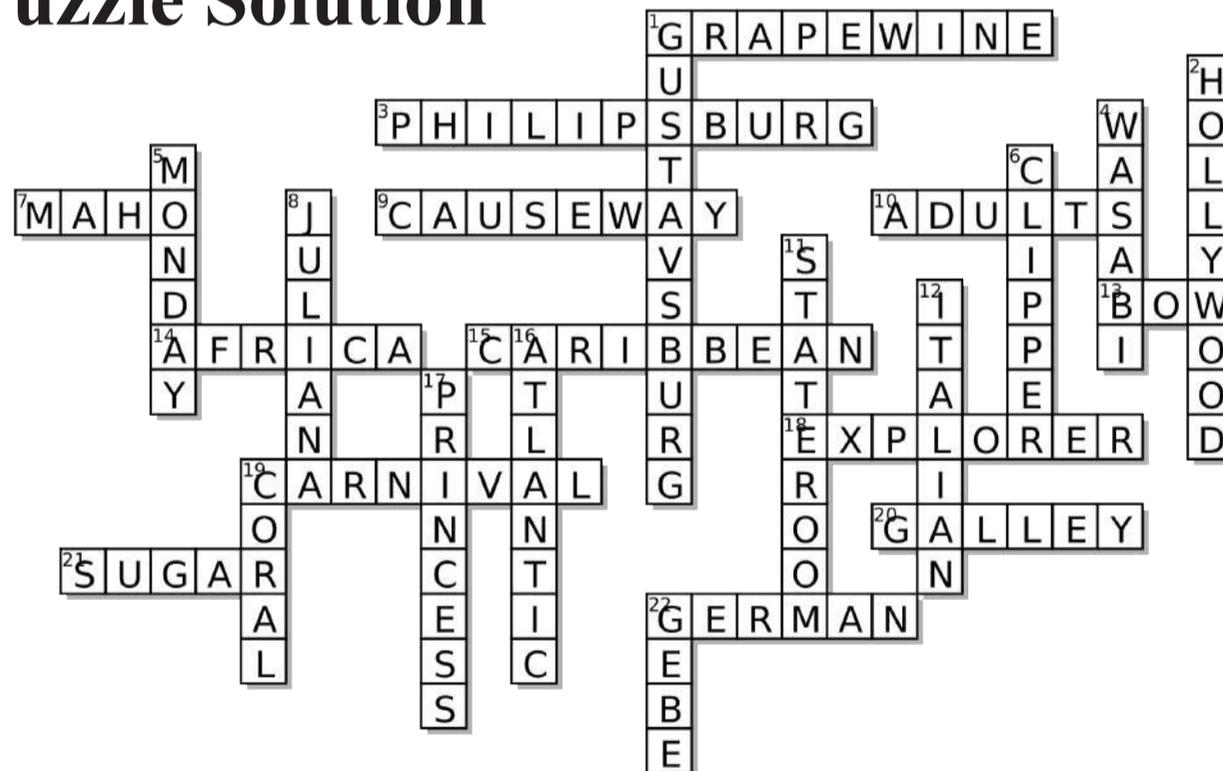
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