Chic Orient Beach is Back in Action

They made the deadline! We celebrate that Orient Beach is back in business as our island’s signature beach. Right around the time that visitors are flocking back to St-Martin, beach bars and Orient Village restaurants are again open and already filled with happy vacationers.

Avenue des Plages is the central road through Orient Village and lined with bars, restaurants, and shops. There is one supermarket and one convenience store, all well stocked and ready to provision the vacation apartments surrounding them.

Hotel Plantation was the first resort in 2018 to offer rooms. Esmeralda Resorts is now also ready to welcome guests. It is unfortunate that the iconic naturist resort of Club O won't be rebuilding soon. Naturists can still find accommodations at Jardin d’O (listed on St-Maarten.com), Club Fantastico or Résidence Adam et Eve.

Right on the beach, Bikini Beach and Kakao Beach have been leading examples of upscale beach restaurants, and they are back open in a fresh incarnation. At the clothing optional end of the beach, Perch Bar light serves excellent drinks and BBQ local food.

It must be reported that the local administration hasn't been able to process the rebuilding applications for most of the local operators, among them famous Pedros, the first beach bar to start a business on Orient Beach.

The End of Frozen Food Roulette

The many casinos on Dutch Sint Maarten are an indication that gambling is a favorite past time for visitors and residents. The providers of frozen food must have misunderstood our passion for the uncertainty of slot machines.

SXM Airport Continues to Evolve

This year, December 3rd marked the 75th year anniversary of Princess Juliana International Airport. Eleven days later the airport re-opened their indoor terminals for the first time since Hurricane Irma in September 2017.

Full Article on Page 4
By Leslie Hickerson
Full Article on Page 6
Continued on Page 13
Letter From the Editor
January 4, 2019

Happy New Year! I hope 2019 is prosperous for all. I certainly enjoyed the firework display and seeing so many faces (familiar and new) out and about as the clock struck midnight.

Now that another year has begun, I take this opportunity as a challenge to continue to bring you content that is innovative, informative and passionate about what our island is all about. You will see that the centerpiece of our thoughtful island map with numbers correlating to hot spots of where to dine, shop and party. Use this as a guide around St. Maarten/St-Martin!

As always, all 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.

Have a terrific week!

Hillary 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: 910 or +1 721 543-1111
Police: 911 or +1 721 542-2222
Fire Department: 919 or +1 721 545-4222

French Side
Ambulance: +590 (590) 52 00 52
Hospital: +590 (590) 52 26 29
Police: +590 (590) 87 88 33

Entire Island
24 Hour Emergency Pharmacy:
+1 721 581-6243

ST-MAARTEN.COM Weekly Edition

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Learn How Gold is Priced
By Hilary Grant, GIA Graduate Gemologist

How gold is priced is an unnecessarily complicated topic, but this article will help you buy gold like an expert.

Have you heard the term ‘spot price’ before? Spot price is the current market price that gold can be bought or purchased at right now. The price of gold changes daily because it is a tradeable commodity.

The spot gold price is per ounce, but when using in the jewelry industry we use grams. One ounce is exactly 31.1034768. So, to get the per gram gold price, we would divide the ounce price by 31.1034768. Here’s an example of how that math equation would work.

If the spot gold price is $1320.00 per ounce: 1320.00 / 31.1034768 = $42.44 per gram.

Gold comes out of the ground only one way: flaming, bright yellow. For jewelry use, we typically alloy gold for three reasons: 1- to change the color or appearance, 2- to make it easier to work with or more durable, and 3- to lower the cost.

Continued on Page 18
The End of Frozen Food Roulette

Continued from Page 1

The many casinos on Dutch Sint Maarten are an indication that gambling is a favorite past time for visitors and residents alike. The providers of frozen food, especially the ones offering pricey pints of Ben's & Jerry's, must have misunderstood our passion for the uncertainty of slot machines. They managed to turn the purchase of ice cream into a gamble: for $7, we never know if we get some delicious, creamy goodness or a block of crystallized, refrozen and often spoiled content.

Now, the indulgence of ice cream is a vice and not a necessity. If the cooling chain has been interrupted, the consequence is mostly disappointment and frustration. But one shudders to think if spoiled ice cream is replaced with seafood...

There are several reasons for the poor standards of frozen food service on the island. The most obvious culprit is undertrained and underpaid supermarket staff. The freezers are refilled with merchandise out of shopping carts loaded to the max with items pulled out of the primary storage freezer. A market employee will take his or her sweet time to place the goods, no matter if the packages start to drip after a while. Oh, lunch break! Let’s take thirty minutes off; the frozen fish will refreeze, no problem. Too bad that after lunch, storing the packages of ice cream turns out to be a bit more work; because now they are so soft and mushy that they must be held with both hands not to deform and spill.

They will firm up within an hour in the freezer again, goes the thinking. Same for deliveries: How long will the merchandise wait in the tropical sun once removed from the freezer truck?

What we do understand is the fact that freezers occasionally break down, everywhere in the world. Only that on this island, management doesn’t feel the need to really dump thawed items. Nobody notices, right?

Now there is a good reason to hope that this cavalier attitude towards frozen food will change for the better.

The highly-respected owners of the island’s leading gourmet shop, Grapewine, have decided to open an equally cutting-edge store for frozen food. And this will set new standards.

Thiriet is a French top brand for gourmet style meals. Only the best ingredients are used, following the strict regulations of France and the European Union for food production.

The new St-Martin store offers a vast selection of products in the most professional set-up we have seen yet on the island (or elsewhere).

Combine a visit of the Grapewine Shop, with its endless assortment of delicacies, wines, and champagnes and walk next door into the Thiriet outlet. Stock up on ready-made meals, pizza, and ice cream, but also find vegetables and meats neatly packaged for your own cooking projects. Doesn’t that sound better than playing a game of frozen food roulette?
Don't Be Taken for a Ride: Common Car Rental Scams

Our island's rental car industry is highly competitive - brutally so. In the past, there were strong French tax incentives for the nation's overseas territories, and among the sectors supported were rental cars. This led to an oversaturation of our local market. Estimates say that there are more than one hundred thirty car rentals companies registered on tiny SXM.

Competition creates fair market prices, or so the rule goes. But if there is too much of it, the individual players must turn into sharks to survive.

This why searching for a decent rental car deal is such a gamble for travelers. If the advertised rate is fantastically low, renter beware. There comes the point where the daily charge is so low that common sense tells us that it's not possible. Nobody can rent a decent car for - say - $14 per day. Even if the car is rented out 70% of the year (which it's not), how should an operator make his lease payments for the vehicle, pay the exorbitant monthly rent for the tiny booth at the airport, pay the crazy rent for any commercial property alongside Airport Road, pay staff and finally make a profit?

Of course, they can't. So, they find other ways to make up for cash flow. One example is the famous passenger side door lock scam: when taking over the car, renters check with the company's representative for scratches and dents and have them marked on the rental form. Nobody checks the passenger side door lock. Once the car is returned, the representative 'discovers' that the lock has been tampered with. As a renter, it's now your responsibility: $280 added to your bill.

A recent survey among the larger fleets on the island shows that about 70% of the right-hand locks are damaged. We are talking about vehicles which are all cleaned up and ready for the next customer - including their busted locks, which will help to triple the published rate.

The additional insurance called the Collision Damage Waiver or CDW is another major profit center for car rentals; these companies are all 'self-insured', which translates into them not having any insurance. They pocket the fees they charge (typically $14/day), and if there is some damage to swallow, the in-house mechanic or body-man will fix it for a fraction of the price of a dealership. In most parts of the world, the CDW does not carry any deductible.

Not so on our island: here, the customer still has to cover between $800 to $1,500 and the CDW only kicks in for damages above this amount.

The trouble is that on our slow-traffic island, few accidents cause dramatic damage. Most fender-benders can be fixed for much less than the standard deductible, turning the CDW into wasted money.

Rental cars get stolen, especially the economy models from Hyundai and the ordinary types from Toyota. If possible, try to get a less popular model, because this car won't be a target for thieves.

Please remember: if you don't pay for the CDW and comprehensive coverage, you actually have to replace the stolen vehicle with your money!

And last: the dilemma of locking a car or not. There is much evidence to recommend treating a rental car as a convertible; knowing that you can't secure an open car, a driver always assures that there are no valuables inside.

Same should go for a rental: leave it open, but don't keep anything inside. At least the curious wannabe thief doesn't have to smash in a window to check out what's in the glove compartment... only to find nothing.
This year, December 3rd marked the 75th year anniversary of Princess Juliana International Airport. Eleven days later the airport re-opened their indoor terminals for the first time since Hurricane Irma in September 2017.

For over a year the arrival and departure terminals have been operating out of temporary pavilions. While these structures provided enough shelter and comfort for airlines to start operating flights to our island they were far from permanent.

The indoor terminals still have a long way to go before they are back to what we had before the storm, but traveling in and out of St. Maarten has become much more streamlined. So, what can you expect when you leave our tropical paradise?

Drop off is still located on the East side of the building, near the entrance of the paid parking area. The current access to the terminal is the same location as the exit for those arriving to the island (the same exit that was operating pre- Irma 2017).

As you enter you will see the exit from the new baggage claim area followed by the check-in counters for the airlines currently operating on St. Maarten.

At the far end of the hall you can find the security entrance, which leads to luggage scanners and metal detectors before you enter the two-story departure hall. Several restaurants are already operating in the terminal including Domino’s Pizza, Le Bistro by Bacchus, Johney Burger and several more. As the construction continues restaurants, bars and shops will continue to open, as well as additional gates and seating areas.

Unfortunately, the jet bridges are not yet operational. You can still expect to take a bus from the building to your plane for boarding.

For those traveling off island remember that weekends and holidays are always busier than other travel dates. Allow a minimum of 3 hours for check-in and security on such days!

If you will be returning to the island you no longer have to wait for luggage to be hand delivered as the baggage carousels are functioning in the arrival area.

The Princess Juliana Airport met their goal of re-opening the permanent terminal by early December this year after devastating damages from Hurricane Irma. While construction will be ongoing for quite some time, this is a huge step forward for our island.

The more functional the airport becomes the more flights will be scheduled; driving down the cost of airline tickets and increasing the number of tourists coming to visit the island.

Progress may seem slow at times but our island will rebuild stronger and better than before. As we say, we are SXM Strong.

Back under a firm roof: check in counters in terminal
All You Need to Know: January's Birthstone- Glorious Garnet

Garnet in medieval Latin means “pomegranate,” most likely named due to the red color. Necklaces decorated with red garnets bejeweled the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Signet rings in ancient Rome featured garnets, which were used to stamp he wax that secured important documents. The clergy and nobility of the Middle Ages preferred red garnets. So, what is Garnet? Garnet is comprised of several minerals.

Five of the minerals (pyrope, almandine, spessartine, grossular and andradite) play a factor in what color the Garnet will be. Pyrope and almandine range from purple to red. Spessartine is found in vibrant oranges and yellows. Andradite is mostly yellow to green, often referred to as demantoids. Grossular Garnets have the widest range of colors: colorless through yellow, reddish orange and orangy red, as well as a rich vibrant green called Tsavorite.

Garnets come from regions and countries around the globe. In 19th century Russia, green demantoid garnets from the Ural Mountains were cherished by the Russian royal family and used by the great jeweler, Peter Carl Fabergé.

Today, the African continent supplies much of the world’s garnet. Namibia is now producing demantoids, and most of the bright green Tsavorites in the market are from Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar. For many years, Southern California’s Little Three mining area was known for producing this fascinating gem.

The birthstone for January is also found in Myanmar, Brazil, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

January babies are lucky to have the stunning and assorted garnet as their birthstone. Garnets are typically thought of as red, but garnets come in an extraordinary variety of striking colors like orange, yellow, purple and bright green. There are even garnets that change color, like the most well-known color change gem: Alexandrite.
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.

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

Puzzle Solution on Page 17
Find Shopping, Services and Activities Here

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ST-MARTEN.COM Weekly Edition Page 9
Visit the Island's Party and Dining Hot Spots

1. **St. Maarten’s Best International Restaurant**
   - Contact: +1 721 546-3500
   - Located at the Allegria Resort - enter at security gate - free parking! Call 1 721 545-5390 for reservation

2. **RD Vous Lounge**
   - Authentic Japanese Cuisine Prepared Fresh
   - Call for Reservation: +1 721 587-8859
   - Plaza de Lugares, Simpson Bay Yacht Club

3. **Karakter Restaurant**
   - Open from 9AM for Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
   - Live entertainment every day of the week from 6PM
   - 121 Simpsonbay Road
   - info.karakterbeach.com • +1 (721) 522-99 63

4. **Little Mobay**
   - Authentic Jamaican Cuisine
   - Open from 7 AM until 1 AM
   - Maho Village next to supermarket
   - Call: +1 721 545-0279 for reservation

5. **MARIO BISTROT**
   - POMPO NOVO "BLAND OF FRENCH, ASIAN AND CARIBBEAN CUISINE"
   - Marina and Lagoon View Dining
   - Open for dinner (Sunday Lunch)
   - (Mon.-Sat. 6 PM to 10 PM/Sun. lunch only)
   - Porto Cupecoy at the Yacht Harbour
   - Call +1 721 523-2760 for reservation

6. **The Boon**
   - Right on pristine Simpson Bay Beach!
   - Casual Gourmet Bistro
   - Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner (8 AM to 10 PM)
   - 117 Simpson Bay Road, Simpson Bay
   - Call +1 721 545-3070 for reservation

7. **Bistrot Caraibes**
   - Only Tabletop BBQ Grill Restaurant
   - Open 5.30 PM to late
   - At the Princess Casino in Port de Plaisance
   - Call +1 721 526-4049 for reservation
   - EASY PARKING
   - www.MelangeSXM.com

8. **Plantage Restaurant Bar & Lounge**
   - "Best chicken wings & other comfort food!"
   - Open for Lunch and Dinner
   - At the Paradise Mall - Welfare Road
   - Call 1 721 556-7229 for reservation

9. **Taco Macho**
   - Enjoy the best of Latin hospitality
   - Mexican - Colombian Restaurant & Bar
   - Happy Hour: Beer $2 - Margarita $5
   - Located at the Allegria Resort - enter at security gate - free parking! Call 1 721 545-5390 for reservation
This exclusion of St-Martin born entrepreneurs had led to some understandable discontent. And their operations are sourly missed by repeat visitors to our island.

Positive is the fresh energy perceivable at the shopping district of Hope Estates. This mall area is only 2.5km (1.5 miles) from Orient Village and buzzing with boutiques, restaurants and gourmet shops.

Let's hope that the coming weeks will see a few more local places to reopen.

Otherwise, the entire Orient Beach region is off to an excellent start for 2019 and will be the island's signature beach again.

---

**Sushi, Teppanyaki & International Cuisine**

For reservations or take out call 1 (721) 544-2323

Open 5 PM to 11 PM - Closed Tuesday

Welfare Road - Simpson Bay - Right next to Pineapple Pete
Zhaveri is more than just a fine jewelry store, they are home to a myriad of luxury goods including timepieces and handbags.

Walk into their new location at 68 Front Street, and you will be impressed with the bountiful collection of GIA certified loose diamonds, and masterfully crafted jewelry showcasing diamonds ranging from colorless to as blue as the Caribbean Sea. Also available is an assortment of lavishly appointed gemstone jewelry: tanzanite, emerald, sapphire and ruby just to name a few.

But the appeal of Zhaveri Luxury doesn’t end at extraordinary jewels at competitive prices. They also carry high end brands of timepieces for men and women providing you with the opportunity to shop for yourself as well as that special someone.

The handbags are just as rich in detail and quality as the rest of this shopping mecca.

Combine the endless choices in opulent offerings with excellence in customer service and it is easy to understand why Zhaveri Luxury has been in business on St. Maarten since 1986. Shop effortlessly at the Budhrani family’s store with their ethical and educated sales team for a pleasant and satisfying shopping experience at Zhaveri Luxury in Sint Maarten.
Adventures in Sex and Dating in St. Maarten
A Regular Column by Leslie Hickerson

People use all manner of excuses to be or not be with someone, but this next story is a bit of a doozy. Religion is a dividing line in many ways and maybe more so in sex and dating than any other situation. Take our next couple as an example of fire and ice. An Atheist (Rick) and Seventh Day Adventist (Janae) became friends. They got along very well and would talk for hours, but Janae told Rick from the start, “We are just friends, don’t try to seduce me.” Rick was a gentleman and even though she continued to visit his apartment for hours, he never made a move.

Then one day Janae was leaving after a long visit she waited at the door with her hand on his arm. Rick leaned in for a quick kiss goodbye and the switch was flipped. She went from being a reserved church girl to a wild one, and much to his delight it was on! The visits kept happening but now there were fewer clothes and less conversation. As the relationship progressed Rick wanted to go out and date properly, but Janae protested. She couldn’t date him, she said, because he was an Atheist and she was very religious. This didn’t make sense, if she could sleep with him (over and over again mind you) why couldn’t she date him? “I had no control over it, you seduced me.”

Sometimes people fight what they really are to fit into what they want to be. In this case Janae was hiding a great big freak flag behind a church veil. Poor Rick was everything she couldn’t have, which made her want him more... even if it was just for a little while.
The King of Shawarmas: Abe's Little Jerusalem

Shawarma dishes are an alternative to the ever-present hamburger variations and have conquered St. Maarten years ago. In Simpson Bay alone there are four locations offering this meal, originating in the middle east.

Never had a shawarma? Traditionally it is thin slices of marinated meat: lamb, mutton, beef, chicken or even turkey. The slices are placed onto a skewer of sorts, and slowly rotates as it cooks, roasting the outer layer of these sumptuous meats. When served, it can be alone or wrapped in a pita or flatbread; often with cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, pickled vegetables and a delicious sauce.

Visitors and residents have the choice to enjoy shawarma in attractive restaurant surroundings or by visiting efficient fast-food joints.

Little Jerusalem is somewhere in the middle: it is not a full-service tablecloth restaurant, but also not a soulless fast-food franchise.

Located right in the heart of Simpson Bay, the owner Abe managed to create shawarma platters straying away from the traditional. People talk about his shawarma, it's that good!

"My biggest hit right now is the Shawarma Spaghetto platter - I can't prepare enough of it," explains Abe, busy flipping meat on the stove.

His wife Kathy and son Gamal assist with all the tasks - as long as it is not preparing the food.

Why did he name the restaurant after a historic city? "Because I was born there, I'm originally from Jerusalem," states Abe matter-of-factly. "My restaurant is a place where people from all backgrounds and believes can relax and enjoy the food."

Little Jerusalem is always busy from lunch-time to late dinner hours. Among the eateries in Simpson Bay, the balance between value and taste has no comparison, and this is the easy explanation for Abe's success.
Crossword Puzzle Solution

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 funny you’ll ever find on the island.
A Beach Bar That Loves SXM As Much as You

Walk along the boardwalk in Philipsburg and you will pass many bars and restaurants that will attempt to win your business. But keep walking until you reach I Love SXM Beach Bar, and you will see why this establishment is different from the rest.

There are no white tablecloths in this beachside watering hole, just appropriately priced food that is skillfully prepared and serving by warm and welcoming staff. This beach bar is just steps away from the glistening Caribbean waters which allows you to enjoy the best of both worlds: great food and cocktails with a stunning view.

Also located on site is their well-appointed gift shop, stocked with souvenirs that will show off your love for our charming island. The only question that will remain is who loves St. Maarten more? We bet after a visit to this quaint beach bar it will be you.

Learn How Gold is Priced

Continued from Page 3

By Hilary Grant, GLA GG

Gold comes in many different karats like 10, 14 and 18. 24 KT gold is 100% pure gold. The lower you go in karat, the lower the metal price AND the less amount of pure gold in your jewelry.

Ready for some more math? So that you know the amount of actual gold in the karatage you want, here is the calculation:

If it is 18 KT gold: 18 / 24 = 75% gold

Now you must remember, that the cost per gram we figured out above is the cost for 24 Karat Gold used in your jewelry only. This does not factor in different karatages or labor.

So, let’s put all that information together. If you wanted to purchase an 18KT gold chain, weighing 40 grams the manufacturing cost would be:

$42.44 per gram X 75% = $31.83 per gram of 18KT gold

$31.83 X 40 grams = $1,273.20

So, the gold alone in your chain cost $1,273.20!
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If you don’t know jewelry... know your jeweler!

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