NoCo Art Studio Hosting Exhibition in Terres Basses

The exclusive Terres Basses neighborhood is the unlikely location of an ambitious art gallery and working artist’s studio. NoCo Art Studio is part of the Trimborn Estate, a residential property with a separate building housing the workplace of sisters Corinna and Norma Trimborn. Both are accomplished artists and display their paintings right there at the studio.

A business located inside a posh gated community and far away from other commercial activities can hardly expect any accidental customer traffic. Norma and Corinna realized this of course and this is why they developed a series of regular events, always on Saturday evenings, where the public is invited to take a free tour of the artwork featured.

It is the knowledgeable Aniko van Nie who takes the guests around and helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the different styles of the sisters. Aniko is also available during regular day time and happy to arrange for viewing appointments.

The weekly events grew into regular parties and colleagues are frequently invited as well to display their work. For the 31st of May, there is a special exhibition scheduled for Colin Bootson, an award-winning artist and illustrator with Caribbean roots.

A visit to NoCo Art Studio is a unique chance to get in touch with the artists themselves, and to interact with them in their own working environment.

Cruising to St. Maarten - 2nd Part

Chris Morvan arrives in the Antillean islands and compares the different ports to St. Maarten/St-Martin.

Is Cannabis Legalization Coming?

Sarina Alexander researches the status of Cannabis legalization in the Caribbean and lists the economic benefits.

Full Article on Page 4  Full Article on Page 7  Continued on Page 14
Letter From the Editor
May 23rd, 2019
The event season for St. Maarten/St-Martin is behind us and the quiet time of the year has started. As a magazine, this is our chance to focus now on smaller events and individual artists. Because there is still a lot happening on the island, just not on the grand scale of Carnival.

In this week's edition, Chris Morvan takes us back to his first cruise ship experience with a few shore side trips to compare other ship stops to St. Maarten. Leslie Hickerson reports on her day charter excursion with the ultra-fast catamaran Arawak, a boat still actively competing in regattas. And Sarina Alexander takes us through her 'Women's Pink Full Moon Circle' encounter, a rather esoteric happening.

It is the aim of our publication to serve both the Dutch and the French side of the island. Don't let the Dutch spelling of St-Maarten.com misguide you; this is just the domain name coming up as number one in Google searches about SXM and we are lucky to own it. But the information we provide serves the complete island. That's why we invite business owners and artists from Saint Martin to also provide us with information about upcoming events.

Jan Thoelke
Publisher

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.

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An Idiot’s Guide to a Caribbean Cruise  
Continued from Page 1  
by Chris Morvan  
Part II: Shore Time

A day or so out from Fort Lauderdale, we’re getting used to being on a ship. The movement is, to me, barely perceptible, although some fellow travelers would have you think it was like going around Cape Horn in a bathtub.

It’s time for the first port of call: Labadee, Haiti, and it’s an unreal experience. Labadee is a resort owned by Royal Caribbean and used by a couple of other cruise lines. It’s a peninsula fringed with beaches and there is no sense of being in Haiti or anywhere else. You might have docked at an island owned by James Bond villain Ernst Stavros Blofeld, except he wouldn’t have allowed people selling touristic knick-knacks and paintings to set up shop in a little kind of village to one side.

Following a few hours on the beach, it’s off to a tent-roofed area for lunch, which is provided by the ship, so again there is no flavor of Haiti involved. A perfectly nice day, but it could have been anywhere.

At each port of call it is possible to pay serious money for a tour, or at least a lift to a part of the country that has a sense of local identity, but we’re doing this on a budget and, judging by the familiar hordes on the beach, so are most people.

Labadee on Haiti is probably a different experience for those who live in some landlocked area where sand and sun are a novelty, but for someone who has been in the Caribbean for years, it’s nothing you wouldn’t get at home.

The next destination is Puerto Rico, where the cruise terminal is right by the original part of the capital, complete with narrow, winding streets, cafes, bars and shops. We came here last year, so on this occasion we give it a miss and take a taxi to Las Americas mall, to take advantage of the free wifi (it’s very expensive on the ship) and because we know the mall has some good places for a bit of clothes shopping. Again, passengers can take a tour if they wish, or just wander around Old San Juan.

Haitian artist at Labadee poses with his work
Shore trip III is Sint Maarten, and we decline the opportunity to go home and water the plants, preferring to stay on a half-empty ship – and it is, surprisingly, only half empty. What Sint Maarten has to offer in comparison to other stops is that it’s only a short walk to Philipsburg, and while the road from Point Blanche to Town is not the prettiest, Great Bay is a magnificent turquoise advertisement spread out for all to see.

Once into the shopping streets, the visitors have every opportunity to spend money with the jewelers who are so eager to welcome them and indeed depend on them for their survival. It may seem odd to find people from cruise ships in far-flung parts of the island, but the confident ones get everywhere, from plane-watching at Maho to the market in Marigot and getting roasted and windblown at Orient Bay. But if you want to stay within striking distance of the ship, Philipsburg is an accommodating place to be.

The final destination on this cruise is Basseterre, St Kitts, where the cruise terminal called Port Zante with its shopping center has its own little tourist trap before you get to the old town.

Again, it’s not the most attractive part of the city, but at least the gateway to it, through an arch in a dilapidated old building, gives the idea that this is a real place with a rich history. In that building a lonely girl sits in the deserted museum with its faded printed pages telling of the sugar trade and slavery, while the crowds from the ships favor the t-shirt shops, cafes and tours.

On both sides of the dock there is sea but no beaches, so shelling out for a tour is an attractive option. A fellow guest tells me later that he and his wife were approached by all and sundry, offering guided tours for a fee, until one man persuaded them to wear one of his wristbands, with no obligation to take his tour but in the knowledge that the other operators would leave them alone. It

We spend a couple of hours looking around and then return to the ship with two bottles of wine, which are immediately confiscated, to be returned on the last night. It’s the sort of disincentive for both passengers and local traders that ensures cruise ships are not universally popular. Sure, you can buy some Guavaberry liqueur, but you can’t enjoy it till the cruise is over.

After St Kitts the ship presumably turns around, although you get no sense of that, and it’s two days at sea, heading back to Florida.

I can honestly say I haven’t relaxed so completely for years, and if we put on a few pounds along the way, so what? Reality, cooking your own food and getting some exercise will soon take care of that.
Let’s Hear It For The Chefs
A series looking at the people who make the food in our island.
Part two: Life in the kitchen
Chris Morvan interviews Vesna and Yannick Debrouée

Continued from Page 1
With so many talented chefs in St. Maarten/St-Martin, choosing one to focus on was not easy – so we went for a partnership. Of the many restaurants in Simpson Bay, one that stands out for the styles of food it offers is Vesna Taverna.

This well-established place thrives on the combined culinary skills of Yannick Debrouée and his wife Vesna, the woman who gives the restaurant its name. Yannick is French, Vesna is from Macedonia and between them they have created a menu that is diverse but consistent in one aspect: quality.

While Vesna is the familiar face whose vibrant personality makes her an ideal front-of-house person, she is also very much involved behind the scenes. If you’ve ever eaten there you won’t be surprised to hear that she does most of the talking in the interview.

The story of this restaurant’s cooks is unusual in that neither of them went the traditional route of catering college, and yet they are constantly honing and updating their skills. Every year they head for École Lenôtre, a culinary school in Paris, where they keep up to date with new developments, ideas and techniques.

They met at the Fish Pot restaurant in Grand Case. Yannick had arrived in St Martin to use his managerial skills before learning the trade on the job with some of the top chefs in that celebrated haven of great food. Vesna had come for a month’s vacation before deciding this would be a good place to stay. In a drastic change of direction (she had been studying law and business administration), she too developed her culinary skills not in a classroom but through working in restaurant kitchens.

Both having a passion for cooking, it wasn’t long before they decided to open their own restaurant, and they identified the Palapa area in Simpson Bay as the place to be. Finding the right premises was not so easy, so they took what was available: a bagel house on the other side of the road from where they are now and they ran that for six years before the current distinctive wooden building became available.

The fact that Vesna Taverna serves breakfast as well as lunch and dinner stems from the bagel house. Although they had taken that business considerably upmarket from what it had been, breakfast was still very much part of it. So they already had a customer base, and when they moved across the street, it made sense to retain those early-morning customers.

With Yannick already steeped in French cuisine because it was what he grew up with, Vesna quickly came to understand and admire it.

“It became my passion because it is amazing,” she says. “It has no limits.” Both of them also love the variety of it, with the cuisine of northern France rich and intense, while the southern part of the country has more of a Mediterranean style, lighter and dependent on olive oil rather than cream and butter.

Presentation is an art that has become increasingly elaborate in recent years and we are all familiar with the sculptures and feats of engineering that make us feel guilty when we have to destroy them to actually eat the food.

“Yes, presentation is very important,” Vesna says, “but if the taste is not good it means nothing.”

Another feature of Vesna Taverna is Greek food, which is available – and hugely popular – on Saturday nights. Vesna’s father was Greek and she was taught some recipes by her grandmother.

“I didn’t appreciate it at the time,” she acknowledges, “but now I’m really glad she showed me those things.”

Finally, I ask if the couple would recommend recommend cooking as a career, and the response is not straightforward.

“It is not easy to find good staff,” Vesna says. “It is a rewarding career but it is very demanding too. It takes over your life. But if you’re passionate about it, then believe in yourself and go for your dream.”
The Economic Benefits of Cannabis Legalization in the Caribbean

By Sarina Alexander

To those not aware of the different Caribbean cultures and realities, by thinking about our hemisphere, visuals of dancehall clips with natty dreadlocks rastas with huge spliffs pinched between their fingers pop into their minds... until these thoughts are washed away by images of turquoise blue waves and white sandy beaches.

Truth be told, marijuana possession is still illegal in a vast majority of the Caribbean. Jamaica, despite its traditional Rastafarian sub-culture, had only decriminalized it in 2015. Following the legalization of the drug in January 2014 in Colorado, it barely took two years to develop a “pot tourism” that generated 4.1 million out of 82.4 million visits to the state in 2016. Although the Compassionate Use Act of 1996, (Proposition 215), making California the first state of America to legalize medical cannabis, it wasn’t before November 2016 that its recreational use was legalized by the signing of the Adult Use of Marijuana Act or Proposition 64.

The benefits of the full legalization of cannabis are of no secret to the sovereign states of Uruguay and Canada, who made the recreational use of the plant permissible by law respectfully in 2013 and 2018, despite the volatility of the stock market.

We must mention though, that the Netherlands made the recreational use of cannabis available in coffee shops since 1976 where they decriminalized it without completely legalization it. Cannabis-derived products have also surfaced such as organic hemp oil, CBD oil, pain relieving hemp cream, natural hemp gummies, hemp capsules or pharmaceutical products like the Sativex mouth-spray for neuropathic pain alleviation, the sleep apnea reliever Dronabinol or the epilepsy disorder treatment drug Epidiolex.

Certain members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and fifteen nations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have placed a particular amount of interest in their agenda to decriminalize cannabis. Thus far, Jamaica, Antigua, Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) appear to be the only ones that have positioned themselves on this recently permitted market. Trinidad and Tobago will be joining the bandwagon, sometime this year.

A press release from the OECS states: “Speaking from SVG, Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Saboto Caesar said the passing of the Bill in Parliament on the December 11th, 2018 signified the Caribbean island was now positioned to become a globally leading medicinal cannabis hub not only in terms of high-quality production but research.”

Yet, Peter Wickham, the Director of the Barbados-based political research organization, Caribbean Development Research Services, believes that the Caribbean’s late coming into this fresh but lightning fast race puts it in an unlikely position to truly benefit from the pot tourism’s potential unless an actual “pot tourism experience” is developed where you can go to a resort or a bar. The topic of creating “wellness experiences” is also being studied by tourism officials as a destination selling point or most likely marijuana tours like in Toronto.

Jamaica is already going in that direction with the opening of Kaya Farms, the island’s very first marijuana dispensary which “offers a multi-purpose facility outfitted with a café and spa alongside the dispensary itself as well as an on-site farm” as said by Civilized.life.
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

Careful! This week's crossword puzzle has a couple trick questions. 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 we are using compound words in the answer, they do NOT have spaces!

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 SXM@EMAIL.COM.

Puzzle Solution on page 19
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St. Maarten Women's Pink Full Moon Circle

By Sarina Alexander

Continued from Page 1

Last month on Friday, April 19th, 2019 we experienced a full moon in Libra called a Pink Full Moon. But unless you’re walking around like Elton John wearing ruby-red palm-front frames sunglasses, it was pretty evident that the moon was anything but pink.

Also called the sprouting grass moon, the egg moon, and the fish moon; the Pink Full Moon got its nickname from the blooming of a pink flower native to North America, called the wild ground phlox, which begins to bloom in April.

Full moons were used in ancient times to track the seasons, but it is no secret that since the dawn of time in many cultures traditions, the moon has also been associated with “moon magic”.

This pink moon was an invitation for balance, healing, rebirth through self-care and harmony, opening a gateway for love; whether it be self-love or love for others. To experience the cleansing and purifying powers of the moon, people often conduct rituals alone of through a moon circle.

A moon circle is a gathering of people – typically women, who come together, creating a sacred space for themselves where they can pay homage to nature, more particularly to the moon but also a space of female energy, support, and magnified manifestation.

The women in St Maarten, just like many other women around the world have come together on the night of April 19th to create their own moon circle.

Dressed in white, the meeting point was on one of the island’s many beaches. Though one would expect it to be at some hidden dark location, the gathering was actually somewhere well lit by nearby businesses, which offered a form of reassurance and security to the all-women’s group. Moon Goddess, Wind Goddess, and Sea Goddess were among us. It seemed like Mother Nature was a bit fidgety, as she had not been honored for the past two months but permission to begin the ceremony was requested by the leader of the circle and so it began.

The mistress of ceremony invited each woman to present herself, and once they’ve been acquainted, some women were asked to change the sites they had made for themselves on nicely placed shawls for another. The purpose is also the discovery of the other, creating a form of bond with another woman and building a way of trust as that woman, complete or partial stranger, now has to smudge you.

A bundled sage is burnt, and following the mistress of ceremony’s instructions, each woman came up in pairs to smudge the other with positive intentions, wishes, and energy, before being individually smudged again by the circle leader.

Revised, the circle leader now invites each woman to place herself in a comfortable position for meditation, guided introspection and release. Taking in her words, focusing on the intentions, a connection with one’s self is made. Suddenly, you are more aware. You hear the wind, the sea, the birds, your own breath, your heartbeats, your thoughts. Suddenly, the feelings are intensified. You are now asked to direct your thoughts towards a loved one of your choice, towards another person that you wish to liberate, to help heal, to help find inner-peace, and you feel more, more deeply until something unclamps. Whatever you had clamped around your heart breaks open, and you begin to feel the warmth of tears trailing down your face.

Water. Water will later be revealed as the keyword for this evening, and indeed, water in many forms was present.

Now, forming a line facing the sea, each pair of women shared a bottle of water that they poured into a calabash bowl. Standing in the sea, each woman would individually honor the elements that their ancestors before releasing whatever energy no longer served them, to the ebb tide and welcoming a new, more empowering energy with the flow.

Before closing the ceremony, the circle leader had a message for each woman, herself included. Calling out the names of those she knew with a smile or politely asking the newcomers their names with a smile no less shy, we saw intense focus, as she listened to the wind, receiving each message.

Anger and fear were dominant emotions among the members of the circle. We were urged to release ourselves from these energies that were crippling us, and some got messages so personalized, that it was “frightening”.

Who was revealing these secrets to this woman? How does she know? Does she even know?

Finally, forming an embraced circle, the women shared their feelings and testimonies. What a powerful and freeing moment that was for many of us. Hugs! So many hugs and well wishes. A real support group of women, with a strange sentiment of genuine love, unconditional love, from complete or partial strangers.

We may not have transformed into werewolves or vampires, but that was indeed, a transformational moment and a night to remember.

If you wish to discover this monthly women moon circle, email StMaarten.Com Weekly Edition for information.

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Centre Commercial de Mont Vernon - Next to LEADER PRICE Supermarket - 15 minutes from Philipsburg
NoCo Art Studio in Terres Basses, a posh neighborhood also referred to as the French Lowlands, is opening its doors for a one-evening showing, entitled ‘Reflecting on the Reality of Culture and Nature’ on Friday, the 31st of May between 6 PM to 9 PM. The show brings together unique artworks created by the artist Corinna Trimborn and international artist and illustrator Colin Bootman. These two masters find a crossing of paths, ideas, and influences of the Caribbean nature and culture, which will be represented in their new artwork. The show will be an exclusive experience for the visitor by adding a visual video-show in the sculpture garden that is surrounding the exhibition space!

Paintings by Corinna Trimborn will capture the structure of Caribbean nature while combining abstract with realism to leave room for imagination in the viewer’s eye. Trimborn is a transplant from Germany, who completed studies with honors in Art and Design. She founded the Lupa Art Association and produced performance art in several European museums.

After her experience as a performance artist, she continued to study oil painting, developing a broad range of art styles; such as expressionism, abstract, figurative, and surrealism. Besides her development in painting she has also worked for many years as a production designer for German television. Corinna and her sister Norma Trimborn founded NoCo Art studio in 2001 and since then have made St. Maarten/St-Martin their home.

Colin Bootman is an NAACP award-winning artist and illustrator, with origins and inspiration from the rich culture of Trinidad and Tobago. Bootman’s early training in fine art was in New York, where he completed La Guardia High School of the Arts and at a college level training at the School of Visual Arts. He studied photography, writing, and illustration. Bootman writes and illustrates children’s books, the first of which was published in 1994, with more than 30 books published in the United States.

He received many awards for his work as an illustrator of children’s books. His paintings have been exhibited throughout the Caribbean in galleries and museums in the United States. The pictures that will be exposed at NoCo represent a reflection on many cultural aspects of life on the Caribbean islands.

The one-evening showing is a unique experience for all art lovers to view new work and discuss them with the exhibiting artists. The showing takes place on Friday 31st of May between 6 PM to 9 PM.

**Directions:**
The studio is located at 39 Falaise des Oiseaux, - which is the road to Plum Bay Beach. Drive to the French side from Cupecoy, continue to go straight, do not turn left for La Samana. Go left only when you see 'Terres Basses' written on the wall, on your left-hand side. There you pass through the staffed security gate. Go straight up the winding road and enter at the third gate to the left! The gate will be open and a sign “Art Show Open” will welcome you. Please park outside along the street.

Call +590 690 10 64 65 if you need more directions.
Adventures in Sex and Dating in St. Maarten
A regular column by Leslie Hickerson
27: His Knight in Shining Armor -

Charmaine and Tony both have similar jobs on different islands. They come together in St. Maarten to do coordinated projects every so often. They got on very well but had always been just friends. One night, after a long week of work, the group of colleagues went out for a Simpson Bay Bar hop. They had drinks at several bars and ended up at Rhythm and Booze. Under the influence of lots of vodka and a few hours of dancing, sparks started to fly between the two. They left the bar together and spent some time making out in the car before she went to drop him at his AirBnB. When she stopped the car, and they were saying goodbye two men flanked the vehicle on either side.

One asked Charmaine for a ride or some cash. Drunken Tony didn’t realize that the men were a bit shady and so he got out of the car to leave. The man on his side started talking with him, asking him where he was staying. Charmaine who had been sobered up by her intuition called Tony back into the car. As he got inside, the man on his side grabbed the door to keep it open. When Charmaine saw this, she hit the gas, and the two men tried to run along with the car but soon fell behind. In her panic, Charmaine drove straight home where the two put the adrenaline they were feeling to good use. In the morning when they woke up, Tony found that he still had the key to the AirBnB in his pocket... the only key. As they arrived at the apartment, they found Tony’s colleague standing outside on the porch where he had spent the night waiting for him to return.

Continued from Page 7: Cannabis Legalization
by Sarina Alexander

In 2018, Herbal Awareness SXM members advocated for the legalization of the plant in Sint Maarten. The cause was also taken up and defended by the MP Christophe Emmanuel as an alternative budget solution to palliate or tackle the huge national budget deficit by its ability to generate “$60 million/107.4 million guilders in sales a year. (Source: stmaartennews.com).”

In case you’re still wondering, neither cannabis nor derived products are legal nor decriminalized in Sint Maarten (unless you want to count the Eco Styler Cannabis Sativa Oil gel that can be found in beauty stores).

Market Watch published a press release stating that “CBD hemp oil market 2019 will emerge globally and grow with 12% of CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) by 2023”. The Hemp Business Journal estimates that “CBD market will grow to a $2.1 billion market in consumer sales by 2020”.

Some of the concerns of local authorities pertaining to the legalization of the plant are understandable.

But hemp or cannabis-derived products such as CBD oils for locally-made or manufactured products could be a way to create a new market for the island, new products, new touristic attractions and in parallel generate more jobs, more revenues, and tax income.

Think about it: If the Greek billionaire and heir to the Coca-Cola fortune, Alki David, alongside the satellite billionaire, Chase Ergen, would go to such extent to “develop legal cannabis businesses” in the tax haven regions of the Eastern Caribbean such as Antigua, Dominica and St Kitts and Nevis – where they got arrested by the way - there must be something there...

No, it was not the $1.5 million dollars worth of THC-free hemp plants, seeds, and SwissX CBD oil products that were found on their private jet but rather the tax-free return on investment they could have made...
Sudoku Puzzles

Try your skills on our Sudoku. Ranging from easy to difficult, giving you the opportunity to see if you are a puzzle master. Need help or want to see if you got it correct? Find the Sudoku solutions on Page 18. Good Luck!

Easy

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 5 7 6 9
 8 2 9 6
4 9 2 1 5
5 6 8
7 9
1 5
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Medium

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8 4 9 5
1 2
8 7 3 5
9 2
4 7
2
6 9 1
6 7
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Difficult

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9 1 7 3
3 1
9 4 2 8
2 5
5
2
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Commemoration of Slavery
By Sarina Alexander

“Wuk free, wuk free, wuk free, DONE!” the chant that is said to have been sung by the former slaves of Saint Martin when they got the good news of their proclaimed freedom from slavery in May 1848. Although the French locals hold dearly to heart the commemoration of the abolition of slavery, there is still one slim issue with significant consequences for its celebration: the official date.

The abolition of slavery in Saint Martin has been celebrated for years, the same day as that of Guadeloupe, May 27. But, until much recently, in 2016, thanks to the researches of the historian and author, Daniella Jeffrey with the help of the archivist, Alfonso Blijden that it has been discovered through official letters of exchange that slavery was actually abolished in Saint Martin on May 28, 1848.

Some excerpts have led the author and historian Daniella Jeffrey to suspect that the official proclamation of emancipation might have been on May 27 but that the slaves weren’t actually freed until ten to twelve days after.

DJ claims that based on our oral history, the delay in the application could have been motivated by economic reasons.

Indeed, the picking of salt in Philipsburg was scheduled almost two weeks following the proclamation. An excerpt from a letter dated May 30 1848, from a Commander of the Dutch side to the Commanding Officer of the French side, stated that they “feared that the slaves from the Dutch side would try to flee towards the French side and that there, they would be treated as free. (...)” And “that would put the Dutch side in a precarious situation (...)”

Whereas the former slaves were not able to truly begin to enjoy their freedom until days after, Saint Martin now celebrates the commemoration of their freedom a day sooner.

So while you’re on the island, join the celebration and discover the cultural commemoration of slavery in Saint Martin.

Ti' Punch - How to Drink Rhum in the French Caribbean

Ti’ Punch is the traditional drink of the French Caribbean. The name derives from the French word Petit Punch or small punch, but this is a blatant lie. This drink will hit you hard in the tropical heat because it needs to be prepared by using the white Rhum Agricole which usually comes with 50% alc./vol.

The recipe for Ti’ Punch is simple: Squeeze a wheel of lime over a cold glass, ad ice cubes. Now ad 60 ml (or a double shot) of Rhum Agricole and a generous tablespoon of sugar cane syrup.

Sugar syrup and lime take the bite out of the strong rum and might tempt you to drink too fast. Wait for the first punch to hit until you order or prepare a second Ti’ Punch.

Served in an old-fashioned glass, a Ti’ Punch is the official way to enjoy white rum.
Visiting Dog Island on St. Maarten's Fastest Day Charter Yacht, the Sailing Catamaran Arawak

By Leslie Hickerson

“It’s the fastest sailboat in Sint Maarten, and you get to sit at the helm and drive as much as you like, you can get involved with trimming the sails. For most sailors, it’s the fastest they have ever sailed. There is definitely a “wow” moment when we start powering up the boat,” explains Nel.

Everything from the smooth and exhilarating sail to the one-on-one service provided by the crew made this a truly fantastic day. SXM resident Joelle Trembley describes it perfectly, “The experience of a lifetime! First of all, our hosts were wonderful. They made us feel very comfortable and safe and went out of their way to please us. It was a spectacular and unique boat ride. So smooth and fast at the same time. All in all, it was an awesome experience with our friends and family.”

Interested in watching the Arawak in her element racing head to head with other boats? You can look for her in next year’s racing season.

“The boat will be racing again in next year’s Caribbean racing season which runs from February until the end of April. We intend to defend our title in the Caribbean Multihull Challenge and then the rest of the racing calendar.”

“We do offer race charters for groups of maximum 6. They can charter the boat, with crew and select the event they would like to race in. We train them on the boat and how to make it go fast, and they do the rest, from grinding winches to hoisting sails and steering the boat,” said Nel.

Ready for even better news? The Arawak will be in Grand Case for the Fete de la Mer on June 1st and 2nd. If you attend the event, you can join the boat for a quick sail, which, of course, will lead to a full day booking once you get a taste of the fun!

This May I was lucky enough to join the crew aboard the racing catamaran Arawak for a day charter, and I can’t believe it took me this long to book. Sailing aboard The Arawak is a once in a lifetime experience that everyone who visits the island should take advantage of.

The history of the boat is an interesting one; she was designed and constructed in 1997 by Pascal Quintin and dubbed ‘Rendezvous Nature’ for the transatlantic race- Jacques Vabres. This race follows the path of the past coffee traders from Brazil to France.

After the competition, the boat was used in Guadeloupe before finding it’s way to a shipyard on Sint Maarten. It was here that the owners of Bluebeard Charters saw its potential and decided to put it back in the water for regatta racing and day charter excursions. For the last five years, the Arawak has been giving thrilling rides and offering a truly unique way to experience the waters around the island of St. Maarten/St-Martin.

When you climb aboard the catamaran, you can see that the boat is made for racing. As it is common with cats, nets stretch between the two hulls and provide plenty of space for lounging. The crew will take all of your personal items which you want to keep dry to store below deck. It is best to pass over everything, as you will get some refreshing sea spray during the cruise!

Before you set sail out of Simpson Bay, the skipper Rodney Williams and crew Francois Nel give you a briefing of what to expect for the day. When booking you choose between a full-day charter to the neighboring island of Anguilla or a half-day sail around St. Maarten/Martin. When traveling to Anguilla, there are several destinations open depending on the weather conditions, including the most remote areas like Dog Island or Scrub Island.

For my trip, we were lucky enough to sail to Dog Island. This destination usually is out of reach for day charter boats due to its distance from SXM, but the speed of the Arawak meant we anchored at our secluded beach easily.

On the way to your stop, you can sit back and relax with a drink in your hand (like me), or if you would like to join the crew, you can spend some time taking the helm or help to raise and lower the sails.
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