

Travel



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O&E Thursday, October 25, 1984

St. Maarten: bounty of beaches

Almost 1 per square mile

ST. MAARTEN — In most vacation spots, the question, "Which way to the beach?" elicits a simple response. Not so in St. Maarten.

Here, on this 37-square-mile Caribbean hideaway, the question invariably generates another, "What kind of beach are you looking for?" With three dozen beaches ringing the island, visitors have a wide range of choices.

There are long, looping scarves of white sand that seem to stretch on and on to the shimmering horizon. Beaches just big enough for two nestle between rocky headlands.

At Cupecoy Bay, coral cliffs overhang the turquoise sand. At Dawn Beach, sea grape trees with leaves like paper fans edge the strand.

And, according to a centuries-old tradition known as "The Queen's Walk," St. Maarten's shoreline is the property of the Dutch crown.

AS A RESULT, all beaches are open to everyone. For visitors this means exploring the island roads and byways with a sense of discovery.

A sandy track meandering through the palms may lead to a secluded beach that seems undisturbed since Christopher Columbus first sighted it nearly five centuries ago. A path zig-zagging down a low cliff may end in a

bathing spot not much larger than a beach blanket.

The gentle crescent of sand that curves along Mullet Bay reflects St. Maarten's "forget your cares" way of life. The low, yellow-roofed buildings of the Mullet Bay Resort and Casino, set back from the Mullet Bay beach, lend a Mediterranean air to the setting.

Mullet Bay's Watersports Center is located on the beach and provides more active beachgoers with boats and boards for sailing and windsurfing.

BEACH BUFFS with a taste for people-watching may opt for the Great Bay Beach, a few steps from Front Street in Philipsburg. St. Maarten's capital village.

Great Bay itself is dotted with sleek yachts on which holiday-makers loiter beneath billowing awnings. Nearby, brightly-painted island cargo boats rock at anchor, their crews busily engaged in loading and unloading everything from bananas to bedspreads.

Several hotels line the beach — St. Maarten Beach Club, Holland House, The Seaview — comfortable and convenient home bases for vacationers

who want to be close to the action.

At "Antioch's," a few steps from Philipsburg's "Little Pier," diners recline about both the imaginative menu and the panoramic view of sea and sky.

Snorkelers find Dawn Beach the perfect setting-off point for exploring the reefs that lie just off-shore. Below the surface, the views are a breathtaking as those on land.

BUTTERFLY fish, bright as flowers, dart among coral branches; sea fans, delicate as lace, wave in the gentle currents.

Lazily swimming through the placid Caribbean waters, snorkelers enter a world that is mesmerizing in its silent beauty. Back on land, there's always time for a refreshing drink and perhaps a snack at the Dining Room of the Dawn Beach Hotel whose louvered windows overlook the beach.

Equally evocative is Simpson Bay beach, a long parenthesis of sugar-white sand set between a picturesque fishing village and the murmuring sea. Bright blue nets festoon many of the fishermen's doorways and sturdy boats, red, yellow, green, are drawn up along the shoreline.

"Mary's Boon," which bills itself as "The Little Inn on the Big Beach," is an airy West Indian-style complex of cottages whose gingerbread-trimmed verandas are perfect spots for observing the passing scene.

FOR AL FRESCO dining beside the sea, "Folia's" at the opposite end of Simpson Bay beach offers continental cuisine in a Provencal setting of thick stone walls and cone-shaped roofs.

Life is unhurried and unpressured on tropical St. Maarten. So much so, in fact, visitors may find the most difficult part of their St. Maarten holiday is deciding just which of the island's 36 superb beaches is their favorite.

For further information about St. Maarten's year-round pleasures, write the St. Maarten Tourist Office, 25 West 39th Street, New York, NY 10018, or call (212) 840-6555.



St. Maarten has 37 square miles and 36 beaches of Caribbean waters. This romantic beach is nestled in a gentle cove approached by a trail through jungle palms.

travel notes

I recently attended a travel trade reception hosted by the Detroit Office of the Canadian Government Office of Tourism. Your travel agent was probably there, snacking on cheese and wine, browsing among the dozens of tables spread out like an information network around the large room.

That's one of the places where travel professionals get their up-to-date information, so that they can help you plan your vacation. Travel trade marketplaces, trade publications like Travel Weekly, familiarization tours, those are all "insider" ways of gathering travel information.

You can be sure that your travel agent also reads both the editorial material and the advertising on newspaper travel pages published weekly, here and in the daily papers. They also



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read travel magazines such as Travel and Leisure, Travel Holiday, the National Geographic Traveler, Geo and others.

You may not be a travel professional, you may not have access to some of those sources of information, but you too can keep yourself up-to-date by plugging into regular sources of information.

IF YOU subscribe to travel magazines, keep a clipping file. You needn't clip every story but you should clip the

table of contents before you throw the magazine away so that you can find an article later in the library if necessary.

The May 1984 issue of Travel and Leisure Magazine included a survey of readers who had taken tours, both in North America and abroad. If you are considering a tour, the rating of tour companies might interest you.

IF YOU READ the travel pages, you know that the travel film series opened in the Detroit area this month. The World Adventure Series, which was the first travel film-lecture series in the country, launched its 1984-85 season with a program by Lowell Thomas Jr., Oct. 14.

The World Adventure Series takes you various parts of the world every Sunday afternoon at the Detroit Institute of Arts and one Thursday morning a month. Call 832-2730 for a schedule.

If you are planning a trip to Paris

you should be at the art institute this Sunday, Oct. 28, when Clay Francisco shows "Americans in Paris." If you are exploring the world but haven't picked a destination, go to several and see what places you like.

Travel film lectures are also given regularly in other parts of the metropolitan area. You'll find them at Oakland Community College Highland Lakes Campus in Union Lake (350-3041), at the Plymouth-Kiwanis series at Plymouth-Salem High School (455-5100), at the Westfield Center in Trenton (607-7303) and other places.

If you "plugged in" you also know that the Automobile Club of Michigan held its first consumer travel show last Sunday, Oct. 21, at the Michigan Inn in Southfield. Like most such shows, it included several dozen exhibitors representing cruise lines, tour companies, airlines and other travel retailers.

Those retailers are there to hand out information and answer questions asked by potential travelers just like you. They want your travel dollar and will give you all the information you need to consider them in your travel plans.

THE PUBLIC has access to many such consumer travel shows. Your travel agent has access to even more of them, since some are held only for the travel trade. Like your travel agent, I get a lot of my information from such sources, as well as from the time spent on the road.

I would never write about a destination on the basis of such flimsy information. When you see a full story about a destination on this page, you can be

sure I've been there and checked all those details out. But that doesn't mean the information isn't useful.

Like you, I use it according to my need, which might depend on whether I've been there recently or whether I've been there at all.

I've never been to Las Vegas, for example, unlike many Detroit travelers, so I was just familiarizing myself with the information when Las Vegas brought its demonstration gambling tables and a glamorous showgirl to the Michigan Inn this fall.

The Las Vegas marketplace was jammed with travel agents, partly because the city uses glitz to attract professionals, just as they use glitz to attract travelers. I was surprised to learn

that Detroit is Las Vegas' number one source of charter travelers.

Your friendly travel agent knows that, and knows how to buy your charter trip from a wholesaler who sells space on a large regularly scheduled airline, or sometimes even charters a plane. Those wholesalers were there at the Las Vegas reception, each out-discoing the other to attract your travel agents' attention.

All of these are great sources of information for your travel file. Keep a file and you will be much better informed the next time you walk into the office of the traveler's best friend, your travel agent.

Restored mill is worth a drive

For fall colors, crisp temperatures and sweet apple cider take an afternoon drive to Greenock Mills, which is along the southern branch of the Huron River in Green Oak Township in Livingston County.

After 12 years of restoration, the old

mill was recently re-opened to the public. It will produce and sell apple cider each weekend through mid-November. Donuts and caramel apples are also available.

Greenock Mills, a saw mill and flour mill, were built between 1836 and 1840. The mills were the hub of the Rushton community which later expanded to include a post office, general store, creamery, and a flag stop on the Grand Trunk Railroad. A wind storm destroyed the saw mill in 1902.

The grist mill, with its rugged 12 X 12 oak posts and beam construction, survived until 1971 when a fire destroyed the upper two floors. The current structure of similar design was rebuilt by the present owners, George and Sionda De Angelis, utilizing much of the original materials.

In addition to the restoration of a 1920s Monarch cider press which is used to produce cider, the building contains the original water-powered runs of stones (mill stones), the millman's wagon, which was used around 1910, and other items of the past.

The mill is at 10470 Rushton Road, between Nine and Ten Mile Roads, three miles west of South Lyon, and four miles east of U.S. 23, exit 54. Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.

Travel show to be at OCC

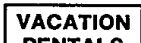
Oakland Community College, Highland Lakes Campus, in conjunction with the Detroit Institute of Arts, will present the World Adventure Series, "Germany — The Country and its People," at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26, in the Student Center Arena.

Ed Lark, narrator, will take the viewer to Munich, Oberammergau, Rothenburg, the plush spas of Baden-Baden and Bad Homburg, Cologne, Berlin, Hamburg and more.

For further information call 350-3041. Tickets are on sale for \$30.00, \$20.00 for Senior citizens.



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