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# ...Welcome to St. Martin/St. Maarten

--The (very) Friendly Island--

From Villa owner John F. Gallagher

[www.OurRentalParadise.com](http://www.OurRentalParadise.com)

Please note which house you are renting (we own 2 large luxury villas):

# 78 Dawns' Beach estates: 5 BR house set high above the beach with panoramic views

Or

La Perla: direct ocean-front stucco estate 6 BR beach house (right on Dawns Beach) (houses are ½ mile from each other)

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We hope you have a wonderful and safe vacation at our (two) beautiful and spacious Dawn's Beach vacation houses. We have tried to incorporate every luxury amenity to make your vacation: spectacular ! We want you to come back next year...and again...

There are panoramic views of the ocean from every room (in both houses), with floor to ceiling glass windows and upper and lower decks, plus a huge patio around the in-ground pool.

**House care-taker of both houses is Alvo and his wife Reya:**

His phone is 011-599-526-6520 or 580-4236

(with a local phone on island you don't dial the area code or the 011-599).

They can best be reached via email at

[Alvo8248@hotmail.com](mailto:Alvo8248@hotmail.com)

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# 78 house was custom-built only 5 years ago to take advantage of the outstanding views of Dawns' Beach, the marina and neighboring islands of St. Barths, Anguilla and the open ocean. Its market value is close to \$ 2 million.

The two best beaches on the entire island are Dawn's Beach and Orient Beach (in my humble opinion).

La Perla was built 30 years ago (for the Gucci heirs) and we've totally renovated it with new everything: appliances, tiles, painting, landscaping, new beds, furniture, new pool, etc. etc.....the best of everything. Its market value is approx. \$ 5 million

Below is some info on both houses, the area and tips on enjoying your stay.

One house's address is # 78 Dawns Beach Estates (near Oyster Bay and close to the French/Dutch border)...set up high overlooking Dawn's beach with panoramic views

Our ocean-front house is called "La Perla" and is only ½ mile from # 78

**Travel Info:** For a good deal on your airfare, get a price from [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) . They discount the major carriers such as American Airlines, US Air, etc.

St. Maarten is half Dutch and half French. Everyone now needs a passport. (including babies).

**Delta airlines** now has 2 flights every Saturday from Atlanta into SXM so price these out and fly from your area to Atlanta, then switch planes for SXM.

**Jet Blue** is now flying from NY into St. Maarten (airport symbol SXM). Check their website at [www.JetBlue.com](http://www.JetBlue.com)

**Jet Blue is now flying non-stop Boston to St. Maarten direct flights every Saturday. Go to [www.jetblue.com](http://www.jetblue.com)**

American Airlines (AA.com) used to have the most flights into Caribbean islands from major U.S. cities but recently they've cut back somewhat. Though Delta and U.S. also have one or two direct flights per day into SXM. AA.com flies several direct flights per day from JFK airport in the morning which are good bets.

**Need a passport?** [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) You do not need the passport to enter St. Maarten, but you need it to get back into the U.S. Be sure you and children have current passports.

**Weddings:** Our 2 houses have hosted weddings and receptions. Let me know if you're interested in having a party at the house. By the way, getting married on the island is pretty easy. Note, if you're divorced, some proof of that is needed and by the way, women need to have 306 days after the divorce before SXM allows a re-marriage, so if any of you housewives plan on taking off with Fabio.....well, be forewarned.....

(with a local phone you don't need to dial the area code or the 011).

(at la perla there is a neighborhood 24 security guard located down the street you can call the security office at (599) 543-1031. This company is Armorguard and all the neighbors chip in for 24/7 security for the area.

House 78 security booth tel # is (don't dial the local area code 599 on the island) 543-6941 and is staffed 24/7

Please just email us a few days before your arrival and indicate approx. what time you'll be arriving at the house, though the cleaners are usually still there until 6pm or 7pm.

To reach the property owner John/Caitlin/Jane or Patricia dial in Massachusetts, (978) 526-7512 (dial either a "1" or 001 before the area code)

Neighbors are extremely friendly and love to meet the guests...especially at cocktail hour (which on Caribbean time is virtually any time).

**Sleeping Accomodations:** # 78 is a 5 and 1/2 BR house that sleeps up to 14 people.

There are 3 master suites each with a private bathroom. The largest of the master suites has 2 Queen beds and awesome ocean views with private balcony and a huge master bathroom with Jacuzzi tub, plus a big walk in shower. The other two master suites each has one king bed. Bedroom 4 has a king and shares a full bath with Br # 5. Bedroom # 5 has a queen and two twin beds. There is a 6<sup>th</sup> small bedroom with a sleeping couch and an upper berth that doubles as the computer room.

La Perla is a 6 BR house with a small 7<sup>th</sup> bedroom. It sleeps up 17. There are 3 master suites each with their own master bathroom. Four bedrooms each have King Beds. Two bedrooms each have two twin beds. One Master has 2 queen beds.

All bedrooms have designer sheets with high thread counts, colorful designer bedspreads and air conditioning in each bedroom. Each house has plenty of designer Bath towels.

Rental rates are based on the # of guests in your party and the season of the year.

**Tel #'s: (about the only fault I can find with the island is the phone system)**

We've left a cell phone at # 78 Dawns beach estates with the # (599) 526-2987. To dial the U.S. with a cell phone you first dial 001 then area code and number. For calls into St. Maarten you dial 011 then the local island area code (599) and number. (It costs nearly a dollar a minute for the cell phone so the internet phone is a much better bet at only 2.7 cents a minute to the US.)

Incoming minutes are free so have guests call you, don't call them on the cell phone if you can avoid it

There are 2 cell phones at La perla, in the bedrooms. One is (599) \_\_\_\_\_ and the other is (599) 523-0919.

For your convenience the numbers for police, emergency and the local guard shack (Armorguard Company) are written on the phone

From the U.S., dial 011, then area code, then the number

The area code on the dutch side is (599). On the French side it's 590. (often you need to dial 590 two times when calling the French side for some weird reason down there.)(with certain cell phones you have to dial 590 then 690 to reach the French side)

The cell phone is pre loaded with some 15 or so minutes from Tel-Cel Co. (or Chippie) here on the island.

It's quite expensive to call the US or Europe via cellphone so we suggest you use the computer phone on the Dell computer in the room (near master bedroom). Click on the Skype icon. Then if dialing the US, put a "1" in the left box and the area code and phone number in right hand box. Click on the handset receive icon and it will dial. You need to wear the headphones which may be in the drawer

User name and password for SKYPE is taped to the computer. —so talk away to your heart's content on the computer wearing the headphones provided! Very easy!

**New Phone for Free long distance !!! We now have a Majic jack device attached to the computer in each house, tied into a regular traditional telephone. But the computer must be turned on**

in order for this to work. Excellent quality internet-based calls. An incredible device frankly. (It will not work of course if the power is out or if the computer is not turned on and only works for calls to the U.S.).

**Calling to the French side** of St. Maarten (known as st. martin): dial (590) then (590) again, then the 7 digit number (leave it to the French to make simple things tricky !)

**Don't pack Too Much!** Travel light. Each house has a new washer and dryer so don't bring a whole week's worth of clothes and cart around those heavy suitcases. Consider packing only a few days worth of shorts, t shirts, polo shirts and bathing suits. The island is very casual and there is no need for men to bring sports jackets for dinner. The finest restaurants on the French side assume you'll be wearing dress shorts and polo shirts and boat shoes. (don't even think about bringing a tie).

### **Basic Operation of both Houses:**

Reya (and her husband Alvo) and her staff clean after each guests' departure, but if you'd like daily maid service she'll coordinate with you and see if you need them during the week. They're lovely ladies with their own kids and are also available for baby-sitting. They may also be available to do some cooking and grilling of local fish or local foods.

We have several local chefs available and you can either pay them and they'll get the ingredients or they'll give you a list and you can go shopping. One caterer we use does a great job and brings everything. See our website, go to La perla house or 78 Dawns beach St. Maarten, and click on tab at the top for "attractions"

There's also a local caterer called "Johnnie Be Under De Tree". He operates a BBQ stand roadside over near Simpson Bay but is willing to come to the house and do his delicious ribs and chicken etc. after 5pm.

### **Other caterers who will send a chef to the house:**

[www.Fabulousfeasts.com](http://www.Fabulousfeasts.com) tel 0-590-87-9316 (you might want to drop the zero and dial 590 twice as it's on the french side) very highly recommended by our previous guests

[www.stmaartenconciierge.com](http://www.stmaartenconciierge.com) (866) 343-1242 chefs, boat trips, babysitting, errands etc though they're a bit pricey.

Alvo stocks the house with the following items:

Soaps in each bathroom  
Ensures all beds are made clean with fine linens

Garbage bags,  
Cleaning supplies for the maids  
Laundry detergent  
Dish washer detergent  
Paper towels  
Toilet paper

Guests often leave a stocked bar with premium gin, rums, vodka, tequila, etc etc. (please replace these as you use them for next guests)

**Trash:** please bag the trash and drop it in the community dumpster-bins right outside the security-guard station in the dumpsters (there is no pickup) for house # 78. For La perla, please put the trash in your rental car and drop at a local dumpster on the side of any road. With the heat here, it's a good idea to drop the trash every day or two. You can keep a day or two's trash bagged in garage (at house 78) but be sure no animal gets to it. With La perla, please drop the trash in the area bins every day or two is a good idea.

Before leaving, it would be helpful if you stripped the beds and just leave dirty sheets in the hallway for maids. Starting a load of towels would help them immensely as there is a lot of laundry to do between guests. Any bed made up is deemed to be cleaned (or not used) so don't make over any beds you've used.

Please help yourself to beer and liquors but please replace with fresh bottles of premium liquors for the next guests. If possible, leave a few bottles of sodas, mixers, etc for the next guests as well. (cold beers are always well appreciated)

The items in the refrigerator are all good. We instruct the maids not to throw out basic staples between guests such as ketchup, mustard, olive oils, sodas, beers, etc. We ask that before you leave you throw away any perishable food items such as produce, meats, leftovers, etc. Coffee beans are kept in the freezer. Help yourself.

The cleaning people open most of the windows prior to your arrival as air conditioning is not needed due to the breezes up high. But if storms are threatened, keep windows open only a few inches as rain can easily blow right in.

**Electricity** is very expensive here on the island so please don't use the air conditioning unless you're in the room, and please turn off all lights when not in use. Each house was designed with plenty of cross ventilation so A/C is normally not needed (except for sleeping)

**Utilities:** this is the Caribbean, after all, so we do have frequent power outages and water disruptions for 20 minutes or a half hour now and then as they're working on a lot of roads in St. Maarten. The town water is quite good to drink and both our houses have refrigerators that filter water on the door and make ice cubes. These ice makers often have problems (usually with stuck ice cubes) so tinker with them if you notice they've stopped working. Ice for cocktails is imperative in this hot climate! There's also a free

standing ice maker in the kitchen of each house. And for back up, there's old fashioned plastic ice cube trays in each freezer !

## **Car Rentals**

Most guests will want to rent a car while here. Or you can arrange to have Sherry's people pick you up at the airport (for a \$ 100 fee paid directly to her).

Avis Rent a Car right at the airport is convenient and you can speak to either Philippe or Christina. Telephone 011 (599) 525-AVIS.

You can book a rental car right on line by going to: [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)  
Then select St. Maarten/airport (SXM is the symbol). The island is hilly so an SUV is often a good idea. Get the biggest SUV they have I recommend as some are small.

The car rental booths are right at the airport where you pay and sign the forms, then they drive you about a 1/2 mile over to pick up your car. Pretty easy, overall. Then drive it back and pick up your luggage and fellow travelers.

**Sunshine Rental Car:** I like these people because their rates are low and they give you a free cell phone to use for personal use around the island, loaded with 15 minutes (incoming calls are free and don't count against the minutes if you want to call home and give them the cell numbers). Email them for a car reservation and size of car to [sunshinecarrental@hotmail.com](mailto:sunshinecarrental@hotmail.com) or call them at (011 from U.S.) (599) 545-2684 or 545-2685 at their airport kiosk. Kumar is one of the owners and a real good guy who'll give you a good deal. Tell him you're renting one of John Gallagher's houses at Dawns Beach area. (but I'm not sure they have any large sized SUV's)

It's very easy to rent a car and get around the island. But if you get in after dark, we recommend you have Alvo and Reya's people meet you at the airport as you will have trouble finding our houses at night. During the day though, it's pretty easy.

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## **We own 2 houses at Dawns beach:**

# 78 Dawn's Beach Estates is a gated community so just tell the attendant you are renting our house and they will waive you thru. After guard house, go straight 200 yards and you'll see # 78 on the fence with 2 satellite dishes in the yard). Big white stucco house with a blue stripe across it. Views to die for ! The yard is planted with fresh fruit trees including mangoes, lemons and avacadoes. Help yourself to them if they're ripe.

Our other house is "La Perla": ...a magnificent direct ocean front estate villa with 6 bedrooms and set on a full acre with palm trees, coconut trees, lemon trees, and lush landscaping affording incredible privacy. (La Perla is about 1/2 mile from # 78 but is not part of the gated community, so it has its own private tall gated entrance). To drive from house 78 to La Perla, you must leave the gated community, take a right down a dirt road

(past the new Westin hotel entrance), go up a little hill and La Perla's big wrought-iron gates will be on your right (sign on wall says La Perla).

Email Alvo/Reya (cc us if you'd like) the estimated time of your arrival so she can be sure the house is left open for you, though normally the cleaning ladies will still be there.

If you didn't rent a car at the airport, the Oyster Bay timeshare resort (local Hertz rep) (near our houses) is located on the far left end of Dawns Beach. They have large SUV's as well as compact cars.

If you handle the car rental yourself, reserve in advance (recommended in peak winter months but not necessary May thru Thanksgiving) and at the end of this memo you will find driving directions to our house. (note: we don't recommend trying to find either house at night if your flight gets in after dark as roads are not well marked—unless you're following Sherry's car).

So if you arrive at night, you should either have Reya or their staff members meet you at the airport or take a taxi to our house as they are familiar with Dawn's Beach. During daylight hours though, you should have no problem finding either house.

### **Computer:**

The computer in each house can be used to search the web or to send and receive emails, or to make long distance phone calls using SKYPE and the headphones supplied. And it runs the new Magic Jack Telephone with free long distance, but of course the computer must be powered on for this new phone to work !

For web browsing, double click the icon that says "internet" and the Mozilla (Firefox browsers or Internet Explorer) program will open and log on. We have a semi fast connection thru radio transmission called Caribserv.net (In heavy rains, the internet may not work and same with Dish network television reception). If you can't get the web browser to open, go to the start menu in bottom left of screen, then the control panel, then "internet" and try to open browser that way. Quirky but it works.

Note: the electricity goes off frequently, and once in a while the internet service goes out. If power is out, you can light the kitchen burners with a match (or use the gas grille from the garage by wheeling it out on driveway).

To receive email, the address on the computer at # 78 Dawns beach estates is

[susan@caribserve.net](mailto:susan@caribserve.net)

password is 1985redd

if you can't get emailing working, an alternative is to use the web browser and go to [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com) and do it thru that site. Or set up a free email at google's G-mail.

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For La Perla internet info: We now have high speed internet via radio signal from Caribserve.net follow instructions post on the computer but it's "live" all the time.

User name: [jgal@caribserve.net](mailto:jgal@caribserve.net) password: (posted on the monitor)

### **TV's:**

We have satellite tv thru the DISH network (at # 78 dawns beach—la perla has cable tv) on the big plasma tv in the living room of house 78.

CNN headline news is channel 202

The New York stations are carried for CBS, NBC, ABC, etc channels (243-245)

HBO we pay for and those channels are found by pressing the Guide button (at house 78)

To watch tv, generally just turn on the power to the black satellite box and power on the TV. (the widescreen tv in the living room sometimes refuses to power on. In this case, you need to reboot it by unplugging it for 30 seconds. You do this in the lower cabinet and unplug the one marked "tv" from the white power strip. Then when you plug it back in after waiting 30 seconds, you can hit the "power" button on front of tv)

If it doesn't play, keep hitting the tv "input" switch until you select "video 1" on the widescreen tv in the living room (in the apartment, select channel 3 on the tv to view Dish network satellite tv)

Use the silver (or black) remote that says "DISH" on the bottom to change channels (the arched blue buttons above and below the blue button that says: "Select/OK")

Audio can come off the tv directly, or if you want surround sound, turn on the Sony black receiver and select Video 2 to hear television programs. Or tuner for radio. For movies, select LD on the Sony receiver. There is a DVD player in the cabinet to the left of the satellite box.

Right now the bedroom TV is not working at the Dish network box needs replacement and they're not allowing replacements at house 78. Sorry.

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La Perla TV: please note we have cable tv at this house and not satellite as we're set too low and the mountains block the satellite signal. See directions on each TV. In

heavy rainstorms, the cable tv signal will be very bad or non existent as they really on satellites for reception.

Glassware/both houses: please don't use glass outdoors due to breakage concerns. The crystal fine- wine glasses should be hand washed and not put in the dishwasher. If any broken glass, please use vacuum cleaner in closet and be sure to get all pieces since most guests walk around barefoot.

Gas grille: at house # 78 it should only be used by wheeling it out into the driveway. Do not move it near the pool areas if it's a windy day. Be sure to tighten the cap on the propane tank after use and clean grille when cooled. (La Perla has grille near the pool sheltered from the winds)

Alvo and Reya leave several extra full tanks of propane at each house in case it runs out.

### **Beaches: (the world's finest of course)**

Dawns' Beach is one of the most outstanding beaches in the entire Caribbean.

(if you're staying at our villa # 78)...You can walk down the street to Dawn's beach by staying to the right at the fork near the big rock. Then at bottom of hill, go left to the beach and it winds around and dead-ends where you can leave the car. It's a strenuous walk back up the hill so older guests should be driven down and you can park your car down near the beach, no problem.

If you're staying at our villa, La Perla, the beach is at your doorstep, just a few steps down from the patio on the far side of the pool. This gate we keep locked at all times so use the key supplied with the house keys.

Dawns Beach is a very long beautiful beach and never crowded. If you want to socialize, walk down towards the little beach bar where you can rent a beach chair. If you want privacy, just stay to the ends of the beach and you'll have plenty of privacy.

Bring sodas or beers with you, or buy them at the little bar on the beach called "Ms. Busby's" which is a nice place for a hamburger or fish sandwich for lunch.

There are occasional waves on Dawns Beach so watch little kids. Some women sunbathe topless so watch your husband. There's good snorkeling all around, especially on the remote sides of the beach near rocks where you'll see a lot of fish.

Other good beaches are Orient Beach on the French side, or Maho Bay where it is pretty cool to watch the big jets land while you're swimming. All beaches on the island are public, including the resorts.

**With 37 beaches, St. Maarten is awesome.**

With the ocean, never swim alone and of course, always supervise children. Always respect the ocean and swim/snorkel with a buddy.

Dawns Beach is usually quite calm, but there can be some waves if a storm is out to sea.

### **Pool: (both houses)**

# 78 has an infinity-edged pool 8 feet deep so please watch little children carefully.

Never leave children unattended outdoors by the pool.

La Perla's pool is also infinity edged but is pretty deep and quite large so watch children at all times.

The pool cleaner/attendant comes twice a week to vacuum it and put in chemicals. They walk right around the side of the house and do not knock-- so if you see 2 local guys with a hose that's them. They usually come around mid-morning and stay just 10 minutes. Very nice fellows. We pay them monthly so there is no need to tip them (though I doubt they'd turn it away if offered a few bucks). They do most of the houses in the neighborhood and their little white truck will be parked up on the street. If you're sunbathing nude, they'll ignore you as they're quite used to it.

### **Safety:**

Drive on the right hand side of the road, but it is quite hilly so go slow and be careful. (at our 2 St. John houses in the U.S. Virgin Islands you drive on the left by the way)

There is very little violent crime on St. Maarten but don't be careless about leaving pocketbooks on the beach, or jewelry around the house, etc. There is some petty theft now and then (but less than in the United States). Violent crimes on St. Maarten are considerably rarer than in the U.S. major cities. Drug enforcement is powerful on the island and not tolerated at all==which probably results in much less violent crime. Most local crimes involve theft or property so don't leave cameras in a rental car, or fancy jewelry on the beach while you're swimming.

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**Security for both houses: we want you to have a safe and wonderful vacation.**

If winds are strong (at house 78) you're best off to keep the windows facing the ocean open only a few inches but the windows on side and front of the house can be open more as rains don't blow in from those directions.

If it's not too windy, open the side and kitchen windows wide and you'll never need air conditioning as we always get nice tropical breezes during the day.

House 78 is in a gated community but locking doors at night is recommended. Alvo and his wife Reya will explain the security to you in a written memo or in person at each house.

To call the security booth 24/7 for house 78 the local phone is 543-6941 (don't have to dial the area code when using a local cell phone)

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La Perla is right on the ocean and has its own gate at the ocean beach which we keep locked all the time and the key is on your key chain left in the house.

La perla has a neighborhood security company we belong to with 24 hour security along the road. If you ever have a problem call the security company at 543-1031 (don't dial the area code) and tell them you're staying at La Perla, John Gallagher's house. We also keep the gate up at the street locked. (only Alvo the property manager and the pool cleaner has a key)

Always keep the doors locked, especially the big front gates and the door to the beach.

At night, we also have exterior motion sensor lights for your safety so should anyone walk near the house, the big 100 watt spotlights will go off. They will sometimes also go off with the swaying of the palm trees so be aware of that.

When I travel abroad, I leave Rolex watches, gold jewelry, etc. at home as you don't want to draw attention to yourself in any strange country.

Reya leaves safety instructions at each house so please follow her recommendations.

Local Security Phone #'s are posted at each house since we have neighborhood security patrols. Also, should you need to reach St. Maarten police dept, it's 542-2222 (no need to call the area code from the local cell phones)

**Food & Dining: (st. maarten has the world's finest gourmet !)**

There are small convenience stores down at the marina and along all roads. The supermarkets are every bit as good, if not better, than those here in Boston where we live!

For a big shopping trip, the big *Super Marche* on the main road thru Phillipsburg is an excellent supermarket. The French side has a number of supermarkets which are superior for French wines, cheeses, breads, pastries, gourmet items, etc. The town of Marigot is the best shopping on the French side for small bakeries, boutiques or designer clothing.

You will note that (many) multi million dollar yachts are tied up over there.

If you like fine French wines, you'll find them about 30-40% less in price than in most major U.S. cities. In any French side supermarket, buy a bottle of bordeau or burgundy for \$ 30-40 and you'll usually get a great bottle of wine. For really fine wines, try the wine shops in Marigot the French side capital which is quite chic. Vinissimo in Marigot on the French side is a great wine store ! Marigot has a lot of nice shops though some are pricey.

There is a great little wine shop called Select Wines on the Dutch side near Simpson Bay, not too far from the airport on the road connecting Simpson Bay to Marigot. There's a link to it from our website ([www.ourrentalparadise.com](http://www.ourrentalparadise.com) under activities).

The supermarkets and convenience stores also have good selections of reasonably priced wines and many beers.

There's also a few little cigar stores selling Cuban cigars and they often have a smoking room where you can enjoy one along with a glass of cognac, bourbon, single malt scotch, etc.

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For fine dining, St. Maarten is outstanding—especially on the French side. If you love gourmet dining and fine French wines, you've come to the right place (personally I think St. Martin's restaurants are considerably superior to St. Barth's)

Any of the small places in Grand Case right on the water are excellent, though rather expensive. Prices on the French side are usually quoted in Euros which means your bill in dollars is about 20 % higher. But many restaurant owners convert 1-1 euro to dollar so you get a much better deal and they often put signs outside advertising that. Pay attention to this as it will shave 20 % off your dinner check (but not if you're using a credit card) !

**A few outstanding restaurants (Fine Dining) include:**

See our website for listings and hot links to many restaurants

(typical dinner dress code: sandals, nice shorts and polo shirts) (do not wear a sport jacket or you'll regret it from the heat)

Aura, at the nearby Westin Hotel just won the AAA 4 Diamond award. It's a fancy steak house like Morton's or Ruth Chris with dry-aged prime beef. Expensive but excellent and it's very close to home

Le Santal (near Grand Case—7-8 miles along the north road eastward from our houses)

Le Tropicana in Marigot (not the Tropicana casino on the Dutch side). Reservations are required (in peak winter months) unless you get there by 6:15pm though calling the French side of the island can be confusing (dial 590 then 590 again then the 7 digit number). Try the Dover Sole. We did manage to get seated when we walked in at 6:30 by promising the hostess we would be finished dining at 7:45 (gluttons for punishment we bring our little kids to gourmet restaurants by going early)

Mario's Bistro on the French side is considered excellent [www.mariosbistro.com](http://www.mariosbistro.com) It's on the French-Dutch border line about half an hour ride from our house near a bridge but some people call this the best restaurant on the French side

In Marigot, the chi chi French locals dine at the bistro called Saint Severin as they fly in local fresh European seafood daily via Air France. The oysters and Dover Sole are fresh daily from France I'm told. Call them at (590) (590) 87-97-00

Bliss on the ocean in Maho near airport where the beautiful people go to be seen

The Atlantis casino in Maho Bay (near airport) has several excellent restaurants including Temptation. They have a new steak house called "Rare" which is outstanding (Dino is chef at both and his parents own both restaurants, and although I think they're divorced, the Dad runs Temptation and the Mother is at the helm usually as the hostess at Rare.

Grand Case is only a 17 minute ride from our house along the northerly road near the Ocean which is a beautiful ride. Most of the restaurants overlook the beach. Reservations are not needed if you go early, say before 7pm usually. If you want dinner at 7:30-9 pm on the French side in the winter months of Jan-April, a reservation is recommended for sure.

La Gourmande in Grand Case

Fish Pot in Grand Case

Le Pressoir in Grand Case

Le Tastevin in Grand Case

L'Alabama in Grand Case (yes a strange name for a French gourmet restaurant)

La California (another strange name) (just sold to new owners)

Le ti Creole in Grand Case I hear is excellent for local/gourmet

Sol e Luna on the French side Mont Vernon area is voted most romantic gourmet restaurant. you can call them at (590) (590 again) 29-08-56

(all Grand Case restaurants are within a stone's throw of each other!!!)

For a real special romantic dinner, go to the main dining room at La Samana on the French side and get a table with a panoramic view of their beach. You can also book spa treatments, massages, facials, etc. at La Samana via telephone. A lot of celebrities stay at La Samana. (and at \$ 1,500 per night per room !)... (embattled Radio/TV shock jock Don Imus (Imus in the Morning) says it's the only resort where he'll stay in the Caribbean). But everything here is very pricey !

If you go early as we do (before 6:30pm) you usually don't need a reservation but in winter months if you want to dine at 7:30-9 pm a reservation is definitely a good idea.

Remember, the French people go out to dinner at 9pm to 10pm !!!

**For casual, family dining try:**

**Near our 2 houses/Dawns beach area:**

The little tiki bar (the Dingy Dock) at the marina near Captain Oliver's complex (where you mix your own drinks)—only one mile ride from our # 78 house ( or a short drive from La Perla house).

Also, at the marina at Dawns Beach is Captain Olivers. It's a casual atmosphere right on the marina where you look out to boats. Owner is French and it's pronounced "Olivier" (like the actor Sir Laurence...). He always has a bevy of beautiful young waitresses hanging around who also go out for sails on the big sailboat/yachts they rent there. (do these young girls go for the old guys for their money, or is it the father figure syndrome??). They have an excellent seafood buffet on Saturday nights at Captain Olivers.

In Phillipsburg not far from where the cruise ships dock, for casual dining there's the Greenhouse and Chesterfields. And a very good Indian restaurant on Front St. in Phillipsbury called Shiv (something or other)

The little beach bar **Ms. Busby's** (near the marina), to the left side of Dawn's beach serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and great drinks. After 5pm you can have grilled lobster and eat at their tables right on the beach which is very casual and very good!

Very cool to eat your lobster at a table overlooking Dawn's Beach. (from our La Perla house, you can easily walk to this beachfront restaurant night or day ! from la perla, walk onto the beach and go left 100 yards.) **At night, Mr. Busby's becomes "Daniels"** and the owner is of course a friendly fellow named Daniel and food is very good. Each day, Ms. Busby's has happy hour 4-5pm with \$ 1 beers !

There's a bunch of casual restaurants on the main road in Simpson Bay (on the road that leads to the airport, and they're all quite good.

**Peg Leg pub:** real good casual food, casual steaks and draught beers

**Pineapple Pete's:** famous for their 3 lb grilled lobster for just \$ 39 and big cocktails. Excellent casual family restaurant with nice servers. Probably the best casual, inexpensive restaurant on the island but the food is surprisingly good.

**Skipjacks:** Excellent seafood, right on the water on near Pineapple Pete's on the road to the airport. Good casual seafood restaurant. They also have a small retail fish store there.

At Orient Beach, try Baywatch for good casual dining. Or Boo Boo Jams which has a reggae band and some dancing right near the beach.

Orient Beach is famous for their nudity, including some of the beach restaurants.

### **Activities:**

(see our website [www.OurRentalParadise.com](http://www.OurRentalParadise.com) for hot links to these places below. Select either St. Maarten house, then click on "attractions" at the top orange box)

Of course, you'll want to spend some time most days lounging on Dawn's Beach or hanging around our pool and enjoying the panoramic views.

Horseback riding at stables on beach road just past Oyster Bay going towards Orient Beach. Our little girls loved the horse riding along the beach even though they had never ridden before. The horses walk the beach and actually go into the ocean.

Shopping at duty free stores on Front St. in Phillipsburg where the cruise ships dock. The shopping here is every bit as good as St. Thomas. Stores will be closed on Sunday unless a cruise ship is in port. St. Maarten is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest cruise port stop in the entire Caribbean after St. Thomas.

Snorkel trips and sail boat excursions. If you scuba dive, a boat goes out from the marina near the Remax office across from Ms. Busby's beach bar. Try [www.captainalan.com](http://www.captainalan.com) for a snorkeling boat trip to some of the coral reefs (like Tintemarre—a tiny island that Gilligan would like !!!) where you can bathe yourself in the black mud of the dormant volcanoes (call (599) 524-1386. His half and full day charters include the gear, drinks, snacks and a great time.

Walk around Marigot on the French side and browse the shops and cafes (parking is tight during the day). You'll find many items not generally available in the U.S. Marigot has a lot of high fashion boutiques. And of course you can bargain prices with them.

Visit the Sunset bar on the beach at the airport and watch the jets land right over your head (place is packed every day at 3pm on)

Book a massage at **La Samanna** (a world class spa on the French side)

If you don't want to pay La Samanna's prices, get a massage or facial in the new Westin Hotel on the far right side of Dawns Beach. They also have a decent gym for workout and treadmills. (but La Samanna is so much more chic)

Rent a jet ski at Orient Beach.

Take a day trip on the ferry to Anguilla. (leaves Marigot every 30 min). There's also a ferry several times a day from Dawns Beach marina to St. Barts though the boat ride can be a bit rough I'm told. There's also a high speed boat out of Phillipsburg to St. Barts which is near Chesterfield's restaurant.

Have breakfast at **Captain Olivers** at the marina near our house; or **Ms. Busby's beach** bar on Dawns beach (on the left side of the beach near the Oyster Bay condos).

Visit the **Butterfly farm** near Orient Beach (extremely good restaurant here for lunch)

Do a workout at the Sunterra resort building for ten bucks a day. This is a good workout facility right at Simpson Bay (on the main road near the airport near the draw bridge to the lagoon where the Mega Yachts come in) and they have a lot of Cybex machines, treadmills, free weights, etc..

Buy some (big) shrimp and grill them on our gas grille (3 minutes per side, sautee with fresh limes). Don't overcook them ! (pretend you're with Jimmy Buffet)

Purchase some fresh fish at the marina and grill it 4 minutes per side after rubbing with olive oil. (for delicate fish, do it in the oven for 5 minutes at 350 temp). Use our hinged grill for fish if you do it on the gas grille—and don't overcook it! The big Grand Marche supermarket also has a good selection of fish.

Wednesday is "market day" in Marigot so walk around and buy some fresh produce and fish, etc.

Get some fresh mangos or other fruit and mix up some rum drinks in the blender

Buy a few Cuban cigars and sip a fine wood-aged rum while sitting on our patio overlooking the very best views in the world !

Make some interesting tropical cocktails: John's favorite is a Mojito (good aged rum with a splash of sparkling water, a lot of crushed mint and a bit of brown sugar over ice). Or a home made Margarita (aged fine agave tequila with triple sec or Grand Marnier, splash of orange juice, over a lot of ice with both lemon and lime squeezed in)

Have Alvo or Rea recommend a chef to bring in some local 2-3 LB lobsters and do a big lobster feast on our patio.

Do some wine shopping in Marigot where the fine French Bordeaux and Burgundies are 40% cheaper than here in the U.S.. then do a blind wine tasting at the house comparing vintages. Or go to "Select Wines" Store in the Simpson bay area and shoot the breeze with the husband and wife owners.

Buy your wife/husband (or significant other) a nice gold Rolex watch in downtown Phillipsburg where the shops heavily discount and charge no tax. You can bargain with them also.

Take a ride to "the Old House" and get a tour of the old plantation house. The owner gives the tour for 5 bucks and is quite a colorful character. This is a good thing to do on a cloudy or overcast day.

Do a helicopter tour of the island. \$ 125 per person at [www.helistmartin.com](http://www.helistmartin.com)

Take your digital camera and visit as many of the island's 37 beaches as you can!

Try the party boat booze cruise around the big salt water lagoon at night. It stops at several bars for a drink and appetizer and is considered a lot of fun. (hot link on our website, [www.ourrentalparadise.com](http://www.ourrentalparadise.com))

Take a ½ day sail around the island, or a snorkeling trip ½ day outing. A good 50 foot sailboat I hear is "Ian's Flyer". He'll take you out sailing, food and drinks, catch a few fish off the back, stop for snorkeling etc. you can email him at [paragonsailor@yahoo.com](mailto:paragonsailor@yahoo.com) or call him at 011-(599) 552-8785 (only dial last 7 digits if on island)

Purchase some nice French cheeses at any supermarket on the French side (just minutes from our house which is right near the border), and some big fresh tomatoes, extra virgin Olive oil, and some real Buffalo Mozzarella and you'll think you're in heaven when accompanied by a fine French Bordeaux/burgundy/rhone wine.

(do like the French...) and have a big meal at noon time with fine wines, fresh veggies and seafoods, accompanied by great French wines. Then take a refreshing afternoon nap on one of our King Beds with the high thread count sheets.

**Call** your friends or relatives back home (take your pick: Boston/Chicago/NY, Minnesota, etc.) where it's below zero and let them know about your beach days, sunbathing and fresh Daiquiries you just made). ( Use our new Magic Jack telephone located near the computer !

Do some window-shopping and maybe purchase some fine Designer-label fashions by walking the streets of Marigot.

Stop at **La Samanna** resort (near Orient Beach) and have a drink at their bar with a tremendous ocean view of the beach (if you don't mind paying \$ 14 for a martini) (Radio/TV announcer Don Imus' favorite resort anywhere, along with many other celebrities)

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### **Day Sails and Snorkelling trips:**

There's a number of boats that do a half day or full day snorkeling trip out to coral reefs and usually include lunch and open bar. At the Oyster Bay condos you'll find some boats that go out with flyers posted near the little Remax office at the marina.

For a sunset sail, the sailboat Catamaran 40 foot Celine goes out every day and it's very reasonable. It goes out of Simpson Bay area and you get to see the beautiful homes over there on the French side also and stop at a pub or two. 2x a week they also stop over dinner. Call them at (599) 557-0109 or 545-3961 (from the U.S. don't forget to dial 011 first). [www.sailst.maarten.com](http://www.sailst.maarten.com) highly recommended by many of our guests.

Sail and power boats can also be chartered at Captain Oliver's marina on Dawns' Beach.

Remember, all beaches are public even at the resort hotels

**Golf:** There's a "decent" course at Mullet Bay near the airport. It will not be confused with Pebble Beach CC by any means but it has some nice ocean views. If you want some world class golf sorry.... the new St. Regis/ Temenos resort on Anguilla has closed down. I hear this place may be in financial trouble as their \$ 4 million condos did not sell (gee, what a surprise). Ferry leaves Marigot hourly to Anguilla which takes about 35 minutes. Or call the SXM helicopter service noted above. This was an outstanding resort and golf course 2<sup>nd</sup> to none –but today it's overgrown with weeds I hear. Anguilla gets a lot of celebrities who used to go to St. Bart's.

Former Newswoman Connie Chung and her husband, talk show host Maury Povich I believe own a big house on the French side of St. Maarten, as did the late Massachusetts Senator Ed Brooke (a Republican from Massachusetts if you can believe that, and first black U.S. senator I believe)

### **Travel Tips We've Learned:**

1. If you need to switch planes, do so in San Juan. Why? Because if you miss your connecting flight on the way down, American and other airlines offer hourly service over to St. Maarten. Also, on your way home, customs is real easy in San Juan but very cumbersome in Miami. Local airlines Liat and Air Carib also offer service regularly from San Juan to SXM.

2. Always address the local people by starting with: .....“Good morning or Good afternoon”..... The local St. Maarten people are very polite and it’s good to inquire how they are before you order your breakfast, etc.
3. Get a direct flight if possible. AA flies direct from JFK, Miami and San Juan. And now Jet blue has a Saturday direct flight from Boston right into St. Maarten (SXM).
4. Delta flies direct daily from Atlanta; and Continental from Newark daily; US Air flies from either Phil or Pittsburg, possibly Chicago; and I think Charlotte. Coming from Europe, Air France flies daily to and from St. Maarten to Paris.
5. JetBlue is now flying from Boston and NY and other major cities into San Juan. Then you can take LIAT or Air Caraibes or Caribbean Sun on a short flight from San Juan to SXM.
6. Jet Blue is now running daily flights NY to St. Maarten direct non-stop and Saturday flights non stop Boston to St. Maarten. Check JetBlue’s website, [www.jetblue.com](http://www.jetblue.com)
7. Have a rental car reserved at St. Maarten airport (see our recommendation above) .....(preferably a SUV) in winter months. In summer and fall it’s not necessary to reserve a car as there are a dozen rental car salespeople waiting for you as you walk out of the terminal. Very competitive.
8. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere but not every place takes Amex though most do.
9. Passports are now required for all travelers, including babies to re-enter the U.S. (not to get into SXM, but to get back home)
10. When in doubt, offer someone a tip...even a small one. Many people depend on tips in these vacation areas.
11. Our houses normally book Saturday to Saturday for 7 nights but if you are coming in a day or two early, we recommend you take a hotel room on the French side to get a different feel for the island. **Le Petit Hotel** in Grand Case is nice and inexpensive at about \$ 250 a night, or try Alamanda Resort at Orient Beach or **Grand Case Beach Club**. Stay there for a night or two then check into our house Saturday afternoon 4pm the house will be cleaned and ready (I hope).

Here is the information needed to start your relaxing vacation.

**Directions from the airport (this is not as complicated as it sounds !)**

Your rental car map will show this pretty well.

--exit airport to the right. (basically you are following the island around with the ocean on your right)

You will follow the airport runway to your right (car rental places on your left).

You drive on the right side of the road--same as US. Follow road for approximately 4 miles and take a right toward Phillipsburg. Look for KFC on the left and right is just ahead. Take this road up hill and around round about, second right. down hill pass ACE hardware to next round about and take first right (after plaza drive). Go less than 1 mile to L in road. (Sign states straight ahead for Philipsburg.) Take left to Middle Region. Continue on this road past bowling center on left, up hill and continue 2 miles. Take a right immediately before the sharp hair pin turn up steep hill. Follow this road through village area to stop sign. The sign states "left to Dawn Beach"

(for house # 78 take a right. For La perla, take a left here)

House # 78 Dawns beach estates: GO RIGHT and first left up very steep hill at the School sign. If you see car wash (on your right)—you missed the left hand turn..

Up hill, around corner and up hill again. Down hill around to the right sharp hair pin corner, continue down hill in low gear. At bottom of hill is Dawn Beach Estates with gated guard. I have registered you for the week under your name.

(Note to # 78 guests: you can also now drive past our La perla oceanfront house and keep going past the new Westin hotel entrance. Climb the hill a few hundred yards and the entrance to "Dawns Beach Estates" will be on your left, with the guard shack there.)

One of the guards name is Blair. Continue past the guard shack over 3 brick speed bumps, as the hill begins to go down, the villa is on the left. White with blue double front doors. Two satellite dishes in the yard. Lot # 78 on the white pillar. Turn left and driveway is on the right. Two blue garage doors.

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Directions to La Perla:

(from the directions above at the stop sign: sign says "Dawns beach"... go left. Go several miles towards Dawns Beach/Captain Olivers/Mr. Busby's beach bar/Oyster Harbor condos.)

Continue for 2-3 miles and you come to a fork. Here don't go down to Oyster Bay condos, but take a right up the hill. La Perla is on the left with big black

wrought iron gates (looks like a movie star's house). Gates must be operated with a remote control so Jessica will leave it open for you

Route to la perla from our house # 78: come out of Dawns Beach estates by the guard house and take a right down the hill. You will now pass the new Westin hotel entrance. Proceed up the hill and as you come down, La perla is on the right with big wrought iron gates.

Alvo & Reya will have the gates open for you and the key will be under the mat if it is really late.

Most importantly....have a great, relaxing vacation !!!

Warm Regards,

John F. Gallagher      Owner & Bon Vivant

**Please conserve water !** (it's very precious in the Caribbean)

**Please shut off lights and A/C when not in use. (electricity is expensive and dear)**

Before you depart:

1. Please start a load or two of towels or sheets in the washing machine(s) as the maids often have only 5 hours between guests. (La perla has 2 washing machines, one off dining area and one outdoors up above in the patio area)
2. A tip of \$ 20-30 is greatly appreciated by the maids (Reya)

3. Please be sure you have all your belongings
4. Lock the house and leave keys on kitchen table. At La Perla, be sure the gate is locked at the foot of the driveway and gate at beach entrance is locked.
5. Plug in both cell phones in the master bedrooms so they can re-charge for the next guests. They should be near the bed headboard or on a dresser and plugged in.
6. Please fill and run the dish-washer. Please fill and freeze all ice cube trays as the auto ice-makers sometimes can't keep up or get stuck.
7. Get to the airport 2 hours before your flight; and give yourself 45 minutes from our house to the SXM airport and to return your rental car. Check the flight schedule on our computer to see if your flight is on time (many afternoon flights run late so check on line)
8. Have a safe trip home and email John to book your next vacation!