

ST. MAARTEN

events

Winter edition
Sun yourself on St Maarten
Plus handy island & shopping maps

Why everyone's
**LAGOON
CRUISING**

Shopping for the
ultimate silver-screen

JEWELS

Catch celebrities at the

**HEINEKEN
REGATTA**

PLUS STYLISH HOTELS >> LOCAL CHEFS ON ANGUILLA >> DIVING WATCHES >> HOTELS



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I love St Maarten. I always have, and hopefully always will. Jewel-filled stores, ocean-scented trade winds, French patisseries, ribs shacks and dollar beer, the roar of jet engines of Maho Beach, the insistent rhythm of steel pan and drum at Carnival on Frontstreet, windsurfing until your arms ache and your back's pink, masses of margaritas at non-stop parties: these are a few of my favorite things.

The annual vacation has its inimitable place in the yearly calendar. Frequently responsible for dreams of escaping the rat race and general over-indulgence, the annual vacation encapsulates everyone's need for a little me-time. Many an action that would appear to be a little, well, self-indulgent at any other time of the year so often appears irresistible on vacation.

Why not, you've earned it. And that's why in this issue's shopping pages we have concentrated our attention on must-have jewelry and accessories. Let the old world elegance of Art Deco's SILVER-SCREEN JEWELS and our pick of this year's best diving watches in SCUBA DO inspire your choice of how to treat yourself. For those with more dash than cash, our piece on pretty costume jewelry flags up how to be a sure-fire hit on the fashion front without taking out a second mortgage.

39 GREAT THINGS TO DO THIS VACATION should be an inspiration to all of us, and a call to try at least a couple of things you wouldn't be caught dead doing back home. The ideas in our DIY-fest demonstrate that there's life beyond sunbathing and snorkeling all day – a point that our occasional columnist Gary Brown would no doubt appreciate. In MESSING ABOUT ON THE WATER, he shows an enthusiasm for all things water-based which very nearly matches my own, and his tips on the best activities in and around Simpson Bay Lagoon will tempt even the most die-hard landlubber.

Separated by only a few nautical miles, the islands of St Maarten and Anguilla are twin beacons on the gastronomic hinterland. We select ten of the finest and most creative restaurants on St Maarten in FUSION CENTRAL, all of who would not feel out of home in the big cities of the world. At the other end of the spectrum, Anguilla's LOCAL HEROES show how good cooking and gracious service are by no means the preserve on the \$100-a-head gastro-temples. Anguilla may be small but it has a big appetite.

Speaking of taste, who could resist the full-blown tacky gorgeousness of our cover girl slurping a Screwdriver on the beach? For what would a vacation be without a bit of kitsch?

Carina Longbottom, Editor

Lara and Charlie jumping off the dock at Karibuni, Pinel

Editor's letter

8 MAKE YOUR OWN ICE CREAM SUNDAES

Fill a tall glass with your own concoction of locally made Etna ice cream (available at most supermarkets). Our favorite combo is coconut ice cream with guava sorbet for a tropical treat.

9 TREAT THE KIDS

The St Maarten Zoo is top of the list of child-friendly activities. Home to over 60 species of exotic mammals, birds and reptiles, it's the largest of its kind in the Caribbean.

10 HAVE A LONG, LAZY BREAKFAST AT A PAVEMENT CAFE

11 ENROLL IN A DISCOVER SCUBA DIVING COURSE AT DIVE SAFARIS

and learn the skills necessary to take your first dive in as little as one afternoon.

12 LEARN TO PARASAIL

and be suspended on a giant, inflated wing above the blue carpet of the Caribbean. Orient Beach offers the biggest range of options. Try the water sports concessions at Kontiki, Kakao or Bikini Beaches.

13 WHIP UP A SUMMERY COCKTAIL

such as a fruity take on the classic martini. Mix three parts Skyy vodka to one part Sint Maarten Guavaberry liqueur and two parts cranberry juice. Mix with ice in a shaker and strain into a chilled glass.

14 RELAX WITH A GOOD BOOK

Top of Events's reading list is:

- Cocktails and assassins on Dawn Beach in *Gone Bamboo* by renowned chef-turned-author Anthony Bourdain (Bloomsbury; \$14.95).
- A matchless collection of travel writing and reportage over the past half-century in Jan Morris's *The World: Travels 1950-2000* (W.W. Norton; \$27.95).
- The moving story of a woman and a Native American child in Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees* (HarperTorch; £7.99).
- A thriller set in a remote South African hospital in *The Good Doctor* by Damon Galgut (Grove Press; \$23).
- Even if you're not a Parrot Head, you'll enjoy this fascinating journey through one man's life in *A Pirate Look at Fifty* (Fawcett Books; \$7.99).
- The hard hitting and often funny account

of the reality of living and working in St Maarten in *Giving Good Ghost* by Andy Gross (Elderberry Press; \$19.95).

15 CHILL IN A TROPICAL GARDEN

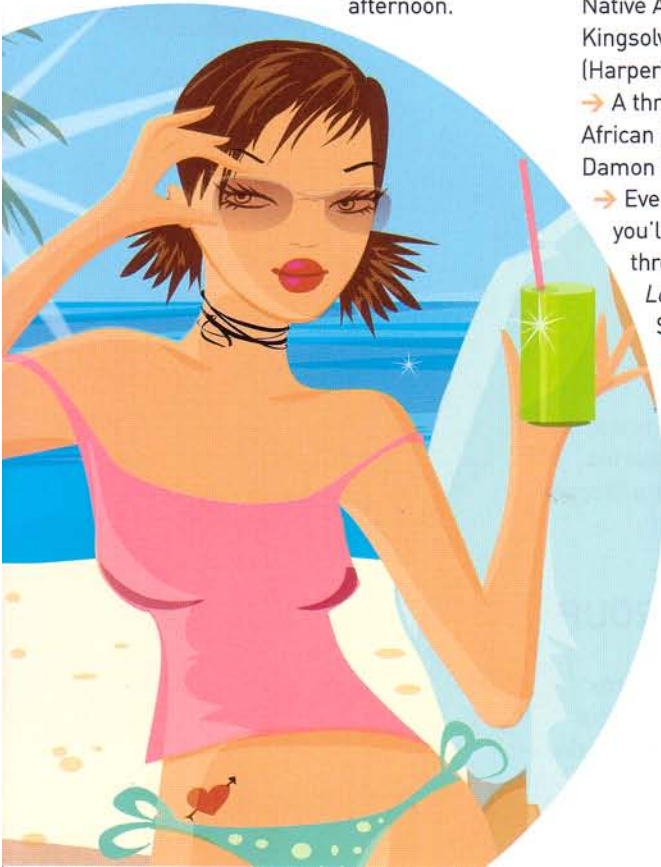
filled with hundreds of rare and exotic butterflies. Take the tour for an amusing and informative introduction to the world of the butterfly or just relax and soak up the tranquil atmosphere. Tel 590 590 87 31 21; www.thebutterflyfarm.com.

16 HAVE LUNCH IN A FRENCH BUTCHER'S SHOP

Try Chez Rene Boucherie in ZAC de Bellevue, tucked away down a side street in the commercial district of Marigot, with a handful of tables on the inside and a few more lining the sidewalk outside. You can't book and the menu consists of three or four freshly made dishes lovingly prepared and simply presented. This is probably the best value meal you'll have on the island.

17 GET RUNNING

The first annual Anguilla's Race Against AIDS is being held on November 30, 2003. This charity event will include three races and offer the opportunity for all levels of runners/walkers to participate. Call 264 497 4673 for more information. ▶



TIME OUT...

We reveal the low-down on the latest timepiece trends

RAY TO GO

Stingray skin is hot news in the watchstrap market: it's surprisingly strong and looks refreshingly different. Galuchat is the correct name for the tanned skin of stingray used by the master tanners of the 18th century to create decorative caskets and cases. Its heyday was at the beginning of the 20th century with the Art Deco movement after which it fell into relative obscurity – until now.

De Grisogono has some wonderful colors, such as candy pink (on a rose-gold watch) or salmon pink (on a black diamond model).

DIAL TONES

Savvy celebrities, such as **Jay Leno** and Jean-Claude Van Damme, have discovered **Ritmo Mundo**, a Beverly Hills watch label that looks like a cross between a Rolex and a Juicy Couture tracksuit. Crocodile bands come in wild shades of electric-lemon or lavender; and lightweight dials are splashed with groovy Art Deco digits.

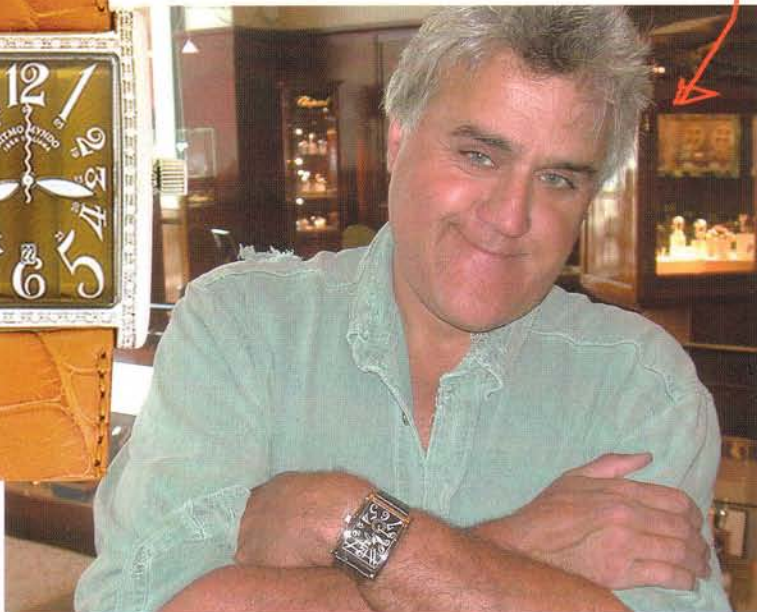


GONE BAMBOO

Gucci's new **Bamboo quartz** steel watch is the decorative motif of the moment. The company's iconic bamboo-handled handbag may have started life as long ago as 1947 but the re-issued design looks as modern today as it ever did.

MASTER CRAFTSMAN

The story of one man's goal to produce the ultimate timepiece has inspired master watchmakers Girard Perregaux to produce a special version of its new **Sea Hawk II** chronometer. John Harrison, the 18th century son of a carpenter, was a self-taught watchmaker. Following a series of disastrous naval losses, the English government offered a prize of £20,000 (the equivalent today of \$1.5 million) to whoever invented a reliable method for calculating longitude. Harrison, realizing that an accurate reading of a ship's longitude depended on knowing the precise time, made it his life's work to produce a timepiece that far exceeded anything available at the time in terms of accuracy. After numerous trials and setbacks, the government



Southern Comfort

Inspiring landscapes but uninspired wines? Not any more. Languedoc-Roussillon is now attracting serious attention thanks to the skill of local producers. Photography by **Mark Bromhead**

Not so very long ago the region of Languedoc-Roussillon in southwest France was known principally for its contribution to Europe's wine lake. The vast, hot plains beside the sea, which have been planted with vines since Roman times, produced wine in volume via the cooperatives, while the secret patches of vines up in the wooded hills of the Corbières were largely left untended, the wine mostly used for local consumption. The rules of the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) were Byzantine in their complexity, varying from valley to valley and often applying to wine varieties that had long been discarded. In short, this was not an area with a reputation for fine wines.

Yet for the past decade or so it has been causing considerable excitement in the wine world. Suddenly, major

players in Bordeaux have woken up to the potential on their own doorstep – or at least half a day's drive away. The Baron Philippe de Rothschild company, which invests as far afield as Napa Valley and Chile, has entered

IN LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON SURPRISES ABOUND

into a joint venture with the well-respected cooperative of Sieurs d'Arques in Limoux (a region hitherto known largely for its sparkling and white wines), the result of which is the hefty yet classy red Baron'arques; and the Baronne Philippine, daughter of the late Baron, has also invested in a chateau just down the road at Saint-

Polcarpe, where the intention is, according to Baron'arques managing director Vincent Montigaud, to create a "top, top wine" in a decade or two.

The Languedoc region, and increasingly Roussillon to the south, still offers the greatest concentration of handcrafted French wines with real individuality for under \$15 a bottle. By far the most interesting producers are the individual domaines, typically selling a mix of Vins de Pays and local appellations (Corbières, Fitou, Minervois, Faugères, St Chinian, Coteaux du Languedoc and Costières de Nîmes) that truly express their superior vineyard origins.

Often dismissed as just another part of Languedoc, the Minervois region has a nucleus of winemakers who have taken steps to improve quality and are now ready to win over the price-conscious consumer with their distinctive Old ▶

