

FREE

Local News
in English

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WW St-Barth WEEKLY

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Traditional West Indies
Sailboats Visit Saint Barth

Air Traffic Falls By 20%

The global economic crisis has had a big effect on the activity at the airport in Saint Jean. While air traffic decreased by more than 14% in the last trimester of 2008 compared to 2007, the first trimester of 2009 was even lower, with a drop of 21.3% compared to the same period last year; there was also a decrease of 23.47% in the number of passengers in March 2009, according to figures released by the management of the airport. The first trimester of 2009 saw a total of 45,873 passengers (both arrivals and departures combined), against 58,259 in 2008—a net loss of 12,386 passengers. In comparison, the first trimester of 2008 was marked by an increase of 2.07% compared to the first trimester of 2007.

During the first trimester, the number of planes also decreased by 8% (with a lower than average number of passengers) representing 12,177 take-offs and landings, compared to 13,176 in 2008 during the same period. On the other hand, there was a considerable increase of freight transported by air during this period—going from 50,000 kilos in 2008 to 70,000 en 2009. This increase was related to the general strikes that paralyzed Guadeloupe, including its port, which forced merchandise to be moved by air.

What Does This Decrease Mean?

In the context of the global financial crisis, where many tourist destinations have suffered (but not all: Reunion

Island, for example, experienced a growth in tourism during the first part of 2009), the decrease in air traffic in Saint Barth is not in and of itself a surprise.

Yet the size of the decrease leads one to wonder about the reasons that it happened, since it seems that the numbers don't tell the entire story and there are indications that Saint Barth has suffered from the financial crisis more than other destinations. The first indication: In spite of the general strikes and lack of tourists in Guadeloupe in early 2009, Raizet airport reports a decrease of "only" 25% for the first trimester according to an estimate in the daily publication, *TourMag*. But in all honesty, the last two weeks of March saw a decline of almost 35%.

The second indication comes from the CTO, Caribbean Tourism Organization, which regularly publishes arrival statistics at airports in member countries (www.onecaribbean.org). In their issue dated April 20, the CTO indicated that of the 12 destinations listed, only tree reported an increase in arrivals in January and February: Cancun (Mexico) +9.4%, Cuba +4.5% and Jamaica +3.2%. Nine others saw a decline in January, from -2.4% for Belize to -18.8% for Anguilla, or the largest decrease marked by the CTO. Other double-digit declines: Antigua and Barbuda -14.3% (January through March), Cayman Islands -11.3% (January-February), Montserrat -11.6% (January-February), and Sainte Lucie -13.7% (January through March). The American Virgin Islands saw a decrease of 6.1% (January-February), Puerto Rico -4.7% (January) and the Dominican Republic

lic- 4.4% (January-February).

What other information do the reports from the CTO reveal? That the clientele from the United States has decreased in all destinations, except Mexico (+3.5%) and the American Virgin Island (+0.7%). Elsewhere the numbers tell the story: the largest declines are -18.2% in Anguilla, -12% in the Caymans, and -24.2% in Sainte Lucie. This is also the case for European tourists—generally lower in most destinations, except once again Mexico, with a marked increase of 53.5% and the American Virgin Islands with an increase of 36.3%. Elsewhere, the decline is about the same as for the US clientele. The surprise comes from the Canadian clientele which showed growth in seven of the 12 destinations: +32.7% in Jamaica (January-February), +31.6% in the USVI (January), +20% in Sainte Lucie (January through March), +6.3% in the Dominican Republic, +5% in Mexico, +4.9% in Anguilla (January), +2.8% in Belize (January).

Is It Just Saint Barth?

Due to lack of statistics for air traffic at Juliana (Sint Maarten), it is impossible to know if the decline in traffic recorded in Saint Barth is uniquely inherent to the destination or if it corresponds to an overall decrease for the Northern Islands. And as we do not have statistics revealing the nationality of the passengers arriving in Saint Barth, it is hard to tell which market is in decline. And finally, the lack of economic data makes it impossible to quantify the effect of the global crisis in Saint Barth.



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Kid's T-Shirts Show Design Innovation And Environmental Awareness



inspired to create these shirts by their daughters, Salinne & Celina, who come from different parts of the world and met on an island where they became best friends.

Antonia notes, "We want to be role models, showing children how they can both

share and enjoy really cool 'stuff' whilst at the same time be mindful of the world that we are setting them up to live in."

Susanna adds: "We are keen to promote the tradition of storytelling and learning through stories and will, when we launch our website in June 2009, have both dedicated story sections and other functions for the children to make virtual 'pen pals' so they can learn of stories from other children across the world." She has approached designers in Sweden to contribute to the collection.

The socially conscious side of Edun Live means that farmers and workers in Madagascar, Lesotho, Kenya and Uganda, for example, benefits from the purchase of each t-shirt. This means that everyone from the farmer to the factory worker is given fair pay for his or her contribution. The 2ONARock t-shirts will soon be available at shops in Paris, New York, Stockholm, Cologne and Sydney.

Contact: Antonia Ludes or Susanna Freer Passburg at: info2onarock@rocketmail.com

By Ellen Lampert-Gréaux

Small Chapels Pillaged



Nestled in rocky crevasses or built along the roadside by neighborhood residents who discretely pray there, the small Saint Barth chapels found primarily on the windward side of the island were pillaged last week. Those in Toiny, Saline, Petit Cul de Sac, and Saint Jean were robbed of their saints and other holy objects; their flowers disappeared and the crosses atop the chapels in Toiny and Petit Cul de Sac were ripped off. For the time being, no charges are being

pressed, but for many people there is much consternation about this desecration. Especially since the chapel in Grand Fond, which was nestled in a rock a little off of the road, was destroyed shortly before the others were pillaged. The reason for the destruction in Grand Fond was not a crime, but the desire of certain neighbors to modernize the neighborhood, putting a wide ribbon of concrete in place of the small path that had led to the chapel.

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NEWS From The Marine Park

WHALE SEASON IN FULL SWING

Whale season has reached its peak: the marine park has been getting calls three or four times a week to report the presence of humpback whales close to the island. If you see them, a few simple rules must be followed: approaching them in the ocean must be done respectfully—the females, having given birth, will do anything to protect their sole babies. The best way to approach and observe both whales and dolphins is to follow along in parallel to the animals. It is also recommended to never approach them directly from the front or back.

And if they decide to approach you, put your motor in neutral and enjoy looking at them, and then back away slowly. And most importantly, never jump into the water!

The best distances for approaching:

- 100 meters for whales and 50 meters for dolphins
- The appropriate length of time to watch a group of whales is one hour, but just 30 minutes if the group contains a baby.
- Each group of whales should not be observed for more than a total time of three hours per day (90 minutes in the case of a mother with baby).
- Motors should remain running during the observation of the whales.

AWARENESS

On Wednesday, March 11, the Marine Park met with a class of 30 Swedish marine biology students who had crossed the ocean from Sweden to Saint Barth aboard a splendid sailboat called the “Marina Läröverket.” Following a presentation about the protected zones within the marine park, the staff answered questions from the students about fishing within the marine park and the protection of the small islands around Saint Barth.

On March 17, a CE2 class from the elementary school in Gustavia visited Grand Cul de Sac to learn about three ecosystems: salt ponds-mangroves/the lagoon/the coral reef. Once there, they were told how to recognize the various



species, including white, black and gray mangrove trees and fiddler crabs, as well as explore the environment, looking for the many different species.

On the way back, they stopped at the pond in St. Jean where they were able to see a variety of birds—from egrets to brown pelicans—and the fish that jump right in front of the birds.



ANCHORS KILL UNDERWATER PLANTS

The rules concerning mooring of boats in Marigot Bay—a “red” protected zone where anchoring is prohibited—were broken several times in the past few weeks. This magnificent, sheltered bay is actually carpeted with sea plants that serve as a refuge for fish and young shellfish, as well as conch, and it serves as a feeding ground for the numerous green turtles found here. When anchors rip up the plants, it takes months for them to grow back.

POLLUTION IN MARIGOT

A mysterious yellow streak appears periodically at the bottom of Marigot Bay. A sample of this water was analyzed and there is only one verdict: it comprises dirty water from a septic system. The marine park, in collaboration with the technical services office, tried to identify the source of this pollution, but the water currents make this job rather difficult.

CHECKING THE MOORINGS

Two boats had problems during the month of March after moorings provided by the Marine Park gave way. This is a reminder that all skippers should check out the condition of the mooring and be sure to use it correctly, adding extra security if they plan to spend the night or. At the same time, the marine park staff checks on the maintenance of the moorings, but unfortunately propellers and boats that are too heavy quite often damage the moorings.

TRADITIONAL WEST INDIES SAILBOATS VISIT SAINT BARTH

The weekend of May 1 saw a small fleet of traditional West Indies wooden boats from Carriacou, Bequia, and Nevis sailing around Saint Barth. The event was not an official regatta but a few days of informal racing organized by LouLou Magras and Alexis Andrews, of the West Indies Regatta organization, in order to evoke the beautiful old boats that were once quite common in Saint Barth and throughout the Caribbean. "These boats were used for trading among the islands," says Andrews, who is based in Antigua. He and LouLou came up with the idea of a laid-back regatta, much in the style of the regattas LouLou organized back in the late 70s, but this year was more of an educational visit, and not a formal race in any sense. "The idea was to bring these boats to Saint Barth and show them to the population, who was invited to come aboard and see how they are made," says Andrews. UNESCO supported the event via Daniel Blanchard in Saint Barth, much as they supported a traditional pirogue project a few years ago.

"We wanted to show how the old-timers made these simple, yet fast sailing vessels," says Blanchard, who sailed on boats not unlike these as a child, travelling from Saint Barth to school in Guadeloupe. "They once played an



important role in the Caribbean."

Andrews adds, "These boats have a certain style, they are very unique and different from modern boats. All of the owners come from very different walks of life. One of these boats belongs to the vice commodore of the Antigua Yacht Club, one belongs to a fisherman, and one is mine and I am a photographer, another is used for day charters. They sail like rockets for such big heavy boats, and were used to carry goods as fast as possible. There is quite a bit of room for cargo inside."

The eight boats that came to Saint Barth included six Carriacou sloops—Ocean Nomad, Genesis, Tradition, Sweetheart, Good Expectation, and Summer Cloud—the Nevis schooner Alexander Hamilton, and a Bequia sloop, Plumbelly, the smallest of the fleet, but which has crossed the Atlantic many times.

Tim Charlwood, an English-

man based in Park City, Utah, noted: "the sailing was terrific with 20 knots of wind. He was sailing on Frank Pierce's Tradition, a classic sloop that was rebuilt, and the crew included such locals as LouLou Magras, Lee and Judy Davidson, and Daniel Blanchard. "We hope to come back next year," says Charlwood, "or what should become an annual regatta."

NEW PROCEDURE FOR TREATING CARS BEFORE CRUSHING

The island's trash collection center has a new tool at its disposal: an anti-pollution station to treat cars before they are crushed. The machine was put into service last March by a technician who came from France, and who also ran a training session for the staff. The goal is to "avoid pollution from old cars," by removing all fluids that cause pollution and are dangerous. This includes draining the motor oil, gasoline, anti-freeze, and brake fluid. It takes just 15 minutes to treat a vehicle.

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

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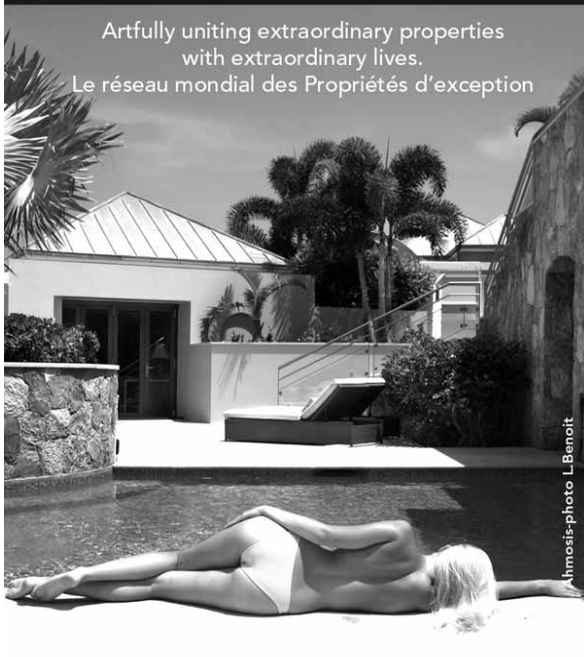
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	Air Caraïbes 05 90 27 71 90
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<u>Town Hall</u>	05 90 29 80 40
<u>EDF</u> (electricity company office)	05 90 29 80 81
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Solution

Check the solutions to the Sudoku page 06

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

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