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# St-Barth WEEKLY

Local News  
in English

FREE

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## Island Lockdown

**No school, no group activities, most stores closed, general confinement: as all across France, Saint Barthélemy is laying low to fight against the Covid-19 epidemic.**



## The times they are a changin'!

**W**ell, actually they have changed. In the space of a little more than a week, the island of Saint Barthélemy has gone from a lively little Caribbean paradise with people on the beach and colorful Mini Coopers zipping all over, to a state of total lockdown. No one is dancing on the tables anywhere at the moment. People are confined to their homes, and must have a self-signed declaration if they go out. Primarily to get food, go to the doctor, or get a little air.

Fortunately, there have only been three cases of Covid-19 on the island so far. One has recovered and the other two are in isolation, having come back from a cruise with the virus. With any luck, that will be it, if people are smart and take all the necessary precautions.

People are being inventive when they can. Restaurants that usually don't do take out are offering meals to go... and some really good ones. Pizza places must be thriving, and of course the supermarkets are busier than ever, yet manage to keep the shelves stocked in spite of people buying in bulk.

This digital issue of The Weekly has all the latest information concerning Saint Barth and Covid-19, including new air travel restrictions. Basically if you don't live here, this is not the time to come. But like after a hurricane, the island will bounce back, even if it takes a while!

We'll keep in touch!

*Ellen Lampert-Gréaux*

## Dear Readers,

These days, news happens so fast!

To stay in touch in real time, log onto our Facebook page:

Le Journal de Saint-Barth.

In light of the current situation, we have decided to suspend publication of The Saint Barth Weekly for the season, after today's final issue which is only available online at [www.stbarthweekly.com](http://www.stbarthweekly.com).

## A Saint Barth Couple With Coronavirus

Two new cases of coronavirus were reported last Saturday on our island. The couple contracted Covid-19 during a cruise.



**L**ast Saturday night, the regional health agency (ARS) announced two new cases of Covid-19 in Saint Barth. Once again, the virus was imported; that is to say, the two people contracted it while on a cruise ship. After this news, ARS Guadeloupe started an inquiry about those the couple had seen since their return to the island. Family members, work colleagues... almost a full week had passed before the couple felt the first symptoms and decided to call the medical services. All of their contacts have not been tested, but asked to remain isolated at their homes as a precautionary measure. The test is only given if a person shows symptoms of Covid-19 (most notably a fever and dry cough) or if they are

frail (elderly or compromised conditions, for example). The health of the sick couple is not an issue as they have been authorized to rest at home. But some of their contacts did not go into confinement immediately, which increases the risk of transmission. The test results from a few of those people are expected in the next few days. The first three people who had the virus in late February—a Saint Barth resident and his parents— have recovered, and the parents, who were isolated at the hospital in Saint Martin, have returned to their home.

An epidemic means 10 infected people per 100,000 residents, so Saint Barthélemy has surpassed that level by one case at this time.

# Covid-19 Immobilizes The Island

The order of the day: “Stay Home.” In one week, the crisis caused by Covid-19 has become considerably more dangerous. Like the rest of France, the quasi-totality of the population in Saint Barth is confined to their homes until March 31 at least.



**C**onfined in Saint Barthélemy is not unusual, but generally for different circumstances, and the current state of confinement might run as long as March 31. The streets are almost empty, the stores are mostly closed, and the gendarmes control the cars on the road. For those who do not have a self-signed attestation (honor system)\*, and in some cases the professional documents that are also required, the fine can be as high as 135€. All gatherings of friends and family are forbidden, as well as group sports.

A lot of people were upset on Monday, as construction sites were not closed. First, that authorization did not come from Saint Barthélemy, it was an edict from the French government, leaving the decision up to the head of each company. On our island, the building trades comprise 20% of the workforce. Yesterday, the president of the Collectivity signed an order to prohibit loud noise (rock crushers, jack hammers, etc.) during the period of confinement. Certain construction companies had already made the decision to close, as did the hardware stores. They can officially remain open, but they decided not to allow customers to come in, but might create a service for emergencies, such as a

drive-through.

Catastrophe for restaurateurs, hotels, merchants! Hotels are allowed to be open but the large majority of the tourists have fled our shores, even if yesterday there were still some on the island.

These sectors represent 28% of private employment, while stores, most of which are closed, represent 20%. Numerous restaurateurs are offering meals to go.

The post office in Gustavia is open in the morning but mail is only delivered every other day, while the Collectivity and the prefecture are closed to the public. Churches can no longer tend to the faithful (except for funerals), the classrooms are empty, the stadium is inaccessible...

## Same Rules As In France

After several attempts to adapt the French national directives to local needs last week, creating a cacophony around the measures of protection against Covid-19, the authorities made a decision: local epidemic or not, no exceptions for the Antilles.

The situation in France changed dramatically last Friday morning, with a stagger-

ing acceleration in the number of cases. Today, the European evolution of Covid-19 has been duplicated in Guadeloupe and in Martinique. Local cases have been reported and some are quite serious. A woman died from Covid-19 in Martinique on Sunday, and several patients are in the hospital. The progression of the virus in Guadeloupe is exponential and continues in Martinique, while the first cases have been reported in Saint Martin.

As for Saint Barth, today would have been the first day to admire the boats in The Bucket Regatta, but instead the population is confined at home, immobile. To date, the virus is not circulating on the island. The only reported cases were imported, or in other words, the carriers were contaminated off island.

Nonetheless, Saint Barthélemy anxiously awaits the daily news bulletins from the ARS, hoping that the preventive measures were taken here in time, before the virus could multiply among the population.

(\* ) *The form is available on page 7. You can also copy it out by hand if you do not have a printer.*

# Air Traffic Greatly Reduced

All around the world, air traffic has been restricted. In our islands, travel is greatly reduced. Since yesterday, the French borders are closed.

**A**s of Thursday, March 19, all commercial flights arriving at the airport Saint Barthélemy are reserved for those passengers traveling for medical reasons, family emergencies, or professional trips impossible to cancel. These exemptions are on an honor system, and as of March 23, the same rules apply for those who want to leave the island by plane. Saint Barth Commuter stopped all flights as of yesterday, Winair continues with reduced service, same for Air Antilles and Tradewind. Private flights are prohibited. France has closed its external frontiers, but maintains access within its borders, so voyages



between the Antilles and metropolitan France are authorized, but only for those who must fly. Flights are not available for tourists, those who want to go to a wedding, or simply go to visit their friends.

In addition, the only people allowed to enter Saint Martin, via Juliana as well as Grand Case, must be residents of the island or nearby islands (Saint Barth, Saba, Saint Eustache, Bonaire, etc.), and they must

provide proof of residency. Residents of the Antilles returning from the United States or Europe are required to confine themselves to their homes for 14 days after their arrival. Foreigners can no longer enter the islands, and those already here are being encouraged to leave. At the same time, Europeans cannot enter many other countries, including the United States. Some airports are completely barricaded, such as Anguilla, an island so far spared by coronavirus. The airlines have drastically reduced their service, but are offering more flexible conditions for those passengers who want to change the dates of their travels.

## What Stores Are Open, Who Can Go To Work?

Information about the closing of businesses dribbled in, creating confusion among workers. Construction sites can continue and certain stores can remain open for their clients, according to the governmental decree.

**C**onstruction sites are exempt. Sylvie Feucher, prefect for the Northern Islands answered this question during a press conference Monday evening in Saint Martin, explaining that with the hurricane season upon us in two months, it is necessary to protect those who still don't have a roof. That might be the case in Saint Martin, but the same rule applies in Saint Barthélemy as well as all of France as it comes from the government, not the collectivities or the prefecture. Every business can make the decision it thinks is best, as long as it vest protects their employees. So as of Sunday, a few construction companies on the island suspended their activities. On Tuesday, a few workers and artisans continued their activities. Yesterday, the Collectivity asked for a stop to loud noise, and the president signed an order to this effect. Health professionals are continuing to work. And businesses have been asked to see how people can work from home. If that is not possible, they should furnish their employ-



ees an attestation as justification. Churches can remain open but cannot have more than 20 people at a time, with the exception of a funeral service.

As for businesses, the government provided a list of those that can stay open, as long as they put measures in place to limit the spread of the virus, primarily by letting customers enter in small groups.

Hardware stores are allowed to stay open,

but in Monday, the doors were closed on the stores in Public. There also, each business can decide for itself.

Not true for bars, restaurants, clothing and souvenir shops, museums, libraries, art galleries, and sports facilities. Restaurants are allowed to provide meals for take-out and many are doing so on the island. Delivery services are still operational; and it seems as if a few new ones have appeared out of the blue.

# Provisions Arriving Non-Stop On Island

Since Saturday, the supermarkets have been under attack by residents who are stocking up. And yet there is no risk of shortages on the island.

**C**ustomers entering Super U in small groups, a long line at the gas station, parking lots overflowing at the grocery stores in Lorient and Saint Jean on Sunday... Starting on Saturday, the residents of Saint Barth stampeded the food and hygienic products aisles.

However, there is no reason to fear shortages. "Shipping of merchandise is continuing normally, it's the transportation of people that has the restrictions. Even at a time of war, the shipping of goods continued," recalls Ernest Brin, director of the port. "Oil tankers and container ships are coming as usual, the commercial port is functioning, and there is nothing to fear, people can continue to go shopping."

## "The only shortage is a shortage of common sense."

At Super U on Monday morning, clients were allowed to enter in small groups to avoid crowding in the aisles and protect the employees. Priority was given to parents with young children, seniors and those with disabilities. "There is no worry about provisioning: we stocked up for the high season," indicated the store management, who calls for civism. "The only shortage is a shortage of common sense," says their Facebook page. "Deliveries are continuing at their usual rhythm as the cargo ships are already in transit, and supplies are assured for the weeks to come. All hygienic measures already in place in our stores have been reinforced,"

Same story at AMC, which reassures its clients "that there is no problem supplying the three AMC stores, and in strict, reinforced hygienic conditions. It is important not to panic and create the idea of a shortage." So if the shelves are empty, it's because of the behavior of the clientele, not the lack of merchandise.



## MASTHEAD

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# Tourist Season Screeches To A Halt

It started when Donald Trump started to close the US borders and a flood of tourists headed home while others cancelled their trips. The cancellation of The Bucket Regatta and the measures put into place by the French government were the final blows.



*As of last Sunday, all restaurants and bars were closed on the island. This week, commercial flights are still allowing tourists to return home.*

**M**onday, while all of France was holding its collective breath waiting for the evening announcement by president Emmanuel Macron, there were still a few tourists on the island, trying to enjoy their vacation in spite of the closing of all restaurants, bars, and sports facilities. Travel restrictions and the declaration by the French president calling for general confinement and closing of the borders, toppled the tourist situation, already wobbly since early March.

Cancellations accelerated for hotels and villas as of last week, based on the decision of Donald Trump to close the US borders to Europeans and impose confinement on Americans returning from traveling. Princess Juliana Airport in Sint Maarten added its own serious restrictions for American and European passengers. The cancellation of The Bucket Regatta was the coup de grace. At that point, visitors were afraid of cancelled flights and the possibility of being confined someplace. But now it is an overall fear of the virus itself that has seized the entire world.

## **Buzzword: flexibility**

The tourist industry is the hardest hit. “We were very transparent about the situation

with our clients,” indicates Vanessa Panza from the Saint Barthélemy Hotels and Villas Association, which has 24 members. The association met on March 13 to evaluate the situation. “The decrease in activity was flagrante for all trips through mid-April. The buzzword for the hotels is flexibility in terms of reservations and cancellations; we are suggesting as much as possible that clients reschedule their visit,” she adds. The hoteliers encourage all tourism professionals to be as flexible as possible.

At WIMCO, which represents 385 villas in Saint Barthélemy, 50% of the tourists were still on the island as of Monday, March 16. But they decided to leave quickly, cutting short their travels. For the last two weeks of March, “more than 70% asked to change their dates... and more requests are coming in. That said, many clients scheduled to arrive in mid-April are holding on to their reservations, at least for now, and there have been very few requests to change dates from May 1 to August 30. And we are getting a lot of people asking about next year,” explains WIMCO president Stiles Bennet.

The most difficult of these challenges is the incertitude about the magnitude of the



Covid-19 crisis and how long it will last: Will the situation improve by April or continue to be extended? “No one has the answer, and we are all in the dark,” admits Vanessa Panza. “We cannot make projections, or make plans... it’s a total unknown.”

## ATTESTATION DE DÉPLACEMENT DÉROGATOIRE

En application de l'article 1<sup>er</sup> du décret du 16 mars 2020 portant réglementation des déplacements dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation du virus Covid-19 :

Je soussigné(e)

Mme / M. ....

Né(e) le : .....

Demeurant : .....

.....

.....

certifie que mon déplacement est lié au motif suivant (cocher la case) autorisé par l'article 1<sup>er</sup> du décret du 16 mars 2020 portant réglementation des déplacements dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation du virus Covid-19 :

- déplacements entre le domicile et le lieu d'exercice de l'activité professionnelle, lorsqu'ils sont indispensables à l'exercice d'activités ne pouvant être organisées sous forme de télétravail (sur justificatif permanent) ou déplacements professionnels ne pouvant être différés;
- déplacements pour effectuer des achats de première nécessité dans des établissements autorisés (liste sur [gouvernement.fr](http://gouvernement.fr));
- déplacements pour motif de santé;
- déplacements pour motif familial impérieux, pour l'assistance aux personnes vulnérables ou la garde d'enfants;
- déplacements brefs, à proximité du domicile, liés à l'activité physique individuelle des personnes, à l'exclusion de toute pratique sportive collective, et aux besoins des animaux de compagnie.

Fait à ....., le...../...../2020

(signature)

# Taking Precautions

## For everyone:

- Wash your hands frequently;
- Only use a tissue once;
- No kissing or shaking hands when greeting friends;
- Wear a mask only if you are sick.

## For those returning from a high-risk zone:

- Take your temperature twice a day;
- Keep an eye out for signs of a respiratory infection (cough, shortness of breath...);
- Wear a surgical mask if you are with another person or if you have to go out;
- Wash your hands frequently or use a hand sanitizer;
- Avoid contact with all people who are susceptible (pregnant women, the elderly...);
- Avoid places such as hospitals, maternity wards, retirement
- Avoid all group activities, restaurants, cinema, etc;
- Workers/students: work at home whenever possible and avoid close contact (meetings, elevators, cafeterias...).

## For those who suspect symptoms (fever, dry cough, shortness of breath):

- Dial 15 for emergency medical services (SAMU);
- Avoid all contact with the people around you and wear a mask;
- Do not go directly to the doctor or the emergency room.

COVID-19

## CORONAVIRUS: PROTECT YOURSELF AND PROTECT OTHERS.



**Wash your hands frequently**



**Cough or sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue**



**Only use a tissue once**



**No kissing or shaking hands when greeting friends**



## News Briefs

### Villa Marie Sold Out For Boson Ensemble Dinner



The last dinner at the restaurant for some time: Villa Marie was full last Friday night for an event to benefit the non-profit Boson Ensemble, whose mission is to provide drinking water for isolated communities in the Peruvian Amazon. During the dinner, guests were treated to a Javanese shadow theatre performance with Ombeline Collin on violin. Information: [www.bosonensemble.org](http://www.bosonensemble.org).

### First 'Day Of The Whale' A Success



The first 'Day Of The Whale' was held on Sunday, March 8 on the main dock in Gustava. The day's events included lectures, projections, activities, and about 10 stands featuring artisans and associations. The event, funded by the Agoa Sanctuary and the Collectivity, attracted close to 300 visitors, according to the

organizers. The Territorial Environmental Agency, La Réserve Naturelle de Saint-Martin, the SNSM, the Sargasse Project, Saint-Barth Plongée, Fabienne Miot, and Véronique Vandernoot all participated. Michel Vély, president of the Megaptera association, and the inspiration behind this day dedicated to whales, says he is "impressed by size of the public, who were curious and interested. We will certainly organize another day like this!" The month of March is the height of humpback whale season in the French West Indies. Megaptera follows these marine mammals to try and better understand their migration patterns and way of life.

### Interact Kids Organize A Mini Clean Up



The kids at the Rotary Interact mini-school organized a mini Clean Up on Sunday, March 1, as a small version of the big Clean Up that takes place on the island each year in May. They walked along the roadside and the beach in Grand Fond to collect trash, working with Didier Laplace of the Coral Restoration Association. They hope to motivate other kids their age to take part in future mini Clean Ups, and raise awareness so that that a maximum number of volunteers, kids as well as adults, participates in May.

 St-Barth  
**WEEKLY**

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