



March 2021 - Newsletter

### **Dive into St. Martin's Underwater Wonders**

St. Martin is a charming Caribbean island covering 37 square miles and split into two sides: one French, the other Dutch. Rich in compelling manmade and natural experiences, St. Martin offers visitors an incredible array of relaxation, shopping, nightlife, and wildlife attractions. While St. Martin is globally celebrated for its wealth of beauty on the island, fewer are aware and appreciate the beauty beneath it. The cerulean Caribbean waters surrounding St. Martin hold stunning biodiversity and countless wonders both geological and biological, making St. Martin a premier scuba destination. Whether you're an experienced diver or just getting your feet wet, St. Martin has a dive for you. Explore old shipwrecks, drift through lava tunnels, and maybe even befriend a dolphin or two as you discover the splendor of the world beneath those gentle waves. From December through to April, keep your eyes peeled for dolphins and whales as they frolick in their winter playground!

From leisurely snorkels through placid reefs to exhilarating encounters with some of the Caribbean's rarest species, St. Martin has something to offer divers of all stripes, preferences, and experience levels. Here, we highlight five of the destination's underwater wonderlands that must be experienced to be truly understood.

#### **HMS Proselyte**



*Photo courtesy of Bubble Shop SXM, St. Martin*

Long regarded as one of the best diving sites in St. Martin, the HMS Proselyte is a shipwreck that has been reclaimed by the sea and is now encrusted with captivating corals. Originally Dutch in origin, the ship was built in 1770 and went on to serve in the British Royal Navy. On September 2, 1801, the ship struck the Man of War shoal and suffered severe damage, sinking beneath the waves. Today, the wreck is scattered across the seabed, serving as home to an incredible array of marine life that includes rays and sea turtles. She lies on her starboard side in approximately 50 feet (15 metres) of water, just beyond the mouth of Great Bay in Philipsburg. Take the plunge and see for yourself: enjoy St. Martin's vibrant aquatic diversity nestled amongst sunken anchors and rusted cannons.

### **Creole Rock**



*Creole Rock, photo courtesy of Nature Foundation of St. Maarten*

A small, rocky islet off the coast of Grand Case, there is much more to Le Rocher Créole or Creole Rock than meets the eye. While the islet itself is unremarkable, its waters are home to an expansive reef. Notably, the water is quite shallow and the bottom is soft and sandy, making Creole Rock the perfect place to learn to dive without air tanks. Both beginner and advanced divers will find a lot to love about this location and nature lovers should keep an eye out for the angelfish, trumpet fish and sea urchins that frequent the locale.

### **La Renee**



*Tintamarre Island, photo courtesy of Donovane Tremor*

This site is recognized as a must-dive for deep-diving enthusiasts. La Renee has been described by some as the “Titanic” of St. Martin and lies about 150 feet underwater, making it one of the deeper dives on the island. It was purposely sunk as an artificial reef and can be found in the waters between St. Martin and Tintamarre Island. Tintamarre is a small French island free of any construction or commercial life and guarantees love at first sight. This is a great site to discover a wide variety of marine life such as schools of barracuda, rays and turtles, amongst many others.

## **Circus**



*Photo courtesy of Ocean Tales Adventures*

An underwater system of three connected caves and numerous semi-caves, Circus will prove irresistible for the intrepid explorer craving something a little more adventurous. Within the many lava tubes on this site, you'll find interesting marine species that shy away from the open waters. The rocky terrain provides the ideal environment to observe lobsters and glassfish, but it's not uncommon to cross paths with curious dolphins as you work your way through the tunnels. Despite its unique topography, Circus is a perfect dive site for novice divers and should be a fixture on every visitor's must-see list. Circus is located on the north eastern tip of Tintamarre.

### **Turtle Reef**



*Photo courtesy of Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Saint-Martin*

Marked from a distance by two prominent rock pinnacles, Turtle Reef's name leaves little to the imagination: as you might expect, this site is famous for its burgeoning population of shelled marine reptiles. Located off the coast of Grand Case, the waters aren't particularly deep, making it easy to drift dreamily along the bottom as you take in the wildlife around you. Turtles aside, it's not uncommon to also find nurse sharks, eels, and arrow rays enjoying the ambiance. Clear, calm water and an abundance of wildlife makes Turtle Reef one of the top diving destinations in the Caribbean.

## Fish Bowl



*Photo courtesy of the Nature Foundation St. Maarten*

Located off the coast of Pointe Blanche, Fish Bowl is the most easterly dive site with the Man of War Shoal Marine Park. It is a circular dive site renowned for its crystal, clear water and colourful reefs. The reef's depth is approximately 45 to 60 feet (15-20 metres). A popular site serviced by most tour operators on the island, the Fish Bowl deserves to be top-of-mind for newbies and veterans alike for one, toothy reason: its sharks! As one of the best places to safely swim with the Caribbean's most timid varieties of shark, Fish Bowl is the destination of choice for those who want to see these majestic creatures in their natural habitat.

Want to set up a dive on your next trip to St. Martin? Check out these local dive shops:

[The Bubble Shop](#)

[Scuba Zen](#)

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## About St. Martin

St. Martin is a charming, scenically beautiful island. It's the smallest territory to be shared between two nations (France and The Netherlands), and home to over a hundred different nationalities and cultures. Surrounded by both the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea, this small 88 square kilometer island is a paradise for beach lovers. Being the undisputed capital of gastronomy, St. Martin not only offers a blend of traditional French cuisine, but as well innovative gourmet cuisine from around the world. With its lavish, unspoiled landscapes and idyllic beaches, St. Martin embodies the true spirit of vacation. This "Friendly

Island”, as it’s often referred to, is bursting with treasures for gourmets, hikers, adventures and dreamers alike.

From hotels to resorts to boutique properties to beautiful villas, St. Martin’s hilly topography ensures beautiful views from the hills as well as on its beautiful shores.

It’s vibrant setting and tropical climate pleasantly cooled by trade winds year-round makes this island your ideal destination, whether you wish to relax, explore or get active, alone, with a loved one, family or friends. Here, you’ll find all the right ingredients from an unforgettable stay on one of the most enchanting islands of the Caribbean.

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