

Appreciation shown to Port for hosting Caribbean Sail Training member vessels



“Wylde Swan” Captain Tsjerk Hesling Hoekstra (left) presents Port Director Albéric Ellis (right) with a traditional ship’s wheel. (Robert Luckock photo)



Marigot Port Managing Director Albéric Ellis was presented with a token of appreciation on April 29 by the non-profit Caribbean Sail Training (CST) organisation for the Port’s continued cooperation in hosting CST member vessels. In photo: Trainees on “Wylde Swan” climb the mast during a training session before the ship’s departure. (Robert Luckock photo)

MARIGOT--Managing Director of the Marigot Port Albéric Ellis was presented with a token of appreciation on April 29 by the non-profit Caribbean Sail Training (CST) organisation for the Port’s continued cooperation in hosting CST member vessels.

Tall Ship visits have been impacted by COVID-19 and it was mainly sail training vessel *Wylde Swan* that benefited from Port services this season, after arriving several times in the Bay of Marigot and the Galisbay commercial pier.

Due to the COVID situation, there was no reception on board *Wylde Swan* as would normally be the case, as crew and trainees were required to remain in their

“bubble” on board to not risk mixing just before the vessel’s departure the next day.

A small reception was therefore held on the pier attended by a handful of CST board members, outgoing minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications (TE-ATT) Ludmila de Weever and French-side sea rescue SNSM representatives.

Following remarks by CST President Jan Roosens, Captain of *Wylde Swan* Tsjerk Hesling Hoekstra presented Ellis with a traditional ship’s steering wheel. The return trip across the Atlantic to the Netherlands was to be under the command of second captain Richard Slootweg.

Roosens said the reception was held again as a “thank

you” to Ellis and his staff for the great cooperation CST already receives from the Port for several years now.

“I just hope sail training vessels in general are not suffering too much financially and that no ship’s organisations will go bankrupt due to the lack of income,” he said. “I’m sure we will again see more ships coming next season, and indeed we have already received requests from sail training vessels.”

He took the opportunity to thank several persons who support CST, and provide services for the member vessels. They included Deon Weweje and his wife, who are CST board members and own the company DPYS which pumps bilges, dirty oil, etc. This service was done completely free of charge for *Wylde Swan*.

Natalia and staff at Delta Petroleum who deliver fuel, and companies like H & R and others who deal with Yacht Assistance’s “crazy” provisioning orders. Anke from Life Rafts Etc and volunteer members of the SNSM Sea Rescue who are always on stand-by, and available if one of the vessels has a problem at sea.

Dr. Frederick Leroy from Laboratory Bio Pole Antilles. His staff came on board *Wylde Swan* many times to do the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and deliver the results. And Arnaud Bourdier who organised the test persons.

“Talking of PCR tests, I have to congratulate the different captains and crew members of *Wylde Swan* because while they kept sailing with so many kids and crew flying in and out, they never had one positive COVID person on board during all those months,” Roosens noted.

“I would also like to thank Minister Ludmila De Weever who gave us the best information on who to contact and handle all KLM airline and Dutch-side entry inquiries. And when check-in computers at Schiphol Airport could not figure out that twins have the same last name and are born on the same date, she quickly came into action so that the students could still fly to St. Maarten and board the *Wylde Swan*.”

Roosens concluded by expressing his wish that a firm agreement can be made with Port of St. Maarten to host CST member vessels under the same conditions as they are received in Marigot (i.e. no fees for anchoring and docking and no fees for clearing in and out).



Rotary Club of St. Maarten-Mid Isle, Rotary Club of St. Martin Sunset, and Heavenly Water recently joined forces to donate 12 pallets of bottled Heavenly Water to St. Vincent and the Grenadines as disaster relief for the volcano-stricken country. Heavenly Water sold the pallets of water to the two Rotary Clubs at a discounted price. Rotary Mid Isle bought eight pallets and Rotary Sunset bought three. Heavenly Water provided one pallet free of charge. In total, the 12 pallets consist of 6,600 bottles, or approximately 8,900 litres. When the water arrives St. Vincent, it will be distributed to those in need by the Rotary Club of St. Vincent.

Island Focus Web-zine introduces Edition #2

PHILIPSBURG--Potential visitors and readers now have another source to obtain information about the island thanks to online magazine – Island Focus Web-zine, which recently introduced its second edition.

According to a press release, two friends with a love for St. Maarten/St. Martin found themselves talking about how difficult it had been for the island to recover since the passing of Hurricane Irma, only to be hard hit, along with the rest of the world, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They knew that, with the eventual vaccination programme coming online, travellers would soon be seeking a destination that is warm, within close proximity of their own country where the COVID-19 numbers were fairly low and stable,” it was stated in the release. “They brainstormed for several weeks about how they could get the word out about St. Maarten/St. Martin and become a beacon for loyal and first-time visitors coming to the island. And so Island Focus Web-zine was born.”

Brenda Wathey, a prominent business owner and entrepreneur in St. Maarten, and Carolyn Ramprashad, a graphic designer, publisher and entrepreneur based in Canada, decided to develop an online magazine that would highlight beautiful St. Maarten/St. Martin and show the world what the island has to offer.

“We wanted to show, through beautiful photography, all that makes St. Maarten/St. Martin spe-



The cover of the second edition.

cial,” said Wathey.

Along with photography of their own, they were able to get some of the island’s top photographers to participate, thereby sharing the natural beauty, richness of its people and culture of the island. Features in the magazine include next generation St. Maarteners, spotlights on local artists and photographers, local gastronomy, Carnival: the island’s largest cultural event, and, of course, the many beautiful white powdery beaches.

“St Maarten/St. Martin has so much to offer as a destination. We wanted to highlight everything in one pictorial-style medium where visitors could see for themselves and be inspired into visiting the island.” said Ramprashad.

The result is Island Focus online web-zine which, un-

like other magazines, allows for updated content whenever required. A new edition of Island Focus Web-zine is generated every eight weeks; this will keep local and international readers interested and keep them coming back to see more.

Having only launched the first edition on March 15, Wathey and Ramprashad are “thrilled” by the overwhelming response with which the magazine has been received – more than 38,000 readers for the first edition alone. France, Holland, England, Canada, the USA and the Caribbean are just a few of the countries that have read Island Focus Web-zine directly from its website

www.islandfocus-st-maarten.com. This, of course, was the goal.