



Aruba Tourism  
Authority

## Aruba Product Update

December 2015

The Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA)  
is the Destination Marketing  
Organization for Aruba.

Our Mission:  
To be an innovative and effective  
DMO that positions the brand  
Aruba as a premier tourism  
destination, which meets interest  
of it's stakeholders.

Our vision:  
For the ATA to be recognized  
as the leading and cutting  
edge Destination marketing  
Organization

Core Values:  
Empowerment Productivity  
& Ownership Professional  
Respect Fun & Passion.

Below we offer a synthesis of some of the most prominent  
and important news during the month of December 2015



On behalf of all of us on our  
One Happy Island, we wish  
you a joyous holiday season  
and a wonderful New Year!





## ATA News

### Copa Vacations Paraguay Fam Trip

In its efforts to grow and diversify tourism markets for Aruba, ATA is working hard to create opportunities in Paraguay. ATA, along with partners such as Divi Aruba All Inclusive and RIU Palace Antillas, organized a special program for Copa Vacations Paraguay attended by ten of its main tour operators. The infrastructure, services, resorts, beaches and flavors of Aruba were highlighted during the group's stay on Aruba. Aruba was presented as an attractive wedding and romance destination. The group was accompanied by representatives of Copa Airlines and ATA Chile.



## Aruba Convention Bureau

### Global Business Travel Association Conference 2015

The annual conference of the Global Business Travel Association recently took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, attended by 375 tourism professionals from the US and 11 countries in Latin America in the area of travel management. ATA together with the Aruba Convention Bureau introduced the island as a versatile, well-aligned destination for the MICE market specializing in meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.



# Awards & Recognition

## Miriam Dabian, Director of ATA, Latin America

In connection with its anniversary celebration, Gerente, a top monthly business magazine in Venezuela, published a special edition honoring 100 top managers. Miriam Dabian, Director of the Aruba Tourism Authority in Latin America, with the principal office in Caracas, Venezuela, was included in this prestigious listing in the category of General Manager. Miriam revealed that promoting a

destination is not only rewarding, but requires skill in communication and planning. She has worked for the ATA for more than 30 years and is the first female marketing director in Latin America. Miriam has succeeded in positioning Aruba as a preferred Caribbean destination in major markets such as Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, and is working on opening new markets.



## Nomination for the 2016 Travvy Awards

The 2016 Travvy Awards, presented by travAlliancemedio, will once again recognize the highest standards of excellence in the industry today and honor travel companies, travel products, travel agencies, travel executives, travel agents and destinations for their outstanding achievement. The winners are announced on January 6th, 2016.

Aruba has been nominated for the following two awards:

**Best Overall Tourism Board** (other finalists are South Africa and Switzerland)

**Best Overall Luxury Destination** (other finalists are Malta and Mexico)

## 10Best.com Reader's Choice Awards

Aruba recently took top spots in the 10Best.com Reader's Choice Awards. The island was ranked #7 for Best Caribbean Destination for Golf; #6 for Nightlife; and #3 for Shopping. 10Best.com is a division of USA TODAY Travel. Nominees for all categories are chosen by a panel of experts which include a combination of editors from USA TODAY, editors from 10Best.com, and relevant contributors.

10Best.com provides users with original, unbiased, and experiential travel content of top attractions, things to see and do, and restaurants for top destinations in the U.S. and around the world. The core of the site's uniqueness is its team of local travel experts: a well-traveled and well-educated group who are not only experts in their fields - and their cities - but discriminating in their tastes. Since the nominations were carefully made by experts, and the public voted for this honor, Aruba has earned some serious bragging rights!



### Honors for Aruba Convention Bureau Pioneers

During the recent celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Aruba Convention Bureau, two leaders were recognized for their key role in establishing the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) market that today represents about 20% of Aruba's business from the U.S. Myrna Jansen-Feliciano received the "Visionary Excellence Award" and the late Simon Oduber Jr. was honored in a special video. More than 20 years ago, the team of ATA and AHATA won the bid to host SITE University Aruba, one of Aruba's biggest VIP events ever, led by a team under the leadership of these two individuals. For her excellent work, SITE International recognized Myrna Jansen-Feliciano, and the same year, she was named Woman of the Year by Diario. Myrna has held key positions at the ATA in Miami, New York and Aruba. She has always advocated the theme that quality of life on Aruba will be reflected in its tourism product. Myrna is being honored by a bronze sculpture created by local artist Ciro Abath.



### Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa

Based on a survey by Thomas Cook Sweden given to clients and travellers, Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa was recently named one of the Top 10 Hotels in the World. The intimate resort took the #3 position among best hotels in the world, chosen out of 1000+ hotels worldwide. The award was given to the resort's general manager, Edgar Roelofs, and Carla van Loenen, sales and marketing manager, by senior contract managers Goran Cosic and Rune Kristensen of Thomas Cook - Ving. "The high level of service and peaceful serenity are one of the many reasons our clients appreciate Manchebo so much," reports Mr. Kristensen. "Our boutique resort underwent many changes over the past years," said the general manager, "...this award is wonderful recognition by Thomas Cook, and we feel honored to receive it."

### Official Vacation Destination of the International Hot Rod Association

Aruba has been named the Official Vacation Destination of the International Hot Rod Association (IHRA) for the second consecutive year. In recent years, the island's own professional drag racing team, fielded by the Eman family, has championed 'The One Happy Island' among fans, race teams, sponsors and officials in various race organizations. "Team Aruba brings a lot of professionalism and integrity to IHRA Drag Racing. Outstanding spokespeople, quality racing and truly the real deal that promotes Aruba as 'The One Happy Island' it is," stated the president of IHRA Motorsports, Scott Gardner. Throughout Team Aruba's time competing in the Pro Stock they have utilized a variety of outlets to promote Aruba as a vacation destination, from face-to-face invitations to mass media publications.





## Resorts

### Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino

#### Smit & Dorlas

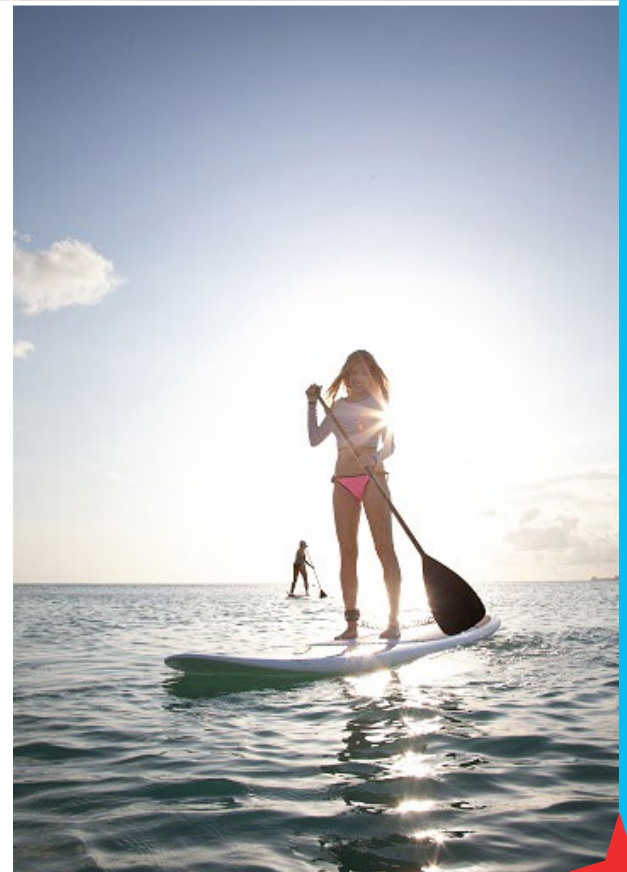
Earlier this month, the famous gourmet Dutch coffee brand Smit & Dorlas opened the first branded coffee shop of its kind in Aruba, located right inside the main lobby of the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino. The store is open daily from 7AM to 10:30PM and offers freshly brewed coffee and cappuccino, small bites from the bakery, including a variety of pastries and sandwiches, gelato and other options to grab and go.

#### Celebrate the New Year in style!

Hilton Aruba is preparing two exclusive five-course dinners and an extravagant countdown celebration to welcome the New Year. Sunset Grille Restaurant will be offering a delicately prepared menu with highlights like aged rib eye steak and Chilean sea bass while the Grand Caribbean Ballroom will treat guests to unlimited fine wines and craft beers, and a special menu featuring surf & turf and a decadent dessert station. Guests anticipating the New Year may join the countdown celebration in the Ballroom which includes a premium open bar, celebratory hors d'oeuvres, champagne toast at midnight, live entertainment and dancing.

#### Discover Your Core

Guests who would like to start the year in an active and healthy way are welcome to take advantage of the resort's complimentary activities during their stay. The new Discover Your Core program, which runs from January 4th through June 28th, offers early morning yoga and stretching classes, body toning classes, stress-relieving massage demos, bike tours to the California Lighthouse and fun family activities like archery, table tennis tournaments and pool volleyball.





### Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino

Caribbean Journal wrote, “Over the last few years, Marriott has been on a push to redefine the Caribbean hotel lobby — to make it a place worth congregating, a place worth admiring, a place, well, worth drinking in...And that’s especially true at their hotel in Aruba, where the Great Room Bar at the Aruba Marriott isn’t just a great lobby bar, it’s the best lobby bar of any hotel on the

whole island. That’s due to a number of factors — beautiful design, great service, huge TVs that make for great theater and a place to watch a sporting event and the general atmosphere cultivated by the lobby, which has been turned into a kind of, yes, Great Room, filled with travelers on laptops, hobnobbing guests and, of course, cocktail enthusiasts.”



**RIU Hotels & Resorts**  
In the world's best destinations

### Riu Palace Aruba

EPB’s Hospitality & Tourism unit faced the challenge of placing 90 students among several different kitchens on the island. Riu’s Executive Chef Valerio Rodriguez agreed to mentor 11 students in November, which was the greatest number of students placed in any kitchen on the island. General Manager Richard Velasco was impressed by each student’s competence when handling and preparing food. The students worked closely with the resort’s culinary team to complete the course of their internship, which is required by their school before graduating.



### Small Boardwalk Hotel Aruba

Small Boardwalk Hotel Aruba recently underwent a complete renovation. The boutique hotel did not go unnoticed by local and international press. In its December 2015 issue, VOGUE Netherlands described it, “The rooms feel spacious because of the high ceilings and each cottage has its own private terrace. There is a small pool and a whirlpool on the premises. Boardwalk is not directly situated on the ocean, but you are welcome to use the lounge chairs on the beach at Moomba Beach Bar. With its lush green garden, the eco-friendly Boardwalk Hotel Aruba is the place to dream your days away in a hammock while reading a book; it’s the ultimate island experience.”



## Divi Aruba Phoenix Resort

General Manager Gerrit Griffith, in collaboration with his department heads, challenged all employees with a decoration contest in the spirit of the season, focusing on 100% recycled materials. Each of six departments dedicated six weeks to the execution of their ambitious plans. Housekeeping transformed old frying pans into brilliant holiday decorations. Plastic bottles and caps, cardboard dividers, paper napkins, and aluminum cans morphed into Christmas ornaments and center pieces at hardly any cost. A large, finely detailed nativity scene was created, with old dyed sheets as a backdrop. Engineering created a full-size Santa in work coveralls and hard hat and a unique Christmas tree adorned with nuts, bolts, and spare parts. Landscaping filled old pillow cases with sand and created a group of snowmen at the beach front garden.



## Aruba Timeshare Association

The Aruba Timeshare Association (ATSA), recently embarked on a project involving EPB Hato and EPB San Nicolaas, the island's basic vocational schools. The association hosted EPB's freshmen students for the day at twelve of Aruba's timeshare resorts, offering an informative half-day of orientation and interactive fun. A total of 250 students and their mentors spent the time taking a close look at the

workings of the hotel industry. ATSA President and hotelier Andy Osbourne explained that ATSA's aim was to secure placements for the students, as many of them are currently doing their internships at the hotels and will then go on to be fully employed post-graduation. ATSA is interested in creating a constant, qualified workforce, preparing the next wave of managers for their role as future leaders.



## Blue Residences

Construction on the last of the three Towers at Blue Residences has been completed. This luxury Condominium Resort on Eagle Beach now boasts 124 spacious and luxurious multi-bedroom units, and a second infinity pool offers guests even more space to enjoy a beautifully landscaped pool deck and tropical garden setting. The Turquoise Tower joins the 1, 2 and 3-bedroom ocean view apartment suites in the Indigo and Aquamarine Towers. The

split-level 3-Bedroom Penthouse units cover 2,150 of luxury square footage, and feature a Jacuzzi on its top floor balcony. To achieve TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence in such a short time tells the story. The resort also opened its full-service health spa, Intermezzo Day Spa. Kitchen Table by White, located on the resort's property, has been rated by TripAdvisor among the top three restaurants in Aruba.



## La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino

Recently, resort employees celebrated important milestones in their careers. As La Cabana celebrated its 25th anniversary, so did many of its employees. Said Assistant General Manager Jessica Franken, “Apart from everyday business operation, added value is generated daily for both staff and the Aruban society when stability, prosperity and peace of mind are shared by all. La Cabana is backed by people who have combined their creativity, diligence and passion to support the island’s hospitality product.” Employees working from 5- 25 years were honored. General Manager Joe Najjar personally congratulated all celebrants on the happy occasion, bestowing them with gifts and tokens of appreciation.

### Aid to local school

Hilario Angela College in San Nicolas, an elementary school in the local public school system, has enjoyed a special relationship with the resort for a number of years. Initially, the resort gave the school a much-needed helping hand when dozens of employees put in a full day’s work at the school, trimming bushes, weeding, painting and fixing. Over the past few years, La Cabana associates and their social conscious suppliers

continue with ongoing maintenance projects. This year, La Cabana also presented the school with a check. The students delivered a super-cute entertainment program and awarded a certificate of appreciation to their benefactors, along with handmade “It takes a Community to Raise a Child” plaques.

### Year-end Gala

At the much-anticipated year-end gala party at the Renaissance Convention Center, La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino revealed winners for Associate of the Year (Sandra Gacusan); first runner-up for the Associate of the Year (Stephanie Maduro); Supervisor of the Year (Glenda Brokke); and Manager of the Year (Ingmar Franken). The four winners received a standing ovation, handsome engraved plaques, and well-deserved recognition for their excellent leadership and tireless efforts. An additional award for Team of the Year concluded the evening’s official portion with the Front Office snapping the title for their impressive collaborative endeavors. The gala offered an extensive holiday buffet as well as dance music with DJ Metropolis and D’Licious Band, which the elegantly dressed associates enjoyed and appreciated.





## Air Travel

### Continued Growth in Airlift

Meetings recently took place with executives from Delta Airlines, United Airlines, Southwest Airlines, American Airlines and jetBlue. The Aruba delegation consisted of ATA CEO Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes and CMO Sanju Luidens-Daryanani; Ministry of Tourism representative Marisol Sanchez, AHATA CEO James Hepple, Aruba Airport Authority CEO James Fazio and Head of Airline Marketing Jo-Anne Arends. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes confirmed continual growth in capacity. Executives of Delta Airlines confirmed Aruba's popularity and will review capacity in key markets (Atlanta). The possibility of opening new markets and increasing current service (Baltimore) was discussed with Southwest Airlines; Aruba is their first international destination. American Airlines, which recently merged with US Airways, will continue working closely with Aruba (Miami). United Airlines will focus on such markets as Newark and Houston in the winter months. Aruba's successful ties with jetBlue continue, with possible new service (Fort Lauderdale). Aruba experienced an increase of more than 3% in air travel from the US. Through September 30, 2015, the US market has shown growth of 8.7%. Projections for the coming winter season reflect an increase of 4% compared to last winter.



### Online Immigration Card

The Aruban Immigration Authority, in collaboration with the Aruba Tourism Authority, offers their first Aruba welcome in the form of Aruba's online Embarkation and Disembarkation (ED) program. This program offers international travelers the opportunity to fill out the ED card online as a convenient ahead-of-time alternative to the existing ED card that is handed out on board all flights to Aruba. The online application consists of a few easy steps. Information from the passport is required to successfully complete the online application form. A confirmation of the application will be sent to the provided e-mail address. The benefits of using this service are easy online application (registration) and quick processing times (usually within 48 hours). In addition, waiting time upon arrival in Aruba is reduced.





## Training

### Training for AGA and AHATA F&B Professionals

The staffs of AGA (Aruba Gastronomic Association) restaurants and AHATA (Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association) hotels participated in the Restaurant Servers and Supervisors Uplift Program, a two-day interactive course facilitated by Louise John and Suzanne Shillingford-Brooks of Talkabout & Earth Solutions. It focused on positive guest engagement and suggestive selling techniques as well as basic wine and food knowledge. AGA restaurants also participated in an intensive four-day Food & Beverage Trainer Toolkit Program. Said the facilitators, "It was great to work with committed F&B professionals and develop

specific training skills and techniques within each person, resulting in uplifts within their individual outlets. Congratulations to the new AGA Trainers who have agreed to meet every quarter; this team-spirit is fabulous and a tremendous asset to Aruba's dining experience." Both courses took place in the conference room at La Cabana Beach Resort. Participants hailed from Divi Resorts, Renaissance Aruba Resort, Aqua Grill, Aruba Wine & Dine, Bucuti & Tara Resorts, La Cabana Beach Resort, Manchebo Beach Resort, Paradise Beach Villas and Marriott Surf Club.

# Activities

## DePalm Tours

### Aruba Sea Trek Recognized

DePalm Tours earned the Reef Alliance Award for the second consecutive year, awarded exclusively to a Sea Trek operator whose staff is dedicated to proactive conservation efforts. The DePalm Aruba Sea Trek team was recognized for their support of the annual Aruba Reef Care Project, contributing locally to the international coastal cleanup. In addition, the team has created and maintained an enhanced Sea Trek dive site since 2002 with repurposed vehicles such as an airplane and a bus, alleviating pressure from the natural reef and sustaining sea life.



### New Busses

De Palm Tours is proud to announce the arrival of 6 new busses (Volvo B7R) with the latest features, including rear and cabin camera, Wi-Fi and LED lights. The new busses each have 52 seats with seatbelts and adjustable seat backs. A windshield electronic display will show guests where the bus is going - good for busy days at the airport or for private group functions. Inside the bus are two screens which can inform passengers about Aruba, tours and activities, or specific announcements. While there is an integrated A/C system, it is also possible to open up the windows. The colorful interior will make each guest feel welcome on the One Happy Island of Aruba. The De Palm Tours fleet now totals 33 busses, plus an additional bus to arrive in 2016 with a wheelchair lift.



## Culture

### Art Wall at Starbucks

Starbucks Paseo Herencia recently inaugurated its Art Wall, a small exhibition by three talented local artists: Armando Goedgedrag, with paintings of the island's wild nature; Cado de Lannoy, with photographs of abandoned historical structures, and Luis Mesquita, with original, colorful driftwood art pieces. The opening of the exhibition attracted a crowd of art-loving coffee aficionados. The Art Wall was on view for a week and may become permanent.



### Caribbean Queen for December

Each month, Caribbean Queen at Palm Beach Plaza Mall honors one local female artist who lives and creates in Aruba. For the month of December 2015, local embroiderer and crocheter Violet Richardson is the boutique's celebrated Caribbean Queen, showcasing her charming crochet line. Violet makes different items such as necklaces and bracelets adorned with buttons and beads. Her focus is on crafts, making gifts for her friends, including sweaters, skirts, caps, blankets, and much more. Inspired by Pinterest, she started making crochet owls recently, and they have met with great popularity.



## Shopping

### T.H. Palm & Company

In early December, the popular boutique T.H. Palm & Company, located in Palm Beach, hosted its 12th Annual Girls' Night Out event. This year's theme drew on the current boho-chic trend, with the 110 attendees dressed in their boho-chic best. The annual event serves as a chance for the company to thank its local clients for their patronage throughout

the year, as well as present its newest collections for the holiday season. Already well known for its Papiamento-inspired clothing lines, Biba Lekker and 100% Dushi, the boutique proudly presented its newest Papiamento-inspired collection—a unique line of beautiful accessories featuring different Aruban phrases, such as “Mi Ta Stima Bo” (I love you!).



## Holiday

### Holiday Gift Project

The Florida Caribbean Cruise Association's (FCCA) annual Holiday Gift Project, in existence worldwide for 19 years, was a great success once again, bringing smiles to delighted primary school children in Aruba. Rosario College was the happy recipient of the generosity of the Coral Princess this year. Every year, crew members of various cruise ships accompany Santa Claus to deliver hundreds of gifts to a selected organization or school. Ernest Giel of the Aruba Tourism Authority has been in charge of the local coordination of this project for the past 11 years. This is actually the 15th year that Aruba has been touched by the FCCA's generosity and all of the island's schools have now had their turn. In this way, FCCA expresses their appreciation to the communities that show hospitality to their guests and cooperate with all the member cruise lines all year long.



To our tourism partners:  
Thank you for providing us  
with your updates

To ensure that your news is featured in  
the monthly Aruba Product Update of  
the Aruba Tourism Authority, please send  
information as it becomes available to:

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and j.tilma@aruba.com

by the 25th of each month.

A special thank you to Aruba Daily,  
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## New Year's Day Dive

On New Year's Day, Moomba Beach will hold its annual January 1st dive at 12 noon. Followed by a zumba warmup, hundreds of participants sporting their "first dive" hats will jump right in the waters at Moomba Beach located between Marriott Surf Club and Holiday Inn. After the dive participants can enjoy traditional Dutch pea soup and music by DJ Diablo.

A vibrant poster for the "New Year's Dive 2016" event. The top text reads "Jan 1st at 12 noon Moomba's Annual New Year's Dive 2016". Below this, a group of people in swimwear and red hats are running through the ocean waves. The poster lists activities: "10am till 11am Zumba Warm up with Glenn Arthur", "11am till 2pm Live transmission with Rico Rijk", and "12 noon THE DIVE". It also mentions "Erwten soep / Dutch pea soup and the famous 1st DIVE Hats" and "2pm till 5pm DJ DIABLO". Logos for "FRESH 104.3" and "Moomba Beach BAR &amp; RESTAURANT" are included. At the bottom, it says "Located Between Marriott Surf Club and Holiday Inn - Right On The Beach!! Ph. 586-5365 - www.moombabeach.com".