



Aruba Tourism  
Authority

## Aruba Product Update

February 2016

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

Our Mission:

To increase the share of affluent travelers and the economic value of tourism for the benefit of the community and our stakeholders by positioning and developing Aruba as their preferred Caribbean destination.

Our vision:

The Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.) will become the most innovative and creative DMMO in the Caribbean.

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 February 2016



## Tourism

### Large Aruban Delegation at Caribbean Travel Marketplace

Last month, a large Aruban delegation again attended the annual conference of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA). The delegation included hoteliers and allied tourism companies as well as Aruba Tourism Authority executives Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO; Sanju Luidens-Daryanani, CMO; Ed Malone, area director for North America; and Adwina Arends, co-op advertising coordinator. ATA held various meetings with tour operators and other key partners in sales and marketing for Aruba, particularly from North America and Canada.

In general, Aruba's growth in the US market has been considered one of the strongest in the Caribbean region. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes indicated that after a strong 2015, in which there was growth of 7.9% up until November in the US market, feedback from partners indicates a strong start in 2016. Together with strong market demand, room rates continue to be stable and average one of the highest in the region. The 2016 goal is 6% growth in the US market. In April, ATA will receive many of these partners on the island during ATCA, the Annual Tourism Conference Aruba.



## Awards

### Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

When TripAdvisor® announced the winners of the 2016 Travelers' Choice Awards, identifying the world's best properties, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort made its debut on the highly coveted list of the Top 10 Hotels in the World.

Bucuti also repeated its performance this year by taking the top honors as the No. 1 Hotel in the Caribbean. In addition, Bucuti's signature hospitality was recognized as No. 3 of the Top 25 Hotels for Service in the Caribbean.

Bucuti's owner, noted environmentalist Ewald Biemans, remarked, "It is a great honor to represent Aruba and the Caribbean on the

world stage thanks to the kind TripAdvisor® reviews and valuable feedback from our guests." In addition, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort was recognized as the No. 1 Hotel in Aruba and among the Best Hotels in the Caribbean by U.S. News & World Report.

Aruba's premier adults-only boutique hotel also received the AAA Four Diamond Award for the second year in a row. "We're flattered to receive awards from both U.S. News & World Report and AAA for the exceptional experience noted by our loyal guests and for our talented staff," said Mr. Biemans.







## Resorts

### Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino

#### Carnival Celebration

In the spirit of Aruba's colorful Carnival celebration, the Blue Energy Team Members Committee organized a queen election and crowned Melissa Kock from Accounting as Hilton Aruba's first-ever Carnival queen. Following the queen election, the eight contestants dressed in dazzling Carnival costumes and, together with the resort staff and a brass band, danced around the pool at happy hour in order to give guests a taste of the island's cultural celebration.

#### New Signs Adorn the Grande Dame

New signs adorn the front façade of the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino. The attractive, blue, Hilton-branded signs light up the entrances of the Aruba and Curacao towers beautifully, welcoming guests to the most iconic resort on Palm Beach.





### **Sunset Grille Restaurant**

The resort's flagship restaurant has a fresh new look and is sparkling brighter than ever. Warm brown tones and dark wood furniture are combined with hints of vibrant colors to create a modern yet welcoming atmosphere at the Sunset Grille Restaurant.

The terrace invites guests to appreciate the warm Caribbean breeze and spellbinding sunsets, surrounded by lush gardens and a peaceful lagoon, while they enjoy their meals.

The culinary team at Sunset Grille is truly committed to sourcing the highest quality of Black Angus beef and the freshest seafood, which are attentively prepared, elegantly served, and paired with some of the most exceptional wines.



### **Jaap van Dam is the New Director of Operations**

The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino is pleased to announce the appointment of Jaap van Dam as the new director of operations. A Dutch native, Jaap has more than 27 years of experience in the hospitality industry, of which he has spent more than 22 years in the Caribbean.

Jaap's professionalism and natural care for the property and its guests will definitely benefit the superior level of guest service that the Hilton Aruba is known for. Jaap most recently served as hotel manager at Hilton Rose Hall in Jamaica prior to joining the team at the Hilton Aruba.



## Aruba Marriott Resort

### Visit by Brazil's Famous Food Blogger

In January, the Aruba Marriott hosted Sandra Matarazzo, Brazil's famous food blogger, representing her blog called Receitas e Temperos, which is focused on gastronomic experiences and has over three million visitors monthly and 168,000 followers on Instagram.

Sandra worked closely with Aruba Marriott's culinary and PR teams to produce video footage highlighting the culinary experiences on the property, including a private cooking class with Executive Sous Chef Miguel Garcia, which Sandra re-created afterwards on the beach, and a romantic dinner at the new Atardi restaurant.

### Carnival Queen Election for Associates

To celebrate the Carnival season, the Aruba Marriott once again organized its renowned Carnival Queen Election. With entertainment by 'N Fuzion, six queens proudly represented their departments in creative dresses. The participants were Yvonne Huen (Engineering Ocean Club), Jetny Portela (Bazaar & Marketplace), Nicole Beltran (Food & Beverage), Danielle Solognier (Front Office Surf Club), Christine Leo (Sales, Marketing & Reservations), and Kiziah Arends (Human Resources).

Christine Leo was selected by the judges as Aruba Marriott's Carnival Queen 2016, and Kiziah Arends was selected as first runner-up.

### Aruba Ray's Stand-Up Comedy Show

The Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino is hosting another season of the incredibly entertaining Aruba Ray's Stand-Up Comedy Show. Every night until March 3, 2016, in the Amsterdam Ballroom, tourists and locals can enjoy America's funniest stand-up comedians, all under one roof. This season's lineup includes top comics from Saturday Night Live, The Tonight Show, Comedy Central, and Late Night.

Tickets are \$36 per person and include a free bonus play in the Stellaris Casino and 20% off the La Vista dinner buffet. The show has been named by USA Today as one of the ten best nightlife attractions on the island.





Riu Palace Aruba

**Carnival**

Riu Palace Aruba coordinated a special pre-Carnival celebration at the Foundation for Elderly Care on February 5. General Manager Richard Velasco, accompanied by Riu Palace Aruba’s employees, brought cheer to the elderly home, San Pedro Pavilion, which is operated by SABA (Stichting Algemene Bejaardenzorg Aruba) in Oranjestad.

SABA is Aruba’s largest provider of care for the elderly. Within this particular home, there are more than 100 residents. Velasco and his staff provided lunch boxes and desserts for the elderly and their caretakers. Residents enjoyed a delicious lunch and a short dance performance provided by Riu Palace Aruba’s own entertainers. “We were so thrilled to have the opportunity to visit the foundation and bring food and treats as well as spread some pre-Carnival cheer to these very special people,” said Velasco. “It was an emotional day filled with love and joy for all of us.”

**Valentine’s Day**

In keeping with the resort’s desire to become more involved with the local community of Aruba, the management team and staff at Riu Palace Antillas took ownership of a rewarding social responsibility project by bringing the spirit of Valentine’s Day to the elderly citizens living in “Huize Maristella.” General Manager Juan Blanco led the efforts and catered a delicious lunch and special dessert to cheer up the residents of the home. It was also a token of gratitude for their lifetime work and their many personal achievements in celebration of love and friendship. A short entertainment program was also put in place to delight the elderly citizens during lunch.



**Airport**

**Expanded Vision-Box eGate Solution**

With Aruba’s Queen Beatrix International Airport having seen the benefits of biometric Automated Border Control eGates, it has even more eGates at both its arrivals and departures areas. The airport’s fully automated Happy Flow pilot project was first implemented almost a year ago, and has since processed over 130,000 passengers from 33 countries using a sophisticated technological arsenal, including biometric authentication. Aruba

Airport is now looking to deploy more of these eGates to further improve efficiency, particularly during its busiest season for tourism. Along with a software platform allowing for eGate management via smartphone and digital Embarkation and Disembarkation Cards, Aruba Airport aims for a high level of technological innovation in passenger processing, and Vision-Box’s technology is proving to be instrumental in this aim.



## Restaurants

### Windows on Aruba

Regional Executive Chef Matt Boland debuted a new menu at his signature restaurant, Windows on Aruba. The new menu features seasonal dishes bursting with the freshest island flavors that will tempt any palate! Crisp salads, locally caught seafood, USDA Prime cut steaks, and enticing dessert options highlight the menu. A few of Chef Matt's recommendations are the "El Gaucho"-Style Chateaubriand, Crab-Stuffed Jumbo Shrimp, and the ever-popular Veal Oscar. The menu also acts as a personal sommelier, with every dish paired with the perfect wine selection designed to best complement each flavor profile.



### MooMba Beach

Even on Aruba, thousands of miles away from the action of the Super Bowl, the atmosphere was electrifying. The shouts and cheers were deafening and the fans went wild. The result, the Broncos' win of 24-10 over the Panthers, was just part of the total fun package of watching the game at MooMba Beach.

According to one of the fans, "Just the act of sitting outside in the breeze, your feet in the sand, the ocean as a backdrop for this unique event, was truly amazing. The halftime performances were stunning, especially Beyoncé, and Lady Gaga's rendition of the national anthem gave everyone goose bumps. The finger foods were great, the drinks plentiful and cold, and the atmosphere could not have been better, so here's our conclusion: MooMba was the absolute best place to watch Super Bowl 2016!"





# Culture

## All-Aruban Film Premiere

A glittering, glamorous event welcomed the premiere of the film *Sinami Stimabo* (Teach Me To Love You) at the Paseo Herencia Mall in Palm Beach on January 29. The film was written, directed, and produced by the multitalented Marilyn S. Richardson. The principal song was performed by her son, rapper Malaghy Richardson.

Lisette Malmberg, president of the Foundation RM Arts & Entertainment and the principal

sponsor of the movie, addressed the gathering of fans and filmgoers and declared, "Aruba has talent!"

According to a spokesperson for Paseo Herencia, which also sponsored the production, the film carried a very important message about family issues. This movie in Papiamentu with English subtitles carries an important message of abuse, mistakes, love, and forgiveness that will be promoted throughout the entire region.



## Caribbean Queen

Each month, Caribbean Queen at the Palm Beach Plaza Mall honors one local female artist who lives and creates here. For the month of February 2016, local artist Carla P. Giglione Guillén is the boutique's celebrated Caribbean Queen, showcasing her charming artwork in the store.

Born in Venezuela and raised on Aruba, surrounded by a family of artists, singers, musicians, and painters, Carla knew that art would be her calling. After earning a psychology degree in Venezuela, she returned to Aruba, where she juggled a professional career and motherhood, and eventually picked up painting, which is seen in the current collection on display at the store. She uses mixed techniques such as acrylics, oil pastels, and decoupage.







### Local Artists Exhibit at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba

Four of Aruba's most talented artists unveiled expositions recently at a trunk show for the HArt Gallery at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba. The works of Elisa Lejuez-Peters, Elvis Tromp, Frank Croes, and Stan Kuiperi were then moved to the HArt Gallery, where they were on exposition for the month of January.

Lejuez' art is primarily contemporary "neo-pop" painting elaborated with bright colors, mixed media elements, and silkscreen printing. Elvis Tromp works mostly in oils, painting charming Aruban landscapes for more than four decades. Frank Croes' work is characterized by powerful compositions and use of colors, and lately he is creating sculptures mostly in stone and wood. Stan Kuiperi has pioneered the abstract Aruban landscape in art since the 1980s and has mastered the inclusion of 1000-year-old Caiquetio Indian petrographs in contemporary art.



### Historical Museum

The Historical Museum recently shared its 2016 calendar of events. In addition to the weekly Bonbini Festival that takes place on Tuesday evenings in the courtyard of Fort Zoutman, the Historical Museum, also housed at the fort, is organizing unique cultural events throughout the year.

March is a special month at the museum, during which there will be a mega event honoring 200 years of the Dutch Kingdom. A new exposition entitled "Weaving History" will also open, providing an in-depth look at one of the oldest occupations on the island. National Flag Day will be celebrated on March 22.

On Wednesdays, beginning on April 13, Elite Historical Art Classes will be offered. Each four-hour class features local artists and includes high tea breakfast in the museum courtyard and materials, for groups of 10-15. Tourists can check with their hotel concierge for details.



## Activities

### JETLEV

Dimitri Vegas, named the world's #1 DJ, was on Aruba for a vacation together with his girlfriend, fellow DJ and model Anouk Matton, resting and re-energizing after a few gigs in Brazil. It was their second time vacationing on the island. Dimitri made sure to experience JETLEV with Red Sail Sports. This was his first time doing JETLEV.

He had already tried the hoverboard in the past and knew how to maneuver above the crystal clear water and grasp the levels of difficulty. Dimitri is already referring to Aruba as his next vacation destination. Experiencing JETLEV with Red Sail Aruba was his "must-do" activity. JETLEV is a water-propelled jetpack with which one can literally fly up to 30 feet over the ocean—a highly recommended activity with a great adrenaline rush.



## Real Estate

### Azure Beach Residences

The Pering Group, developers of Oceania Residences and Blue Residences, is adding Azure Beach Residences to its exclusive portfolio of luxury condominium developments in Aruba. The property, located just steps away from Eagle Beach and Palm Beach, will feature 106 spacious whole-ownership condominium units and nine superb villas that will be built in two phases, with the first scheduled for completion by the first quarter of 2018.

Azure Beach Residences will consist of two residential towers with spacious units ranging from two to five bedrooms and offering unobstructed sea views. They will be decorated in a sleek contemporary style and feature elevated ceilings, roomy terraces, upscale appliances and electronics, and wireless Internet. Planned on-site amenities include a private beach protected by a jetty, two swimming pools, fitness center, tennis court, club room, and landscaped sun deck, in addition to poolside and beach butler service, concierge services, and daily maid service.







## Wine Tasting

### The Wine Room

Escape the usual crowd and step into a new wine journey! This rustically elegant wine tasting room serves wines by the bottle or glass Tuesday through Friday, and offers tastings on Saturday.

The “Experience Package” includes four types of wine paired with such tapas as ciabattini, matured cheese, garlic herbed escargots, and Italian sausage. The “Indulgence Package” features five types of wine with tapas of Dutch Gouda, Parmigiano Reggiano-crusting mushroom, premium slices of steak, and chocolate truffle. The “Wine Gathering” includes a cheese bar with olives, eight types of cheese, ciabattini, charcuteries, and two hours of selected vintages.

Recently opened, The Purple Room is a private tasting room located on top of The Wine Room, painted the color of Concord grape and having a Moroccan twist. For an exclusive dinner, party, or tasting, visit the The Wine Room, located at LG Smith Blvd 126, behind Antraco. Complimentary hotel pick-up.





## Arubans In The News

### Sarah-Quita Offringa

The Cabeibusha, The Curly Gem documentary is a book and movie combo released in October 2015, featuring nine-time Aruban Windsurfing World Champion Sarah-Quita Offringa.

“We follow her as she ventures out into the world exploring new destinations and meeting new people. We’ll also see how Sarah-Quita prepares for the upcoming competition season as well as how she is coming along competing in all three disciplines

on tour. This will be the first time to have a female protagonist in a windsurfing movie. We shed light on the lifestyle of a professional windsurfer, which typically involves traveling the world, training, finding new spots, and coming in contact with new cultures,” says Julian Robinet from broken bloke Production.

The movie had its premiere show during the 2015 PWA World Cup in Sylt, Germany.

### Dr. Jorge Ridderstaat

A special event recently took place at University of Aruba in honor of the publishing of Dr. Jorge Ridderstaat’s thesis, entitled Studies on Determinants of Tourism Demand Dynamics in a Small Island Destination.

Dr. Ridderstaat’s thesis is an important investigation for the tourism industry of Aruba. In his eight case studies, Dr. Ridderstaat focused on the various factors that affect tourism demand on Aruba as well as how quality of life and tourism development are interrelated. In the competitive world of tourism, his research is vital.

Dr. Ridderstaat is currently the manager of the research department of the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA). He has a Ph.D. degree in applied economics of tourism from Free University Amsterdam, a master’s degree in economics from Erasmus University in Rotterdam (the Netherlands), and a bachelor’s degree in accountancy from HES J. van Zwijndrecht in The Hague. Over the past 15+ years, he has taught courses in business and economics and given presentations to the private sector.





## Events

### Carnival 62

Aruba's world-famous Carnival culminated in a grand weekend in true Caribbean fashion, with all the spectacular and colorful sights and sounds that define this exciting annual tradition. On Saturday, February 6, revelers enjoyed the Grand Parade of San Nicolas, which wound its way through the streets of San Nicolas, Aruba's "Sunrise City." Before partygoers could catch their breath, the Grand Parade of Oranjestad

roared through the main boulevard in downtown Oranjestad on the afternoon of Sunday, February 7. The following day, revelers burned the "Momo," the symbolic final act of the Carnival festivities, wherein bad spirits are chased away, clearing the way for a healthy and prosperous new season.

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

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## Challenge Aruba

The Challenge Family—the fastest-growing global long-distance triathlon series, now with 44 full- and half-distance triathlons in 21 countries—announced a new race to take place in Aruba on October 23, 2016. The 1.9 km swim in Aruba’s crystal clear blue water is a loop. The 90 km bike course follows four coastline laps along some of Aruba’s best beaches and past its iconic lighthouse. The 21 km run is entirely along the white beaches with great spectator access from many of the island’s popular resorts. There will also be a sprint distance race available. Marcus Altmann, head of global operations

for Challenge Family, said Challenge Aruba is a great addition to the series, especially for North American athletes. “Racing in paradise is always a hard opportunity to turn down,” he said. “The convenience of getting to Aruba from the North American mainland makes this a perfect race to escape the autumn weather and get some sun before winter hits. A great way to close out the season.” While there have been many global race announcements from Ironman and Challenge Family in the past year, this is the only Caribbean race to have been added recently.