THE BEST CREW HANGOUTS IN THE WORLD

WORDS **ISLA MCKECHNIE**

YOU'VE SCOURED THE WORLD OVER, DAY AND NIGHT, TO SAMPLE THE FOOD, DRINK AND ATMOSPHERE AND RELAYED IT BACK TO *TCR*. NOW FIND OUT WHERE YOUR TOP HOTSPOTS HAVE RATED WITH OUR RUN-DOWN OF THE BEST CREW HANGOUTS IN THE WORLD.

WHILE SOME CREW WERE ADAMANT THE BEST CREW HANGOUTS WERE IN THEIR OWN HOMES AND OTHERS ASSERTED MORE RESEARCH NEEDED TO BE UNDERTAKEN BEFORE A FAVOURITE COULD BE DECIDED, THERE WERE SOME CLEAR WINNERS AMONGST THE CREW BARS OF THE WORLD. HERE ARE THE FRONT RUNNERS:

1 SOGGY DOLLAR BAR ST MAARTEN

Nestled in Palapa Marina, Simpson Bay, the Soggy Dollar Bar started as a crew bar under the coconut tree alongside the Simpson Bay lagoon but has evolved into an anything-goes party spot known the world over. Loved by one reader who responded on the strength of its daiquiris alone, Soggy is also famous for holding themed parties including Australia Day celebrations, Halloween parties and an infamous Horror Show event.

If you want to properly let loose in St Maarten, this could be just what you are looking for. As the management says: "Make no mistake baby, what happens in Soggy, stays in Soggy – except when you people put it on Facebook and YouTube"!

Grab a seat: Palapa Marina, Simpson Bay, St Maarten

Say hello: +599 545 2735 | office@palapamarina.com

2 LE BLUE LADY PUB ANTIBES, FRANCE

Listed as a favourite by crew due to the likelihood of running into old friends and colleagues there, Le Blue Lady is an Antibes institution. Situated in the heart of Antibes, Le Blue Lady has been providing a place for crew to catch up with people from their past, grab a bite and enjoy a pint since 1982. The pub is family run and still operated by the founders.
It's not all about drinking and reminiscing here though, the menu changes with the seasons and offers everything from full English breakfast to fresh salads, wraps or burgers and homemade pies and quiches. Well known as a meeting place, the pub also actively participates in the yachting community and has played host to many fundraisers and gatherings for those in the industry. Want to try Le Blue Lady for yourself? Ask a local or the nearest crewmember for directions; everyone knows Le Blue Lady.
Grab a seat: Le Galerie du Port, Rue Lacan, Antibes
Say hello: +33 (0)4 93 34 41 00 | info@blueladypub.com

3 WAXY O'CONNORS, FORT LAUDERDALE, US

There are many branches of the infamous Waxy's around the world but the Fort Lauderdale outpost has found a special place in the hearts of crew. Located close to Lauderdale harbours, Waxy's Fort Lauderdale is considered by some of our readers to be *the* crew hangout to get themselves to after a long Atlantic crossing.
Maybe it's the Irish pub vibe or maybe it's the daily specials that keep the yachting community coming back for more; whatever the case, Waxy's Fort Lauderdale has proved popular since its launch in December 1997. Perch at one of the outdoor leaners, give their Irish-influenced menu a whirl, take advantage of the WiFi hotspot or simply relax and enjoy the exuberance for which Waxy's is famous.
Grab a seat: 1095 Southeast 17th St, Fort Lauderdale
Say hello: +1 954 525 9299 | info@waxysfortlauderdale.com

4 SUNSET BAR ST MAARTEN

The only bar on our list that also doubles as a plane-spotting mecca, Sunset Bar – situated at the end of St Maarten's famous Princess Juliana Airport – makes an impression for more than one reason. Maybe it's the roar of planes scraping by overhead or maybe it has more to do with the weekly bikini contests, body shots and topless-women-drink-free policy that have crew reminiscing about the good times at Sunset.
Whatever it is, it was enough to see this bar with a difference voted one of the top crew hangouts in the world. If you're ready to see what it's all about for yourself, pull up a chair, settle in with a drink and watch the planes roar overhead. Be warned though, guys: while women are actively encouraged to go topless, men aren't so lucky and the policy is no shirt, no service for blokes. A little unfair in our opinion!
Grab a seat: 2 Beacon Hill Rd, Beacon Hill, St Maarten
Say hello: +599 520 5251 | bar@sunsetsxm.com

5 SAND BAR ST MAARTEN

Holding a firm place in the hearts of crew by virtue of its close proximity to their yachts at Isle de Sol and the activities on offer, is St Maarten's Sand Bar. Situated in the Yacht Club at Isle de Sol, the Sand Bar and Restaurant offers crew a place within easy stumbling distance to relax and exchange stories of their season. With a comprehensive menu offering something to everyone's taste and live music, darts, ping-pong or pool to keep the punters occupied if the stories stop flowing, it has confirmed its place as a global favourite with crew.
Grab a seat: Yacht Club Isle de Sol, Simpson Bay, St Maarten
Say hello: +599 544 2408 admin@stmaartenyachtpro.com

ST MAARTEN DIAL CODE CHANGES
As of 1 September 2011, the international dialling code for St Maarten will change from +599 to +1 721.

Dom Perignon Pommery

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6 THE HOP STORE ANTIBES, FRANCE

Needing practically no introduction, the Hop Store is famous (or infamous). Nestled front and centre in Antibes Old Town, it's virtually impossible to get from yacht to anywhere else in Antibes without passing by. Scene of many a debauched night as well as afternoon session in the sun, it's also played host to more networking successes than you can poke a stick at, and is the site of Crew Coach Alison Rentoul's free seasonal talks for crew new to the industry, helping them land that all-important first position. Spend any time in Antibes and you'll be hard pressed not to become a Hop Store regular.

Grab a seat: 38 Boulevard Aguillon, Antibes

Say hello: +33 (0)4 93 34 18 70

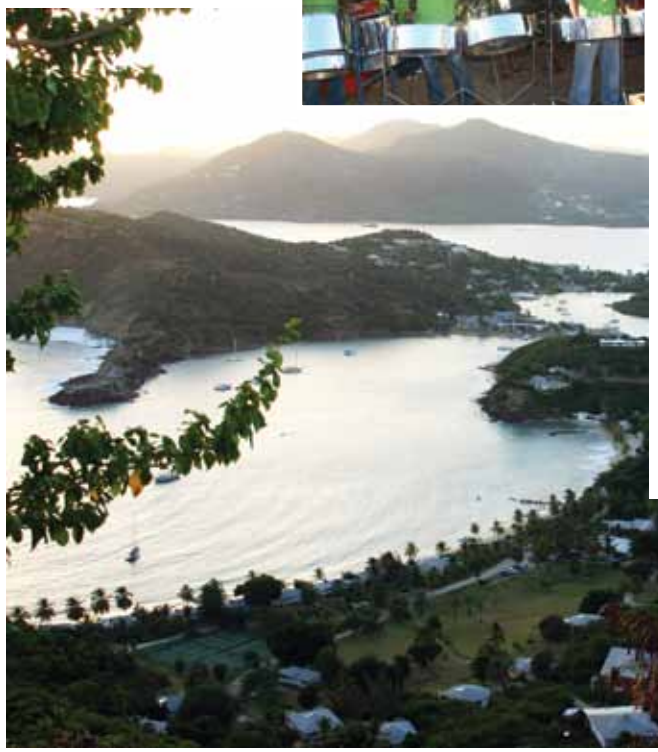
7 MAD MONGOOSE ANTIGUA

The Mad Mongoose (formerly The Goose) is situated in prime position in Falmouth Harbour and, by all reports, is a top place to get good and rowdy. With plenty of live music, Sunday Fundays and events on offer, you won't get bored. And with a bar famous for its Jager bombs, chocolate vodka shots and frozen cocktails available by the glass, pint or jug, chances are you won't go home sober either. The Mad Mongoose will treat you to anything from soca, reggae and calypso to rock'n'roll, played by a rotating array of bands. Plus it's only a few minutes' stumble from the Antigua Yacht Club Marina, Falmouth Harbour Marina and Nelson's Dockyard – what's not to like?

Grab a seat: Falmouth Harbour, Antigua

Say hello: +1 268 463 7900

8 SHIRLEY HEIGHTS LOOKOUT RESTAURANT AND BAR ANTIGUA



Touted as the best view on Antigua, Shirley Heights Lookout sits atop a national park, in the midst of nature trails. Views stretch from Guadeloupe to Montserrat and over English and Falmouth Harbours, providing an impressive backdrop to the "biggest and best" party on the island, held every Sunday for the last 25 years. If you're not in the mood for one of the notorious Sunday parties, the restaurant is open from 9am to 10pm for lunch and drinks on other days (except for Mondays, when it closes at sunset), allowing you to sit and enjoy views over the harbours, while avoiding the rowdier crowds.

Grab a seat: Shirley Heights Lookout, Antigua

Say hello: +1 268 728 0636 | info@shirleyheightslookout.com

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9 BASIL'S BAR MUSTIQUE

The only hangout on our list where you can pick up some furniture with your Mojito, Basil's Bar also has exotic furniture available which owner Basil has picked up on his travels. A legendary spot for big nights since 1976, Basil's has been entertaining the crowds since with DJs and a house band and keeping them well lubricated with rum punch, fruity cocktails and a comprehensive wine list.
Owner Basil Charles also uses the Mustique Blues Festival, which began at Basil's in 1995, to attract donors to the Basil Charles Educational Foundation. A Vincentian himself, Basil established the Foundation to provide scholarships to children of St Vincent, who would otherwise have difficulty financing and continuing their education.
Grab a seat: Britannia Bay, Mustique Island, St Vincent and the Grenadines
Say hello: +1 784 488 8350 | basils@caribsurf.com

10 CORNER BAR PALMA DE MALLORCA

A great place to pull up a seat and settle in to watch a game, or down a few Jager bombs, the Corner Bar in Palma also has some attractions only found here. Try your hand at Killer Pool (€5 to play, each player starts with three lives, winner takes all), do your best to party harder than the staff or treat yourself to a bucket of five beers for €5. Whatever you fancy for an evening's entertainment, you're bound to find it here.
Now showing ESPN, chances are you'll be able to catch any major rugby or football match, live, as well as golf, tennis, cycling – and most other sports that take your fancy. And the food! Corner Bar proudly boasts a free wedge of lemon and pinch of salt with every tequila shot purchased and free mustard, ketchup and onions with every hotdog bought. We're sold. What more could you want?
Grab a seat: Placa Drasana, La Llonja, Palma de Mallorca
Say hello: +34 971 714 900

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