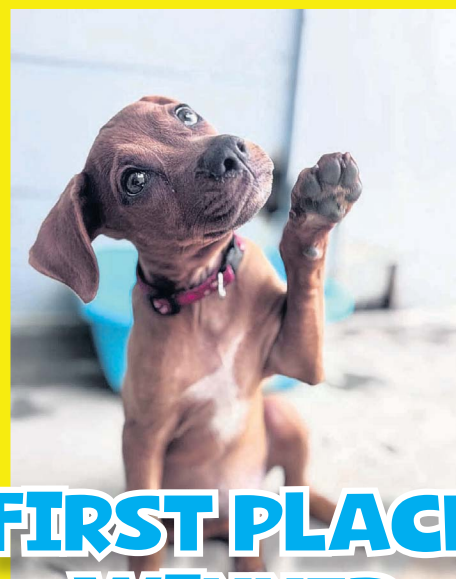


PET CARE SPECIAL 2025



**1ST RUNNER UP
CAMILO**



**FIRST PLACE
WINNER
KIRA**



**2ND RUNNER UP
KASH**



**1ST RUNNER UP
NEEDI**



**FIRST PLACE
WINNER
MAVERICK
MOOSE**



**2ND RUNNER UP
LUNALOVE
GOODGIRL**



For the Love of Animals

Welcome to our fifth annual edition of the Pet Care Special, which we release each year just in time for World Animal Day, celebrated on October 4. With this special, we highlight some serious issues affecting our pet (and stray) population, shine a light on those who care for them, offer some pet-related tips and tidbits, showcase where you can get some great pet-related products and services and, most importantly, promote responsible ownership.

You'll notice certain themes coming up over and over, within the special and throughout the years. It all comes back to responsible ownership. Take care of medical needs as well as social needs, and strongly consider microchipping your pets – it's a cheap and easy way to make

sure you can be reunited. Don't tie them up and forget about them, and don't let them roam 24/7 and forget about them.

And worth shouting from the hill-tops: Sterilise your pets! Pet dumping and neglect is all too common, and sterilisation is the only way to stem the island's dire overpopulation. It is not an exaggeration to call it what it is – a crisis. Neglected and dumped pets face incredibly cruel fates, and animal-centred non-profit organisations (NPOs) and veterinary clinics work hard, often with little support, to fight it.

No matter your tax bracket, sterilisation is a must for pet owners. Reach out to any vet or animal-focused NPO for information; there are discounts and even free options available for those who need it.

Lightening the mood throughout the special are the good boys and girls posing for the camera in our pet photo contest. They'll be sure to put a smile on your face. Many of them are in fact, rescues who have found loving homes – their lives changed by compassionate people who value them.

Consider supporting animal-centred organisations and, of course, the animals themselves, by fostering, volunteering or donating. Here's to the animals!

Happy reading!

Sincerely,
The Coordinator



Happy World Animal Day from best friends Tinkerbelle and Jayjay. Owner: Anette Kartopawiro Tjin-Asjoe

PET PICTURE CONTEST SPONSORED BY PRIME DISTRIBUTORS

The charmers gracing the front page of this Pet Care Special are the winners of the Pet Picture Contest, proudly sponsored by Prime Distributors. However, all contesters are winners in our eyes. Their pictures are displayed all throughout the publication – a joyful addition to this yearly publication, and a glimpse into the personalities of pets all over the island. We hope you enjoy seeing them!

The top three cats and dogs were selected by a panel of nine judges that independently gave in their votes, with the photos identified only by ID numbers. This has been the method used throughout the years but it's worth pointing out this time, for two reasons.

Unexpectedly, both the winner and 1st runner up dog pictures were sent in by the same person: Diana Boyd, who is the President of SXM Paws. The pups were under the care of SXM Paws at the time, and have luckily recently been adopted. Their new owners will be able to start their pet care journey with a little boost, not to mention some bragging rights.

Our 2nd runner up in the Cat category has also earned some serious bragging rights: This is the fourth time that the photogenic Miss Lunalove Goodgirl Hathiramani has placed in the top three. By the way, this year marks our fifth edition of the special.

Winners and runners-up receive Purina brand pet food, kindly provided by Prime Distributors. The winning Dog- and Cat-entries will receive two bags of dry- and two cases of wet-food; first runners-up one bag of dry- and one case of wet-food; and second runners-up one bag of dry-food. Winners will be contacted within a week for arrangements.

Special congratulations to the following pets and their owners:

Cat category

- 1: Maverick Moose Kokkermans – Bronson Kokkermans
- 2: Needi – Antonin Moreau
- 3: Lunalove Goodgirl Hathiramani – Owner Lakhsmi Hathiramani

Dog category

- 1: Kira – SXM Paws
- 2: Camilo – SXM Paws
- 3: Kash Davis – Krystel Davis

For the first time this year, there are also two honourable mentions, whose photos were a close 4th place. Look out for them, framed in magenta – cat Tigress (owner Julio Carrilho) and dog Volt (owner Rose Chery).



The Pet Care Special 2025
is a Special Publication of



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CHOUCHOU By Jacqueline Hooftman

A small, long-haired dog was wandering the road to Colombier. I had just picked up the newspaper at a little toko on the way to Grand Case, and when I drove back not five minutes later, I saw him in the middle of the country road. To the left lay the cattle's watering place; to the right, flamboyant trees glowed in the pasture of Golden Grove Farm.

I pulled over in the curve of the road. The cows, curious and silent, fixed their eyes on me as the dog zigzagged from one side of the road to the other. He walked a few steps toward Colombier, then suddenly turned back. I followed his movements. *Where are you going, little one?*

I drove slowly behind him, then overtook him to ask some nearby residents, who happened to be outside, if they recognized the dog. They shook their heads. No, they had never seen him. By then,

he had turned around again and was trotting toward Colombier – straight into the path of an oncoming car speeding down the road. My breath caught as the driver swerved at the last instant. The dog, oblivious, seemed unused to cars.

I had my own little dog in the car. I slipped off his leash and stepped out. The stray walked straight toward me, as though he had been waiting for this moment.

Back home, I noticed blood around his mouth. A large canine tooth jutted sideways from his jaw, and when I touched it gently, he recoiled in pain. Without hesitation, I put him back into the car and drove to the Clinique Vétérinaire de Grand Case.

Dr. Wilfrid Clarke took one look and knew: the dog was suffering terribly. Though I had no appointment, he acted immedi-

ately. The dog was carried into the operating room. Under anaesthesia, not only the large canine tooth was removed, but also five more loose teeth. Dr. Clarke cleaned and scaled the remaining teeth until the mouth was free of pain and decay.

Half an hour later, he placed a groggy, trembling dog in my arms. The procedure had been largely sponsored by the veterinarian himself. "He couldn't go on like this," Dr. Clarke said softly. "He's been in immense pain. The teeth came out so easily I barely had to pull."

Relieved, grateful, I carried him home. My Yorkie – himself a former stray – took no issue with the newcomer.

That February week, I posted the dog's picture in the Lost and Found groups on-



line. It was shared more than 50 times. But no one came forward to claim him.

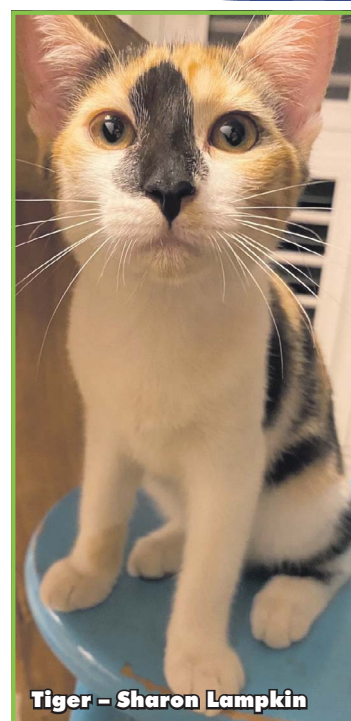
I named him Chouchou.



Mochi Lau – Yin Shan Lau



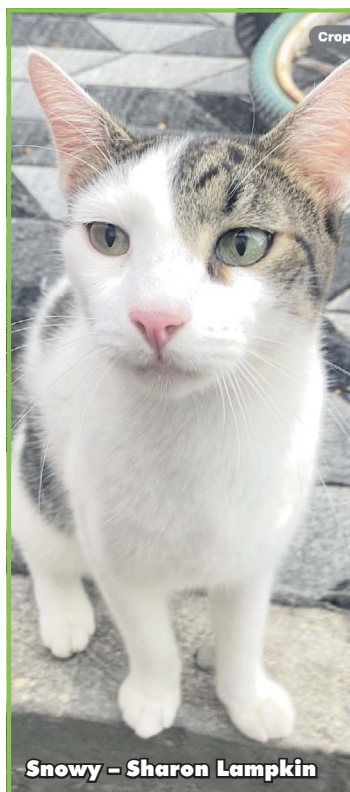
Lilly – Stephen Boekhout



Tiger – Sharon Lampkin



Scooter and Phoebe – Lisa Marshall



Snowy – Sharon Lampkin



Jordy Jordan – Anne Jordan



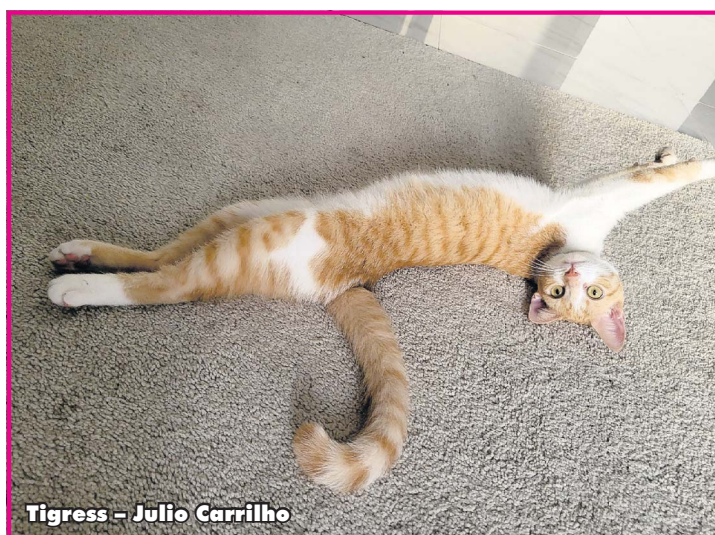
Kigali “Kiki” Dijon – Germaine Dijon



Dublin Philogene – Michael Philogene



Mam'zelle Mimi – Helene Albert



Tigress – Julio Carrilho



London Ledee – Sophie Ledee



Ace – Judi Roberts



Orie – Christine Rabago



Amour – Claire Lavergne

Nala Jederon
– Keana JederonPrincess Ella Isaac
– Trisha Isaac

Kimi – Claire Lavergne



Pasha – Judith Boekhout

WHICH VEGGIES CAN DOGS EAT?

Veggies are definitely not central to a dog's diet, but do offer health benefits, being good for skin, coat, eyes and digestion. Some are in fact common ingredients in many commercial dog foods. Lots of veggies are safe for dogs to eat, but make sure to avoid salt and spices, cut them to size, and remove parts of the food that can pose a choking hazard (such as pits, stems or seeds).

However, just like treats, veggies should not make up the majority of a dog's diet – that should come from a well-balanced and formulated dog food diet. Treats and veggies supplement, rather than replace, this food and should take up maximum ten per cent of the diet of these mainly carnivorous pets. High calorie veggies, such as starchy or sweet veggies, should only be given in moderation.

Note: Fruit can also be given as a treat, but generally has more sugar, and should be limited. If your dog has gastrointestinal disease, diabetes, obesity, allergies or bladder stones, ask a vet about feeding them any fruit. Fruit to definitely avoid are grapes, lemons and limes.

Veggies to avoid:

Dasheen/ Taro
Onions
Leeks
Garlic

Chives
Cassava (raw or as chips)
Wild mushrooms (as they roam about)
Spinach and kale in large amounts

Veggies to include:

Asparagus (cooked)
Avocado (flesh only – avoid the skin)
Beets
Bell Peppers
Butternut Squash (cooked)
Carrots
Cassava (fully cooked only)
Celery (with strings taken off)
Corn – kernels only (raw, canned, cooked, frozen)
Cucumbers
Eggplant (cooked)
Green Beans
Kale (only in small amounts)
Lettuce
Mushrooms (not wild mushrooms)
Parsley (also fights bad breath!)
Potatoes (peeled, cooked)
Pumpkin (cooked or canned)
Spinach (only in small amounts)
Sweet Potatoes (cooked or canned)
Yam (cooked)
Zucchini/ Courgette

Veggies to include, but in small amounts (may cause flatulence):

Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Peas

Are your pets vaccinated? OCTOBER PET VACCINATION SPECIAL



**15% off annual
vaccination (incl
check-up).**

**50% off microchip
application.**

Offer valid for dogs and cats in the month of October.



Dr Ruth Wright

Cay Bay Road, Cay Bay
Clinic tel: +1 721 544 0963
Whatsapp: +1 721 580 0567

Where smart pets bring their people



NEW THEMES, OLD ISSUES, AND RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

With Dr. Ruth

Pet dumping and neglect remain front and centre when it comes to issues affecting animals on the island. The main, resounding advice for years from every vet clinic and animal-focused non-profit organisation has been straightforward: Sterilisation is key to reducing the harm and cruelty inflicted on so many animals because of overpopulation. It is part of responsible ownership, and part of the reason that even willing and caring pet owners can get overwhelmed and directly contribute to this harm.

Catching up with Dr. Ruth from The Island Vet – a long-time partner for the Pet Care Special – we once again gained some timely insights on trends affecting the local pet population. Two distressing themes emerged during our interview, which are really just variations of the same enduring issues.

The dumping of “fancy” small breeds
The first is that there has been a noticeable uptick in the dumping/abandoning of small, white, fluffy dogs – about 40 in the past two months alone (including both sides of the island). While dumping is not new, these “fancier” breeds were generally not in the mix until a few months ago.

So, what’s happening here? Are people buying on-trend, cute dogs, without knowing their maintenance needs? Are they being bred for profit, given as gifts, or simply not sterilised in order to keep these options open until the situation becomes overwhelming? Are they fashionable, impulse purchases enjoyed until the novelty wears off? Can most of the problem be traced back to just a few irresponsible owners? It might be any one of these reasons, or a combination of them. Regardless, the consequences are the same.

These affectionate and energetic dogs are prized for their suitability as indoor family pets. And those thick, fluffy, beautiful coats come with the extra responsibility of maintenance. When abandoned and left to the streets, they face the cruel circumstances of any abandoned pet, but their idolised long hair quickly turns the odds even more against them. Hair matting can get so extreme that they are hardly recognisable, and this ushers in a host of issues including pain, infection, and the restriction of movement. These small strays are also showing up with handfuls worth of ticks latched onto them, including big clusters in their ears.

Dog attacks

Pit Bulls are popular on the island (and as a result are also one of the most commonly dumped dogs). The breed (or better said, group/mix of breeds) is the most polarising, internationally, when it comes to the discussion of safety – centring on nature/breeding vs nurture when it comes to the traits of these powerful dogs. Whatever your stance on the matter, it is undeniable that training and socialisation are important. That counts for any sort of dog, of course. Unfortunately, there have been a number of serious Pit Bull attacks over the past few months.

Some are reported to police, some become widely known among the public, while many more simply go unreported. In many of these cases, the dogs were unrestrained, and left to go feral. There has been a severe lack of responsibility among dog owners. There are many trainers on the island; the best advice is to train them as puppies, should you choose to own one of these strong and athletic dogs.



Dr. Ruth (left) and the team at The Island Vet in front of the clinic.

Responsible ownership

While these two visible issues overlap with the theme of breeds, the true and overarching theme is the need for responsible ownership. Understand what you’re getting yourself into when it comes time to consider owning a pet, whether it’s a good old “coconut retriever”, or you go out of your way to seek out specific breeds or mixes.

If you seek out a specific breed, take the time to research whether they have any traits or characteristics that require special consideration. Are they extra energetic or powerful? This would increase the importance of training. Are they prone to certain illnesses or health conditions? Do they need lots of exercise? Are they known for having a certain temperament? Do they do well indoors? Will grooming take extra work? Grooming those long-haired, fluffy dogs needs to be done every two-three months – expensive in terms of money and time. Count on at least US \$200 per year, unless you plan to do it yourself with clippers.

Responsibility in ownership includes taking care of the pet’s physical health, but social responsibility is also an equally important consideration for the sake of your pets, other people’s pets, and other people. Physical health includes grooming, as already stated, in addition to giving monthly tick and flea treatment, monthly de-worming treatment, and following the recommended vaccination course. Neglecting any of these essentials has far reaching consequences.

When it comes to social responsibility and socialisation, “there are simply too many people and dogs in a small area, to allow them to roam freely,” Dr. Ruth points out. “They shouldn’t be wandering around unattended, and you also can’t tie them up 24/7 without walking them. Too often, they are either not contained and forgotten, or tied up and forgotten.” This is neglect. The dogs get into too many fights, and end up hurting each other. Both large and small dogs get into fights; the small ones typically getting hurt the most. Bigger dogs in particular will hurt smaller

ones and people, as a result of this irresponsible ownership.

Microchipping is highly recommended; it is the best way to ensure a pet can be reunited with you, if they are lost or go missing for any reason. The microchip, the size of a grain of rice, contains an electronic implant with a registration number that can be scanned and read at any vet clinic. It costs around \$40 and the procedure lasts for half a minute.

The single biggest issue affecting the animal population on the island is the need for sterilisation. Overpopulation is nothing short of a crisis, resulting in cruel fates for far too many animals. Dogs and male cats can start to reproduce at just six months, and that’s four months for female cats. Failing to act on time can mean you’ll end up needing to house, feed and care for a growing litter. Often, entire litters are dumped together, with or without their mothers. Strays face starvation, disease, attacks, and getting hit by cars. They also spread disease to other pets. This is everyone’s problem.

Sterilisations typically cost between \$55 and \$165, depending on the type and sex of the pet, and a number of organisations help to offer heavily discounted or even free sterilisations for those who qualify. Enquire at the clinic.

The Island Vet offers all the above mentioned services and products, along with food, toys, leashes and other pet related products. The team also offers pet boarding services, with separate spaces for cats and dogs, and a large outdoor area.

The Island Vet is located at Tray Drive 2 on Cay Bay Road (second building to the right). It’s easy to find once you spot the famous Jimmy Sheik mural. Opening hours: Weekdays from 8:00am to 12 noon, and from 1:30pm to 5:00pm; and Saturdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm. For more information, find The Island Vet on Facebook.



An aerial view shows the outdoor spaces for pet boarding at The Island Vet.



Precious Blackwood
- Robert Blackwood



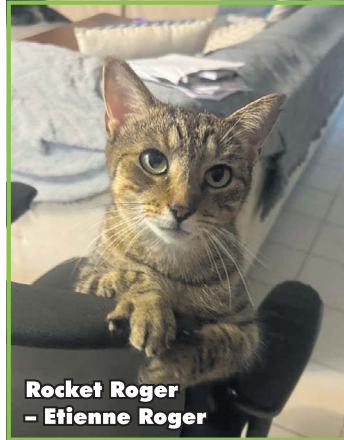
Oreo - Breanna Barrie



Kimba, Akila, Danu
- James Larmorie



SuperKitty
- Charles Southworth



Rocket Roger
- Etienne Roger



Luna Lelu St. Rose
- Aaliyah St. Rose



Amy - Rita Kartopawiro



Belina Kirton
- Dionne Kirton



Chaos - Kathy Blasberg

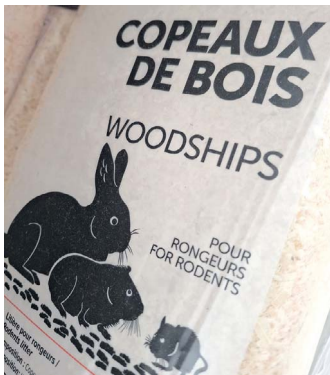


Ziggy †
- Brigitta Waasdorp



CARING FOR PETS MADE EASY AT SUPER U

Hope Estate & Marigot locations



Offering a comprehensive pet care section designed to meet the needs of a variety of beloved companions; Super U has become a trusted destination for pet owners. From daily essentials to specialty items, Super U provides a wide selection of pet products, including dry and wet food, healthy treats, interactive toys, such as balls, plush animals, and rope toys, as well as practical accessories like bowls, leashes, collars, and cosy pet beds.

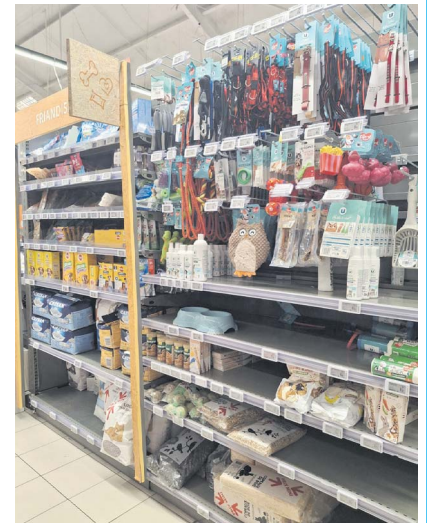
The store also stocks grooming and wellness items, including shampoos, brushes, and parasite treatments at both the Hope Estate and Marigot locations, making it easy for pet owners to keep their furry friends clean, happy and healthy. And while the focus is primarily on dogs and cats, Super U also caters to birds and offers a limited range of products for small animals like rabbits and rodents, as well as select items for reptiles – depending on availability.

For pet owners who prioritize quality and nutrition, Super U carries natural, organic and specialized pet food options. These include the well-regarded U Bio and U Specialist ranges, tailored to meet the dietary needs of pets with specific health considerations or sensitivities. Super U is constantly refreshing its pet care inventory to reflect current trends and customer preferences, ensuring that its shelves are always stocked with relevant, in-demand products.

Although the store does not stock meat specifically labelled for animal consumption, customers can visit the butcher's counter to select suitable cuts – such as offal – that may be used as part of a raw or home-prepared diet for pets. To commemorate the special “Pet Care” supplement, Super U is offering exclusive promotions on select pet foods and accessories. Shoppers can also take advantage of U Card benefits, earn rewards and enjoy discounts on pet items during promotional periods. Special bundles, such as kibble packs paired with a complimentary toy, will be available for a limited time, giving

pet owners even more value for their purchases.

Beyond retail, Super U is committed to giving back to the community. Both the Hope Estate and Marigot locations regularly host pet food and accessory drives in collaboration with local animal welfare organizations, supporting animals in need across the island. With quality products, caring service, and a community-focused approach, Super U continues to be a reliable partner in pet care for households throughout St. Maarten.



Visit Super U today and discover how easy and affordable shopping for your pet can be, all while supporting a business committed to Saint Martin's community. Located at the Commercial Howell Centre between Marigot and Galisbay, Super U is open daily. Hours of operation are 8:00am to 12:45pm on Sunday; and 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday through Saturday.

SUPER U

Howell Center Hope Estate

SUPER U CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ANIMAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS ON THE ISLAND





Eli Javier Fana
- Marisel Flores



Roxy and Hoochi Coo
- Sarah Boekhout



Lardon "Larry" Chamas
- Julienne - Vivian
Chamas



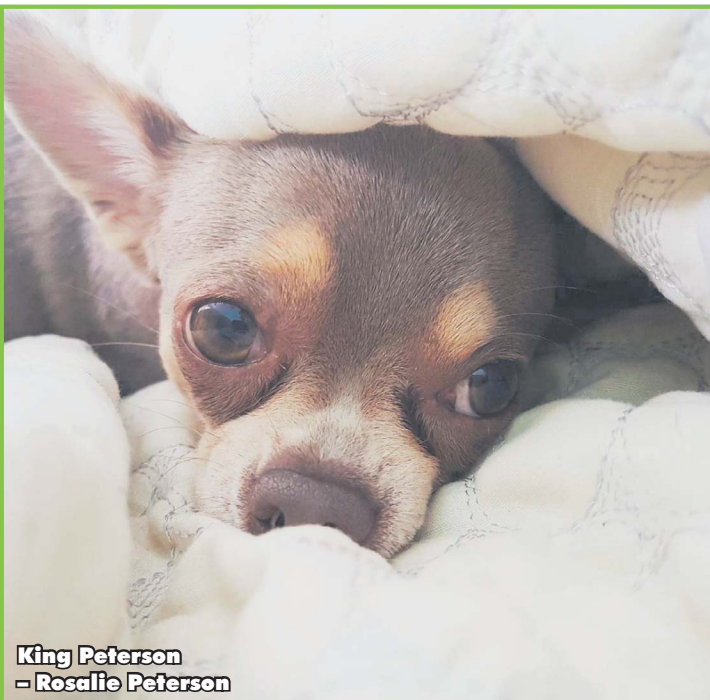
Snoopy - Crystal Hassell



Tinkle - Essy van Bosse



Ruby - Frank Nous



King Peterson
- Rosalie Peterson



Piccolo - Harold Bautista



Layla Premkumar
- Yolanda & Rakesh
Premkumar



Whether migrating or vacationing, don't leave pets behind

Stefy handles all the sticky details

Stefy's Pet Sitting has become a household name on the island, having firmly established a name in all-things-pet-care, including grooming and spa services, pet products, boarding, day-care, home-visits, transport, and even hydrotherapy. But do you know the extensive services available for anyone needing to

travel? Whether you are in for a permanent move, long-term stay, or short vacation – with or without you pet coming along for the journey – Stefany Rodriguez and her team can make sure that every last detail is taken care of. That counts for incoming and outgoing journeys.

Until you have to experience it, you may not even realise how complicated travel processes can be for pets, and when life's changes come, you want to make sure these furry family members are taken care of.

Relocation & travel services

Whether you're starting a new chapter of life in another country, or want to bring pets along for your travels, it comes with a string of complications – some you may have never thought of before. Some countries, including the United Kingdom and South Africa, require rabies testing that can't be done on the island, and which can take weeks to complete. Some airlines don't carry pets during



the hotter months of the year, while others don't allow specific breeds of dog to fly with them.

Stefy and her team are able to handle every aspect, from regulating passports and other documentation, to taking your pets to the vet and sending blood samples for lab testing. She can also accompany the pets during flights where needed, or coordinate all logistics and care with international partners, airlines, or shipping companies.

You don't need to know the requirements of the destination before approaching the team for their services; they know the ins and outs of complicated international travel. If the amount of paperwork, money and time may not be worth it for a certain trip, such as a shorter vacation, don't worry; they'll let you know!

Boarding without you at the Cat or Dog Hotel

Stefy's Pet Sitting keeps evolving, and includes two boarding options, St. Maarten's only Cat Hotel, located in Simpson Bay, and a Dog Hotel located in Mary's Fancy. Both locales always have someone on guard, a vet tech, and work closely with vets. Not to mention, the comforts of air-conditioning, comfy bedding, toys, and outdoor play. The facilities also cater to day-care and are a good space for socialisation.

Vacationers also have the option of booking home visits

while they are away, so that pets are looked after, walked, fed and medicated, without having to leave home.

A family home

Stefy and the team don't just treat their furry clients as family, they also offer a refuge to more than 50 foster dogs, many of which are much less likely than others to be adopted as they may be old, injured or otherwise unwanted. A few rescues are up for adoption, and support in the form of volunteers or donations is always welcome.

For more information, call +1 (721) 588 9567 or +1 (721) 542 6894, email stefy@petworldsxm.com, or find Stefy's Pet Sitting on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.





Contact us for more info! 

BOARDING 🐾

DOG DAYCARE 🐾

HYDROTHERAPY 🐾

DOG WALKING 🐾

DOG & CAT BAKERY 🐾

DOG SPA 🐾

GROOMING 🐾

HOME VISITS 🐾

PET TRANSPORT 🐾

CAT HOTEL 🐾

📱 @stefyspetsitting • +1 721 588 9567

World Animal Day Message

From Mercedes De Windt of Animal Defenders St. Maarten

Let us celebrate World Animal Day on October 4. We celebrate it every day at our house – it is a daily animal party. With lots of pet cookies and snacks, but no alcohol please. If you want to know what you can give your cats or dogs to celebrate every day, then visit your friend Google and ask what is good or bad for your best furry friends.

For sure, never give them our number 1 snack – chocolate. Also, forget about grapes or any other fruit with seeds. Print out the list of what to feed and what not to feed pets, and tell your kids as they may wish to share their favourite snacks with their best friends.

If your family loves pets, then think of the numbers of puppies and kittens they can produce per year. Investigate and make your calculation together with the kids.

Twice a year, they can reproduce, and usually produce about seven or more per litter. Imagine that happening every year until they get old – let's say about seven or eight years.

This is the average: 2x7 babies = 14 babies per year; about eight will equal 112 babies in a lifetime. Now picture these 112 babies all becoming sexually mature in six months. Continue the calculations – I am dizzy already. The numbers grow so fast, and they all need their territory.

Ask for help; call any of the animal foundations or vets on the island. Spay or neuter – this is the most humane way to solve pet overpopulation. If you want to help the animals who were born already, then please help them through adoptions.

Each cat or dog that gets adopted makes space for a new stray animal. If they are

adopted, they are out of danger. They will be staying at home with you, getting and giving much needed love.

No more traffic, no more diseases, no more fights, no more hunger and no more dangerous attacks or being chased by other animals. This will be good for the animals on our island, but it also keeps our island clean if there are no dogs or cats breaking up the garbage bags to look for food.

There are so many pets up for adoption; simply adopting a pet will help. Check the adoption page in this special for pictures of Frida and Pasha, two of the many lovely dogs that are up for adoption through Animal Defenders. You can contact our organisation at +1 (721) 553-3116 to schedule a meet-and-greet.

Frida is a four-month old girl, funny, wise,

and up to date on her vaccinations. She has two sisters and a brother who are also up for adoption. Pasha is a happy eight-month old girl. She is up to par with vaccinations, spectra and flea medications. She is funny, beautiful, and already sterilized.

So be proud and have compassion for all the lovely animals out there. Adopt or foster, be kind and spread the love for animals; they will make you feel good.

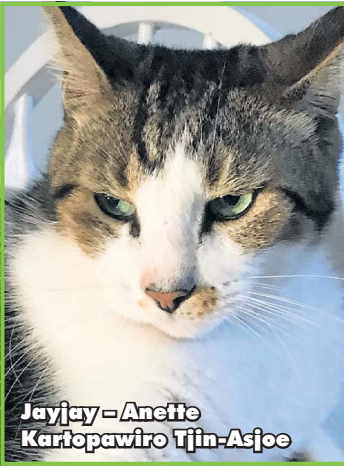
PS: Skip the landlords that are not pet-friendly. Keep on searching for the landlords with a compassionate heart and respect towards pets also. People who love pets love life and love you.



10

Pet Care Special

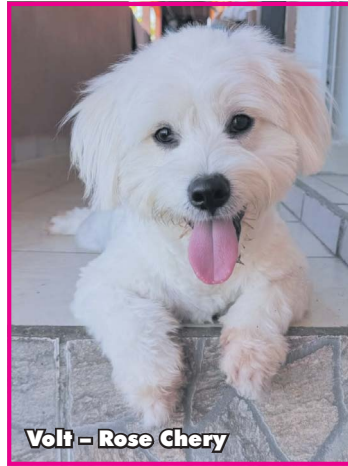
Friday, October 3, 2025



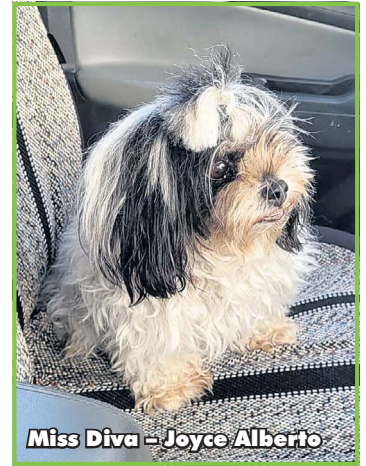
**Jayjay – Anette
Kartopawiro Tjin-Asjoe**



**Gigi Lee Matos
– Alba Matos**



Volt – Rose Chery



Miss Diva – Joyce Alberto



**Erin Alexander-Emer
– Glenda Janga**



**Roxy Roger
– Elena Roger**



**Whiski
– Ferdinand Beauperthuy**



**Mochi B
– Danielle Benjamin**



Andy – Judi Roberts



Indy – SXM Paws



PARADISE PET SHOP

Specialising in small pets, along with animal feed and supplies

Now in its fourth year, Paradise Pet Shop was opened to provide the island with affordable pet supplies and necessities, and to offer pets not readily available. The store offers a variety of animal feeds: dog, cat, bird, fish and turtle, small animal and chicken feed.

The company also offers cleaning and maintenance supplies for aquariums, bedding and habitat accessories for small animals, aquariums, bird cages, and everything you would expect to find a pet store.

There are also tropical fish, birds, and small animals such as guinea pigs, and rabbits for sale.

Given the stray animal problem on the island, the pet store does not sell cats or dogs, and strongly encourages customers to instead



adopt from one of the many shelters, animal welfare organisations, or veterinary clinics.

The team at this family-run store is welcoming and happy to help you and your children pick out a pet. Perhaps



you'll find just the bird or fish you were looking for – a welcome addition to the family. At the same time, they are there to offer advice on pet care, and sell everything needed for the pet's upkeep and comfort. You can walk away confidently prepared



for their long-term care, knowing exactly what you need and where to find it.

We asked Paradise Pet Shop's Dominique Hodge for a titbit of advice for anyone interested in becoming a pet owner. "Pets require time and attention/ care and it is important to choose the right pet for you and not just choose something that you think is cool," she said. "They become a part of your family." We couldn't agree more.

Visit Paradise Pet Shop to check out their selection of small pets, along with everything needed to take good care of them. It is conveniently located on Airport Road in Simpson Bay, and has convenient parking. For more information, call +1 (721) 581-3536 or +1 (721) 542-5424.

PIT BULLS

When it comes to breeds, as opposed to the average mixed-breed dogs, Pit Bulls are one of the most popular choices on the island. But the issue of Pit Bulls is one of the most polarising in many countries, when it comes to safety concerns. On one hand, these strong and athletic dogs are very capable of harm, and there have been a concerning number of serious attacks, including an uptick in recent months, both on people and other animals. Some of these dogs had been abandoned, while some were pets.

The nuanced discussion needs to consider both behaviours that they may be predisposed to as a result of breeding, and care/training/socialisation. Acknowledging or blaming one side without considering the other is short-sighted. Below is the position statement by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which we found to be informative and well-rounded.

In reading the explainer, keep in mind some additional local context: Some breeding is random, some is not. Some breeders are strategic, some are not; some want strong guard dogs/family dogs, and some breed fighters intentionally. Dog fights are still organised. Proposals to outlaw it in the past have gotten kickback as being against culture.

Pit Bulls are also amongst the most commonly dumped dogs, left behind to fend for themselves once they become too much to handle. As with any dumped

dog, this often happens when a new litter is born.

As the issue of socialisation comes up, think of a common way that many dogs are kept, regardless of type – tied up with little interaction, training, or socialisation. Worth keeping in mind is that local animal-centred organisations that rescue abandoned dogs and put them up for adoption, make sure that the dogs are indeed fit for adoption – unaggressive, healthy, and ready for a second chance at a happy and healthy life.

The ASPCA position statement in full

Dog breeds are characterized by certain physical and behavioural traits. Each breed was developed to perform a specific job, whether that job is hunting rabbits, retrieving downed birds, herding livestock or sitting on people's laps. When developing a breed, breeders selected only those dogs that performed their job best to produce the next generation.

Physical abilities and behaviour are both important facets of any breed. A well-bred dog should have both the physical attributes necessary to perform its job and the behavioural tendencies needed to learn it. It's not surprising that individuals of a specific breed tend to look and behave somewhat similarly. Pointers are more likely than Poodles to point, and

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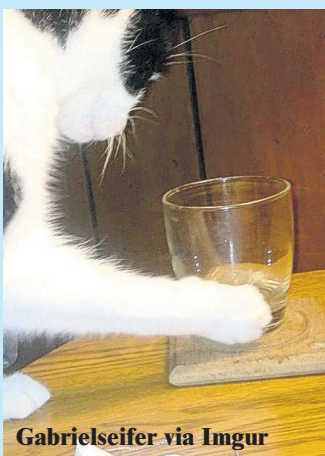
Saturday

9AM-12PM

Late night zoomies, boxes and butts... what about that cat behaviour?



Oleg Ivanov via Unsplash



Gabrielseifer via Imgur

Our feline friends definitely exhibit some strange behaviour from time to time – count it as part of their charm – but what causes these funny and often unexpected moves? Let's get into the causes behind them.

One common and curious behaviour is “kneading” – that massage you might get from the cat when you lay down and relax. This behaviour is associated with comfort and safety. Kittens do it when stimulating the mother's milk flow, and carry this into adulthood, often to calm themselves during times of anxiety. They may use it to express contentment, create a comfy space (for example in a blanket), and it also serves to mark a beloved human with their scent.

Friendly cats rub their heads, bodies, and tails on one another, showing trust and gathering information on each other via scent. The tail, including the base and length, is one of the places scent glands are located. It is believed the act of sharing scent relieves tension and stress by helping them to feel more comfortable around each other. The scents on a cat can convey lots of information about the animal, such as

mood, stress level, diet, and availability for mating.

When a cat slides its body under your hand or along your body, it starts with its head and ends with the tail – similar to how it feels sliding against another cat. This can easily leave you with the butt right in your face, coupled with the fact that friendly cats often stick their tails up. The treatment of them sticking their butt in your face when looking for attention, is simply a result of being friendly and saying “Hi.” Rubbing their head on you is also putting their scent onto you – which shows affection and ownership.

Perching up high is another natural inclination. Cats are hunters by nature (sniffing and stalking prey) and they also look for peace and safety, higher above ground. A high perching spot offers the best lookout point. To keep them from constantly jumping onto tables and counter tops, offer an alternative perch, that is higher than these surfaces.

Does the cat seem like it intensely focuses on nothing in particular? That's simply because they are sensing things that you can't, with both hearing and seeing capabilities that put ours to shame. They can see things in the ultraviolet spectrum, hear things in the ultrasonic range, and hear both higher and lower than many other mammals (including us).

The love of boxes is bemusing, isn't it? This is connected to the urge to seek

small hiding places and get comfortable. The hiding places make sense because of their status of both hunter and prey, while the tightness of these spaces also translates to a swaddling effect, which brings comfort (as it does for us as well).

Late night zoomies are another peculiar behaviour: Why are they frantically speeding around while you're finally getting into a good night's rest? Cats can have lots of energy that's pent up during the day, and this comes out at night – thanks to their nocturnal instincts. If you want to counteract this and get a peaceful night's sleep, get them enough exercise during the day, and try feeding them late so that it curbs their desire for nighttime hunting. Bonus points for food puzzles that will keep them busy for longer.

Fast and intense chattering of the teeth, which is done especially when they view potential prey, is connected to their hunting inclinations. This natural instinct allows the muscles to prepare to kill prey, and some behaviourists speculate that it's also done when a cat is frustrated that it can't get to the prey, such as when it sees a bird through a window but is stuck inside.

Laying down on clothes you just laid out, or on your laptop as you're trying to use it, is simply an attempt to get some affectionate attention. Similarly, rolling around on their back shows that they trust you and would like to engage in some playtime. Slowly blinking at you is another way they show affection and trust. This behaviour is called giving “kitty kisses”, and they'll likely continue if you blink slowly back at them.

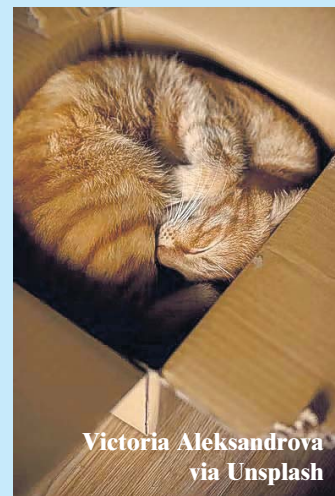
Another sign that they like and accept you, possibly to your dismay, is bringing you gifts which include their kills – they are sharing their hunting success with you, you're a member of their group.

Calmly and methodically pushing items

off a table and watching it fall to the floor, seems to simply be a product of curiosity, sometimes paired with boredom. It may also be tired to the inclination to test things out with their paws; in the same way they test whether prey is still alive. It can also be connected to attention-seeking, if it predictably grants them a reaction from you – and they are bored. Try curbing this behaviour with engaging toys or activity.

On the more serious side, there are two odd behaviours that warrant a visit to the vet – (1) not using the litter box, and (2) eating inedible objects. Besides these odd behaviours, cats that display a lot of aggression should also be taken to the vet, as there are different types of aggression that have different causes and means of intervention.

Not using the litter box: Skipping the kitty litter box is a more common problem, but the issue is not simply a matter of bad behaviour. First, try to change the location or set-up to see if it is indeed a matter of preference, but more likely, if it's a behavioural issue, it's con-



Victoria Aleksandrova via Unsplash



Trà My via Unsplash



PIT BULLS

Continued from page 11

sheepdogs are more likely than lapdogs to herd. However, while a dog's genetics may predispose it to perform certain behaviours; tremendous behavioural variation exists among individuals of the same breed or breed type. It's also important to note that some dog breeds are now bred for entirely different jobs than those for which they were originally developed. For example, certain strains of Golden Retrievers are now being bred as service dogs, a far cry from their original job of retrieving downed birds.

Today's pit bull is a descendant of the original English bull-baiting dog – a dog that was bred to bite and hold bulls, bears and other large animals around the face and head. When baiting large animals was outlawed in the 1800s, people turned instead to fighting their dogs against each other. These larger, slower bull-baiting dogs were crossed with smaller, quicker terriers to produce a more agile and athletic dog for fighting other dogs.

Some Pit Bulls were selected and bred for their fighting ability. That means that they may be more likely than other breeds to fight with dogs. It doesn't mean that they can't be around other dogs or that they're unpredictably aggressive. Other Pit Bulls were specifically bred for work

and companionship. These dogs have long been popular family pets, noted for their gentleness, affection and loyalty. And even those Pit Bulls bred to fight other animals were not prone to aggressiveness toward people. Dogs used for fighting needed to be routinely handled by people; therefore, aggression toward people was not tolerated. Any dog that behaved aggressively toward a person was culled, or killed, to avoid passing on such an undesirable trait. Research on pet dogs confirms that aggressive dogs are no more likely to direct aggression toward people than dogs that aren't aggressive to other dogs.

It is likely that the vast majority of Pit Bull type dogs in our communities today are the result of random breeding – two dogs being mated without regard to the behavioural traits being passed on to their offspring. The result of random breeding is a population of dogs with a wide range of behavioural predispositions. For this reason, it is important to evaluate and treat each dog – no matter its breed – as an individual.

While a dog's genetics may predispose it to behave in certain ways, genetics do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, behaviour develops through a complex interaction between environment and genetics. This is an especially important consideration when we look at an individual dog ver-

sus a breed. Many diverse and sometimes subtle factors influence the development of behaviour, including, but not limited to, early nutrition, stress levels experienced by the mother during pregnancy, and even temperament in the womb. And when it comes to influencing the behaviour of an individual dog, factors such as housing conditions and the history of social interactions play pivotal roles in behavioural development.

The factors that feed into the expression of behaviour are so inextricably intertwined that it's usually impossible to point to any one specific influence that accounts for a dog becoming aggressive. This is why there is such variation in behaviour between individual dogs, even when they are of the same breed and bred for the same purpose. Because of the impact of experience, the Pit Bull specifically bred for generations to be aggressive may not fight with dogs and the Labrador retriever, bred to be a service dog, may be aggressive toward people.

Early positive experiences, most notably socialization, are considered key in preventing aggressive tendencies in dogs. Puppies that learn how to interact, play and communicate with both people and members of their own and other species are less likely to show aggressive behaviour as adults. Given the powerful impact of socialization, it's

no surprise that dogs that are chained outside and isolated from positive human interaction are more likely to bite people than dogs that are integrated into our homes. Unfortunately, Pit Bull type dogs that find themselves in these conditions may be at greater risk for developing aggressive behaviour. But because these factors are ones that can be controlled by better educated owners, it is possible to reduce these risks, not just in Pit Bulls but in dogs of all breeds.

The reality is that dogs of many breeds can be selectively bred or trained to develop aggressive traits. Therefore, the responsible ownership of any dog requires a commitment to proper socialization, humane training and conscientious supervision. Despite our best efforts, there will always be dogs of various breeds that are simply too dangerous to live safely in society. We can effectively address the danger posed by these dogs by supporting the passage and vigorous enforcement of laws that focus, not on breed, but on people's responsibility for their dogs' behaviour, including measures that hold owners of all breeds accountable for properly housing, supervising and controlling their dogs. Breed neutral "dangerous dog" laws, "leash" laws that prohibit dogs from running loose off their owners' property, and "anti-chaining" laws can control the behaviour of individual dogs and individual owners and thereby

help reduce the risk of harm to people and other animals.

Laws that ban particular breeds of dogs do not achieve these aims and instead create the illusion, but not the reality, of enhanced public safety. Notably, there are no state-wide laws that discriminate based on dog breed, and 18 states have taken the proactive step of expressly banning laws that single out particular breeds for disparate legal treatment. Even the White House has weighed in against laws that target specific breeds. In a statement issued in 2013, President Obama said "[w]e don't support breed-specific legislation – research shows that bans on certain types of dogs are largely ineffective and often a waste of public resources. And the simple fact is that dogs of any breed can become dangerous when they're intentionally or unintentionally raised to be aggressive."

All dogs, including Pit Bulls, are individuals. Treating them as such, providing them with the care, training and supervision they require, and judging them by their actions and not by their DNA or their physical appearance is the best way to ensure that dogs and people can continue to share safe and happy lives together.

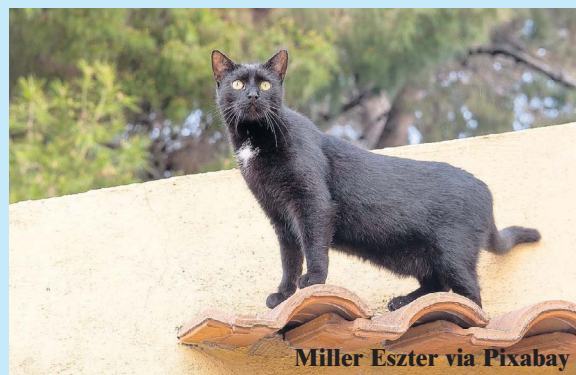


Mak via Unsplash

nected to stress. This stress can be caused by other pets, by visitors, or by big changes such as the birth of a child or moving house.

More worryingly, the behaviour can be rooted in a medical issue. Urination in the wrong places can point to bladder and urinary tract conditions, such as bladder stones, cystitis, infection, or urethral obstruction. Defecation in the wrong places can point to colitis, constipation or anal sac disease. Other causes of pain or discomfort, such as arthritis or conditions affecting muscles, joints, or nerves, may also simply make it harder to reach the litter box. Therefore, the behaviour is one that warrants investigation by a vet.

Eating inedible objects: Another behaviour that warrants a visit to the clinic, is when a cat eats non-food items, such as plastic, metal, cloth, or inedible plants. This can be a sign of pica, a rare condition. The cause may well remain unknown, but it is speculated that it might be caused by mineral deficiencies, hyperthyroidism, anaemia, genes, or boredom and stress. A vet will offer an examination, treatment and advice.



Miller Eszter via Pixabay



Daria Shatova via Unsplash



A lifeline for forgotten felines

Island Cat Rescue, Maho

Island Cat Rescue addresses this crisis through a proven TNR (Trap Neuter Return) program, humanely trapping feral cats, having them sterilized, and then returning them to their colonies or, when possible, finding them permanent homes. It was recently shared on the group's Facebook page that ICR has rescued and sterilized over 200 cats this year alone. They are also working with The Island Vet in Cay Bay to offer discounted spay/neuter services for local residents who otherwise cannot afford this service.

can also help by volunteering, fostering or adopting. We encourage you to visit their adoption centre in Maho (above 3 Amigos) to play with kittens and help them with their socialization. It's an excellent opportunity to meet the kittens in person, learn about their personalities, or perhaps even give one a permanent home.

2:00pm and in the evenings from 6:00 to 9:00pm. Follow them on social media @IslandCatRescueSXM or call (721) 523-0090 for more information.



On the sun-drenched streets and hidden alleys of St. Maarten, countless stray and feral cats silently struggle to survive.

While many residents and tourists enjoy the island's natural beauty, few notice the four-legged residents living on the fringes. That's where Island Cat Rescue (ICR) steps in quietly, consistently, and compassionately.

Founded in 2024, Island Cat Rescue is a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and re-homing stray and abandoned cats on the island. What began as a grassroots effort by a small group of animal lovers has now grown into one of St. Maarten's most respected animal welfare initiatives. St. Maarten has long struggled with cat overpopulation. Without intervention, a single pair of unsprayed cats can produce thousands of offspring in just a few years.

ICR maintains a network of foster homes and a small but well-run shelter, where rescued cats receive medical care, socialization, and a second chance at life. In a recent post, they introduced "Blink" – a four-month-old kitten rescued in Grand Case (French side) who needed to have an eye removal surgery. He is now recovering well in foster care. They also regularly post "before and after" photos that show the dramatic transformation of many cats, from emaciated or injured, to healthy and adoptable.

Education is another cornerstone of Island Cat Rescue's mission. Through school visits and social media outreach, the organization works to shift attitudes toward animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. Their Facebook page frequently features tips on caring for strays, advice for new adopters, and reminders about the importance of spaying/neutering. One recent post urged: "If you feed a stray, be part of its life – support it medically, help us trap/neuter it, or foster if you can."

ICR always welcomes donations of cat food, litter, medical supplies, and financial contributions. Locals and visitors alike

With dreams of expanding its shelter and establishing a low-cost spay/neuter program, Island Cat Rescue is determined to deepen its impact in the years ahead. "St. Maarten is paradise," says Danny, the Adoption Center Director. "We believe every creature, no matter how small or scruffy, deserves to live in peace here."

In partnership with SXM Paws, ICR will be co-hosting its first "Paws for a Cause" fundraising gala at Kalatua Beach Restaurant on Friday, October 24. There is limited space available, and tickets must be purchased in advance. Please contact ICR for more details and secure your spot at this incredible event.

To donate, to get involved or to learn more about Island Cat Rescue, visit their Adoption Centre in Maho above 3 Amigos, seven days a week from 11:00am to

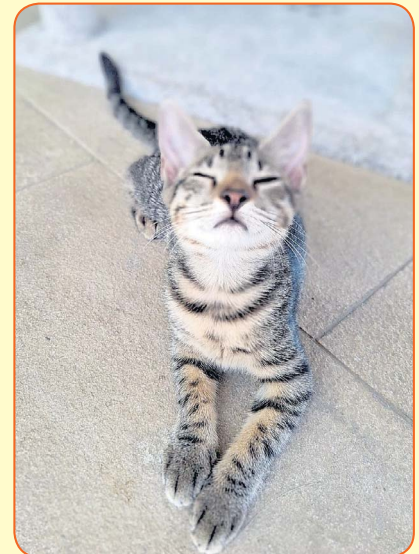
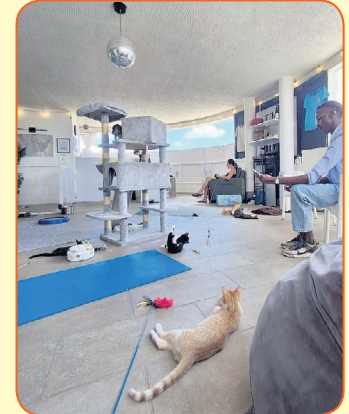


Photo credit: Rover.com

TUNA ICE TREATS

This treat is a hit with pets, simple to make, and is a great way for your cat (or dog) to get a little break from the soaring heat. It's also a break for you, from buying expensive treats – it's practically free!

Simply take the drained liquid from a can of tuna, and add some water (around 400ml for a standard can), and put the liquid into any type of mould – be it in popsicle sticks, paper cups or an ice cube tray. Optional: add a meaty treat stick if using paper cups, this doubles as a way for you to hold it.

And that's it! Freeze until solid and add it to their feeding bowls when it's time to enjoy. They'll take their time on this icy treat.

You can also try the same method, swapping the can of tuna for a can of salmon. Another option is to use store-bought chicken stock, or make home-made stock with chicken, beef or oxtail bones (celery and carrots optional). In any case, make sure there is no added salt.

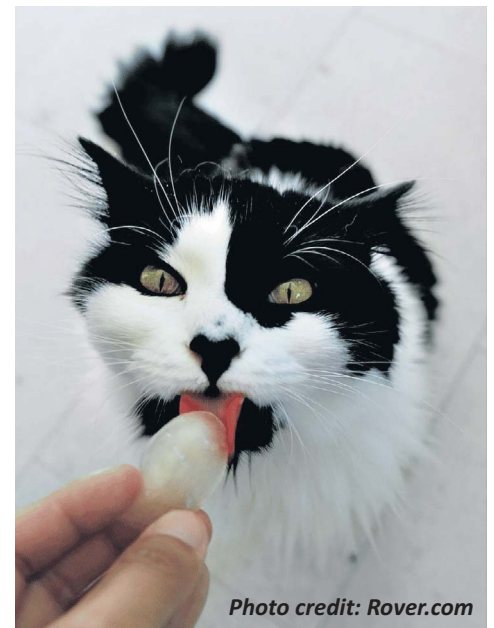


Photo credit: Rover.com



A FEW OF THE ANIMALS LOOKING FOR LOVING HOMES



Pasha (female, 8 months)
@ Animal Defenders

They are all vaccinated, friendly and (to be) spayed/ neutered

Interested in supporting animal-centred non-profit organisations? This can entail donations, volunteering or fostering. Here are the main players on the island. Find them on social media.

Dutch Side

Animal Defenders
SXM Paws
Animal Welfare Foundation
Island Cat Rescue

French Side

Soualiga Animal Lovers
Collectief Animaux
I Love My Island Dog



Scooby (male, 3 years)
@Stefy's Pet Sitting



Mika (female, 4 years)
@Stefy's Pet Sitting



Fluffy (male, 2 years)
@ St. Maarten Veterinary Clinic



Patch (male, 6 months) Patch
@Island Cat Rescue



Gouda (male, 7 months)
@Island Cat Rescue



Frida (female, 4 months)
@ Animal Defenders



Don (male, 3 years)
@Stefy's Pet Sitting



Domino (female, 1.5 years)
@ St. Maarten Veterinary Clinic



Axel (male, 1 year)
@ St. Maarten Veterinary Clinic

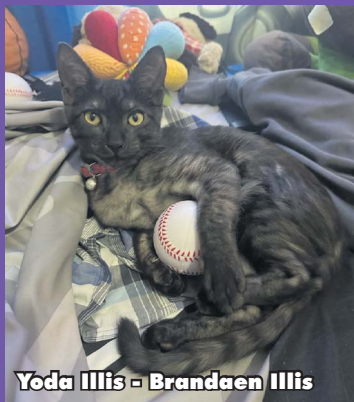


Furry friends & family of *The Daily Herald*

(Not eligible for the contest, but we still wanted to share.)



Valkye - Aurelie Romero



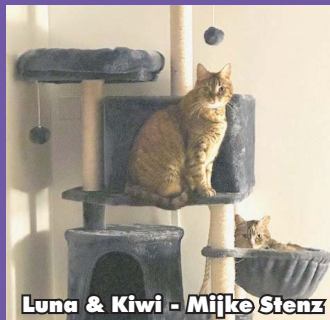
Yoda Illis - Brandaen Illis



Mia & Mochi
- Soleil Marcelle



Fiona & Rambo
- Cecilia Vazquez



Luna & Kiwi - Mijke Stenz



Mimi - Esther Beltre



Blue
- Claudette Alexander



Scout
- Pip van Gelder



Chouchou
- Jacqueline Hooftman



Lady Freyja - Alita Singh
& Raj Chintaman



The Duke of Orange - Alita
Singh & Raj Chintaman



Liza - Cecilia Vazquez



Reina Blijden
- Juan Blijden



Agent
- Luis Hurtault



Sicily Ramnauth
- Tiffany Ramnauth



Mimi & Disco - Daniella
De Windt & Brams Souare



Kari - Stephanie Mathieu



Tatiana
- Esther Beltre



Lucy - Lupita Belina