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**AVANT-GARDE ARTS FESTIVAL TO LAUNCH IN ST MAARTEN/ST MARTIN; MONTHLY FESTIVAL CURATED BY TOP CARIBBEAN ARTISTS**

**ST. MAARTEN (December 8, 2010)** – St. Maarten is set to welcome some of the Caribbean’s finest artists for the inaugural “Arts in the Plaza” event taking place on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. Held in the plaza at Porto Cupecoy, the monthly arts festival will be of the first of its kind to combine visual, performing and musical arts from St Martin/St Maarten’s avant-garde arts scene.

The festival promises to be one of the most important arts events in this part of the world, featuring Dutch, French, Indian and Island Caribbean influences. This month’s launch, taking place December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 7-11 p.m., will be open to the public, kicking off the high season on the island.

A prestigious curator committee has been assembled to select the various performers for each of the “Arts in the Plaza” events. The individuals tasked with this are among the most recognized and respected not only in St. Maarten, but also in the Caribbean and worldwide: Clara Reyes, founder of the Imbali Center for Creative Movement; Roland Richardson, the iconic artist often called the “Father of Caribbean Impressionism,” along with wife Laura Richardson; Neville York, one of the most recognized steel drum players in the world; and Thierry Gombs, Director of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs - St Martin.

Watch video interviews with **Caribbean artists**: <http://stmaartenlife.com/>.

According to Ms. Reyes, the **festival** will consist of not only the island’s finest art and music,

but also a series of unique performances choreographed specifically for the event. "The Arts in the Plaza festival will be innovative, interesting and different. St. Maarten is a multi-cultural society. We can offer anything from classical Indian dance to Capoeira, from the Brazilian martial arts movement. I have seen fire artists and amazing stilt walkers who dance five to 10 feet off of the ground," said Reyes.

Additionally, the gourmet restaurants in the plaza will be offering specials for festival guests, and the shops will stay open late, offering specials of their own. The marina will be offering complimentary dockage on festival nights for mega-yachts and pleasure-craft visitors from St. Barth's, Anguilla and other marinas.

The event is free and open to the public. The festival will continue into 2011 with new performances and exhibits each month scheduled for January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20 and May 18. A complete listing of featured artists will be announced prior to each event at [www.portocupecoy.com](http://www.portocupecoy.com). For festival updates like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/artsintheplaza](http://www.facebook.com/artsintheplaza). Orient Express Hotels, La Samanna Resort, Porto Cupecoy and Dom Perignon Champagne are sponsoring the festival.

Developed by Orient Express Hotels Ltd., Porto Cupecoy is a Mediterranean-inspired waterfront village and marina. The 184-residence luxury seaside village is anchored around a marina, the most exclusive and upscale on the island.

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Orient-Express, (NYSE: OEH, [www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)) the name behind an elite collection of travel experiences, first came into being in 1883 as one of the world's most exciting and indulgent train journeys. Today that evocative name also embraces hotels, cruises and other luxury rail adventures in 24 countries, across five continents. The Company has offered exceptional luxury travel experiences since 1976, when it first purchased Hotel Cipriani in Venice and then shortly afterwards, recreated the celebrated Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, linking London, Paris and Venice, along with other European cities. Today, the company owns or part-owns and manages 50 businesses, 41 of which are highly acclaimed hotels, each unique in style, from the Mount Nelson in Cape Town and Rio's Copacabana Palace, to the Grand Hotel Europe in St. Petersburg and Maroma Resort & Spa on Mexico's Riviera Maya. There are six luxury tourist trains, two river cruise operations and '21', one of New York's most iconic restaurants.

Orient-Express real estate developments draw on over 30 years of experience in the creation of luxury resorts and travel experiences. The company's overriding commitment to

providing the highest quality of service, products and amenities in its hotels, trains and cruises is also a standard in its real estate developments. In addition to Porto Cupecoy, Orient-Express is currently offering luxury lifestyle residences at The Villas at La Samanna (St. Martin), Keswick Estate (Charlottesville, Virginia) and Napasai (Koh Samui, Thailand). The company owns developable land in Madeira; Riviera Maya, Mexico; and St. Michaels, Maryland.