



STINAPA INFORMATION

A SECOND ST.MARTIN?

Bonaire is a unique island, and the tourists who come here know that. Peace, space and an amazing nature above and below water. To keep its unique character the government has chosen for "growth while maintaining nature and culture". But times have changed. Bonaire's economy is on the rise, especially since it was announced that Bonaire will become "a special Dutch municipality". That gives investors reassurance. During the first 6 months of 2007 the number of inhabitants of Bonaire increased from 14.000 to 14.500. And the end seems far from near. Many Bonaireans wonder which way their genial island, that they care for so much, is headed. On the one hand there is the motto of growth while maintaining nature and culture, and on the other hand Bonaire wants to get the same chances to develop as Aruba and St. Martin. What does that mean? Are the many building projects, the weekly increasing number of cars on the road, and the rise in cruise ship visits an omen of a tumultuous tourism development? What will be left of nature and the local culture? The peace, the quiet and the unique nature are Bonaire's biggest treasure, the goose with the golden eggs. Will we realize in five years that Bonaire killed its goose? With so many unanswered questions, it can be useful to establish some facts. Bonaire is one of the least populated islands of all the Caribbean. With its surface of 288 square km, it is the second largest of the Dutch Antilles, after Curacao with its 444 square km. Bonaire is bigger than Aruba, Sint Martin, St. Eustatius and Saba put together. Aruba has more than 100.000 inhabitants. On the Dutch part of St. Martin there are 50.000 people living, and that is without adding the estimated 30.000 illegals. Both Aruba and St. Martin house a lot of illegal's, especially from Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. On both islands the local people are asking themselves who the true Aruban is or St.Martiner. On both islands nature lost its battle with the tourism development. The local culture is under pressure from the culture that the many immigrants and tourists brought with them. Hopefully Bonaire will still belong to the Bonaireans. *Written by Trix van Bennekom, translated by Marcel Nahr.*

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NOS TA BIBA DI NATURALESA



Traha huntu na un desaroyo duradero pa Bonelru