Discovering The Island Of Martinique

(NAPSA)—There are few places in the world where you can dine on both authentic French cuisine and genuine island Creole in the same day that you tour a rain forest. Martinique in the Caribbean is one of them.

Like many islands in the Caribbean, Martinique is blessed with pretty beaches, a favorable climate, lush vegetation and fine hotels. What sets the island apart, however, is its strong French ties and unique island culture. These aspects lend themselves to a vacation experience that blends adventure, luxury and fun.

Martinique ladies in traditional costume.

Martinique By Taxi Or Car

Vacationers can hire a taxi or car at their hotel and drive north out of the city. The road climbs steeply, edging the sea, then twists and turns through picture-postcard villages such as Case-Pilote and Bellefontaine. Vacationers will eventually reach Le Carbet, the area where Columbus landed in 1502 on his fourth trip to the Americas. Visitors can also tour Saint Pierre. Originally known as "The Little

Saint Pierre's bay.

Paris of the Caribbean," the first capital city of Martinique was destroyed in 1902 by a Mount Pelée eruption. Today, the town is known as "The Little Pompeii of the Caribbean."

Magnificent Schoelcher Library.
Photos courtesy of Martinique Promotion Bureau/CMT USA

Sight-Seeing In Martinique

Visitors to the island can tour its lush rain forests, comb its beautiful beaches or bask in its fabled valleys. Of course, there's plenty to do in its capital city as well. Stroll around the green Savane, people-watch from a terrace cafe, or wander the busy little balconied streets, lined with boutiques, restaurants, pastry shops and more.

Staying In Martinique

The island recently added three, 3-star, all-inclusive resorts to its already impressive list of accommodations. The Villa Coloniale guesthouse offers distinguished service in a quiet setting. The 3-star Baie du Galion Resort sits on the top of a quaint hill, facing the ocean. The Diamond Rock hotel is in the south of Martinique, an area known for its white-sand beaches.

Martinique At A Glance

• The French island of Martinique lies in the heart of the Caribbean Archipelago and is one of the many islands that make up the group known as "The Breezy Islands."

• The 426-square-mile island has the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Caribbean Sea to its west. It's 1,400 miles from Miami and has a mean temperature of 79.

• Martinique is home to a number of natural attractions, including the two peaks of Carbet and Mont Pelée—a dormant volcano spanning 4,586 vertical feet. The island is also home to a tropical rain forest, the majestic Lamentin Plain, and the beautiful Les Salines Beach.

• Visitors to Martinique shop for indigenous art, as well as fine clothing and wares. The island also has a number of fine restaurants and luxury hotels. The island's events and street festivals provide a taste of its culture and hospitality.

For more information, visit www.martinique.org.