



LA MARTINIQUE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Géraldine Rome
Martinique Promotion Bureau
T: 212-838-6887
E: geraldine.rome@atout-france.fr

Steve Bennett
SBPR Corp
T: 305-213-8074
E: Steve@SBPRcorp.com

MARTINIQUE EVENTS CALENDAR – WINTER 2016/2017

From cycling races, fishing tournaments, and endurance marathons in the fall, to Chante Noel, Martinique's vibrant Christmas celebrations, and Carnival in February, fun is always on-tap in Martinique during the winter months

NEW YORK, NY – (September 13, 2016) – Martinique's social calendar is filled once again this winter with a wide array of special events for visitors to see and experience.

"A vibrant and infectious energy permeates all aspects of life in Martinique, so it's little wonder that there's always a celebration happening somewhere on the island," said Muriel Wiltord, Director Americas for the Martinique Promotion Bureau. "This is especially true during the winter months with all types of festivals and events bringing visitors and locals together."

Some of the top events on Martinique's winter 2016/2017 social calendar include:

International Sport Fishing Tournament: October 31 – November 4, 2016

Organized by the Martinique Billfish Association, the tournament celebrates its 23rd edition in 2016. Local fishermen as well as visitors from overseas compete, with anglers of varying levels of experience welcome.

La Belle Martinique: November 11, 2016

This amateur cycling race held annually in November offers a unique way to tour Martinique. Local and visiting riders participate. The competition is less than intense, though spectators line the course a la the Tour de France.

Martinique Semi Marathon: November 27, 2016

This festive half-marathon attracts amateur and professional runners to compete along a scenic course that winds throughout the capital city of Fort-de-France.

Martinique Jazz Festival: December 1–2, 2016

The Caribbean's longest-running jazz festival, Martinique Jazz Festival 2016 will feature legendary world music and jazz fusion drummer Paco Sery.

Chante Noel: December 2016

Caroling to a Creole beat while savoring such delectable Holiday treats as smoked caramelized ham marinated, warm petits pâtés, yams, boudin créole (a spicy West Indian sausage), a spicy pork ragout with congo peas, the Bûche de Noël, or Christmas log, for dessert and Martinique's marvelous shrub liquer make Christmas in Martinique one visitors never forget.

Martinique Carnival: February 26 – March 1, 2017

All Caribbean Carnivals stem from Martinique, the tradition carried to Trinidad by slaves owned by French aristocrats who moved to Trinidad during the Cedula de Poblacion in the 1780's when the Spanish, who ruled Trinidad at the time, were having trouble establishing a viable population there. Today, the biggest celebration of the year remains distinguished from other Carnivals by extending an extra day longer than celebrations in Trinidad, Rio, New Orleans, and elsewhere.

Carnival celebrations reach a fever-pitch beginning on *Dimanche Gras* or **Fat Sunday** as Martinique becomes awl with daytime parades of costumed marchers strumming strings and strutting to a Carnival beat. Puppets, called *bwa bwa*, festooned in fantastic dress, are carried about, while *nègres-gros-sirop* – revelers whose bodies are covered with coal tar and sugarcane syrup – break through the crowds playfully frightening children.

The spectacle grows on Carnival Monday. This is the day for Martinican burlesque; Mock Weddings with men garbed as pregnant brides or floozies, and women done up as reluctant bridegrooms.

Shrove Tuesday is **Red Devils Day**, highlighted by glorious parades, with all eyes on armies of tots in brilliant red-devil costumes carrying homemade tridents. A mask of animal skin and horns is worn with a red cloth jumpsuit adorned with hundreds of glittering mirrors and small bells that jingle when in motion. The **Red Devils** dance until sundown when their elders take over in a celebration that may seem like Carnival's climax. This is just a preview of more to come, though.

Martinique Events Calendar – Winter 2016/2017

Page 2

For the rest of the Christian world, **Ash Wednesday**, the first day of Lent, is a time to pray. But in Martinique, it's a time to play. It is the **Day of the She-Devils** (*La Fête des Diablesses*), when some 30,000 revelers gather to mourn the end of Carnival and the symbolic death of Vaval, King Carnival. Only two colors are worn: black and white. For revelers not in mourning attire, any kind of crazy get-up is okay, so long as it's black-and-white.

Visitors to Martinique during Carnival Season can safely join parades, or watch from bleachers set up on sidewalks lining the parade routes, or from hotel balconies overlooking the streets and squares.

For more information on travel to Martinique, please visit www.us.martinique.org. For the latest, up-to-date Martinique Promotion Bureau press kit, visit www.martiniquepresskit.com.

About Martinique (www.martiniquepresskit.com)

The Caribbean Island with French Flair, The Isle of Flowers, The Rum Capital of the World, The Isle of the Famed Poet (Aimé Césaire) – Martinique ranks among the most alluring and enchanting destinations in the world. As an overseas region of France, Martinique boasts modern and reliable infrastructure – roads, water and power utilities, hospitals, and telecommunications services all on par with any other part of the European Union. At the same time, Martinique's beautifully unspoiled beaches, volcanic peaks, rainforests, 80+ miles of hiking trails, waterfalls, streams, and other natural wonders are the equal of neighboring Dominica to the north and St. Lucia to the south, so visitors here truly get the best of both worlds. The currency is the Euro, the flag is Le Tricolour, and the official language is French, but Martinique's character, cuisine, musical heritage, art, culture, common language, and identity are of a distinctly Afro-Caribbean inclination known as Creole. It is this special combination of modern world conveniences, pristine nature, and rich heritage that has earned for Martinique several notable distinctions in recent years, including being ranked in the Top 16 Places to go in 2016 by Condé Nast Traveler, named as a "Must-Visit" destination for 2015 by *Caribbean Journal*, "Best Caribbean Destination" by *About.com*, and "Top Caribbean Island for Delectable Dining" by *Caribbean Travel + Life*. The Bay of Fort-de-France, which fronts Martinique's charming capital city, was also inducted into *The Club of The Most Beautiful Bays in the World*. Martinique's storied history further stirs travel passions. Napoleon's bride, Empress Josephine, was born and raised in Martinique, while the majestic Mt. Pelée volcano and St. Pierre, *The Pompeii of the Caribbean*, are found here.

A special place, to be sure, with so much to offer – *Martinique c'est magnifique!*

#