



LA MARTINIQUE

Martinique Sets Records with Influx of Robust Cruise Business

The French Caribbean Island Announces Striking Increases in Calls and Passengers for 2017/2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, NY | March 5, 2018 – The Martinique Tourism Authority (MTA) announces record breaking cruise arrival growth. 151 calls were added in addition to the previously scheduled 214 calls for the 2017/2018 cruise season. This resulted in a 70% increase from the initial forecast. Following the Caribbean's severe hurricane season, the MTA was thankful to report that the destination emerged totally unscathed from these powerful storms.

For the first time, the destination is also pleased to announce the crossing of a major milestone; nearly 120,000 cruise passengers visited the island in the single month of December 2017, and a total of 511,147 passengers arrived via cruises for the year. These excellent results, among other factors, helped propel the Isle of Flowers to a record 1,041,139 visitors in 2017.

CRUISE FIGURES FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2017

- 256 calls versus 199 calls in 2016 i.e. a 28% increase
- 511,174 passengers versus 381,157 i.e. a 34% increase

CRUISE FIGURES FROM SEPTEMBER 2017 TO AUGUST 2018

- 366 calls versus 170 in 2016-2017 i.e. a 115.3% increase
- 667,061 passengers expected versus 360,076 in 2016-17 i.e. a 85% increase

HOME TRAFFIC IN 2017 (EMBARKING + DISEMBARKING)

- 105,968 passengers versus 100,591 in 2016 i.e. a 5.34% increase

“We are elated to announce that the island of Martinique is welcoming thousands of new cruise passengers every year during the peak cruise seasons. Through strategic partnerships, we have been able to position the island as a cruise destination of choice in the U.S. and European markets. We are committed to continuously improving amenities, facilities and infrastructure. Our island is the perfect destination for the discerning traveler whether one's interest lies in eco-tourism, superb gourmet food, prestigious rum, exciting water sports, events, culture or just simply pampering. The welcome is warm and we are eager to share our unique French-Caribbean Creole culture with our American guests.” – said **Karine Mousseau, Martinique Tourism Commissioner.**

In addition to the two main cruise ports in the capital of Fort-de-France, Martinique received in 2017, 36 calls of luxury/boutique vessels at various unique anchorages around the island: 8 at Anses d'Arlet, 8 at Le Marin, 4 at St. Pierre, 15 at Trois-Ilets; indicating more than 200% growth from the previous year. Overall, the number of calls and the number of cruise passengers have steadily increased from 2011 to 2017, representing a growth of + 246% of cruise ships and + 993% of cruise passengers welcomed.

To facilitate the growth in cruise passengers the local government has implemented a robust set of action plans and improvements to offer accessibility, modern amenities and resources for passengers and above all, a memorable experience.

GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Information:
 - o Greeting hosts at the tourist information center as well as taxi dispatchers nearby
- Local Transportation:
 - o Taxi voucher use issued by dispatchers to cruise visitors and taxi drivers
- Anchorages:
 - o MTA Cruise team members are on-hand during the arrival at the four sites of Le Marin, Anses d'Arlet, Trois-Ilets and St. Pierre
- Community Outreach:
 - o Coordination of the presentation of the FCCA's^[1] gifts to 200 underprivileged children from Martinique
- Leisure Activities:
 - o Exciting new excursions, such as the turtle discovery, snorkeling in a bat cave , diving, tricycles in Fort-de-France, and culinary discoveries, along with the always popular tours to Saint Pierre, the rain forest, botanical gardens, historic distilleries and more.
- Branding:
 - o Installation of a new step and repeat backdrop with logos at Pointe Simon
 - o New signage at the Pointe Simon terminal

The Pointe Simon Cruise Terminal in Fort-de-France's is now the island's most frequented and state-of-the-art cruise facility. It is attached to a promenade, Le Malecon, along the seaside that leads directly into the heart of the capital city.

The Tourelles Cruise Terminal in Fort-de-France also received an upgrade, with expanded facilities, additional security lines and new VIP room for larger home ported vessels.

The Martinique Promotion Bureau will participate at this year's **Seatrade Cruise Global** on March 5 to 8, 2018 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (Booth #2515).

ABOUT MARTINIQUE (us.martinique.org – martiniquepresskit.com)

*The French Caribbean Island of Martinique is also known as the Isle of Flowers, The Rum Capital of the World, the Birthplace of coffee in the New 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 unparalleled in the Caribbean, so visitors here truly get the best of both worlds; and speaking of beauty, the Bay of Fort-de-France has been inducted into the prestigious club of "The Most Beautiful Bays in the World." The currency is the Euro, the flag and the official language are 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. In 2018, Martinique is highlighted in the Caribbean segment of the New York Time's "52 Places to go in 2018." and prominently featured in a January 2018 article in Travel + Leisure. In a 2017 review of noteworthy French Islands throughout the world ThePointsGuy.com selected Martinique as number one. Other distinctions include being named as a "Must-Visit" destination by *Caribbean Journal*, "Best Caribbean Destination" by About.com, and "Top Caribbean Island for Delectable Dining" by *Caribbean Travel + Life*.*

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[1] The Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association