

For Immediate Release

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NOTABLY LUXURIOUS, ELEGANT AND UNIQUE : MARTINIQUE GOES DELUXE **5-star Cap Est Lagoon Resort and Spa becomes a member of the famous Relais & Chateaux Hotel Chain**

New York, February 20, 2004—The first 5-star hotel in Martinique, and the most luxurious of the French West Indies, has been added to the impressive list of properties in the Relais & Chateaux hotel group. The Cap Est Lagoon, which opened in December 2002, was named one of the best 80 new hotels in the world in the May 2003 issue of Conde Nast Traveler. And as if that weren't enough, the hotel's Bélem restaurant made the magazine's list of Hot Tables, the 75 great new restaurants worth the detour!

Built and designed with European standards by architect Didier Lefort, whose name is associated with several prestigious hotels in Europe and Asia, the Cap Est Lagoon Resort and Spa is able to accommodate the most discriminating clients and welcome visitors looking to be pampered in style and spend the best of times in the Caribbean's best kept secret.

With 50 deluxe suites, 35 of which have a private swimming pool (and 2 equipped for wheelchair access), this stunning new 5-star deluxe resort is located only 20 minutes from the Lamentin International Airport in the village of François on the South-East coast of Martinique right on the lagoon renowned to be Empress Josephine's favorite, a stone's throw away from her famous bath in the middle of the Atlantic. Also near by are the Empress islets, protected by coral reef barriers. All rooms have a view of the sea.

Each room at Cap Est Lagoon Resort is spacious and equipped with state of the art amenities (DVD, TV with plasma screen, internet access, maxi bar and fridge, ice making and espresso machines).

The hotel management, headed by Stéphane Baras, formerly Director of Le Sofitel Bakoua, an all-time favorite, who came back to Martinique after spending 4 years in a palace in Mauritius, wants to give clients the comfort of modern living. Special care is given to the clients' taste for fine cuisine: The chef, Hervé Rameau, was selected among the best; he trained at Paris' Taillevent and Lucas Carton restaurants, respectively 2 and 3 star Michelin, then spent 4 years at La Samana in St Martin. The Maitre D, Yann Rawling, also comes from Taillevent and the restaurant manager, Gilles Trouillot, spent 8 years at the famous restaurant Prunier in Paris (2 Michelin star). "The property's greatest asset is its staff, trained to Parisian standards and with a genuine glow and shy smiles that are trademark Martiniquaise" noted Conde Nast Traveler.

Since deluxe rhymes with appetite for the best and finest, the Cap Est Lagoon Resort and Spa has chosen to feature what the island is best known for: its rum – the only rum awarded the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* (AOC) like the best wines in France. Along with a vintage rum cellar, the hotel also features a cigar cellar. Cigars and good rum make quite a fine marriage.

As far as the spa is concerned, it is the first one of its kind on the island, using hydrotherapy and balneotherapy and focusing mostly on the clients' well being and sense of aesthetics. A team of French trained therapists is attentive to their customers every need. The spa is managed in partnership with the famous cosmetic brand *Guerlain*, whose headquarters are in Paris.

If you recall, MGM pictures chose Martinique in 1999 as Thomas Crown's luxurious and romantic getaway. The island has been appealing not only to Francophiles in need of a unique Caribbean experience with a French flair, but also to the rich and famous. With this new hotel, Martinique confirms that it is definitely chic, trendy and *très magnifique* ! Rates are in Euros, taxes and services included, and range from 300 to 900 euros (single or double suite, per night) from May 3 to November 30. Worth the trip during the off-season!

For reservations contact reservation manager Betty Cappa at :011-596-596-54-80 80, or fax 011-596-596-54-96-00 email: betty@capest.com , web site : www.capest.com .

For more information on Martinique, visit the web site www.martinique.org. To order a free brochure email: info@martinique.org or call 1.212 838 78 00 ext 228.