

GOLF AT MARTINIQUE'S "EMPRESS JOSEPHINE COURSE" FOR 2000

Golf in a setting of French "savoir faire," Creole "joie de vivre" and 18th-century history has long given Martinique's 18 holes a special appeal. And for 2000 the David Leadbetter Golf Academy, inaugurated in 1996, continues to provide on-the-spot training, using personalized teaching methods for all levels of play, under the control of Leadbetter himself, coach of top players worldwide, including Nick Faldo.

When Robert Trent Jones Sr. designed Martinique's course over 20 years ago, he selected a site that was both picturesque and historic: a magnificent 150-acre tract of rolling hills near **La Pagerie**, birthplace of the island's famous daughter, Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon. Though French in name (**Golf de l'Impératrice Joséphine**), the course is American in design, one of Trent Jon's great signature pieces.

Located at Trois-Ilets, a five-minute, one-mile drive from the leading resort area of Pointe du Bout and 20 miles from Martinique's capital of Fort-de-France, the Golf de l'Impératrice Joséphine is a good, tough 18-hole course, one of the Caribbean's most beautiful. It unfolds its greens from Josephine's birthplace across undulating hills and hillocks that offer exquisite vistas of the turquoise sea. Year-round trade winds cool the 6,640-yard, par-71 course, even during noonday hours.

The par-5 12th is the most difficult hole, with a dogleg to the left. The fairway is very narrow, as is the green, which is also long. You play against the wind on the 12th, and between December and April, when the trade winds are strongest, this hole can be very tricky. Other tough holes are the par-3 15th, across a bit of water, and the par-5 16th, played from the land across the water to the fairway, which is an islet, and across the water again to the green.

Although the course is open to all, it is handiest for guests staying at the Méridien, Bakoua, Carayou and Pagerie hotels, all located at nearby Pointe du Bout. A van, which belongs to the course, shuttles twice a day to and from the hotels between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Equipment is both French and American, with buggies, handcarts and clubs for rent, and golf clothes for sale in the clubhouse boutique. Greens fees for 2000 are 270F (about \$45) per player for 18 holes. Per week, the fee is 1,323F (\$220) a person. The course now has 50 carts, which rent for 250F (\$41) for 18 holes. Handcart rental is 40F (\$7); a set of clubs rents for 100F (\$18).

The Golf Club has such amenities as a clubhouse with dressing rooms, a well-equipped pro shop, plus a bar and restaurant called Le Country, as well as three lighted tennis courts. Court fees are 80F (\$13) an hour. Philippe Rosier is president of the club, and assisting him are two English-speaking pros: Bruno Frechinos and Leon Joseph. For details, call (596) 68.32.81 or fax (596) 68.38.97.

Information on Martinique is available from the Martinique Promotion Bureau, 444 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022, Tel: (800) 391-4909, Fax: (212) 838-7855. On the Internet: www.martinique.org. By e-mail: martinique@nyo.com.

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