



For immediate release

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A VOTRE SANTE!

Tour *La Route Des Rhums* in Martinique and Discover its Famous Rum Distilleries

Just as wine lovers travel to France to tour the *Route des Vins*, or to discover Cognac distilleries, in Martinique do as the Martinicans do: travel *La Route des Rhums* and discover what connoisseurs of rum have been whispering about for years: Martinique has the best rum and has been known as the rum capital of the world since the eighteenth century.

Martinique rums have been awarded the prestigious French designation *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*, previously reserved for only the finest wines in France and its rums are carefully made in accordance with the highest standards of the AOC, the governing rules for rum agricole production.

The island has eleven distilleries producing more than seventeen varieties of rums *du terroir*, as well as many local liquors made from rum, like coconut liquors, passion fruit liquors and orange flavoured *shrub*. A visitor will soon realize that there is a rum for every palate and the passionate connoisseur will appreciate our vintage dark rum, often compared to a superb cognac.

On the North Atlantic, in the town of Sainte-Marie at Saint-James distillery, explore the Rum Museum. Here you will learn the history of the sugar cane and rum from 1765 to today, through a broad exhibit and exquisite prints relating the history of rum making. Outside in a magnificent garden, the vestiges of this history awaits you with windmills, distilled pipes, an antic sugar cane locomotive and huge oak barrels. Following your visit, you are invited to taste the many varieties of rums and of course, you may purchase a bottle or two to take home. Twice a year, in June and December, there are festivities around the making of rum. During the third week of June people gather at the distillery to celebrate the end of the sugar cane cutting season at the Harvest Festival with music, dancing, and of course, rum tasting! In 2006, the museum is being renovated and will boast a genuine traditional Creole village and a conference center for Meetings and Incentives to open in June. In December, there is the Rum Festival when everyone is invited to come and taste rum products.

Other distilleries in this area are Saint-Etienne Distillery in Gros-Morne whose white rum has received several gold medals and two others distilleries located in Trinité: Hardy distillery is a small family-owned distillery and Le Galion, the only sugar factory still in operation nowadays

since its creation in 1865. Between March and June, the sugar cane is cut and the distillery can be visited upon request.

In the South, distilleries La Mauny in the town of Rivière-Pilote, Trois-Rivières in Sainte-Luce and Habitation Clément in François are worth discovering. The latter from the 18th Century is part of an estate with an extraordinary seventeen acres Botanical Park with more than 300 tropical plants, a distillery no longer in operation but stocking 1.5 million litres of rum aged in oak barrels. The main house is classified as an historic monument and has an exhibit space, La Case à Léo, where many Caribbean artists show their works. This estate is famous for the summit meeting between Presidents Bush Senior and Mitterand in March 1991. Rhum Clément is now offering flavoured rum products to attract younger clients.

On the North Caribbean Coast, two distilleries await your visit: Distillery Depaz, built in the shadow of Mount Pelée in Saint-Pierre, which received two Silver Medals in 2004 in Paris for its white 55° proof rum its dark aged rum and Distillery Neisson, the smallest distillery in Martinique with only forty acres of sugar cane fields boasting a *Rhum Agricole* rewarded in 2005 with a Gold Medal in Brussels.

Continue on the *Route des Rhums* of Martinique by visiting La Favorite, the other *Rhum Agricole*, in the town of Le Lamentin made from freshly squeezed cane juice at a small family estate where quality is the most important ingredient. At Distillery Dillon in the capital of Martinique, Fort-de-France, you will find a restaurant on the estate surrounded by an enchanting garden. And since sugar cane is the main ingredient in the fabrication of rum, do not forget to stop by the Sugar Cane museum in the town of Trois-Ilets.

The discovery tour of Martinique distilleries cannot be complete without a visit to J.M. distillery in the North, in the town of Macouba, the oldest distillery founded in 1845 and producing its rum from its own sugar cane. Its white 50° proof rum has received numerous medals, most recently a Gold Medal in 2005.

Throughout Martinique you will be able to sample and purchase local rums. And finally, at Le Lamentin airport, “La Case à Rhum” awaits you with many Martinique rums for sale. Take home the taste of Martinique to hold you until you return.

If a trip to Martinique is not in your immediate future, however, you may taste and purchase Martinique rums in the United States:

Caribbean Spirits, represented by Edward Hamilton, a savvy rum connoisseur, distributes Rum Neisson and La Favorite.

For more information, please contact Caribbean Spirits - Tel: 312 286 1995

Email: ed@MinistryOfRum.com

Rum Clément is being distributed in the United States by Benjamin Jones, the grandson of the founder of Rum Clément, Mr. Homère Clément.

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