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SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE 1902-2002

The 100th year commemoration

One hundred years of certitude: Saint-Pierre, the former capital city of Martinique located on the northern Caribbean coast of this French Caribbean island has forever imprinted the history of the Caribbean. In 2002, Saint-Pierre will renew with the splendor of its past and regain its magnificence of yesteryear. One hundred years later, the entire island will reminisce and celebrate what once was before that fatal day of May 8, 1902, the day of the greatest volcanic disaster of the 20th century.

For a whole year, the whole island's heart will beat to the rhythm of its former capital city. Concerts, lectures, exhibits, sport events, pageants, flower shows, street fairs, theater and conferences, an entire program of events kicking off on January 18, will give the opportunity to its inhabitants and its visitors to remember what Saint-Pierre was before 1902. Memories and memoirs of a city under a volcano.

Once upon a time, Saint-Pierre...

Before 1902, Saint-Pierre was the first center of European trade and culture in the Caribbean. Not only a major economic and administrative center, the city boasted all the attires of the larger cities of the coast of France : a large theater, parks, fountains and statuary. It was a major port, not only as capital and major city of Martinique, but as a comfortable enclave of European civilization in this very different "new world". Saint-Pierre was known as the "**little Paris**" of the West-Indies. A true cultural Mecca, the city was famous for its vibrant nightlife, its music, its fashion, its ideas, its Carnival, its people and the beauty of its women.

All this came to an abrupt end on the morning of **May 8th, 1902**, when Mount Pelée erupted, killing 30,000 people in a few minutes in a massive cloud of burning gases and a rain of rocks and ashes, sparing only one, a man named Cyparis.

Now dubbed "**the little Pompeii**" of the Caribbean, Saint-Pierre can be considered the historic capital of Martinique. In 1990, Saint-Pierre was proclaimed part of the French heritage and was designated the "101st City of Art and History". Filled with ruins and historic monuments that recall the splendor of its past, Saint-Pierre is a quiet city of some 5,000 inhabitants, proud of its heritage, which welcomes more than 300,000 tourists a year.

(more)

Life under the volcano

Renowned Mount Pelée, one of the dozen volcanoes in the Caribbean, rises majestically 4,800 feet above sea level. Now dormant, it is monitored year round by vulcanologists. The 1902 eruption marked the onset of modern vulcanology studies. With a complex summit morphology, its slopes are covered with a hilly Eden of magnificent rainforest, ideal for hikers, botany buffs and travelers alike.

This year, the whole island will *rendez-vous* in Saint-Pierre for a year-long celebration, under the quiet volcano. We invite you to be there, to witness the best of Martinique.

Calendar of Events 2002 **Rendez-vous in Saint-Pierre**

January

- Jan.18 "Carnival in Saint-Pierre, from its origins to today", exhibit opening, Maison de la Bourse, Saint-Pierre
- Jan.19 Opening ceremonies (traditional costumes, guided visits, inauguration of restored historic sites, nautical parade, pyrotechnic show), Saint-Pierre
- Jan.26 Elections of the queens of Carnival, Paul Pierre-Charles Stadium, Saint-Pierre
- Jan. 31 "Life in Saint-Pierre before 1902", conference, City Hall, Saint-Pierre

February

- Feb.1 "Politics and Economics of St-Pierre before 1902", literary conference City Hall, Saint-Pierre
- Feb.10-13 Carnival, special 100 year anniversary celebrations

March

- Mar.3 "In the heart of history" hike organized by the Maison des Volcans, Morne Rouge
- Mar.8-9 Homage to the women of Saint-Pierre (exhibits, concerts...)
- Mar.16 Miss St-Pierre Pageant, P.Pierre-Charles stadium, Saint-Pierre
- Mar.21-22 "Saint-Pierre, myths and reality of a Creole city", Literary conference, Madiana Convention center, Schoelcher
- Mar.23 Hike, Nature Park of Martinique
- Mar.23-24 "Convergence" Festival, Ajoupa-Bouillon (exhibits, arts and crafts, fair, conferences)

April

- Apr.1 Theater exhibit, CMAC, Fort-de-France
- Apr.12 Homage to Claude Prufer, an artist from St.Pierre, Maison de la Bourse, Saint-Pierre

May – May of St.Pierre

- May 1 “The voices of Mount Pelée”, poetry and music by Germain Kanuty, ruins of the theater, St.Pierre
- May 2 St-Pierre welcomes a Japanese delegation for the signature of the “Lafcadio Hearn’s carnet” the famous American anthropologist who lived in St-Pierre before the eruption
- May 3-4 “Metaphor of the eruption”, exhibit by Martinican artiss, Maison de la Bourse and in the ruins of St-Pierre
- May 3-5 “Madiflora” flower show, exhibit, fair, Depaz Plantation and Distillery, St-Pierre
- May 4 “Tchimbé Raid”, 5th edition of the hike organized by the Regional Council of Martinique
- May 4 Miss Martinique Pageant, Depaz Plantation and Distillery, St-Pierre
- May 5-8 Boat show, St-Pierre, Fort-de-France, Marin
- May 6-10 Senior citizens conference (International Federation of Seniors), St-Pierre
- May 7 “Volcanoes and ancient cities: Pompeii to St-Pierre”, International exhibit, Pavillon Bougenot, Fort-de-France
- Illumination of the Bay of St-Pierre, by Claude Yacoub
- May 8 Special May 8 celebrations:
AM. Arrival in St-Pierre for the 1st time since 1902 of the Bélem sailboat (organized visits), Church celebrations and pilgrimage through St-Pierre
All day: street shows and fair
Evening: “Ardent night”, historic fresco and pyrotechnic show
- May 8-10 “Renaissance fair”, exhibit, arts and crafts, Place de la Roxelane, St-Pierre
- May 9 Ascension Thursday, sound and lights show with choreographer Rony Aul, Place Ernoult, St-Pierre
- May 9-12 Petanque tournament, organized by the Regional Council, St-Pierre
- May 11 “Cyparis, the castaway”, (“Cyparis, seul au monde”) by the Awa theater company, Ruins of the theater, St-Pierre
- “The Roads of History”, a night hike up Mount Pelée, organized by the Hiking committee of Martinique
- May 13-18 Open doors, exhibits by students in all schools in Martinique (music, theater...)
- May 13-17 International Vulcanology Conference, Depaz Plantation and Distillery, St-Pierre
- May 17-18 Dance representations in the ruins of the theater of St-Pierre, by the Christiane Emmanuel Company
- May 19 Pentecost Sunday Mass, Cathedral of St-Pierre
- May 22 Abolition of Slavery, celebrations (proclaimed in St-Pierre in 1848)
- May 24 “Demain, à l’aube, qui serons-nous?”, drama by Michèle Césaire, Théâtre des Antigonnes company, ruins of the theater of St-Pierre

June

- June 1 "One century of communication" exhibit, Maison de la Bourse, St-Pierre
- June 3-9 Underwater world photography championship, St-Pierre
- June 10-15 Street fair, drum show, concert by Dédé St-Prix, St-Pierre
- June 21 "Fête de la Musique" (tba)
- June 22 Literature conference, Fort-de-France (tba)
- June 25 Literature conference, St-Pierre (tba)
- June 26-30 Diving week
- June 28-July 13 Patron Saint week end celebrations, St-Pierre

July/August

- July 6-14 Tour de la Martinique, biking tour with a stop-over in St-Pierre
- Aug.4-11 Tour de la Martinique des Yoles Rondes, departure and arrival in St-Pierre
- Aug.30 Closing ceremonies of the 100th anniversary celebrations (tba)
Inauguration of a fountain, symbol of life, Place Bertin, St-Pierre

For more information, please contact the Martinique Promotion Bureau, 444 Madison Ave, 16th floor, New York NY 10022, tel. (800) 391-4909, fax. (212) 8387855, by email: info@martinique.org or visit our web site www.martinique.org

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