



LA MARTINIQUE

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Contact: Géraldine Rome
Martinique Promotion Bureau
T: 212-838-6887
E: geraldine.rome@atout-france.fr

Steve Bennett
SBPR Corp.
T: 305-213-8074
E: Steve@SBPRcorp.com

MICHELIN-STARRED CHEF MARCEL RAVIN BRINGS THE INNOVATIVE CULINARY STYLE THAT MADE HIS BLUE BAY RESTAURANT AMONG THE MOST CELEBRATED IN MONACO TO THE CARIBBEAN'S HOTTEST NEW RESTAURANT IN HIS HOME ISLAND OF MARTINIQUE

La Table de Marcel, located within the all-new Hotel Simon in downtown Fort-de-France, debuted June 24, 2016

NEW YORK, NY (July 11, 2016) – Martinique's status as *The Culinary Capital of the Caribbean* is further cemented this summer with the opening of La Table de Marcel, the newest haven for haute cuisine in the West Indies located within the all-new Le Simon Hotel (established January 2016) in downtown Fort-de-France. The restaurant is headed by Martinique-native and Michelin-starred chef Marcel Ravin (46), who returns to his homeland following a celebrated 16-year tenure at the helm of the famed Blue Bay Restaurant within the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort in Monaco.

La Table de Marcel promises a singular dining experience. The ambiance blends sleek and modern décor with the seaside romantic charm of historic Fort-de-France. The restaurant seats only 24, ensuring intimate culinary explorations and highly attentive service.

Chef Marcel's creations, though, are the star attractions, of course. As with his star turn in Monaco, Chef Marcel will employ his trademark innovative style, combining local spices, herbs, and Creole seasonings with traditional French flavors in crafting meals that are more sensory adventures than simple lunches and dinners.

"Exceptional cuisine is everything in Martinique; the focal point at the heart of who we are as a people and what makes our little island so special," said Muriel Wiltord, Director Americas for the Martinique Promotion Bureau. "Chef Marcel has carried the flag for us in Europe for many years, bringing a taste of Martinique to some of the most exclusive tables in Monaco, Lyon, Brussels, and beyond. Now, with this fabulous homecoming, the world can come to Martinique and experience his masterful dishes in the land that inspired his talent."

Born and raised in the small fishing village of Diamant, nestled on the south Caribbean coast of Martinique, Chef Marcel honed his love of cooking from a very early age in his grandmother's kitchen. In his early-20's, his culinary education took him to Alsace. His mid-20's saw him back in Martinique apprenticing at some of the island's top restaurants. This was followed by three years in Lyon serving as Assistant Chef at L'Arc-en-ciel Restaurant within Le Meridien Part-Dieu Hotel. From there, Chef Marcel ascended to his first Head Chef position at the five-star Le Meridien Brussels. In 2005, he accepted the Head Chef position at Blue Bay, quickly earning the restaurant Michelin Star status. "We couldn't be more proud and happy to have Chef Marcel back home in Martinique," said Wiltord.

The 94-room Le Simon Hotel opened in January 2016, bringing a new level of modern style and sophistication to the downtown Fort-de-France area. Nestled on the waterfront directly in front of the Pointe Simon Cruise Terminal, Le Simon Hotel offers convenient access on foot to all of the capital city's best shopping and prime historic attractions – Fort Saint Louis, La Savane, Schoelcher Library, Saint Louis Cathedral, and more – making it ideal for pre- and post-cruise stays.

For reservations and more information on Le Simon, please visit www.hotel-simon.com/en/.

For more information on travel to Martinique, please visit www.martinique.org.

About Martinique (www.us.martinique.org)

The Caribbean Island with French Flair, The Isle of Flowers, The Rum Capital of the 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 the equal of neighboring Dominica to the north and St. Lucia to the south, so visitors here truly get the best of both worlds. The currency is the Euro, the flag is Le Tricolour, and the official language is 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, including being ranked in the Top 16 Places to go in 2016 by Condé Nast Traveler, named as a "Must-Visit" destination for 2015 by *Caribbean Journal*, "Best Caribbean Destination" by *About.com*, and "Top Caribbean Island for Delectable Dining" by *Caribbean Travel + Life*. The Bay of Fort-de-France, which fronts Martinique's charming capital city, was also inducted into *The Club of The Most Beautiful Bays in the World*. Martinique's storied history further stirs travel passions. Napoleon's bride, Empress Josephine, was born and raised in Martinique, while the majestic Mt. Pelée volcano and St. Pierre, *The Pompeii of the Caribbean*, are found here.

A special place, to be sure, with so much to offer – *Martinique c'est magnifique!*