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Where nature comes first

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Reefballs

A first for Curaçao



Have you been to Playa PortoMari lately? If so, you will have noticed an inordinate amount of activity going on. Difficulty parking your car? So sorry, but it is all in a good cause - our Reefball Research Project. Maybe you have read about it already because Curaçao's local newspapers have taken great interest in

our innovative approach to promote coral regeneration around the coast and on our reef in particular. Hurricane Lenny caused considerable damage to our "double" reef in November 1999. The first reef, the one that is in the shallow water and accessible from the shore, was the main victim and that is where we are concentrating our recovery efforts. Although Reefballs have been used in other countries, this is a first for Curaçao. Under the guidance of two American specialists, Todd Barber and Larry Beggs, and our own marine biologist, Maureen Kuenen, some twelve volunteers have been constructing concrete reefballs that are being placed in strategic locations to encourage new coral growth and provide shelter and breeding places for other reef inhabitants. Want to know more about reefballs? The Reef Ball Foundation in America has an interesting website: <http://www.reefball.org/>

Environment-friendly techniques for scuba-diving and snorkelling

Although Plantages "PortoMari" tries to do everything to make scuba-diving and



snorkelling as attractive as possible, we need your cooperation to help protect and preserve our underwater treasures.

The Diver's/Snorkeller's Eight Commandments

1. Maintain good control of your buoyancy. Divers often inadvertently bump against coral which then becomes diseased and dies. If you are an inexperienced diver, keep a reasonable distance (2m).
2. Use a good swimming technique. Do not let your fins drag along the ocean floor and disturb the sand. Loose sand forms a deposit on coral that is life-threatening to these organisms.
3. Make sure that loose equipment does not damage any of the underwater organisms.
4. Avoid contact with the ocean floor and its sea creatures. Contact with them is dangerous for you as well as for them.
5. Do not remove anything from the ocean floor, not even to show other people on the beach. But please help us by removing trash, like cans and plastic cups - they do not belong there.
6. Wearing gloves under water encourages you to touch things. **DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING.**
7. Spearfishing is illegal.
8. If you see or come close to our "Reefballs", please keep your distance and do not disturb them.

Plantages "PortoMari" wishes you happy diving & snorkelling.

PortoMari's Past



A fascinating history

Plantages PortoMari, which covers an area of 594 hectares, has a history that goes back to 1684. In that year, Puerto Marie was given permission to create enclosures for cows, sheep and goats. Without this permit, the owner was not allowed to raise livestock. The landhouse (or country house) was built in the second half of the 18th century, but in the nineteen- thirties it was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground.

In the 18th century, a fortification was built on the top of Seru Caballé. This post was rebuilt in 1742 as Fort Porto Mari and it had ten cannons, both 12 and 18 pounders. When in 1805 the English captured the neglected fort, it still had 19 cannon balls and one 12-pound cannon, which the invaders proceeded to throw into the sea to render the fort harmless.

PortoMari played an important role in the slave uprising of 1795. It was here that the slaves gathered and the famous discussion took place between Tula and Pastor Schinck. Fierce fighting during which many rebellious slaves were killed followed this meeting.

About 200 slaves and freed slaves used to live on the plantation. They raised livestock, cultivated maize, grew fruit and vegetables in the orchard near the landhouse, made charcoal and tended the limestone ovens. After emancipation in 1863, most of the freed slaves continued to live on the Plantation.

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["Un journal c'est un monsieur"](#)

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