

OUTING

WHERE TO: the Mayaguez Zoo and the Mayaguez Hilton
ZOO HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Monday
ADMISSION: 50 cents for adults; 25 cents for children

Please do not throw

By JACQUELINE MARTINEZ
 Special to the STAR

Flying to Mayaguez is like zooming through Alice's looking glass. From the plane window, I could see the top sides of a flock of white birds, darting and gliding one way then another, the reversed vantage point made them look like wonderland fantasies.

As we flew over karst country, the sense of unreality was intensified. It's hard to place in any familiar context the endless field of deep sinkholes, each encircled with a narrow strip of hill. You can imagine someone, or something, fastidiously scooping out the center of countless earth mounds. The effect from the distance is of a huge cut of crumpled green velvet. Centered over one of the hollows, the Arecibo Observatory resembles a far-out mechanical game.

Prinair flies — on the same kind of aircraft used on flights to the Virgin Islands — close enough to the ground that you get a good look at lovely countryside just north of the Cordillera Central. This mountain range splits the island roughly down the center, separating the lush northern part from the dry south.

The flight (\$34 round trip) takes 30 minutes. But it seems a fraction of that as reality returns with small towns, remote plantations, twisting turning rivers and highways, little country lanes. A happy reminder that we live on a many-faceted island of great beauty and interest.

I was enroute to the newest of the island's points of interest, the much-awaited zoo that recently opened on the west coast in Mayaguez, our third largest city. From the airport, with Jardín Zoológico de Puerto Rico — in Miradero, next to the University of Puerto Rico's Mayaguez campus — can be reached by taxi at a cost of \$3. The rate should be settled from the start, since meters are not used.

If you're planning to stay overnight in Mayaguez, the Mayaguez Hilton Hotel is a convenient and fine

place to stay. On a hillside overlooking the harbor and the city, it is not only a favorite among travelers but among locals as well.

When Roberto Rivera, the hotel's food and beverage manager, needs information about Mayaguez, he doesn't have to call anyone. He just waits until lunchtime when you can always find any number of local dignitaries, prime sources of a wide range of facts.

As might be expected, the food and service are good at the Mayaguez Hilton. The red snapper is exceptionally delicious. Heard amid sounds of dining: "This fish and I have taken eons of evolution to find each other — and it was worth it."

Most of the seafood comes from Puerto Real, a fishing village down the coast, where Roberto goes several times a week to pick up the catch he contracts from two fishermen. Besides red snapper (chillo), they bring in mero, kingfish, lobster, and shrimp.

The Mayaguez Hilton features music five days a week (not on Sunday or Monday), two tennis courts, an 18-hole miniature golf course, swimming pool, and pond with fish so kids can feed or catch them with poles provided by the hotel.

Arrangements for many other activities can be made through the hotel: a tour of Mayaguez, an evening jaunt to La Parguera's Phosphorescent Bay, a hunting and fishing excursion to Mona Island, and more. Rates are (effective until Dec. 18th): MAP \$49-52 single, \$68-71 double; and European Plan \$34-37 single, \$38-41 double.

The Hilton is a few minutes from the university, where you might want to take in an art exhibit of sports activity, or just wander around the modern campus along Royal palm-lined streets.

The choice of modes of transportation seems to be taxi or publico. I took a publico (stated on the license plate) from the university to downtown Mayaguez. When the driver learned this was my first ride in a carro publico, he made a big fuss over such a

momentous occasion and the honor I'd paid him by getting into his publico.

He knew I was a novice at publico riding when I asked how much the fare would be and if I should pay on entering or when leaving. He thought that was hilarious — comparing it to a woman cooking who wants to know if she should add more salt. "It's up to her," he said, as he took my quarter.

Maybe I was just lucky, but my fellow passengers were also delightful. One was a young Chinese who works at the university art gallery, and two others were pleasant blue collar workers. All kidded and joined in with the driver's mock ceremony.

If going to the zoo from the Mayaguez Hilton, the best way is by taxi. It's only a few minutes away, about a mile beyond the university.

When I arrived at the Jardín Zoológico de Puerto Rico, it was 10 minutes before my 9 a.m. appointment with the director. The taxi driver passed two gates that appeared locked and stopped at a third that was in fact locked. But the only building likely to contain offices was nearby.

As the taxi drove off, I felt very alone with only unseen animal sounds for company. Not a soul in sight. Even the animal cages and compound were far away, behind a big fence. Down the road was a shady little bridge next to a neighborhood built up a hill along a stream.

A rooster's crow mixed with squawks from geese, answered by fiercer fowl sounds. Small birds chirped, sang. Lions roared, especially one that bellowed deep, loud arias. When I finally gained entrance to the zoo, I was driven to the administration offices, hidden by lovely trees on a hill.

The zoo had been operated previously by the university's College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, for purposes of education and experimentation. Al-



The view from the Mayaguez Hilton Hotel.

SUNDAY San Juan Star Magazine

Editor: Connie Underhill

Outing	2	Spotlight	10
The Mayaguez Zoo		Bond fades away	11
Personalities	4	Books	12
Waiting pays		Art	
In the news	6	Catano's 'Taino Lady'	14
Aspirin	7	Television	16
Health		Cablevision	17
Frisky but risky therapy	8	Travel	
Design	9	Coral World	20
Kitchen king		Puzzles	
Island Kitchen			
It's fruticake time			

Cover: from a photograph of Luis A. Medina Gaud's sculpture, "Monument to the Taino Culture" taken by Pipo Grajales.



Puerto Rico's hawk, the Guaraguao, surveys the new zoo.



This little miss may be wondering how Mr. Stork brought her.

every park

simple water-proofings and latexes to the wet plaster. But who can guarantee that such stuff will hold fast in a 12-foot high mold filled with an expansive concrete mix, its settling urged by vibrators? Help! Mayaguez!

Medina Gaud solved the production problem by making his monument in four sections. First he made the pedestal in one swoop direct from the cement-mixer's truck. His initial mold, made with wood found in the bay, split open under the pressure. He had to stop and work all night to remove the setting concrete, a thankless but very instructive task.

Next the actual figure was poured into three separate molds and left to set in Catano's gymnasium. The three separate pieces of the figure were then carted to the pedestal and lifted by crane one on top of the other. A central hole with a tube guided the alignments. Inside the tube are documents on our Taino culture and current history. The alignments didn't come out perfectly because the molds opened slightly under the pressure so that some reductions and padding with cement mix were necessary and the union between the three pieces can still be seen, though covered by a slight tar-patina.

Tar can protect cement from strong acids but it travels downward eventually as it did in early 19th Century paintings where it had been used for romantic warm shadings and varnishings. Silicates such as water glass might prove better for impregnating the raw cement surface. Here again, our technological laboratories could cooperate.

How did Catano get its "Taino Lady?"

Medina Gaud tells me the small plaza by the sea with its magnificent backdrop of Old San Juan was designed by architect and ceramist Jaime Suarez. The curved lines of semi-glazed red bricks make a free Taino Indian design on the pavement which is made of coarse whitish no-slip terrazo. Low circular concrete planters will eventually encompass shade trees. People will be able to sit on the rims of the planters. The chastely kneeling and nude "Taino Lady" reigns over the plaza, listening to a shell while facing the mountains to which her people scattered on the coming of the Spaniards. Her back is to the bay from which Catano is invaded by tourists of all kinds every day.

"Accion Juvenil of Puerto Rico" pushed the plaza-by-the-sea idea and the National Foundation for the Endowment of the Arts paid Medina Gaud for a "monument to the Taino Culture and to Puerto Rican Womanhood," also described as a "monument to the Caribbean Spirit." In its simple expected volume and chaste pose, in its humbleness and economical monumentality, the work achieves its goal better than many pretentious plazas I have seen in this world. From Catano's mayor on down, people are pleased by the work. I hope other mayors and priests from other towns follow the Catano experience.

Medina Gaud would like to put many similar concrete monuments in Puerto Rico. Notice his previous all-concrete "Virgin," a natural-sized sculpture in the little park in front of Miramar's Perpetuo Socorro Church. It is monolithic. The concrete was poured on the up-turned mold, allowed to set, the mold was discarded, and the sculpture with its base was set on its foundation. Also notice his work in the Anasco plaza and on the second floor of the Condado Convention Center.

Medina also envisages an Experimental School for Sculpture where students would be apprenticed to work



The concrete-mixer method has few, if any, plastic limitations. See closeup of Luis A. Medina Gaud's Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow, left page, and the fluid lines of the sculpture above, and those of his "Taino Lady," above. The limitations are technical — "Taino Lady" has already lost a toe — but could be remedied, with a little help from scientific friends.

on monuments for their towns using simple techniques. He founded an experimental sculpture workshop in Mexico City which is still going on, where polyester and other synthetic resins, various metals and poured concrete are tried for sculptural projects.

Medina is well qualified for his simple "monumental" aspirations. Born in 1941 in Mayaguez, he graduated from the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture Plastics Arts School where he studied under Compostela and Batista, then from Esmeralda Academy in Mexico. He has exhibited in many places. He had won three first prizes in sculpture at the Ateneo on three consecu-

tive years, 1964-65-66, while he was in school here. That's quite an early start.

But sculpture is slow in its majestic grinding away of space and time. Now Medina, like Carlos Raquel Rivera and other artists, is looking for workshop space, a place to work even under the stars, providing a minimum of stability for work. Do you know of any empty buildings or spaces artists could work in? Decrepit old buildings can become productions palaces for art as painter Rafael Rivera Garcia knows from personal experience. Now as head of the Commonwealth Office of Cultural Affairs, can he help?

to Fri. 9 to 4. A summary of history of P.R. in antique objects.

MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES

Instituto de Cultura 253 Cristo St. 723-2320. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oil, prints and graphics.

Current Show: Graphics by Jose Rosa.

MUSEO DE LA FUNDACION

Behind Tapia Theater, Plaza Colon 725-5962. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mon. Indian Artifacts and sculpture. Current show: (opening Thursday) photographs, "Petroglifos de Boriquen" by Hector Mendez Caratini.

MUSEO DEL GRABADO LATINOAMERICANO

Casa de los Contrafuertes. 101 San Sebastian St., Plaza San Jose second floor. Open every day from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

MUSEO DEL CONVENTO DE SANTO DOMINGO

Instituto de Cultura. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Corner Cristo and Norzagaray. Plaza San Jose, 724-0700, 724-0702. Current show: Puerto Rican paintings.

PONCE MUSEUM OF ART

Las Americas Ave. 842-6215. Open Wed. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

UPR MUSEUM

764-0000 Ext. 2452 or 2456. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 5.