

TRAVEL & CULTURE

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Sharp Note

Preservation Hall
Jazz Band trumpeter
Branden Lewis

CITY GUIDE

New Orleans' New Style

The South's most expressive city just turned the big 3-0-0, but she has never looked better

BY HANNAH HAYES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC ANGELES



**Snack Time**

A shareable mini feast at beloved Bywater mainstay Bacchanal Wine

IN NEW ORLEANS, the notion of local color has always been applied literally. Neighborhoods lined with houses in every hue mimic the countertop crowded with glass bottles of flavored syrups at Hansen's Sno-Bliz or the rainbow of gelati in the Angelo Brocato parlor. On Sundays, a flood of feathers in vivid violet, fruit-punch pink, and electric teal pours into the streets for second-line parades. The trees, still wearing last year's Mardi Gras beads (and some from the decade before), seem bioluminescent in the streetlights.

"New Orleans is the most 'placey' place in America," says Nathalie Jordi, co-owner of the much-anticipated

Hotel Peter & Paul, a long-vacant Catholic church, convent, school, and rectory that was turned into a resplendent 71-room retreat in the Marigny neighborhood. (The project was completed in partnership with the design firm ASH NYC.)

Jordi's ambitious intention for the property, to rekindle the past and recompose it for the present, is what New Orleanians have done better than anyone else for centuries. But take one look around these days, and it's clear that the famously patinaed city, now more than a decade past Hurricane Katrina, has a notably new look remixed with its history.

Gold Star

The Elysian Bar lounge at the city's new must-visit, Hotel Peter & Paul

**Bespoke Bistro**

The firm Farouki Farouki designed Justine in the French Quarter.

At Jordi's hotel, the schoolhouse stairs, dating back to the late 1800s, still bear the embossed steps of students. The frescoed church dome

remains. However, the renovation of this 50,000-square-foot compound has set a new standard for future projects. Wrought iron canopy beds dressed in gingham linens with drapes to match, armoires made by local craftspeople, and apothecary items perfumed with bergamot and rosemary appear in every room (some featuring claw-foot bathtubs for a true sanctuary).

In the church's former rectory, beloved **Bacchanal Wine** operates the hotel's restaurant, **The Elysian Bar**,



with chef Alex Harrell at the helm. Here, locals and visitors congregate in the layered, loungelike dining rooms (chromatically inspired by 14th- through 18th-century religious paintings) and the coffee shop with a trompe l'oeil

tent in blue and white. Outside, the original bell tower shades a lush courtyard. "We don't have to invent a backstory for this place," says Jordi, who lives four blocks away. "Not a day goes by that I don't run into a former

student or a nun or someone who got married in the church. Seeing our neighbors embrace this place means so much to me."

At French Quarter bistro **Justine**, local husband-and-wife design team Sabri and Caroline Farouki of the firm Farouki Farouki used a fittingly French influence for a sizable shotgun space. Flea market finds from Paris are paired with a blush-colored backdrop of vertical subway tile and artist Ellen Macomber's sprawling sequin-and-fabric maps of the city.

Although their other build-outs, like Southeast Asian spot **Maypop** and Indian eatery **Saffron NOLA**, lean more modern, Caroline and Sabri say they still feel very grounded in the city. "I grew up in a Cajun family with a high level of hospitality, and we try to infuse that welcoming spirit into all our projects," says Caroline. "Tradition is not so much an aesthetic for us as it is how New Orleans comes together over food," Sabri adds.

More recent restaurants that are remixing tradition with a global perspective dot the city from the Bywater to Uptown. Among them are chef Rebecca Wilcomb's newly opened Italian beauty **Gianna Restaurant**; chef Sue Zemanick's turquoise gem **Zasu**; wine bar **Saint-Germain**, which features a casual courtyard; award-winning bartender Chris Hannah's cocktail atelier **Jewel of the South** and **Manolito**, his other shoebox-size bar with daiquiris and Cuban snacks; and **Couvant** (inside The Eliza Jane hotel), where French classics feel fresh.

New Orleans' style is "more recycled than developed from scratch," says Wayne Clark. The fulfillment manager for optical upstart **Krewe**, Clark was raised in Uptown and saw a priority shift toward preservation after Katrina. "The culture only gets better as we

Maven on the Move

West London
Boutique owner
Mariah Walton



Fresh Twist
Co-owner Chris Hannah at new bar Jewel of the South



Global Garb
Lekha owner and designer Trishala Bhansali uses Indian fabrics.



In Tune

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band shows off their signature style.



(Defend New Orleans), and Blue Dream Vintage Boutique.

Trishala Bhansali, who also grew up in the city, was one of those inspired by

Krewe's success. She moved back here from New York to start her own clothing line, **Lekha**. Connecting her Indian heritage to her hometown, the collection includes sultry-weather staples that are made with fabrics like khadi, sourced from India. "There is just something about the sense of community here," says Bhansali. "Maybe that comes with this feeling

of New Orleans being a very vulnerable city, but those strong ties are essential to my brand."

When Margaret Sche and Sarah Killen opened their shop, **Saint Claude Social Club**, they modeled it after a parlor to foster a community of female entrepreneurs in the city, who now gather for monthly events while perusing their vibrant collection of vintage and indie brands, along with Killen's jewelry line. After spending decades as a fashion-trend forecaster in California, Sche, a Louisiana native, found it liberating to return to New Orleans' lawless style. "It's fun, free, and funky, and there's a sense of ease to it," she says. "Bordering on costume is a huge part of the look here."

Desiree Ontiveros thinks that look goes for buildings too. The owner of

redesign what we already have," he explains. "And what we already have is so beautiful."

Since its launch, Krewe has released architectural sunglasses with frames named for the streets that inspired their color palettes. A cadre of other style-minded businesses includes **West London Boutique**, **Sunday Shop**, **Pilot and Powell**, **DNO**



Sipping Pretty
The cypress tree-inspired decor at The Elysian Bar



Local Catch
Gulf shrimp by chef Alex Harrell at Hotel Peter & Paul's The Elysian Bar



by-appointment tours of his backyard museum **House of Dance & Feathers**, filled with Mardi Gras Indian memorabilia and costume pieces.

Hansen's Sno-Bliz owner Ashley Hansen feels the push and pull of tradition and sees the ebb and flow of both old-timers and newcomers standing at the ice-shaving machine her grandfather invented when he and his wife opened the landmark snowball stand, which turned 80 this year. Instead of removing the past from its walls (covered with handwritten signs, framed photos, and newspaper clippings), she layers the present over them. A new stratum of poster-paper cutouts advertises her own marks, like a zest-flecked satsuma and rose-toned fresh watermelon. "It's a reflection of the city in a cup—the different tastes and personalities," she says. "All the flavors of New Orleans—we want to share them with everyone, passionately share them." **SL**

Badass Balloon Co., the El Paso, Texas, transplant is known for levitating latex installations made out of Technicolor balloons (some so big she has to use a hydraulic crane), which have become must-haves for restaurant awnings, parties, and festivals. "The artists and makers in this town—we're the masters of elegant excess," she says.

Another artist making his mark is social activist **Brandan "Bmike" Odums**. His recent mural depicting jazz forefather Buddy Bolden and his band, in shades of deep purple with a pop of marigold, puts the city's most historic innovation front and center in

the rapidly changing Central Business District. Down the river in the Lower Ninth Ward, Ronald W. Lewis keeps his part of the city's colorful past alive with



Liftoff

Badass Balloon Co. owner Desiree Ontiveros created a booming local business.