YOUR PASSPORT TO THE MOST FASCINATING CORNERS OF THE GLOBE



espite its historic reputation, New Orleans is a city in constant evolution. Part of the thrill of such a destination is the promise of duality, where you can plant one foot in the past and another in the future. Dine at a modern Mexican restaurant then catch a show at a jazz joint that dates to the 1950s. Discover the city's cultural heritage via interactive displays at Vue Orleans before savoring a Sazerac at Peychaud's cocktail bar and embarking on a ghost tour. Or simply post up on a veranda and soak in the sounds of the city as you scroll through social media to decide where to grab lunch (but hurry, because Turkey and the Wolf's stoner-friendly sandwiches often sell out).

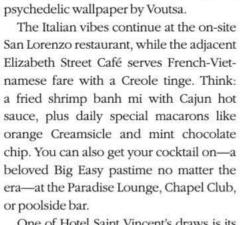
Such a veranda—and then some—can be found at Hotel Saint Vincent (saintvincentnola.com). MML Hospitality resurrected this circa-1861 building (which had its first life as an orphanage) and debuted the hotel in June 2021. From the red brick to the



## **JOURNEYS**







One of Hotel Saint Vincent's draws is its location within the Lower Garden District.

Not only is this neighborhood supremely walkable, but it's far enough from the more touristy corners to remain insulated from the intense crowds. However, should the French Quarter call, it is just a quick Uber or trolley ride away.

Highlights within the Garden District itself range from gallery hopping to ogling nineteenth-century mansions and side-hall homes. Along the way, pop in and out of local watering holes like The Bower and

Barrel Proof before a dinner reservation at Lengua Madre (lenguamadre nola.com). This spot by chef Ana Castro has garnered an avalanche of accolades, including being named one of Bon Appetit's best new restaurants in America and landing on The New York Times' 2021 list of the country's 50 most delicious and vibrant restaurants. Herself a 2023 James Beard nominee for Best Chef: South, Castro crafts multicourse tasting menus that change seasonally, reflect her Mexican heritage, and celebrate Southern ingredients. The meal is a surprise-with the menu only presented at the end-but recent highlights have included a traditional quesadilla with crawfish gobernador and trout roe, and octopus with salsa negra, little gem lettuce, and a coffee-forward aioli.

To get the full scope of Southern cooking, head to the nearby Southern Food & Beverage Museum (southernfood.org). Belly up to the circa-1850s bar pulled from one of New Orleans' oldest restaurants, peruse the Galerie d'Absinthe, or learn about the city's rich culinary history, from red beans and rice to Popeyes and beyond. The museum also hosts cooking classes that provide a hands-on introduction to such staples as jambalaya and gumbo.

One woman who is becoming synonymous with New Orleans cuisine-in the same vein as Emeril Lagasse, Leah Chase, and Willie Mae Seaton-is Nina Compton. A Top Chef finalist and 2023 James Beard semifinalist for Outstanding Chef, Compton operates two NOLA restau-



## THREE WAYS TO JAZZ IT UP

## 1. PRESERVATION HALL:

Order your tickets early to attend an intimate jazz show at this historic venue, where an unassuming facade gives way to a living room-style performance space. These concerts truly feel like casual jam sessions between friends-that is, if your friends were some of the South's foremost musicians. (preservationhall.com)

rants: Bywater American Bistro and Compère

Lapin (comperelapin.com), which translates

to "brother rabbit," a figure in Caribbean and

Creole folktales. This reference alludes to

Compton's playful marriage of the two cultures

as seen in dishes such as hamachi tartare with

jerk pineapple and fried okra, her signature

curried goat served atop sweet potato gnocchi

and garnished with cashews, and her addictive

scialatielli, which eats like a Creole carbonara.

Compère Lapin is part of the city's Ware-

dotted with crawfish and andouille.

2. BLUE NILE: Accent an evening out on Frenchmen Street with a late-night visit to Blue Nile. Catch New Orleans native and trumpeter extraordinaire Kermit Ruffins and the BBQ Swingers at this hot spot every Friday. (bluenilelive.com)

3. RIVER CRUISE: For some jazz with a sweet breeze,

you cannot beat a river cruise. The New Orleans Steamboat Company

hosts sailings along the Mississippi River, complete with views of the city, a jazz trio, and options for lunch, brunch, and dinner add-ons. (steamboatnatchez.com)



LEARN THE HAUNTED HISTORY OF MURIEL'S (BELOW) IN THE FRENCH QUARTER AND VISIT STUDIO BE (BELOW LEFT) IN THE CITY'S MARIGNY AND BYWATER AREA.



tractions including the National World War II Museum, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and Mardi Gras World, where you can check out the event's famous floats year-round. For a more off-the-beaten-path stop, walk to the other side of the French Quarter to visit Studio Be (studiobenola.com). The resident gallery for artist Brandan "BMike" Odums, Studio Be covers some 35,000 square feet and boasts floorto-ceiling artworks that reflect the spirit of New

Orleans and those who call it home.

Speaking of spirits, few American cities have as much ghost lore as New Orleans. If you have a penchant for spooky stuff and plan to explore the French Quarter, do so on a ghost tour. Given the destination's association with hauntings, vampire sightings, and everything voodoo, there's no shortage of companies offering these types of experiences both day and night. A standout is NOLA Historic Tours and its Haunted French Quarter Tour (tourneworleans.com). Start at the icon-

ic St. Louis Cathedral to hear the tale of Père Dagobert, followed by stories of the Ursuline Convent's casket girls, the gregarious ghoul who demands his own table at Muriel's restaurant, and the city's most notorious murderess, Madame Delphine LaLaurie.

The LaLaurie Mansion, like much of New Orleans, has grown beyond its physical constraints to occupy a distinct place in the imaginations of travelers. The mansion's insidious reputation has attracted tourists for generations, and the city's promise of debauchery continues to entice. But should you choose to explore beyond Bourbon Street, you'll find that New Orleans never plays anything the same way twice. (neworleans.com) <<

COMPÈRE LAPIN OFFERS CARIBBEAN-MEETS. CREOLE DISHES INCLUDING CRUDOS AND TARTARES ACCENTED TROPICAL





54 PALM BEACH ILLUSTRATED PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM | MAY 2023 55