



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

Bright Sparks for the Bonfire Night

*The Holiest Day in Vodou – St. John's Eve - Comes to International House hotel
Wednesday, June 22, 2022*

Year after year, the country looks to New Orleans for the significant **rituals** found within the culture of this storied city. For visitors to partake in them is nearly impossible. One of the most underground cultures in New Orleans is **Vodou**, founded on Haitian customs – and the rare opportunity to witness a Vodou ceremony by one of the most revered Vodou priestesses, **Sallie Ann Glassman**.

From **6:00PM – 8:00PM** on **Wednesday, June 22, 2022**, in the lobby of **International House**, the hotel will honor its most essential ritual of the seven presented annually, **St. John's Eve**, the holiest day in the Vodou religion. The evening's experience exposes the hidden secrets of sacramental offerings with **head washings, drumming, spiritual chalk drawing, a papier-mâché altar, and chanting** out to loa [Vodou spirits].

Abigail Gullo – the culinary **Creative Director** for the hotel's bar, **loa** – will present the **Beltane Bonfire Punch**, using the premier *Clairin Rum*, that originated in the countryside [of Haiti], where Vodou took root. The juice is made from wild *Sugar Cane* and fermented with indigenous yeast strains before distillation. The rum is the very best one can experience of the country's terroir.

The large punchbowl cocktail is a blend of the *Rum with Cognac, Sorrel, Caribbean Spice, Red Summer Flowers*, and fragrant *Fruit*. The punchbowl will be prepared with fire – mimicking the bonfires along the levees – followed by a complimentary sampling toast from the bowl for the attending guests. This fire is meant to draw God's blessing on the summer crops and to repel evil spirits. Full glasses may be available for purchase on a limited basis.

Blending Vodou, Catholicism, Native American spirituality, and Masonic mystery, the hand-made limited-edition bottled **elixirs - John's Way** - will also be available. Each concoction employs seven waters that maximize the healing properties of the ingredients. It combines **Aguardiente**, an anise and sugarcane spirit [meaning "firewater"]; **Genapi**, a rare **Alpine Liqueur** flavored with **Wormwood Blossoms; Kummel**, a spirit infused with **Caraway**; foraged **Spanish Moss; Jasmine; Sweet Olive**; and other local herbs. Each keepsake bottle is accompanied by a white candle, a gris-gris bag, a white headscarf, and detailed instructions for a private ceremony intended to heighten the potion's effects.

It's all part of International House and loa's paramount goal – to offer their guests an authentic demonstration of the customs, traditions, and rituals of New Orleans, to enrich the experience and offer a true sense of place.

For more information:

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