

ST. CHARLES

FEBRUARY 2020

avenue



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+ **DOUBLING DOWN
ON DECADENCE**

Mardi Gras & Valentine's
Day restaurant specials

+ **ST. CHARLES AVENUE'S
COUTURE WEDDING GUIDE**

NEW ORLEANS'
DEFINITIVE
SOCIAL
MAGAZINE

Doubling Down on Decadence

By Kelcy Wilburn | Photographed by Mike Lirette



Mardi Gras & Valentine's Day restaurant specials

Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras have much in common when it comes to food – neither holiday feels complete without the over-the-top sensory experience of decadent meals, a little wine or a fancy cocktail and sweet, sharable desserts. And whether you're indulging with a loved one in chocolate ganache or your favorite bakery's signature King Cake,

it's the indulging itself that adds to the allure of both holidays. This year, Valentine's Day falls within New Orleans' parade weekends, adding an extra level of flare for lovers looking to double down on excitement. Restaurants across the city are gearing up to celebrate the two holidays at once with new dishes, prix fixe menus, special events and more.

Ralph's on the Park is kicking off Valentine's celebrations a day early with "Galentine's Day." On Thursday, February 13 the restaurant will offer specials on champagne tastings, rosé cocktails and dips and snacks. Then, on Valentine's Day, couples looking to indulge can enjoy a three-course prix fixe menu with favorites such as truffle risotto, lobster pasta, filet mignon and red velvet cake.

Located in Mid-City, Ralph's is conveniently situated at the beginning of the Endymion parade, which rolls Saturday, February 22. Since King's Day, Ralph's has been serving revelers the King Cake cocktail as part of its monthly Cocktails for a Cause series. The sweet concoction combines vanilla vodka, Chilla Orchata, Cointreau and cream, and is finished with a Mardi Gras-colored sugar rim.

Along the Uptown parade route, **Emeril's Delmonico** provides a romantic and classic backdrop to enjoy a special meal. While traditionally a dinner spot, the restaurant will be offering Friday lunch service – Valentine's lunch can be a nice precursor to a romantic night in – as well as Saturday and Sunday brunch during Mardi Gras.

Emeril's lunch menu will feature brand-new dishes including seared coriander crusted Yellowfin Tuna with boiled egg, green beans, tomato, kalamata olives, arugula and sweet basil, as well as a half-pound Creekstone beef hamburger with caramelized onions, Cabot clothbound cheddar and French fries.

The brunch menu will highlight New Orleans classics with a signature Delmonico spin: panéed pork chop with a sunny side up egg, roasted poblano grits and Creole mustard jus and a jumbo lump crabmeat omelet, with Boursin cheese and fine herbs. Additionally, limited signature steaks and presentations will be available.

Further Downtown, **Restaurant August** is also situated along certain parade routes. Under the helm of Chef Ross Dover, August continues to lure guests with its classic-inspired, contemporary cuisine and white tablecloth service.

"Any day there's a parade is a great day to be at August," says Dover. "We offer our full menu throughout Mardi Gras and our bar is always available for a to-go drink or to sit and dine in between parades," he says.

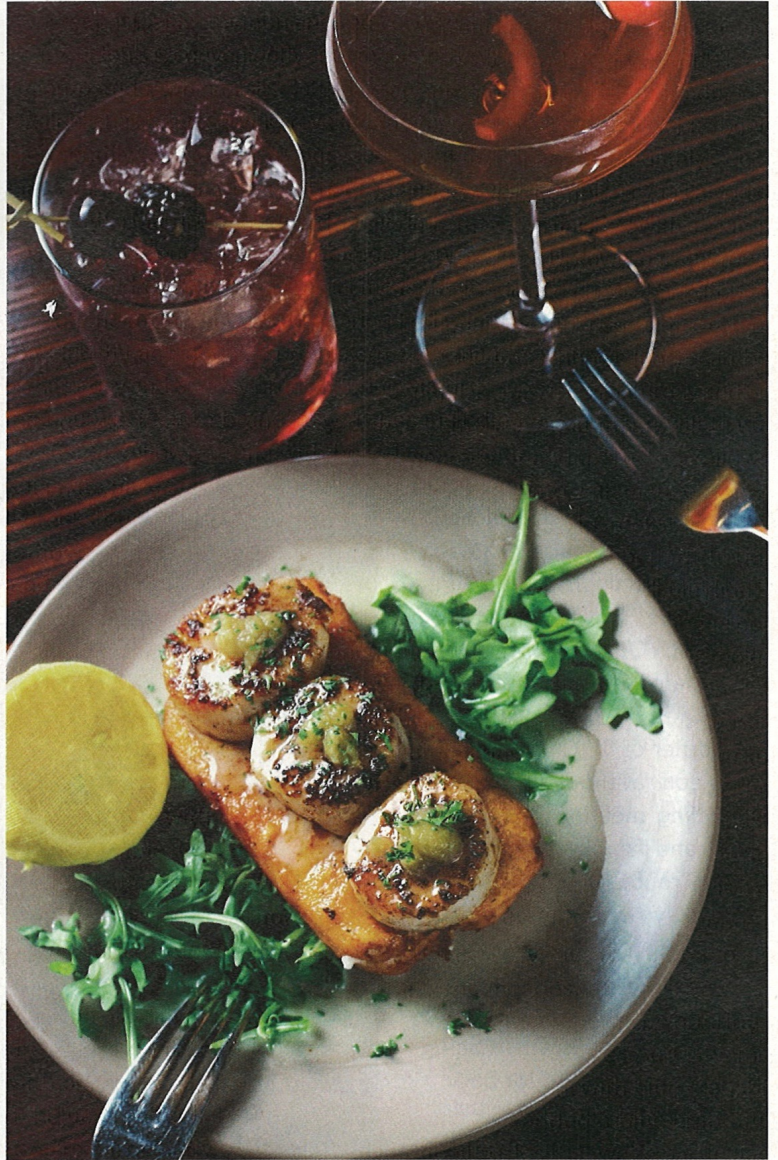
The restaurant will be offering its regular menu on Valentine's Day, which features August's most popular dish: the signature potato gnocchi with blue crab, black truffle and Parmesan.

"We've added a blue crab tagliatelle with crab fat and white Alba truffles that we're particularly excited about for Valentine's Day," says Dover.

Also Downtown but off of the parade route, **Briquette** offers an upscale casual setting for either a prix fixe Valentine's meal or pre- and post-parade eats and drinks. For two days, February 13-14, Briquette will offer a Valentine's three-course menu for two priced at \$125 per couple. Drink and wine specials will accompany the menu, and all ladies will receive a rose upon arrival.

"We are gearing up for Endymion since it ends at the Convention Center this year, and we're the perfect spot on Mardi Gras Day for a great dinner because we're open," says Proprietor Anna Tusa. Indeed, many restaurants close on Fat Tuesday, so consider

dropping in at Briquette and trying the caramelized sea scallops appetizer before indulging in the snapper Pontchartrain – two of their most popular menu items. If you're looking to simply pop in for a cocktail, consider the Bourbon-centered District Cocktail or New Fashioned.



ABOVE: Briquette's caramelized sea scallops, District cocktail and New Fashioned.

OPPOSING PAGE: Blue crab tagliatelle with crab fat and white Alba truffles at August.

If you're a visitor to New Orleans or a local looking for a classic New Orleans experience during Valentine's and Mardi Gras, you may want to venture into the French Quarter with a trip to 102-year-old **Arnaud's Restaurant**, where many menu items have remained nearly untouched across the century and continue to be local favorites.

On Valentine's Day at 3 p.m., the Krewe of Cork parade will pass under the restaurant's Bourbon Suites (private dining) balcony. The balcony provides a birds-eye-view and a great locale for catching throws. Arnaud's

can coordinate to have beads available for throwing down to the masses once the parade has passed for those interested in renting the suite(s).

The à la carte menu of authentic Creole dishes will be available at Arnaud's on Valentine's Day and throughout Mardi Gras, and features favorites such as the Gulf fish Pontchartrain and filet mignon Charlemond. While Arnaud's is known for its traditional French 75 cocktail, consider getting festive with Arnaud's Carnival Colada. And, don't forget to stop in at Arnaud's free and open-to-the-public Mardi Gras Museum located on its second floor.

Whereas Downtown and the French Quarter will bustle with many a tourist during Valentine's and Mardi Gras, the corner of St. Charles and Napoleon avenues is often a bustling meeting point for locals and families along the parade route. **Superior Seafood & Oyster Bar** offers traditional New Orleans cuisine (e.g. BBQ shrimp, blackened fish, shrimp and grits) at comfortable prices with a bar that's always packed for both its drinks and oysters.

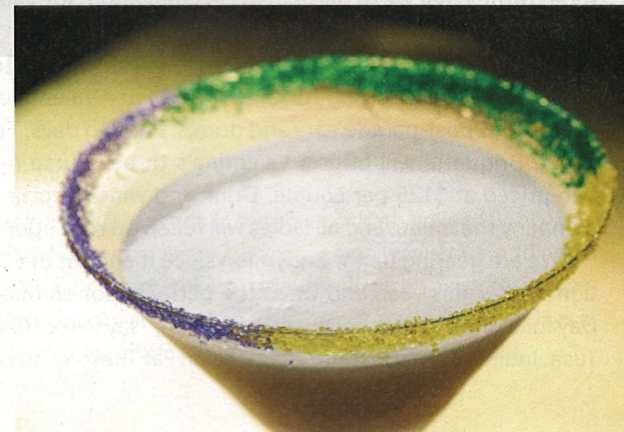
"I like to think that we're the Swiss Army Knife of Mardi



ABOVE: Seared coriander crusted Yellowfin Tuna with boiled egg, green beans, tomato, kalamata olives, arugula and sweet basil at Emeril's Delmonico.

RIGHT: King Cake cocktail from Ralph's on the Park.

OPPOSING PAGE: Panéed pork chop with a sunny side up egg, roasted poblano grits and Creole mustard jus at Emeril's Delmonico.





Gras," says John Michael Rowland, GM/Managing Partner. "We can provide whatever experience you're looking for." Rowland lists reserved tables along St. Charles Avenue for parade-view dining; balcony parties for families and friends with full service food and bar; family-friendly dining for large groups with kids in tow; quick cocktail service at the front door with a satellite bar; walk-in tables available in the dining room; and a full-service bar for raw oysters.

On Valentine's Day, oysters are an oft-recommended ingredient, and Superior Seafood regulars love to hit up the raw or char-grilled. The most popular drink at Superior is the Frozen French 75, a sweet and tart treat you can enjoy at the bar or carry with you along the parade route.

Also on St. Charles Avenue, **Lula Restaurant Distillery** is hosting its annual LulaGras throughout the parade season. Tickets to LulaGras include access to Lula's parade-facing Barrel Room, an all-you-can-eat buffet, VIP private balcony for parade viewing, access to bathrooms all day and a private cash bar. Tickets range \$45-\$65 depending on the parade days, and parking passes are also available for purchase.

If you prefer to skip the ticketed event, you can still dine at Lula and enjoy its regular menu, which includes favorites such as the sugarcane pork skewers, fried mirliton pickles and Margo's tomato stack appetizers as well as the grilled Gulf fish and boudin stuffed quail entrées. On the cocktail

Ralph's on the Park

900 City Park Ave.
488-1000
RalphsOnThePark.com

Emeril's Delmonico

1300 St. Charles Ave.
525-4937
EmerilsRestaurants.com/emerils-delmonico

Restaurant August

301 Tchoupitoulas St.
299-9777
RestaurantAugust.com

Briquette

701 South Peters St.
302-7496
Briquette-Nola.com

Arnaud's

813 Bienville St.
523-5433
ArnaudsRestaurant.com

Superior Seafood & Oysters Bar

4338 St. Charles Ave.
293-3474
SuperiorSeafoodNola.com

Lula Restaurant Distillery

1532 St. Charles Ave.
267-7624
LulaNola.com

Red Gravy

125 Camp St.
561-8844
RedGravyCafe.com

The Country Club

634 Louisa St.
945-0742
TheCountryClubNewOrleans.com



ABOVE: Ralph's on the Park champagne tasting flight for "Galentine's Day."

RIGHT: Superior Seafood & Oyster Bar's Frozen French 75.

OPPOSING PAGE: Three-course Valentine's dinner special at The Country Club, including Crab Meat Beignets, a pan-roasted 20 ounce rib-eye for two and a chocolate tart.



menu, explore hand-made creations that include Lula's vodka, gin or rum, all distilled from 100 percent Louisiana sugarcane.

Focused exclusively on brunch and lunch, **Red Gravy** will be in Mardi Gras mode throughout February. Located one block from Canal, the restaurant is conveniently close to most parades' routes. On Valentine's, you and a special someone could ogle over Red Gravy's popular breakfast spaghetti with handmade pasta and family recipe meatballs, or indulge in the weekly skillet cake, a double-decker stuffed pancake baked in a cast iron pan.

Over Mardi Gras, Chef and Owner Roseann Rostoker hints that a King Cake burger will likely appear on the menu. She also recommends the sweet and spicy Carnival cochon, fried chicken

and roasted ham served with a glazed donut.

"No meal is complete without our Witches' Coffee," adds Rostoker.

If you're looking to escape the parades for a bit, head down to the Bywater, where **The Country Club** will be hopping with its "infamous" Drag Brunch on the weekends. They also offer an Ash Wednesday Brunch for those looking to recover from Mardi Gras with a little extra food and drink.

Escape the parades on Valentine's, and you'll find a three-course Valentine's dinner special at The Country Club available for \$60 per person. The dinner includes Crab Meat Beignets, a pan-roasted 20 ounce rib-eye for two, and a chocolate tart with pistachio, cinnamon and yuzu.

