

Welcome to New Orleans

“The Big Easy”

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Introduction:

Over the last ten years, I have had the pleasure to visit New Orleans for many professional conferences and conventions. During those visits I have been fortunate to tour the *Vieux Carré* (the French Quarter) and the Garden District to enjoy its history, jazz, and cuisine. Anne Rice no longer writes about vampires and her house in the Garden District is for sale. You will miss the pleasure of seeing her arrive in a coffin in a hearse with limos of ghouls who carried her coffin into the New Orleans bookstores for author signings. Even though Anne Rice and LeStat are gone, there is still much to see and enjoy including a waterfront casino. Here are a few suggestions given our brief time in New Orleans.

Le Vieux Carré (The French Quarter)

Locations:

Bourbon Street: Bars and jazz clubs.
Chatres Street: Elegant and funky antiques shops
Royal Street: Antiques and the home to the **Blue Dog** paintings.

Sites:

Cathedral of St. Louis: The oldest Roman Catholic Church in the United States faces Jackson (General/President Andrew Jackson) Square. The Square is home to restaurants and street artists, particularly on weekends.

Cabildo: 701 Chatres Street, the site of the signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty.

Old Ursuline Convent: 1100 Chatres Street, the oldest building in the Mississippi River Valley.

William Faulkner: Faulkner House Books, 624 Pirates Alley. This is where William Faulkner lived and wrote *Soldier's Pay* and *Mosquitoes*.

Truman Capote: Resided at 711 Royal Street in 1945 and wrote *Other Voices, Other Rooms*.

Tennessee Williams: Williams resided at three locations in the French Quarter: 722 Toulouse where he moved to from St. Louis in 1938. He wrote *Vieux Carré* here and this residence is described in the book. 710 Orleans Street where he wrote *Ten Blocks on the Camino Real*. 1014 Dumaine, where he retired and died in 1983.

Old Absinthe House: 234-240 Bourbon Street. Built in 1806 of French design. Note the street signs on the buildings are in Spanish while the street markers on corners are in French reflecting New Orleans as both a French and Spanish colonial city.

St. Louis # 1 Cemetery: New Orleans is famous for its cemeteries. This one is located across North Rampant Street on the north side of the French Quarter. Buried here is Queen Marie LeVeau, New Orleans' most powerful Voodoo priestess. I visited her grave one Halloween evening before going to an Anne Rice Halloween party and was amazed to see all the gifts and offerings left there with notes requesting help. Better to do this one in daylight.

Gallier House Museum: 1132 Royal Street, Creole style town house with over 6000 artifacts. Great for New Orleans architecture and interior design of the 19th century.

Beauregard-Keyes House: 1113 Chartres Street, the home of Confederate General Pierre Beauregard who fired the shots on Fort Sumter starting the Civil War. The house was later the home of author Frances Parkinson Keyes.

Restaurants:

Bayona: 430 Dauphin Street, 504-525-4455. Chef Susan Spicer. This is my favorite New Orleans Restaurant. The history team ate here two years ago and loved it! Reservations required. www.bayona.com

The Bombay Club: 830 Conti Street, 504-586-0972. Bistro, live music and over 125 different types of Martinis to wash down a creative meal. Reservations suggested. www.thebombayclub.com

Galatoire's Restaurant: 209 Bourbon Street, 504-525-2021. Reservations suggested. Traditional cooking. Very famous, long lines and good food. www.galatoires.com

K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen: 416 Chartres Street, 504-524-7394. Lines begin early, at least they use to. Spicy Cajun. www.kpauls.com

Napoleon House Café: 500 Chartres Street, 504-524-9752. Named for the cupola used to look for Napoleon's ships. Homemade food. Great for lunches. No reservations needed. www.napoleonhouse.com

Nola: 534 St. Louis Street, 504-522-6652. One of Chef Emeril Lagasse's restaurants. Noted for creative Louisiana fare. www.emerils.com

Yo Mama's Bar and Grill: 727 St. Peter Street. Noted for creative ways to reinvent usually lunch fare. Famous for its peanut butter and bacon burger.

Outside The French Quarter

African-American Museum of Art and History: 1418 Governor Nicholls Street, 504-319-5415. \$6/admission.

New Orleans Museum of Art: 1 Collins Diboll Circle in City Park, 504-488-2631, \$8/admission. Excellent collections of European and American art. A good collection of Fabergé.

Lafayette Cemetery # 1: On the edge of the Garden District. Cemeteries are above ground because of the high water table and are interesting cities onto themselves. Interesting to stroll.

Garden District: Take the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar to State Street. This section is 19th century Victorian architecture and is really beautiful to see by day. Anne Rice resided here until recently and the Garden District was filmed extensively in the movie *JFK* by Oliver Stone.

Commander's Palace: 1403 Washington Avenue, 504-899-8221. Next to the Lafayette Cemetery # 1. Famous for traditional New Orleans cooking. Reservations suggested.
www.commanderspalace.com

A Final Note

The charm of the French Quarter is walking the streets. Everything is different in the daylight from what you experience in the night. The Quarter is well patrolled so there are not problems normally. If you get lost or can't make a decision about what to do or where to eat, just yell **STELLA!** You might be surprised who or what comes to your rescue!