



Is Fidgeting In Fashion?
Why so many men constantly tug on their shirts **D3**

OFF DUTY

Deja Review
Dan Neil revisits the Volvo XC40, lured by improved software **D11**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

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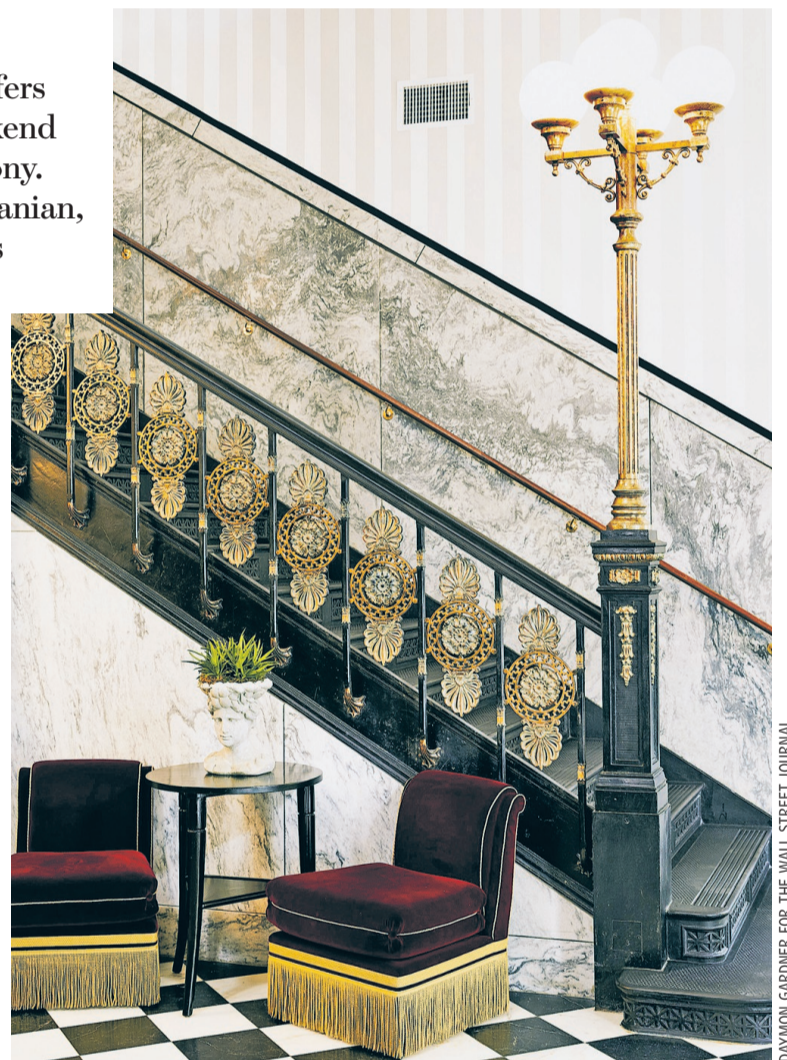
Saturday/Sunday, October 19 - 20, 2019 | **D1**



TAKE MONDAY OFF

The Big Little Easy

A city as vital as New Orleans offers more than enough for a long weekend of stimulation and gleeful gluttony. **Chelsea Brasted**, a native New Orleanian, shrewdly narrows the options



DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS Clockwise from top left: A cotton-candy confection at Brennan's, a classic French Quarter brunch spot; more elegant than the Hurricane, the Jardin de Mémé cocktail at Bar Marilou, made with Chartreuse, St. Germain and absinthe; the lobby of the new Maison la Luz hotel in the Central Business District; a burlesque show at AllWays Lounge & Theatre.

IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS in New Orleans you haven't heard from in a while, it's probably because they haven't had the energy to pick up the phone. But the intense heat of the last few months is finally starting to peel away, and the animated funkiness of the city is back on full display. The music, the food, the freedom to take adult beverages outside in go-cups—this 300-year-old port town thoroughly lives up to its hype during the autumn months but lacks the marauding tourist mobs you encounter during winter's Mardi Gras and spring's Jazz Fest. Not that this time of year wants for appetizing events: Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival kicks off this Friday (Oct. 18-20) and, equally perilous to waistlines, the Po-Boy Festival, serving more than 60 versions of the locally revered sandwiches, falls on Nov. 3. If you're in town on a Sunday, expect to find locals cheering (and, often, praying) for the fate of the New Orleans Saints at nearly every bar.

While it's understandably tempting for visitors to return to the places that feel comfortably worn-in (restaurants such as Brennan's and Cafe du Monde come to mind), consider this guide a challenge to also experience something new, like sipping an aperitif in the Elysian Bar's courtyard or strolling the newly expanded Besthoff Sculpture Garden. Whatever you do, tackle this itinerary with the knowledge that schedules here often change without notice (blame the unpredictable weather, traffic or hangovers). Your schedule might go awry while you're here, too. It's all too easy to take it easy here, but we've at least given you a splendid starter kit.

Day One: Friday

6 p.m. After flying into Louis Armstrong International Airport, drive about 20 minutes to New Orleans' Central Business District and check into Maison de la Luz. Earlier this year, Atelier Ace, the team behind Ace Hotels, opened this tribute to maximalist Southern luxury, awash in gold accents, colored marble floors and trompe l'oeil wallpaper. The typical temptation is to stay in the nearby French Quarter, but, by making this hotel your base, you're wisely avoiding the harried swaying of the too-inebriated (*from \$300 a night, maisondelaluz.com*).

8:30 p.m. Step inside Palm & Pine, a restaurant set in an old French Quarter townhouse, and a reminder that fine dining doesn't have to feel stuffy. Savor this fact when you dip into the pimento cheese on their Preservation Plate and when someone offers to bring over the tequila cart. (*308 N. Rampart St., palmandpinenola.com*).

10:00 p.m. Grab a nightcap at Bar Marilou back at your hotel. Celebrate your arrival while crunching the rum- and campari-soaked ice in a citrusy Brave Margot.

Please turn to page D6

Inside



REMEMBRANCE OF SOUPS PAST

Wistful recipes that hark back to New York City's humble (now-vanished) luncheonettes **D9**



HAIL A CABINET

Build your own authentic retro arcade for \$399 **D10**



ALBERT EINSTEIN STAYED HERE

Wonderfully intact, this 19th-century Japanese hotel was born to woo Westerners craving familiar comforts **D7**



20 ODD QUESTIONS

New mom Kirsten Dunst on giving up glamour **D2**

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



Clockwise from top: Bar Marilou inside Maison de la Luz; a French Quarter poet; an exhibit at the Whitney Plantation.

Clockwise from above: Brennan's, in the heart of the French Quarter, is known for its old-school hospitality and bananas foster flambé tableside; fresh cheese and toasted country bread at Saint-Germain wine bar; Krewe, the New Orleans-born sunglass shop.

A New Orleanian Sojourn

Continued from page D1

Day Two: Saturday

9 a.m. You'll want to dress up for brunch today, so start your morning by getting a ride—not walking—to Jackson Square. Stroll past the Cabildo to the tiny Spitfire Coffee. Barely bigger than a closet, it's a magnet for the city's coffee nerds (627 St. Peter St., spitfirecoffee.com).

9:15 a.m. Take your coffee to go and walk the length of Royal Street to see the French Quarter architecture, most of which is actually Spanish; fires in the latter half of the 18th century wiped out many of the French constructions. Watch as artisans, street poets and performers begin to take up their requisite corners.

10 a.m. Make your way to the salmon-pink building that houses the venerable Brennan's Restaurant. Enjoy the old-school hospitality and balletic waitstaff. Begin with a nutmeg-topped Brandy milk punch before ordering the eggs Sardou, a Creole breakfast of artichokes and poached eggs, draped in Hollandaise sauce. Ignore your



satiety and request the Bananas Foster, invented here, for dessert. The flambé happens tableside. Reservations recommended (417 Royal St., brennansneworleans.com).

12 p.m. Teeter away from the French Quarter and into Louis Armstrong Park. Take a walk around to see Congo Square, the gathering place for 17th- and 18th-century New Orleans slaves, which became a cradle for the city's music.

12:15 p.m. Slip into the Backstreet Cultural Museum to learn the history of the city's Mardi Gras Indians (aka Black Masking Indians), social aid and pleasure clubs and other traditions. Peer closely at the

Mardi Gras Indian suits on display, and remember each bead is sewn by hand (1116 Henriette Delille St., backstreetmuseum.org).

1:45 p.m. Take a 10-minute drive over to the Music Box Village, a cacophonous collection of interactive musical tiny houses. Each building has its own soundtrack: Open a door to elicit a squeal, step on a wooden plank to make it zing or strum your hand along a line of wind chimes (4557 N. Rampart St., musicboxvillage.com).

2:30 p.m. It's a mile walk through the Bywater neighborhood to Euclid Records, where you can lose track of time digging for new and used records (3301 Chartres St., euclidnola.com), including those from New Orleans artists like Ernie K. Doe and James Booker. On the way, enjoy the walk past Creole cottages and friendly neighborhood bars.

3:30 p.m. Take a few minutes to explore the Bargain Center, a thrift store filled with weird relics, from vintage T-shirts to old Carnival costumes (3200 Dauphine St.).

3:45 p.m. Explore artwork from one of New Orleans's most urgent artists today, Brandon "B-mike" Odums. In and around his continuously evolving gallery and studio space, Studio Be, Mr. Odums has created monumental, powerfully provocative graffiti murals (2941 Royal St., bmike.com).

5 p.m. Make a quick trip to Bywater American Bistro, a neighborhood restaurant from chefs Nina Compton and Levi Raines. Grab a spicy BAB Sour (with rum, coconut and jerk spice orgeat) and ask for it to go (2900 Chartres St., bywateramericanbistro.com).

5:15 p.m. Appreciate just how close New Orleans hews to the water that is both its foe and friend with a riverside walk. Take the entrance to Crescent Park at about 2900 Chartres Street, climbing over the big red staircase to see an

unparalleled view of the curve of the Mississippi River, which gives New Orleans its Crescent City nickname.

5:45 p.m. Exit the park the same way you came in, zig-zagging down Royal and Dauphine streets past the Marigny Opera House. Stop to read the plaque commemorating the arrest of Homer Plessy from the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court case, which established the "separate but equal" doctrine.

6:15 p.m. The Gustavian design of the Elysian Bar and its home, the Hotel Peter and Paul, have made headlines since they opened in 2018. Gilt sconces, rattan furniture and cozy gingham make it all feel like a European castle was plopped in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Sip an Aperitivo Montenaro in the courtyard. If you can't resist snacking, opt for that day's seasonal variety of whipped ricotta and sourdough flatbread (2317 Burgundy St., theelysianbar.com)

7:30 p.m. Ignore the neon sign that calls it a pizza place and instead look for the off-kilter black-and-white letters stuck to the door to know you've found Saint-Germain. If you're smart, you'll make reservations well in advance for whatever's on the tasting menu that night. Whatever you order, make sure you say "yes" to the menu's wine pairings (3054 St. Claude Ave., saintgermainnola.com)

9 p.m. Step down St. Claude Avenue to dip into the All-

Ways Lounge for burlesque, a comedy show, drag queen improv or all of the above (2240 St. Claude Ave., theallwayslounge.net).

10:30 p.m. Hopefully you saved some energy for dancing. Make it to Frenchman Street in time to catch the late show at d.b.a., whether it's Corey Henry and the Trem Funktet, the Soul Rebels Brass Band, Little Freddie King or some other local performer (618 Frenchman St., dbaneworleans.com).

11:45 p.m. Stumble between the narrow french doors at the dimly lit Longway Tavern for a late-night Sazerac. Take your drink outside to the front steps, where you can watch the craziness on Bourbon Street without actually having to jump into it yourself (719 Toulouse St., longway-tavern.com).

Day Three: Sunday

10 a.m. Watch the city wake up with a cup of coffee and a trio of beignets from Cafe du Monde. If the wait for a table is too long, as it often is, step around back and stand in the to-go line, which locals know often moves much more quickly. Take your chicory-laced cafe au lait and paper bag of beignets over to a bench at Jackson Square to watch any latecomers hustle into Mass at the St. Louis Cathedral at the postcard-pretty heart of the French Quarter.

11:30 a.m. Walk across the French Quarter to Canal Street, where you can pay \$1.25 to hop on the rumbling streetcar. Make sure you take the one headed toward City Park, not the Cemeteries.

12:15 p.m. Just beside the New Orleans Museum of Art sits the Besthoff Sculpture Garden. While the museum requires an entrance fee, tour the garden for free to see its recent 6-acre, 27-piece expansion and to walk along Elyn Zimmerman's glass bridge.

1 p.m. Walk southeast (or, in New Orleans-speak, toward the river) down Esplanade Avenue to grab a sandwich stuffed with a fennel-and-cabbage slaw and bright green falafel at 1000 Figs (3141 Ponce de Leon St., 1000figs.com). If your appetite requires something a bit more substantial, opt instead

for a roast beef po'boy at the nearby Parkway Bakery & Tavern (534 Hagan Ave., parkwaypoorboys.com).

2:30 p.m. Grab a taxi for the 20-minute drive across town to Magazine Street, a long stretch of boutiques and high-price real estate that connects the Central Business District with Uptown. Start your shopping from the bottom, picking up a locally flavored T-shirt at Dirty Coast. Other must-stops include local jeweler Mignon Faget, hip bag company Tchoup Industries and the New Orleans-born Krewe, which crafts sunglasses beloved by style stars like Beyoncé and Gigi Hadid.

5 p.m. Most shops will close by 5 p.m. on Sundays, so make your final stop at chef Alon Shaya's Saba, which he opened after splitting with chef John Besh and leaving behind the restaurant that bears his own name. Sit at the bar and sip a Dionysus Revival, a peppery concoction of tequila and a Mexican chile liqueur, while you dip the housemade pita bread into the buttery blue crab hummus (5757 Magazine St., eatwithsaba.com).

7:30 p.m. Slide into a booth at Meauxbar and ask for a New Orleans daiquiri, a lime classic that's a far cry from the frozen, syrupy versions at any number of French Quarter bars nearby. Soak up all your day-drinking with an order of the gnocchi and a side of deviled eggs (942 N. Rampart St., meauxbar.com).

9 p.m. Grab a beer from the cash-only Chart Room on your way to the Moon Walk for a last look at the Mississippi.

Day Four: Monday

8 a.m. Head to Congregation Coffee, just two blocks away from Maison de la Luz, and pick up a cup of locally roasted brew and a house-made croissant from Maison Chace (644 Camp St., congregationcoffee.com, maison-chace.com).

8:30 a.m. Pick up a rental car on Canal Street and make for Interstate 10. Take the hour drive out to Wallace for a tour of the Whitney Plantation, where tour guides are dedicated to telling the story of the enslaved Africans who worked there as opposed to the opulent lives of the people who owned them (5099 Louisiana Highway 18, Edgard, whitneyplantation.com).

1 p.m. Before heading to the airport to drop off your car and catch your flight, follow the Mississippi River into LaPlace, where you'll stop at Wayne Jacob's Smokehouse and Restaurant for lunch (769 West 5th St., LaPlace, wjsmokehouse.com). On your way out, pick up paper-wrapped smoked andouille sausage, a savory souvenir.

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A mural by Brandon "B-mike" Odums on display in his continuously evolving gallery, Studio Be.

DAYMON GARDNER FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL