

What I *Love* About New Orleans

Editor's Note: This issue of On Parade introduces a new regular feature, "What I Love About New Orleans," and we all know there is plenty to choose from: sipping chicory coffee at the Cafe du Monde, licking fingers after a muffuletta from the Central Grocery Store, drinking a cold Dixie at Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop or Fat Harry's, dressing in black tie for a dazzling carnival ball....well, you get the picture. In each issue, we'll ask a prominent New Orleanian just what it is about the Big Easy that makes it so easy to love. In our first installment Patti Nickell interviewed Hans Maissen, new GM at the Windsor Court only three weeks after he moved to the city. Not to worry - even in that short time, he found a lot to love.)



Hans Maissen

What I Love About New Orleans

by Hans Maissen
General Manager,
Windsor Court Hotel

First, let me say that 13 years ago I was managing a hotel in Houston and every weekend I promised myself that I would go to New Orleans. Well, I was there for two years and I never made it, so I guess it's about time I finally made good on my promise.

What do I love about New Orleans? I'm from Switzerland originally and my last position was in the south of France, and New Orleans is one of the few American cities that has the same qualities as a European city. That's not to say I'm looking for a European reproduction. I'm looking to find the best of both Europe and America, and I think New

Orleans possesses both.

The first couple of days I was here I didn't leave the hotel, but then one Sunday I went to the French Quarter and spent the whole day just walking the streets absorbing all the sights, smells and sounds. The whole time I was walking it was like having an old movie playing continuously in my head. There really were jazz bands and wrought iron balconies just like I remembered from seeing

American movies as a child.

Of the things I've already done, I've especially enjoyed the traditional New Orleans jazz brunch at Court of the Two Sisters, sitting in Tom Benson's box for a Saints game, the coffee and beignets at Cafe du Monde and watching the artists at work in Jackson

Square. Some of them are really good.

Of course, I love good food, so visiting the various restaurants is high on my list. My first meal in New Orleans was at Emeril's and I was very impressed. I also loved my dinner at Galatoire's - both the lamb chops and the ambiance. I'm looking forward to having lunch there on Friday afternoon which I understand is a very local thing to do.

Other things I haven't done yet, but am looking forward to are having a juicy steak at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse; putting on my jeans and boots and finding out where the city's best country/western club is, and, oh yes, riding on a raft at carnival. (For those who need a little help translating - that's riding on a float for Mardi Gras.)