

# Fast Tracks

NEW ORLEANS, LA

## Noveau Orleans

**If you think you know New Orleans, think again.** With the infusion of young, educated professionals post-Katrina, the city has become a bona fide hub for digital media startups, with its entrepreneurial culture being widely covered, including in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes* and *Bloomberg*. It is a mindset that has reached beyond digital media, in particular, reinvigorating the hospitality industry. Craft cocktails are the new hurricanes. Innovative new restaurants offer diners an alternative to traditional standbys. Sparkling new interiors have breathed new life into downtrodden historic hotels.

Daniel Victory, the owner of the retro cool Victory bar, is among the stars of city's craft cocktail scene. He was a bartender at the Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans, where he became a bit of a celebrity for his innovative concoctions. His mixologists use interesting ingredients—truffle-tini anyone?—to create an outstanding taste sensation.

Chef Donald Link continues to impress with Peche, a seafood restaurant that specializes in open-fire grilling, which he opened in April with chefs Stephen Stryjewski and Ryan Prewitt. The



Chartre Street



W New Orleans – French Quarter

trio spent two years honing their method and menu, which included trips to Uruguay and Basque Spain to study local techniques. The restaurant embodies the best qualities of New Orleans' newer restaurants—a hip but not trendy atmosphere, a fresh take on traditional ingredients, and perfect execution.

Joe Jaeger, a partner at the New Orleans Hotel Collection, has now helmed a couple of massive fluffings of French Quarter hotels that had succumbed to years of tourist traffic. His latest triumph is Hotel Mazarin, a boutique hotel just off Bourbon Street. A major gutting enabled him to create a hotel that can be challenging to find: one with luxurious new room interiors that complement the well-preserved architectural details of the historic building.

### SLEEP/DRINK/EAT > NEW ORLEANS

#### SLEEP > FRENCH QUARTER LUXE

##### HOTEL MAZARIN

» From floors to furniture to bathrooms, everything in the 102 rooms in this hotel off Bourbon Street is new. Gilded headboards and marble tiles add luxury while white



Hotel Mazarin Courtyard

shutters and B&W photos of New Orleans provide a sense of place.

» A hearty buffet breakfast, Wi-Fi, in-room bottled water and the use of a small fitness center are included in the room rate.

**WINNING FEATURE:** The brick courtyard. Lush trees and a bubbling fountain make it a lovely place to enjoy breakfast or a glass of wine from the hotel's Patrick's Bar Vin.

**French Quarter, 730 Bienville St., 504.581.7300.**  
[www.hotelmazarin.com](http://www.hotelmazarin.com)

#### SLEEP > FRENCH QUARTER HIP

##### W NEW ORLEANS - FRENCH QUARTER

» On Chartres Street, this hotel offers access to the action and a quiet night's sleep.

» A multi-million dollar renovation of the 97 rooms and four suites includes high-design features—solar system corner mural, minimalist furniture, and glass bathrooms.

» Use of a personal driver to ferry guests within 5 miles of the hotel in an ACURA SUV is a nice bonus.

**WINNING FEATURE:** The courtyard pool. Contemporary lounge furniture with tarot card pillows is a cool juxtaposition to the historic brick buildings. **French Quarter, 316 Chartres St., 504.581.1200.**  
[www.wfrenchquarter.com](http://www.wfrenchquarter.com)



#### DRINK

**Victory** Affable mixologists set the tone for this hip watering hole, when they plunk down a small pour of the cocktail of the night to whet your taste buds. **CBD, 339 Baronne St., 504.522.8664.**  
[www.victorycocktails.com](http://www.victorycocktails.com)



**Bellocq** Jars of fresh fruit and sprays of herbs are the farm-to-table ingredients used in cocktails at this sophisticated bar. **936 St. Charles Ave., 504.962.0900.**  
[www.thehotelmodern.com/bellocq](http://www.thehotelmodern.com/bellocq)

**SoBou** A block of ice is chipped and pounded to create just the right shape

SEASONED TRAVELER NANCY MCCABE

## My Lower Manhattan

Nancy McCabe, Vice President and Assistant General Counsel, Willis North America

**A world unto itself** » **Lower Manhattan** is an oasis of calm. I live in New Jersey and commute to work by ferry. As I ride in, I have this great view of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, so I am pretty relaxed by the time I get to work.

**Restaurants: old and new favorites** » **P. J. Clarke's** is really just a burger place, but it's an institution. You can't beat sitting at one of the tables overlooking the marina. ISE for sushi is the real deal. There are a lot of unusual things that you don't find at other sushi restaurants. One of my favorite things to do is to get a sandwich and sit by the water for lunch.

**Where to drink and talk business** » For inventive and cool cocktails, I love **The Black Hound**, which is relatively new. **P. J. Clarke's** has a great after-work bar scene. The atmosphere is great.

**What's new** » With the World Financial Center going through a redevelopment process, a lot of eateries have closed, so they have brought in gourmet food trucks like **Rickshaw Dumplings** and **Schnitzel & Things**. Some of these are supposed to open as storefronts in the new center.

**Where to go for a morning jog** » The waterfront all along **Battery Park** is ideal. There is also the **Irish Hunger Memorial**, which is a wedge of land that's been set up to look like the Irish countryside. If you meander through the trails, you end up on an overlook where you can see Ellis Island. It is very peaceful.

**Must-do** » **The 9/11 Memorial**. I can see the reflecting pools from my office. It is a memory and a reminder and a very worthwhile place to visit.



Nancy McCabe

## BRIEFCASE

### STAY Quail Lodge & Golf Club

in Carmel Valley, a favorite get-away for golfers since 1964, has reopened after 3 1/2 years and a \$28 million renovation. Luxurious new rooms sport a California ranch meets Spanish Colonial décor and have private decks or patios overlooking the lake, golf course or gardens. The 18-hole Robert Muir Graves-designed, par 71 course has also been refreshed and is now managed by KemperSports Management, the same company that has sprinkled its magic on courses like Bandon Dunes Golf Resort. [www.quailodge.com](http://www.quailodge.com)



Quail Lodge &amp; Golf Club

**FLY** **Qatar Airways** continued its push into the U.S. market in April with the launch of nonstop flights between Doha International Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport on Boeing 777-300 Extended Range aircraft. The newest U.S. gateway joins Houston Intercontinental, New York JFK International and Washington Dulles International as airports offering nonstop service to and from Doha. Next up is Philadelphia, slated for March 2014.

**CARRY** Eco-friendly designers, **Matt & Nat**'s clever new tote is sure to be a hit with female travelers. The flat Epea tote has side zippers that can be unzipped to make room for shopping purchases and travel sundries. A zippered pocket and accessory compartment inside and a zippered pocket and magnetic snap pocket outside also help to keep things organized. High-quality faux leather (in ocean and tangerine) and metal hardware make it très chic. \$148. [www.mattandnat.com](http://www.mattandnat.com)



**APP** From getting from gate A to gate B on a tight connection to finding an open restaurant before an early or late flight, nothing is easy for frequent fliers. Bringing sanity to the "Up in the Air" experience is the travel app, **Airports** by TravelNerd. Downloadable on iPhones and iPads, it provides detailed terminal maps for 250 domestic and international airports as well as features like real-time flight tracking, the locations and hours of restaurants and shops, and transportation options. [wwwitunes.apple.com](http://wwwitunes.apple.com)

for the Collins and other fanciful drinks created by Abigail Gullo. **French Quarter, 310 Rue Chartres, 504.552.4095**, [www.sobounola.com](http://www.sobounola.com)

### EAT > SEAFOOD STAR

#### PECHE

» In a former carriage house in the Warehouse District, this seafood grill is the hottest restaurant in New Orleans.

» Fresh and flavorful describes the array of seafood dishes, many of which are cooked over an open-fire.

**SIGNATURE DISH:** The catch of day, served whole, might include grilled red fish with salsa verde or American red snapper with fennel and orange.

» Anchored by a cocktail bar on one end and an oyster bar on the other, plate glass windows make the casual dining room airy.

**Warehouse District, 800 Magazine St., 504.522.1744**, [www.pecherestaurant.com](http://www.pecherestaurant.com)

### EAT > ELEGANT AND

#### REVOLUTION

» This modern fine dining restaurant is a south meets north marriage of celebrated chefs John Folse and Rick Tramonto.

» The sophisticated cuisine reinterprets Creole cooking, emphasizing its French and Italian heritage.

» Exquisite menu items like Sheep Ricotta Gnocchi with Lobster are elegantly presented.

» Sauces (truffle butter) and toppings (sautéed Gulf oysters) accompany the chops and steaks, which top out at \$62.

» Dark wood bar with comfy leather stools offers a casual alternative to the formal dining room. **French Quarter, 777 Bienville St., 504.553.2277**, [www.revolutionnola.com](http://www.revolutionnola.com)

### EAT > FUN FARE

#### SOBOU

» The attractive modern dining rooms and eclectic New Orleans fare make SoBou a standout.

» Shrimp & tasso kebabs with grilled pineapple and fish of the day served a la plancha epitomize nouveau New Orleans cuisine.



**SIGNATURE DISH:** Served with an Abita root beer float and housemade cracklings, the fois gras burger is decadent and delicious.

» Well-chosen, affordable wine list.  
**French Quarter, 310 Rue Chartres, 504.552.4095**, [www.sobounola.com](http://www.sobounola.com)