

FADER'S

EDGE



NEW ORLEANS, LA

Icon Reborn

Legendary French-Creole Antoine's Restaurant celebrating its 175th anniversary. James Beard award finalist Chef Justin Devillier opening his second restaurant, Balise, a modern love letter to the region's cuisine and heritage. These are two examples of why the New Orleans' dining scene might best be described as having one foot in the past and one in the present.

So it is remarkable that Ralph Brennan, along with his partner, Terry White, has been able to successfully straddle both at the recently renovated Brennan's restaurant. They acquired it last year during bankruptcy from a decades-estranged branch of the family.



Brennan's Foie Gras Gumbo

Resurrecting an icon is tricky business, so to help him breathe new life into the pink stucco landmark, Brennan snagged the talented Slade Rushing from MiLa as executive chef. Rushing has elevated Brennan's famous classics, using artisanal ingredients like homemade English muffins in egg dishes and adding a touch of citrus to the duck roux in the meaty turtle soup. He is also spinning tradition in new dishes like Filet of Beef Rosco, a decadent combination of the

tender beef, seared foie gras and wilted spinach kissed with a savory brown sauce.

The food's sumptuousness is matched only by the striking décor of architect and designer Richard Keith Langham, who has made Brennan's one of the most charming places to dine in the city. The former kitchen is now the front dining room with large windows, ideal for watching the musicians perform on Royal Street. The two dining rooms in the back are now the Chanticleer room, which boasts floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the brick courtyard. The salmon and green color

scheme is reminiscent of revered designer Dorothy Draper, but the lattice work and hand-painted murals of Mardi Gras floats inspired by 1920s Carnival ball invitations is pure New Orleans.

This is a place where you want to linger, so launch the experience with a signature Brandy Milk Punch. Made with cream instead of milk and served with a dash of freshly grated nutmeg, it is a satisfying way to toast the return of Brennan's, which is well on its way to reestablishing itself as one of the top restaurants in a top restaurant city.



Brennan's Queen's Room

SLEEP / LISTEN / EAT > NEW ORLEANS

SLEEP > FRENCH SOPHISTICATE

LE MERIDIEN

- » This newly renovated luxury hotel in the CBD offers easy access to the French Quarter and Warehouse District.
- » Check in "pods" and refined lounge areas in the light-filled lobby emphasize a personal but convivial experience. Longitude 90, the coordinates of the hotel, morphs from a daytime espresso bar, serving éclairs (try the signature bananas foster) to a nighttime sparkling cocktail bar.
- » Design details, like an original mural, depicting an abstract map of the region, pay homage to New Orleans.
- » 410 guest rooms, in blue and grey with pops



of color, reflect a mid-century aesthetic. A corner suite boasts killer river views and custom modern furnishings like a headboard made of crown molding.

» **ESCAPE:** Lounge in a rooftop pool cabana, or compliments of a free pass from the hotel, visit a nearby museum.

www.lemeridienneworleanshotel.com

SLEEP > EUROPEAN MODERN

AC HOTEL NEW ORLEANS

- » Spanish hotelier Antonio Catalán and Marriott have teamed up to open the first AC Hotel in the U.S. in the former Cotton Exchange building near the French Quarter.
- » The spare European modern design lets original art, accent pieces and thoughtful lighting make an impression.
- » 220 rooms feature a taupe palette, minimalist furnishings à la platform beds, and flat-screen TVs for Internet surfing and listening to music via Bluetooth. Executive suites on the third floor have 17-foot ceilings and arched windows overlooking the CBD.

» **WHAT'S TO LOVE:** Hydration stations with carafes and ice and water dispensers; cocktails on tap at the bar; and the 24/7 AC Marketplace that sells bottles of wine and European and local snacks like mini king cakes. www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/msyac-ac-hotel-new-orleans-bourbon-french-quarter-area

LISTEN > GROOVE LIST

- » **Snug Harbor**—The caliber of musicians and table-service-only atmosphere makes this intimate venue New Orleans' most serious jazz club. www.snugjazz.com
- » **Hermes Bar at Antoine's**—Local greats play this small but festive club off Bourbon Street. www.antoines.com **CONTINUED, P. 66**

SEASONED TRAVELER MICKEY WEBB

My Minneapolis

Mickey Webb, SVP and COO,
Associated Financial Group



Mickey is wild about her hockey team

What's to Love » Minneapolis and all of Minnesota is a wonderful place. We have exceptional outdoor activities you can do in the thousands of lakes area. We are ranked in the top 10 for number of golf courses per capita. Our trail systems connect our state from one end to the other.

Best Time to Visit » We experience all four seasons, although winter can drag on at times! Our summers start around mid-June and are wonderful. But I would have to say September is the best month of the year. The brilliance of our fall colors and the continuous sunshine is worth experiencing.

Culinary Scene » There are a lot of great local chefs and restaurants to experience if you are a "foodie." We also have breweries popping up. But like Philadelphia is known for cheesesteak and Chicago is known for hot dogs, we are known for our Juicy Lucy—a cheese-stuffed burger. You can't beat the Juicy Lucy!

Favorite Eats » **Zelo** in downtown Minneapolis. There is a warm charm to the space, and the service and food, which leans Italian, are exceptional. The bar area is so relaxing that I could sit and hang for hours with friends.

Where to Stay » Many people want to be close to the **Mall of America**, but I would prefer to stay at one of the hotels downtown, where there are so many things to do. With our skyway system, which is basically a bunch of enclosed footbridges that are connected together, you don't even have to go outside to do them.

Don't Miss » Going to a **Minnesota Wild** hockey game! We love our hockey, and even if you don't know the sport, the energy is just plain fun and exciting! There are also statues of characters from the comic strip Peanuts at the arena because Charles Schultz is from Minnesota.

BRIEFCASE

FLY In "Up in the Air"

news, starting July 9, **Delta** will launch nonstop service between Los Angeles and Shanghai, using 777-200LR wide-body jets. The configuration will include 37 full flat-bed BusinessElite seats, which is slumming it compared to **Etiha Airways'** "Residence" on its new Airbus A380. The three-room, 125-square-foot suite is located on the forward, upper deck and features a living room, bedroom, private bathroom with shower, and dedicated butler.



The Residence bedroom, Etihad Airways



TECH The new **Reserve** app for iPhones and Androids is promising to be an efficient way for globe-trotting foodies to book James Beard award-winning and Michelin-starred restaurants. Just input the size of your party and, when you want to dine, browse the curated list of eateries then make your selection. The "digital dining concierge" sends your request to the restaurant, books a table if it is available or offers alternatives if it is not. As for paying, the check is automatically billed to your card on file and includes the tip and Reserve's nominal concierge fee of \$5. Reserve currently offers more than 100 restaurants in New York City, Los Angeles, Boston and San Francisco with Chicago coming soon. www.reserve.com

SLEEP The new **Virgin Hotel Chicago** has opened. Located in an art deco building in the Loop district, the décor mingles modern furniture with original elements—a 1920s oak cigar bar is now the front desk—while adding pops of Virgin's signature red, e.g. red SMEG mini-fridges in the rooms (stocked at street prices!). Each of the 250 rooms is divided into two spaces by sliding doors: a dressing room with a full vanity and an extra-large shower with bench and a lounge with an ergonomically designed bed with swiveling table so you can set up a computer for work. With free Wi-Fi, no fees for early check-in or late check-out, and no room service delivery fees, road warriors can only hope that the "what travelers love in a hotel" approach becomes the new standard.



SLEEP / LISTEN / EAT > NEW ORLEANS (CONTINUED)

» **Dos Jefes Cigar Bar**—In a historic Uptown cottage, top-shelf cigars, spirits and bands make for one hell of a house party. www.dosjefes.com

» **d.b.a.**—Enjoy craft beer while listening to New Orleans' best bands at this Frenchmen Street club. www.dbaneworleans.com

» **Polo Club Lounge**—The classic wood bar and cozy lounge areas are perfect for enjoying the city's outstanding vocalists and jazz trios. www.windsorcourthotel.com/polo-club-lounge



Little Freddie King playing at d.b.a.

EAT > ICON REBORN BRENNAN'S

- » Between the refreshed décor and cuisine, Ralph Brennan has done an outstanding job at reviving this French Quarter icon.
- » Chef Slade Rushing has elevated the classics on the three-course brunch menu while adding traditional dishes with a twist to the à la carte menu. A standout is the New Orleans BBQ Lobster, shelled lobster in a mouth-watering Creole spiced butter, lemon confit and thyme sauce served on toasted baguette slices.
- » With gold fleur-de-lis wallpaper, velvet pad-

ded chairs and shelves of the Rex Mardi Gras krewe memorabilia, the Kings and Queens private dining rooms are regal and festive. www.brennansneworleans.com

EAT > MODERN CREOLE BALISE

- » Named after a settlement on the Mississippi River, chef Justin Devillier's second restaurant is located in a restored 1832 Creole townhouse in the CBD.
- » Modern Creole with French influences best describes the limited menu, which is divided into Garde Manger (apps from the cold station at the bar) and Entremet (hot apps) and Entrees from the kitchen.

- » Dishes vary by season, but the menu launched with raw Louisiana oysters served with a spicy, crunchy Mirliton Mignonette; scallops with dollops of green garlic sauce, perfectly seared to retain their texture and flavor; a glorified patty melt, crunchy but satisfying; and a pot de crème, a luscious deconstructed chocolate cream pie.
- » **NOTE:** Request to be seated in the front bar or upstairs dining room, as the back room lacks charm.
- » Open for dinner on Saturdays and from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Friday, this is a welcoming spot to grab a quick bite and cocktail, like the packs-a-punch Birdfoot Delta Cooler, during off hours. www.balisenola.com