



SOUARD MARDI GRAS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2024

Contact: Bess McCoy

314-495-4891

45TH SOUARD MARDI GRAS ENTERS HOME STRETCH

The Soulard Mardi Gras season culminates with six events over the next two weekends

SOUARD, Mo.— Revelry reigns supreme as the 45th Soulard Mardi Gras approaches its grand finale – six fan-favorite events over the last two weekends. From the Purina Pet Parade on February 4 to the Bud Light Grand Parade on February 10, there is something for everyone at Soulard Mardi Gras.

Soulard's signature events, ten between 12th Night and Fat Tuesday, generate more than \$20 million annually for the St. Louis regional economy and make St. Louis one of the largest Mardi Gras celebrations in the world. The lineup of remaining events is below. More information and tickets are available at stmardigras.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Summaries of the upcoming events are below. Please mark your calendars for a press briefing next Thursday, February 8, at 10:30 a.m. Details on the press briefing and logistics for Grand Parade weekend will be sent in a media advisory on Monday, February 5.

Pooches and Palates Community Weekend – February 3 & 4

Saturday, FEB. 3 / SUPPLEMENT SUPERSTORES 5K RUN FOR YOUR BEADS

There is only one race that is as fun-filled, colorful and slightly wacky as Mardi Gras itself: The Supplement Superstores 5K Run for Your Beads. This race is a moving celebration through Soulard, sprinkled with beer and hurricane pitstops for runners of legal age. Come dressed in your Mardi Gras best – costumes are half the fun!

A run always works up an appetite, so after the race, join us for the Taste of Soulard. Sign up now at stmardigras.org or register at the Bud Light Party Centre (at 8th St. and Lafayette Ave.) at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the event.

Starting Time: 9:00 a.m.

Soulard – Starts at 8th St. and Lafayette Ave.

Registration fee: \$45



SOULARD MARDI GRAS

Saturday FEB. 3 and Sunday, FEB. 4 / TASTE OF SOULARD

Choose your own culinary adventure with this self-guided tasting and pub crawl through the many Cajun flavors throughout Soulard. Each purchase includes one drink voucher and six food vouchers that can be redeemed at any participating establishment. On Saturday, the world-famous Soulard Trolley Tramps will be shuttling hungry merrymakers to restaurants throughout the neighborhood.

Taste booklets are available at stmardigras.org and available at any participating Taste of Soulard establishment on Feb. 3 and 4.

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day

Soulard Neighborhood

Booklets: \$35

Sunday, FEB. 4 / PURINA PET PARADE

The Purina Pet Parade is a Guinness Book of World Records holder, the largest collection of costumed dogs in the world. Some 1,500 pets—that's 6,000 paws!

Register your furry friend online or on the day of the event at 12th and Allen so you both can strut your stuff in style. The best-dressed pets will be selected as members of the Court of the Mystical Krewe of Barkus and will be invited to the Coronation Pageant at Soulard Market Park where the King and Queen of Barkus will be crowned.

All proceeds from the Purina Pet Parade will go to benefit Open Door Animal Sanctuary, a no-kill shelter.

Registration: 10:00 a.m., Parade: 1:00 p.m.

Begins at 12th St. and Allen Ave.

Registration Fee: \$10 donation

Free for spectators to watch the parade

Sunday, FEB. 4 / TITO'S VODKA WIENER DOG DERBY

Post-parade, the fun shifts to the nation's longest-running wiener dog derby at Horseshoe Casino Stadium at Soulard Market Plaza. Whose pup is the dashingest dachshund in all the realm? Only the running of the Derby will tell.



Known as *"the slowest two minutes in sports racing,"* the six-dog elimination heats down a 30-foot track will trot out one champion after another until the top wiener stands victorious.

Size doesn't matter, so race classes are based on age:

- Cocktail Wieners: Up to 4 years old
- Hot Dogs: 4 to 8 years old
- Ball Park Franks: 8 years and older
- Wiener Wannabe: Dogs small enough to fit in the starting box (OK, so size matters a little)

Register online at stlmardigras.org and hit the ground running on race day or register on race day. All proceeds from the Tito's Wiener Dog Derby go to benefit Open Door Animal Sanctuary, a no-kill shelter.

Registration: Opens at 10:00 a.m.

Opening Ceremonies: 1:45 pm or shortly after the Purina Pet Parade end

First Heat: 2:00 p.m.

Horseshoe Casino Stadium in Soulard Market Park

Entry Fee: \$10 donation

Free for spectators

Grand Parade Weekend – February 9 & 10

Friday, FEB. 9 / MAYOR'S MARDI GRAS BALL

The Mayor's Ball, which ALIVE Magazine and the Riverfront Times have called the *"social event of the season,"* is a must-attend gala that combines the elegance of the setting with the striking visuals of Mardi Gras. It features fine cuisine, cocktails, dancing, and entertainment ranging from traditional to spectacular, including live music from Dave Grelle and the Playadors.

The 22nd Mayor's Ball will once again grace the Midway at St. Louis Union Station. With its soaring glass roof, brick arches, and spacious atrium, the Midway provides a spectacular venue—especially when given the Mayor's Ball design and production treatment.



SOULARD MARDI GRAS

This charitable event is hosted by the Mardi Gras Foundation, and proceeds benefit Community Improvement Grants. The Ball has enabled \$650,000 in grants to Soulard and Downtown. Tickets are available at stlmardigras.org.

Time: 7:00 pm to Midnight

The Midway at St. Louis Union Station

Admission: \$175 and up

Friday, FEB. 9 / THE OFFICIAL MAYOR'S BALL AFTER PARTY

After you party at the Mayor's Ball, continue the fun at the Mayor's Ball Mardi Gras After Party! Proceeds from After Party ticket sales benefit STL College Kids, a non-profit helping St. Louis students pay for college.

Time: 10:00 p.m.– 2:00 a.m.

Regency Grand Ballroom at Union Station Hotel

Admission: \$100 and up

Saturday, FEB. 10 / BUD LIGHT GRAND PARADE "By the Numbers"

What started as a two-block march up Russell Blvd. in 1980 is now the event of the season, and one of the biggest Mardi Gras parades in the nation. The Bud Light Grand Parade is a dazzling show of scores of floats, marching and riding Krewes, throwing more than 15 million beads along a route from Busch Stadium to the Anheuser-Busch brewery.

Parade Starts: 11:00 a.m.

Soulard Neighborhood

Theme: *By the Numbers*

Free Event

Saturday, FEB. 10 / BUD LIGHT PARTY TENT

You shouldn't have to choose between being along the parade route, warming up from the cold, a dance floor with body-moving beats, a restroom without a line and being able to grab a drink whenever you need one.



SOUARD MARDI GRAS

That's why the all-inclusive Bud Light Party Tent is the place to be for over 8 hours of beer, beats, beads, and booze in a climate-controlled tent. You get more Mardi Gras for your money here, including:

- Fully stocked open bar with Bud Light, plus premium spirits
- Live music from country music star Chris Lane
- Cajun lunch buffet
- Heated tents one block from the Bud Light Grand Parade route
- Unlimited re-entry
- Private restrooms
- FREE BEADS!

Saturday, February 10: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Bud Light Party Centre in Soulard Market Park

Tent Admission: \$150

Saturday, FEB. 10 / BLUES ALUMNI EXPERIENCE

If you ever wanted to rub elbows with Blues legends at St. Louis' biggest party, then we have exactly what you're looking for. At the Blues Alumni Party Tent, your all-inclusive pass lets you hang out with some of the best to ever don the Blue Note in a climate-controlled tent right on the parade route.

An all-inclusive Blues Alumni Party Tent pass includes:

- Lunch buffet, open bar with beer and cocktails
- NSFW story time with Blues legends
- Front-row view of the Bud Light Grand Parade

Saturday, February 10: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tent Admission: \$150

-end-



About Soulard Mardi Gras

The Soulard Mardi Gras season will light up St. Louis with a full and varied calendar of celebrations until Fat Tuesday, February 13. This year, Grand Parade Day is Saturday, February 10. Details on all Soulard Mardi Gras events can be found at STLMardiGras.org.

Mardi Gras, Inc., a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organization, is responsible for producing the Mardi Gras celebration in St. Louis, which celebrates its 45th year in 2024. Soulard's celebration, which began with a house party among five friends in search of a theme, is now recognized as one of the largest Mardi Gras celebrations in the world. The dozen events of the entire Soulard Mardi Gras season regularly draw thousands of annual visitors to the Gateway City and generate more than \$20 million in economic activity for the region.

Contacts

Bess McCoy
Mardi Gras Foundation Board
314.495.4891
BessMcCoy@gmail.com

Mack A. Bradley
President, Mardi Gras Foundation
314.324.8567
Mack@standpointpa.com

Soulard Mardi Gras by the Numbers

Number of years we've been at this:	45
Annual regional economic activity generated by Soulard Mardi Gras:	\$20m
Soulard Mardi Gras donations to STL charities/not-for-profits, 2002-2022:	\$1.3m
Number of dollars it cost to produce Soulard Mardi Gras in 1980:	\$1.2k
Number of dollars it costs to produce Soulard Mardi Gras in 2023:	\$1.3m
Number of days between Fat Tuesday and Easter:	47
Number of Mardi Gras colors:	3
Number of times STL weather has truly gotten in the way:	5
Average number of Krewes in the Grand Parade:	75
Average Grand Parade run time in hours:	2
Number of traffic cones used to stage the Grand Parade:	125
Number of bike racks used on Grand Parade Day:	3k



SOUARD MARDI GRAS

Number of miles in the Grand Parade Route:	1.6
Average number of people riding in the Grand Parade:	2k
Average number of people walking in the Grand Parade:	1k
Average number of beads thrown from Grand Parade route:	15m
Average number of paws at the Purina Pet Parade:	7.5k
Number of volunteer hours needed to make it all happen:	5k
Number of pandemics:	1
Number of "Soulard Mardi Gras, By the Numbers" Facts:	20