



SOUARD MARDI GRAS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bess McCoy

January 3, 2025

314-495-4891

12TH NIGHT TO KICK OFF MARDI GRAS SEASON

Eight weeks of celebration begin Monday with new additions and iconic events

ST. LOUIS, Mo.— Let the good times roll! The 46th Mardi Gras season in Souard officially kicks off on Monday with the annual 12th Night celebration. Souard's signature events, 12 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 outposts in the world.

New in 2025:

- **New Mayor's Mardi Gras Ball Venue:** This iconic event is coming home to Souard, transforming the historic Anheuser-Busch Brewery and Biergarten into a stunning new Mayor's Ball experience. Guests can expect an immersive atmosphere that showcases the unique character of the brewery, with added experiences that only Anheuser-Busch can provide such as Day Fresh Budweiser Stations, exclusive access to the brewery campus, and photo opportunities with a world-famous Clydesdale. Proceeds continue to fund the Mardi Gras Foundation's Community Improvement Grants, which have raised over \$600,000 for Souard and Downtown.
- **New VIP Group Experiences:** Celebrate in style with exclusive VIP group packages at the Sunset Hills Subaru Blues Alumni Experience and the Bud Light Party Tent on Grand Parade Day. These packages include premium amenities and an exclusive Mardi Gras atmosphere perfect for friends, family, or corporate gatherings.
- **Carnival Tent Joins the Official Roster:** New for 2025, Carnival STL is now an official Souard Mardi Gras event, headlined by DJ FISHER.
- **Introducing the Golden Ticket:** Starting at \$185, this ultimate Mardi Gras pass grants access to two premier venues—the Carnival Tent, headlined by DJ FISHER, and the Bud Light Party Tent, headlined by Mitchell Tenpenny.

The Season Begins with 12th Night on Monday, January 6

It all begins with the 12th Night Celebration, where the Mardi Gras Inc. board of directors calls for a crucial vote on whether to produce another grand Souard Mardi Gras. As part of their deliberations, the board receives petitions from the community, often in the form of a song, dance, poem, oratorical flourish, or a humble toast to the season, generally accompanied by appropriately preposterous Mardi Gras attire.

After receiving these petitions, the board members cast their votes in what organizers anticipate will be a landslide victory for Souard Mardi Gras in 2025. The celebration

continues with the coronation of the new monarch, their reign commencing with a grand procession through the neighborhood. The night culminates in the raising of the Souldard Mardi Gras flag, which will proudly fly over Souldard until Fat Tuesday, March 4.

Schedule January 6, 2025

- 5:15 p.m. Doors open at the South Broadway Athletic Club, 2301 S 7th St.
- 5:30 p.m. Welcome from Mayor Tishaura Jones
- 5:35 p.m. Board receives petitions
- 6:45 p.m. Board proclaims decision on 2025 Mardi Gras Season
- 6:50 p.m. Coronation of new monarch, Rex XIII Mike Johnson
- 7:00 p.m. Grand Procession through Souldard, starting at South Broadway Athletic Club
- 9:00 p.m. Raising of Souldard Mardi Gras flag, 7th and Souldard streets (flagpole, east side of 7th)

12th Night Tradition

In the Christian calendar, the twelfth day after Christmas is variously known as "Epiphany," "Twelfth Night" or "Kings Day." It is the day the Magi arrived in Bethlehem and marks the end of the Christmas season. Until Fat Tuesday, the pre-Lenten Souldard Mardi Gras season will light up St. Louis with a full calendar of celebrations offering something for everyone.

2025 Mardi Gras Monarch – Rex XIII, Mike Johnson

Succeeding the remarkable reign of Rex XII, Jim Reisinger, this year's crown will be bestowed upon Chef Mike Johnson, acclaimed as Rex XIII. With the Grand Parade theme, "Cooking Up a Celebration," there's no better monarch to lead the festivities than Chef Johnson, who has been a pivotal figure in St. Louis' culinary scene for more than 30 years. He has opened more than 15 restaurant concepts, including the award-winning Sugarfire Smoke House and Hi-Pointe Drive-In. His restaurants have garnered national acclaim, elevating St. Louis' culinary reputation and solidifying the city as a premier dining destination.

For more than 20 years, Johnson has been a dedicated supporter and active participant in Souldard Mardi Gras, lending his talents to events like the Cajun Cook-off, parade floats, and special catering events. With culinary roots in New Orleans, Chef Johnson has used his expertise to bring authentic flavors to one of St. Louis' most cherished celebrations.

2025 Mardi Gras Calendar

- January 6** Twelfth Night
- January 18** Family Winter Carnival
- February 8** Scavenger Hunt



SOULARD MARDI GRAS

- February 15** Cajun Cook-Off
- February 22** 5K Run for your Beads
- February 22-23** Taste of Soulard
- February 23** Purina Pet Parade and Tito's Vodka Wiener Dog Derby
- February 28** Mayor's Mardi Gras Ball
- March 1** Bud Light Grand Parade

-end-

Contacts

Bess McCoy
Mardi Gras Foundation
314.495.4891
BessMcCoy@gmail.com

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