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ACCLAIMED CHEF MIKE JOHNSON CROWNED REX XIII, MONARCH OF 46TH MARDI GRAS SEASON

SOULARD, Mo.— Chef Mike Johnson, a highly-acclaimed figure in St. Louis' culinary scene, will reign supreme over the 2025 St. Louis Mardi Gras season as Rex XIII. He was installed as the honorary monarch during a special coronation event at the Biergarten at Anheuser-Busch Brewery on Tuesday, January 14.

"With this year's Grand Parade theme, 'Cooking Up a Celebration,' we couldn't ask for a more fitting Rex than Chef Johnson," said Mack Bradley, President of the Mardi Gras Foundation Board. "His culinary brilliance has not only elevated St. Louis' dining scene but also brought authentic flavor and flair to Soulard Mardi Gras for decades. Chef Johnson embodies the heart of our celebration—community, creativity, and bringing people together."

Chef Johnson has been a pivotal figure in St. Louis' culinary scene for more than 30 years, opening 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.

"As a chef, I've spent my life 'cooking up' memorable experiences, and I can't wait to do the same as Rex XIII for this year's Mardi Gras," said Chef Johnson. "Soulard Mardi Gras is a tradition that brings the community together and showcases the best of St. Louis. I'm honored to represent a celebration that means so much to our city and the people who call it home."

For more than 20 years, Johnson has been a dedicated supporter and active participant in Soulard Mardi Gras, lending his talents to events like the Cajun Cook-off, parade floats, and special catering events. His culinary roots in New Orleans add an authentic flavor to his role as Rex XIII, making him the perfect monarch to lead this year's festivities.

Johnson succeeds Jim Reisinger, who served as Rex XII (the twelfth) during the 2024 season.

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, March 4. This year, Grand Parade Day is Saturday, March 1. Details on all Soulard Mardi Gras events can be found at STLMardiGras.org.



SOULARD MARDI GRAS

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 46th year in 2025. 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.

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