



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 February 2022

MEDIA ADVISORY:

20th Mayor's Ball, 43rd Grand Parade Headline Soulard Mardi Gras' Apotheosis Weekend

*2022 Grand Marshal, parade pro tips, media logistics/briefing, and
neighborhood logistics*

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The 20th annual Mayor's Ball on Friday night and Saturday's 43rd annual Grand Parade mark the apotheosis of Mardi Gras in St. Louis. Grand Parade weekend typically brings thousands of people to Soulard, fills hotel rooms, and supports restaurants and other establishments throughout the region.

Nearly 25 percent of Grand Parade Day visitors come from outside the St. Louis region, making a significant contribution to the \$20 million that Soulard Mardi Gras generates each year for the local economy. The many not-for-profit organizations that benefit from Grand Parade Day and the Community Improvement Grants funded by Mayor's Ball proceeds in 2022 will add to the \$1.3 million in charitable contributions made by Soulard Mardi Gras in the past 20 years.

More information and tickets are available at stlmardigras.org and on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram at STLMardiGras.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25 / THE MAYOR'S BALL - NEW LOCATION

THE ROARING 20'S—2022's Grand Parade theme—come to life at the 20th Mayor's Ball, for the first time at a new location! ALIVE Magazine and the Riverfront Times have called the Mayor's Ball the "social event of the season."

The biggest change for 2022 is the location. Iconic as City Hall is, for several years the Ball has stretched its limits. As we anticipate the continued growth of the Ball, a new venue is needed, not just larger but someplace as uniquely St. Louis as City Hall itself.

We are therefore excited to announce the 2022 Mayor's Ball will grace the Midway at St. Louis Union Station. With its soaring glass roof, brick arches, and spacious atrium, the Midway promises to be a spectacular venue, especially when given the Mayor's Ball design and production treatment.

This charitable event is hosted by the Mardi Gras Foundation, and proceeds benefit Community Improvement Grants. To date, the Ball has funded \$600,000 in grants to Soulard and Downtown.

Time: 7:00 pm to Midnight

The Midway at St. Louis Union Station

Admission: \$150 and up available at stlmardigras.org

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26 / BUD LIGHT GRAND PARADE “The Roaring 20s”

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 2022 Bud Light Grand Parade will be a dazzling show of scores of floats, marching and riding Krewes, throwing 15 million beads along a route from Busch Stadium to the Anheuser-Busch brewery. This year’s theme “The Roaring 20s” will inspire float designs and this year’s parade will have an emphasis on creative artistic expression.

Parade Starts: 11:00 am

Soulard Neighborhood

Free Event

Limited number of tickets for upgraded experiences at the Bud Light Party Tent and Blues Alumni Experience available at stlmardigras.org

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26 / RUE DU CIRQUE – NEW FOR 2022

The fun doesn’t stop when the Bud Light Grand Parade is over. The brand-new Rue du Cirque street party, emceed by Dre’co, features games, prizes, and live music from Steve Ewing. Make history by helping to smash the world record for the largest game of Flip Cup or strut your stuff in the High Heel Drag Race.

Time: 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

On South 7th Street at Soulard Street

Free

2022 GRAND MARSHAL

Organizers also announced the 2022 Soulard Mardi Gras Grand Marshal, internationally renowned St. Louis visual artist and illustrator Cbabi (pronounced Kuh-bob-bi) Bayoc. He is a sought-after muralist and illustrator with diverse clientele such as schools, corporations, non-profits, hospitals, churches, actors, athletes, and musicians seeking images depicting the vibrancy and beauty of diversity through acrylic on canvas, metal, wood, and even stained glass.

“In the 2022 Grand Parade, we wanted to highlight St. Louis’ vibrant and diverse arts community, creating a unique, eclectic and creative parade to delight Soulard’s thousands of revelers,” said Bonita Leiber, Grand Parade Creative Director. “We are so excited that Cbabi will lead this year’s parade as Grand Marshal and that we have the opportunity to showcase some of his art. The depth of his talents, activism and commitment to our community are inspiring, and we’re delighted to have him in our Mardi Gras family!”

Bayoc, whose birth name is Clifford Miskell, Jr., adopted his name Cbabi (Creative-Black-Artist-Battling-Ignorance) during his time at Grambling State University and later legally changed his last name to

Bayoc (Blessed-African-Youth-Of-Creativity) as a way of setting the stage of always reminding his future children of their value and worth.

Perhaps Cbabi's name and evolution as an artist are best embodied in his *365 Days with Dad* series—his 2012 New Year's resolution to paint a positive image of Black fatherhood each day for the entire year. This project was quintessential in starting a dialogue within the community about the importance of a strong foundation and support system for all children, no matter the age. Today, this series continues to evolve, revealing the complexities of Black masculinity through Cbabi's *52 Fridays of Fatherhood* and his commitment to grow art collecting amongst Black families through weekly giveaways of original art pieces.

"My art is activism filled with light, life, heart, bold color, patterns, and phunQ! My ultimate goal is to paint the world I want to see my children and yours thrive in. This goal keeps me committed to evolving my art, and engaging my community," Bayoc said. "I'm honored to serve as Grand Marshal for one of St. Louis' biggest events, and excited by the parade's focus on art and creative expression. It will be quite a show in Soulard on February 26!"

Photo of Cbabi with an example of his work is attached. For more information on Cbabi, visit cbabibayoc.com.

GRAND PARADE PRO TIPS

1. **Arrive early.** You may even want to [book a nearby hotel room](#) for Friday and Saturday to eliminate parking hassles and ensure you have plenty of time. Several hotels offer shuttles to and from or provide access to plenty of cabs.
2. **No cans, no coolers, no bottles, no backpacks. No exceptions.** For public safety reasons, these items are not allowed in the Soulard festival zone. If you do somehow manage to have these items in the festival zone, you will be asked to dispose of them immediately.
3. **Dress for the weather.** St. Louis weather is notoriously fickle, so plan appropriately. The Grand Parade rolls on, rain or shine, and you'll be on your feet a lot, so wear comfortable shoes.
4. **Use the port-a-potties.** There are thousands of portable restrooms located throughout the festival zone. The police will ticket you for, let's say, using alternate outdoor methods. If you can't find one, you're not really looking.
5. **Don't drive.** Take a shuttle, a taxi, a ride-share service, or, if you must drive, have a DD.
6. **Respect our neighborhood.** As one of the oldest residential and entertainment districts west of the Mississippi, Soulard is recognized as a national historic jewel. Be respectful of the neighborhood and its residents.
7. **Outdoor sales in Soulard** end early at 7 p.m. Soulard's bars and restaurants will remain open on the inside until 11:30 p.m.

MEDIA LOGISTICS

Grand Parade Staging (New for 2022), Media Parking, Credentials, Organizer Interview Availability, and Press Briefing

Parade entries will stage on South 8th Street from Walnut Street to Cerre Street, beginning at 8 a.m., Saturday, February 26, as shown on the attached the Grand Parade Day map. Full parade lineup will be in place by 10:00 a.m.

Media parking available in the parade staging area—South 8th Street at Cerre Street—from 7 a.m. to parade time, 11 a.m., Saturday, February 26; entry onto 8th Street from Market Street. Show either outlet media credentials or Mardi Gras media credentials, example attached, for entry.

All access media credentials will be available at the Mardi Gras office, 2200 Dolman St. in Soulard from Monday, February 21 to Thursday, February 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or at the Grand Parade staging area on Saturday, February 26 from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Organizer, Grand Marshal, and parade krewe interviews will be available from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at parade staging, Saturday, February 26.

A joint Mardi Gras, St. Louis Metropolitan Police press briefing will take place at 3 p.m. on Grand Parade Day, Saturday, February 26 at the SLMPD Command Post, Gene Slay's Girls and Boys Club, 2524 South 11th Street, 63104.

Grand Parade Route and Parade Winner Announcement

Parade steps off at 11 a.m. from South 7th Street and Cerre Street, proceeds south on 7th to Chouteau Avenue, turns east on Chouteau to South Broadway Street, then south on Broadway to Park Avenue, where the street continues south as South 7th Street through Soulard. Parade ends at South 7th and Sidney Street. The route is indicated on the attached Grand Parade Day map.

Grand Parade winners will be announced within 30 minutes of the parade conclusion via all social media channels—Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—@STLMardiGras and on the web at stlmardigras.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD LOGISTICS

Access and Parking in Soulard

Vehicular access to Soulard on Grand Parade Day is unavailable in the Red Zone and restricted in the Yellow Zone. These zones are shown on the Grand Parade Day map.

Soulard Red Zone

All streets in the Red Zone will be closed to vehicular traffic and parking from 3 a.m. Saturday, February 26 to 2 a.m. Sunday, February 27. No unauthorized vehicles allowed in or out of this zone during this time.

Soulard/LaSalle Park Yellow Zones

The Yellow Zones are for resident access and parking only from 3 a.m. Saturday, February 26 to 2 a.m. Sunday, February 27. All Soulard residences have received official Mardi Gras parking/access tags. In order to preserve this area for the use of neighborhood residents on Grand Parade Day, any vehicles parked on the street in the Yellow Zone without an official Mardi Gras access/parking pass will be ticketed and towed.

Taxi and Ride Share Stands

There are two designated taxi/Uber/Lyft locations for Grand Parade Day: South 13th Street and Russell Boulevard (west entry to Soulard, near Gravois and Russell), and 1511 South 10th Street (LaSalle Park neighborhood, near South 10th and Marion Street, at the west end of the I-55 pedestrian bridge). These sites are shown on the Grand Parade Day map.

Additional COVID Safeguards for 2022

We've been closely monitoring the COVID-19 conditions and what they mean for our ability to produce Mardi Gras events that are both safe and fun. In addition to complying with all City public health orders and following CDC guidance, at this point, we have decided to implement further entry requirements to protect the health and safety of our guests, which are in line with current policies at other large entertainment venues in our region such as Enterprise Center and The Pageant. We will continue to monitor pandemic information to guide our health and safety measures and could adjust as circumstances dictate.

Therefore, at this time, we are implementing new entry requirements for all indoor events produced by Souland Mardi Gras. These include the Mayor's Ball on February 25, and on Grand Parade Day, February 26, the Bud Light Party Tent, Blues Alumni Tent, all Mardi Gras Village tents on the east side of the South 7th Street parade route, and all events in the Bud Light Party Centre in Souland Market Park. Other venues in Souland operated by neighborhood bars or restaurants are not affected by these safeguards and each establishment makes its own entry requirements, in addition to any City orders which apply to everyone.

All guests at indoor events will be required for entry to either 1) provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination via a print or digital version of an official government-issued COVID-19 vaccination card listing the guest's name and date the last dose was administered, or 2) a print or digital negative COVID-19 PCR or rapid test administered by a healthcare professional with 72 hours of entry, which includes the guest's name and date the last test was administered. A photo ID will also be required to match and confirm vaccination and testing information with the guest's identity.

About Souland 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 43rd year in 2022. Souland'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 Souland 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.

Souland Mardi Gras, By the Numbers

Number of years we've been at this:

43

Annual regional economic activity generated by Souland Mardi Gras:

\$20m

Souland Mardi Gras donations to STL charities/not-for-profits, 2002-2022:

\$1.3m

Number of dollars it cost to produce Souland Mardi Gras in 1980:

\$1.2k

Number of dollars it costs to produce Souldard Mardi Gras in 2022:

\$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

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