

## Walking Tour 1: The French Quarter

**Start:** The intersection of Royal and Bienville streets.

**Finish:** Jackson Square.

**Time:** Allow approximately 1 1/2 hours, not including time spent in shops or historic homes.

**Best Times:** Any day between 8am and 10am (the quiet hours).

**Worst Time:** At night. Some attractions won't be open, and you won't be able to get a good look at the architecture.

If you only spend a few hours in New Orleans, do it in the exquisitely picturesque French Quarter. In these 80 city blocks, the colonial empires of France, Spain, and, to a lesser extent, Britain, intersected with the emerging American nation. It's called the Vieux Carré or "old square," but somehow it's timeless -- recognizably old while vibrantly alive. Today's residents and merchants are stewards of a rich tradition of individuality, creativity, and disregard for many of the concerns of the world beyond. This tour will introduce you to its style, history, and landmarks.

*From the corner of Royal and Bienville streets, head into the Quarter (away from Canal St.). That streetcar named Desire rattled along Royal Street until 1948. (It was replaced by the bus named Desire. Really.) Imagine how noisy these narrow streets were when the streetcars were in place. Your first stop is:*

### 1. 339-343 Royal St., Rillieux-Waldhorn House

Now the home of Waldhorn and Adler Antiques (est. 1881), the building was built between 1795 and 1800 for Vincent Rillieux, the great-grandfather of the French Impressionist artist Edgar Degas. Offices of the (second) Bank of the United States occupied the building from 1820 until 1836 when, thanks to President Andrew Jackson's famous veto, its charter expired. Note the wrought-iron balconies -- an example of excellent Spanish colonial workmanship.

### 2. 333 Royal St., The Bank of Louisiana

Across the street, this old bank was erected in 1826, its Greek Revival edifice followed in the early 1860s, and the bank was liquidated in 1867. The building suffered fires in 1840, 1861, and 1931, and has served as the Louisiana State Capitol, an auction exchange, a criminal court, a juvenile court, and an American Legion social hall. It now houses the Vieux Carré police station.

*Cross Conti Street to:*

### 3. 403 Royal St., Latrobe's

Benjamin H. B. Latrobe died of yellow fever shortly after completing designs for the Louisiana State Bank, which opened here in 1821. Latrobe was one of the nation's most eminent architects, having designed the Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (1796) and contributed to the design of the U.S. Capitol and White House. Note the monogram "LSB" on the Creole-style iron balcony railing. It's now a banquet hall named for the architect.

### 4. 417 Royal St., Brennan's Restaurant

Brennan's opened in this building, also built by Vincent Rillieux, in 1855. The structure was erected after the fire of 1794 destroyed more than 200 of the original buildings along this street. It has been home to the Banque de la Louisiane, the world-famous chess champion Paul Charles Morphy, and the parents of Edgar Degas.

### 5. 437 Royal St., Peychaud's Drug Store

When Masons held lodge meetings here in the early 1800s, proprietor and druggist Antoine A. Peychaud served after-meeting drinks of bitters and cognac to lodge members in small egg cups, called *coquetier* -- later Americanized to "cocktails." And so it began (the cocktail and the legend).

### 6. 400 Royal St., New Orleans Court Building

Built in 1909, this was and still is a courthouse, covering the length of the block. The baroque edifice made of Georgia marble seems out of place in the French Quarter -- especially considering that many Spanish-era structures were demolished to make way for it. The building was laboriously renovated and now houses the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

*Cross St. Louis Street to:*

#### **7. 520 Royal St., The Brulatour Court**

This structure was built in 1816 as a home for François Seignouret, a furniture maker and wine importer from Bordeaux -- his furniture, with a signature "S" carved into each piece, still commands the respect of collectors. During business hours you should ask to walk into the exotic courtyard -- it's one of the few four-walled courtyards in the French Quarter. From the street, notice the elaborate, fan-shaped guard screen (*garde de frise*) on the right end of the third-floor balcony -- look for Seignouret's "S" carved into the screen.

#### **8. 533 Royal St., The Merieult House**

Built for the merchant Jean François Merieult in 1792, this house was the only building in the area left standing after the fire of 1794. Legend has it that Napoleon repeatedly offered Madame Merieult great riches in exchange for her hair. (He wanted it for a wig to present to a Turkish sultan.) She refused. Nowadays, it's home to the Historic New Orleans Collection Museum and Research Center.

*Cross Toulouse Street to:*

#### **9. 613 Royal St., The Court of Two Sisters**

This structure was built in 1832 for a local bank president on the site of the 18th-century home of a French governor. The two sisters were Emma and Bertha Camors, whose father owned the building; from 1886 to 1906, they ran a curio store here.

#### **10. 627 Royal St., Horizon Gallery**

Walk through the entrance to the back to see another magnificent courtyard. This 1777 building is where 17-year-old opera singer Adelina Patti first visited and then lived after becoming a local heroine in 1860. As a last-minute stand-in lead soprano in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, she saved the local opera company from financial ruin.

#### **11. 640 Royal St., Le Monnier Mansion**

The city's first "skyscraper" was all of three stories high when it was built in 1811. A fourth story was added in 1876. Sieru George, fictional hero in George W. Cable's *Old Creole Days*, "lived" here.

*Cross St. Peter Street to:*

#### **12. 700 Royal St., The LaBranche House**

This building is probably the most photographed building in the Quarter -- and no wonder. The lacy cast-iron grillwork, with its delicate oak leaf and acorn design, fairly drips from all three floors. There are actually 11 LaBranche buildings (three-story brick row houses built 1835-1840 for the widow of wealthy sugar planter Jean Baptiste LaBranche). Eight face St. Peter Street, one faces Royal, and two face Pirates Alley.

*Turn left at St. Peter Street and continue to:*

#### **13. 714 St. Peter St., Lacoul House**

Built in 1829 by prominent physician Dr. Yves LeMonnier, this was a boardinghouse run by Antoine Alciatore during the 1860s. His cooking became so popular with the locals that he eventually gave up catering to open the famous Antoine's restaurant, still operated today by his descendants.

#### **14. 718 St. Peter St., Pat O'Brien's**

Now the de facto home to the famed Hurricane cocktail, this building was completed in 1790 for a wealthy planter. Later, Louis Tabary put on popular plays here including, purportedly, the first grand opera in America. The popular courtyard is well worth a look, maybe even a refreshment.

#### **15. 726 St. Peter St., Preservation Hall**

Scores of people descend on this spot nightly to hear traditional New Orleans jazz. A daytime stop affords a glimpse, through the big, ornate iron gate, of a lush tropical courtyard in back. Erle Stanley Gardner, the author who brought us Perry Mason, lived upstairs.

#### **16. 730 St. Peter St., Plique-LaBranche House**

Built in 1825, this is believed to be the site of New Orleans's first theater, which burned in the fire of 1816. But that is the subject of some debate.

*Continue up St. Peter Street until you reach Bourbon Street. Turn left onto Bourbon Street.*

#### **17. 623 Bourbon St., Lindy Boggs Home**

Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote stayed in this house (no, not together). It's owned by Lindy Boggs, a much-beloved local politician, philanthropist (and mother of NPR and ABC commentator Cokie Roberts), who took over her husband's congressional seat after his death.

*Turn around and head the other way down Bourbon Street. At the corner of Bourbon and Orleans streets, look down Orleans Street, toward the river, at:*

#### **18. 717 Orleans St., Bourbon Orleans Hotel**

This was the site of the famous quadroon balls, where wealthy white men would come to form alliances (read: acquire a mistress) with free women of color, who were one-eighth to one-fourth black. Look at the balcony and imagine the assignations that went on there while the balls were in session. The building later became a convent, home to the Sisters of the Holy Family, the second-oldest order of black nuns in the country. Their founder (whose mother was a quadroon mistress!), Henriette Delille, has been presented to the Vatican for consideration for sainthood.

*Turn left onto Orleans and follow it a block to Dauphine (pronounced Daw-feen) Street. On the corner is:*

#### **19. 716 Dauphine St., Le Pretre Mansion**

In 1839 Jean Baptiste Le Pretre bought this 1836 Greek Revival house and added the romantic cast-iron galleries. The house is the subject of a real-life horror story: In the 19th century, a Turk, supposedly the brother of a sultan, arrived in New Orleans and rented the house. He was conspicuously wealthy, with an entourage of servants and beautiful young girls -- all thought to have been stolen from the sultan.

Rumors quickly spread about the situation, even as the home became the scene of lavish high-society parties. One night screams came from inside; the next morning, neighbors entered to find the tenant and the young beauties lying dead in a pool of blood. The mystery remains unsolved. Local ghost experts say you can sometimes hear exotic music and piercing shrieks.

*Turn right on Dauphine Street and go 2 blocks to Dumaine Street and then turn right. You'll find an interesting little cottage at:*

#### **20. 707 Dumaine St., Spanish Colonial Cottage**

After the 1794 fire, all houses in the French Quarter were required by law to have flat tile roofs. Most have since been covered with conventional roofs, but this Spanish colonial cottage is still in compliance with the flat-roof rule.

#### **21. 632 Dumaine St., Madame John's Legacy**

This structure was once thought to be the oldest building on the Mississippi River, originally erected in 1726, 8 years after the founding of New Orleans. Recent research suggests, however, that only a few parts of the original building survived the 1788 fire and were used in its reconstruction. Its first owner was a ship captain who died in the 1729 *Natchez* Massacre; upon his death, the house passed to the captain of a Lafitte-era smuggling ship -- and 21 owners subsequently. The present structure is a fine example of a French "raised cottage." The above-ground basement is of brick-between-posts construction (locally made bricks were too soft to be the primary building material), covered with boards laid horizontally. The hipped, dormered roof extends out over the veranda. Its name comes from George W. Cable's fictional character who was bequeathed the house in the short story *'Tite Poulette*. Part of the Louisiana State Museum complex, it is currently not open for tours.

*Take a left at the corner of Dumaine and Chartres streets and follow Chartres to the next corner; make a left onto St. Philip Street and continue to the corner of St. Philip and Bourbon streets to:*

#### **22. 941 Bourbon St., Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop**

For many years, this structure has been a bar (for the full story), but the legend is that Jean Lafitte and his pirates posed as blacksmiths here while using it as headquarters for selling goods they'd plundered on the high seas. It has survived in its original condition,

reflecting the architectural influence of French colonials who escaped St. Domingue in the late 1700s.

It may be the oldest building in the Mississippi Valley, but that has not been documented. Unfortunately, the exterior has been redone to replicate the original brick and plaster, which makes it look fake (it's actually not). Thankfully the owners haven't chromed or plasticized the interior -- it's an excellent place to imagine life in the Quarter in the 19th century.

*Turn right onto Bourbon Street and follow it 2 blocks to Governor Nicholls Street. Turn right to:*

### **23. 721 Governor Nicholls St., The Thierry House**

This structure was built in 1814 and announced the arrival of the Greek Revival style of architecture in New Orleans. It was designed in part by 19-year-old architect Henry S. Boneval Latrobe, son of noted architect Benjamin H. B. Latrobe.

*Backtrack to the corner of Royal and Governor Nicholls streets. Take a left onto Royal and look for:*

### **24. 1140 Royal St., The Lalaurie Home**

When Madame Delphine Macarty de Lopez Blanque wed Dr. Louis Lalaurie, it was her third marriage -- she'd already been widowed twice. The Lalauries moved into this residence in 1832, and were soon impressing the city with extravagant parties. One night in 1834, however, fire broke out and neighbors crashed through a locked door to find seven starving slaves chained in painful positions, unable to move. The sight, combined with Delphine's stories of past slaves having "committed suicide," enraged her neighbors. Madame Lalaurie and her family escaped a mob's wrath and fled to Paris. Several years later she died in Europe. Her body was returned to New Orleans -- and even then she had to be buried in secrecy.

Through the years, stories have circulated of ghosts inhabiting the building, especially that of one young slave child who fell from the roof trying to escape Delphine's cruelties.

The building was a Union headquarters during the Civil War, a gambling house, and more recently home to actor Nicolas Cage. Haunted by his own financial difficulties, Cage turned the house over to the bank in 2009.

### **25. 1132 Royal St., Gallier House Museum**

James Gallier, Jr., built this house in 1857 as his residence. He and his father were two of the city's leading architects. Anne Rice considered this house when she described Lestat and Louis's home in *Interview with the Vampire*.

*Turn left onto Ursulines Street, toward the river.*

### **26. 617 Ursulines Ave., Croissant D'Or**

If you need a little rest or sustenance at this point, you can stop in the popular Croissant D'Or, 617 Ursulines St. (tel. **504/524-4663**). The croissants and pastries here are very good, and the ambience -- inside or out on the patio -- even better.

*At the corner of Ursulines and Chartres streets is the:*

### **27. 1113 Chartres St., Beauregard-Keyes House**

This "raised cottage" was built as a residence in 1826 by Joseph Le Carpentier, though it has several other claims to fame. Notice the Doric columns and handsome twin staircases.

*Turn left onto Chartres Street and continue walking until you get to Esplanade (pronounced Es-pla-nade) Avenue, which served as the parade ground for troops quartered on Barracks Street. Along with St. Charles Avenue, it is one of the city's most picturesque historic thoroughfares. Some of the grandest town houses built in the late 1800s grace this wide, tree-lined avenue. (If you're interested in viewing some of these houses, Walking Tour 3, concentrates on the architecture of Esplanade Ridge.) The entire 400 block of Esplanade is occupied by:*

### **28. The Old U.S. Mint**

This was once the site of Fort St. Charles, one of the defenses built to protect New Orleans in 1792. Andrew Jackson reviewed the "troops" here -- pirates, volunteers, and a nucleus of trained soldiers -- whom he later led in the Battle of New Orleans. Now home to the Louisiana State Museum, it is soon to house a comprehensive Jazz Museum.

*Follow Esplanade toward the river and turn right at the corner of North Peters Street. Follow North Peters until it intersects with Decatur Street. This is the back end of:*

### **29. The Historic French Market**

This European-style market has been here for well over 200 years, and today it has a farmers' market and stalls featuring everything from gator on a stick to tacky trinkets (that is, jewelry, T-shirts, and knockoff purses) though some excellent souvenirs and bargains have been found therein.

*When you leave the French Market, exit on the side away from the river onto:*

### **30. Decatur Street**

Not long ago, this section of Decatur -- from Jackson Square all the way over to Esplanade -- was a seedy, rundown area of wild bars and cheap rooming houses. Fortunately, few of either remain. Instead, it has fallen into step with the rest of the Quarter, sporting a number of restaurants and noisy bars. (The stretch of Decatur between Ursulines and Esplanade has retained more of the rundown aesthetic, including Goth and punk shops, dank bars, and a few secondhand shops worth browsing.)

*As you walk toward St. Ann Street along Decatur, you'll pass 923 and 919 Decatur St., where the *Café de Refugies* and *Hôtel de la Marine*, respectively, were located in the 1700s and early 1800s. These were reputed to be gathering places for pirates, smugglers, European refugees, and outlaws.*

### **31. 923 Decatur St., Central Grocery**

If you're walking in the area of 923 Decatur St. around lunchtime, pop into the Central Grocery (tel. **504/523-1620**), and pick up a famed muffuletta sandwich. Eat inside at little tables, or take your food and sit outside, maybe right on the riverbank.

*Decatur Street will take you to Jackson Square. Turn right onto St. Ann Street; the twin four-story, red-brick buildings here and on the St. Peter Street side of the square are:*

### **32. The Pontalba Buildings**

These buildings sport some of the most impressive cast-iron balcony railings in the French Quarter. They also represent early French Quarter urban revitalization. In the mid-1800s, Baroness Micaela Almonester de Pontalba inherited rows of buildings along both sides of the Place d'Armes from her father, Don Almonester (who rebuilt St. Louis Cathedral). In an effort to counteract the emerging preeminence of the American sector across Canal Street, she razed the structures and built high-end apartments and commercial space.

The Pontalba Buildings were begun in 1849 under her direct supervision; you can see her mark today in the entwined initials "A.P." in the ironwork. The buildings were designed in a traditional Creole-European style, with commercial space on the street level, housing above, and a courtyard in the rear. The row houses on St. Ann Street, now owned by the state of Louisiana, were completed in 1851.

Baroness Pontalba is also responsible for the current design of Jackson Square, including the cast-iron fence and the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson.

*At the corner of St. Ann and Chartres streets, turn left and continue around Jackson Square; you will see:*

### **33. 751 Chartres St., The Presbytère**

This, the Cabildo, and the St. Louis Cathedral (read on for descriptions of the latter two buildings) -- all designed by Gilberto Guillemard -- were the first major public buildings in the Louisiana Territory. The Presbytère was originally designed as the cathedral's rectory. Baroness Pontalba's father financed the building's beginnings, but he died in 1798, leaving only the first floor done. It was finally completed in 1813. It was never used as a rectory, but was rented and then purchased (in 1853) by the city to be used as a courthouse. It now houses wonderful exhibits on the history of Mardi Gras.

*Next you'll come to:*

### **34. St. Louis Cathedral**

Although it is the oldest Catholic cathedral in the U.S., this is actually the third building erected on this spot -- the first was destroyed by a hurricane in 1722, the second by fire in 1788. The cathedral was rebuilt in 1794; the central tower was later designed by Henry S. Boneval Latrobe, and the building was remodeled and enlarged between 1845 and 1851.

under Baroness Pontalba's direction. The bell and stately clock (note the nonstandard Roman numeral four), were imported from France.

*On the other side of the cathedral, you'll come to Pirates Alley. Go right down Pirates Alley to:*

### **35. The Cabildo**

In the 1750s, this was the site of a French police station and guardhouse. Part of that building was incorporated into the original Cabildo, statehouse of the Spanish governing body (known as the "Very Illustrious Cabildo"). It was still under reconstruction when the transfer papers for the Louisiana Purchase were signed in a room on the second floor in 1803. Since then, it has served as New Orleans's City Hall, the Louisiana State Supreme Court, and, since 1911, a facility of the Louisiana State Museum.

Think those old Civil War cannons out front look pitifully obsolete? Think again. In 1921, in a near-deadly prank, one was loaded and fired. That missile traveled across the wide expanse of the Mississippi and 6 blocks inland, landing in a house in Algiers and narrowly missing its occupants.

### **36. 624 Pirates Alley, Faulkner House Books**

In 1925, William Faulkner lived here. He contributed to the *Times-Picayune* and worked on his first novels, *Mosquitoes* and *Soldiers' Pay*, making this lovely bookstore a requisite stop for Faulkner lovers and collectors of both new and classic literature.

*To the left of the bookstore is a small alley that takes you to St. Peter Street, which is behind and parallel to Pirates Alley.*

### **37. 632 St. Peter St., Tennessee Williams House**

Have a sudden urge to scream "Stella!!!" at that second-story wrought-iron balcony at 632 St. Peter St.? No wonder. This is where Tennessee Williams wrote *A Streetcar Named Desire*, one of the greatest pieces of American theater. He said he could hear "that rattle trap streetcar named Desire running along Royal and the one named Cemeteries running along Canal and it seemed the perfect metaphor for the human condition."

*Return to Jackson Square. On the left side of the cathedral on the corner of Chartres and St. Peter streets (with your back to the Mississippi River and Jackson Square) is:*

### **38. 813 Decatur St., Café du Monde**

You've finished! Now go back across Jackson Square and Decatur Street to Café du Monde (tel. **504/525-4544**) -- no trip to New Orleans is complete without a leisurely stop here for beignets and coffee. Be sure to hike up the levee and relax on a bench, and watch the river roll.

## Walking Tour 2: The Garden District

**Start:** Prytania Street and Washington Avenue.

**Finish:** Lafayette Cemetery.

**Time:** 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours.

**Best Time:** Daylight.

**Worst Time:** Night, when you won't be able to get a good look at the architecture.

Walking through the architecturally phenomenal Garden District, you could get the impression that you've entered an entirely separate city -- or time period -- from the French Quarter of New Orleans. Although the Garden District was indeed once a separate city (Lafayette) from the Vieux Carré and was established in a later period, their development by two different groups most profoundly distinguishes the two.

The French Quarter was initially established by Creoles during the French and Spanish colonial periods, and the Garden District was created by Americans after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. Antebellum New Orleans's lucrative combination of Mississippi River commerce, regional abundance of cash crops, slave trade, and national banks fueled the local economy, resulting in a remarkable building boom that extended for several square miles through Uptown.

Very few people from the United States lived in New Orleans during its colonial era. Thousands of Americans moved here after the Louisiana Purchase. Friction arose between them and the Creoles due to mutual snobbery, language barriers, religious division, and competition over burgeoning commerce. Americans were arriving at the brink of a boom time to make fortunes. With inferior business experience, education, and organizational skills, the Creoles worried that *les Américains* would work them out of business. Americans were thus barred from the already overcrowded French Quarter. The snubbed Americans moved upriver and created a residential district of astounding opulence: the Garden District. It is, therefore, a cultural clash reflected through architecture, with Americans creating an identity by boldly introducing styles and forms familiar to them but previously unknown here.

*Note:* The houses described on this tour are not open to the public.

*To reach the Garden District, take the St. Charles streetcar to Washington Avenue (stop no. 16) and walk 1 block toward the river to:*

### 1. 2727 Prytania St., The Garden District Book Shop

This bookshop's stellar collection of regional titles is an appropriate kickoff for a Garden District tour. Owner Britton Trice schedules readings by many locally and nationally acclaimed authors, and stocks many signed editions. The historic property known as the Rink was built in 1884 as the Crescent City Skating Rink, and subsequently acted as a livery stable, mortuary, grocery store, and gas station.

The Rink also offers a coffee shop, restrooms, and air-conditioning (crucial in the summer).

*Across Prytania Street, you'll find:*

### 2. 1448 Fourth St., Colonel Short's Villa

This house was built by architect Henry Howard for Kentucky Colonel Robert Short. The story goes that Short's wife complained of missing the cornfields in her native Iowa, so he bought her the cornstalk fence. But a recent owner's revisionist explanation is that the wife requested it because it was the most expensive fence in the building catalog. Second Civil War occupational governor Nathaniel Banks was quartered here.

*Continuing down Prytania, you'll find the:*

### 3. 2605 Prytania St., Briggs-Staub House

This is the Garden District's only example of Gothic Revival architecture (unpopular among Protestant Americans because it reminded them of their Roman Catholic Creole antagonists). Original owner Charles Briggs did not hold African slaves but did employ Irish servants, for whom he built the relatively large adjacent servant quarters. Irish immigration was then starting to create the Irish Channel neighborhood across Magazine Street from the Garden District.

#### **4. 2523 Prytania St., Our Mother of Perpetual Help**

Once an active Catholic chapel, this site was one of several in the area owned by Anne Rice and the setting for her novel *Violin*. The author's childhood home is down the street at 2301 St. Charles Ave.

#### **5. 2504 Prytania St., Women's Opera Guild Home**

Some of the Garden District's most memorable homes incorporate more than one style. Designed by William Freret in 1858, this building combines Greek Revival and Queen Anne styles. Now owned by the Women's Opera Guild, the home can be toured on Mondays from 10am to noon and 1 to 4pm for \$7, or by advance arrangements for groups (tel. **504/899-1945**).

#### **6. 2340 Prytania St., Toby's Corner**

The Garden District's oldest known home dates to at least 1838. Built for Philadelphia wheelwright Thomas Toby, it is in the then-popular Greek Revival style. Although it represents an Anglicized attempt at non-Creole identity, this style required Creole building techniques such as raising the house up on brick piers to combat flooding and encourage air circulation.

#### **7. 2343 Prytania St., Bradish Johnson House & Louise S. McGehee School**

Paris-trained architect James Freret designed this French Second Empire-style mansion, built for sugar factor Bradish Johnson in 1872 at a cost of \$100,000 (\$1.6-plus million today). Contrast this house's awesome detail with the stark classical simplicity of Toby's Corner across the street -- a visual indication of the effect that one generation of outrageous fortune had on Garden District architecture. Since 1929 it has been the private Louise S. McGehee School for girls.

*Turn down First Street (away from St. Charles) and it's less than a block to the:*

#### **8. 1420 First St., Archie Manning House**

Home of former New Orleans Saints superstar quarterback Archie Manning and the childhood home of his sons, also familiar to football fans: Peyton, quarterback for the Indianapolis Colts, and Eli, New York Giants quarterback.

#### **9. 1407 First St., Pritchard-Pigott House**

This Greek Revival double-galleried town house shows how, as fortunes grew, so did Garden District home sizes. Americans introduced two house forms: the cottage (as in Toby's Corner) and this grander town house.

#### **10. 1331 First St., Morris-Israel House**

As time passed, the simplicity of Greek Revival style moved toward more playful design styles. By the 1860s, Italianate was popular, as seen in this (reputedly haunted) double-galleried town house. Architect Samuel Jamison designed this house and the **Carroll-Crawford House** on the next corner (1315 First St.); note the identical ornate cast-iron galleries.

*Follow Coliseum Street to the left less than half a block to:*

#### **11. 2329-2305 Coliseum St., The Seven Sisters**

This row of "shotgun" houses gets its nickname from a (false) story that a 19th-century Garden District resident built these homes as wedding gifts for his seven daughters. Actually, there are eight "Seven Sisters," and they were built on speculation.

"Shotgun" style homes are so named because, theoretically, if one fired a gun through the front door, the bullet would pass unhindered out the back. Also, a West African word for this native African house form sounds like "shotgun." The shotgun house effectively circulates air and is commonly found in hot climates. The relatively small shotguns are rare along the imposing Garden District streets, but they are extremely popular throughout the rest of New Orleans.

*Now turn around and go back to First Street and turn left. At the corner of First and Chestnut, you'll see the:*

#### **12. 1239 First St., Brevard-Mahat-Rice House**



Designed in 1857 as a Greek Revival town house and later augmented with an Italianate bay, this house is a fine example of "transitional" architecture. It was called Rosegate for the rosette pattern on the fence. (The fence's woven diamond pattern is believed to be the precursor to the chain-link fence.) This was the home of novelist Anne Rice and the setting for her *Witching Hour* novels.

### **13. 1134 First St., Payne-Strachan House**

As the stone marker in front of the house notes, Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, died in this classic Greek Revival antebellum home, that of his friend Judge Charles Fenner. Davis was buried in magnificent Metairie Cemetery for 2 years and then was disinterred and moved to Virginia. Note the sky-blue ceiling of the gallery -- the color is believed to keep winged insects from nesting there and to ward off evil spirits. Many local homes adhere to this tradition.

*Turn right on Camp and go less than a block to:*

### **14. 2427 Camp St., Warwick Manor**

An example of Georgian architecture, this house is a rare (for the vicinity) multifamily residence. Note the buzzers, which indicate rented apartments.

### **15. 1137 Second St.**

This house exemplifies the type of Victorian architecture popularized in uptown New Orleans toward the end of the 19th century. Many who built such homes were from the Northeast and left New Orleans in the summer; otherwise, it would be odd to see this "cool climate" style of claustrophobic house in New Orleans. Note the exquisite stained glass and rounded railing on the gallery.

*Turn right onto Second Street and go 2 blocks to the corner of Coliseum, where you'll see the:*

### **16. 2425 Coliseum St., Joseph Merrick Jones House**

This house, now home to actor John Goodman, was previously owned by Nine Inch Nails singer Trent Reznor. When he moved in, more anti-noise ordinances were introduced into city council proceedings. His next-door neighbor was City Councilwoman Peggy Wilson. Coincidence?

*Turn left onto Coliseum Street and go 1 block to Third Street. Turn left to get to the:*

### **17. 1331 Third St., Musson-Bell House**

This is the 1853 home of Michel Musson, one of the few French Creoles then living in the Garden District and the uncle of artist Edgar Degas, who lived with Musson on Esplanade Avenue during a visit to New Orleans. On the Coliseum Street side of the house is the foundation of a cistern. These water tanks were so common in the Garden District that Mark Twain once commented that it looked as if everybody in the neighborhood had a private brewery. Cisterns were destroyed at the turn of the 20th century when mosquitoes, which breed in standing water, were found to be carriers of yellow fever and malaria.

*Turn around and cross Coliseum to see the:*

### **18. 1415 Third St., Robinson House**

This striking unusual home was built between 1859 and 1865 by architect Henry Howard for tobacco grower and merchant Walter Robinson. Walk past the house to appreciate its scale -- the outbuildings, visible from the front, are actually connected to the side of the main house. The entire roof is a large vat that once collected water. Add gravity and water pressure, and thus begat the Garden District's earliest indoor plumbing.

*Continue down Coliseum Street 2 blocks to the corner of Washington Avenue. There you'll find:*

### **19. 2627 Coliseum St., Koch-Mays House**

This picturesque chalet-style dollhouse (well, for a large family of dolls) was built in 1876 by noted architect William Freret for James Eustis, a U.S. senator and ambassador to France. Along with four other spec homes he built on the block, it was referred to as Freret's Folly. No detail was left unfrilled, from the ironwork to the gables and finials. Actress Sandra Bullock and her adopted baby Louis (a native New Orleanian) moved here in 2010; wonder if he rides a Big Wheel around the full-size ballroom. Please enjoy the elaborate design, and respect the tenant's privacy.

## **20. 1403 Washington Ave., Commander's Palace**

Established in 1883 by Emile Commander, this turreted Victorian structure (a bordello back in the 1920s) is now the pride of the Brennan family, the most visible and successful restaurateurs in New Orleans, and one of the city's top restaurants. Rain damage after Katrina demanded a to-the-studs stripping inside and out, but the iconic turquoise and white manse looks as it always did!

## **21. 1400 Washington Ave., Lafayette Cemetery**

Established in 1833, this "city of the dead" is one of New Orleans's oldest cemeteries and a popular film location. It has examples of all the classic above-ground, multiple-burial techniques. These tombs typically house numerous corpses -- one here lists 37 entrants, while several others are designated for members of specific fire departments. It's often active with visitors (Commander's Palace diners walking off the bread pudding soufflé?), and thus safe, but unfortunately there is much disrepair here. (The website [www.SaveOurCemeteries.org](http://www.SaveOurCemeteries.org) accepts donations toward restoration and preservation efforts.)

*Walk to St. Charles Avenue to pick up the streetcar (there is a stop right there) or flag down a cab to return to the French Quarter.*

## **22. Wind Down at Still Perkin', Tracey's, Coquette, or Sucré**

Now go back to your first stop, the Rink, where you can enjoy a cup of coffee and some light refreshments at Still Perkin'. Or head south on Washington to Magazine Street, where a po' boy at Tracey's, lunch at Coquette, or a sweet from Sucré will satisfy other appetites.

### Walking Tour 3: Esplanade Ridge

**Start:** Esplanade Avenue and Johnson Street.

**Finish:** City Park.

**Time:** Allow approximately 1 1/2 hours, not including museum, cemetery, and shopping stops.

**Best Times:** Monday through Saturday, early or late morning.

**Worst Times:** Sunday, when attractions are closed. Also, you certainly don't want to walk in this area after dark; if you decide to stay in City Park or in the upper Esplanade area until early evening, plan to return on the bus or by taxi.

If you're heading to City Park, the New Orleans Museum of Art, or the Jazz & Heritage Festival, consider strolling this overlooked region, or leaving enough time for sightseeing from your car. We particularly enjoy the stretch along St. John's Bayou -- mostly as slow and quiet as the sluggish water itself. Historically, the Esplanade Ridge area was Creole society's answer to St. Charles Avenue -- it's an equally lush boulevard with stately homes and seemingly ancient trees stretching overhead. Originally home to the descendants of the earliest settlers, the avenue had its finest days toward the end of the 19th century, and some of the neighborhoods along its path, especially the Faubourg Tremé, are visibly suffering. Esplanade is a little worn compared to St. Charles Avenue, but it's closer to the soul of the city (read: Regular people live here, whereas St. Charles always was and still is for the well-heeled).

*You can catch a bus on Esplanade Avenue at the French Quarter, headed toward the park to your starting point. Otherwise, stroll (about 15 min.) up Esplanade Avenue to:*

#### 1. 2023 Esplanade Ave., Charpentier House

Originally a plantation home, this house was designed in 1861 for A. B. Charpentier and now operates as Ashtons Bed & Breakfast.

#### 2. 2033-2035 Esplanade Ave., Widow Castanedo's House

Juan Rodriguez purchased this land in the 1780s, and his granddaughter, Widow Castanedo, lived here until her death in 1861 (when it was a smaller, Spanish colonial-style plantation home). Before Esplanade Avenue extended this far from the river, the house was located in what is now the middle of the street. The widow tried and failed to block the extension of the street. The late-Italianate house was moved to its present site and enlarged sometime around the 1890s. It is split down the middle and inhabited today by two sisters.

#### 3. 2139 Esplanade Ave.

A great example of the typical Esplanade Ridge style. Note the Ionic columns on the upper level.

*On the opposite side of the street is:*

#### 4. 2176 Esplanade Ave.

A simple, classic-style town house, this was the second Bayou Road home built by Hubert Gerard, who also built the 1861 at no. 2023 .

*After you cross North Miro Street, Esplanade Avenue crosses the diagonal Bayou Road, which was the route to the French-Canadian settlements at St. John's Bayou in the late 17th century. Veer left at the fork to stay on Esplanade Avenue and look for:*

#### 5. Goddess of History -- Genius of Peace Statue

In 1886, this triangular piece of land, called Gayarre Place, was given to the city by Charles Gayarre. George H. Dunbar donated the original terra-cotta statue, a victory monument, which was destroyed in 1938. The present one, made of cement and marble, is a replacement.

#### 6. 2306 Esplanade Ave., Degas House

The Musson family rented this house for many years. Estelle Musson married René Degas, brother of Edgar Degas, the French Impressionist artist. (She and her descendants dropped his last name after he ran off with a neighbor's wife.) Degas is said to have

painted the portrait of Estelle that is now in the New Orleans Museum of Art, among other works, during the brief time he spent living here.

The house was built in 1854, and the Italianate decorations were added later when it was split into two buildings. It's a B&B now, with studio tours available by appointment.

#### **7. 2326 Esplanade Ave., Reuther House**

The current resident of this house -- a founder of the Contemporary Arts Center and a major figure in the city's arts community -- has a collection of metal and cinder-block sculptures in his front yard, readily visible from the street.

*In passing, take a look at nos. 2325, 2329, and 2331 -- all are interesting examples of Creole cottages. Then, continue to:*

#### **8. 2337 & 2341 Esplanade Ave.**

These houses were identical structures when they were built in 1862 for John Budd Slawson, owner of a horse-drawn-streetcar company that operated along Bayou Road in the 19th century. Back then, they were both single-story shotgun-style houses. Notice the unusual ironwork underneath the front roof overhang.

*Cross North Dorgenois Street to:*

#### **9. 2453 Esplanade Ave.**

Until the other was demolished, this house was one of a pair at the corner of Dorgenois Street. Though its architecture has been changed extensively, it's one of the few remaining mansard-roofed homes on Esplanade Ridge.

*Cross North Broad Street to:*

#### **10. 2623 Esplanade Ave.**

Here is a classical revival Victorian home built in 1896 by Louis A. Jung. Note the Corinthian columns. The Jungs donated the triangular piece of land at Esplanade Avenue, Broad Street, and Crete Street to the city on the condition that it remain public property. Now called DeSoto Park, it is graced by an Art Nouveau fence.

#### **11. 2809 Esplanade Ave.**

This is one of the more decorative Victorian Queen Anne center-hall houses on Esplanade Ridge.

#### **12. 2936 Esplanade Ave.**

A nice example of what's known as a Gothic villa.

#### **13. Take a Break at Café Degas, Terranova's, or Fair Grinds**

At the intersection of Mystery Street and Esplanade Avenue, you'll find a little grouping of shops and restaurants. If you're in the area at lunchtime, you might want to stop at Café Degas, for a leisurely meal -- if the weather is nice, the semi-outdoor setting is exceedingly pleasant. If you just want a snack or some picnic food for City Park, you can get cold cuts, ice cream, and snacks at the family-run Terranova's Italian Grocery, 3308 Esplanade Ave. (tel. **504/482-4131**), across the street. Or opt for a break at the quirky Fair Grinds coffeehouse just off Esplanade at 3133 Ponce De Leon St. (tel. **504/913-9072**).

*Continue to:*

#### **14. 3330 Esplanade Ave.**

A galleried frame home built in the Creole-cottage style.

*On your right is:*

#### **15. 3421 Esplanade Ave., St. Louis Cemetery No. 3**

This was the site of the public Bayou Cemetery, established in 1835. It was purchased by the St. Louis diocese in 1856 and contains the burial monuments of many of the diocese's priests. If you've been putting off going into the cemeteries because of concerns over safety, you can explore this one on your own -- though as always, you should still be alert.

*From the cemetery, head back out to Esplanade Avenue and continue walking toward City Park. When you get to the bridge, go left, following the signs, along St. John's Bayou (one of the nicest and least touristy areas of the city), to:*

**16. 1440 Moss St., Pitot House**

This Creole country house overlooks historic Bayou St. John and is open for public viewing. Knowledgeable docents offer a window onto life in the day when the Bayou was the major trade route. Years later, this was home to the first mayor of New Orleans.

*Head back to Esplanade Avenue, turn left, cross the bridge, and walk straight into:*

**17. Esplanade & City Park Aves., City Park**

Explore the sculpture garden, amphitheater, museum, botanical gardens, lakes, and much more in this glorious, expansive park.

