

carnival feature

22nd King Cake Queen Coronation Unites LGBT+ Community @ Ambush Mansion

The 22nd King Cake Queen of Gay Mardi Gras Coronation was a smash success heralding in the Krewe of Queenateenas annual Carnival festivities. It was a beautiful crisp winter evening as guests arrived at the Ambush Mansion for "Vienna: Beautiful, Gay & Gemuthlich (Cozy)," the 2015 chosen theme. Lines began forming 45 minutes prior to party time. Precisely at 8pm the gates and doors to the famous building were opened. As guests entered into the first floor **Ambush** offices, it was a site to behold as King Cake Queen XXII Aubrey Synclaire posed in a striking gown worthy of the "Queen of the Opera" designed by Brent Lavergne. The exquisite jewelry in brilliant red stones was created by Lucinda Holliday of Made for a Queen Jewelry. The coronation crown glimmered in her coiffure courtesy of Maxie Lonidier and Kouture Kaoz.

Krewe of Queenateenas Co-Captains Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain stood on each side of the new queen. Rip was dressed in black tux with red jacket, tie and cummerbund with a fashionable crown, pin and "R" medallion necklace. Marsha wore a simple black lace beaded gown with a vintage elegant red rose stoned necklace and earring set, along with a royal crown highlighted with red stones. The couple's jewelry and crowns were gifts from dear friend Rona Conners, King Cake Queen XVIII and Easter Grand Marshal VIII, of Plantation, Florida.

Krewe captains and royalty; grand marshals of Easter, Southern Decadence and Pride; bar, club, and business proprietors; organization and community leaders; pageant royalty; and socialites including monsieurs, madames and mademoiselles; all joined together under one roof to celebrate the grand kick-off

a message from the queen

It is with most humble gratitude that I would like to express my appreciation to all of the invited guests and Carnival Society in attendance at the 22nd King Cake Queen Coronation on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at the world famous Ambush Mansion hosted by Krewe of Queenateenas' co-Captains Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain. Being selected as the "chosen one" this year to reign over Gay Mardi Gras as King Cake Queen XXII: the "Queen of the Opera," is an exceptionally distinct privilege and prestigious honor for which I am excited and prepared to uphold. This year celebrating the theme of "Vienna: Beautiful, Gay, and Gemuthlich (Cozy)," I was overwhelmed by all of the beautiful sentiments and excitement from the 328 revelers in attendance who waited in what I understand to be a rather lengthy queue on Bourbon Street before entering. The party filled with wonderful delicacies representing the theme was indubitably exquisite, and I was delighted to see the guests having such a great time.

Thank you to Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain for hosting and producing such an outstanding event and for selecting me as your King Cake Queen XXII: the "Queen of the Opera." I am truly grateful and blessed to be selected by you to represent something so culturally important in the Carnival Society of New Orleans. Being amongst a sisterhood of so many regal, legendary, and beautiful ladies who have preceded my coronation fills me with an overwhelming sense of appreciation and honor. Thank you to all of the formers who were in attendance lending their support, and those who were unable to attend but sent beautiful gifts and well-wishes. Those notions and thoughts of support are most appreciated.

Thank you to Larry Graham/Graham Studio One Photography for capturing my stunningly elegant official King Cake Queen portraits; your talents and artistry are incomparable. Thank you to my gown designer Brent Lavergne, of Shreveport, LA; my jewelry designer

Lucinda Holliday of Made for a Queen jewelry in Tucson, AZ; and my hair stylists, Maxie Lonidier of Montana and Kouture Kaoz of Atlanta, GA. I am truly appreciative of your talents and hard work. Extra special thanks to Paul Davis and KCQ XVI Tami Tarmac for your friendship and assistance in getting ready for my big day as well as the photo shoot for my official portraits. You are always there when I need you, and I am very grateful for your support.

I am looking forward to attending all of the Gay Mardi Gras Balls this year and participating in the celebrations of Carnival Season leading up to the Official Bead Toss from the Ambush balcony on Mardi Gras Day.

Thank you all again for a beautiful night; it is a true honor and esteemed privilege to reign as your King Cake Queen XXII of Gay Mardi Gras for 2015.

Aubrey Synclaire
King Cake Queen XXII

for Gay Carnival on world famous Bourbon Street. The 328 guests represented the LGBT+ communities of Mobile, Biloxi, Shreveport, Monroe, Natchitoches, Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Metairie, Slidell and greater New Orleans.

It is the one time each year the mansion is open to invited guests with the receiving line, wine and beer bar in the first floor **Ambush** offices. The long hallway and adjacent plant laden courtyard is lined with seating. At the end of the hallway is the entrance to the private residence of the Naquin-Delain's. As guests ascend the grand staircase, they are greeted by portraits of the King Cake Queens of Gay Mardi Gras bringing them to the second floor landing which houses Belle Lain's Magnolia Bar. After having their cocktails prepared here, they enter the hallway of the second floor which opens into the Victorian parlor, and the formal dining room, which leads to their world famous Ambush balcony.

The entire home is adorned with artwork, objects d'art, religious icons, and various collectibles the Naquin-Delain's have acquired over the past 41 years here and in Europe, as well as antiques from Marsha's grandmother's estate.

The balcony was decorated to showcase this year's Vienna theme featuring a large sparkling crystal chandelier reminiscent of "Phantom of the Opera" on Broadway. It is flanked on each side of the balcony with mannequins in red capes with black phantom mask and glimmering crowns set back in the floor to ceiling windows.

In keeping with the theme guests were treated to Wiener Hofoper (Royal Vienna Court Opera Buffet) which was prepared by the Naquin-Delain's themselves. In the first floor **Ambush** offices, Gulyassuppe (Goulash Soup with Venison) was served. In the Naquin-Delain's second floor formal dining room, the remainder of the buffet was presented including Schinkenschnitten (Ham Slices with Sherry Sauce), Bauernschmaus (Peasants' Feast with Smoked Pork Loin, Wild Boar, Sauerkraut & Sausage), Russischer Kase (Pyramid Molded Russian Cheese with Camembert, Cream Cheese, Roquefort, Cheddar, Edam, Swiss, Cream & Butter), Helgolander Hummersalat (Lobster & Crawfish Salad), Leberparfait (Calf's Liver Pate), and Antoine's Bakery Cream Cheese King Cake.

At 9pm, twelve members of the King Cake Queen Royalty Club joined the new King Cake Queen for the KCQ Gift Exchange. KCQs II & Emeritus: Jewel of the Nile, Jay A. Loomis; IV: Pearl of the Sea, Reba Douglas; IX: The Freedom Queen, Lisa Beaumann; X: The Voodoo Queen, Teryl-Lynn Foxx; XIII: The Diamond Queen, Raven Kennedy; XIV: The Fantasy Queen, Princesse Stephaney; XV: The Fleur de Lis Queen, Marsha Naquin-Delain; XVI: The Grandee Queen, Tami Tarmac; XVII: The Parisian Queen, Opal Masters; XIX: The Samba Queen, Nicole DuBois; XX: The Platinum Queen, Dusty Debris; and XXI: The Borghese Queen, Barbara Ella presented their gift to KCQ XXII Aubrey Synclaire. "The Queen of the Opera" gave each former queen a pair of black opera length gloves.

The City of New Orleans' Human Relations Commission Executive Director Larry Bagneris then presented a proclamation in honor of King Cake Queen XXII Aubrey Synclaire from Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

The Queen of the Opera will lead the 28th Annual Official Gay Mardi Gras Bead Toss on Mardi Gras, February 17, 2pm from the balcony at 828 Bourbon Street, following the 51st Bourbon Street Awards. (www.GayMardiGras.com) (www.GayMardiGras.com/KCQ)

