



Dames de Perlage

Founded in 2012 by Christine Clouatre and Julie Lodato

in 2012 Julie and Christine set out to create a marching club that would celebrate some aspect of Carnival culture. Beads, which are used in Mardi Gras parade royalty costumes, Mardi Gras Indian costumes, and as throws, seemed to fit the bill.

The Dames de Perlage are an all-female marching Social Aid & Pleasure krewe, helping to preserve the art and history of perlage, a beading style used in the costuming of Mardi Gras kings, queens, and maids; and Big Chiefs, Spy Boys and other Mardi Gras Indians. They hope to help give awareness to the art and tradition by reveling throughout the city of New Orleans during the carnival season and for special non-profit events. The Dames march in several major New Orleans area parades, but we also stage and participate in community events (blood drive, zoo fundraisers, . These include nonprofit fundraisers, costume showings in city art galleries, and various appearances to raise awareness for charities throughout the metropolitan New Orleans area.

Costumes: Like Mardi Gras Indians, their work begins on Ash Wednesday, the day after Mardi Gras. Over the following months, they design and create new costumes, based on the next year's theme (which is kept secret until Twelfth Night). The process entails everything from research and storyboarding to art direction, bead and supply purchases, and twice-monthly sacred perlage circles. They bead every available moment, and sometimes in the most unlikely of places, until the final costume - a themed, bead-covered bustier and headdress - is complete for the next carnival season and its multitude of parades and events.



Membership requirements:

A Dame de Perlage shall pay yearly dues in the amount set by the Directors, and by a date set by Directors. Do this, if for nothing else, than for the aforementioned cause. For payment of her dues, a Dame de Perlage shall be entitled to march in local parades and a membership into an exclusive perlage circle. (no guests are permitted in this sacred circle.)

A Dame de Perlage shall bejewel herself in a bustier and headdress that is fully covered with Mardi Gras beads along with other varieties of glam. There cannot be enough emphasis put on the importance of covering every inch of your bustier and headdress in beads, for every bit left untouched by the blessing of a bead undermines our purpose to preserve the art and history of perlage. It is important that every Dame designs and crafts their own bustier and headdress, for the tradition is about telling a story that is from their heart and soul which is the pulse of the New Orleans culture. This bead art and the plumage selected each year make a glorious combination of color and texture that render the dames costumes a work of art. Face painting and make-up are equally important as a dame's craft does not stop with her perlage. All of our dames are beautiful inside and out but a true Dame de Perlage uses her beautiful features to accentuate the perlage by decorating and embellishing her natural beauty with color and glamour. We are the epitome of feminine in every way. A Dame de Perlage does make

sacrifices for her craft, but that sacrifice is not comfort. A Dame de Perlage is expected to carefully select their undergarments, pants, skirts and shoes to coordinate perfectly with their bustier and headdress and to support them appropriately for, at the most, a 7 mile walk. A Dame of Perlage does not need a 3 inch heel to look beautiful.

In order to be a Dame de Perlage you must accept our code of conduct. Dames do not overindulge in alcohol or drugs while in costume or during a Dame de Perlage event. Dames do not show their dame parts or behave in a manor that would deem them unDame-like. We are a respectable collection of dames. Any dame who breaks this code of conduct will be asked to turn in their Dame de Perlage status. Basically don't get loaded and show your stuff while a bunch of families are watching. Most of us have kids and we don't want them seeing that. Thanks!

“Big Fun” live brass band in tow, blaring out Ernie K-Doe’s “Here Come the Girls,” and the Dudes (husbands and friends of the Dames) to assist those with tired feet, or those who may have imbibed a bit too much

any custom throws?

Past Themes:

2013 - No theme (Julie’s outfit was a sugar skull)

2014 - Ain’t Der No More

2015- Jazz & Heritage Festival

2016 - Dames in the Hood

2017 - “The Saints Go Marching In ... Patron Saints of New Orleans” (real and imagined)*

2018 - Marching Forward, Looking Back (Salute to Tri-Centennial”

2019- They All Asked for you (audobon Zoo)

* The names of the "Saints" reflect a mash-up of memories of the various Dames, which are a broad range of vignettes, each with a story to tell. There's Saint Allegra, patron saint of NOLA allergies; St. Nola, or Our Lady of Excess; St. Dan Gill, patron saint of New Orleans gardeners; St. Zing Zang, patron saint of hangovers; St. Caroline, patron saint of piano bars; and even St. René Brunet — patron saint of moviegoers and theaters, for the longtime owner of Uptown’s neighborhood Prytania Theater, whose costume includes a headdress with a strategically placed popcorn box.

[Dames de Perlage](#) co-founder Christine Clouatre estimates that each of the 45 members of the [Mardi Gras](#) marching group spends over 200 hours sewing thousands of tiny seed beads onto the Dames' signature corsets and hats each Carnival season.

DamesdePerlage.org

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Parades that the Dames are typically in: Tucks, Freret, King Arthur, Thoth