



ENTERTAINING



PHOTOGRAPHY
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FAT TUESDAY FUN

HOW TO PARTY
MARDI-GRAS STYLE
IN THE NORTHWEST

BY KELLEY L. MOORE

Clockwise, from opposite page: Make Mardi Gras magic with creative invites and table favors; hostess extraordinaire Lori Russell greets her guests in full Mardi Gras regalia, including a peacock feather-festooned mask.



NORTHWESTERNERS MAY BE nearly a country's-length away from New Orleans, the hotbed of Mardi Gras celebrations, but just because our February days don't top out at 80-plus degrees doesn't mean that we can't generate our own kind of heat. The French-Creole flavored tradition of six weeks of bacchanalia and revelry leading up to Fat Tuesday, which this year falls on February 20, is a great excuse to indulge in great food, friends and family. ✨ We got our party on at the home of local hostess extraordinaire Lori Russell. An ardent supporter of the arts, Russell bid for this hot-and-spicy party catered by Sazerac restaurant's (appropriately named after a New Orleans cocktail) executive chef Jason McClure and planned and styled by me—complete with limited-edition champagne and a hostess necklace from Cartier—at PONCHO's (poncho.org) annual spring Gala Auction in 2005. Creating Russell's Mardi Gras party reminded us of the enchantment and enjoyment that our diverse region and its spoils afford us, and you easily can do the same. The basics to any Fat Tuesday festivity should include tabletops drenched in plenty of purple, green and gold (the traditional colors of Mardi Gras) and decadent, inhibition-freeing masks. We found a variety of ready-made styles, but, for added fun, let your guests fashion their own designs by decorating masks with sequins and feathers. Of course, guests should be liberally plied with creative juices—such as Sazerac's signature Orange Spice martinis—fiery fare and beads, beads, beads. ✨ Then, all that's left to do is, in the patois of the Creole, *laissez les bons temps rouler*, or, let the good times roll! +

Kelley L. Moore is an entertaining and lifestyle expert for NWH+G and Seattle magazines and KING 5 News on KONG TV.



the goods * PAGE 27: Accent place settings with a booklet filled with Mardi Gras terminology and definitions. It will generate conversation and laughter.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Kelley L. Moore sips a Sazerac cocktail creation, an Orange Spice Martini (Woodford reserve bourbon, muddled orange, spiced rum and a touch of cayenne), prepared by Sazerac executive chef Jason McClure. * What would Mardi Gras be without the masks? Put together a creation station and allow your guests to act as designers. Make sure to provide feathers, rhinestones and sequin trim along with a trusty glue gun and tacky glue to secure it all. * Purple for passion, green for fertility and gold for prosperity create the perfect palette for your



Mardi Gras tabletop, from linens to place settings and stemware. For a fun and easy Fat Tuesday centerpiece, fill Camilla Canisters with Mardi Gras Beads and gold doubloons. * Sazerac's lusciously plated, lip-smacking New Orleans Style BBQ Shrimp. * Delightfully incognito, the girls (left to right: Élise Fortin, Lori Russell, Jessamy Livingston, Joan Albee, Jill Millet, Joanna Fesler and Ann Gildner) kick back in their masked creations. * If you can't travel to New Orleans to watch the floats go by, create your own. Skirt any table (this one serves as the mask-making station) in metallic green fringe secured with 3M mounting tape, cover the skirt with purple floral sheeting and trim the perimeter with purple float trim. For extra whimsy, add a mannequin dressed in a purple wig and Mardi Gras beads.