

Move over NYC, **New Orleans** gets top city rankings



Revelers make their way down Bourbon St. while celebrating Mardi Gras Day in New Orleans February 5, 2008.

Credit: Reuters/Sean Gardner

By Patricia Reaney

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(Reuters Life!) - Looking for romance? Head to Honolulu. But if you are single, like live music, boutique hotels and want a wild weekend, New Orleans is the city to visit.

In its latest survey of America's favorite cities Travel and Leisure magazine asked readers to pick the best places for everything from the most attractive, intelligent, stylish and the friendliest people to where to find the best museums, restaurants, bars, museums and affordable hotels.

"The big news this year is that New Orleans received the most number one rankings over New York," said Travel and Leisure Assistant Editor Stirling Kelso.

"It is a popular weekend destination. You can go to New Orleans and feel like you have left the country," she added.

The city known as the "Big Easy" also came out tops for people watching, singles scene and the metropolis with the best bars and concerts and bands.

"In the nightlife category, New Orleans beat Las Vegas. Last year New Orleans swept all of the night-life categories and New Orleans did this year," Kelso added.

Miami topped the charts for the most attractive people, followed by San Diego and Charleston but southern charm seemed to come into play with Nashville, New Orleans and Charleston having the friendliest folks.

New York was the U.S. city with the most stylish residents with Miami and San Francisco and Los Angeles also coming up with high marks.

But when it comes to most intelligent Minneapolis/St. Paul took the crown, followed by Austin and Boston. The twin cities also scored top marks as the cleanest city.

The results were based on an online survey of more than 60,000 people who rated 30 U.S. cities in various categories. Five new cities, Providence, Kansas City, Cleveland, Houston and St Louis, were added to the survey this year.

Washington D.C. was the top choice for best museums, galleries and historical sites, with New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston also in the top five.

"In regards to culture, Washington D.C. and New York really tied in that category. New York got the No. 1 ranking for classical music and theatres, and Washington D.C. did for historical sites and monuments and museums and galleries. It was a nice East Coast tie," Kelso said.

For more sedate family fun, Orlando, Florida was the top choice with Washington D.C. coming in second, and San Diego third. If money is a consideration, Cleveland scaled the chart for best affordable getaway.

New York may have bowed to New Orleans in the nightlife ranking but it was still scored top marks in a category considered important by many -- shopping.

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Come visit New Orleans

