



# THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

Haw, haw, haw—the UFC finally makes a return to “The Big Easy.”

BY TR FOLEY

New Orleans is a pride-filled American city that is back on its feet...and that's just where Dana White wants the fans in Ernest N. Morial Convention Center on Sept. 17 for UFC Live: Shields vs. Ellenberger.

## ► The Fans

Miami. Los Angeles. Vegas. All these cities are filled with TapouT t-shirts and guys in board shorts. New Orleans is filled with linen shirts and paunch bellies. As a sport and lifestyle, MMA hasn't quite taken hold in the Crescent City. However, according to Jeff Duncan—a sports writer for the Times-Picayune for the past 11 years—the MMA lifestyle could be taking hold with the city's changing demographic.

“The UFC can definitely make inroads here,” says Duncan. “They must see the same marketing potential that the NBA now sees in New Orleans. The city is filled with entrepreneurial 20-somethings, all with disposable income and interest in sports. Just wait 10 years—I think it can be a major sports city.”

## ► The Fighters

Pat Barry and Melvin Guillard are two of the most outspoken—and entertaining—fighters in the UFC, and they both call New Orleans home. Melvin Guillard's seven-year stint in the UFC is finally starting to show signs of rocketing north after a solid streak of wins over top contenders. Barry, the converted kickboxer known for his witty retorts and dangerous limbs, is a fan-favorite. Both are street-tough and the type of fighters

that the UFC hopes will continue to emerge from New Orleans.

## ► The Soul

The 1892 world heavyweight boxing match between “Boston Strong Boy” John J. Sullivan's and “Gentleman” James J. Corbett was held at the Olympic Club in New Orleans and was one of the most important events in combat sports history. The fight was the first to be held under the Marquess of Queensbury rules, which stated that competitors must wear gloves and that rounds must be limited to three minutes each—although there was no limitation on the numbers of rounds. In addition, it was the first fight to be held indoors under electrical lights at the Olympic Club Arena, packing in 10,000 fans.

## ► The Story

UFC Live will be the seventh time that the UFC has marched into Louisiana, but the first since 2000, which means that this will be the debutante ball of the Zuffa-owned UFC in the bayou. The UFC's first appearance in Louisiana took place at UFC 16 in 1998, which marked the “meteoric” rise of play-by-play announcer Mike Goldberg, as he was in the booth for the first time, calling the action with guest commentator Tank Abbott.



## BIG EASY LIVING

When UFC Lightweight Melvin Guillard gets back to his New Orleans hometown, he's sure to hit his five favorite places.

- **FRENCH MARKET**—six blocks of retail shops, live performances, restaurants, cafes, and a flea and farmer's market.

- **JACKSON SQUARE**—historic buildings that include an open-air art district, retail shops, museums, art galleries, and restaurants.

- **RIVERWALK MARKETPLACE**—unique shopping and entertainment on the Mississippi riverfront, including 130 stores, kiosks, and restaurants.

- **CITY PARK**—1300-acre park that features a botanical garden, arboretum, sculpture garden, and museum.

- **BOURBON STREET**—famous avenue of non-stop partying, which includes bars, restaurants, stores, and live musical acts.