

Krewe of Proteus

Travel and Treasures

of the Silk Road

March 4, 2019

THE NEW ORLEANS
ADVOCATE
SEVEN DAYS • HOME DELIVERED • LOUISIANA OWNED

1. PROTEUS CXXXVIII (138)

Proteus himself leads his glittering procession from his gold and pink shell, astride a cascading wave. The design, shell, and wave structure of this classic float originated in the 1930s.

2. TITLE: "TRAVEL AND TREASURES OF THE SILK ROAD"

As Proteus emerges from the swirling waters, he is escorted by his colorful creatures of the sea. The Old-Man-of-the-Sea will lead us on a journey through time and halfway around the world, as we explore the Silk Road.

3. "1881: THE DAWN OF PROTEUS"

Based on the design of the King's Car from the very first Proteus parade; this faithful reproduction of the wing-like fins reflect the colors of the rainbow. The glittering scales shed flashes like a million diamonds in the ever-changing illumination of this magnificent float.

4. VOYAGE OF MARCO POLO

Marco Polo, starting out in the mercantile city of Venice, set forth on a 5,000-mile journey along the Silk Road, ultimately leading to the Mongolian palace of Kublai Kahn. It was to this emperor that he became a trusted confidant for many years. After 24 years abroad, he finally returned home to Italy, with the riches and wisdom of the East.

5. PORT OF ALEXANDRIA

The lighthouse of Alexandria, Egypt, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, burns brightly as a guiding light for the sailors below. Ships from across the globe — from Europe, Asia, and Africa — lay at anchor to trade their goods and take a brief rest on her shores.

6. BYZANTIUM

Emperor Constantine stands tall with the model of his Byzantine capital and his namesake, Constantinople. Emperor Justinian

I displays the Hagia Sophia, shining jewel of this gold-drenched city, to symbolize his oversight in its creation.

7. ZENOBIA, QUEEN OF PALMYRA

The brave warrior queen, Zenobia, found a love of conquest under her husband, King Odaïnat. His victory over the Persians was preserved on the mosaic walls of their city of Palmyra: Persia depicted as a savage chimera, and the victorious king as the hero and monster slayer, Bellerophon. Following the death of her King, she bore the crown and brought most of the Eastern Roman Empire under her power, seizing most of Egypt before her ultimate defeat and capture.

8. GARDENS OF NINIVEH

Behind the garden walls of the Savid Empire, a lady and her court entertain a merchant with his fine selection of fabrics from far off lands. Meanwhile, the winged Lamassu stands as a

symbol of protection over the city.

9. DESERT CARAVAN

Through the harsh, wind-swept dunes, a party of Bedouin tribesmen can be seen cutting across the landscape. Their elaborate tasseled jewelry sways to the gait of their camels as they make their way through the vast desert sands.

10. CARAVANSERAI

Caravanserais offer a welcomed rest after a long day's journey, for traders and camels alike. Tired bodies with full stomachs gather around the fire to share stories and songs from around the globe.

11. MIRAGE

The thirst for water can play tricks on desperate travelers, whose minds have become weak in the grasp of nature's cruelty. Lush palms and plentiful water appear to rise up from the desert, glittering in the white-hot

sun. But, alas, it is all an empty illusion.

12. RESTFUL OASIS

The most precious sight for our weary travelers after a long, desert trek: the cool, fresh water of an oasis. In contrast with the surrounding desolation, life thrives here. Trees grow strong, dripping with fruit, while animals raise their young in the shade of the lush palms

13. BAZAAR IN BUKHARA

In the bazaar in Uzbekistan, food and treasures from around the world are piled high on display, warmed by the golden light of the midday sun. A vendor shows off his fine collection of Ikat fabrics, a specialty of the region.

14. TRANS HIMALAYAN PASS

Loaded down with salt and wool to trade down in the fertile valleys of the Ganges, traders make their way along narrow, hairpin passageways through the Tibetan plateau and

the mountains of Nepal. Fields of Himalayan wild flowers flourish in the crisp mountain air, while ancient Buddhist temples can be seen off in the distance.

15. RISE OF GENGHIS KAHN

The fiercest of armies emerges from the steppes of Mongolia with an insatiable hunger for power, treasure, and conquest. Ruthlessly, they burn and pillage everything in their wake as they thunder their way across Asia. Villagers too slow to escape are given an ultimatum: join the Mongol Horde or perish. Their brilliant and ruthless leader, Genghis Kahn, extends his vast empire across all of Asia.

16. PORT OF KOLKATA

Enterprising men weave their boats through the lush maze of waterways to the riverine Port of Kolkata. From there, the bounty of India — animal skins, fabrics, semiprecious stones, ivory, and produce — will find its way out to

sea and to points unknown.

17. MOGAO GROTTOS

Rising out of the vast wastelands of the Gobi Desert is the Mogao Grottoes of the Dunhuang Oasis; a respite not only for the body, but also the spirit. Hidden in the cliffs above the Dachuan River lies one of the marvels of the world: the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas. Throughout 492 caves and sanctuaries, the traveler is treated to a treasure trove of statues and wall paintings of the Buddha. Each room vibrates with color, every inch covered in 1,000 years of divinely inspired artistry.

18. VOYAGE TO THE SPICE ISLANDS

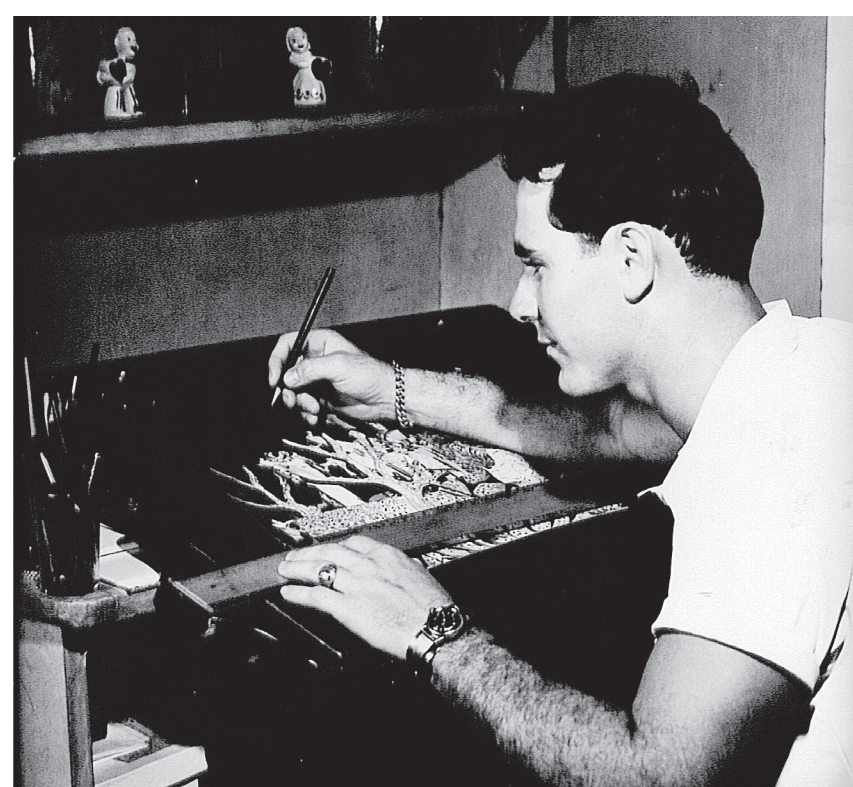
In the tropical isles of South East Asia, one can find a cargo more precious than gold: spice. Piles of turmeric, anise, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, and peppers flavor the air as they are loaded into ships to be whisked along maritime routes to foreign merchants.

19. TREASURE OF SILK

The penultimate of luxury goods, the paving stone of Eurasian trade, and the backbone of an empire: silk. This bold, undulating dragon represents the silk treasure of China, as it transforms into colorful ribbons of the precious textile.

20. CITY OF CHANG'AN

Situated at the end of a 3,000 mile central Asian passageway, the city of Chang'an was once one of the finest and more powerful metropolises in the world. People from far and wide flocked to its city walls, drawn to its enormous wealth and flourishing marketplaces. The court of the Tang Dynasty, the height of worldly sophistication, is entertained by dancer performing the traditional sleeve dance, accompanied by imperial musicians.



85 YEARS LATER, PREMIER PARADE DESIGNER AND BUILDER KERN STUDIOS HONORS TRADITION AND CONTINUES TO INNOVATE

“Aside from their global reach, home is where the art is for the Kern family.”

Have you ever wondered who makes your favorite Mardi Gras parade? Chances are high that it's Kern Studios, the oldest, largest, and most respected parade design and build business in New Orleans and around the world.

Aside from their global reach, home is where the art is for the Kern family. Kern Studios is the go-to designer and builder for Carnival's oldest and most traditional Mardi Gras parades, Rex, Hermes, and Babylon, and they are also the go-to team behind the biggest and most innovative Superkrewes, Endymion, Bacchus, and Orpheus.

Highlights from the past few years include working with the fantastic female krewes Cleopatra, Femme Fatale, Muses, and Iris. Kern Studios is also the design and build team behind some of the most popular parades, including Freret, Cae-

sar, Tucks, and Zulu. More recently, Kern Studios built the world's longest parade float for Endymion, as well as new signature floats for Muses, Tucks, Bacchus, and Orpheus, featuring cutting edge animatronic and lighting technologies never seen before in New Orleans. Kern Studios is currently working on several new spectacular signature floats that will be unveiled during the 2019 Mardi Gras season.

“These days, as visitors turn a few more corners in the float den, they are greeted by the latest technology—the magnificent robot Pixie.”

From the towering sculptures of famous figures such as Marilyn Monroe and Louis Armstrong, to the animatronic King and Queen Kong statues, Kern Studios artists work year-round to bring to life the imaginative concepts that are the

cornerstone of the company. Operating side by side with Kern Studios is Mardi Gras World, one of the most popular tourist destinations in New Orleans. Visitors are treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the captivating history and artistry of Mardi Gras. Guests are guided through the breathtaking props and floats of Kern Studios, meeting artists along the way and observing traditional techniques of sculpting, paper mache, and painting. Guests also view a short historical film about Mardi Gras, enjoy a fun photo shoot with traditional costumes, eat a tasty slice of King Cake, and browse authentic Mardi Gras gifts in the gift shop—all with views overlooking the Mississippi River.

These days, as visitors turn a few more corners in the float den, they are greeted by the latest technology—the magnificent robot Pixie. Pixie was created especially for Kern Studios by international robotics innovator KUKA. Weighing six tons and sitting on a moving axis in glassed-in room designed for spectators, the resident KUKA robot is undeniably the strongest

and shiniest tool at Kern Studios. Pixie is also a uniquely global citizen. The mechanics hail from Germany, the spindle is Italian, and the computer hardware originates in Japan. Pixie can mill single-piece sculptures up to 60 feet long with the ability to attach multiple components together. The artists can also back an entire float chassis into Pixie's robot room and sculpt a float from Styrofoam.

Pixie is not the only worldly guest star in the den these days. Kern Studios works year-round for national and international clients like Universal Studios, Disney, Chick-fil-A, M&M's Mars, Hard Rock, and Uber. From casinos, museums, theme parks, stadiums, and arenas worldwide, you will find the mark of Kern Studios artists and designers in parades, props, and theming designed to withstand the test of time.

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Blaine Kern ‘the greatest influence on Mardi Gras in the 20th Century.’”

At the heart of Kern Studios' work is the artistic manner credited to Mardi Gras pioneer Blaine Kern Sr., who first drew inspiration from his father Roy Kern's work for early Mardi Gras parades in the 1930s. Blaine established himself as an independent float builder in 1947 with Alla. In 1952, Rex Captain Darwin Fenner sent Blaine to Europe to study Carnival traditions. Blaine returned with a new knowledge of color, animation, and innovation, which transformed Mardi Gras into the experience we know today. Blaine passed his trade secrets and expertise down through the generations of artists and leaders still working on the floors of Kern Studios today. Local writer and Mardi Gras historian Arthur Hardy, has proclaimed Blaine Kern “the greatest influence on Mardi Gras in the 20th Century.”

Blaine's present day legacy includes the leadership of his son Barry Kern, President

and grandson Fitz Kern, Vice President of Operations of Kern Studios, overseeing record breaking local, national, and international growth. Kern also co-owns and operates Mardi Gras World. Whether it's designing Mardi Gras parades year after year or working on permanent installations around the world, the Kerns' dedication to honoring artistic tradition and driving innovation in the specialty fabrication industry makes Kern Studios the most respected parade designer and builder in New Orleans and beyond.

KERN STUDIOS IS PROUD TO DESIGN AND BUILD

- Hercules
- Cleopatra
- Eve
- Freret
- Nemesis
- Olympia
- Caesar
- Femme Fatale
- Knights of Babylon
- Muses
- Hermes
- Aphrodite
- Iris
- Tucks
- Endymion
- Bacchus
- Orpheus
- Cleopatra (Houma)
- Zulu
- Rex