

Iberia Parish

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James Lee Burke - How often do you dream of experiencing the locations made vivid in your favorite novel? Do you ever wish you could walk the path of your favorite character and retrace the steps for yourself? Fans of world renowned author James Lee Burke and his famous Cajun Detective, Dave Robicheaux have the opportunity to do just that when they visit Iberia Parish.

Burke knows South Louisiana like the back of his hand, as he spent his summers in New Iberia with relatives, playing and fishing in the many water holes that populate the area. That knowledge is vindicated in the way he weaves tales of intrigue with characters pulled from New Iberia and New Orleans in a setting that includes well-known landmarks and locations in Iberia Parish. Burke has written 17 crime



novels featuring Dave Robicheaux, the troubled Cajun detective who pursues justice with a vengeance. The first of the series that was published was "Neon Rain" in 1986. Burke is also one of only two authors who have won two Edgar Awards, and one of his books, the 1986 "Lost Get Back Boogie" was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Two Robicheaux novels are now feature films. "Heaven's Prisoners" was released in 1996 and starred Alec Baldwin, Eric Roberts and Teri Hatcher. In 2007, Bertrand Tavernier directed and filmed "In the Electric Mist," adapted from the



1993 book "In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead," in New Iberia. Released in 2009 and starring Tommy Lee Jones, John Goodman, Mary Steenburgen, Peter Sarsgaard and Kelly MacDonald, the film captures the mystique of the town as the action snakes through historic downtown New Iberia, City Hall, sugar cane fields, and along Bayou Teche. To add even more charm and magnetism, local residents with a Cajun accent play small roles in the film.

A walking and driving tour of New Iberia and the surrounding area celebrates the popularity of Burke's novels and films. These tours of "Dave's Domain" map out sites straight from the Cajun detective's adventures. Bayou Teche Museum features an exhibit dedicated to the author. Books Along the Teche sells signed first editions of all his novels. Both are located on Main Street, one of his favorite spots.

Burke has expressed how New Iberia is blessed with one of the most beautiful and breathtaking main streets in the country. In "A Stained White Radiance" Robicheaux reflects, "I look down from the window at the brick paved street in the morning's blue light, the colonnades over the sidewalks, a black man pushing a wooden cart laden with strawberries from under the overhang of a dark green oak tree. The scene looks like a postcard mailed from the 19th century."

By: Brittany Racca

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