

BEYOND MERELY THE A-LIST

The Social Group who
will make New York Sizzle this
Winter.

There have always been elite groups within New York society, to which membership was restricted even if one had all the money in the world, or could claim an ancestry that traces back for a thousand years. From Mrs. Astor's 400 forwards there have been little elite groups that outsiders would sacrifice anything to enter.

One such group that has formed this year, and has outsiders bruising their knuckles trying to knock on the door for admission, are the so-called "Saints and Sinners" who have taken their name from a newspaper headline following an outrageously successful Halloween party.

You can forget automatic membership if you are a celebrity, so sorry Kardashians; being a billionaire doesn't help either, so hard luck Donald Trump; even the President himself would be politely asked to come to an event, but membership? Only time would tell.

So if they are the ones who don't get in - Who does? What things make you an insider?

Well for starters you have to be invited, which usually means you know an existing member, two or three doesn't do you any harm. It's rather like membership in something as elite as the Union or the Metropolitan clubs, except it's even harder to get in.



Manchester – Holiday Home for the Saints and Sinners

So having discussed who is out lets discuss who is in. Well, a bevy of beautiful women always helps any social clique, and the Sinners, as the group call its women folk, include such iconic models as Juliette Huntingdown, Abigail de Ros, Jeannie Brewster and rising star Caroline Jameson, as well as a host of other beautiful faces.

Among the Saints are to be found Investment Fund Manager Roy Razinski, socialite priest Alexander Richmond, Deputy Mayor Tom Morse, and social icon Guy, the Duc de Grechy.

Okay - the average reader might now just be losing interest thinking that this is just another spoiled group of the rich and powerful. Let me disabuse you of that idea.

The hostess of the famed Halloween Party that really set this city gossiping was Janice Carter. Have you not heard of her? Well if that's a no it's not surprising, Jan as her friends call her is a humble FBI agent.

April Broadhurst runs a Florists shop in Greenwich Village, Annie Kelly is a schoolteacher. I could go on. The point is that this is not a coterie of the rich and powerful, it really is a group of friends from all strata of society.

So do you still want in? Well a few tips. Give heavily to the right charities - the Saints and Sinners are all big supporters of the Jamie Kirkham Memorial Scholarships, given in honor of a St Angela's Academy student tragically killed in an armed robbery.

In fact sending your daughter to St Angela's might be the best idea of all since the group is littered with current saints like Teen Supermodels Abigail de Ros and Jeannie Brewster, as well as parents of students, and a large wedge of alumnae.

So what of the group's tentacles? The Marquess of Ordford, his wife the ex-model Mandy Carrow, and their children all have a membership key, as do the numerous members of the de Grechy and de Ros families.

Socialite superbrain Dr. Patricia van Roon, and her partner Frieda are of course members. Insurance Executive Susan Walker and her husband UN driver Clint are insiders because Mrs. Walker is Juliette Huntingdown's niece. Her friend, Security Consultant and soon to be Supermodel Caroline Jameson, qualifies also by having done work for Ms. Huntingdown. It really is a case of a growing circle.



Spot the visitors!

So where can you sight the saints and Sinners beyond the society pages? Well in winter I hear forget Aspen, cancel that trip to Europe, the group favors Stowe with I hear long groups of minivans going to be seen heading that way each Friday night all season.

In Summer, forget The Hamptons, this group prefers the brisker environs of Boston's North Shore, which accounts for why both Dr. Karen Boyd aka former model Charity Royce, and Alice MacKinnon the fashion entrepreneur, as well as their husbands are members in good stead.

The group has even the power to draw such dedicated non-partygoers as style icon Mary Thomas into its orbit.

"We tend to prefer to do things in an understated way." Sinner Kelly Rochermann told this writer over cocktails at the Inn on the Park, one of their favored hangouts.

When I reminded them of the notorious Halloween party, socialite and well know society building contractor Tonia Razinski, laughed and told me, "Well every group needs let its hair down occasionally darling."

Well hair up or down it looks like the Saints and Sinners will decorate our social scene at least for a while. We spoke to leading light of the group Sandy Richmond, former Debutante of the year and one of the hottest interior designers in NYC.

"It really did begin with daughters becoming friends at school," she told me as we sat drinking coffee in her sumptuous mansion home. "As they grew up, the mothers got to know each other, and it just seemed to snowball from there."

But what in her view led to the breakdown in what many perceive to be the firm social barriers in New York society? She laughed and said "you have to remember my own nanny and her sister are members of this group as well. You see, it's not about money or status or who your parents are. It's about friendship, it's about being there for each other, it's – it's about accepting people as they are, warts and all."

So does she think that being an extended family is what provides the bedrock?

"I think so, yes – with the way this country is today, so much hatred and mistrust, you need to know who your friends are, and we consider all of us our friends."

And if one of those friends is hurt or needs help?

"Then we're there for them one hundred and fifty per cent, no questions asked."

I asked her about two of the Sinners, Carina Huntingdown, the daughter of Julia and the current face of Varilux glasses, and Judy McNally, both currently studying at Yale and both due to take part in the Debutante's Ball this coming January. Would the group be supporting them at that event?

"Every step of the way – in all that they do then and in the future."

So there you have it – friendship and mutual respect, regardless of where your perceived standing in society is. A model, surely, for all of us.



ST ANGELA'S ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LADIES

Founded	1888
Location	East 87th St, New York City.
Governance	Independent but originally Roman Catholic
Enrolment	507 girls
Nicknames	Wildcats, Angels
Colors	Maroon & Gold

Justifiably considered THE elite Girls' private day school in New York City, the list of famous alumnae is endless. Under the benevolent reign of Miss Wilhelmina Harkness the school has enhanced both its social and already high academic reputation.

Angels are regarded as being the hardest working girls in town, trying to appear effortless as they combine hard studying with relentless partying.

Seniors are renowned for their end of year pranks that have raised millions for charity over the years.

The school is also renowned for its relentless rivalry with the girls of the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Open to students of all faiths there are extensive scholarship and financial aid packages available.