

# Toreador Clan Guide

“Art is a lie that enables us to realize the truth.” –Pablo Picasso

The Toreador Clan are often thought to be frivolous by those who don't understand the importance of art or the power of social networking in our society. It is the artists who shape the world around us with strokes of color across canvas and the breadth of words across once-empty pages; to be read and viewed and, most importantly, interpreted for our own enjoyment. Everything around us is influenced by these creators, and their creations allow us a brief moments of joy in an otherwise dark existence.

The Clan of the Rose as a whole remain closer to mortals than perhaps any other clan, for how can one partake in the best humanity has to offer without maintaining a closeness to it? The Masquerade is a fine line and Toreador walk right down the middle of it. They indulge in their human emotions and favor art and indulgence above almost all else. They are wont to throw extravagant fêtes and can become lost in hedonistic pleasures. They have less organization than many of the High Clans, though that's not to say they don't enjoy a good machination once in a while. Most would just rather spend their time out and among mortals, having fun or seeking inspiration to fuel their craft.

## The Many Flowers

The Toreador possess an ever-changing clan hierarchy, that can shift and move with fads and fleeting popularities. Prestige can be won and lost within a short span of time and it is difficult to maintain clearly defined ranks when they are subject to change so rapidly. The Clan's main structure comes from their cliques. Just as trends wax and wane, so can an artist's perceived value and contribution. One night's artiste can become tomorrow night's poseur, depending on what a critic might say!

## The Cliques

The Roses can be divided into three main categories based on their relationship to culture and the arts. Each of the cliques share both a love and hate relationship with each other. They each despise each other for being less than their own art, style, or view, however at the same time they look to each other for review, competition, and acknowledgement that thrusts these passionate Kindred ever forward through culture.

## **Artistes**

The Artistes are your classic visual and performing artists, those who were embraced because they were exceptional at a specific craft such as painting, writing, sculpture, acting and dance.

Their work is truly their passion and their life's calling, and often they are fully taken and entranced by its creation. However, they can also be quite taken by its perception by others and their fellows, often craving good reviews and spurring competition amongst themselves. Each Artiste wants to leave his lasting impression on an every changing culture, a feat that constantly compels them to create.

Amongst their clan mates they consider themselves the “real” Toreador and inheritors of the Clan's original values and goals. They look down on other Toreador with not-so-subtle contempt for watering down the talents of the Clan. They find the non-traditional works of Novateurs to be simultaneously a knock-off of true art, and also a threat to their position. However, while they likewise look down on the Connoisseurs for their lack of a “true” art, they also crave their positive reviews as approval for their own work.

### **Novateurs**

The Novateurs, though some Artistes would dare call them Poseurs, are the most diverse group of Roses. They consist of those embraced without an art, while their sires were riding a particular fad, or unconventional types of artists who create in a field that is misunderstood or devalued by a classic Artiste. This is the most diverse clique of Toreador, ranging from elders practicing unconventional arts or embraced centuries ago for their rare beauties, to younger computer based artists and graphic designers who are deeply entrenched in the age of digital art. What they all share is a lack of interest in the more conventional arts, and they usually wear their social marking of unconventionality with pride.

The Novateurs often find the Artistes too set in their ways, and the Connoisseurs lacking in understanding of their true brilliance. Their most lauded member, and the one rumored to have coined the term, is Raphael de Corazon. His great art, the Camarilla itself, remains a stark example of the power of unconventional thinking amongst his clan.

### **Connoisseurs**

The Connoisseurs, called Critics by some and Patrons by others, were embraced to judge and support the arts—they have a keen eye and understanding of art, but supposedly lack the talent to create themselves. However, their opinions can be an art form unto themselves ranging from scathing essays to flowery praise, each laced with carefully chosen words to hit the appropriate tone. The reviews of a so-called “critic” can make or break the success of a clan member's work, something both the Artistes and the Novateurs dread equally, and as such they are usually welcomed at most salons, at least on the surface. The support of a “patron” can make or break a fellow Rose with its influence. Due to this sway, Connoisseurs often direct the trends that Artistes and Novateurs alike may follow. They may not have the talent, but they play an important role all the same.

The Connoisseurs find the Artistes and Novateurs equally pretentious: the Artistes for assuming

their vaunted sense of style is all there is to art, and the Novateurs for daring to think they can do it better.

### **The Dangers**

Toreador can be Kindred prone to extremes, and when they dip over the edge, they do so in grandiose style. The dangers consist of the downfalls of each clique when a member gives in to the excesses and degenerates from passion into obsession. Artistes can become sullen Burnouts or overexposed Hedonists. Novateurs can become obsessive Revenge Artists. Connoisseurs can turn into jaded Thorns.

### **Burnouts and Hedonists**

These poor Roses consist of mostly Artistes who have lost their passion over time or new embraces faced with the truth of immortality who simply become overwhelmed and start to draw blanks where they used to draw inspiration. Some Burnouts attempt to make themselves still useful to the art scene by becoming patrons or trying their hand at critique, but often their unbeating hearts just aren't in it. Other Burnouts may simply shut themselves away either socially, or in some extreme cases physically, in order to bear the shame of their loss, while still others attempt to hide it by producing half-created pieces lacking in their creator's true skill.

Artistes react differently altogether, embracing the cultural aspects of art over the creative ones. These Hedonists revel in the party scene, often attracting flocks of mortals who have come to take part or take advantage. A Hedonist often loses himself in the thrill of experience and forgets himself, a true loss of some of the clan's greatest artists.

### **The Revenge Artists**

One can only be scorned so much before one's mind bends to revenge, and thus many a Toreador, mostly Novateurs tired of being treated as lesser artists, falls to a new art: revenge. These lost Kindred abandon the talents they had in life for a new passion that twists their minds toward the single goal of vengeance against the one that hurt them. The intricate plans and layers of intrigue involved in Toreador revenge are truly astonishing. These consumed vampires bend their creative skills in the most vindictive ways, and woe to the one who has crossed such a Kindred. The most beautiful, elaborate, and "just" ending is in store for such a being.

### **The Thorns**

Some Connoisseurs grow bitter over time; the endless parades of art and salons weigh heavy on their souls and the demand for their critiques seems unending. Eventually they become so jaded that it all begins to blend together and a bitter resentment forms for art and the entire culture in general. These Roses turn into Thorns and begin to use their reviews as a weapon to

bring down the artists that have embittered them so. All art deserves their scorn, and will be met equally with negative review and chastisement. These Thorns lead bitter nihilistic existences, turning on the very culture that once sustained them. Woe to the Toreador who gains their ire.

## **The Guilds**

While the hierarchy and social conventions of the Toreador clan may change rapidly with the culture, many cities form more formal organizations with their fellows called guilds. These Guilds may last anywhere from a season or a year to decades and centuries depending on their leadership and purpose. They are formed based on specific codes of etiquette, usually related to specific goals or principles of the clan in the area.

Especially successful guilds find that their charter will spread to other cities, gaining regional, or even national, influence among the clan. Guilds based on the same code of etiquette will select a Guild leader, called a Didaskalos, usually by vote of the participating cities (1 vote per city). These guilds remain blocks of power in the Toreador Clan, as long as they remain popular and in fashion. Jealous rivals spreading rumors or false information at a salon have brought many guilds low, and critics always love to tear down the most popular.

Occasionally a city will seek to start a guild based on art or expertise. These sorts of guilds create clear lines of division within the clan, encouraging rivalries, yet strengthening the bonds between members. Sometimes stronger guilds will expand their coverage of various art forms or enterprises in order to garner more clan support in a city or region. These larger guilds may dabble in politics or policy, often dictated by the interests of their membership. However in the end, Toreador are individualistic, and loyalty and investment may vary from Kindred to Kindred and trend to trend, with only the truly influential commanding lasting enterprises.

### **Example Guilds:**

#### *The Guild of the Dawn*

While many of the Guilds of the Rose focus on the improvement and innovation of their own art seeking to raise it to new heights, the Guild of the Dawn instead serves to cultivate and inspire today's mortal artists in order to find the newest innovations in art and culture. The Guild does so by sponsoring art schools, museums, performing halls, and individual artists and often take time to individually mentor promising students.

This Guild, based in Hamburg, Germany, is composed of patrons, artists, and critics who have retained their connection to humanity and seek to ensure art and culture remain the focus of the mortals in the area.

#### *Guild of the Immortal Rose*

These Roses find describing the Beauty of the surrounding world as their core principle in what it means to truly live. Taking in a scene, a person, or just a moment of beauty and rendering it immortal through song, poem, painting, and even some prose.

This Guild began as an alliance between San Francisco Toreador painters, that had a broad vision to paint “all the beauty of the world” and find some political unity against a growing brood of critics. Their guild became fashionable quickly, and many would be artists came to ply their trade, and the guild was slowly but surely expanded to include other arts under the same mantra.

## **The Council of Petals**

A recent occurrence in modern nights has been the rise of an increased hierarchy amongst the clan, possibly in response to the Camarilla’s equal rise in authority and order. The most influential Toreador in each geographic region has taken upon herself the mantle of Councilor, and together the Toreador Councillors have begun to call themselves the Council of Petals.

While their authority can wax and wane with the influence of the individuals elevated to the Council, many individual Toreador and a large number of the Guilds revere those who have the renown to be elected. Many Roses dream of the prestige being a Councillor would bring them and vie for the position as a symbol of social status. Most members of the Clan have even come to take their social and political cues from these self-styled leaders. It is rumored that the Council even has influence over the selection of the Toreador Clan Head.

The Councillors are at minimum responsible for making the preparations for the yearly Halloween Ball, and for Carnivale when it draws near. Being elected to the Council of Petals during the year of Carnivale is considered a noteworthy event, and Toreador remember Carnivale Councillors from years past.

Carnivale is held in late winter or early spring every twenty-three years. The event is almost always a formal, masked ball. Councillors prepare and preside over the gallant festivities, often attempting to top the previous events in theme, style and expense. Gaining the favor of the Councillors and earning a place at the Councillor’s head table is often thought to be a worthy goal of Carnivale for artistes and poseurs alike. Carnivale is often a festival where the high arts are showcased.

The Halloween Ball (All Hallow’s Eve Ball) is held in late fall and is a typically dark, gothic or costumed event depending on the hosts’ preference. Games and themed events have peppered past Halloween Balls. More unusual, sensual or emotional arts are typically showcased during this event.

A Councilor almost always takes on the responsibility and the prestige of being the head organizer of regional salons and balls.

Members of the Council of Petals are selected by vote and each region is represented by one Councillor. Each city in a region receives one vote that must be cast by the Toreador Primogen

or, if present, the Toreador Prince. If there is both a Toreador Primogen and a Toreador Prince, the Toreador with the highest Camarilla Status casts the vote for who shall be elected Councillor. Candidates for the Council of Petals are nominated by others or self-nominated publicly prior to the election. Reassessment times can vary from region to region, but most Toreador look to reassess their Councillor on a yearly basis as styles and trends wax and wane.

## **Notable NPCs**

**Raphael De Corazon** (5<sup>th</sup> Generation) - Founder of the Camarilla - Raphael was embraced in 1182, from his humble beginnings as a priest, by Callisti y Castillo, who had disguised herself as a native pagan witch to observe mortals. However, Callisti soon grew tired of the world during the Inquisition, finding the increased religious fervor to produce increasingly lifeless and plain art. She bid to move on and in a moment of opportunity her childe, Raphael, asked if he might speak in her name and manage her affairs while away. His sire agreed, eager to be away, left her childe to his own devices.

Raphael, quickly rose to prominence amongst his clan, using his sire's titles and embracing many childer of his own. He used his new authority to create alliances and form treaties, often using her name to speak to the Elder's of other clans directly. It was during one such impassioned speech he first set forth the founding principles of the Camarilla, accusing the Elders of creating the situation of the Burning Times, and imploring that the Masquerade was the only solution that could protect them in the long term. His speech turned the heads of even the staunchest Ventrue, and Elders all over Europe laid down arms against each other and came together to cover all traces of vampiric existence.

Raphael rose to become the most influential member of the Toreador Clan and it was his ideas and speeches that carried the hearts and minds of Elders of all the Seven Founding Clans into his glorious Camarilla, his greatest work of art. He served proudly as the first Toreador Justicar, and now guides his creation from behind the scenes.

**Francois Villon** (5<sup>th</sup> Generation) - Prince of Paris - Known as the eldest and most powerful Prince in Europe, Villon was embraced in 1230 by the well-known Methuselah, Helena. He rose to become Prince of Paris by 1666 and was influential even then throughout France. However, during the French Revolution, his holdings were stormed by both mortal revolutionaries and Sabbat members who drove him from the city.

Feigning his death for a few years, Villon returned to reclaim his city and rebuild his country after the ravages of the revolution. He was the focal point around which many influential elders, such as Mme. Guil, lent their resources in the name of the Camarilla.

Since then his power and reach have only grown, one of his childer even rising to become Justicar. A long time patron of the arts, many Toreador flock to his court just to catch his eye for merely a moment, on the off chance the Prince of Paris might take an interest.

**Katherine of Montpellier, The Muse** (7<sup>th</sup> Generation) - Justicar - She was born in 1116 to a French nobleman of some minor station. As she grew she managed the home, practiced

needlepoint, and exercised a secret passion for painting with the local priest, who merely considered it a pretext for seducing him. Katherine was married and in response to her husband's brutality upon learning of her art, secretly poisoned him into a weakened state, until she was the de facto head of his lands and money.

This all changed the night a beardless youth named Theobald became a guest at her estate. After a brief time, Theobald or Theophano as she was truly known in life, decided Katherine was worthy of embrace to paint forever.

Katherine became a famous member of the Artistes, known throughout France, and widely rumoured to have been the secret designer of Notre Dame in Paris and to have inspired many of the greatest painters of the Renaissance, including Leonardo De Vinci. Whether true or not has been lost the annals of time, what is for certain is that through her magnificent work she discovered the Toreador art of Soul Painting and became a mentor to many aspiring Roses of the time.

However, her rise was cut short by the fires of the Inquisition, but instead of being destroyed by suspicious well-informed inquisitors, her ghouls managed to protect and store her torpid body in a secret crypt. The ghouls had meant to return, but were laid low by the inquisitors before they could, fortunately for her none of them gave up her secret. She slept until 1980, when she was unearthed by curious Kindred. Upon her return she wasted no time securing a network of loyal servants to update her on the world. When in 1998, Madame Guil was Red Listed, she seized advantage and secured her seat as Justicar.

**Victoria Ash** (8<sup>th</sup> generation) - Clanhead - This would-be popstar generated a singular hit for a brief few weeks in 2007, a taste of true fame she has not forgotten. However, Victoria was actually born in 1624, and penniless at an early age turned to a life of prostitution for survival. It was during this time her immense beauty and angelic singing voice attracted the attention of the Toreador, Maximilian, who ghoulled her and put her to use charming French nobility. Rewarded with the embrace for her loyalty she continued to serve Maximilian until his schemes caught up with him, and seeing no alternative she saved herself by boarding a ship to the New World in 1702.

Since then she has cultivated ties and connections in America, reveling in its excesses and new wealth in a quest for true fame. She settled into Georgia early on, and after a stint through Victorian England, returned to America and called Atlanta her home. After a brief few weeks on the pop charts in 2007, Victoria turned to Toreador Clan Politics to advance her career and attract new patrons. She left Atlanta in 2009 and found herself swept up in a flurry of social activities, balls, and salons. There she garnered the support she needed for the title of Clan Head and the patrons necessary to support a rumored upcoming single. Many see her as another vapid beauty, using her looks to get what she wants, but there are other rumors that indicate that may just be a ruse hiding a keenly political mind.

**Madame Guil** (6<sup>th</sup> Generation) - Red Listed - She first came to prominence after the French Revolution, where she lent to assistance to Villion in helping to rebuild Paris and strengthening all of France after the Sabbat were cast out. The ironically named, Mme. Guil, proved herself more than up to the task and efficiently rooted out many infiltrators and sources of corruption in the

Sect that had left it vulnerable to attack. None was more ruthless than she in putting an end to any weakness in the Camarilla and over two centuries she became one of the most feared and respected of the Sect's Elders. Finally, in 1985 she was voted Justicar by the Inner Council, and reached the apex of her authority and power. However, all was not as it seems.

When her term came up in 1998, during what was to be a mere formality of an interview process for her coming second term as Justicar, a few simple baseline questions raised some warning flags and an actual questioning began. What was found was a life of betrayal, and loyalties to enemies of the Camarilla. The interrogator survived only long enough to warn his clanmates, as Guil made a mad dash for escape and disappeared into the night. A former Justicar of such crimes could not stand and she was formally placed on the Red List soon after her crimes came to be public knowledge.