

FREE

# *my* ROUSES everyday

JULY/AUGUST 2015

***We Are What  
We Eat***

***Before & After:  
The 10 Year Anniversary  
of Hurricane Katrina***  
By Chris Rose

***At Season's Peak***  
Watermelon, Cherries, Peaches,  
Hatch Chiles & More

**The Anniversary Issue**

55 Years, 44 Stores, 3 Generations

**My  
ROUSES**



# Stacy's® & Sabra® sittin' in a tree... D-I-P-P-I-N-G





# A Family Business

Rouses has always been a family business. Our dad's first job, at 16, was at his father's pack-and-ship produce business sorting shallots. Our first jobs were at dad's first grocery store, sweeping, stocking, bagging and carrying groceries.

Our entire family grew up in the grocery business, and a Rouses Market is where you're always most likely to run into one of us. Over the years, all six kids and all 17 grandchildren have worked at Rouses along with an extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins. We also have team members, partners and customers who feel like family, not just to us, but to each other.

Fifty-five years is a long time. And most companies don't get to a second generation, let alone a third. We're blessed to get to work together and with our children everyday, and we're proud to see Rouses third generation adopt our father's traditions, values and commitment to supporting local. We know dad would be proud of the business and civic leaders they have become. We certainly are.

Of course we wouldn't be where we are today without customers like you. The grocery business is a people business, and the people are the best part of our jobs.

Thank you for making us a part of your family for 55 years.



▲ (Left to Right) Donald Rouse, Donny Rouse, Tony Rouse, Ali Rouse Royster, Tommy Rouse and Tim Acosta  
Grand Opening Rouses #24, Lockport, LA, circa 2011

*Donald Rouse & Tommy Rouse*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Generation

> **On the Cover**

*Rouses Fresh Green Onion Sausage cover photo by Romney Caruso*

• • •

**EAT | HIRE | PLAY | SUPPORT LOCAL**

**EAT LOCAL**

Our dad always said, "buy from your neighbors". Supporting local farmers, fishermen, ranchers and manufacturers is good for everyone.

**HIRE LOCAL**

Our very first store had 4 employees. Today, we have over 6,000 team members.

**PLAY LOCAL**

Work hard, play hard. We're passionate about supporting the local festivals and events that make the Gulf Coast great. *You'll find us at the fest!*

**SUPPORT LOCAL**

We contribute to big name and small charities alike every year, but our number one goal remains feeding our community. With your help, we have contributed over \$1.5 million in cash and food to local foods banks. You can donate anytime at any Rouses. No one should go hungry.

• • •

*Stay in Touch with Rouses*

✉ **Write Us!** [info@rouses.com](mailto:info@rouses.com)

🐦 **Tweet Us!** [@RousesMarkets](https://twitter.com/RousesMarkets)

👍 **Like Rouses?** We like you too!  
Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/rousesmarkets](https://facebook.com/rousesmarkets)

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**SIGN UP FOR E-MAILS**

> **Hungry for more?** [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com)

*Sign up on our website to receive our weekly specials and cooking tips, recipes and special offers in our e-mails and newsletters.*



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"I worked with all three generations. Watching Donny and Ali grow up in the stores, go to work in the office, and then become management, has been amazing. The Rouses family is involved in every aspect of our day-to-day operations. They are in their stores every day. I may not be around for the fourth generation, but Rouses certainly will be."

—Clint Adams,  
District Manager



# MADE FROM *scratch*

## JUST LIKE US

*We're celebrating 55 years of local!*

*Rouses Chicken Salad*

*photo by Romney Caruso*





LETTERS • POSTS • TWEETS



"Big shout out to Donny Rouse of @Rouses Markets for breaking the fundraising record at the Fireman's Fair! That # will be tough to beat." —@ColonelRuttley

JOIN OUR TEAM

Our team members share a strong work ethic and dedication to providing our customers with the best quality and service. If you're looking for a career you'll love, apply online at [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com) or e-mail [human.resources@rouses.com](mailto:human.resources@rouses.com).



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Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/rousesmarkets](http://facebook.com/rousesmarkets)

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SIGN UP FOR E-MAILS

> **Hungry for more?**

Sign up to receive our weekly specials and cooking tips, recipes and special offers in our e-mails and newsletters.

Doing my grocery shopping! Ready to cook for the week! Best Chefs and Cooks shop @ RousesMarkets —@BrandinCooks

We are in the process of moving out of state, but didn't want to leave without telling you how much we enjoy your stores. Our favorite is Rouses #26, the Tchoupitoulas store. You have some terrific people working there, especially the folks in the deli (and their awesome General Soy's Mock Chicken). They are funny, nice and very accommodating. We appreciate the fact that you are a local company, but we do think that you should open a Missoula, Montana branch! —Bob & Joy

I just wanted to say how good the Sushi is at #38, the 2851 Belle Chasse Highway Gretna store. It's up there with some of the higher-end sushi places. Always good and fresh. Service is great. Thank You! —M. Haydel

Just a note to advise you of my pleasant experience at Rouses #49 in Old Gretna. Mr. Barry, the butcher, was very generous with his time on educating me on the different cuts of meats and cost per pound. I walked away with helpful knowledge to apply to my next visit to Rouses. It is nice to receive great customer service. Plus, the steaks were fabulous! Thank you, Stacie J.

I just wanted to say you have the best fried chicken cook, Ms. Deborah. She makes the best fresh fried chicken, better than any Popeye's or a chain. Every time she sees me walk in the store, she asks, "Do I need to cook your order today?" —Nick B.

On my recent trip, I went to the Baronne Street location. I am so impressed with Rouses. Your employees are terrific, always smiling and speaking to customers. —Carolyn F.

I am writing to commend you on the personnel at Rouses #25, in particular, Store Director Chad Morvant. We have been customers of Rouses since you entered the New Orleans market and have gotten to know Chad from shopping at Rouses and have actually followed him from store to store. Please keep him at Store #25 since that is our favorite and most convenient store. On a side note, I live right behind Dorignac's but do not shop there.

Chad has actually become a good friend and recently attended my mother's surprise 85th birthday party. Most of the catering for the party was ordered from Rouses and was absolutely delicious. From the bacon wrapped shrimp to the vegetable, fruit and cheese trays, all of the party guests commented on how fresh everything was. Chad and his team went above and beyond in their preparation and presentation of the food. It is not very often that I find that level of customer service, and I was truly touched that such a care was taken to ensure that everything I ordered was done to perfection.

Sincerely, Elizabeth P. McDonnell



*A Grand Tradition*

The Grand Isle International Tarpon Rodeo (July 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>) is the oldest fishing tournament in the United States, with prizes for tarpon and just about every other kind of fish, from tuna, flounder and wahoo, to catfish and bluefish. This is one of our favorite events that we sponsor and a highlight of summer on Grand Isle. Donny Rouse is an Admiral this year.

*Speckled trout run great in Grand Isle all summer long!* Just ask Jonathan Craft of Baton Rouge. He recently landed himself a brand new truck when he pulled in a 2015 Coastal Conservation Association's Louisiana Star tagged redfish behind the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries facility on Grand Isle. CCA has 206 chapters and 100,000 members in 17 states and helps build artificial reefs, create finfish hatcheries and monitor freshwater inflows all over the Gulf Coast. *Rouses is a sponsor of CCA and the Star Tournament, which runs through September 7th.*

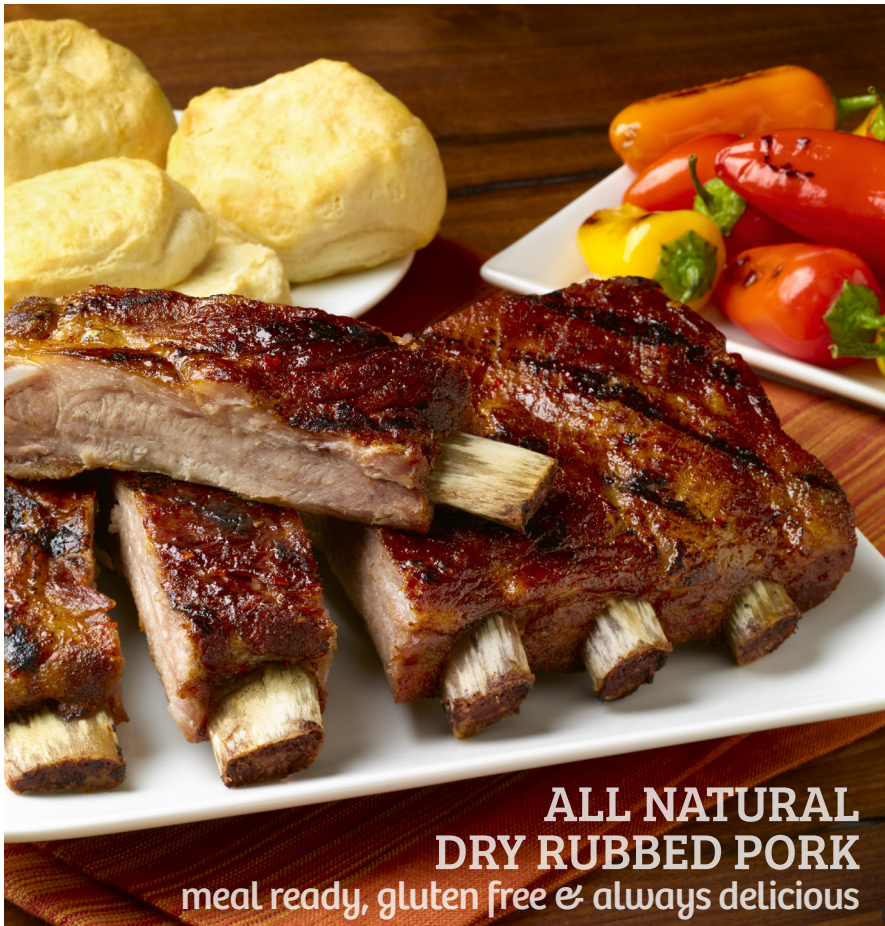




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**ALL NATURAL  
DRY RUBBED PORK**  
meal ready, gluten free & always delicious

**SAVE \$2.00  
OFF ANY**



\$2.00 OFF ANY ONE (1) SWIFT PREMIUM DRY RUBBED PORK PRODUCT

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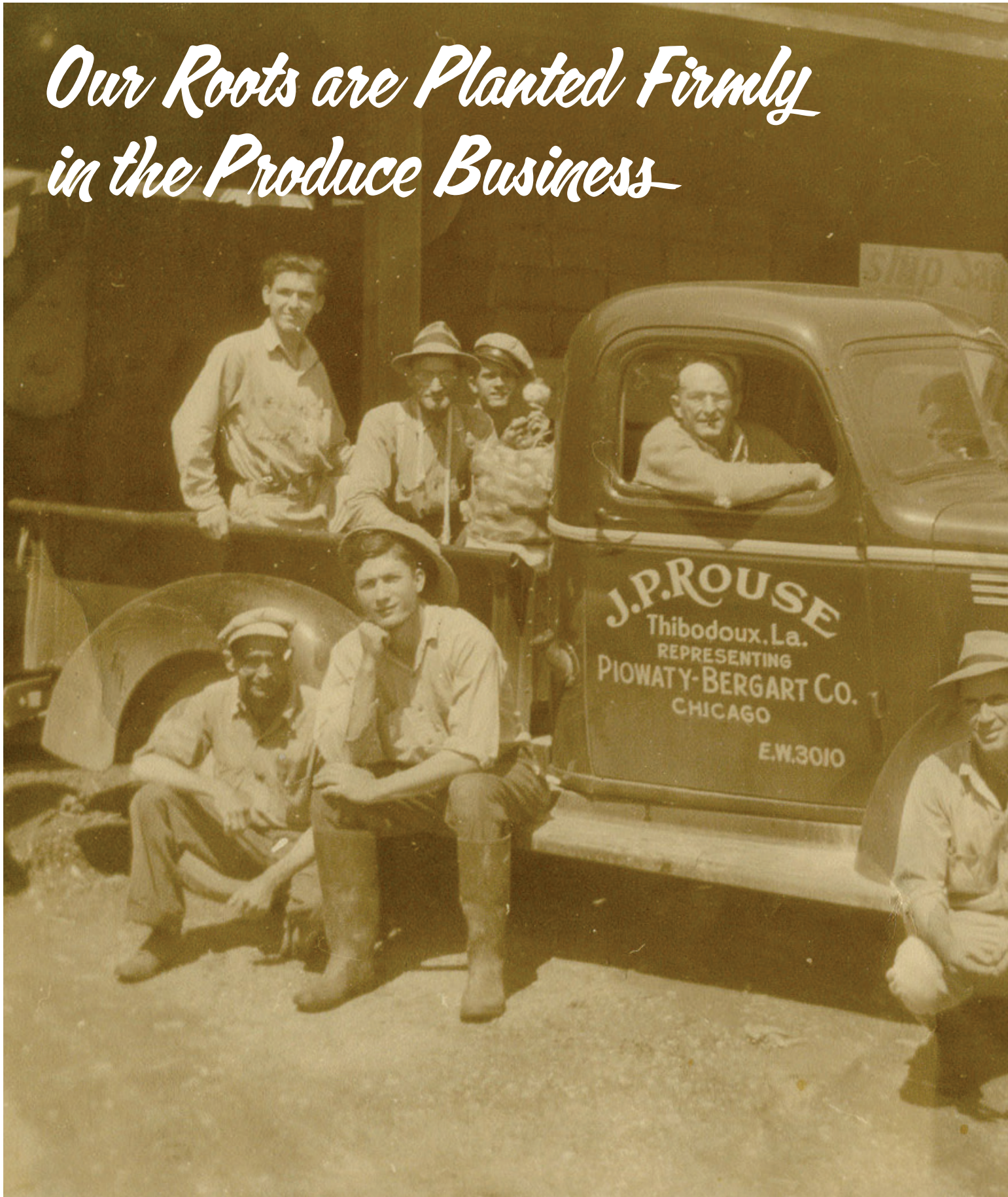
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# *Our Roots are Planted Firmly in the Produce Business*







## Donald Rouse

My grandfather, Joseph P. Rouse, or J.P., grew up in Marrero. His family — father, mother, brother — immigrated to Louisiana from Sardinia. There were farms in Marrero where houses stand now, and J.P. worked the family truck farm raising garden vegetables. Eventually, he got the idea to open a produce company, and in 1923, he and my grandmother, Leola Pitre, moved to Thibodaux. J.P. bought fruits and vegetables from big farms in Chackbay and Chocktaw and sold and shipped them to stores as far away as Alaska.

## Aunt Anna Mae

My brother, Anthony, and my cousin, Ciro, worked at City Produce Company helping Daddy. Anthony and Ciro were as close as brothers. They worked side by side in the packing shed washing and sorting green onions (we called them shallots), which were then packed in trucks and rail cars filled with ice. City Produce Company also delivered potatoes, cabbage, squash, oranges, satsumas, tomatoes — anything grown locally. I stayed out of the packing shed. Instead, I'd sit on the screened-in porch of our house on Jackson Street in Thibodaux and clean and bunch shallots with friends — Marie, Michelle, Bernice and Bernice's cousin.

## Donald Rouse

Dad and Uncle Ciro took over City Produce Company when my grandfather passed away in 1954, but the big farms that drew my grandfather to Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes were already starting to shut down. Big oil had become big business, and people in the area were able to find better wages working in oil fields than onion fields. Dad and Ciro eventually closed the produce company. In 1960, they opened a grocery store, Ciro's Supermarket, in downtown Houma. Dad said they chose the name Ciro's over Anthony's because it had fewer letters in it, so the sign was cheaper to make.

### CITY PRODUCE COMPANY ARE PACKERS AND SHIPPERS OF LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE; AIDS IN PROSPERITY OF AREA

The City Produce Company, located at the T. P. Shed at Thibodaux, La., is one of the well known centers of its kind in this part of the state and enjoys a reputation second to none in its field. This firm was established in 1951 and is a successor to the produce firm of the late J. P. Rouse, which was founded in 1923. Present owners of the enterprise are: Anthony J. Rouse and Ciro DiMarco.

Many thousands of dollars are brought into Lafourche Parish by the operation of the City Produce Company, as they buy locally-grown produce and then ship it all over the United States and to many points in Canada and Puerto Rico. The highest possible prices are paid to farmers in this area for their onions, shallots, potatoes, turnips, mustard greens and other vegetables which are packed and shipped in the freshest condition.

In this review we wish to compliment Anthony Rouse and Ciro DiMarco on the fine reputation they enjoy in the produce shipping field. Besides being prominent packers and shippers they are also growers, having sixty acres under cultivation. Always at the service of the farmer, Mr. Rouse and Mr. DiMarco are always anxious to assist them in any way possible, giving them advice on the best ways to obtain the top prices for their produce. During the height of the packing season approximately fifteen persons are employed by the City Produce Company. Their telephone number is 3950.



<b>BUY ONE GET ONE FREE!</b>	
FREE 2 LB. PACK OF AUTOCRAT WITH PURCHASE OF 5 LB. ONE OF AUTOCRAT BEANS	<b>25¢</b>
FREE 26 OZ. AUTOCRAT OF SALT WHEN YOU BUY ONE 26 OZ. PKG AT	<b>9¢</b>
FREE QUART BOTTLE OF SURE KLEAN WHEN YOU BUY ONE AT	<b>18¢</b>
FREE JIM DANDY GRITS WHEN YOU BUY ONE 14 OZ. PKG AT	<b>13¢</b>
FREE ONE 8 OZ. CAN OF AUTOCRAT TOMATO SAUCE WHEN YOU BUY ONE 8 OZ. CAN	<b>10¢</b>
FREE ONE QUART MA BROWN DILL PICKLES WHEN YOU BUY ONE QT AT	<b>33¢</b>
FREE ONE NO. 1 CAN OF ROTEL TOMATOES PEPPERS BUY ONE CAN AT THIS PRICE	<b>17¢</b>
FREE! FREE! KELVINATOR DELUXE AUTOMATIC WASHER TO BE GIVEN AWAY SAT. NITE ABSOLUTELY FREE! BE SURE TO REGISTER. YOU MAY BE THE LUCKY WINNER!	
FREE! FREE! 25 BASKETS OF GROCERIES TO BE GIVEN FREE WED. THRU SAT.	
<b>SALE WED. THRU SATURDAY MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> THRU 5<sup>TH</sup></b>	

2751 WEST MAIN ST. HOUMA, LA. **CIRO'S** ON SCHRIEVER HWY. NEAR HOUMA DRIVE IN THEATER

**GRAND OPENING**

BRINGS LOWER FOOD PRICES TO HOUMA

HERE'S PROOF!

SWIFTS BROOKFIELD BUTTER 1 LB. PRINTS 4 **59¢**

Red Ball SUGAR 5 LBS. **39¢**

Autocrat OIL 1 GALLON CAN \$ **1.39**

U.S.D.A. GRADE "A" "LITTLE MISS" BRAND FRYERS **25¢**

## ROUSES #1

### Donald Rouse

When *Ciro* retired in 1975, I bought his shares in the business. From the moment I signed, my father treated me like a partner. He gave me the opportunity to make decisions and learn. I tried to do the same with my son, Donny, when he was coming up in the business.

Dad was already building our second store by then, *Rouses #1* on St. Mary Street in Thibodaux, just yards from where we lived. At the time, the typical grocery size was 20,000 square feet. #1 was 28,000. It had the very first floral shop, bakery and deli in the area (our tarte-a-la-bouille custard pie dates back to that first store). We used the produce, meat and seafood off of our shelves to make our deli specials. We still do that today. We served a plate lunch based on what my mom made that day of the week. Red beans and rice on Mondays, lasagna or meatballs on Wednesdays, seafood on Friday. We still do that, too.

Our butcher at *Rouses #1* was Carroll Zeringue. He's now one of our meat buyers. Dad made hoghead cheese and boudin in the backyard. He and Carroll made the fresh green onion sausage in the kitchen. We fried fish and boiled crawfish in the backyard. My brothers Tommy and Wayne would go get the crawfish out of Belle River.

*Rouses #1* was probably the first grocery store in Louisiana with a bar code scanner. The first UPC codes weren't even invented until the early 1970s, and the first supermarket scanner wasn't installed until 1974.



from *Acadia Dairy* in Thibodaux (*Brown's Dairy purchased Acadia in 1994*), and we took turns driving over to the dairy to swap out an empty truck for one full of milk.

### Tommy Rouse

We were doing boat orders from the beginning. Three days a week, one of us — usually Donald — would get up at four in the morning, drive to Houma, pick up groceries at *Ciro's*, load them on the truck and drive down to Galliano, Dulac or the Cocodrie Marine Terminal. Today we deliver to offshore service vessels, platforms, lift boats and inland tugs all over the Gulf Coast. The captains and crews love it when the big *Rouses* van pulls up full of food.

**"Mr. Rouse used to buy all of the produce from the farmers in the area whether he needed it or not, because he said it was important for the community."**

—Larry Daigle, Produce Buyer

Mr. Anthony J. Rouse, circa 1975 ▶

## CIRO'S SUPERMARKET

### Tony Rouse

Daddy and *Ciro* invested everything they had in that little supermarket. Daddy built the store from scratch — he was the engineer, architect and carpenter. He never went to college or even finished high school, but he just knew how to design and build and fix everything.

The day of the grand opening they made \$300.

At first, it was just daddy, *Ciro* and two employees, Wilfred Rodrigue in produce, and Leland Rodrigue, the butcher, but as soon as we kids were old enough to work, we did — after school, on weekends and holidays. My brothers Wayne, Donald, Tommy and I would stock shelves and bag and carry groceries.

We were raised in the trade. Mr. Wilfred grew Creole tomatoes at his place in Chackbay, and we would clean and pack them in the back of the store, same as the cabbage, shallots and oranges from neighborhood farms. Daddy bought from everyone. Mr. Leland taught us all how to cut meat — I had to stand on a Coke case to reach the saw. I think we all learned to drive in the old store truck. We got our milk



## ROUSES #2

### Malcom Landry, Pricing director

Ciro's was busting at the seams, so when the Piggly Wiggly across the street came up for sale in 1979, Rouses bought the store, stock included. I was part of the package.

The first time I ever met Mr. Anthony, he was cleaning the grease trap. I didn't know who he was, so I asked, "Who is that man in the overalls working in the back of the store?" I wasn't the first or the last employee who failed to recognize Mr. Anthony. You'd hear, "who's that man on the bulldozer? Who's that man working on the wiring ..."

### Ali Rouse Royster

Pa's customary work outfit was coveralls, but he occasionally swapped coveralls for overalls or jeans. He was almost always dressed and prepared to climb a ladder, fix a light, fit a pipe or drive a forklift.

**"My dad gave me the opportunity to make decisions and learn. I tried to do the same with my son, Donny, when he was coming up in the business."**

—Donald Rouse

### Clint Adams, District Manager

I started as a nighttime stocker at the old Piggly Wiggly in Houma, Rouses #2. One day, my manager comes by looking for volunteers to sweep up at Rouses #6, which was then under construction. I headed over with another team member, and the first person I see in the store is an older man dressed in coveralls, covered in sweat, standing over a bunch of busted up concrete. He asked us to help move the concrete. I said "yes," but the other guy said "no," he'd only been brought over to sweep. The next day, my manager told me that Mr. Anthony wanted me back at #6 after work. And the other team member? I never saw him again. I tell people all of the time, when someone asks you to do something, do it, because you never know who's asking, and Mr. Rouse would never ask you to do something he wouldn't do himself.

### Caroll Zeringue, Meat Buyer

I started 40 years ago when we had two stores and maybe 50 employees. I retired, but I couldn't stay away, now I'm back three mornings a week. Mr. Anthony was more than just my boss, he was also my friend. I watched Donald and Tommy come up in the business and their kids Donny and Ali help grow and make it into what it is today. The meat industry has changed a lot in my 40 years, but I still follow the advice Mr. Anthony gave me in 1975, "Get the best products at the best cost and pass the saving along to our customers."



**"Pa's customary work outfit was coveralls, but he occasionally swapped coveralls for overalls or jeans."**

—Ali Rouse Royster

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Nov 3, 1980



**ROUSES SUPERMARKET** celebrated the grand opening of its third store Monday with a 9 a.m. ribbon cutting ceremony. Sheriff Ronnie Duplantis did the honor of cutting the ribbon for the new supermarket in Gaylords Plaza. He is joined by (left

to right) Mrs. Donald Rouse, Mrs. Anthony Rouse, owner Anthony Rouse, Leonard Toups, Donald Rouse, manager Harold Boudreaux, Progressive Bank President Huey Morris, and many friends, relatives, well wishers and customers.



## THE ROUSE HOUSE

### Tim Acosta, Marketing Director

Mr. Anthony and Miss Joyce raised their kids, Tony, Wayne, Donald, Tommy, Cindy, and Jeaneen, in their home behind Rouses #1. When the family moved out in 1986, our office moved in.

I started at Rouses as a stocker at the Raceland store, Rouses #3, in 1981, and worked my way up, or rather around, the business — I worked at all four of our early stores, and eventually the Rouse House. Everyone did a bit of everything. Donald ran the stores. Tommy was in technology — he had a big IBM 34 computer system that tied in all of the stores and our warehouse took up half of the wall in his office. Tony did pricing; my wife, Cindy, did accounting; her sister, Jeaneen, ran payroll.

### Ali Rouse Royster

People worked in the kitchen, old bedrooms ... the rumpus room was our conference room. We stored filing cabinets in closets and bathtubs. Donald's office was in the formal living room, dad was in my grandparent's bedroom. Uncle Tim's office was in Aunt

## Teen has title in the bag

By Maurice Crocker  
Staff Writer

Lightning-fast speed, steady hands and the ability to distribute weight properly are all the qualities you need to become a champion. Just ask 17-year-old Brad Boudreaux of Thibodaux, the nation's fastest bagger.

This past weekend, Boudreaux, who works at Rouses Supermarket in Thibodaux, won the national bagger competition in Las Vegas. Twenty-nine of the nation's fastest and most skilled baggers came together in front of hundreds to find out who would be named champion.

"When I first arrived at the competition, I was a little nervous because I had so many people to beat," Boudreaux said. He said he met baggers from North Carolina, Michigan and as far away as Alaska.

"I have lightning-fast speed and I think that is a big part of it," Boudreaux said.

Boudreaux was able to properly fill two bags of groceries in 21 seconds.

Although speed is a necessity, Boudreaux said it's not the most important thing to have.

"The judges don't just judge you on speed, you also have to make sure the weight is distributed properly," he said.

Speed has not always been one of his greatest attributes.

"When I first started working here, I was the slowest of all the baggers, but I continued to work at it, and eventually it just came natural," Boudreaux said.



Brad Boudreaux, the nation's fastest bagger, displays his skills at Rouses supermarket in Thibodaux.

In the past, Boudreaux said, customers would complain about his bagging, but now people come to the store just to see him.

"I might be in the back stocking groceries, and a customer may come and ask for me to bag their groceries," he said.

Boudreaux said some things never change. There are still customers who complain about the types of bags they want, and putting certain items in one bag.

Being champion has some advantages, Boudreaux said. He received \$2,000 in prize money, an apron, and a championship trophy in the shape of a grocery bag.

Boudreaux said managers at Rouses are considering placing him in charge of training all the baggers, but he didn't get the raise he asked for.

Last year's winner was featured on the David Letterman show, for a competition against Letterman, who

See BAG, 8A

## TEEN HAS TITLE IN THE BAG

In 1995, then 17-year-old Brad Boudreaux of Rouses #1 in Thibodaux earned the title of fastest bagger in the country at the National Grocer Association. He was invited to show off his skills on the David Letterman Show. Donald Rouse promised him \$100 for every time he mentioned Rouses. He earned over \$1,000.

Cindy's old bedroom upstairs next to the attic. And our general manager, Dave, had his desk in Pa's study. I had a little desk in dad's office, and helped with filing. Donny worked in the stores with his dad, bagging groceries and wrangling buggies.

Eventually we outgrew the house. In 2004 we moved into a new corporate office, which was our old store, Rouses #1. My grandfather renovated it himself.

## THE SUPERSTORE

### Tommy Rouse

My dad's favorite vehicle was a bulldozer. Dad built Rouses #4 on East Park in Houma himself — he actually had to get his general contractor's license to build that one. We acquired #5 on Audubon in Thibodaux. Rouses #6, the 70,000-square-foot superstore on West Main Street in Houma opened in 1989. Dad built #6 from the ground up. It was his dream store.

In 1989, the Superstore was easily the most modern store in the state. The only place that even came close to it — and really just for size — was the old Schwegmann's Giant Supermarket on Airline Highway in New Orleans. We put in a pharmacy, a video store and a photo-processing center. Customers could have their film developed while they shopped. (Remember videos? Remember film?)

We put in our first seafood boiling room at the Superstore and built our first sausage kitchen and smokehouse. We developed the recipes for our stuffed chickens and Jalapeno sausages at #6 (the fresh green onion sausage dates back to Rouses #1). The deli manager recreated my dad's fried chicken and my mom's chicken salad. Those are the only two family recipes we don't share.

### Tim Acosta

Our grand opening theme was Hold On Houma. The commercial mimicked a roller coaster ride, with swoops and turns and camera drops into the store.

**PRICES GOOD AT ALL ROUSES STORES**

**ROUSES SUPERSTORE**

**OPENING SUNDAY JUNE 11th, 1989 8 A.M.**

**2737 WEST MAIN IN HOUMA**  
(ACROSS FROM SOUTHLAND MALL)

**FREE GROCERIES FOR THE FIRST 200 CUSTOMERS!**  
(OPENING DAY)

**FREE BALLOONS FOR THE KIDS!**

**FREE SAMPLES IN EVERY DEPARTMENT!**

**FREE GIVE-A-WAYS TO THE FIRST 100 CUSTOMERS**  
(EACH DAY DURING OPENING WEEK)

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175 AUDUBON AVE. THIBODAUX, LA 446-3000

L.A. HIGHWAY NO. 1 RACELAND, LA 837-6666

E. PARK AT PROSPECT IN VILLAGE E. SHR CTR. HOUMA, LA 863-5286

PRICES GOOD THRU SAT. JUNE 17, 1989

REGULAR STORE HOURS: 7 A.M. - 12 NOON



## Donald Rouse

It was the most exciting food store in the area. Dad was really proud that a local business had opened a store that size and could employ that many people. I remember him saying, "If a local doesn't do it, a chain will." Dad agreed with Huey Long, who famously said, "I'd rather have thieves and gangsters than chain stores in Louisiana."

## SCHWEGMANN'S

### Tim Acosta

We wound up in Morgan City when Winn Dixie pulled out after Hurricane Andrew. That was 1992.

In 1996, we had our first big growth spurt. Schwegmann's took over National Supermarkets and had to get rid of a few new stores to avoid competing against existing Schwegmann locations. We picked up That Stanleys in Thibodaux and Houma, and Canal Villeres in Lockport and Metairie, on Veterans by Transcontinental. Metairie was a whole new market for us. Sherriff Harry Lee, Irma Thomas and Chef Andre Apuzo starred in our commercials and WDSU's Margaret Orr bagged groceries on opening day.

Suddenly Rouses was one of the largest independent grocers in Louisiana.

## EPICUREAN-STYLE MARKETS

### Donald Rouse

The epicurean-style markets in Houma and Thibodaux were a completely different concept for us. We try to bring something new to every store we open, but this was more than just adding the latest features. We dramatically expanded the deli and bakery, moved fresh food to the front of the store, put in our first completely organic section in produce and had our first international section in grocery.

### Clint Adams

Rouses #16 in Thibodaux opened in 1999, Rouses #15 in Houma open in 2001. I was a manager at #16, then #15 (#15 is numbered first, but we opened it second). People travelled from all over Louisiana just to see these stores.

### Donald Rouse

When Delchamps left the market, we bought a few of their stores in Thibodaux, Cut Off and Metairie. In 2003, we opened the first Rouses Market in St. Tammany, a 54,000-square-foot store in Covington. We were mid-build on our Mandeville store when Katrina hit in 2005.

6B Daily Comet, Lafourche Parish, La./ Monday, June 13, 1988

## Business & Agriculture

ASCS NEWS

### Richard Folse

## Wheat level reduction announced

A 10 percent wheat acreage reduction and other provisions of the 1989 wheat program were announced by U.S. Department of Agriculture officials on May 25.

In addition to the required 10 percent acreage reduction for the 1989 crop which will be planted in 1988, other provisions announced by the Department include:

1. A price support loan rate of \$2.06 bushel, a 20 percent reduction from the basic loan rate of \$2.57. The downward adjustment was determined necessary to maintain United States wheat competitiveness in domestic and international markets. This is the statutory minimum and 7 percent below the 1989 loan rate of \$2.21.
2. The establishment target price is \$4.10 per bushel, the statutory minimum, and down 3 percent from the 1989 target price.
3. A paid land diversion program will not be implemented.
4. No marketing loan or related program provisions will be implemented.
5. Producers will be required to maintain an acreage conservation reserve an area equal to 11.11 percent of program payment acreage.

Anyone interested about the 1989 wheat program should contact the Lafourche Parish ASCS office. **INTEREST RATE** Commodity Credit Corporation's variable interest rate for June 1988 has been announced at 7.25 percent per annum on commodity loans. The price support loan program for certain commodities is administered by the Agricultural Stabiliza-



On hand for the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Rouse's Supermarket in Houma are, from left, Wayne Rouse, Bayou Cane Fire Chief Jerry Gautreaux, Donald Rouse, Anthony Rouse, Tommy Rouse, Terrebonne Parish President Teddy Duhe, councilman Ronald Eschete and Martin Bruno, director of economic development.

## Supermarket construction begins

NYT Regional Newspapers

HOUMA — Construction work on the new Rouse's Supermarket has begun following a three-month delay caused by a change in design plans, company President Donald Rouse Sr. said.

"The delays were due to an architectural switch," Rouse said following a recent groundbreaking ceremony. "We placed the coolers on the outside. That gives us more shopping area."

Workmen recently began driving the 1,700 30-foot pilings that will be needed to support the store and its parking lot, Rouse said.

The store, with an area of 70,000 square feet, will be one of the largest supermarkets in the state, Rouse said. When completed, it will provide jobs for 300 people.

The total cost of the store will be about \$6 million, Rouse said.

Rouse began planning the supermarket about three years ago, following the completion of its store on East Park Avenue.

"As soon as we built Number 4 it was too small," Rouse said.

Rouse believes that the huge new store will have no problems gaining shoppers.

"I think the economy's coming up. It's bottomed out," Rouse said.

"We're outgrowing our smaller stores."

"If local people don't put up a store of this size, then outsiders will come in," Rouse said. "We're local."

The biggest problem with the new store will be getting a large enough variety of merchandise, Rouse said.

Among its special features are specialty shops such as a seafood market, a sausage factory, a smokehouse and a floral department.

It will also include a cafeteria in the bakery-deli area. The company also hopes to locate a strip mall in the store's parking lot so that people will be able to do all their shopping in one trip.



### Leadership

Luke J. Ford, principal at Thibodaux High School, and Jerry Thibodaux, assistant principal at the same school, recently received diplomas for completing the Leadership Academy for School Improvement.

The academy, sponsored by the South Utilities Inc., is a series of training programs held during the past nine months in Little Rock, Ark., Jackson, Miss., and New Orleans.

### Food bank

Rouse's Supermarkets is sponsoring a program in conjunction with Procter and Gamble to dole out proceeds to Good Samaritan Food Banks in the area.

For every six-roll package of Charmin toilet tissue, Bounty paper towels and Puffs facial tissue, Rouse's sells at all five of its stores throughout the month of June. Procter and Gamble will donate cents to the food banks located in Raceland, Thibodaux and Houma.



Hughes Cherami

### Hospital staff

River Region Hospital, Vacherette, recently hired two new staff members.

Marie C. Hughes joins the social services department as a social worker. She has an associate degree in criminal justice from the University of Southern, a master's social work from Louisiana State University and graduate hours in counseling psychology.

## Where The Chefs Shop

Growing up in Thibodaux, Ali Rouse Royster and I went to school together from kindergarten through high school graduation. The Rouse Family and their grocery stores were always a part of my life. Rouses was the only place I knew you could shop, especially for the good stuff. Before I became a chef, the good stuff consisted of apple fritters and doughnuts from the bakery, ice to fill up my ice chest before a fishing trip, crawfish for family get-togethers, beef tongue for crab bait and all of the "day old" food to feed the hogs my grandfather raised. When I left Thibodaux to pursue my career as a chef, the good stuff at Rouses never really left me. I'd order king cakes to send to friends in Italy and the Caribbean — to give them a taste of home.

Today as a chef, I still eat doughnuts from the bakery and shop for that same taste of home to share with international friends. I shop for produce, meat and game from local farmers. I can get ingredients indigenous to Louisiana: Steen's cane syrup from Abbeville for cane vinegar, Hola Nola tortillas from Gonzales for my redfish tacos, sunflower flour from Folsom and hoghead cheese and store-made boudin ... still getting all my good stuff from Rouses.

—Chef Nathan Richard, Kingfish, New Orleans



## HURRICANE KATRINA

### Donald Rouse

We had thirteen stores down after Katrina, and our stores in Metairie had been looted top to bottom. We were as much at ground zero as anyone in the industry.

Remember how bad your refrigerator smelled after Katrina? Every store smelled like that, only one hundred times worse. Imagine whole meat counters, dairy cases — tops had popped off the milk because of

the heat. All of the frozen food had melted and there was ice cream all over the floor. We had fruit flies everywhere.

But we were lucky that we weren't personally affected like so many of our customers, employees and their families.

### Chris Rose

Widespread skepticism about the sincerity and commitment of some beloved longtime institutions was confirmed when they never reopened, or worse, relocated to other

cities. In the interest of equanimity and absolution after all these years — the guilty shall remain nameless. They know who they were. We all know who they were.

### Donald Rouse

As locals, it was hard to watch national companies leave after Katrina. We never once thought about not rebuilding. It was important that local companies like ours invested in the state. We got all but one store up and running very quickly. Our new Mandeville location, an epicurean-style market, was scheduled to open early Fall 2005. It took a few extra months, but we made it before the end of the year.

The big leap came when we signed a deal to acquire A&P's Southern Division in September 2007. We got our first stores in Mississippi, and our company doubled in size overnight. The stores we bought had

**"There's nothing you can do about it, but accept it. You take a good cry and you keep going. And I always look at it this way ... bad things happen, but you always get something good out of it."**

*—Chef Leah Chase in a recent interview with The Times-Picayune on the Katrina 10 year anniversary*





really been neglected. We cleaned them and fixed them up and added 4,000 local products before we reopened them one and two at a time. We kept every A&P and Sav-A-Center employee who wanted a job.

### **Marcy Nathan, Creative Director**

When the doors opened on our first New Orleans store — Carrollton in Mid City — I was first in line for the second line. Like so many New Orleanians, I lost everything in Katrina. I had been working with Rouses for three years, and my friends and colleagues immediately stepped in to help me. But it wasn't until Rouses stepped in to replace Sav-A-Center that that I knew things would be okay. Rouses kept stores in neighborhoods that desperately needed them, and jobs in Louisiana and Mississippi.

### **Jeremy Simmons, Store Director**

I was a store manager for Sav-A-Center when Rouses took over the stores in Louisiana and Mississippi. Rouses didn't just come in and clean up the stores, they built up variety, they added staff, they responded to customer request — you knew Rouses was local. Customers were excited that a local company took over; employees were excited that a local company took over. I was never so proud to be a local.

### **SLIDELL**

#### **Donny Rouse**

Rouses on Gause Boulevard opened in November, 2006, fourteen months after Katrina, less than a year after we opened



the Rouses in Mandeville. It was our fourth epicurean-style store. Pa helped Slidell firemen, police and EMT's raise the flag in our parking lot in honor of Hurricane Katrina's first responders. It was a very emotional moment for everyone.

### **HURRICANE GUSTAV**

#### **Ali Rouse Royster**

Hurricane Gustav came ashore as a category 2 in Cocodrie, a small fishing community south of Houma, in September, 2008. It was the first major storm threat since Katrina, and most of our area evacuated. As soon as the storm passed, those who stayed behind started looking for supplies. Most of our family was still in town, so we did what Rouses do, we opened our grocery store. There were enough of us, plus a few of our team members who were around and ready to work — including my now-husband Billy, an accountant who came to stock shelves to pitch in — to open our store on North Canal in Thibodaux. I took charge of our cash registers, teaching some of my family how to ring up groceries for the first time (my cousin Chris Acosta brought me his till at the end of the day with crumpled up money all mixed up). My dad even ran a register for a while, which was fun for me to watch. It had probably been 25 years since he had done that.

Pa was there overseeing it all and was beaming from ear to ear. He talked about it for months, and you could tell how proud he was that we could still run a store with mostly just family after all those years. He passed away a little over 6 months later, and I have no doubt that this was one of the many, many stories he shared with his cousin Ciro when they met again.







**TWO THINGS:  
BEST QUALITY + BEST PRICE**

*—Anthony J. Rouse, Sr.*



## Donny Rouse

My grandfather died March 5, 2009. He and my grandmother had been married for 58 years.

Pa began his career sorting shallots and ended it as owner of the largest independent grocery chain in Louisiana. He knew every inch of the business. He loved it. Even at 79, he couldn't stay away from it. He was in the office the Friday before he went to the hospital.

Our new Rouses Market in Youngsville opened two months before Pa died, and he and my grandmother were there to cut the ribbon. It was one of our largest grand openings in history, and our first store in Acadiana. Pa was an entrepreneur, like his dad, like my dad and uncle, and he got a kick out of competition. No one was more excited about our expansion. We opened our first grocery store in New Orleans October of 2007, and less than a year later, Rouses was voted Best Grocery Store in the city. Pa was as proud of that as he was of how much we'd grown.

## Ali Rouse Royster

In 2005, I interviewed my grandfather for my Nicholls State University MBA project on entrepreneurship. Pa believed in education — he was very proud that his grandchildren had the opportunity to go to college when he didn't even get to finish high school. But one thing was clear after the interview — you don't need an MBA to be an entrepreneur. You just need passion — and the right people. *Here is an excerpt from the interview.*

• • •

**Ali:** Who are the key people at Rouses?

**Mr. Anthony:** The key people are my sons, Donald and Tommy. They are my youngest boys. But the people I rely on most are right at the store, the managers and employees at the store.

**Ali:** What were your expectations for Rouses?

**Mr. Anthony:** Where we are now is way over my expectations. I never dreamed it would become this big. *(We had 16 stores at this point. No one could have imagined we would some day have 45.)*

**Ali:** What were the major milestones, where you felt like the company shifted?

**Mr. Anthony:** We had to change with the times, or we wouldn't be where we are. When we got in the biz, no one had computers or really cash registers, and we had to change with that. There were no huge stores, and now there are these big megastores to compete with. Changing with the times is part of our success.

**Ali:** What's special about Rouses?

**Mr. Anthony:** We always try to give the best quality at the best price, and a big thing is service. Bagging groceries, carrying them out, listening to the customers, I think that's one of the biggest assets we have. The people working here ... they have an interest in it and seeing it succeed, and they are loyal. And the products we carry and make. We have the latest products, but we always strive for better products. And we adjust, a whole lot faster than the big stores. We adjust to our customers needs and get what they want.



▲ Mr. & Mrs. Anthony J. Rouse on their wedding day, circa 1949

**Ali:** What makes you happiest?

**Mr. Anthony:** I really raised a family in this business, and grandchildren.

**Ali:** Is it challenging?

**Mr. Anthony:** It's a demanding industry of your time and energy, and it's a 24-hour job especially when you are at the head. And there's always a challenge. Without a challenge, you get lost, you get complacent, and that's not good.

• • •

*The interview took place a few months after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.*

**Ali:** How did the recent hurricanes affect Rouses?

**Mr. Anthony:** We had a lot of damage and a lot of damage to our customer base and to the people. We managed and came out of it and got all but one store (in Metairie) back up and running. We were fortunate compared to other people.

**Ali:** Is there anything you think I missed?

**Mr. Anthony:** No, you did very good.

**Ali:** It went pretty good?

**Mr. Anthony:** I think so.

**Ali:** If I think of anything else, I know how to reach you.



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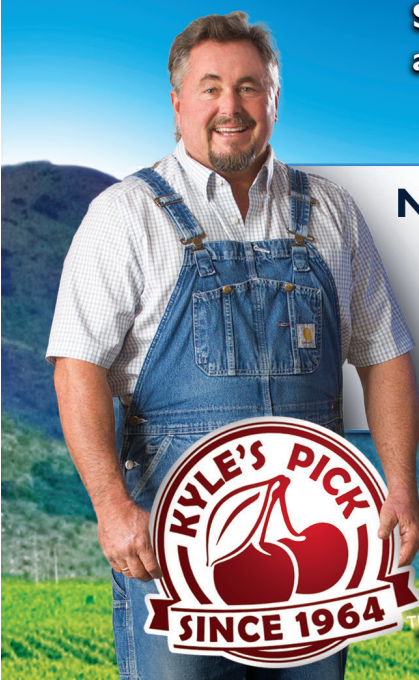


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## THE CADILLAC OF GROCERY STORES

### Donald Rouse

Downtown New Orleans got its first major supermarket in 50 years when we opened a store in the historic Sewell Cadillac building in the Warehouse District in the fall of 2011. The four-story building had been empty since 2007 when Sewell closed their dealership. This was our first historic building — it was one of the original International-style buildings in New Orleans. We were very aware of the significance of the building, and we worked to preserve the architecture and interior elements like the chandeliers.

The Warehouse District had been residential and mixed residential and commercial since after the 1984 Worlds Fair. But even I didn't predict how much the area would change after we opened. The store has become a major anchor for new developments, including 700

luxury apartments built right next door and new restaurants from John Besh, Donald Link and Stephen Stryjewski.

I'm a lifelong Saints fan, and the store is basically on the 50-yard line, right smack in the middle of all of the game day excitement. We've hosted Sunday tailgates, Monday night tailgates, BCS tailgates, and a few New Orleans Bowl tailgates that turned our parking lot Ragin' Cajun Red. At least once a season we do a chefs' tailgate with Tory McPhail from Commander's Palace.

### Tim Acosta

Chefs have always shopped at Rouses, and we've always featured chefs in our advertising. Paul Prudhomme cooked crawfish étouffée at Rouses #4 in Houma back in 1985 (he was escorted into the parking lot by a firetruck — maybe because his food was so spicy?). Frank Davis appeared one Saturday morning after Mardi Gras still





## LAFAYETTE

### Donny Rouse

Lafayette was a very personal project for me. When I was at UL, I always brought groceries from Thibodaux back with me to Lafayette. The city deserved the kind of grocery store I knew we could build. In 2011, we opened our first store, right across the street from Cajun Field. Our second Lafayette location opened last year on Johnson Street.

So much of our culinary heritage is in Acadiana. Steen's Syrup is made in Abbeville; rice is grown all around Crowley; and Lou Ana Cooking Oil, Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning and Savoie's Sausage are made in Opelousas. I love having stores where there's so much food history.

**"The warehouse district is home to some of the best artists' studios and galleries, interesting places to shop and great places to eat. With Rouses in the neighborhood, whether it's Louisiana shrimp or seasonal produce, you know it's going to be top quality and super fresh. You can't beat the taste of local."**

—Chef Emeril Lagasse



hoarse from yelling, "Throw me something Mister." Dozens of local and national chefs have done appearances and commercials for us since then, including John Besh, John Folse, Leah Chase, Susan Spicer, Brian Landry, Sue Zemanick and David Slater of Emeril's. But we're just as likely to feature po-boy makers and oyster shuckers as we are white-tablecloth chefs.

### Donald Rouse

One of our most enduring commercials featured the St. Augustine Marching 100. We asked some of our more recognizable customers to be in the commercial spot — every character imaginable shops at Rouses during Mardi Gras; trust me, we've seen it all. We also featured team members who were riding that year. We had Indians, Baby Dolls, Zulu's, but the St. Augustine Marching 100 parading up and down the aisles of our Tchoupitoulas store was the most memorable part of the commercial spot.



▲ [LEFT] Rouses #46, 701 Baronne Street, New Orleans  
 [TOP] Chef Chris Wilson, Chef Emeril Lagasse and Donny Rouse  
 [BOTTOM] St. Augustine Marching 100 filming Rouses Mardi Gras commercial spot.  
 photos by Frank Aymami



# The Rouses

by Chris Rose + photos by Frank Aymami

Although it seems so familiar, so ubiquitous — as the saying goes, so Naturally N’Awlins — the fact is, while Rouses has been around for 55 years, it’s relatively new to New Orleans.

But something happened on that day the first Rouses Market opened in the city in the fall of 2007 — something equally only-in-New Orleans — which conferred upon the franchise the kind of legitimacy that usually takes a company decades to earn in this town.

That morning, a caller to WWL radio referred to the new store in Mid City as “Rooses.” Two calls later, someone called it “Ralph’s.” Minutes later, another called it, “the Rouse.”

From that moment, iconic status was assured. One of the weird and adorable quirks of this city — inexplicable, nonsensical, but absolute — is that once everyone here starts mispronouncing your name, you’ve got it made. We repeatedly butcher your name — high five! You’re part of the family now.

A quarter century after it closed, we still call it D.H. “Holmses.” “K & B, KB,” we loved them so much we even named a color after them.

Here in New Orleans, we’re always getting it wrong in just the right ways.

In an environment so determinedly and contentedly eccentric and unique — it’s no easy feat to become the store locals think of when you say the words “makin’ groceries.” Especially after only eight years on the scene.

This isn’t New York, the Big Apple. We all know: If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere. This is New Orleans — not so Big and never Easy — and if you can make it here, well then — nothing else really matters, quite frankly.

Rouses was born in Houma, one of many municipalities in south Louisiana that bear enough proximate cultural affinity as to convey a certain geographical allowance — which holds that if you’re close enough to pick up WWL’s broadcast of Saints games on your radio on Sunday afternoons in the fall, you’re close enough to call New Orleans home.

And if Saints fans actually tailgate in your parking lot on game day — as they do at the Rouses on Baronne Street in the CBD — then your local standing is unimpeachable. Or, as Dr. John might put it: That’s legitimatocal credentialization.

How *did* Rouses become such a beloved institution in such a short time? How did it morph into the area’s best and most popular supermarket?\*

(\*See Gambit Readers poll “The Best of New Orleans,” 2008–present. Or any other poll. Or just ask anybody.)

Before Katrina struck, 10 years ago, there were 15 Rouses Markets in Saints country, including two in Metairie and one in Covington. The storm pared that down to three — one of the Metairie stores never reopened.

That wouldn’t appear to be such a strong position to launch an effort to win the hearts, minds — and loyal business — of the New Orleans market, but that would soon change.

The storm, the flood, the recovery and the rebuilding forced every business to rethink itself and — in many cases — reimagine itself. And in September of 2007 — almost exactly two years after the storm — Rouses made a blockbuster deal that would essentially redefine the company.



▲ The World Famous Pinettes All Girl Brass band performing at Rouses tailgate.



With the acquisition of all the Sav-A-Center and A&P grocery stores in the New Orleans area, Rouses was suddenly everywhere. So, it was time to get down to screwing up its name.

It was a period of intense and hyper-emotional civic pride and boosterism — sometimes bordering on the pathological — and there was an unmistakable and pervasive “you’re with us or against us” mentality.

The Rouse was obviously “with.”

The collective sentiment of New Orleanians was a yearning for someone to love us, commit to us, inspire us, make us laugh. To not only like us, but *be* like us — bless our beat-down, funky little powdered sugar hearts.

Into the void stepped, among others, Drew Brees, who seems like he’s been the pride of New Orleans forever, though he arrived just the year before Rouses. Then there’s everybody’s favorite all-male dance ensemble, with their trademark hot pants, satin jackets and porn-star moustaches — the 610 Stompers’. Although it seems like they were around during Edwin Edwards third inaugural ball, in fact, they didn’t perform their first eye-popping public synchronized booty shake until the summer of 2009. The manner and intensity with which they have embedded their image into our collective memory almost defies the space/time continuum.

Becoming an institution of an icon is a tough row anywhere. To reach beloved status in New Orleans? *That’s* a serious accomplishment. Especially for a grocery store. Grocery stores don’t win Super Bowls and they don’t march in parades. So how does one tap into the city’s Zeitgeist?

The Wikipedia entry for the old Schwegmann’s supermarkets explains it best: “It was once said that only in New Orleans could one become emotional about a grocery store because people in the Crescent City do take their food very seriously.”

That actually short-sells the notion: We take *everything* seriously that positions itself as a reflection of ourselves and an expression of our character. We brook no imposters. Be us or be gone.

And once you walk inside of a Rouses, you know where — and who — you are. First, all those crazy names on the shelves and in the freezers: Zatarain’s, Manda, Savoie, Leidenheimer, Tabasco, Tony Cacherie, Zapp’s — walking down the aisles feels like a south Louisiana family reunion.

Even more so when you look away from the products and look at all the shoppers around you, the teeming masses of oddly-dressed, curiously-coiffed, inscrutable, discerning, highly opinionated and fiercely proud people who call the area home and Rouses their store.

If another flood was coming to New Orleans, and Noah got here in time to save humanity, he wouldn’t need to build an ark. He could just put some big pontoons under any Rouses Market in the city, wait for the water to rise, and he would float away with a cross-section of everybody and everything we’ve got around here — two-by-two, more likely than not.

**As Dr. John might put it: That’s legitimatICAL credentialization.**



▲ *The Treme Brass Band at Rouses in Mid City, New Orleans.*

The best testament to Rouses’ place in our culture can be found on a local blog called “What it Means to be Miss New Orleans: My life in a new city.” It was written by a woman named Ginger Sexton — a New Orleans transplant, obviously — who sublimely captured the essence and spirit of a visit to a Rouses Market last summer.

“As I walked in to my neighborhood Rouses, I expected the usual shopping trip,” she wrote. I was greeted by a lady selling hot boiled

crawfish at the front door, which, in the springtime, is a normal sight, but I soon realized today might be different.

“I heard a live song playing in the distance and wondered where it was coming from. I soon discovered a local brass band second-lining though the grocery store ... trailing them were dancing store employees and customers. When you arrive at a second line, you always join in, so I did.

“We danced and sang at the top of our lungs throughout the entire grocery store. It was very liberating! In most cities, these actions would warrant odd looks and lots of questions — and perhaps the police. But in New Orleans, it is another day out on the town.”

She goes on to describe receiving a free sample of Abita beer at one location in the store, a bowl of Yaka Mein — from Miss Linda, the Yaka Mein Lady of all people! — at another. She was in a state of reverie over the incandescent experience of putting on your party face, doing the funky butt and kicking out the jams down in the aisles of your friendly neighborhood Rouses.







## HELPING THE GULF COAST GROW

### Donny Rouse

We opened five stores in Lower Alabama over the course of five weeks in 2014. Every community we serve is different, and every store we open is local down to its neighborhood, but when it comes to food, on the Gulf Coast, we're really all the same.

We love to eat.

We boiled over 30-thousand pounds of Louisiana crawfish the first month we were open. We sold more chicken and andouille gumbo, more seafood gumbo, more boudin and hogshead cheese in Alabama that month than we did in all of New Orleans. We had trucks pulling in with Chappapeela Farms pork from Husser, Louisiana and fresh lamb and goat from Royal Family Farms in Crystal, Mississippi. Trucks headed to our stores in Louisiana and Mississippi carried Alabama's famous Conecuh sausage — it's great on a biscuit. We always make it a point to bring products from one area we serve to another.

### Ali Rouse Royster

The most fun we have is opening a new store. It's a ton of work, and it's challenging being in the nitty-gritty of it all and making sure everything is ready to go, especially in the days leading up to an opening. But it's worth every minute. We had over 100 customers lined up outside our first store in Alabama half an hour before we were scheduled to open. They were as excited as we were.

### Donny Rouse

Our newest store in Denham Springs near Baton Rouge opened this January, and we have new stores opening in Baton Rouge next year. We have a long-term commitment to helping the Gulf Coast grow, which means creating jobs and supporting our local farmers, fishermen, ranchers and manufacturers. Supporting local has been our family philosophy for 55 years.



◀ [LEFT] Donny Rouse — photo by Travis Gauthier  
[TOP] Alabama Grown Produce — photo by Frank Aymami





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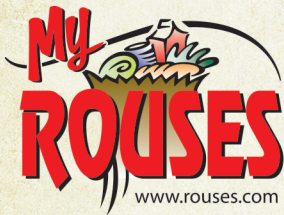


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## The Star Of Your Next BARBECUE

*Almost everything's bigger in Texas. Almost! With Texas Star Beef steaks, roasts and briskets, you get that big, beefy, Texas-size flavor without the Texas-size price. A Rouses exclusive.*



photo by Romney Caruso



by Chris Rose

There are many elements that go into creating a shared identity among people — language, rituals and religion to name a few big ones. Then there's music, clothing, oral history — many of the ties that bind.

Here on the Gulf Coast, there may be no stronger connection we make to each other than that which we make through food.

That makes us a tribe in many ways. The foods we value, the meals we treasure, the importance we assign to our cultivation and preparation — and preservation — of meals through the years transcends mere biological imperative.

Around here, we don't eat to live; we live to eat.

But we are more than the sum of our intake of calories, proteins, carbohydrates and such — much more. We are shared history, loyalties and community.

Rouses, at 55, is a mere baby to some companies, an elder to others. But all those products we recognize from Rouses shelves and freezers — Blue Runner, Blue Plate, Manda, Chisesi, Savoie, Steen's, Barq's, Connecuh, Zapp's and,

appropriately, Community — aren't just names on a label, but part of our lives, literally.

These names — these words — spoken between any two of us reassures each other of membership in the same tribe. We come from the same people. We *are* the same people.

Particularly if we are what we eat. And I don't mean that in an I'm-a-crawfish, you're-a-muffaletta and you're-momma's a regular ole' Moon Pie sort of way. (Though, admittedly, once you start playing around with terms like remoulade, étouffée, comeback sauce and chow chow — you can have a lot of giddy wordplay indeed.)

What's also funny is how that phrase "you are what you eat" — so familiar and home spun — was more appropriate for our region before it was Anglicized from its original French wording, and its original meaning was changed ever-so-slightly.

Let me display my worldly erudition (and advanced Google skills) by laying out what is believed to be the first printed use of the phrase in 1824: "*Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es,*" by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. As is almost intuitive from the gravitas of his name, Savarin was a lawyer and a politician by trade, but he is also credited as one of the founders of a literary genre that came of age in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century — the gastronomic essay.

In other words, he was one of the earliest known foodies, a gustatory trailblazer of his time. Think Anthony Bourdain with a powder wig and a law degree. (Which, for some reason, isn't that hard to do!)

Brillat-Savarin's phrase, translated literally, says: "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."

See how much more fitting those words seem when applied from Cajun Country through New Orleans along the Mississippi and Alabama coastlines? How much closer to the truth they get than "you are what you eat?"

At the risk of being presumptuous, I would add a few words to Brillat-Savarin's Epicurean musing to make it truly Gulf Coast local — and a little more modern: Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you not only what you are, but where you are from and probably, what kind of music you like and, in New Orleans, maybe even what high school you went to.

Such is the gloriously provincial nature of life here, where one man's Bunny Bread is





another man's Evangeline. You say Tabasco, I say Crystal. What'll it be, Mister — Zatarain's or Tony Chachere's? Chee Wees or Zapp's? Barq's or Big Shot?

We all drink coffee, but if you like yours with chicory (I not only think it's a little bitter for my tastes), I also probably know where you and your momma come from. (Unless you call her your "mother," then, well — I might need a minute.)

Answer me these following questions, and I know more about you than if you told me your age, gender and job; more about you than your doctor; more, even, than a tarot reader in Jackson Square: How do you like your greens? Chard, turnip or collard? Do you call it a yam or a sweet potato? Snap beans, green beans or string beans?

And if you call it a chayote squash instead of a militon (or merliton), I know you're not from around these parts, Mister, so drop the fork — slowly — and put up your hands.

What's your indulgence — pickle tips or cracklins? And to wash it all down, Tin Roof, La-1, Lazy Magnolia or Abita? And if it's Abita, is it Amber, Golden, Purple Haze, Wheat, Andygator ... Ok, you get the point.

It's all different, but it's all the same. It's what we eat and drink. It is us.

For instance, only in New Orleans would you speak of the Mandinas and Liuzzas like they're members of your family tree — even though you're Jewish. You trust the names Leidenheimer, Kleinpeter and Peychaud like kinfolk, but you're Irish Catholic.

We're all closer to each other than we may think, nurtured through generations at the bounteous trough provided by Gulf Coast fields, forests and waters. We are bound less by the existence of our common diet and more by our unwavering ardor for our shared foodstuffs.

We are linked by, among other things, the links we love to eat, be they Manda, Savoie, Rouses or Richard's. These are the comfort names of our comfort foods. They are names — and people, families — you trust, because they have always been there. In the ads, on the labels, right there in your cupboards and pantries. And what on God's green earth is more sacred in a Southern home — after our requisite alters, devotionals and bathtub Virgin Marys — than our cupboards and pantries?

**All those products we recognize from Rouses shelves and freezers — Blue Runner, Blue Plate, Manda, Chisesi, Savoie, Steen's, Barq's, Connecuh, Zapp's and, appropriately, Community — aren't just names on a label, but part of our lives, literally.**



### ➤ WHAT'S YOUR FLAVOR?

Zapp's sells 16 different flavors of potato chips, including Bar-B-Que, Cajun Dill, Salt & Vinegar and Hotter 'N Hot Jalapeño. For our 50th anniversary, they made a special commemorative run of Spicy Cajun Crawtators just for Rouses. The bag featured J.P. Rouse's City Produce Company's truck and the message: "From the Zappe family to the Rouse family, congratulations on 50 great years."

It is the lulling and contended sense of the familiar that makes a home a home. Oysters breed in cool waters the world over, but if you ask someone from around here what an oyster tastes like, there is only the salty-sweet, chewy brine of a Gulf oyster.

Crabs come in King, Snow and Dungeness species, among others, but what a crab tastes like to you is what a crab tastes like to me: Blue.

Boiled not steamed.

You make a roux like I make a roux, and everyone who doesn't is just making soup.

We are what we eat, and that is the world around us, close to us, dear to us. We are the collective experience of our shared meals and bread broken in communal reverie and respect.

We are what we eat: Abundant, fruitful, flavorful, messy, spicy, sometimes sweet, sometimes sour and — at our best — very hot.

We are unusual, colorful and creative. We are traditional, provincial and communal. We are family. We are what we eat, and we love who we are.



# Salt & Pepper

Pepper Baumer joins his family's food businesses after a few seasons in the field.

*photos by Romney Caruso*





**Ali Rouse Royster:** We're both third generation. I've always worked at Rouses. The summer I was 15, I worked a few days a week doing office work, the next summer I became a cashier. You took a more circular approach — I first met you when you were working on our advertising, then we did the Idea Village Food challenge together.

**Pepper Baumer:** I think there are two paths that one can take in a family business, both of which are good. I started at Baumer Foods when I was a kid. My first job was sweeping the floors in the warehouse. I drove a forklift. During summers off from school, I would hand load these huge containers for overseas shipment. My dad, Al, came up in the business, like you did. He's spent his whole life at Baumer Foods. It took a little squirming to get him to let me try other things before officially joining the family business, but now he's glad I did. I worked for the Idea Village, the New Orleans Tourism Marketing, the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau and Commander's Palace. Before that, I interned working on advertising for Rouses.

**Ali:** You're also a Brennan on your mom's side. That's another family business.

**Pepper:** My grandmother is Dottie. She's of the first generation of Brennan restaurant owners. There are eight from the second generation in the restaurant business now: Ti, Lally, Brad, Alex, Dickie, Lauren, Ralph, and Cindy, and my cousins are starting to get involved.

**Ali:** On my mom's side, my family owns a plumbing business. I'm going to admit that I have never thought about joining in on that. But you just finished working with your aunts, Ti Martin and Lally Brennan, for a year and a half. How was that?

**Pepper:** I was never going to go into the restaurant business, but I gained so much invaluable experience that I consider it my MBA program. I worked with Ti and Lally every day at Commander's Palace. I did marketing and operations and was in charge of our expansion into e-commerce. I also had these great one-on-one consultations with Ella and my grandmother, Dottie.

**Ali:** Baumer Foods was flooded during Katrina. How long did it take to rebuild and recover the business?

**Pepper:** We had four and a half feet of

water in our factory on Tulane Avenue, and every piece of machinery had to be repaired. I was still in high school when Katrina hit, so I didn't understand the severity of what it was like to not have an operating business, and the amount of work and effort my dad and my stepmom, Penny, put in to save the company. We spent a year co-packing in North Carolina, Maryland and Tennessee, just to keep our products on our customers' shelves. Now we have a new factory in Reserve.

**Ali:** Your products have changed since Katrina.

**Pepper:** Jelly and mustard went away after Katrina. Now we have hot sauce, extra hot sauce, buffalo, soy, steak, teriyaki and Worcestershire. We also own Figaro liquid smoke.

**Ali:** I think every generation leaves its mark on a family business.

**Pepper:** My grandfather, the first Alvin, started the company and opened the plant on Tulane. He got a government contract to put Crystal jellies and preserves in GI Meals during World War II. My father was the one who got us into the private label business. That's now 45% of our business. He also expanded into the Middle East market. I'm in charge of quality assurance and new product development, and I am hoping to expand the Crystal brand itself.

**Ali:** Your real name is Alvin. How did you get the nickname Pepper?

**Pepper:** My grandmother Dottie gave me the nickname Pepper when I was still in the womb. She said that she didn't feel like having another Alvin running around, two were enough.



▲ Pepper Baumer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Baumer Foods

## Shake Ya Boudin Serves 4

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 4 strips bacon
- 4 tortillas (flour or corn)
- ½ cup Guidry's seasoning (onion, bell pepper and celery)
- 2 links Rouses boudin, casing removed
- 3 eggs
- Crystal to taste, 5 to 10 shakes
- ½ cup shredded cheese

### HOW TO PREP

In a small skillet, fry bacon until crispy. Transfer to a paper towel to drain.

Warm tortillas in the oven.

In a medium skillet, brown seasoning mix and boudin. Add eggs and cook until set. Top with Crystal, cheese and crumbled bacon. Serve wrapped in warm tortillas.

**"I live in the warehouse district, and I'm at Rouses downtown at least twice a week. I love to cook — it's in the genes."** —Pepper

## THE FIRST FAMILIES OF FOOD

What is it about families and the world of food? On the Gulf Coast, the threads run deep, through generations. Think restaurants and fine dining, and the name Brennan springs to mind. Louisiana hot sauce? Since 1923, the Baumer family has owned and operated Baumer Foods, Inc. Led today by Alvin Jr., the company is a Louisiana institution, and one of the fastest growing condiment manufacturers in the country. The Vaucressons have passed down the tradition of sausage-making to the third generation. Since 1919, The Saurage family has been brewing a great coffee tradition, while the Chisisis have produced some of the highest quality meat products in the nation, currently in the hands of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generation. And there are more ... For more than 100 years, the Wm. B. Reily & Company and the Reily Foods Company has been run by a member of the Reily family. The Steens established their first mill in 1910, five generations in the past.

—Mary Beth Romig





## Sweeping Made Simple. See Beauty in The Mess.

This ad was created with dust and dirt collected from 10 homes using the Angler® Broom with Double Bristle Technology. **Firm black bristles** help capture big dirt particles, while **soft grey bristles** collect fine dust and hair. **Long angled bristles** make it easier to sweep in corners and under cabinets. When cleaning is this simple, a mess can be a beautiful thing.

Watch how our beautiful mess was created at [cedar.com/beautifulmess](http://cedar.com/beautifulmess)



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### Angler® Angle Broom with Dust Pan

The improved Angler®, with Double Bristle Technology, makes it easier to clean all types of dirt and hard to reach areas. The long angled bristles along with the sleek, modern broom head design make it simple to sweep dirt out of corners, along walls or from under cabinets. The Angler® broom also features a wide mouth dust pan that picks up more dirt.

### Triple-Action Power Scrub® Roller Mop

The Triple-Action Power Scrub® roller mop features a unique microfiber wave sponge design that has better spill pick up and grabs more dirt than ordinary sponge mops. Plus, the Power Scrub's® scrubbing brush gets rid of tough, dried-on dirt for a truly deep clean!

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**BEFORE** **05** **AFTER**  
**15**

by Chris Rose + photos by Frank Aymami

**I**t's hard to imagine it's been 10 years. Sometimes it seems like yesterday. Then again, sometimes it seems like a hundred years ago.

But it never seems like it didn't happen, right? It's always there, somewhere. Maybe in the background, in the deep recesses of the mind. Or maybe it's front and center on some days, still right in your face. But it's never not there.

Hurricane Katrina and the Federal Flood were events of such breadth and magnitude that they serve as the seminal, epochal date on our collective calendar. In the historical timeline of south Louisiana and Mississippi, there is Before Katrina, and there is After Katrina, and no other date bears any close significance.

Before and after. Those two words color everything. They put whatever is being said

into clear and stark perspective, lend layers of context, subtext and implication. They speak to different eras, different times, different mindsets. Completely different lives.

Consider this: What are you doing now? With your job, your money, your family, your leisure time, your priorities, your goals and your religion?

How different would it all be if it had never happened?

It's almost laughable, isn't it? How it changed everything? How the way we live now bears so little resemblance to the way we were, and how the two lives seem so at odds with each other on the space/time continuum?

It was a shift in the cosmos. An existential pause, reset, rewind and — then hit play and see what happens.

I guess that's how it goes when you have a near-death experience, when you close your eyes and stop breathing, when you see that bright light at the end of a long dark corridor, when you are overcome by a sense of calm, of letting go, of ... And then your eyes open.

And that's when you have your choice: Get busy living or get busy dying.

Back in the summer of 2005, headlines across the nation pronounced unequivocally the death of an American City. But reports of our demise were premature speculation. Or worse — misplaced wishful thinking — in some quarters.

There was no death of an American City; it was the drowning of an American Dream. The loss of American Innocence.

Everything changed in that moment for everyone. But letting it all go, giving up — as so many from the media and Congress suggested? That was not on the table for negotiation.

You can't beat down a people who parade in tragedy, dance at funerals and love among the ruins.

Like the Mardi Gras Indian chant goes: Won't bow down/Don't know how.

New Orleans may be the most death-obsessed city in the world, but we weren't quite ready for our own second-line just yet.

Consider the view of first-time visitors coming into town from the airport. To enter New Orleans, they must pass between



two Cities of the Dead that stretch as far as the eye can see.

The entrance to our city is protected by the ghosts of our past. If that's not an ominous sign, a harbinger of strange times ahead, the most surrealistic gateway to a city you will ever see, then I'm not sure what — other than steaming moats filled with fire-breathing alligators — could send a clearer message that you are most definitely *not* in Kansas anymore.

We're the folks that put the "fun" in "funeral," after all. They're our most treasured public gatherings. Celebrations of a life well-lived rather than mourning a life now passed. They're easier to crash than weddings and considerably less uptight. And the bands are always better.

• • •

Ten years after, it's a brave new world. Look around this place. Who would have thought?

Instead of dying, New Orleans is a city reborn. A work-in-progress, to be sure, but a city renewed, rebuilt and reimagined.

If what the magazines and websites say is true, if what the analysts and futurists are predicting is correct, then New Orleans is the destination for America's next generation of young artists, entrepreneurs and designers.

Millennials, dreamers and visionaries are here creating the next new business model, designing the next great app, fusing the next landmark technology, mixing the next banging cocktail.

We're the new Austin. The new Portland. The new Brooklyn. Hollywood South. Hipster City USA. The New New Orleans.

You see the changes everywhere, progress, habits and trends that were alien to New Orleans just a few years ago.

Urban planning. Green space. Bicycle lanes. No smoking. Yoga pants. Airbnb. Tech start-ups. Uber cabs. Farm-to-table. And kale.

Did you know there was actually a controversy about Kale last year so extreme that it was covered in the New York Times? Some longtime residents were carping about newcomers' dietary differences and how they're affecting menu selections at local restaurants.

Now, kale was pretty much a metaphor encapsulating the simmering clash of cultures between Pre and Post-K residents in some evolving neighborhoods around town — the Bywater most of all.

You can view this conflict in one of two ways, by the old glass-is-half-full-or-half-empty measure. The way I see it, if the worst story the New York Times could find about New Orleans on any random day is how the introduction of kale into our culinary portfolio is raising tensions in some quarters and threatens to tear apart the fabric of this community then, hell — I say the glass is neither full nor empty.

It's positively spilling over with champagne.

All these guys walking around wearing corduroy blazers with really long but perfectly coifed beards don't bother me a bit; I say welcome to New Orleans, everyone. It doesn't matter how much the people here *look* like they're from Brooklyn; we'll never actually *be* Brooklyn.

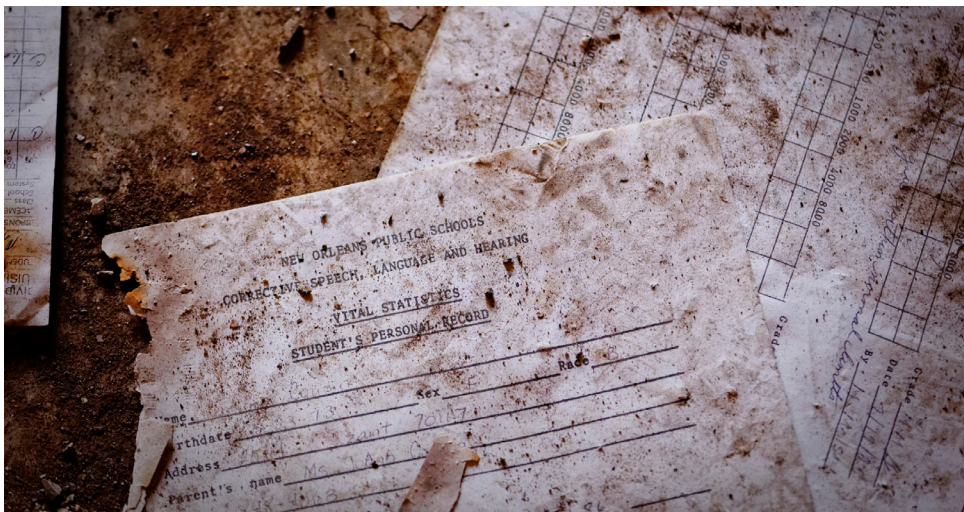
And I don't think it's a fashion that will take deep root here, that Old World artisan steampunk gentleman style. I mean, I understand suffering for style as much as the next guy, but I don't care how much it makes me look like an artisan cheese-



▲ [TOP] The abandoned Six Flags theme park in New Orleans East.

[BOTTOM] Cool Zone at the abandoned Six Flags themepark in New Orleans East.





▲ The old Lakeview School on Milne Boulevard in New Orleans, LA, built in 1915, was one of the first in the Lakeview area's nascent years. According to the Preservation Resource Center, local architect E.A. Christy designed the now-dilapidated building. The building is scheduled to be demolished.

## SAVING WILLIE MAE'S SCOTCH HOUSE

*Willie Mae's Scotch House is a soul food restaurant known for its fried chicken. It had been serving the same food for over 50 years, to the same customers, by the same hand of the same lady.*

*Like a lot of restaurants, Willie Mae's was flooded in Katrina. The Southern Food Alliance saw that we could do something to save this place, and we jumped on it. We also helped Leah Chase of Dooky Chase's in the same Treme neighborhood.*

*Not only did we save restaurants, we established a beacon of hope in that neighborhood.*

*The restaurant community has always been philanthropic. We provide sustenance to people, we're involved in our culture, and we have the responsibility to give back to those from whom we make our living. It's all part of feeding the soul of a city.*

—Chef John Currence

➤ The Southern Foodways Alliance documents, studies, and celebrates the diverse food cultures of the changing American South. Chef Currence has been a board member for nearly 20 years. Currence was born and raised in New Orleans. He was interviewed for this story by Julian Brunt in June, 2015 in Oxford, Mississippi, where he has six restaurants.



eating, hemp-wearing, paddle boarding, farm-to-table aficionado and enlightened craft cocktail connoisseur — you won't catch me rocking 8-inches of tumbleweed on my neck in the middle of New Orleans summertime.

It's called a Brain Gain when young, smart and forward-thinking people move into a place, and after 30 years of Brain Drain, I think it's an unequivocal win for the city.

It's hard to envision the day when the Thinking Class outnumbers the Drinking Class in this beautiful beat-down city; I see it more as us approaching a necessary equilibrium between the old and new, the practical and the frivolous, the digital and the sensual.

New Orleans is today, as it was before, a place suspended between the physical world and the realm of imagination. The experience of everyday life here is magnified by emotional intensity and creative reverie, yet also reduced by the heat, humidity and altitude to its most basic and primal elements: Food, shelter and the Saints.

You can regulate our smoking and regulate our music and — hard to believe this day has come — but you can even regulate our Go Cups.

But you cannot regulate soul. You cannot legislate funk. And you cannot pass an ordinance that makes us ordinary.

The best things about us will never change.

• • •

We've done the near impossible. We've remade this place. Sure, we're still a troubled town with a split personality and a closet full of skeletons, but a lot of those are Mardi Gras costumes.

We're a better place, it seems, by so many measures. We have Rouses instead of Sav-A-Centers. We're more engaged, involved and thoughtful. Hopefully more appreciative, unified and committed.

But what New Orleans is today, most of all, is the story of the unshakable faith of the human condition, the indomitable ardor of the human heart and the eternal triumph of the human spirit. Dependent upon the kindness of strangers, as always.

**"When we took over the Sav-A-Center's after Katrina, Leah Chase said something I'll never forget, 'You can build a great neighborhood around a great grocery.' There has been so much development around our Mid City store in recent years, and there is even more on the horizon."**

—Donald Rouse





# A Real Job

by Emery Whalen

Every once in a while, a restaurant employee will say they are leaving to take a “real job.” I don’t like that. I love what I do — I work for Chef John Besh as his COO and as the Executive Director of his foundation. I love our industry, and I believe in what we do, so every time I hear that, it cuts deep.

Can you imagine a New Orleans without our food culture? Can you imagine a post-Katrina, a recovered New Orleans or Mississippi Gulf Coast without our restaurants, new and old? I can’t. After Katrina, restaurants opening back up signaled recovery and resilience, and provided a much-needed sense of place and normalcy. That’s why John opened up August as soon as he was able. He worked the line with the skeleton crew of chefs who would one day become his team of executive chefs across our restaurants, while Octavio Mantilla, his business partner, manned the door and waited tables.

Food doesn’t just sustain our hearts and tell a story about who we are, it is the lifeblood of our city. Since the storm, restaurants are one of the largest group of employers (and taxpayers) in our city. 9 million tourists visited New Orleans last year. Our tourism is driven by food more than any other city in the US.

It’s not just about the tourists, though. Think about the redevelopment of neighborhoods throughout New Orleans. Restaurants – and new Rouses Markets — were the best indicators of post-Katrina economic revival and, more importantly, growth. Think about Freret or the Bywater and the boom of restaurants and businesses, and now, real estate. The restaurant industry is a sales tax industry - that means that every dollar spent in a restaurant means more revenue generated for our city.

The restaurant industry also provides jobs for 120,000 people in New Orleans. I am proud of the huge number of employees we have at the Besh Restaurants, and I know that each new restaurant opening, no matter who owns it, means jobs in our city. Jobs that al-

low for upward mobility. I look around and I see chefs making a real difference. Emeril has been fundraising for disadvantaged youth since 2002. John Currence spearheaded the rebuilding of Willie Mae’s Scotch House. John Besh started Chefs Move! with Jessica Bride to provide culinary educations, and he also provides micro-loans to farmers. Donald Link just announced his foundation intended to provide education and support for young children during the most crucial time of their development.

For many, a restaurant job is a stepping-stone. I certainly don’t mind that, rather, I am grateful that we can allow college students to pay off debts, for entrepreneurs to save money while waiting to open their own business, for a parent to have

more flexible hours. Restaurants were one of the few industries actively hiring after the storm — many people turned to these jobs to support their families. To me that is real, that is important.

I started as a hostess and was paid \$10 an hour. Working for a restaurant is the best education you get in understanding people, managing yourself, supporting others and responding gracefully in challenging and stressful situations. I learned to serve from the heart not by starting a non-profit, not from gutting homes post-Katrina, not from all of my hours spent volunteering, but from John, after Katrina — watching him and the chefs and cooks he trained. They were more about the person in front of them than themselves.

When I speak to classes at Tulane or meet with graduating college students, the people shaping the future of our city, the most important piece of advice I will give them is get a real job — go work in a restaurant.





# Restaurant Rows

by Pableaux Johnson + photos by Cheryl Gerber

Before Katrina, there were just over 800 restaurants in New Orleans — excluding fast-food and chains. Now there are around 1,500.

Looking back, it's been a long road. After the damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina and the associated levee failures, New Orleans recovery was, in many ways, measured by our food and (by extension) our restaurant scene.

In the early months of recovery, the city's bounceback was marked by which restaurants reopened quickly — the places where locals and visitors alike can experience the dishes and experiences that make New Orleans unique among the world's food cities.

The neighborhood joints, po-boy shops, oyster bars, stalwart saloons and old-line French Quarter restaurants that form the backbone of our city's edible culture became a tangible measure of the city's revival. Many returned to their former glory after full renovations, a testament to the city's resilience and cuisine as a community cornerstone.

But in the decade since the floods, the New Orleans restaurant scene

has also changed significantly. Ten years "after the storm," the scene is stronger than ever, with plenty of new restaurants exceeding pre-storm levels. Dress codes have relaxed, and more casual restaurants now draw food-savvy tourists into the city's outlying neighborhoods. New restaurants have increased the scene's stylistic diversity with a wave of international flavors (Vietnamese, Caribbean, Mexican) expanding the city's culinary palette.

This growth and increase in diversity is fueled in many cases by "restaurant rows" across the city. From the heart of Uptown to the neighborhoods hugging the Industrial Canal, these restaurant clusters have vitalized neighborhoods while strengthening the city's commercial and culinary fabric. These rows, like the new populations they often serve, reflect new (often modern) influences in a town that's known for an inclination toward local tradition.



## WAREHOUSE DISTRICT / CBD

As New Orleans passes the 10-year mark, it shows significant growth in restaurants that are easy walking distance from the Rouses Market on Baronne Street and the apartment/condominium complexes that are becoming a mainstay of the formerly staid downtown area (thanks in large part to the opening of the Rouses in 2011).

Herbsaint's Donald Link had already established a firm foothold in the Warehouse District before Katrina and was eagerly working on a new venture, the Cajun-inspired Cochon. After the understandable delay in opening, Link's restaurant group opened a string of successful ventures in the neighborhood — Cochon, its more casual sister Cochon Butcher and their 2013 blockbuster Peche Seafood Grill. The team — led by partners Link, Steven Stryjewski and Ryan Prewitt — also managed to garner substantial national attention, winning four James Beard Foundation awards (often called the "Oscars of the food world").

John Besh expanded his influence with a Latin-influenced taco joint, Johnny Sanchez, a Poydras Street partnership with chef Aaron Sanchez, and Borgne, which he co-owns with Chef Brian Landry. Besh Restaurant Group is also poised to open a bakery partnership run by gifted head pastry chefs, Lisa White and Kelly Fields, in a café-style homage to their grandmothers.

Top Chef veteran and chef/owner of La Petite Grocery opened up Balise, a cozy seafood-driven restaurant near Lafayette Square.

[TOP LEFT] Peche Seafood Grill

[BOTTOM LEFT] Balise







## FRERET STREET

On the other side of Canal Street, Uptown's Freret Street experienced a serious transformation in the years since Katrina's floods made it into a standing-water shoreline. Formerly the home to a few old school joints like Dunbar's Creole Cooking, Freret's feel changed significantly when Neal Bodenheimer and crew opened Cure, their pioneering craft cocktail lounge, in a renovated firehouse.

Cure's success provided an anchor and proof for other restaurateurs eager to expand their empires or experiment with new concepts. Adam Biderman (alum of Link's Herbsaint) returned from a stint at Holeman & Finch Public House in Atlanta itching to build a restaurant around his vision of the perfect, uncompromising diner-style classic, and the nationally-renowned Company Burger was born. Local activist and developer Greg Esslen (a booster for Freret since well before the storm) brought The Kingpin bar's Steve Watson into the neighborhood with Midway Pizza's Chicago-style pies.

Adding to the culinary momentum, Adolfo Garcia (himself a pioneer of several noted restaurants in the Warehouse District) renovated the old Antoine's bakery building into a double-barrel venture housing High Hat Cafe (Southern-style home cooking) and Ancora (true Neopolitan-style pizza and salumi). A wave of other joints such as Dat Dog and Liberty Cheese Steaks brought alternatives to the corner-store po-boys. Dat Dog now has two more locations in the New Orleans area, on Magazine Street, and Frenchmen Street in the Marigny.

[TOP LEFT] *Company Burger*

[BOTTOM LEFT] *Dat Dog*



## MARIGNY / BYWATER

Meanwhile, on the far side of the French Quarter, the downriver neighborhoods hugging the Mississippi have undergone perhaps the most dramatic changes since the floods. The Marigny, St. Roch and Bywater are in the midst of a radical transformation as the formerly working-class areas have become textbook case studies in post-storm gentrification.

Early on, there were but a few restaurant options past the Press Street railroad tracks — Elizabeth's for brunch-time praline bacon, oysters at the legendary Mandich's, ramshackle wine-fueled fun at the largely-improvised Bacchanal — but in recent years, the landscape is exploding with restaurants catering to the influx of new residents.

Trendy, upscale joints popped up on the side streets to form a fashionable (yet less formal) scene — from farm-to-table joints like Maurepas Foods and Maritza to cocktail-centric joint Oxsalis and the global street food stylings of Booty's. More casual options surfaced over time, with Pizza Delicious rising from its secret pop-up roots and upstarts like Red's Chinese (eclectic Asian) and Kebab (Mediterranean sandwiches) perfectly situated to feed the club-bound crowds on the rapidly growing St. Claude Avenue.



▲ *Maurepas Foods*

## Keep On Trucking

Another national trend that's literally fed into New Orleans' post-storm restaurant scene is the rise of the food truck. In the months of early recovery, taco trucks set up shop to feed the many construction workers here to spread blue roof tarps and demo flooded homes.

Fast forward a few years and the combination of comparatively low startup costs and social media popularity helped even more mobile kitchens get their legs in New Orleans. Some of them even gave up their wheels and made the switch to brick-and-mortar establishments. Chef Nathaniel Zimet built a mobile reputation slinging garlic/parmesan fries and boudin balls, took root in the Carrollton neighborhood and recently expanded to two locations (including Boureee at Boucherie — a wings and daiquiri joint) within easy walking distance. The folks behind the Fat Falafel food truck recently opened a storefront in Mid City near the Rouses on North Carrollton serving their Mediterranean-inspired snacks as 1000 Figs.





# Cooking Up a Storm

▲ *Shrimp Creole* (Photo by Dinah Rogers, NOLA.com | *The Times-Picayune*)

## Shrimp Creole Serves 4 - 6

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups chopped onions
- 1 cup chopped bell peppers
- ¾ cup chopped celery
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cups peeled, chopped fresh tomatoes or 2 cups canned, chopped with their juice
- 1 cup shrimp stock\* or chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 teaspoons chopped parsley

### HOW TO PREP

Combine the butter and flour in a medium-heavy pot over medium heat. Cook, stirring, to make a blond roux, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables are soft and lightly golden, 8 to 10 minutes.

Add the bay leaves, tomatoes, shrimp stock, salt, and cayenne. Simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the shrimp and cook until they turn pink, 3 to 4 minutes.

Remove the bay leaves. Add the parsley and serve over rice.

\*To make shrimp stock, combine shrimp shells with water to cover in a saucepan. Add aromatics, such as celery or a piece of onion or the peels from onions, if you wish. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to simmer for 15 minutes. Strain.

When it came out in 2008, "Cooking Up a Storm: Recipes Lost and Found from The Times-Picayune" struck a chord with people still recovering from Hurricane Katrina and the devastating floods that followed.

More than just a collection of 250 of the best New Orleans dishes, the cookbook tells the love story between a city and its culinary culture. It was a

collaborative labor of love created by The Times-Picayune | NOLA.com food editor Judy Walker, food columnist Marcelle Bienvenu and their readers.

When Walker became food editor at The Times-Picayune in 2004, she started a weekly column called Exchange Alley. In the column, which continues today, she publishes recipes in response to readers' requests and shares their queries.

After the storm and flood, the column became a lifeline for home cooks, who lost recipe collections that were precious to them — not just as cooks, but as locals. The Exchange Alley

column became a public service for residents of Louisiana and Mississippi seeking to reclaim what they had lost.

Out of that reader recipe exchange came the idea for the book. Judy Laine, who said she

"lost everything" to the storm, wrote to Judy Walker saying: "I know I am not the only one who lost all their recipes and recipe books. I was thinking maybe you could come

up with a cookbook of all the recipes you printed over the years."

The memo that Judy Walker wrote that day to her editors started the process of creating "Cooking up a Storm," which took nearly three years to complete, working with Bienvenu, author of the popular "Cooking Creole" column, which has run in The Times-Picayune for more than 30 years.

➤ **A new hardcover edition of the *Cooking up a Storm* will be re-released on Aug. 18th. An electronic database of thousands of recipes is also available at [NOLA.com/Eat-Drink](http://NOLA.com/Eat-Drink).**

**"A survivor would write in to mourn the loss of a recipe for mirliton casserole with crab meat, and another reader would supply it. It was one small way people could help." —Judy Walker**



▲ *Crawfish Pie* (Photo by G. Andrew Boyd, NOLA.com | *The Times-Picayune*)



**Crawfish Pie** *Serves 6*

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

- 1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped bell pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 cup chopped canned tomatoes
- 1 pound crawfish tails
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onions
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1 (9-inch) pie crust, unbaked

**HOW TO PREP**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions, bell peppers and celery, and cook, stirring until the vegetables are soft and golden, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the salt, cayenne and tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes. Add the crawfish tails and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Dissolve the cornstarch in the water and add to the pan. Stir for about 2 to 3 minutes, or until the mixture thickens. Add the green onions and parsley and stir to mix. Remove from the heat and cool for about 30 minutes.

Pour the crawfish mixture into the pie crust. Place the pie on a baking sheet and bake for about 45 minutes, or until the edges of the pie crust are golden. Cool for 15 minutes or so before cutting into wedges to serve.



**M.R.E**  
*Mississippi is Ready to Eat*

by Julian Brunt

**A**fter Hurricane Katrina swept ashore 10 years ago, no city in South Mississippi was left unscathed. More than 80,000 homes and businesses were reduced to slabs. Every major bridge was demolished, and much of Highway 90, the main East-West thoroughfare, was un-drivable. It was an unimaginable scene.

At first, recovery was painstakingly slow. Thousands of trucks labored for months just to remove the debris. Many businesses decided not to reopen. Long stretches of Highway 90 were nothing but empty lots. But then, something happened. An entrepreneur saw an opportunity, scraped together funding, and opened a gas station. This inspired shops and businesses of all sorts to open around it. Some very brave souls rebuilt where their business had once stood, and we got our first Rouses Markets in Mississippi.

The recovery has been remarkable, but nowhere is it more prevalent than in the restaurant industry. In those first weeks after Katrina, there was no place to eat on the coast. If you were lucky, a Salvation Army food truck might come by. But eventually, restaurants of every sort began to open to huge crowds of recovery workers and weary residents.

Remarkably, in this region more than 50 restaurants have opened every year since the storm. There is a bevy of new beachside, raised restaurants — most recently, the Oyster Reef Club in Long Beach. In the mood for Indian? Try Gulfport's Orchid. Want a pizza you'll never forget? Try Biloxi's Sicilian II. Ocean Springs is the epicenter of this incredible building boom, with more than 30 restaurants within walking distance of the city's heart. Vestige, which just returned from its second trip to

the Atlanta Food and Wine Festival, is one of the South's best fine dining restaurants. Washington Avenue Diner just opened, and Maison de Lu, Bayview Gourmet and Government Street Grocery are all nearby.

In Bay St Louis on North Beach Boulevard, there's a new Trapani's, 200 North Beach, The Blind Tiger and Buoy's Bar. Around the corner is Serious Bread. Down the street, the Sycamore House, the Mocking Bird Café and The Butter Cup Café all thrive. One of The Bay's now most famous places is on Highway 90 — Cannella, an eclectic mix of German and Italian food that draws people from all over Louisiana and Mississippi.

**"All along the coast, there's evidence of growth. Food has been the foundation. We have new chefs, new restaurants, three Rouses in Mississippi and five new ones in Alabama."** —Les Barnett, Ocean Springs



▲ Trapani's, Bay St. Louis





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# Mama's Meatloaf

*“Mama grew up in Eunice, so she cooked a lot of rice and gravy. Daddy and my brothers and sisters and I loved her meatloaf and mashed potatoes, but I made it a point to eat at a friend's house whenever she served liver and onions.”*

*—Cindy Rouse Acosta*







# Family Favorites

The recipes on our hotlines are based on Rouses Family Recipes. Our chefs and cooks set out an ever-changing selection along with our daily lunch specials. We serve red beans and rice on Mondays, meatloaf on Tuesdays, lasagna on Wednesdays, jambalaya on Thursdays, and white beans and seafood on Fridays. Saturdays feature a choice of pepper steak or meatballs and spaghetti. On Sunday, it's chicken and sausage gumbo and pot roast with mashed potatoes or rice.

## Mrs. Joyce Rouse's Meatloaf Serves 8

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 tablespoon Rouses olive oil or bacon drippings
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 cup Rouses ketchup
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¾ cup beef broth
- 2 large eggs, loosely whisked
- 1 cup fine breadcrumbs
- ½ cup grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon Rouses salt
- ¼ teaspoon Rouses black pepper
- 1½ pounds Rouses 85% lean ground beef, chuck or sirloin
- ½ pound Rouses fresh green onion sausage, casing removed

### HOW TO PREP

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a small saucepan or skillet, heat oil over medium heat until it begins to shimmer. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.

In a separate saucepan, bring ketchup, vinegar, brown sugar, and cayenne pepper to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until mixture reaches a syrup consistency, about 5 minutes.

Transfer 2 tablespoons ketchup mixture to a blender; add broth and blend until smooth. Reserve remaining mixture for meatloaf topping.

Pour contents of blender into the large bowl with garlic and onions. Add eggs, breadcrumbs, cheese and parsley and season with salt and pepper. Add ground beef and sausage and mix well with your hands to combine.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, then parchment paper. Transfer meatloaf mixture to the pan and hand form into log. Smooth the surface with a spatula. Bake for 75 minutes or until a cooking thermometer inserted into the center registers 165 degrees. Top with remaining ketchup mixture. Let rest 10 minutes before slicing.

## Mrs. Joyce's Mashed Potatoes

Serves 8

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 5 pounds Russet potatoes
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter

Rouses salt to taste

Black or white pepper to taste

### HOW TO PREP

Place unpeeled potatoes in a large saucepan and add cold water to cover. Bring water to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until potatoes are fork tender, about 30 minutes. Drain potatoes and let sit for 2 to 3 minutes to cool and dry.

Peel warm potatoes, transfer to a bowl, and mash with potato masher or fork.

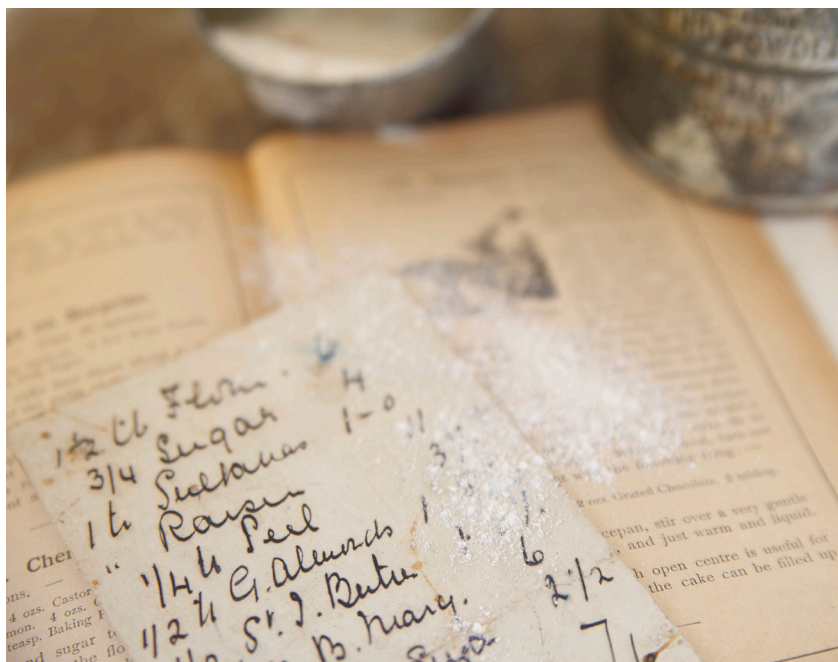
In a small saucepan, heat milk and cream until warm. Gently stir in butter to melt. Pour milk mixture over mashed potatoes, mash to combine, and season with salt and pepper.

## Kitchen Traditions

by Liz Williams

Regular family meals, time spent in the kitchen and around the table, and those large family gatherings for holidays and celebrations are the foundation of our food and culture. Too often, favorite family recipes that we take for granted are lost because we forget to ask for them, or we think that the recipes are unimportant until it is too late to capture them. Passing recipes to the next generation is a wonderful process that can and should include multiple generations. Designate someone to be the family scribe, who takes the family measuring cup — perhaps a teacup with a broken handle that your grandmother could not allow herself to throw away — and turns the ingredients into an orderly recipe with lots of stories and notes. Serve those dishes on your grandmother's china and always remember to tell the stories to the family when you serve them.

*Whether it's a Junior League classic like **Talk About Good, River Road Recipes, Recipe Jubilee** or **Jambalaya**, or a hand written, gravy stained piece of paper, recipes are precious, tangible memories of culture, of family and of heritage. We keep cookbooks and family recipes in places of honor at the Southern Food & Beverage Museum's John and Bonnie Boyd Hospitality and Culinary Library, 1609 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd, New Orleans.*







## MEETING MS. MILDRED:

*How a day with a New Orleans culinary icon changed my perspective on the word “Family”.*

*by Michael Twitty + photo by Johnathan Lewis*

**O**f all the words unique to South Louisiana lingo, words like “lagniappe,” “banquette,” and “Hurricane,” one you won’t encounter in too many circles is the word “mishpocha.” Let me help you out. It’s a Yiddish word, from the Hebrew word “mishpacha,” and it means family. When Mildred Covert, the “South’s kosher Julia Child,” died, I felt as

if I had just lost mishpocha, and truly, I had. In 2012, I launched the Cooking Gene Project and Southern Discomfort Tour in a search for both my family’s roots in the Deep South and the presence of people of African descent in the making of the South’s cuisines during slavery. To make matters more complicated, I do Southern cooking on historic plantations

and surprise; “Guess who’s coming to Seder?” I’m Jewish. This landed me on the cover of Southern Jewish Life Magazine, and apparently, this is a big deal because once I was on that cover, every Jew in the former Confederacy seemed to know who I was and that I was coming to town.

Mildred Covert didn’t do email, but she





knew her name. She was the co-author of the famous triple delight of Southern Jewish cookbooks—*The Kosher Southern*

*Cookbook*, *The Kosher Creole Cookbook* and the *Kosher Cajun Cookbook*. Interviewed by Dr. Marcie Cohen Ferris, a foodways scholar devoted to tracing the story of Southern Jewish food from colonial times to the present, Mildred Covert had given her inspiration for her jewel of a title, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo*. That was her signature dish.

Not being a New Orleans native nor even a Louisianian, Mildred Covert did not need to talk to me. Thinking on it, being given multiple honors, working at the *Times-Picayune*, being noted by the likes of cookbook author Joan Nathan and Dr. Cohen-Ferris, and producing three extraordinary cookbooks of nationwide renown — she didn't need me to tell her story again. It occurred to me very quickly after sizing up the petite lady in the leopard print blouse and cayenne colored jacket that I needed her, and she knew it — and she didn't have a lot of time to explain. She came to teach.

These days, you will read and hear about a lot of racial flashpoints and moments of seemingly irreconcilable conflict between blacks and whites. What you won't hear about is a little white, Southern, Jewish lady taking a big, African American, Southern, Jewish dude by the hand and praying with him, showing him where she grew up and treating him to a lifetime of memories and directives for the future. Mildred Covert didn't doubt or show confusion over my identity, she affirmed it. It is a great pleasure to have an elder look at you and give you the feeling that the baton is being passed, that you are the future and that you are enough.

Mildred Covert didn't need me, I needed her. "Young man, do you know who we learned to cook from down on Dryades street? It was the African American ladies we lived near and who worked for and with us. That's how we became Americans and a part of New Orleans." Over kosher jambalaya, a bowl of matzoh ball gumbo and a bit of pastrami on rye, Mildred Covert sat me down at her grandson's restaurant after a day of touring old Jewish New Orleans and gave me the saga of her own culinary "Roots." Her mother

**"Mildred Covert appeared and signed her cookbooks at several Rouses store openings. She was one of a kind."**

—Tim Acosta, *Rouses Marketing Director*

was an immigrant from Galicia — Austrian Poland — who landed in New Orleans unaware that you had to peel

the bananas before you ate them. She came from the Old World, where nobody had seen a fiery hot Louisiana pepper and where tomatoes were verboten to some because they were believed to be made of blood. Mildred's memories were the fading of the Old World and wonderment of those who took the one-way ticket to America.

Her hands, hands that had molded kneidlach for matzoh ball gumbo and blackened fish, looked like my grandmother's hands. She said, "Now, all my life I have kept kosher. I was raised Orthodox. But when I first married my husband of blessed memory, he, being a German Jew, wasn't quite used to all that." With a wry smile and a wink, Mrs. Covert said, "Now, I did *try* a few foods while I was getting him on track the first five years, but *honey*, I can now make the best kosher stuffed crab you ever had!"

Hours of stories, history lessons and it was time to go get ready for Shabbat. I imagined that the next time I was in New Orleans, I would find a way to get my two favorite ladies in the same room for tea and conversation, my elder-friend Chef Leah Chase and Ms. Mildred. It didn't happen. But this I will always have — Mildred Covert's parting words, "Michael, remember what I told you, keep telling *our* story, you're my mishpocha now."

Thank you, Ms. Mildred. We love you.

➤ *Years before Mildred Covert passed away, she donated some of her papers and clippings to the then nascent library at the Southern Food and Beverage Museum. She had donated other materials even earlier to the library at Newcomb. Her family has donated some of her hand written adaptations to the John and Bonnie Boyd Hospitality and Culinary Library. Her notes and comments are a wonderful commentary on her experimentation and her imagination. In addition to her notes, the family has donated her certificate of completion from Lea Barnes School of Cooking as well as magazines that she annotated.*

—Liz Williams

dictated to a family friend, a former Hebrew school student turned journalist, a note that caught my attention for its urgency if not its matter of fact-ness. Mildred Covert read about me in *SJL*, and she didn't say I *should* meet with her, she said I *WOULD* be meeting with her. Before I struggled to drum up who this strange, elderly woman bossing me around might be, I remembered where I





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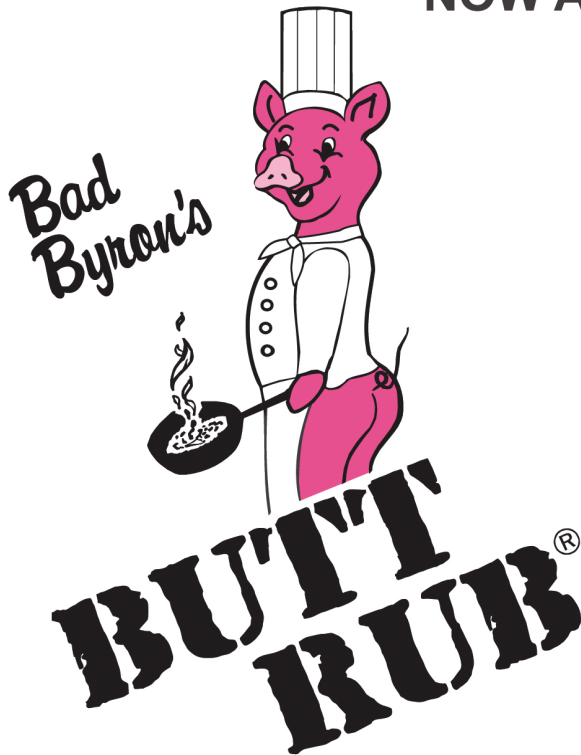
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## At Season's Peak

### EAST COAST

There's no special season for lobsters, but in general, more lobsters are caught in the warm summer months when fishing conditions are easier, and the lobsters come closer to the shore. While most people associate the East Coast with lobsters, divers and fishermen also catch them right here on the Gulf Coast. Gulf Coast spiny lobsters have smaller claws than their cold-water, hard-shell cousins in Maine and Canada. We love everything local, but when it comes to these crustaceans, we say East Coast for lobster, Gulf Coast for crawfish.

### Cooking Lobster

Our seafood experts will steam your lobster for free while you shop, but if you prefer to cook at home, boiling is an easy method. You need a large pot and around 3 quarts of water per lobster. A 1-pound lobster needs to cook

for 8 minutes; a 1¼ pound lobster 9-10 minutes; a 1½ pound lobster 11-12 minutes. **HOW TO PREP:** In a large pot, bring water to a rolling boil. Add lemons (quartered) and season with Rouses salt. Place lobsters in the pot one at a time, and boil, uncovered, for proper time based on lobster weight, stirring halfway through cooking. Remove pot from heat, but let lobsters soak for 5 minutes before serving. **CAJUN STYLE:** Add liquid crab boil, garlic and onions to water before boiling.

### Cheddar Biscuits

*Cheddar biscuits like the ones served at Red Lobster are great with seafood. Here's our take on the restaurant's recipe. Rouses Chef's Tip: Use cold butter and milk and keep the dough rough. Makes 1 dozen.*

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2½ cups Bisquick baking mix
- 4 tablespoons cold butter (1/2 stick)
- ¾ cup cold Rouses whole milk
- 1¼ cup cheddar cheese, grated
- ¼ teaspoon Rouses garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- ½ teaspoon Rouses garlic powder
- Pinch of Rouses salt

#### HOW TO PREP

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a medium-sized mixing bowl, lightly combine Bisquick and butter with a pastry cutter or large fork, leaving small chunks of butter, about the size of peas. Blend in milk, cheese and ¼ teaspoon garlic powder, cutting or mashing until dough just begins to set. (Be careful not to over mix; you want a rough dough).

Using an ice cream scoop or large spoon, drop ¼-cup portions of dough onto an ungreased cookie sheet, leaving enough space between balls of dough for biscuits to rise. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes, or until biscuits are lightly browned. In a small saucepot, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Add remaining garlic powder and parsley. Brush butter mixture on the top of biscuits right before serving.





## Drawn Butter for Lobster

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter

### HOW TO PREP

In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt butter until top is foamy, and butter solids fall to the bottom, about 15 minutes. Remove pan from heat and allow butter to cool. Skim foam from the top and discard. Transfer liquid butter to a small bowl; discard solids. Serve warm.

## WEST COAST

Summer is peak season for Alaska salmon, a great fish for the grill. Our most popular variety is Sockeye or Red Salmon, which has a rich, deep color, high oil content, firm texture and delicate flavor. Coho or Silver Salmon has an even milder flavor, and firm flesh that's more orange than red. Keta or Chum Salmon spawns near river mouths and has lower oil content than Sockeye or Coho.

Every Rouses seafood specialist is trained to cut every piece of fish we sell, and salmon is one of our seafood specialties. Steaks are cut from the thick slab between the head and the tail of the fish, and are at least one-inch thick. Salmon fillets may run a bit thicker, about one-and-a-half to two-inches. They're cut from behind the head of the fish down to the tail. Sizes taper from the wider head end to the narrower tail end.

## From Our Test Kitchen

### Buffalo Trace Cedar Plank Salmon

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

4 cold-soaked maple or cedar planks  
¼ cup maple syrup  
¼ cup Buffalo Trace bourbon\*  
4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets  
4 sprigs fresh thyme, lightly crushed  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Rouses salt  
2 tablespoons Rouses olive oil  
\*you can substitute apple juice

#### HOW TO PREP

Soak planks in cold water for at least one hour using cans of food or weights to keep them fully submerged.

Preheat grill.

In a small bowl, combine maple syrup and bourbon. Set aside.

Season salmon with thyme, salt and black pepper.

Remove the planks from water and place on the grill smooth side up. When planks are hot, brush with olive oil, place fillets on top, and brush the fish with the maple-bourbon mixture. Cook over a medium to high flame for 10 minutes or until done.



## GULF COAST

Flounder's nickname, the Doormat, just about says it all. Its body is compressed laterally, and its eyes (both of them) are on the left side of its head. This is not a pretty fish, but it's a delicious one, whether served fried, broiled or stuffed. Flounder are found all over the Gulf Coast, mostly on mud, but also on sand bottoms. Females tend to stay inland, adult males in offshore waters.

### Also in Season:

Blue Crabs • King Mackerel • Snapper • White Shrimp  
Brown Shrimp • Yellowfin Tuna

### ➤ Jubilee!

*Summertime is jubilee time for the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay, from Daphne to Mullet Point. But you can't schedule a trip to see a jubilee — a very specific set of conditions has to occur for this natural phenomenon to take place. In Lower Alabama, it's when the saltwater from the Gulf meets freshwater from the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and oxygen levels in Mobile Bay drop so low that bottom-dwelling flounder, shrimp, crabs and eels are forced into shallow waters. Lucky fishermen can scoop them from the shoreline with a gig and a net.*

## Fried Flounder

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

2 large eggs  
½ cup milk  
Pinch of Rouses Cajun Seasonings  
4 6-ounce pieces boneless flounder  
Rouses Salt and pepper  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
Rouses Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
Lemon wedges

### HOW TO PREP

In a small shallow bowl, whisk together eggs, milk and Rouses Cajun seasonings. Season fish with salt and pepper. Pour flour onto a plate. Dredge fish in flour then dip in egg mixture.

In a large skillet, heat ¼ inch of olive oil over medium-high heat. Oil is ready when it begins to shimmer. Shake off excess batter before placing fish in the skillet. Fry until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer fish to a serving platter. Gently blot with a paper towel to absorb any excess oil. Serve with lemon wedges.



*Fresh Produce*  
**CHERRY PICKED**  
*Just For You!*







### Northwest Cherries, July and August

Different varieties of cherries grown in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana ripen at different rates throughout the summer. Our farmer partners deliver to us within two days of harvest, so you get the freshest cherries every time you shop. All varieties of Northwest Cherries are sweet, but the rule of thumb is the darker, the sweeter. Some of our favorite varieties include deep, mahogany-red Bing cherries, which are firm and juicy; large Rainier cherries, which are yellow with a red blush; and heart-shaped Sweetheart cherries, which are firm, with a mild sweet flavor.

**Storage:** Unwashed cherries stored in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag will last for about a week. Don't wash until just before eating.

### Alabama Silver King & Silver Queen Corn, July

We buy entire crops of this sweet Alabama corn, but as fast as we get it, it goes.

**Storage:** We recommend eating silver corn fresh on the cob, but if you want to freeze your purchase for later, shuck and blanch ears in boiling water for one minute, let cool, and freeze in Ziploc. Corn will last for a few months.

### Amaize Sweet Corn, July

Available exclusively at Rouses

This rare breed of white sweet corn is known for its deliciously sweet flavor and crunchy texture.

**Storage:** Bag un-shucked ears and store in the refrigerator for up to three days.

### Apricots • Peaches • Nectarines Plums • Figs

#### Lori Anne Peaches, July

Available exclusively at Rouses

These South Carolina peaches have a soft, fuzzy exterior and sweet, tender flesh. They're harvested and packed right in the field and shipped directly to Rouses.

### Local Yellow Squash & Zucchini, July and August

Look for squash and zucchini that are less than eight inches. Any larger, and they can be bitter.

**Storage:** Store unwashed in a plastic bag in the vegetable drawer for up to five days.

### Local Eggplant, July and August

Great fried, grilled, stuffed and in casseroles. A slice of fresh eggplant is meaty, so it can replace beef, chicken or pork in some recipes.

**Storage:** Store loose eggplants at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to three days.

### Tomatoes • Strawberries • Blueberries Watermelons • Crenshaw



## From Our Test Kitchen

### Cheesy Zucchini Casserole

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 4 slices Rouses white bread, cubed
- 2 cups cubed zucchini
- 1 large white onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup green onions tops, chopped

#### HOW TO PREP

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, toss bread cubes, zucchini, onion, garlic, garlic salt and egg to combine. Pour in butter and stir to coat. Transfer mixture to a 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with shredded cheese, cover, and bake for 30 minutes. Remove cover and bake an additional 30 minutes or lightly browned and bubbling. Garnish with green onion tops.







# Tales of the Cocktail

One of our favorite events, Tales of the Cocktail, challenged bartenders around the world to create a frozen daiquiri, this year's signature cocktail. The daiquiri may have been invented in Cuba, but there's no doubt the Gulf Coast perfected it! This version features Gulf Coast grown watermelon, but you could substitute our exclusive Lori Anne Peaches.

➤ *Tales of the Cocktail runs July 13<sup>th</sup> through July 20<sup>th</sup>. For tickets, visit [www.talesofthecocktail.com](http://www.talesofthecocktail.com).*

## Watermelon Mojito

*The Mojito was also invented in Cuba. Makes 6*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 30 large fresh mint leaves
- 2 cups fresh cut watermelon, seeds removed
- 6 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 12 ounces Bayou Silver Rum
- Sprigs of mint for garnish

### HOW TO PREP

In a small pot, bring ½ cup water and ½ cup of sugar to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and stir until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Use a mortar and pestle to mash the mint leaves.

In a food processor, purée watermelon. Transfer to a pitcher, add mashed mint, simple syrup, lime juice and rum and stir to combine. Serve in a rock glass with ice. Garnish with fresh mint.

## Watermelon Daiquiri

*Makes 6*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2½ pounds watermelon, seeded, cut into pieces, and frozen
- ½ cup lime juice, or to taste
- 3 tablespoons superfine granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons Grand Marnier, Cointreau or other orange-flavored liqueur
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons Bayou Select Rum

### HOW TO PREP

Freeze watermelon pieces in a single layer on a baking tray. In a blender, purée watermelon, lime juice, sugar, Grand Marnier and rum until smooth. Divide among 4 chilled glasses.

## Watermelon Strawberry Salad

*Makes 8*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2 cups balsamic vinegar
  - ¼ cup honey
  - 1 head curly lettuce, torn, rinsed and dried
  - 1 cup red leaf lettuce, torn, rinsed and dried
  - 4 cups watermelon cubes (about 1-inch), seeds removed
  - 1 cup strawberries, cut in half
  - 1 pound small fresh mozzarella balls, pinched or cut in half
  - 2 sprigs fresh mint, leaves only
- Rouses salt and pepper

### HOW TO PREP

In a small pot, stir balsamic vinegar and honey to combine. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and reduce until mixture reaches a syrup-like consistency. Set aside and allow to completely cool.

In a large bowl, arrange lettuce, watermelon, strawberries, mint and mozzarella. Drizzle with balsamic honey syrup and sprinkle with salt and pepper.





# CATCH *the* HATCH!

*Only available for a limited time.*

## **Hatch Green Chiles,** *July and August*

Our Hatch green chiles are grown in Hatch, New Mexico, where hot days, cool nights and rich volcanic soil give this seasonal favorite their flavor.

➤ We're roasting bell peppers and Hatch chiles throughout the months of July and August. For our complete roasting schedule and to find out when we will be roasting at a store near you, visit [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com).



# Hot Dram!

by Bobby Childs

I love bourbon. So much so that I've turned my spare bedroom into a "bourbon room." I own close to 90 bottles which I jokingly refer to as 'my children'. *My wife rolls her eyes every time I say that.* Soon, though, I will have to rechristen the room "the whisky room," because recently I've started drinking Scotch.

*"All Scotch is smoky and peaty, and I don't like smoky and peaty."* That's the response I usually get from people when I ask if they like Scotch. And I have to be honest here, I used to think the same thing. I was under this same common misconception, without ever trying Scotch — *so much for my parents teaching me to try something before saying I didn't like it* — but my opinion changed when our neighbors brought over a housewarming gift — a bottle of Glenlivet 12 year old single malt Scotch whisky. It took me a while to work up the nerve to pop open the bottle and pour a dram, but when I finally did, it was like someone slapped me awake. It wasn't because the Scotch was smoky or peaty or even "rough". Quite the opposite — the Glenlivet 12 year old was bursting with flavors of honey, pear and even a little vanilla. No smoke or peat here.

Scotch shouldn't be intimidating. Bourbon fans, look past the idea that all Scotch is smoky and peaty. Yes, some are, but many aren't. Going back to the Glenlivet 12 year old — it's a sweet, fruity whisky that's widely available. Another great entry single malt Scotch is Glenfiddich 12 year old. It's similar to Glenlivet 12, but adds a crisp apple note.

I recently tasted the entire Johnnie Walker lineup, ranging from the \$20 Red Label to the pricey Blue Label. Johnnie Walker is the most recognizable name in Scotch whisky. It's a blended whisky, so it's designed to be smooth and palatable. Try Johnnie Walker Black Label (about \$35 at Rouses). Even some of the world's most accredited whisky writers agree that the Johnnie Walker Black Label offers great flavor and complexity for the price. There is a hint of smoke lurking in all of the Johnnie Walkers. Not a fan? Give Chivas Regal or Dewar's a shot — or a dram.

## What is a Dram?

A dram is an arbitrary measurement, but usually one to two ounces of whisky. A double is exactly that, two drams.

## Neat & Tidy

A Scotch whisky neat (no ice) is the classic, but you can add a cube or two if you like your drinks colder. Use a Scotch glass, snifter or small rocks glass.

## Cheese Pairings

Just about any whisky can be paired with cheese, but Scotch and blue cheese are a traditional pairing. Smoked cheddars, aged Goudas and aged sheeps milk are also very good matches.



## EAGLE RARE, MEDIUM & WELL DONE

*Eagle Rare Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey is aged for no less than ten years. Its bold, dry, oaky flavors make it the perfect match for steak.*

**Blue Rare** 115 degrees

*Steak is charred or seared outside, but still completely red throughout. You need a screaming hot pan and a very cold steak to reach this level of doneness/un-doneness. Blue Rare is also referred to as Black & Blue, Pittsburg Blue, Pittsburg Rare and Chicago Rare.*

**Rare** 120 degrees

*Seared outside and still red 75% through the center.*

**Medium Rare** 126 degrees

*Seared outside with 50% red center.*

**Medium** 134 degrees

*Seared outside with 25% pink inside.*

**Medium Well** 150 degrees

*Just a slight hint of pink.*

**Well Done** 160 degrees

*100% brown.*





## Summertime Blues

From our Test Kitchen

### Red, Bite & Blue Salad Serves 2

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 pound Texas Star skirt steak,  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1-inch thick, trimmed and halved crosswise
- 3 tablespoons Rouses olive oil
- Rouses salt and pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  head Butter lettuce, rinsed and dried
- 6 cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 10-12 fresh snap beans, blanched
- Blue cheese dressing

#### HOW TO PREP

Preheat grill to highest temperature.

Pat steak dry and season both sides with salt and pepper.

When grill is hot, brush rack with olive oil, and place steak in center. Cover and grill steak for 3 minutes. Flip steak and continue cooking to medium rare (126 degrees), about 3 minutes. Transfer steak to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes.

Thinly slice steak on the diagonal, across the grain. Arrange lettuce and steak on a platter. Top with blue cheese dressing, cherry tomatoes and snap beans.

*This salad is also great with grilled romaine lettuce. Cut heads of romaine in half, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill cut side down until edges begin to char.*

- > At Jesse's Restaurant in Magnolia Springs, Alabama, the Whiskey Steak is a 16-ounce rib-eye marinated for 24-hours in a mixture of Jack Daniel's, Cajun seasonings, ginger and soy. Start with an appetizer of Mississippi sweet tea-brined quail then go for the Whiskey Steak and a side of the Blue Cheese Gratin at this family owned restaurant 45 minutes from Mobile.



### Blue Cheese Dressing Serves 4

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 cup crumbled Gorgonzola, Roquefort or Stilton blue cheese, room temperature
- Rouses salt and pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Rouses mayonnaise
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup buttermilk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon Rouses garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon Rouses black pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon Rouses onion pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon Rouses salt

#### HOW TO PREP

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup blue cheese, mayonnaise, buttermilk, sugar and seasonings. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the rest of the blue cheese.

### Bluesiana Martini Serves 4

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 12 Dellalo Blue Cheese stuffed olives
- 12 ounces vodka
- Olive juice to taste

#### HOW TO PREP

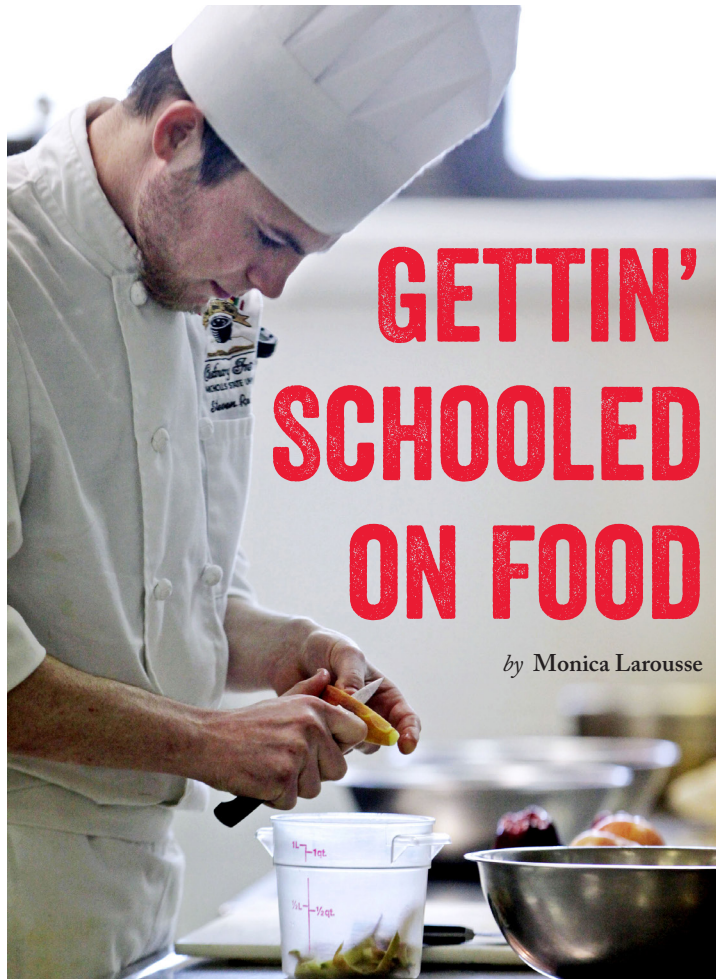
Fill martini glasses with ice water; set aside.

Skewer Dellalo blue cheese stuffed olives on cocktail picks (3 per glass). Fill a martini shaker halfway with ice, add vodka and olive juice and shake to chill.

Pour ice water out of glasses. Strain martini into chilled glasses and garnish with blue cheese olives.







# GETTIN' SCHOOLED ON FOOD

by Monica Larousse

**A** searing 101 degrees — that’s the temperature registered by the thermometers living in most chefs’ left shoulder pockets at this time of year, when the trenches of South Louisiana kitchens are tempered à la Dante’s Inferno.

When I enter the much cooler 85-degree kitchens of Nicholls State University’s Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, where the students know me as Chef Monica Larousse, I wear my chef’s whites and thermometer proudly, ready to instruct culinary labs that last as long as the day’s recipe requires. For some culinary students, the lessons I share in these labs are the introduction to techniques they will use for the rest of their lives, both in their professional and private kitchens.

My role as educator doesn’t end with the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute. As a mother to two beautiful girls and wife to a professional chef, I am challenged constantly to give my best both at home and at the university. What keeps me going is the realization that I get to live the dream that I have spent over 20 years working tirelessly to achieve while always being surrounded by a culinary-minded family. It’s a unique lifestyle, and unique lifestyles tend to attract curious questions. “Where do y’all shop for groceries?” I get asked most often. My instinctive reply is a no-brainer: “Rouses, where the chefs shop.”

Much like the culinary institute and Nicholls, Rouses has evolved over the years, especially since the market opened its first café. Rouses is always my first stop to shop no matter the length or variety of my scribbled shopping list. It’s where I buy comfort food for my family and lunch prepared by some of South Louisiana’s best chefs, who happen to be Nicholls culinary alumni and students. Rouses carries the freshest local produce and trendy groceries, while consistently supplying local restaurants and our own culinary institute’s classroom operations with top-notch ingredients.

As you can tell, Rouses and the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute feed my soul and passion, and Nicholls provides me the opportunity to influence young, aspiring chefs. These students, in turn, unknowingly influence culinary evolution through their expressions in the kitchen and desire to ingest any morsel of information that is fed to them. It is this fervency that has joined Rouses and Nicholls in creating a partnership that continues to yield innovative, one-of-a-kind opportunities for students at the culinary institute, located in the heart of the Bayou Region.

The small town of Thibodaux, where Rouses and Nicholls call home, provides a bountiful natural pantry and deep-rooted Cajun-Creole culture, making it the ideal community in which to immerse culinary students in the art of cooking the Louisiana way. Even Jimmy Buffett knows Thibodaux is a special town. His lyrics to “I Will Play for Gumbo” suggest he has had a good roux or two: “A piece of French bread with which to wipe my bowl, good for the body, good for the soul ... you should never know when you’re gonna get it next, at midnight in the Quarter or noon in Thibodaux.” This *joie de vivre* is part of a Nicholls student’s daily life. It is also what attracts renowned regional and international chefs to visit the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, only a short 45-minute drive from New Orleans. Being so close to such a large culinary and cultural Mecca means Nicholls culinary students are able to acquire externships and employment in some of the country’s finest kitchens, all while pursuing a Bachelor of Science in culinary arts — the first degree of its kind in the country and the only one currently offered in Louisiana.

Getting into dream kitchens starts by clocking countless hours in the six kitchens of the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, which recently moved into the new 33,000-square-foot Lanny D. Ledet Culinary Arts Building on the Nicholls campus. This state-of-the-art facility opens to Nicholls’ 300-plus culinary students in August and upholds the culinary institute’s fine tradition of educating and developing the industry’s next leaders in a region that maintains respect and appreciation for the Cajun-Creole tradition, a mission that began in 1995 when the institute

was founded, incidentally over a few bowls of gumbo.

Speaking of gumbo, the classic Louisiana-style soup isn’t a cooking technique, but a way of life, one of the important concepts that Chef John Folse Culinary Institute students come to learn while receiving a quality liberal arts college education at Nicholls. Hey, at least all that learning no longer takes place in a 101-degree kitchen.







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