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# What's Cooking At



VOLUME 29, ISSUE NO. 1 SPRING 2006

## Mother's Day: May 14th & Father's Day: June 18th

Join us for lunch on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14th. Celebrate your mother and all that she has meant to you with a delicious Taste of Texas meal. We'll do all the cooking and present her with a beautiful rose. You supply the gratitude.

On Father's Day, Sunday, June 18th, treat your Dad to a well-deserved steak dinner. Let him know how much you admire and respect him. We'll add to your special time together

er by giving each Dad a Taste of Texas "Master Chef" apron.

On both of these occasions, we will open at 11:00 a.m. and continue serving through dinner. You'll enjoy having your family picture taken as a warm reminder of your time together. At the Taste of Texas Restaurant, we truly value families, and hope that we can be a part of making some great memories with yours!

## Web News from the Taste of Texas

The "Taste" is now as close as your computer and we ship our wonderful steaks and merchandise nationwide! If you are not able to bring your Mom or Dad to the restaurant this year, simply send them a "Taste Gift" from the Taste of Texas. We've got great gift ideas on our website, <http://www.tasteoftexas.com>,

which will surely bring a smile to the ones who deserve to be reminded of how very special they are. Moms would love a Gift Card for a future visit and Dad's will really enjoy receiving some Certified Angus Steaks to cook out at home. Send a "Taste of Texas" today!

## Taste Staff Boot Camp Going Strong!

"Sleep in" on Saturday? Not this crew! Every Saturday morning, 24 dedicated Taste of Texas staffers roll out of bed for some very strenuous physical training. Not for the faint-hearted, "Boot Camp" challenges each individual to push beyond their comfort zone to achieve more than just physical strength. The end result? Increased stamina, clearer thinking, and the personal satisfaction that comes from self-discipline.

They inspire us all to reach for our personal best and we are so proud of their commitment to excellence.

*Way to go!*



## Staff News

Congratulations to Manager, Nathan Vera and his sweet wife Sarah who are expecting their third bundle of joy any minute! Members of our waitstaff are preparing to celebrate as Trainer Brady Frye adds a precious boy to her eagerly awaiting clan which includes 3 daughters. Meagan Chase will welcome a sweet baby boy in May. John VanNoller and his wife Amy are looking forward to their new baby in September. We are excited for all of them!

As our business continues to grow, so does our administrative

staff and this month we welcomed Amy Smith who hails from Georgia and is handling our accounting needs. We love her soft, southern accent, and "whatever it takes" attitude! Will Agudelo is our resident technical genius. He manages the e-commerce site along with shipping orders to our customers, and tweaks our computers. In addition to handling issues for the office folks, he also is one of our great wait staff! We are blessed with a great team of people at the Taste of Texas and appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

## Disciplined, Determined, Dedicated MS 150: Taste of Texas "Blazing Saddles" trek from Houston to Austin

One of our employee's most eagerly anticipated annual events is the MS150 bike ride from Houston to Austin. Our Taste of Texas team, the "Blazing Saddles", just completed our 6th tour together on April 22-23rd to raise money to fight debilitating Multiple Sclerosis. With 40 riders and 15 support staff, the Blazing Saddles joined 13,000 other riders to make the Houston to Austin MS bike ride the biggest and most successful in the nation. Advil, Ben-Gay and Band-Aids became close allies in the mission to travel 160 miles in 2 days. The riders and staff enjoyed great weather, fellowship, and a delicious Taste of Texas steak & shrimp dinner. A breakfast feast was prepared by our traveling chefs, Richard Sanchez, Fausto



Hernandez and Mauricio Diaz. As an extra benefit, riders were revived after the first day by our team of masseuses, Glenn Byrd, Brian Cryer, and Giovanna Thompson. Why do we do this? Simply put, MS has affected the lives of our family, friends, neighbors and customers. The MS Society continues to make a huge difference in not only research, but support, therapy, and training to those afflicted by this awful disease. The money we raise for MS goes directly to those in need right here in our community. Many of you have expressed an interest in supporting this great cause. We appreciate your involvement and we are offering some great incentives for those who donate to MS through The Taste of Texas.

### You send a check for:

\$75 donation  
\$150 donation  
\$250 donation  
\$350 donation  
\$500 donation

### We'll send you:

1 free appetizer and 1 free dessert  
\$25 gift card  
\$50 gift card  
\$100 gift card with immediate seating for 4!  
\$150 gift card with immediate seating for 6 or more!

Join us today in this worthy program! Please make out a check to "MS 150" and mail to: MS150-Taste of Texas, 10505 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77024. Or you can donate online at [www.tasteoftexas.com](http://www.tasteoftexas.com) – look for the MS 150 donation section and support the Multiple Sclerosis Society today!

*Contributions must be marked by May 31st for this program!*

## Texas Trivia

1. King Ranch in South Texas is larger than what state?
2. Ima Hogg was the daughter of the Governor of Texas, James Hogg. Ura was her sister. True or False?
3. What was the name of the original Astrodome?
4. The Taste of Texas Restaurant was established in what year?
5. What was the fourth flag to fly over Texas?
6. What was Tascosa's Boot Hill?
7. People have paid over \$1000 for Luling's Grand Champion what?
8. Where is the "Come and Take It" celebration held?
9. Why is petrified palm wood significant to Texas?
10. Who was "Ma" Ferguson?

## Lisa's Heavenly Creme Brulee

If you need a wonderful dessert to serve, Lisa's Heavenly Crème Brulee, a favorite at the Taste of Texas, is sure to make you a very envied host. Although it takes a bit of time to prepare, the grateful response of your guests will make it time well spent!

### Ingredients:

- 3 qts. heavy cream
- 1.5 vanilla beans, split, scraped
- 24 egg yolks (fresh)
- 12 oz. granulated sugar

**Method:** Heat in a stainless steel pot, the heavy cream and vanilla bean. Bring to a simmer. In a bowl whisk egg yolks and sugar together until incorporated. Take 8 ounces of the hot cream and

whisk into the egg yolk and sugar mixture. Slowly add the remainder of the heavy cream while stirring. Strain through a fine mesh strainer. Place six individual serving ramekins in full hotel pan. Fill the ramekins with 6 ounces of mix carefully, do not splash. Torch the surface of each serving dish quickly to remove the air bubbles. Place the pans in a convection oven at 335 degrees (preheated) and on low (no fan). Fill the pans halfway up the dish with hot water. Cook for 33 minutes. Take out of the oven immediately and let sit in the water bath for five minutes then carefully take the crème brulee dish out of the water bath and place on a rack to cool for about 30 minutes. Refrigerate for one hour. Coat the surface of each bowl with a thin layer of granulated sugar. Torch until the sugar turns light brown.

**Yield: 24 portions**

## The "Taste" Recommends... Cleburne Cafeteria

Many of you have asked where Nina and Edd like to eat when they don't eat at the Taste of Texas. One of their all time favorites is Cleburne's Cafeteria, located at 3606 Bissonnet between Edloe and Buffalo Speedway.

Soon after World War II, a young gentleman named Nick Mickelis immigrated to America from Greece with only \$2.50 in his pocket and a piece of paper with the word "Houston" written on it. Working his way from dishwasher to cook, he earned enough money to buy a barbecue restaurant. He also had a talent for painting and not being able to afford canvas, he would paint murals on the walls in between serving customers.

In 1952, Nick and his wife Pat bought the Cleburne Cafeteria. Thinking of changing it into a barbecue restaurant, the faithful clientele would hear nothing of it! Nick had never eaten at a cafeteria, but had no choice but to learn the ropes of cafeteria business. Nick and Pat worked side by side to create one of Houston's best and most quality operated cafeterias. Many of the cooks that started with Nick and Pat are still with the family today. In 1969, the decision was made to move the restaurant from

its original location on Cleburne Street to its current address on Bissonnet. Pat wrote 350 letters to old customers and when they were ready to open, all 350 of them showed up! (It is estimated that 70% of their customers are regulars with many appearing for both lunch and dinner.) Nick passed away in 1989, and in August 1990 the cafeteria was completely destroyed by fire. Miraculously, most of Nick's paintings were saved and restored to their original beauty. The cafeteria was rebuilt in loving memory of Nick, and reopened in December of 1990.

Today, Nick's son George, and his wife Michelle, work side by side operating Cleburne Cafeteria. They are hopeful that their 4 children, Athena, Nickolas, Anthony and Matthew will carry on the family's cafeteria tradition.

Nick never gave up the dream of being an artist. The walls of the Cleburne are covered by his work (now on canvas). Most of Nick's art comes from memories of Greece. The Mikelis family believes in a warm, comfortable environment and simple homemade food. Visit their website "cleburnecafeteria.com".

## Taste of Texas Wins "Best of Houston" Award

The Taste of Texas is honored to have received the coveted AOL Cityguide's "City's Best Steakhouse" award for 2006. This search service empowers its users to make informed decisions about where to spend their time and money based on over one million editorials and user reviews and ratings. We are also proud to have received the Wine Spectators Award of Excellence for the 12th

year in a row! Each year, Wine Spectator reviews thousands of wine lists from restaurants all over the nation and evaluates them based on balance of selections, vintages, price and availability as well as a number of other factors. We are grateful to be included in a publication that considers our wine list as one of the "most outstanding restaurant wine lists in the world".

## Hendee Family Update

The Hendee kids are all graduating. It's "cap and gown season" and we are celebrating the graduations of all three of our children this summer!

Upon completion of his MBA from Harvard Business School in June, Edd K, Claudine and son Campbell will be moving to Greenwich, Connecticut. Edd has taken a job with Starwood Capital and is both excited and challenged with his new responsibilities. Campbell is growing before our very eyes and gets cuter by the minute! It's great having a professional photographer in the family and Claudine graciously keeps us supplied with updated pictures.

Lisa, already a graduate from A&M, will be



graduating from the Texas Culinary Academy in Austin this July. Customers at the Taste of Texas have been delighted by many of her special creations in the kitchen as she has fulfilled her externship hours here with us. (Wonder if we could convince her to stay?)

Thomas Jefferson said, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." If he is correct, Kristin should have plenty of luck. After 4 years of diligent work, Kristin graduates from Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia in May. She will receive her B.A. in Commerce with minors in History and French. She's off to New York for the summer.

Nina and Edd value education and continue to reward employees for academic excellence. Congratulations to our Graduates of 2006. We are so proud of all of you!

## Best Customer Award

At least 2-3 times a week, without fail, Gena and Jack Morrison make their way to the Taste of Texas to enjoy a meal with us. Many of our customers are frequent diners but this faithful couple has been making these visits since the Taste of Texas opened in 1977! Married for 53 years, Gena and Jack, and their three boys met Edd when he was in college waiting tables for Steak & Ale near U of H. They were there to support Edd from the early 1970's on and beam as they revisit memories of watching Nina and Edd's growth in the restaurant business.

When the Taste of Texas opened on Memorial in 1977, Jack and Gena (who had seen several restaurants come and go at this sight), decided to give it a try.

They were the first customers and continued coming back, all the while acting as goodwill ambassadors at their church, Tallowood Baptist, and in the workplace (Jack with Hoffman-LaRoche

Labs, and Gena with Rummel Creek Elementary). They even celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the restaurant!



The friendship between the Morrisons and the Hendees has grown throughout the years. Jack remembers fondly being Edd K's Sunday school teacher when he was in the 11th grade. Active at Tallowood Baptist Church, Gena and Jack continue to teach high school students and stay active in the church's many exciting ministries. They have many favorites at the Taste of Texas, and have enjoyed being "taste testers" for all of our menu additions! Crab cakes are one of their "favorites."

If you come to the restaurant on any given day, chances are, you'll see this precious couple enjoying time together over a wonderful meal. Their faithful and continued patronage and friendship make working in this business a delight. Thank you Gena and Jack!

## Katy Freeway Construction Zooming Ahead!

Work on the Katy Freeway is progressing ahead of schedule! Thanks to great teamwork by TXDOT, Williams Brothers and Harris County, several phases of the project have been completed almost 8 months ahead of time. Thankfully the TXDOT design includes an impressive new drainage system which will keep the area from flooding. With crews working 24/7, the work is being completed in approximately one-fourth

of the estimated time of a normal project. Traffic is flowing and drivers are amazed at the progress made daily on this immense project. Thanks to TXDOT and our loyal customers our sales have not been affected! Visit [www.katyfreeway.org/](http://www.katyfreeway.org/) to get the latest updates, work areas, and an overview of the completed product.

## Texas Trivia Answers

1. Rhode Island
2. False, purely a tall Texas tale
3. Harris County Domed Stadium
4. 1977
5. The Republic of Texas and it is still the state flag.
6. A cemetery for cowboys who died with their boots on!
7. Watermelon
8. Gonzales
9. It's the state stone! You knew that, didn't you?!
10. Governor of Texas 1924

## "New" Museum Quality Artifacts Guide

Attached to this newsletter you will find our new and improved artifacts guide. We take great pride in the museum quality pieces we have collected over the years. Next time you are in the restaurant, take some time to learn about Texas and our rich Texas heritage.