Brennan's
RESTAURANT
**Mineral Waters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PANNA (ITALY)</th>
<th>SAN PELLEGRINO (ITALY)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 liter</td>
<td>1 liter</td>
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<td>6.95</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Appetizers and Soups**

- **OYSTERS ROCKEFELLER (15 min.)**
  - Brennan's special treatment of this world famous sauce.
  - $11.50

- **BAKED OYSTERS CASINO (15 min.)**
  - Topped with cocktail sauce and a slice of grilled bacon.
  - $11.50

- **SHRIMP TRAIL**
  - Boiled Gulf shrimp topped with Brennan's authentic Cajun sauce.
  - $11.50

- **SHRIMP REMOULADE**
  - Boiled Gulf shrimp with the famous sauce which includes horseradish and Creole mustard.
  - $11.50

- **POG LEGS MEUNIERE**
  - Delicate frog legs sauteed and served in a lemon butter sauce with a touch of garlic.
  - $11.50

- **BARBECUED SHRIMP (15 min.)**
  - Brennan's version done to perfection with our own seasonings and peeled for your convenience. Pure decadence!
  - $11.50

- **ESCAROĞOTS BORDELAISE**
  - Half Dozen (15 min.)
  - French snails served in their shells, with garlic butter sauce.
  - $11.50

- **BUSTER CRABS BORNAINE**
  - A delicacy from Gulf Waters — baby soft shell crabs sauteed in butter then topped with Borrainaise sauce.
  - $11.50

- **BUSTER CRAB PECAN**
  - A delicacy from Gulf Waters — baby soft shell crab flash fried then topped with roasted pecans and crabmeat. Lemon butter sauce.
  - $12.50

- **CREPE BARBARA**
  - Delicate crepe filled with shrimp and sauteed lump crabmeat then topped with Hollandaise, grated Parmesan cheese and glazed.
  - $12.50

- **MAUDE’S SEAFOOD OKRA GUMBO**
  - $8.50

- **NEW ORLEANS TURTLE SOUP**
  - A Brennan Specialty.
  - $7.75

- **OYSTER SOUP BRENNAINE**
  - $7.75

- **CREOLE ONION SOUP**
  - $7.25

**Entrées**

- **VEAL ALANA MICHELLE**
  - Sautéed baby veal topped with lump crabmeat and Borrainaise sauce.
  - $36.00

- **VEAL PECAN**
  - Sautéed veal topped with crabmeat, roasted pecans and pecan butter.
  - $36.00

- **VEAL KOTTWITZ**
  - Baby veal sauteed with sliced artichoke bottoms and fresh mushrooms topped with a lemon butter sauce.
  - $36.00

- **BABY RACK OF LAMB ROUSSEL**
  - Grilled whole and sliced into mini-chops. Served with Borrainaise or Choron Sauce and a bouquetiere of fresh vegetables.
  - $36.00

- **TROUT NANCY**
  - Filet of fresh trout sautéed and topped with lump crabmeat sprinkled with capers. Lemon butter sauce. Formidable!
  - $30.00

- **TROUT KOTTWITZ**
  - Filet of fresh trout sautéed with sliced artichoke bottoms and fresh mushrooms topped with lemon butter sauce.
  - $30.00

- **REDFISH AU POIVRE**
  - Filet of redfish with a sauce of freshly ground peppercorns, brandy and cream.
  - $30.00

- **TOURNEADOS CHANTECLAIR**
  - Three prime tournedos each with a different sauce; Borrainaise, Choron, Marchand de Vin, accompanied by a bouquetiere of fresh vegetables.
  - $36.00

- **PEPPER FILLET WITH BARBECUED SHRIMP**
  - A prime butterflied filet topped with a brandy and cream peppercorn sauce. Accompanied by our barbecued shrimp.
  - $36.00

- **FILET BRENNAINE**
  - Center cut tenderloin, grilled to your liking, and topped with a fresh mushroom and red wine sauce.
  - $36.00

- **FILET STANLEY**
  - Topped with a fresh mushroom and red wine sauce and served with a sauteed banana and tangy horseradish sauce. Truly unique!
  - $36.00

- **FILET SERICE**
  - Boursin cheese stuffed filet of beef with cracked black peppercorns and orange Cabernet reduction sauce.
  - $36.00

- **RIBEYNE STEAK**
  - Prime 14 oz. ribeye broiled as you like it, in its natural juices.
  - $36.00

- **PEPPER RIBEYNE**
  - Finely ground peppercorns are pressed into this prime 14 oz. ribeye. Served in a sauce of natural juices, brandy and cream.
  - $36.00

- **STEAK DIANE**
  - Prime beef filets are sauteed in a sauce of natural juices, butter, fresh mushrooms and seasonings.
  - $36.00

- **CHATEAUBRIAND BOUQUETIÈRE**
  - (For Two)
  - (per person)
  - Grilled tenderloin, sliced, served with an assortment of vegetables, Borrainaise sauce.
  - $36.00

**Salads**

- **BRENNAN SALAD**
  - Romaine lettuce with a tangy Creole dressing, grated Parmesan cheese and croutons.
  - $7.00

- **JACKSON SALAD**
  - Iceberg lettuce, chopped hard-boiled egg, crumbled bacon, Bleu cheese, chives and Jackson dressing.
  - $7.00

- **BLAKE SALAD**
  - Mesclun greens with a cranberry vinaigrette, crumbled Bleu cheese and candied pecans.
  - $7.00

- **FRESH SPINACH SALAD**
  - With sliced fresh mushrooms, crumbled bacon and hard-boiled egg and Brennan's tangy Creole dressing.
  - $7.00

- **HEARTS OF PALM**
  - Vinaigrette dressing.
  - $7.25

**Desserts**

- **BANANAS FOSTER**
  - A Brennan creation and now World Famous! Bananas sauteed in butter, brown sugar, cinnamon and banana liqueur, then flamed in rum. Served over vanilla ice cream.
  - $7.25

- **CREPES BRIDGET (A Brennan creation)**
  - Crepes with a delicate filling of cream cheese and sour cream, topped with chocolate fudge sauce and whipped cream.
  - $7.25

- **CREPES FITZGERALD (A Brennan creation)**
  - Crepes with a delicate filling of cream cheese and sour cream served with a topping of strawberries flamed in Marsachino.
  - $7.25

- **STRAWBERRIES SUZETTE**
  - Marinated strawberries cooked in a Suzette sauce, flamed in brandy and served over ice cream.
  - $7.25

- **CREOLE CHOCOLATE SUICIDE CAKE**
  - $7.00

- **CREOLE WHITE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE PIE**
  - $7.00

- **BRENNAN'S LEMON CURD TARTELETTE**
  - $7.00

- **BRENNAN'S IRISH COFFEE**
  - $6.95
Table d'hote
Dinner Menu

Four Course Prix Fixe

$40.00

Appetizers (Choice of one)

CREOLE ONION SOUP
MAUDE’S SEAFOOD OKRA GUMBO
NEW ORLEANS TURTLE SOUP

OYSTER SOUP BRENNAU
ADD $4.00

SOUPE DU JOUR
ADD $3.00

Entrees

TROUT AMANDINE
Filet of trout sautéed and topped with lemon butter sauce and slivered almonds, accompanied by fresh potatoes.

TROUT PECAN
Filet of fresh trout sautéed and topped with roasted pecans and pecan butter.

REDFISH PEREZ
Sautéed filet of redfish covered with lump crabmeat, shrimp and topped with Hollandaise sauce.

BRENNAN’S BLACKENED REDFISH
Brennan’s version of blackened redfish grilled to perfection with Brennan’s own seasonings. Served with glazed carrots.

REDFISH WITH LUMP CRABMEAT JAIME
An old favorite, Brennan-created. Filet of redfish topped with lump crabmeat in a fresh mushroom and red wine sauce.

GRILLED FILET OF SALMON AUDUBON
A zesty combination of Creole mustard, Hollandaise, shrimp and carrots served atop salmon.

BUSTER CRABS BEARNAISE
Delicacy from Gulf waters - baby soft shell crabs sautéed in butter then topped with Bearnaise sauce.

SHRIMP CREOLE
Gulf shrimp in a traditional Creole sauce with parsley rice.

SHRIMP SAMANTHA WITH ANDOUILLE
Gulf shrimp and spicy Cajun sausage sautéed with fresh mushrooms, garlic, green onions, white wine, spices and served on a bed of parsley rice.

SHRIMP VICTORIA
Gulf shrimp sautéed in butter with fresh basil and fresh mushrooms served in a light cream sauce with parsley rice.

SHRIMP SARDOU
 Deliciously spicy fried shrimp atop sliced artichoke bottoms nestled in a bed of creamed spinach and covered with Hollandaise sauce.

CHICKEN LAZONE
Breast of chicken sautéed in our own Brennan seasonings, served in a light cream sauce with pasta.

CHICKEN ESPLANADE
Sautéed breast of chicken served in a divinely seasoned Creole sauce with fine herbs and freshly ground pepper.

Salads

BRENNAN SALAD
Romaine lettuce with a tangy Creole dressing, grated Parmesan cheese and croutons.

TOSSED GREEN SALAD
Choice of French, Bleu Cheese, or Thousand Island dressing

Desserts

BANANAS FOSTER (add $5.00)
CREPES FITZGERALD (add $5.00)
STRAWBERRIES SUIZETTE (add $5.00)
CREPES BRIDGET (add $5.00)
BRENNAN’S LEMON CURD TARTETTE
LOUISIANA CHOCOLATE PECAN PIE
CREOLE CHOCOLATE SUICIDE CAKE
CREOLE CHEESECAKE WITH STRAWBERRY TOPPING
CREOLE WHITE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE PIE

Dinner at Brennan’s without wine is like a day without sunshine!

Suggested Wines

ROBERT MONDAVI CHARDONNAY — 45.00

SONOMA CUTRER CHARDONNAY — 41.00

MIRASSOU CHARDONNAY — 28.00

POUILLY FUSSSE, LOUIS JADOT — 45.00

STAG’S LEAP WINE CELLARS CHARDONNAY — 59.00

POUILLY FUSSSE, LOUIS JADOT — 45.00

PIESPORER — 27.00

JORDAN CHARDONNAY — 55.00

FUMÉ BLANC — 27.00

STAG’S LEAP WINE CELLARS CHARDONNAY — 59.00

SAUVIGNON BLANC — 28.00

FUMÉ BLANC — 27.00

POUILLY FUSSSE, LOUIS JADOT — 45.00

SERVICE IS NOT INCLUDED

Due to certain conditions we sometimes substitute other fresh Gulf or farm raised fish for redfish or trout.

Breakfast at Brennan’s AND DINNER, TOO
– our most recent cookbook and the story of our legacy –
To purchase, ask your waiter or the bartender for information.
## Les Vins

### WHITE WINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Bottle</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARDONNAY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Napa Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JORDAN CHARDONNAY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT MONDAVI CHARDONNAY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Napa Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BYRON CHARDONNAY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Maria Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POUILLY FUISSE, LOUIS JADOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisp, dry burgundy (Qual VIni)</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONOMA CUTTER CHARDONNAY</td>
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<td>60.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian River Ranch</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEBASTIANI SONOMA CASK</td>
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<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHARDONNAY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonoma County</td>
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<tr>
<td>KENDALL-JACKSON, VINTNER'S RESERVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHARDONNAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>California Vineyards</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIRASSOU CHARDONNAY</td>
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<td>28.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monterey County</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SAUVIGNON BLANC</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisp, medium body, clean finish</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FUME BLANC</td>
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<td>27.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisp, dry, Americans</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PIESPORTER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fragrant, light Muscat</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEWURZTRAMINER</td>
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<td>26.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fragrant, spicy, fairly dry</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSCADET</td>
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<td>24.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light, crisp, Loire Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>COTES DU RHONE</td>
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<td>24.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry, well balanced from South France</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RIESLING</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delicate, floral aromas, fairly dry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DELOACH WHITE ZINFANDEL</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>California, Gold Medal Winner</td>
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### RED WINES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Bottle</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGS' LEAP WINERY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</td>
<td></td>
<td>77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall bodied, black fruit and cassis aromas are supported by ripe black fruits, raspberry and spicy vanilla flavors</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGS' LEAP WINERY</td>
<td></td>
<td>63.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERLOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velvety soft with expansive aromas and flavors of black fruit and spice</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY, NAPA</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium bodied, aromas and flavors of berry and black current with nuances of mocha, violet and spice</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST. EMILION</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>One of the fullest and heartiest of the French wines</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERLOT</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smooth, soft, round American wine</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ZINFANDEL</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heartly American wine with jammy fruit and spicy finish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEBASTIANI SONOMA CASK</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Robust American wine</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT MONDAVI COASTAL</td>
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<td>29.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>PINOT NOIR</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silky, soft, berry flavored American wine</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRU BEAULJALAS</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of several villages allowed its own appellation due to quality and topography</td>
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<tr>
<td>COTES DU RHONE</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous, robust wine from South France</td>
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<td></td>
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### SPARKLING WINES

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>BILLECART-SALMON BRUT ROSE</td>
<td>85.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>VEUVE CLICQUOT &quot;Yellow Label&quot; BRUT</td>
<td>80.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOET &amp; CHANDON, WHITE STAR</td>
<td>75.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIPER-HEIDSIECK BRUT</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;J&quot; JORDAN</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHRAMSBERG, ROSE</td>
<td>58.00</td>
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Entertaining Ideal Have a party in one of our lovely private rooms.

* please ask for master wine list for additional selections *
Brennan’s...A Culinary Legend

Founded by Owen Edward Brennan (portrait) in 1946, Brennan’s is operated by his sons — Owen, Jr. ("Pip"), Ted and Jimmy. Brennan’s is noted for its lush courtyard and twelve elegant dining rooms which accommodate most anything – be it a romantic dinner for two or a large reception for several hundred.

Restaurant Hours
Breakfast or Brunch: 8 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Luncheon Specials: Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Dinner: 6 p.m. — 10 p.m.
Open Seven Days a Week
Closed Christmas Eve night and Christmas day and night

Facilities
Award winning outdoor courtyard serving cocktails during regular restaurant hours.
Twelve dining rooms each with a different capacity.

Credit Cards Accepted
American Express, Visa, Mastercard, Diners Club / Carte Blanche, Discover

Brennan’s Restaurant
417 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
Reservations 504/525-9711
Private Parties and Sales Office 504/525-9713
FAX 504/525-2302
www.bennansneworleans.com

“BEST RESTAURANT IN NEW ORLEANS”
Food and Wine Magazine

“BEST WINE LIST IN NEW ORLEANS”
Food and Wine Magazine

“GRAND AWARD” since 1983
Wine Spectator Magazine

“READERS CHOICE AWARD”
Southern Living Magazine

“5 BEANS” out of five
The New Orleans Times-Picayune Newspaper

“A vision of civilized dining”
Veranda Magazine

“Breakfast at Brennan’s is a unique culinary landmark.”
Bon Appetit Magazine

“Brennan’s is one of the most impressive and elegant restaurants in the French Quarter, and the food has never been better.”
John Mariani, international food writer
Esquire, Playboy, USA Today and Wine Spectator

Since 1983, Brennan’s restaurant has been an annual recipient of the world-renowned Wine Spectator Grand Award in recognition of its 35,000 bottle wine cellar.
Created at Brennan's Restaurant in 1951 by Chef Paul Blangé, Bananas Foster has become an international favorite and the most requested item on the menu. The scrumptious dessert named after a very good friend of Owen Edward Brennan, Richard Foster, consists of lengthwise-sliced bananas sautéed in butter, brown sugar, cinnamon and banana liqueur, then flamed in rum. Served over vanilla ice cream.

An integral part of Brennan's operations since 1956 and Executive Chef since 1975, Chef Michael Roussel has not only been the master of his talented kitchen on Royal Street but has brought a sample of Brennan's fine dining across the country and around the world - from Good Morning America and the Today Show to Moscow, London and Osaka, Japan.
Five-bean experience
Dinner at Brennan’s a Creole luxury

By GREGORY ROBERTS
Restaurant critic

Dinner at Brennan’s.

It doesn’t have quite the ring of “breakfast at Brennan’s,” the concept and catch-phrase that catapulted the restaurant to national renown in the 1940s and ’50s. Indeed, executive chef Michael Roussel calls dinner at Brennan’s the best-kept secret in town. If so, the restaurant’s fabulous food, superb setting and high-toned service make it a secret well worth knowing.

Yet Brennan’s-bashing remains a popular local sport. It’s way overpriced, the accusation goes, and overrun by underdressed tourists who can’t tell the difference between reputation and the real thing.

Brennan’s certainly is no place for the budget-conscious, with entree prices in the over-$30 class at dinner ranking it among the most expensive restaurants in town. But those dollars go to buy some of the finest prime beef and fresh seafood available, and help stock a huge wine cellar second to none in New Orleans.

As for tourists, they may well pack the place for those famous breakfasts, and some may look like they just wandered in from a fraternity beer bust. But management requests that men wear jackets after dark, and a nighttime meal when the convention pace slows can mean unhurried dining among well-dressed customers in an atmosphere of elegance and serenity.

Once the food arrives, restraint largely gives way to opulence. Brennan’s adroitly prepares haute Creole fare of the kind that once defined fine dining in New Orleans, with luxuriant sauces shimmering seductively on abundant servings of seafood or meat.

Indulgence is the byword, yet not without balance. The kitchen’s deft execution combines with ingredients of stunning quality to create magnificently memorable meals.

Brennan’s is a place to celebrate, in more ways than one.

In the flagstone carriageway that serves as the restaurant’s entrance on Royal Street, a portrait of the founder, Owen E. Brennan, hangs in a place of honor. When he took over the old Vieux Carré restaurant across Bourbon Street from his bar 50 years ago, the bright lights and tile floor gave way to candles and carpet, the standard à la carte French menu was replaced by an English one with specially named dishes, and the Brennan style was born.

Owen’s younger sisters and brothers followed him into the business, with Ella and Dick emerging in the forefront of the operation. In 1955, the family settled on a landmark Creole townhouse at 417 Royal St. as a new home for the restaurant. But with renovations still under way, Owen died of a heart attack at 45.
Crystal chandeliers and soft carpets set the elegant tone of the main dining room, one of about a dozen small areas that allow the 550-seat restaurant to retain an intimate feeling.

The Brennans pushed on, moving to the new building in 1956, and their reputation continued to grow. Owen’s sons, Owen “Pip” Jr., Jimmy and Ted, ultimately joined the family enterprise, which expanded to Houston, Dallas and Atlanta.

But by 1973, the three sons fell out with their aunts and uncles. Ella, Dick and company split for Commander’s Palace, a venerable Garden District restaurant purchased a few years before; since then, they’ve raised it to glory while opening other restaurants in and out of New Orleans. Except for a venture called Anything Goes, a wacky theme steakhouse that opened and closed years ago on Iberville Street, Pip, Jimmy and Ted have tended to business on Royal Street.

For most of the last 40 years, so has Mike Roussel. He joined Brennan’s as a bus boy in 1956 and later returned from a military culinary school to work in the kitchen. For 20 years, he’s presided over an expansive menu that evolves gradually, retaining old favorites while adding some new dishes that stay well within the established boundaries. Pasta, served with only one dinner entree, is about as exotic as it gets.

The crepe Barbara typifies the Brennan’s approach, an impossibly lush appetizer enfolding silken crabmeat and shrimp in a delicate wrapper awash in hollandaise sauce. The classic Creole repertoire comes oysters Rockefeller, at Brennan’s an intriguing blend of chopped parsley, celery, green onion and butter spooned over the oyster and doused with herbsaint and Tabasco.

The lively remoulade arrives with a greenish tinge, thanks to more celery and parsley in the mustardy mix clinging to the firm shrimp. The kitchen conveniently does the peeling for the barbecue shrimp, a starter of admirably mellowed redolence.

Brennan’s turtle soup stands out as a well-tuned tomato-y broth liberally threaded with turtle meat and laced with sherry and cayenne. The darkroux-seafood arrives robust and icy, if a bit murky.

Chanteclair is a folklore term for a crowing rooster. The Brennan’s logo, but the signature tournedos chanteclair entree is all beef: three mouth-watering medallions of prime filet, anointed in turn by satiny bearnaise, choron and marchand de vin sauce. A single, perfectly tender slice of prime filet, just edgy with peppercorns, plays marvelous counterpoint to the velvety vigor of barbecued shrimp in another outstanding entree.

Robert Kottwitz, the advertising man who designed the logo, gives his name to a pair of entrees. One smothered sauteed shards of succulent baby veal under a mound of sliced artichoke bottoms and mushrooms, the whole lavished by a lemon butter sauce.

Trot or other fresh white fish also gets Kottwitzed, while luscious lump crabmeat and capers substitute for the artichokes and mushrooms atop a wondrous flaky filet in the Nancy rendition. Redfish or a first-rate stand-in revels royally in crabmeat, shrimp and hollandaise in the sumptuous seafood Perez. And a thick, glistening slab of grilled salmon soars to dizzying heights as a filet Audubon, adorned with shrimp, hollandaise and a hint of Creole mustard.

The best goes on at dessert, a source of sinfully rich satisfaction. Featured performers include the astonishing crepes Bridget and Fitzgerald, both filled with a scintillating confection of cream cheese and sour cream, the one awash in silky chocolate sauce, the other generously bedecked with strawberries.

The bananas Foster, invented at Brennan’s decades ago, remains a staggering, sugary standout. And the awesome lemon curd tartelette bids for greatness on its own, achieving a sublime synthesis of sweet and tart.

For all its splendor, the food at Brennan’s does not overshadow the setting.

The 200-year-old townhouse surrounds a magnificent tree-shaded courtyard, and several of the dozen dining rooms scattered through the building afford views of the patio through a sweep of glass. The first of those rooms, an intimate space just off the foyer, sets a gracious tone with its crystal chandeliers, pale gray walls, soft carpet and flickering candlelight. Waiters and bus boys, formally correct in black jackets and bow ties, provide polished service to match.

An old red-brick slave quarters at the rear of the courtyard shelters Brennan’s world-class wine cellar, a trove of 3,000 different wines totaling 35,000 bottles. The list runs to 56 pages, cataloging a collection especially deep in wines from California and Burgundy and Bordeaux reds.

There are, of course, dozens of wines in the three-figure price range, but there are also many choices in the teens, 20s and 30s. The 1991 Rally from Olivier Lefaive, for example, offers smooth appeal in a white Burgundy for $25. At $35, Louis Jadot’s 1991 Beaune Clos Des Ursules marries fruit and finesse in a red Burgundy with a lovely, lingering finish.

For a wine aficionado, the delight in drinking a fine bottle drawn from a great cellar profoundly enhances the meal. But even for a teetotaller, a dinner at Brennan’s can be an experience intoxicating with pleasure.

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**Brennan’s**

Continued from previous page

for richly rewarding meals in the grand New Orleans manner. Desserts are dazzling, and the wine list has no match in the city.

**Ambiance:** Excellent to superior. Brennan’s combines size with intimacy by scattering its 550 seats among a dozen dining rooms, many with a view of the vast flagstoned courtyard at the heart of its landmark French Quarter home. Soft lighting at night and appointments of tasteful elegance can create a mood of stylish sophistication.

**Service:** Excellent. The staff is polished and professional in black jackets and bow ties.

**Comfort:** Excellent. Chairs are accommodating, tables well spaced and noise levels moderate at dinner. Jackets requested for men after dark. Families with children of middle-school age or older should be most comfortable; high chairs and booster seats are available. Wheelchair access: No steps at entrance or to some first-floor dining rooms; equipped rest room available.

**Cleanliness:** Excellent.

**Best bets:** Oysters Rockefeller ($9.95), barbecued shrimp ($9.95), crepe Barbara ($12.50), tuft soup $7.75, trout Nancy ($28.50), veal Kottwitz ($34.50), tournedos chanteclair ($35), pepper filet with barbecued shrimp ($35), redfish Perez ($23), salmon Audubon ($23), bananas Foster ($6.95), crepes Bridget ($6.95), crepes Fitzgerald ($6.95), lemon curd tartelette ($5.50).
URBANE GOURMET

Lisa LeBlanc-Berry

Returning to the Classics

New Orleans diners who found little joy in the nouvelle cuisine food fad and who have tired of plates that look like artistic presentations (but with very little to eat) are now eagerly returning to the classics. After tiresome rounds with sprout-covered dishes and edible flowers, many have felt a longing for a return to the good times: dining in the grand style at the city's leading French Creole establishments.

In recent years, New Orleans has seen a host of new restaurants quickly become all the rage, only to fade away quietly into dust. Unfortunately, none of these managed to measure up to the lasting allure of the old line establishments, which have endured for generations. Ever since Antoine Alciatore created the Antoine’s restaurant dynasty 150 years ago, classic French Creole cuisine has thrived in this city.

Since 1946, Brennan’s Restaurant has guided both the neophyte and the experienced New Orleans diner through the pleasures of the lavish French Creole table. Run by seasoned restaurateurs Ted, Owen and Jimmy Brennan, it is a timeless place with all the allure and romance of a celebrated New Orleans legacy.

Patrons catch a glimpse into New Orleans’ culinary past while savoring the exuberance of fresh, fragrant food served with warmth and style. The 12 intimate dining rooms, illuminated by candlelight at night, are centered by a lush courtyard complete with a fountain brimming with small fish and turtles.

According to Brennan’s wine coordinator Marianne Stierwald, the 30,000 bottle, award-winning wine cellar (which just received a facelift) is continually updated and is now on computer.

Exemplary French sauces, including classics that date back to the Escoffier era, bathe the freshest fish, shellfish, prime meats and fowl that are available daily in the marketplace. For dinner, appetizers like buster crabs bearnaise, frog legs meuniere, escargots bordelaise and Creole onion soup whet the appetite for the marvels of superbly prepared tournedos, veal, lamb, shrimp, crawfish, trout, chicken and grillades.

This is feasting that satisfies the soul. Albeit famed for its lavish breakfasts, Brennan’s more romantic identity is revealed during evenings, when the lights are dimmed and the treasures of the table are filled with extremes - from the crusty garlic bread oozing with butter and Parmesan to dishes like chateaubriand for two and luscious dessert crepes ceremoniously flamed tableside.

Brennan’s oysters Rockefeller has no rival - a creamy and peppery blend of ground herbs tinged with Pernod and heaped atop plump bivalves. Another old-timer, oysters Brennan, gets the juices flowing with plenty of garlic, seasoned bread crumbs and white wine (shades of Moscato’s).

Delicate baby buster crabs, fresh from the gulf waters, are crowned with buttery roasted pecans and lots of fresh, lump crabmeat. Barbecued shrimp appear in a pool of mildly seasoned butter sauce, redolent of herbs and already peeled. Small nuances such as these constitute the mark of a truly great restaurant.

Brennan’s offers a definitive version of turtle soup - thick and peppery. Flavored with a little lemon and sherry, it has a deep, lingering taste. The gumbo is equally sumptuous, prepared with a rich, dark brown roux and chock full of fresh seafood and okra. The onion soup is also delicious, with its deep, golden, creamy broth, topped with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese. For a little of everything, request a demi-tasse of all three.

This is one of the beauties of dining at such an establishment: you can make special requests, from taster portions of entrees to off-the-menu dishes prepared for those on special diets, Executive Chef Mike Roussel, who regularly makes rounds in the dining rooms, makes it his business to accommodate diners.

Steak lovers savor the vigor of Brennan’s superb pepper filet, encrusted with cracked peppercorns, butterflied and served with barbecued shrimp. The filet Stanley is another marvel, a unique blend of fresh mushrooms and red wine served aside a sweet and ripe, sautéed banana, which is offset by a tangy horseradish cream sauce.

Devotees of fresh fish rave about the trout Nancy, which is perhaps the most popular of all Brennan’s trout selections. A fresh filet, topped with lots of butty lump crabmeat, is sprinkled with capers and lingers of lemon zest.

The baby rack of lamb Bouquetiere is highly recommended, when available. Ultra tender, pink in the center and formidable, the mini-chops are encrusted with a light coating of seasoned bread crumbs and a fragrant garlic butter sauce.

Table d’hotel entrees for dinner, which include an appetizer, entree, salad, dessert and coffee, are in the $44 range.

Of course, locals have sung the praises of Brennan’s bananas Foster for decades. But I prefer the crepes Fitzgerald, another Brennan creation, with its gorgeous presentation and a filling of cream cheese and sour cream, served with strawberries, then flamed in marachino.

As one of New Orleans’ premier restaurants, Brennan’s represents the hallmark of superb French Creole cuisine. Located at 417 Royal, it is open daily for breakfast or brunch from 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (lunch specials are served from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday), and for dinner from 6-10 p.m. Credit cards: all major; complimentary parking available; telephone 525-9771.
Breakfast in New Orleans

BY TOM FITZMORRIS

Breakfast is usually a perfunctory, utilitarian meal, but that doesn’t stop restaurateurs in New Orleans from making something celebratory and delicious of it. Here, a little bit of Creole tradition is blended with a great deal of imagination to turn breakfast into something quite grand.

The utterance of “breakfast” in New Orleans begs to be followed by “at Brennan’s.” The Brennan family, jealous of the publicity created for its around-the-corner competitor by the novel Dinner at Antoine’s, “created” the meal from whole cloth in the early 1950s. They justified the grandeur with a spurious tale about how they were re-creating a classic Creole petit dejeuner of yesteryear. From that day to this, breakfast at Brennan’s is a unique culinary landmark.

There could hardly be a more pleasant place to start the day. Brennan’s occupies a nearly two-hundred-year-old building that surrounds a lushly planted courtyard; almost every table is near a window. New Orleanians like to start off with a brandy milk punch or absinthe suissesse (“eye-openers,” as the menu calls them). Pots of hot, blue-black coffee and pitchers of cream land in short order.

Breakfast at Brennan’s is usually taken in three courses (if that’s not enough, the menu offers a five-stanza version). Soup—particularly the herbal oyster one or the spicy, thick turtle—is the best first course, although the baked apple with cream is also good. The entree frame of the menu is dominated by some two dozen different variations on poached eggs. The most interesting: the Sardou (with spinach and artichoke bottoms), St. Charles (fried trout), Nouvelle Orleans (lump crabmeat) and Owen (roast beef hash).

The ultimate breakfast here starts with a single egg Sardou and moves on to an authentic old Creole breakfast dish: grillades and grits. Grillades are pieces of veal simmered for a long time in a spicy sauce with tomatoes and bell peppers. Brennan’s cleaned-up version uses sautéed baby veal scallops with a spectacular Creole sauce. The grits, served on the side, through some miracle are always hot, buttery and smooth.

Brennan’s created bananas Foster, which may be the only flamed dessert actually worth the trouble. That, along with more of that addictive coffee, wraps up a spectacular morning meal. It’s quite expensive—figure on $35 per person—but your day will be hard to derail afterward.
Breakfast at Brennan’s

By Lucius Beebe

When the late Owen Brennan—founder of the fortunes of the House of Brennan, in the Rue Royale, in New Orleans—first undertook to promote and popularize breakfast in a public restaurant, his friends of whom there were many, shook their heads and confidently looked forward either to Brennan’s bankruptcy or to a profound and immediate change of gastronomic heart. This was considered a mild view when his friends found that the menu would include a prescribed gin fizz, a claret, a champagne, fruit in brandy, and a dessert flamed in kirsch and strawberry liqueur in addition to such robust matters as broiled pompano, hot French bread, lamb chops with béarnaise sauce, exotically shirred eggs and café diable.

Even in New Orleans, a town where time means nothing and a great tradition of leisurely gastronomy obtains, this sort of thing was flying in the face of Battle Creek—where processed butcher’s paper is widely packaged as breakfast food—not to mention the defying of an entire generation of Americans who have been conditioned, by means of one of the greatest national swindles of all time, to a breakfast of orange juice and Melba toast.

Brennan was goaded into prandial rashness when a lady novelist of some local fame had celebrated a rival restaurant in a novel called Dinner at Antoine’s. Friends, growing with Owen at this invidious partiality, came up with the alliterative of “Breakfast at Brennan’s.” The founding Brennan promptly ran up a collation that would have assured him of the patronage of Henry VII and began advertising it as “an old New Orleans tradition dating from the great days of the Créoles,” although the ink wasn’t dry on the menus.

Brennan said that if nobody would eat his breakfasts he damn well would himself and promptly had his portrait painted opening a bottle of the best champagne. The portrait was prophetic, and it hangs today in a place of honor in a new and enlarged Brennan’s much of whose fame, fortune, and felicitous repute derived from Owen’s stewpot vision of what the morning of a civilized man should be devoted to. Under its benevolent regard, champagne corks mutter decorously of a Sunday morning and on weekdays, too, in an overture to a recurrent symphony of shrimp rémoulade and café brulot that is making Owen’s heirs and assigns rich . . .
BREAKFAST AT BRENNAN'S WITH A BRENNAN

By Mary MacVean
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The oversize, laminated menu at Brennan’s lists 15 “eye-openers.” There’s brandy milk punch, Mr. Funk of New Orleans, absinthe frappe, or the Suzaree, made with bourbon and “a little mystery.”

But Ted Brennan will not be lured by these or any other mysteries on this sunny spring morning. The waiter brings a Diet Coke to his table overlooking a courtyard.

In classic dieter’s fashion, Brennan follows that with Eggs Bayou Lafourche — poached eggs on andouille Cajun sausage and Holland rusk with Hollandaise sauce — and then a slice of dark chocolate “suicide” cake. Dessert, he says, is his favorite part of the meal.

It’s breakfasts like these that led Ted Brennan to note that he could stand to lose about 20 pounds and soon will return to one of two diets he says work — a low-carbohydrate regimen or a commercial program that requires prepared food he found pretty awful.

And it’s breakfasts like these — big, groaning, rich breakfasts with Creole, Cajun and French accents — that have made the restaurant his father opened in 1945 famous.

It’s just 10 a.m. on a Saturday, but many of the 450 seats at the sprawling old French Quarter mansion that houses Brennan’s are taken. You can eat lunch or dinner here, but it’s breakfast that tourists know and locals who can spare three hours for a morning meal love.

Breakfast at Brennan’s takes its cues from a pre-Civil War tradition in the nearby French Market, Brennan says. After an early start to the workday, the merchants would break around 10 or 11 o’clock for a three- or four-course breakfast that would include egg dishes, meats, dessert and wine.

In the 1950s, his dad opened one room for similar morning meals. “It took about 10 years to really catch on,” he says. Now, locals come on the weekends, but weekdays are mostly tourists. “It would be hard to go back to work after a three-hour breakfast with eye-openers and wine,” he says.

It might be hard to go to work the next day, in fact. The menu suggests a traditional Brennan breakfast ($50): oyster soup Brennan, eggs Benedict, sirloin with fresh mushrooms and hot French bread, bananas Foster (a flaming dessert made tableside), coffee. Suggested accompaniments: a $35 bottle of champagne and a $4.75 cocktail called absinthe suisseuse, “guaranteed to put you in the mood for this carefree old city.”

“One thing about this place, you don’t leave here hungry,” said Brennan, as he leans back in his chair, well aware of the understatement.

So much for the old coffee cart and factory-made danish.

Despite his protestations, Brennan, wearing a conservative navy blue suit and tortoise shell-framed glasses, looks fairly trim for someone who owns a place that checks your cholesterol counter at the door.

“When people come here, diets be damned,” he says. “We never got into the low-fat, health-conscious mores of the ’70s and ’80s.”

A modest assessment. The grits, for example, taste so sensual because, he says, instead of adding butter before serving, they’re cooked with lots and lots of it. Even the virtuous seasonal berries are served with double cream. Of the 12 egg dishes, every one has cream or butter or both as a prominent ingredient.

Then there are the Oysters Rockefeller.

“You know what I like? You get the taste right here,” he says, stroking his neck, just beneath his right ear.

Two restaurants, his and Antoine’s, he says, do it properly: “It’s just sauteed vegetables, and one of the vegetables is not spinach.” The right ingredients, besides oysters, are green onion, celery, parsley, bread, Tabasco, Pernod and “tons of butter,” he says.

This and other secrets to Brennan’s kitchen are revealed in a new book, “Breakfast at Brennan’s and Dinner, Too” by Pip, Jimmy and Ted Brennan (published by Brennan’s Inc. $27.50).

Brennan is having breakfast with a reporter to publicize the book, which tells the history of the restaurant, including the brothers’ version of the schism that divided among family members the Brennan empire of restaurants: Brennan’s, Commanders’ Palace, Mr. B’s, Bacco.

‘One thing about this place, you don’t leave here hungry.’
— Ted Brennan

The book is dedicated to Owen Edward Brennan, patriarch of New Orleans’ first family of food, who died in 1955, when Ted was just 7. It is time, says Brennan, now a father of three himself, “to pay tribute to our father and get his story in writing.”

Ted, the youngest of Owen’s sons, says all the brothers considered other careers. “But when it came time, you realize what was in your blood.”

He had spread his wings to San Francisco, in the late 1960s. But while it might seem an easy shift from the Big Easy to the Haight, Brennan found he didn’t quite fit in.

“I was no hippie,” he says.

OYSTERS ROCKEFELLER

1 pound butter
1 celery rib, finely chopped
2 bunches scallions, finely chopped
1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon Tabasco
1/2 to 3/4 cup Herbsaint or Pernod
1-1/4 cups seasoned bread crumbs
48 oysters, in their shells
Rock salt

Melt the butter in a large skillet and add the celery, scallions and parsley. Saute for 5 minutes, then add the Worcestershire and Tabasco. Reduce heat to medium and cook for 10 minutes. Add the Herbsaint or Pernod and bread crumbs and cook for 5 minutes more. Remove the pan from the heat and transfer the mixture to a bowl. Chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour, until cold but not firmly set.

Using an oyster knife, pry open the oyster shells, then remove the oysters. Discard the top shells; scrub and dry the bottom shells. Drain the oysters. Arrange 6 oyster shells on an oven-proof pan or tray lined with a layer of rock salt about an inch deep. Make 8 trays in all. Place 1 oyster in each shell.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Remove the chilled Rockefeller topping from the refrigerator and beat it with an electric mixer to evenly distribute the butter and infuse air into the mixture; transfer the mixture to a pastry bag fitted with a large plain tip. Pipe a tablespoon of the mixture onto each oyster; then bake in a 375-degree F oven for 5 to 8 minutes. Serve each person a tray of piping hot oysters. Makes 8 servings.
Brennan’s Chef Featured On Television Cooking Show

Shot entirely on location at Brennan’s Restaurant in New Orleans’ historic French Quarter, the series focuses on the history and preparation of time-honored recipes savored at Brennan’s Restaurant by both visitors and residents for five decades. Each of the 13 episodes features a complete menu – from spirited eye-openers to mouth-watering desserts – by Brennan’s Executive Chef Michael Roussel. The program has appeared on more than 200 Public Broadcasting Stations throughout the country, and it is currently being redistributed to many PBS stations.

Chef Michael Roussel takes viewers behind the scenes in the new 13-part BREAKFAST FROM NEW ORLEANS. The series focuses on the delicious, time-honored breakfast recipes of world-famous Brennan’s Restaurant.
‘Breakfast at Brennan’s’ honors founding father

By DALE CURRY
Food editor

He was Irish and his restaurant was French. Together, Owen Edward Brennan and the world-famous French Quarter restaurant that he founded became New Orleans institutions. That was in the ’50s. Today, the two are the focus of a newly published cookbook, “Breakfast at Brennan’s and Dinner, Too” ($27.50).

The Irishman died in 1955, months before his restaurant moved to the present Royal Street address. But his vision lives today through his three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, who continue to run the restaurant as a family business and have produced the cookbook as a tribute to their father.

The opening of Brennan’s came as a challenge to the bon vivant, entrepreneur and son of a New Orleans foundry laborer. He was told by a competitor that an Irishman could never run a decent French restaurant.

So Brennan set out to compete with the best of them and that he did, opening his original restaurant on Bourbon Street, across the street from the Old Absinthe House, which he also owned.

It wasn’t long until Owen Brennan’s French and Creole Restaurant - the original name - was frequented by celebrities and hailed by national publications.

And French it was, known for pompano en papillote, escargots bordelaise, crepes and flambe. And Creole, too, serving local favorites. Original creations were soon on the menu including the famous bananas Foster.

But Brennan’s strategy to make his restaurant famous peaked with the theme, “breakfast at Brennan’s,” rivaling a competitor’s highly billed “dinner at Antoine’s.”

Today, the legacy of the gourmet breakfast lives on with a menu of egg dishes famous the world over - some original, some borrowed, but many linked in the minds of tourists and locals alike to the pink French Quarter restaurant with the rooster logo. Eggs Sardou, Benedict, Hussarde, Owen and many more make up the brunch dishes detailed in the cookbook.

Although a Brennan’s cookbook was published years ago and has been sold in the restaurant, this is the first formulated by the restaurant owners themselves.

With it, the family states that it hopes to put to rest many myths about the origin of Brennan’s and broader family links to it and other restaurants.

The history of the restaurant is accompanied by photographs of clippings, pictures and memorabilia from the ’50s to the present.

The focus is on the family, not the chefs, who are simply mentioned in the book’s opening pages. They are the late Paul Blange, who created many of Brennan’s original signature dishes, and current executive chef Michael J. Roussel and sous chefs Lazine Randolph and Harrison Duncan.

Here are some recipes from the Brennan’s cookbook:

EGGS OVEN
1 large potato
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
1 pound beef tenderloin, diced (beef tips can be substituted)
1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup celery, finely chopped
1/2 cup green bell pepper
2 tablespoons garlic, finely chopped
2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 cup scallions, finely chopped
Pinch of cayenne pepper
Pinch of white pepper
1 cup beef stock
1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
Salt and black pepper
8 poached eggs
1/2 cup marchand de vin sauce
(see recipe)
Grilled tomatoes for garnished

Peel and cube the potato. Fill a large saucepan with water and bring the liquid to a boil. Add the potatoes to the boiling water and cook until tender, about 15 minutes; do not overcook.

Melt the butter in a large skillet and brown the beef tenderloin over moderately high heat, about three to four minutes.

Remove the meat from the pan with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the onions to the skillet and cook for two minutes, then stir in the celery, bell pepper, garlic and bay leaves.

Cook the vegetables for two to three minutes until tender, then blend in the Worcestershire, flour, scallions, cayenne and white pepper. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Whisk the beef stock into the mixture and return the diced meat to the pan. When the mixture comes to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for about 10 minutes, until the liquid has reduced.

Remove the bay leaves and fold in the diced potatoes and parsley.

Spoon two portions of hash onto each serving plate, then place a poached egg on the hash. Ladle marchand de vin sauce over the eggs, garnished with grilled tomatoes and serve.

Make four servings.

MARCHAND DE VIN SAUCE
6 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup scallions, finely chopped
1/2 cup boiled ham, finely chopped
1/2 cup mushrooms, finely chopped
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 cups beef stock
1/2 cup red wine
1/2 teaspoons thyme leaves
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
Salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a large saucepan or Dutch oven and saute the onion, garlic, scallions and ham for five minutes. Add the mushrooms, reduce the heat to medium and cook for two minutes.
Blend in the flour and cook, stirring for four minutes. Add the Worcestershire, beef stock, wine, thyme and bay leaf. Simmer until the sauce thickens, about one hour.

Before serving, remove the bay leaf and add the parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Yields three cups.

**CRABMEAT IMPERIAL WITH HEARTS OF ARTICHOKE**

1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over to remove any shell and cartilage*
1/2 cup scallions, finely chopped
1/2 cup green bell pepper, finely chopped
1/4 cup chopped pimientos
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon dry mustard
4 artichoke hearts, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons paprika
1 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
Salt and black pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, combine the crabmeat, scallions, bell pepper, pimento, egg yolk, dry mustard, artichoke hearts, paprika and one-half cup of the mayonnaise. Stir until well-mixed and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Spoon the crabmeat mixture into four one-cup baking dishes; then cover with the remaining mayonnaise. Sprinkle Parmesan and bread crumbs on top and bake in the hot oven for 15 to 20 minutes until heated through. Served immediately.

*One pound of blanched crawfish tails can be substituted for the crabmeat. Makes four servings.
Combine New Orleans' legendary hospitality with an infectious Irish spirit and you have Brennan's. With its spectacular wine list, its lush courtyard, and its fine, traditional Creole and French cuisine, Brennan's is one of the most impressive and elegant restaurants in the French Quarter, and the food has never been better.

Paterfamilias Owen Brennan opened Brennan's in 1946, making it into the most famous restaurant in the Vieux Carré, a hang-out for visiting movie stars and dignitaries and a must-see on just about every traveler's list. He also instituted the wildly successful "Breakfast at Brennan's" to compete with the "Dinner at Antoine's." Many people today think of Brennan's only for that lavish mid-morning meal, thereby denying themselves the pleasure of lunch or dinner.

There is always something breathtaking about entering Brennan's. You push your way through the gleaming front door of the salmon-pink building and look past the fine artwork, crystal chandelier, maître d's station and bar to a leafy patio set with potted flowers and wrought-iron tables and chairs. Here you may enjoy one of Brennan's nonpareil Bloody Marys or an absinthe Suisse. Breathe in the perfume of the flowers and take in the view of the lovely verandah and brick-faced archways around you. There are a dozen dining rooms for public and private use, and a former slave's quarters of this antebellum structure now houses one of the world's finest wine stocks, overseen by Jimmy Brennan, who likes nothing better than a customer who likes to talk wine.

Most people go to Brennan's for the first time for the famous breakfast--a very lavish, formal affair that begins with a cocktail and moves on to excellent steaming cups of Creole coffee, eggs Sardou, grillades and grits, and ends with the irresistible bananas Foster, created here back in the 1950s to honor a favorite customer.

But don't neglect Brennan's for dinner. Chef Michael J. Roussel is a master of Creole culinary traditions, and you'd be hard put to find better renditions of dishes like oysters Rockefeller, shrimp remoulade, crab bisque, crawfish omelet, eggs Portuguese, crawfish étouffée, steak au poivre with barbequed shrimp, and crepes Fitzgerald.

While you're there, pick up a copy of the brand-new book, *Breakfast at Brennan's and Dinner, Too* (Brennan's, Inc.), which is as much a fascinating history of dining out in New Orleans as it is a fine cookbook. Dinner for two will run about $80.

*John Mariani is restaurant columnist for Esquire magazine and author of The Dictionary of American Food and Drink* (Hearst Books).
‘Breakfast at Brennan’s’ serves up rich memories

By Elliott Mackle
DINING CRITIC
Atlanta Constitution

“Breakfast at Brennan’s and Dinner, Too” by Pip, Jimmy and Ted Brennan (Brennan’s, $27.50)

In today’s post-Prudhomme New Orleans, the words “Breakfast at Brennan’s” are of more historic than culinary interest.

Like “Dinner at Antoine’s” (the book title on which the well-promoted phrase plays), a leisurely breakfast at Owen Brennan’s famous French Quarter restaurant was once almost mandatory when visiting the city that care forgot and Mama warned us about.

That was back in the brontosaurus ’50s, of course - when we liked Ike, loved Lucy, sighed at the fate of Blanche Du Bois and were just getting acquainted with French cooking. In those days (and at Brennan’s still) la belle cuisine involved considerable amounts of heavy cream, butter, whole eggs and alcoholic flavorings.

A typical Brennan’s breakfast meant eggs with trick sauces, oysters with rich toppings, grits with fancy gravy, perhaps a baked apple or salad and either bananas Foster (a Brennan’s invention) or crepes suzette.

More specifically, such a meal (we didn’t call it brunch then) meant drinking in the morning without any good excuse, a definite no-no in the straight-arrow decade.

And afterward? For many, a nap.

This commemorative volume by Brennan’s sons - they operate the restaurant today - includes recipes for the drinks and dishes that drew celebrities, travelers and even locals to Brennan’s. From Cafe Brulot and the Sazerac cocktail to Rex salad, eggs Husserd and Sardou, crab meat imperial, various crepe preparations, bread pudding with (Canadian!) whiskey sauce and - yes, indeed - bananas Foster, the ’50s standards are all here.

The “... and Dinner, Too” section of the book includes mstodont food (beef Wellington, frog legs en croute) as well as dishes more in tune with the considerable culinary developments in New Orleans in the past decade. Oysters Rockefeller soup and oysters Benedict, though hardly diet fare, are worth space on anybody’s short list of party dishes.

Of interest to foodie generalists, the book begins with a history of the restaurant as well as its not so successful descendants (one of which - in the building now inhabited by 103 West - was located in Atlanta).

Abundant color illustrations include early menus, promotional materials, photos and letters from influential customers such as Hedda Hopper, Elia Kazan, Liberace, Curt Gowdy, Robert Ruark and Lucas Beebe.

There’s also a sanitized account of family squabbles: Owen’s sister Ella Brennan, once his kitchen manager, tried to take over the restaurant after his death, was forced out and now - with another brother and assorted nieces and nephews - operates Commander’s Palace and a string of other highly regarded eating houses.

Order the book from Brennan’s Restaurant, 417 Royal St., New Orleans, La. 70130-2191. Include $5 postage and handling. Or call 504-525-9713 for credit card orders.

Eggs Ellen
Makes 8 servings
Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 8 minutes

8 salmon fillets, about
3 ounces each
salt and black pepper
8 poached eggs
2 cups hollandaise sauce
(see note)

Preheat a grill or broiler. Season the salmon with salt and pepper, then grill or broil the fish until flaky and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Divide the salmon between four warm plates and top each fillet with a poached egg. Spoon hollandaise sauce over the eggs and serve.

Note: Use your favorite recipe for

hollandaise sauce or purchase a commercially prepared version.
Per serving: 466 calories, 26 grams fat, 539 milligrams cholesterol, 1,189 milligrams sodium.

Asparagus Ellen
Makes 8 servings
Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

64 fresh asparagus spears
2 cups cold water
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 pounds lump crab meat, picked over to remove any shell and cartilage
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
Mousseline Sauce (recipe follows)
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese for sprinkling

Rinse asparagus spears thoroughly under cold running water, then trim stems so that spears are about 4 inches in length. Using a vegetable peeler or knife, scrape away tough skin from just below the asparagus tip to the base of stalk.

Place asparagus in a large saucepan along with 2 cups cold water and the salt. Boil the spears gently over medium heat until tender, about 10 minutes, then remove from the pan and blot dry on paper towels. Place on a warm plate while cooking crab meat.

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the crab meat and saute for several minutes until heated through. To serve, divide the spears between eight plates. Top with 1/2 cup of crab meat, then cover with Mousseline Sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and serve hot.

Per serving, without Mousseline Sauce: 176 calories, 7 grams fat, 63 milligrams cholesterol, 1,158 milligrams sodium.
Per serving, with Mousseline Sauce: 288 calories, 17 grams fat, 97 milligrams cholesterol, 1,591 milligrams sodium.
**Mousseline Sauce**  
*Makes 2 1/2 cups*  
*Preparation time: 10 minutes*

1/2 cup heavy cream  
pinch of salt  
pinch of white pepper  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley  
1 tablespoon dry white wine  
2 cups hollandaise sauce

In a medium bowl, combine the cream, salt, and pepper. Beat with a whisk until thick enough to form a ribbon trail, then add the parsley, wine and hollandaise sauce. Fold until thoroughly blended.

*Per 2 tablespoon servings: 45 calories, 4 grams fat, 14 milligrams cholesterol, 173 milligrams sodium.*

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**Oysters Rockefeller Soup**  
*Makes 8 servings*  
*Preparation time: 20-25 minutes  
Cooking time: 15-20 minutes*

2 cups (about 48) shucked oysters  
2 quarts cold water  
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter  
3/4 cup chopped celery  
1/2 cup all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup Pernod (optional)  
8 ounces fresh spinach leaves, washed, stemmed and coarsely chopped  
1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped  
salt and white pepper, to taste  
2 cups heavy cream or half-and-half

Place the oysters in a large saucepan and cover with 2 quarts cold water. Cook over medium heat just until the oysters begin to curl, about 5 minutes. Strain the oysters, reserving the stock. Set oysters aside. Melt the butter in a large pot and saute the celery until tender. Stir in the flour, then add the oysters and oyster stock. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes until thickened. Add the Pernod, spinach and parsley; season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour in the cream and simmer several minutes until the soup is hot, then serve.

*Per serving: 316 calories, 26 grams fat, 99 milligrams cholesterol, 305 milligrams sodium.*

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**Bananas Foster**  
*Makes 4 servings*  
*Preparation time: 15 minutes  
Cooking time: 10 minutes*

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 cup banana liqueur  
4 bananas, cut in half lengthwise, then halved  
1/4 cup dark rum  
4 scoops vanilla ice cream

Combine the butter, sugar and cinnamon in a flambé pan or skillet. Place the pan over low heat either on an alcohol burner or on top of the stove, and cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves. Stir in the banana liqueur, then place the bananas in the pan. When the banana sections soften and begin to brown, carefully add the rum. Continue to cook the sauce until the rum is hot, then tip the pan slightly to ignite the rum. Put scoops of ice cream on serving dishes. When flames subside, lift the bananas out of the pan and place four pieces over each portion of ice cream. Generously spoon sauce over the top of the ice cream and serve immediately.

*Per serving: 521 calories, 15 grams fat, 40 milligrams cholesterol, 187 milligrams sodium.*
Start with melted butter in a flambe pan, mix ingredients, add the halved bananas.

Bananas Foster, popular for brunch at New Orleans Brennan’s, can be made at home.

Bananas Foster is most-requested item at the Big Easy’s Brennan’s

By Donna Lou Morgan
Tribune Food Editor

NEW ORLEANS – The “grand Creole breakfast” was invented at Brennan’s Restaurant, in the French Quarter, about 50 years ago. The meal has made the restaurant famous.

With good reason.

The original poached egg dishes, with dozens of under- and over-layers and sauces, are terrific food. Gourmets and gourmands would be hard pressed to find more artfully prepared eggs. Some of the finest are St. Charles (atop fried trout), Sardou (creamed spinach and artichokes with hollandaise), the Hussarde (Canadian bacon and marchand de vin sauce). The oyster soup that begins the meal and the Bananas Foster that ends it, along with the crispy hot French bread, make the breakfast spectacular.

According to Chef Michael Roussel, Bananas Foster was invented in the 1950s when the restaurant’s founder Owen E. Brennan wanted to find an interesting way to use bananas. “New Orleans was the major port of entry for bananas shipped from Central and South America,” recalls Chef Mike. “Mr. Brennan decided we needed to promote the plentiful fruit and he challenged his chef Paul Blange to create an interesting dish.”

Bananas Foster was the result. Little did anybody realize the dish would go on to become an international favorite appearing on the menus from New Orleans to Paris.

Brennan’s serves 35,000 pounds of bananas in Bananas Foster annually. The dessert is the most-requested item on Brennan’s menu.

Chef Mike has taken the “Bananas Foster Show” on the road for charity and trade promotions. He has demonstrated the dish in Russia, Italy, Ireland, England and Japan.

“Do not be afraid to attempt the dessert in your kitchen. It is simple.”

Enjoy Chef Mike’s recipe for Bananas Foster:

Bananas Foster

Chef Michael Roussel

4 servings
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 cup banana liqueur
4 bananas, cut in half lengthwise, then halved
1/4 cup dark rum
4 scoops vanilla ice cream

Combine the butter, sugar and cinnamon in a flambe pan or skillet. Place the pan over low heat either on an alcohol burner or on top of the stove, and cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves. Stir in the banana liqueur, then place the bananas in the pan. When the banana sections soften and begin to brown, carefully add the rum. Continue to cook the sauce until the rum is hot, then tip the pan slightly to ignite the rum. When the flames subside, lift the bananas out of the pan and plate four pieces over each portion of ice cream. Generously spoon warm sauce over the top of the ice cream and serve immediately.
Dinner by candlelight at a white-tablecloth restaurant is often the choice for a special occasion. But in New Orleans, who needs to wait for sunset? “Breakfast at Brennan’s” has been a be-all, end-all, budget-busting celebration in this city for decades.

Southern Living

True, every morning, Brennan’s gets an early start on serving eye-openers like gin fizzes, daiquiris, frappes and other enticing concoctions, but it is the solid fare—poached eggs artistically gussied up with smoked meats, fresh seafood and hand-whisked sauces—that has brought locals and tourists alike to the table for 50 years.

Travel Weekly

First-timers to New Orleans absolutely should sample the Bananas Foster at Brennan’s.

Life

Breakfast at Brennan’s is still unbeatable. The renowned eatery is located in a 200-year-old building on Royal Street and lives up to its reputation.

Leisure World

To join the local “religion” start your day at historic Brennan’s, where you can ingest a breakfast repast not to be equalled outside “The Big Easy.” In fact, one food writer has suggested that a morning feed here is to the usual breakfast what Laurence Olivier is to most actors. Where else would the first meal of the day include 90-proof “juices,” soup, main courses like poached eggs over fried trout and spinach (with Hollandaise sauce), and a dessert choice one step short of suicidal?

Destinations

New Orleans is a city that may be credited with an amazing number of dishes created within its boundaries. Brennan’s concocted Bananas Foster back in the early Fifties in honor of a regular customer named Richard Foster. It is still made there as impeccably and with as much ritual as always. A mixture of butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, and banana liqueur is heated in a chafing dish, sliced ripe bananas are added, then some rum is flamed in the pan, and all the sugars caramelize. It is then served piping hot over vanilla ice cream.

Southwest Airlines Spirit

Not since the 19th century had a three hour, leisurely breakfast been revived, and to the surprise of those who said it didn’t match the modern tempo, it was a phenomenal hit.

Mobile Bay Monthly

One of the culinary traditions in the French Quarter is breakfast at Brennan’s and many first-time visitors wouldn’t miss it. Thirty-five dollars may seem like a lot for the first meal of the day, but it buys a sumptuous four-course repast that will fill you up for the entire day.

Physicians’ Travel & Meeting Guide
Fill in the blank: "Breakfast at..." If you said "Tiffany's," be prepared for hunger pangs.

The more lilttingly correct response is "Breakfast at Brennan's," signifying a longstanding New Orleans tradition of sumptuous brunching — and also the title of a new book about that famous family of restaurateurs.

Royal Street in the French Quarter is walk-to-wall people this week of Mardi Gras, and Brennan's genteel dining rooms and greenery-rich courtyard are packed, not only for breakfast but for elegant Creole-style dining throughout the day. That's why Pip, Jimmy and Ted Brennan, sons of founder Owen E. Brennan, named their recently published book "Breakfast at Brennan's — and Dinner, Too" (Brennan's Inc., $27.50). The book honors, said the restaurant's chef, "An Irishman who defined French Creole food."

"One of best-kept secrets in this city is dinner at Brennan's," said Executive Chef Michael J. Roussel. Owen Brennan, before his death in 1955, created the posh morning meal, and it has become almost too successful. "Breakfast" and "Brennan's" are synonymous, but, says Roussel, who like his brother bosses has spent nearly his whole life at the restaurant, "Dinner here has a whole different ambiance."

Yet, we made our reservations for breakfast, returning for the third time to enjoy the most fabled morning repast in the country. Since our first breakfast there, little has changed in the interior. A gracious double stairway and brass chandeliers remain in the foyer, mainstays in a building that has housed a private home, the first bank of Louisiana and other restaurant ventures.

Twenty years ago, when we breakfasted in the courtyard, the price was perhaps half of what it is today, $3.50 for three courses. But after a Brennan's breakfast, you won't need to eat for the rest of the day. The dining room on Sunday last month was absolutely packed, so price resistance doesn't seem to exist.

Soup for breakfast? At Brennan's, it's a must. Creole Onion Oyster Soup Brennan, New Orleans Turtle Soup, are all exercises in richness, deeply flavored, slow-simmered.

With them we had the extra treat of Brennan's cinnamon toast, buttery baguettes dusted with spice and sugar and toasted golden under the broiler. That basket was quickly emptied.

The simple egg has become golden on Brennan's breakfast menu. Aside from Oysters Benedict and Crawfish Sardou, two variations on classic egg dishes, the 10 other choices are all poached perfections. We tried Eggs Portugaise, cradled in flaky pastry shells with an underliner of sautéed tomatoes and herbs, and a glistening coat of Hollandaise; and Eggs Owen, based with beef hash and intensified with Marchand de Vin sauce. Though many of the egg creations were invented for the menu, the one "that put Breakfast at Brennan's on the map," we read, is Eggs Hussard, poached eggs atop Canadian bacon balanced on Holland rusk, with a double dose of Marchand de Vin and Hollandaise sauces.

Fortunately, a Brennan's Breakfast is a leisurely event, because one must recover from eggs to prepare for dessert. Everyone except the banana-allergic spoons up every drop of fragrant Bananas Foster, so warm with flaming banana liqueur and rum that the ice cream melts into a brown sugar soup. The other option is Creole Chocolate Suicide Cake, layers and layers of cake and fudgey frosting that will kill off any vestige of appetite.

Orange juice glasses are refilled, coffee contains no New Orleans-style chicory extender, and champagne is the drink befitting such elegance. At either side of the breakfast list are other à la carte choices — veal extravaganteries, fanciful fishes, even other desserts — such as creamy-filled Crepes Fitzgerald drenched with strawberries and flaming maraschino liqueur. But the middle breakfast column is where the action is of a morning at Brennan's.

Consistent on the menu, morning or night, is the richness of New Orleans provender — crabmeat, oysters, shrimp. The cookbook, which makes no attempt to remove cream and butter from the soups and sauces, reflects that. Diet book? No way. Delicious? Absolutely. Any way you combine menus for a taste of Creole flavors.

"Even as a youngster, I felt that New Or-
leans was the food capital of the world because we have so many great ingredients here,” says Chef Roussel, who has worked at Brennan’s since his youth.

On a Sunday morning, when Breakfast at Brennan’s is practically a New Orleans’ religion, the kitchen will use 15 gallons of Hollandaise sauce on its Eggs Benedict and other poached creations. “We try to accommodate people with health problems,” the chef says, but he adds, simply, “we do what we do best. We have perfected everything on our menu and follow the same specifications. Anyone coming here five years from now will find that the food tastes exactly the same. The challenge for me is never to change.”

The book is very much a family record, recounting the empire founded by Owen, which split when, after some years and a great deal of restaurant expansion after his death, his younger brothers and sisters broke away to run their own New Orleans dining empire, including Commander’s Palace and Mr. B’s. Since then, only Owen’s wife, Maude, who died several years ago, and his three sons have owned the original Brennan’s.

The Brennan clan is to New Orleans what the Mondonavis are to the Napa Valley – families who disagreed and split to pursue even greater business successes.

After breakfast, we wandered in the green and shaded courtyard, its water fountain soothing those who must wait for a table while sipping a Milk Punch or Ramos Gin Fizz. Just beyond that serene space is the wine cellar built in one-time slave quarters, where 30,000 bottles are protected against summer heat by air-conditioning. Wine sales are brisk, even at breakfast, where each eggy option is paired with a wine suggestion.

Much of the book that combines history with a heritage of recipes was a kitchen-table project in the home of Ellen Brennan, Ted’s wife. Many dishes carry the names of Owen’s grandchildren. Not every item in the book is restaurant fare. Maude’s Spaghetti and Meatballs was home food for the Brennan family.

If it was any consolation to the family, Owen went out in a big way, commensurate with the high style in which he lived. On a November evening in 1955, he attended a black-tie dinner at Antoine’s restaurant for members of the French wine society, Le Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin. After that night of rich food and fine wines, Maude was unable to awaken her 45-year-old husband the next morning. The tragedy was that he never saw the current Brennan’s in operation. After having built two other successful French Quarter restaurants, he was just about to consolidate in the current Royal Street location when he died.

“This book sets the record straight and gives Owen his legacy,” says Chef Roussel. It sorts out the many Brennans on the New Orleans scene who got their start because of Owen’s skills as restaurateur, promoter and bale fellow who met and became friends with the parade of celebrities who made Brennan’s their New Orleans dining headquarters.

If there is anything lacking in the book, otherwise as comely as a Mardi Gras queen, it is that the reader is left longing for more. A few of the recipes are embellished with bits of Brennan history, such as the story about Bananas Foster: In the 1950s, New Orleans was the major U.S. banana port and Owen Brennan challenged his chef Paul Blange to create a recipe to promote the fruit.

About the same time, Holiday magazine asked for a recipe to accompany a feature on Brennan’s, and the rest is sweet history. Sixteen tons of bananas are flambeed in the restaurant each year. And the dessert forever immortalizes Richard Foster, Owen’s good friend and a New Orleans businessman.

Perhaps in the second edition, the family will share more of those nuggets of data that readers love to nibble.
Breakfast at Brennan's
A New Orleans eye-opener

TRENT ROWE
The Ledger

NEW ORLEANS

Breakfast at Brennan's is different everywhere you go, but nowhere is it more different than at Brennan's in New Orleans.

You eat in a converted mansion built in 1795. The entrance to the 550 seats in 12 dining rooms is the old carriage-way of the house at 417 Royal St., in the heart of The French Quarter.

Now it leads to a courtyard where you wait for a table while sipping a libation, most too strong to be enjoyed before the sun is over the yardarm.

Breakfast, when your reservation is called – and you better have a reservation – is a thing of beauty and a joy to the credit card company.

How about $25.75 for ham and eggs, or $35 for steak and eggs? A three-course prix fixe meal is $35. It is an appetizer, an egg dish and dessert.

As a meal, it's too much. As an experience it's worth every penny.

Enjoy your time in the courtyard. It's part of the charm.

Magnolia trees shade the iron tables and chairs, and paddle fans create a breeze. Gas lights take you back in time, and a fountain and pond with fish and turtles take you to another place.

Don't jump when a leaf falls in your drink.

Linger too long and you will be salivating from the smell of crusty French bread baking inside.

Listening is very important as you wait for your table to be called. Someone answers to our name and we wait 45 minutes to get another table. We get apologies, a drink on the house and a table on a first-floor terrace looking out on the courtyard.

Where else but at Brennan's could you sit down to breakfast at a table set with three spoons, two forks, one knife and butter on a plate over a silver bowl of ice. Baguettes wrapped in a napkin sits across a bread basket.

We are near the station where a pair of waiters melt sugar and flame liqueurs to make Bananas Foster and Crepes Fitzgerald.

The smell should be illegal – or bottled and sold. Bananas Foster was invented in the restaurant kitchen in 1951, and now the restaurant flames 35,000 pounds of bananas a year. Two bananas make a portion.

Our waiter, Mário, is brother to Carlo. They come from South America and have been serving breakfast at Brennan's for decades.

"They call us the Mario Brothers," he says.

The hardest part of breakfast at Brennan's is choosing what you will have – from 14 cocktails, seven "omelettes," 10 egg dishes, nine meat dishes, five seafood selections and three desserts.

The easiest way is to pick from an inclusive meal.

"A Traditional Brennan's Breakfast" is oyster soup, eggs Benedict, sirloin steak with fresh mushrooms, hot French bread, coffee and Bananas Foster for $35.

"A Typical Creole Breakfast" has Egg Sardou (a poached egg dish). Grilledades and Grits (sauteed baby veal with Creole sauce and herbs, and a bowl of grits), hot French bread, coffee and Crepes Fitzgerald. That's $45.

"A Typical New Orleans Breakfast" has a baked apple with double Cream, Eggs Hussarde (a poached egg dish), hot French bread, coffee and Bananas Foster. That sets you back $35.

My wife starts with the Southern Baked Apple in Double Cream. It doesn't look like much, all brown and soft, and it's not sweet. But there's lots of cinnamon flavor. The inside is pink from the skin, and the lightly sweetened heavy cream tops it beautifully.

They poach a lot of eggs in Brennan's kitchen. They do it in water, not a steamer, so the eggs don't look like yellow bull's eyes in perfect, whole hockey pucks. The edges tend to be a bit ragged.

What they are on, and what's on them, is what makes different dishes.

I try Eggs Bayou Lafourche. That's poached eggs on spicy Cajun sausage – called andouille – on Holland rooks, topped with hollandaise sauce.

My new truism: He who hesitates has cold eggs.

There is a hint of lemon in the sauce. The rusk (a slice of dried bread) helps get all the sauce.

The andouille I had the night before this meal was spicy, but Brennan's version tastes good without the hot spices.

We have a little show on the side as one of the Mario Brothers melts sugar with butter, splashes in banana liqueur and flambés a pan of Bananas Foster on a burner beside us. It gave another tourist a chance to get his picture taken with an authentic Brennan's waiter doing the bananas thing.

Loaves of bread are like large bread sticks. We devour two of them while waiting for the main attraction. They are messy but good.

My wife's Eggs Ellen is two home-style poached eggs perched on a tender filet of red salmon. The fish is – as too many menus say in error – cooked to perfection, moist but done.

Broiled tomato is the garnish.

Grillades and grits is three thin pieces of veal in a platter with lots of bits and pieces of onion, and peppers and some hot peppers. You know when you bite into a seed from a hot pepper.

Our half of the Marios had brought a clean knife before the main courses, but I don't need it for the veal. My fork just about falls through it.

I'm spoiled for grits forever after this bowl. These are as smooth as cream and have tiny dots of yellow. A little brown sugar and I could almost forget Bananas Foster – almost.

Things are done right here. Our waiter crumbs the table before dessert.

Crepes Fitzgerald was invented at Brennan's. It's thin crepes filled with cream cheese and sour cream that's flambéed with maraschino liqueur.

Mario melts butter in a pan, then adds sugar and strawberries that had been marinated in orange juice and lemon juice. A splash of liqueur and a tilt of the pan ignites the alcohol. It's as much fun to watch as it is delicious to eat.

The smooth, cool filling contrasts with the hot berries, bringing out taste and texture sensations.

Bananas Foster comes in a glass dish spread over and around a mound of vanilla ice cream frozen into a cupcake shape. The result is heavenly.

Creole Chocolate Suicide Cake is a gift from the waiter. Folks at the next table were given it, too. It's three layers and three chocolates with a roll of chocolate and a truffle on top in a pool of white sauce.

There is so much variety on the menu that you could have breakfast at Brennan's every day for weeks and never repeat the meal.

I have a big box at home where I am squirreling away coins so the next time we are in New Orleans we can again enjoy breakfast at Brennan's.
Brennan's a history lesson in dining

By Trent Rowe
The Ledger

NEW ORLEANS

The history of Brennan's is the story of fine dining in New Orleans.

It was started by Owen Edward Brennan, son of Irish immigrants who in 1946 took up the challenge to serve fine French food without being French.

He was the eldest of six children and married before his youngest brother and sister were born.

After owning a piece of a gas station and drugstore, and stints as bookkeeper and salesman, he managed a restaurant.

In 1943 he bought the business of The Old Absinthe House on Bourbon Street.

The bar was the headquarters of pirate Jean Lafitte, and Brennan set up a tableau of the Pirate and Andrew Jackson in the room where they supposedly agreed to defend New Orleans against the British.

Thousands of calling cards and autographed papers hung from the ceiling of the bar, and the book "Breakfast at Brennan's, and Dinner Too," has pictures of the place populated by celebrities sharing a drink with the host.

Brennan would pass on patron's comments on restaurants to the owners, and his good friend and restaurateur Count Arnaud was said to have challenged Brennan: "If you think you can do better, open a restaurant."

He said an Irishman could only run a hamburger stand.

Brennan leased the Vieux Carre Restaurant across from The Old Absinthe House and changed the name to Owen Brennan's French & Creole Restaurant.

He gave his father a job as greeter, and siblings Adelaide and Ella became bookkeeper and kitchen manager.

Brennan's success was as much due to his personality as his food, and he became famous among entertainers and the press.

He had no formal education as a restaurateur but he was a promoter. After the novel "Dinner at Antoine's" was published, he started plumping Breakfast at Brennan's.

It cost $9.45 in 1955.

When his lease was up on the Bourbon Street building, the landlord demanded a half interest in the business.

Brennan found a place to rent on Royal Street–The Patio Royal – and set to converting it into his own place. In 1954 the building was a bit off the beaten path.

It was to open in the spring of 1956, but Owen Edward Brennan died in his sleep on November 4, 1955.

His three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted run the restaurant in the same tradition as their father started.
Breakfast at Brennan's: A New Orleans tradition

Sonya Vial
Senior Writer

“Turn back the clock to the time when the French aristocrats of New Orleans dined in leisurely elegance, when breakfast was served in the patio amidst the soft rustle of exotic plants, a refreshing breeze from palmetto fans and the romantic aroma of magnolia blossoms.” This quote, taken from the Brennan's Restaurant breakfast menu, describes perfectly the atmosphere as you enter 417 Royal St. Brennan's opened in the 1950s when Owen E. Brennan signed a lease with Tulane University to rent the building which currently houses the restaurant. This location was later purchased by Owen Brennan's sons in 1986.

There are 12 rooms in the building including the main dining area which faces the courtyard and is donned with sketches following a New Orleans theme. A dining area upstairs pays homage to the King of Carnival, Rex. The breakfast atmosphere was casual as tourists stopped in during a tour of the French Quarter. (During dinner, however, jackets are recommended.)

The brunch began with one of Brennan's "eye-openers," Brandy Milk Punch, a delicious blend of milk, brandy, nutmeg and vanilla. The drink was delicate enough for the morning, yet extremely tasty. Other recommended selections were the New Orleans Gin Fizz ($4.75) and Mr. Funk of New Orleans ($4.75), made with champagne, cranberry juice and peach schnapps.

We decided on the Three Course Prix Fixe ($35.00) which includes your choice of appetizer, entree and dessert. To start, I had New Orleans Turtle Soup. If someone was to ask me what "Creole" meant to me, I would tell them to taste this soup. Although it has a definite kick, it wasn't too spicy.

My companion selected the Oyster Soup Brennan, a thick blend of small bits of oyster and spices. The oyster soup was quite good, although first time visitors to Brennan's should try the turtle soup, which has been called the best in the city.

Next, I enjoyed the Crawfish Sardou, a rich compilation of fried crawfish tails, creamed spinach and sliced artichoke hearts, smothered in Hollandaise sauce. My companion chose the Eggs Nouvelle Orleans, poached eggs served on a bed of crawfish covered in a distinct brandy-cream sauce. Also included in the list of entrees is the Brennan original, Eggs Hussarde, touted as “one of the dishes that put Breakfast at Brennan’s on the map.”

Both dishes were exquisite. The strong flavor of the Hollandaise and fried crawfish in the Crawfish Sardou served as a perfect companion to the delicate flavor of the Nouvelle Orleans, and both consisted of portions too large for either of us to finish (our waiter wrapped both up for us to take home).

For dessert, there is only one option to make the Brennan's experience complete—Bananas Foster. Named for a friend of Owen Brennan, Bananas Foster was invented to use a plentiful New Orleans commodity in a delicious dessert. In a very simple recipe, your server combines brown sugar, butter, cinnamon, banana liqueur and bananas, then flames the dish with rum right at your table. The dessert is then topped with vanilla ice cream to balance the rich sauce. The other dessert choice is the Creole Chocolate Suicide Cake, definitely a chocoholic's dream. The cake is surrounded by a light vanilla bean sauce, a fitting counterpart to the richness of the cake.

If you decide to order breakfast a la carte, there are selections for all tastes. The omelettes ($15.75-$18.75) are complemented with typical New Orleans ingredients such as tasso, crawfish or andouille. Other selections include meat, fish and other seafood dishes.

With each menu entree comes a recommendation of wine, and hot French bread is served fresh throughout the meal. Also available at the restaurant is a book compilation of the recipes that are found on the menu ($27.50). Brennan's also boasts an award-winning wine cellar.

There are several quintessential events each Tulane student should partake of during the short time they spend in New Orleans—Bourbon Street during Mardi Gras and the Jazz Fest to name a few. Breakfast at Brennan's should also be on that list of things every Tulane student should experience. Brennan's epitomizes New Orleans charm with strong tradition and exquisite culinary creations. It truly can make any special occasion extraordinary.
Focus

Aging gracefully: Brennan's at 50

BY CHRISTI DAUGHERTY

For a half-century, the sunset-colored walls of Brennan's Restaurant have drawn locals and tourists, the rich and the not-so-rich, into a small world of elegance in the French Quarter.

This year, Brennan's celebrates its 50th anniversary. Through five decades, the restaurant, founded by the late Owen Brennan at the end of World War II and originally located on Bourbon Street, has held a place among the finest dining establishments in the country.

Brennan's seemed charmed from the beginning. Since its founding, the restaurant has been "where one goes" when in New Orleans. From its early days, celebrities and wealthy travelers have flocked there. Restaurant memorabilia include letters of praise from society columnist Hedda Hopper, cartoonist Hank Ketcham, movie director Elia Kazan and novelist Leon Uris.

Now under the ownership of Owen Brennan's sons, Owen "Pip" Jr., Jimmy and Ted Brennan, the tradition continues. Resident celebrities and traveling newsmakers come by, dining alongside everyday Joes, locals and tourists. In true New Orleans style, the hot polloi still mingle with high society at Brennan's.

It is exactly what Owen Brennan always wanted. "We are very proud of the restaurant," Ted Brennan says. "I think it's as good or better than it's ever been."

For many New Orleanians, Brennan's, like a few other local legends, remains the site where great moments are observed. Graduation, bar mitzvahs, Sweet 16 parties, grandparents' 80th birthdays and wedding engagements regularly are celebrated inside the 200-year-old walls. The signature meal remains the lavish "Breakfast at Brennan's," which Owen Brennan conceived as a marketing concept—and which came to rival "Dinner at Antoine's."

The restaurant may have international acclaim, but for Ted Brennan, the patronage of local families is one of Brennan's greatest successes. The family can't rest on its laurels, he says, because none of the customers would put up with it.

"We try to act like every day is our first day in the business," he says. "We have discovered that owning a restaurant is never routine."

Over the years, diners' tastes and demands have changed, forcing the second generation of Brennans to respond. The
Brennan’s menu is more extensive than it was 50 years ago, with new dishes listed alongside old favorites.

Over the last two decades, Jimmy Brennan’s love of wine has expanded the restaurant’s extensive wine cellar to award-winning levels. Ted Brennan says more than 35,000 bottles from around the world make it the most complete restaurant wine cellar in the South.

The third generation has had an impact as well. Pip Brennan’s sons, Clark and Blake, share general manager duties. Ted Brennan’s daughter, Alana, works in sales.

The younger Brennans recently convinced their parents to install a computer system at the restaurant. Ted Brennan freely admits to having opposed the whole idea.

“We would never have done it without their insistence. They told us we were in the Dark Ages,” Brennan says. “So we had it put in and it paid for itself in two months. That just goes to show you what new blood can do.”

But tradition counts for much as well. The Brennan family has been stringent about keeping the restaurant in the family and the family in the restaurant. They resisted expansion they felt might dilute the quality of the original.

So determined were Owen Brennan’s sons to keep control of the restaurant that the extensive Brennan family divided over the issue in 1974. Owen Brennan’s younger sister, Ella Brennan, her siblings and their children now own and manage Commander’s Palace and several other restaurants. Owen Brennan’s sons remain the owners of their father’s Royal Street restaurant.

The split left a permanent rift in the family.

Stable staff

Some Brennan’s chefs and waiters have spent their entire careers at the restaurant, helping to bolster the Brennan’s reputation for service.

“We consider our workers part of our family,” says Brennan, who refers to long-time staff members as tenured employees.

Restaurant regulars might feel the same way. Some younger customers have been served by the same Brennan’s waiters all their lives and dined on meals cooked under the watchful eyes of one chef.

Chef Michael Roussel has been with Brennan’s for more than 40 years and has overseen the restaurant’s kitchen for half that time. He came up the old-fashioned way, beginning at the bottom and moving through the ranks.

“I started with the original Brennan’s on Bourbon Street in 1955 as a busboy,” Roussel says. “I’ve worked every phase of the dining room.”

His memories include busing dishes when the restaurant cooked for an event held for former French President Charles de Gaulle in Jackson Square.

Roussel apprenticed to the original Brennan’s chef, Paul Blangé before becoming a chef himself in the 1970s. He has received offers over the years to open his own restaurant, but says he prefers working at Brennan’s.

“I like the family, I like the customers, and I know the staff,” he says. “All the things a chef normally wants for his own restaurant, I have at Brennan’s.”

His kitchen staff has stability as well. Four cooks have been with the restaurant for more than 25 years each, he says.

Because of Brennan’s reputation for fine meals, Roussel and his staff have had unusual careers — and they have seen the world. Roussel has cooked or demonstrated his work in Denmark, England, Japan, Russia and all over the U.S.

Roussel’s career at Brennan’s also can be measured in volume. He and his staff prepared 11,000 servings of bananas Foster for one of President Ronald Reagan’s inaugurations. They prepared 9,000 meals for a function during the 1988 Republican convention in New Orleans.

Frequently, the chef steps out of the kitchen to visit with regulars and meet new customers. “There’s something about the look on a customer’s face when they tell you how they enjoyed the meal,” he says.

Waiter Sergio Davini knows that look well. He has worked at the restaurant since 1959.

“I came to America from Italy in the 1950s, and I have had two jobs in this country. One in a bakery, for 2-1/2 years, the other is here,” Davini says. Waiter Raul Castro has spent two decades working at Brennan’s. Like Davini, he considers Brennan’s the ultimate restaurant for a waiting career.

“I like to work here because of the people,” Castro explains. “It’s a friendly staff, and every day you get to meet people from all over the world.”

Growing up in the business

Ted Brennan started with the restaurant much younger than did his staff.

“I grew up in this restaurant,” he says. “I can remember when they were renovating this building before we moved here from Bourbon Street, when I was a child. I can remember playing in the courtyard.”

The history he and his brothers share helps them keep a perspective on how they would like to see the restaurant operate in the future. That means walking a fine line: They don’t want the restaurant to fall behind the times, but they also don’t want it to lose its charm. “The most important thing is to keep it constant,” he says.

Some Brennan’s customers come only a few times in their lives, Brennan says, and they connect the restaurant with those moments. To change it in any significant way would be to dash the memories of those times.

“Many people came here for their first anniversary, and they come back for their 10th,” Brennan explains. “They want to have the same meal now that they had then, and they want it to feel the same. When people come here there’s something they’re looking for, and it’s a moment in time.”

Some Brennan’s customers come only a few times in their lives, Brennan says, and they connect the restaurant with those moments. To change it in any significant way would be to dash the memories of those times.

Customers who haven’t returned to New Orleans for decades tell the Brennan children and grandchildren tales of their first visits and their meetings with Owen Brennan.

“I love those stories, and I love for them to be as happy with the restaurant now as they were then,” Brennan says.

Owen Brennan’s sons feel the restaurant is a heritage more than a legacy. They’ve dedicated the restaurant’s 50th anniversary to the memory of their father, who was just 45 when he died. They think he would be happy with how they have kept up the family business. “At the same time,” Ted Brennan says, “it’s a lot to live up to.”
BRENNAN'S RESTAURANT
417 ROYAL STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70130
RESERVATIONS (504) 525-9711
SALES AND EXECUTIVE OFFICES (504) 525-9713
FAX (504) 525-2302

RESTAURANT HOURS
Breakfast Or Brunch - 8:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
Luncheon Specials - 11:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M. - Monday - Friday
Dinner - 6:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.
Open Seven Days A Week Except For Dinner Christmas Eve And
Breakfast, Lunch And Dinner On Christmas.

RESERVATIONS
Suggested

DRESS CODE
Jackets Preferred At Dinner

OWNERSHIP
Founded By The Late Owen E. Brennan,
Owned and Operated By His Three Sons - Owen E. "Pip" Brennan, Jr., James
C. Brennan And Theodore M. Brennan.

GENERAL MANAGER
Clark Brennan, Blake Brennan

EXECUTIVE CHEF
Michael Roussel

SALES, MARKETING &
PRIVATE PARTIES
Sandra Taylor
Alana Brennan
Sherrie Bourg

COOKBOOK SALES &
DISTRIBUTION
Ellen C. Brennan, Diana Miller
*Breakfast at Brennan's and Dinner, Too*, Brennan's New Cookbook Is
Available At The Restaurant, All Major Bookstores, Specialty Shops And By
Mail Order.

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Bonnie Warren

FACILITIES
The Historic French Quarter Building Surrounds A Picturesque, Romantic
Courtyard Where Cocktails Are Served During Regular Restaurant Hours.
Twelve Elegant Dining Rooms, Each With A Different Seating Capacity, Will
Accommodate Anything From A Small Dinner Party To A Large Corporate
Function. Total Restaurant Capacity Is 550 Patrons.

CREDIT CARDS
Accepted
American Express, Visa Mastercard, Diners Club/Carte Blanche,
Discover

PARKING
Validated Parking In The Evening For Up To Three Hours At The Omni Royal
Orleans Hotel (Chartres and St. Louis Streets)
Since 1946, Brennan’s Restaurant located at 417 Royal Street in the heart of New Orleans’ historical French Quarter has been a culinary phenomenon. Through the years, Brennan’s chefs have created some of the world’s most famous and imaginative dishes which have given great pleasure to millions of discerning customers.

At Brennan’s inception, Owen Edward Brennan established the same standard of excellence nurtured today by his sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted. As Owen received recognition from countless food critics, national publications and visitors around the world, Brennan’s continues to receive culinary accolades.

Built in 1795, Brennan’s original structure served as La Banque de la Louisiane founded in 1804 by Governor W.C.C. Claiborne. In 1820, the property was sold to Martin Gordon, a clerk of the United States District Court and a friend of General Andrew Jackson, who frequented the Gordon home for dinner as the guest of honor.

In 1841, Louisiana Judge Alonzo Morphy, father of the celebrated American chess master Paul Morphy, purchased the building. William Ratcliffe Irby, a member of the Board of Administrators of Tulane University, bought the property from Morphy’s heirs in 1884 and donated the historical structure to the University in 1920.

Brennan’s founder, Owen Edward Brennan, leased the property in 1954 from Tulane. Thirty years later Owen’s sons and Brennan’s proprietors, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, bought the Royal Street landmark from Tulane University.

Today the building features twelve elegantly decorated dining rooms with a total capacity of 550 patrons. What was once the slave quarters of the pre-Civil War mansion has been converted into Brennan’s stellar, award-winning wine cellar. Exquisite dining surrounds a romantic patio with huge magnolia trees, lush foliage and a picturesque fountain.

“Breakfast at Brennan’s” has become a world-famous tradition and does not typify the conventional breakfast. Beginning with a choice of eye openers such as Brennan’s Brandy Milk Punch, a Creole Bloody Mary or an Absinthe Suisseesse, this gastronomic experience is then followed by an array of appetizers. Oyster Soup, Southern Baked Apple with Double Cream or Oysters Rockefeller are touted as favorites.

Brennan’s scrumptious breakfast menu offers items from Grillades and Grits to a dozen or more poached egg dishes including Egg Benedict, Sardou or Brennan’s own creations of Eggs Hussarde, Eggs St. Charles and Eggs à la Nouvelle Orleans.
For dessert, “Breakfast at Brennan’s” would not be complete without Bananas Foster, Brennan’s most famous creation. This renowned dessert is an international favorite and is the most requested item on the restaurant’s menu.

Dinner at Brennan’s is equally epicurean to its daytime counterpart. Fine dining is complemented by the restaurant’s romantic ambiance and the reflection of the courtyard gas lanterns in almost every dining room.

Dinner may begin with Buster Crabs Bearnaise, Turtle Soup or a Jackson Salad. The evening menu is always inclusive of numerous local seafood delicacies and other delectable items such as Tournedos Chanteclair, Veal Kottwitz and Baby Rack of Lamb Bouquetiere.

The recipes for every menu item can be found in Brennan’s most recent cookbook entitled Breakfast at Brennan’s and Dinner, Too. Brennan’s shares its gastronomic secrets in over 200 recipes, old and new, in this 288 page hardbound edition. Each recipe has been home tested to ensure its accuracy. Color photographs feature Brennan’s exquisite cuisine as well as the restaurant’s elegant décor and surroundings.

Breakfast at Brennan’s and Dinner, Too is much more than a collection of recipes. In a tribute to the restaurant’s founder, the late Owen Edward Brennan, Brennan’s shares with the reader its accurate history and legacy. This informative narrative is inclusive of old clippings, unique illustrations and nostalgic memorabilia.

Owen Edward Brennan influenced the course of New Orleans gastronomy as the culinary renaissance man of his time. His vision of what fine dining should be is paralleled at Brennan’s today. No trip to New Orleans would be complete without this epicurean experience.
The History of Brennan’s Restaurant

Owen Edward Brennan, the founder of Brennan’s Restaurant, was born April 5, 1910, in New Orleans’ “Irish Channel” to Owen Patrick Brennan and his wife, Nellie. Over a span of the next twenty-three years, Owen’s younger siblings were born in the following order: Adelaide, John, Ella, Richard (Dick) and Dorothy (Dottie).

Owen was already married when Dick and Dottie were born. Shortly after their births, Owen Edward Brennan, Jr. (Pip) was born to Owen and his wife, Maude. In time, Maude gave birth to two more sons, James (Jimmy) and Theodore (Ted) providing Owen with three male heirs.

Throughout his adult life, Owen Edward Brennan was driven by his devotion and an undaunting sense of responsibility to support not only his own wife and their sons but his parents and siblings as well. His father, Owen Patrick Brennan, was a New Orleans foundry laborer, which had made supporting Nellie and their six children very difficult; and so, his eldest son, Owen Edward Brennan set out to make his fortune.

Owen’s undertakings and endeavors included buying an interest in a gas station as well as a drugstore and becoming the bookkeeper for a candy company. He worked as a liquor salesman and district manager for Schenley Company and, finally, as the temporary manager of the Court of Two Sisters Restaurant.

In September 1943, Owen purchased the business of the Old Absinthe House on Bourbon Street. The Absinthe House had been built in 1798 and was known to be pirate Jean Lafitte’s secret hangout. As its most recent proprietor, Owen staged lifelike mannequins of the notorious Lafitte and Andrew Jackson in what he called the “Secret Room” – the very room in which the pact was supposedly made in New Orleans’ defense against the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

Owen became one of the city’s best known hosts at his colorful Old Absinthe House, “the oldest saloon in America.” Pianist Fats Pichon added to its charm with his talented renditions from Bach to boogie.
Owen created another dimension of ambience to the historical and musical atmosphere of the Old Absinthe House by inviting myriads of visitor to attach their business cards to its inside walls. Eventually, thousands of cards and autographed papers hung from its ceiling as well.

Owen’s customers could recapture the past with a Pirate’s Dream, the specialty drink of the Old Absinthe House. He labeled it “the high brow of all low brow drinks.” Owen perpetuated the popularity of the Absinthe Frappe, an original creation of the Absinthe House and a favorite of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Admiral Earnest King.

Yet the adventuresome drinks and unique atmosphere of the Old Absinthe House were not Owen’s essential keys to success. Owen Brennan didn’t need frappes but only the flash of his smile and a warm welcome to his many customers. It was once written that Owen would hit his customers over the head with his personality – “a blow from which few tourists, writers, movie celebrities or presidents ever completely recovered.” With this innate ability to win friends and customers while committing each and every one of their names to memory, it was no wonder that Owen would become a distinctively successful restaurateur.

Owen’s good friend, Count Arnaud, whose restaurant was a popular New Orleans dining spot, allegedly posed a challenge to Owen. Owen would relay complaints overheard at the Absinthe House to offending restaurant owners. To which Count Arnaud replied, “You’re forever telling me about the complaints you hear. If you think you can do better, why don’t you open a restaurant?”

At the same time Count Arnaud taunted that no Irishman could run a restaurant that was more than a hamburger joint. To which Owen responded, “All right you asked for it! I’ll show you and everybody else that an Irishman can run the finest French restaurant in this town!”

In July 1946, Owen Edward Brennan leased the Vieux Carre Restaurant directly across the street from the Old Absinth House. He named his new restaurant for himself. Owen Brennan’s French & Creole Restaurant; and with time, it became commonly known as Owen Brennan’s Vieux Carre.

Owen employed his gray-haired father, Owen Patrick Brennan, as he feared injury would befall him in the shipyards. He then gave his father a small percentage of the business. Making his father a minority stockholder was Owen’s way of providing and caring for his parents as well as his younger siblings.

The success or failure of this venture rested solely on the shoulders of Owen. Owen Edward Brennan had become the patriarch of the family. Everyone deferred to Owen. Many years his junior, Owen’s siblings were either still youngsters in school or just starting out.
At Owen Brennan's Vieux Carre, Owen's father was found greeting the luncheon customers until a heart attack in the early 50's slowed him down. Eventually, Owen employed two of his younger sisters, Adelaide and Ella, as well as a younger brother, John. Adelaide became the bookkeeper and Ella the kitchen supervisor. John was employed by his brother for a brief time only.

Owen Edward Brennan and his Vieux Carre restaurant attained nationwide fame on an "Irish smile and a kiss of the Blarney Stone." Owen built his restaurant into a famous institution overnight, competing with New Orleans' oldest and best in French and Creole cuisine. Owen's research and knowledge of French food, fine wine and impeccable service made him a master. He was called the "wonder man" of the New Orleans restaurant industry. Owen's Irish stubbornness compelled him to work extremely long and hard hours to put Brennan's on the culinary map - locally and nationwide.

Owen's ready wit, radiant smile and infectious laugh endeared him to locals, Hollywood celebrities and tourists alike. He was so very kind to so many people and was genuinely loved in return. As the famous novelist and syndicated columnist Robert Ruark once wrote about his good friend, "If he had a fault, it was his generosity." Owen was full of energy and possessed an incredible imagination; and all was reflected in Brennan's success.

Owen was known in Hollywood movie circles and entertained some of the brightest stars in his French Quarter restaurant - Vivien Leigh, John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Taylor, Gary Cooper, Jane Russell and Tennessee Williams, to name a few. For national magazine writers and syndicated columnists, such as Earl Wilson, Walter Winchell, Hedda Hopper, Dorothy Kilgallen, Robert Ruark and Lucius Beebe, Brennan's was oftentimes their first stop on assignments to cover New Orleans. As a result, many stories were written of Owen's life and success in the restaurant business in national publications, such as Newsweek, Collier's Holiday, Life and Gourmet magazines.

The advancement of the New Orleans community was high on Owen's list of priorities. He was especially devoted to the promotion of the New Orleans tourist trade and was labeled a "one man Chamber of Commerce." Appointed by; Mayor Chep Morrison, Owen was the founding chairman of the first New Orleans Tourist Commission. He was a driving force as a member of the New Orleans Crime Commission and the city's Chamber of Commerce. As a promoter of the New Orleans tourism industry, Owen arranged a special Mardi Gras ball for visitors during the Carnival season.

As a restaurateur, Owen Edward Brennan was a genius in a business for which he had no formal education. His creative ability was Brennan's crowning glory. After the publication of Frances Parkinson Keyes' Dinner at Antoine's, a new experience was conceived. Owen was convinced that if the concept "Dinner at Antoine's" could so successfully captivate a gastronomic audience, then why not "Breakfast at Brennan's?"
And so Owen became the first in his time to promote this epicurean experience anywhere.

Brennan’s, as Owen ultimately wanted his restaurant to be called, became such a lucrative venture that when the time came to renew the lease on the Bourbon Street building, the landlord demanded fifty percent of the business. Unwilling to meet these demands, Owen searched for a new location for his restaurant and found its present location on Royal Street.

Owen was under a tremendous amount of stress as a result of his landlord’s demands and his decision to move to Royal Street. At that time Royal Street was not the busy thoroughfare it is today. In fact, the Royal Orleans Hotel was not even in existence.

In 1954, Owen leased the building and began renovating and redecorating the Patio Royal at 417 Royal Street to convert it into the new Brennan’s Restaurant. On November 1, 1955, Owen invited Brennan’s initial customers to join him at his officially opened bar located in the building carriage way. The opening of the restaurant was scheduled for the spring of 1956, but the hand of fate dealt a devastating blow.

Since the spring of 1950, Owen had been a member of La Confrerie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, an elite wine society whose original home was the Chateau du Clos de Vougeot, Cote d’Or since 1551. The objectives of the Tastevin were for its members to appreciate and promote the products of Burgundy and to maintain the region’s festivities and customs.

Owen attended the fall dinner of its New Orleans chapter at Antoine’s Restaurant on a Thursday evening in November 1955. That night no one enjoyed the exquisite wines, superb food and comradery of good friends more than Owen.

The next morning, Maude was unable to wake her husband. At the age of forty-five, Owen Edward Brennan had died of a massive coronary in his sleep on a fateful Friday, November 4, 1955. Although shock and grief overwhelmed his family and the friends who loved him so dearly, Brennan’s Restaurant still opened in its new Royal Street location on schedule.

At the time of Owen’s passing, his sister, Ella, was thirty years old and was still the kitchen supervisor. Yet her strong will and leadership ability enabled her to assume the role of manager of Brennan’s Restaurant. Owen’s widow, Maude, had not been involved at Brennan’s in a managerial capacity, and none of their three sons was old enough to affirm their positions as proprietors.

At the time of their father’s death, Pip was a graduating college senior, Jimmy a freshman in high school and Ted only seven years old. Immediately following his college graduation, Pip assumed a leadership role in the management of his late father’s restaurant.
When Owen died, his photograph and the tragic news of his passing were front page headlines for New Orleans' *Times-Picayune* and *Item* newspapers. *Time* magazine included the calamitous report in “Milestones.” Not only did nationally read Robert Ruark and New Orleans' own Herman Deutsch dedicate their columns to Owen Edward Brennan, but the editorial in the *Item* Sunday edition immediately following Owen's death was entitled “A Truly Fabulous Orleanian” in tribute to Owen.

In its new location on Royal Street, Brennan's prospered as it had on Bourbon Street. Owen's multitude of friends continued to patronize the restaurant he had founded even though their good friend was no longer there. Owen's ingenious concept of “Breakfast at Brennan's” and the dishes that were invented under his scrutiny, including Bananas Foster and Eggs Hussarde, combined with the expertise of his Dutch Chef, Paul Blange, had made Brennan's world-famous.

Owen's younger sister, Ella, inherited an enviable legacy in her position as Brennan's manager. Ella had learned most of what she knew about the restaurant business from her brother, Owen, whom she adored. Through the years Ella had observed not only Owen's technique in managing the daily operation but also his distinct style and finesse in dealing with the customers and news media. The mastery of public relations had been an exceptional expertise of Owen.

By maintaining Owen's many contacts and friends in the local and national news media, Ella was successful in her acquisition of publicity for Brennan's. She maintained Owen's friendships with numerous restaurateurs across the country and continued to promote Brennan's as a culinary mecca for celebrities.

Shortly after Owen's death, Brennan's needed additional working capital. Maude, Owen's widow, had already invested the money realized from her husband's life insurance policy in Brennan's, but these proceeds alone were not enough. Maude was advised by her late husband's good friend and financial advisor, Ralph Alexis, to offer her father-in-law, Owen Patrick Brennan, the opportunity to purchase additional Brennan's stock from her rather than allow non-relatives to become partners.

To provide the financial means, it was necessary that Maude's father-in-law borrow the money to purchase this stock. The cash proceeds from such a transaction would provide the business with the additional working capital. Maude heeded Ralph's advice and allowed her father-in-law to increase his percentage as a minority stockholder while maintaining control of Brennan's Restaurant for herself and Owen's three sons.

Owen Patrick Brennan and his wife, Nellie, died within a couple of years following the death of their son, Owen Edward Brennan. When Owen Patrick Brennan died, his minority interest in Brennan's Restaurant was divided among each of his own five surviving children and the late Owen Edward Brennan's three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, further securing Maude and Owen's three sons as majority stockholders of Brennan's Restaurant. Until that time, Owen Patrick Brennan's children, Adelaide, John, Ella, Dick and Dottie, had not been stockholders in the restaurant.
As time passed, Ella sought to enlarge her legacy. In 1963, under Ella’s management and direction, Brennan’s Restaurant purchased the Friendship House Restaurant in Biloxi, Mississippi. At that time, Ella’s expansion plans began.

The stock of each expansion restaurant – financed by Brennan’s Restaurant and Owen’s widow, Maude – was divided equally among the nine stockholders of Brennan’s and not as the stock was divided in Brennan’s itself. Thus, Ella and her siblings, who comprised five of the nine Brennan’s stockholders, assumed control of the stock in each expansion restaurant while Maude and her three sons became the minority stockholders.

Ella continued to expand the Brennan family operations. The opening of Brennan’s Restaurant of Houston in 1967 was next. Jimmy, Owen and Maude’s second son, moved to Houston to manage that operation. Jimmy had been formally trained in the restaurant business at Ecole Hoteliere de la S.S.H. in Lausanne, Switzerland. Brennan’s of Houston benefited from Jimmy’s knowledge of food, service and wine and was extremely successful under his management.

Brennan’s of Dallas opened in 1969 with no Brennan family member in charge of its operations. A manager was hired by Ella and the pitfalls of expansion with absentee ownership became apparent.

In the spring of 1970, Ted, Owen and Maude’s youngest son, moved from San Francisco, where he had been working since his college graduation, to take over the Dallas restaurant with high hopes and serious expectation of redeeming its reputation. By the time Ted arrived in Dallas as the restaurant’s newest manager, Brennan’s had been opened for fourteen months and was operating in the red with little hope of recovery. However, after much hard work, duress and his own Irish stubbornness, Ted was able to turn Brennan’s of Dallas around, win back many of its initial customers, cultivate new ones and, finally, show a substantial profit.

In 1969, the Brennan family also purchased an established New Orleans restaurant, Commander’s Palace, as well as a family-style restaurant in Metairie called Chez Francais. After the opening of Brennan’s of Dallas, plans for a Brennan’s of Atlanta ensued, as did a chain of two hundred steak houses, which was to be called the Inner Circle. Ella informed the family that she intended to assume the ownership of substantially more stock than her usual one-ninth in these two hundred steak houses.

In July 1973, concerns arose among Maude and her sons regarding the rapid expansion that was occurring. The concerns stemmed from the obvious inability to manage adequately the restaurants that already had been acquired.

The overall quality of the original Brennan’s in New Orleans was suffering, as were the other acquisitions with the exception of Brennan’s Restaurants in Dallas and Houston. Concentration, finances and valued employees had been diverted in the efforts of expansion while culinary excellence was sacrificed.
At the July family meeting in New Orleans, the subject of discontent was first on the agenda. Surprisingly, Ella’s panacea was, as she put it, “to split up the corporations and not the family.” This may have been possible had everyone agreed to Ella’s terms.

However, after discussing Ella’s proposal among themselves, Owen’s three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, responded in a manner which Ella probably had not anticipated. Brennan’s Restaurant in New Orleans had been their father’s legacy for them. Along with their mother, Maude, Pip, Jimmy and Ted controlled its stock and were merely minority stockholders in the six expansion restaurants. These were reasons enough to inform Ella that they would assume sole control of the original Brennan’s and that she with her brothers and sisters could have the remaining six expansion restaurants.

Intense hours of discussion and negotiations among the accountants and attorneys from both sides of the family ensued for several months following that fateful July meeting. However, no proposal splitting the restaurant corporations equitably was acceptable to Ella as long as she was not awarded the original Brennan’s Restaurant. After months of endless negotiations and frustrating attempts to settle this unfortunate family dispute amicably, on November 5, 1973, Maude, Pip, Jimmy and Ted assumed complete control of Brennan’s Restaurant of New Orleans resulting in a family schism. The issue of expansion may have been only the tip of the iceberg among the real causes of unrest, unfairness and resentment within the family; but this single issue simplifies the story.

Immediately, after the Brennan family split, Maude, Pip, Jimmy and Ted restored Brennan’s to the quality-oriented restaurant that Owen Edward Brennan had originally established. Through the years they have worked diligently to maintain its greatness. Simultaneously, Ella recognized the need to restore Commander’s Palace, as it had declined also since its acquisition by the Brennans in 1969. Commander’s then provided a New Orleans base for her six restaurant corporations.

Not until November 1974 was a complete and final agreement reached between the two factions of the family. At that time, Maude, Pip, Jimmy and Ted assumed complete ownership of Brennan’s Restaurant in New Orleans with no minority stockholders remaining, while Ella and her siblings accomplished the same in all six expansion restaurants. Since that time, Ella and her brothers and sisters have closed four of their original six restaurants with only Brennan’s of Houston and Commander’s Palace remaining.

Ella and her family have since expanded their restaurant holdings. Brennan’s Restaurant in New Orleans is in no way affiliated with these most recent ventures or any other restaurant operations. Owen’s three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, remain the sole owners and operators of their father’s world-famous restaurant on Royal Street.
Our story and cookbook are dedicated in memory of our father, Owen Edward Brennan, with our deepest appreciation - for without his creativity, determination and dedication where would the Brennan family be today? Had he remained a bookkeeper, perhaps, we all would be accountants. Had he continued his career as a district manager for Schenley, perhaps, we all would be liquor salesmen. Had he owned his own gas station, perhaps, we all would be pumping gas. Had Owen Edward Brennan pursued a different path than he did most probably no Brennan would be where he or she is today. Our father became a successful restaurateur and that conceivably has made any Brennan a restaurateur.

Fortunately, for the entire Brennan family, our father pursued his dreams and made them into realities. The misfortune was that fate did not permit him to enjoy those realities for very long. Yet the generations to follow continue to reap the benefits of his success.

In recent years, stories have been written about the Brennan family in which history has been changed. For that reason, our true beginning is so important for the sake of posterity.

We can never forget that it is Owen’s spirit of gracious hospitality that we all attempt to emulate today. For it was Owen Edward Brennan who launched his entire family into the restaurant business and not a candy factory. We must remember that Owen’s ready wit, radiant smile, infectious laugh, incredible imagination, energy and generosity were the keys to his success. For without these traits and an “Irish smile and a kiss of the Blarney Stone,” there never would have been a Brennan’s Restaurant.
History of 417 Royal Street

Nowhere in New Orleans' French Quarter is there a building with a more illustrious past than 417 Royal Street, the home of Brennan's Restaurant. Located on the most elegant street of this historic district and adjacent to some of the finest antique shops in the world, Brennan's Restaurant has been a landmark on Royal Street since it first opened on May 31, 1956.

The property was originally given the number 215 by Adrien de Pauger. In 1721 he designed the original city, now known as the French Quarter, and assigned lot 215 to Baron Hamburger to whom it had been granted by the Superior Council.

The first transaction of the Royal Street property on record occurred on December 3, 1794, when Gaspar Debuys and Huberto Remy purchased the land from Angela Monget. On December 8, just five days later, the great fire of 1794 destroyed more than two hundred buildings in the city, including whatever buildings existed at 417 Royal Street.

During the Spanish rule of Louisiana, Don Vincente Rillieux, the great-grandfather of the French artist Edgar Degas, bought the land from Debuys and Remy. The purchase occurred on January 8, 1795, exactly one month after the fire. Records show that Debuys and Remy sold their lot, including the ruins of their building. The lot still had the original dimensions assigned by Pauger of 60 feet x 120 feet.

The two-story structure as we know it today was built by Don Vincente Rillieux in 1795. After Rillieux died, his widow Dame Maria Fonquet Rillieux, gave the property to her son-in-law, Santiago Freret. On June 2, 1801, Freret relinquished the title to Don Jose Faurie for 8,650 Mexican pesos.

Faurie not only resided in the handsome new mansion but maintained it as his place of business. On January 26, 1805, Faurie sold his residence to Julien Poydrous. As its president, Julien Poydrous converted his Royal Street structure into the newly organized Banque de la Louisiane, founded on March 11, 1804, by Governor W.C.C. Claiborne.
The bank was the first financial institution to be operated in New Orleans as well as in all of the territory secured by the United States through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Extensive renovations of the building by the bank included the addition of an intricately designed wrought-iron balcony railing with the bank's LB monogram, a compelling example of ferrerò's art that still exists within the structure today.

In 1819, after the original Louisiana Bank had outlived its charter, the ground floor of the building was occupied temporarily by the Louisiana State Bank. On October 5, 1820, the liquidators of La Banque de la Louisiane sold the property to Martin Gordon, a socially prominent Virginia gentleman and clerk of the United States District Court.

The Gordon family was noted for its lavish hospitality. The family home soon became the center of fashionable Creole social activities. Gordon was active in the politics of the day and a friend of General Andrew Jackson. General Jackson was the guest of honor at many lavish banquets staged at the Gordon home. After Andrew Jackson became President, he appointed Martin Gordon to the office of Collector of the Port of New Orleans in appreciation of Gordon's generosity and hospitality.

Unfortunately, in 1841 the Gordon Family met with financial reverses. The building was seized by the Citizen's Bank and sold at auction by the sheriff. Judge Alonzo Morphy, a former state attorney general and a member of Louisiana's high court, purchased the building.

Judge Morphy's son was Paul Charles Morphy, the celebrated American chess master. Known around the world as a young genius, Paul Morphy was only ten years old when he mastered the intricate game. He defeated Europe's foremost chess champions, as newspapers touted his feat of playing eight contestants at one time while blindfolded. Judge Morphy even designed a huge chess board on the floor of one of the upstairs rooms in the mansion for his son's pleasure.

The chess master, Paul Charles Morphy, died in his Royal Street home in 1884. In 1891, his brothers and sisters sold the mansion they had inherited.

The property then passed to several owners, including William Ratcliffe Irby. Irby, who acquired his fortune in tobacco, dairy products and banking, was a member of the Board of Administrators of Tulane University. He was deeply interested in many philanthropic endeavors and primarily in the preservation of the historic French Quarter. As a result, Irby donated his property at 417 Royal Street to Tulane University in 1920.

Over the years, Tulane University leased the property to a number of tenants. The Patio Royal, a popular spot for debutante parties and other social functions, was the last tenant before its conversion into the world-famous Brennan's Restaurant.
Owen Edward Brennan rented the property from Tulane University in 1954. Under the guidance of Owen’s architects, Richard Koch and Samuel Wilson, as well as the Vieux Carre Commission, the building was completely renovated.

On April 3, 1975, a raging fire severely damaged and ceased operations at the Royal Street establishment. Amazingly, Brennan’s restored to its original splendor, resumed business in less than six months. Almost ten years later in 1984, Owen’s three sons, Pip, Jimmy and Ted, purchased the building from Tulane University.

Today the building features twelve elegantly decorated dining rooms, with a total capacity of 550 patrons. What was once the slave quarters of the pre-Civil War mansion has been converted into Brennan’s stellar, award-winning wine cellar. Exquisite dining surrounds a romantic patio with huge magnolia trees, lush foliage and a picturesque fountain, while its structure remains one of the most historically significant buildings in the French Quarter.
MICHAEL ROUSSEL, EXECUTIVE CHEF

Chef Michael Roussel of Brennan’s Restaurant in New Orleans is well-versed at multi-media and public appearances. Among his credits are ABC’s “Good Morning America,” NBC’s “The Today Show,” CBS’s “Morning News,” nationally syndicated “Live with Regis and Kathie Lee,” CBS’s “The Tom Snyder Show,” and Nashville Network’s “Cookin’ USA.” He is currently appearing in the 13-part cooking series produced by Public Broadcasting System entitled, “Breakfast from New Orleans,” which is televised in over 200 cities across the country. Chef Roussel was a featured chef in the “Great Chefs of New Orleans” series on PBS. Additional appearances include “Cooking with Burt Wolf” and “A view From the Vineyards,” produced by the Chaines des Rotisseurs. He has appeared on more than one hundred individual television stations throughout the country and has been featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles.

Chef Roussel has brought Brennan’s across the country and around the world. Roussel was selected by the committee for President Reagan’s second inauguration to prepare Brennan’s world-famous Bananas Foster for 12,000 guests attending the “Taste of America” party. He was also asked to be a member of the team to prepare Cajun and Creole food at the Presidential Summit in Moscow between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. In Washington, Roussel did a Brennan’s Breakfast at the request of Tip O’Neill for the House of Representatives. Roussel brought Brennan’s to Osaka, Japan, for 18 days, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. He brought Brennan’s to Milan, Italy, for Delta Airlines. The U.S. Ambassador invited Chef Roussel to prepare a state dinner in Copenhagen, Denmark. Roussel did a tour covering both coast lines of Florida for Burdine’s Florida stores. He gracioulsy represents Brennan’s preparing his specialities, at numerous charitable special events and fund raisers.

Yet, Chef Mike is happiest at home in his kitchen at Brennan’s. It’s where he mastered the operations of the back as well as the front of the house. Chef Mike became Executive Chef at Brennan’s in 1975 after a lengthy apprenticeship under Chef Paul Blange, senior chef and creator of Brennan’s many signature dishes. In 1956 Roussel began his career at Brennan’s as a busboy. He later became a waiter, then head waiter, and finally, Maitre’d before leaving on a tour of duty in the U.S. Army.

When Roussel returned to Brennan’s after completing his service commitment, Chef Blange chose him as his first apprentice. With Blange’s guidance through Brennan’s outstanding kitchen Roussel became a master.

Chef Mike also studied with several noted European chefs, including Reinhold Lucas, Klaus Rosier, Rudy Steinhauser and Fernando Oca. He has been honored often by his peers and is a member of the International Order of Les Toques Blanches and the Chaines des Rotisseurs.
BANANAS FOSTER

In the 1950’s, New Orleans was the major port of entry for bananas shipped from Central and South America. Owen Edward Brennan challenged his talented chef, Paul Blange, to include bananas in a new culinary creation – Owen’s way of promoting the imported fruit. Simultaneously, Holiday Magazine had asked Owen to provide a new recipe to appear in a feature article on Brennan’s.

In 1951, Chef Paul created Bananas Foster. The scrumptious dessert was named for Richard Foster, who, as chairman, served with Owen on the New Orleans Crime Commission, a civic effort to clean up the French Quarter. Richard Foster, owner of the Foster Awning Company, was a frequent customer of Brennan’s and a very good friend of Owen.

Little did anyone realize that Bananas Foster would become an international favorite and is the most requested item on the restaurant’s menu. Thirty-five thousand pounds of bananas are flamed each year at Brennan’s in the preparation of its world-famous dessert.

Bananas Foster Recipe – Serves 4

\[\frac{1}{4} \text{ cup (1/2 stick) butter} \quad \frac{1}{4} \text{ cup white rum} \quad 4 \text{ bananas, cut in half, lengthwise, then halved.}\]

\[\frac{1}{2} \text{ teaspoon cinnamon} \quad \frac{1}{4} \text{ cup banana liqueur}\]

\[1 \text{ cup brown sugar} \quad 4 \text{ scoops vanilla ice cream}\]

Combine the butter, sugar and cinnamon in a flambé pan or skillet. Place the pan over low heat either on an alcohol burner or on top of the stove, and cook, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Stir in the banana liqueur, then place the bananas in the pan. When the banana sections soften and begin to brown, carefully add the rum. Continue to cook the sauce until the rum is hot, then tip the pan slightly to ignite the rum. When the flames subside, lift the bananas out of the pan and place four pieces over each portion of ice cream. Generously spoon warm sauce over the top of the ice cream and serve immediately.