



TESTIMONIAL: SEBASTIAN "BUSTER" AMBROSIA, CHEF, AUTHOR AND CULINARY ICON



Chef, radio and TV personality, cookbook author, restaurant owner: Chef Sebastian "Buster" Ambrosia has had a lifetime of accomplishments, and he owes it all to his beginnings at Delgado Community College.

Chef Buster, a native of the Irish Channel, always knew that he wanted to cook. He grew up in his parents' grocery store, watching his mother and father prepare Cajun and Creole dishes for the whole family.

At the age of 13, he entered Delgado's School of Cooking where he was inspired to succeed. Upon graduation, he served in an apprenticeship with the Hotel Corporation of America, where he learned traditional European styles of cooking in the French, German, Italian and Swiss techniques.

After a few years there, he became the Executive Chef at Metairie Country Club, and at the age of 23, was the youngest executive chef in the city. His 18 years at the club was what he needed to prove his leadership. "I supervised three kitchens, and over 35 employees. We would cook for banquets of up to a thousand people. I loved it. I was working with people who really appreciated fine dining," says Chef Buster.

In 1980 Chef Buster accepted a position with the Brennan Corporation, starting out as a night chef at Commander's Palace and then moving to Mr. B's Bistro as the Executive Chef. This is where his star began to shine, winning numerous awards for his New Orleans-style cuisine.

Over the next several years, Chef Buster appeared weekly on the nationally syndicated P.M. Magazine television show. He had a live weekend radio show on WWL-AM. He authored *Mr. B's Cookbook*. He began traveling the world to share his cooking with politicians and celebrities, including President Gerald Ford, Elizabeth Taylor, Bob Hope, Liza Minelli and many others.

As most chefs do, Chef Buster dreamed of one day owning his own restaurant. His restaurants have included "Chef Buster's Creole Restaurant" in Slidell and later, "Chef Buster's Kitchen" in Metairie, which received a rating of "Excellent" from *Zagat's Restaurant Survey*. He has also written two additional cookbooks, *Louisiana: Cooking with Ambrosia* and *Simply Ambrosia: A Yat Cookbook*.

In 2005, Chef Buster, semi-retired, returned to working on a part-time basis teaching classes in Culinary Arts at Delgado. "I was lucky that I could take my life experiences and go back to Delgado and share my knowledge with the students. I thought that if I could help the students get over the hurdles and see them succeed – I'd feel good at the end of the day."

Today, Chef Buster continues to conduct cooking demonstrations and gives speeches on the origins of Cajun and Creole cooking. Of course, he still cooks almost nightly for his family, which includes his wife Vivian, daughters Michelle and Darnella, and his granddaughter Jackie. He knows that his family has had to make sacrifices over the years, to allow him to follow his dream of being a great chef.

He owes his success to his family and to Delgado. "I couldn't have been who I am today without either one."