

Area caterer relies on traditional Louisiana cuisine in brush with nobility

By **CAROL ANNE BLITZER**
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Have you ever wondered what you would serve if a member of royalty were coming for lunch?

Sue Price, who with her husband, Buddy, owns and operates Abigail's Fine Catering, had just that problem recently. She had to prepare and serve a lunch for Capt. Mark Phillips, who used to be royalty when he was married to England's Princess Anne.

Phillips, a world famous horseman, was in Baton Rouge Nov. 16 to design a cross-country course for BREC's Farr Horse Activity Center. Gretchen Morgan, director of the BREC facility, says Phillips was selected by the private donors of the course because he is considered the top course designer in the world.

Morgan asked Sue Price to prepare a luncheon to serve Phillips and about 25 others in the Farr Park gym. "She told me that it was no point in trying to impress him with fine French cuisine," Price said. She wanted a simple luncheon with a touch of traditional Louisiana cooking.

Price came up with a menu of Crawfish Cheesecake, fresh vegetables, sandwiches and chicken and sausage gumbo with pecan pie and bread pudding for dessert.

For decorations, Price used a patriotic theme with white linen table cloths, navy blue napkins and lots of red flowers. She covered the dessert table with an American flag cloth inherited from her mother.

The tables were set with silver flatware, china plates and real glasses. "Nothing was disposable," Price said.

Raymond Babin, a close family friend of the Prices, made the centerpieces. For the food table, he cre-



Advocate staff photo by Arthur D. Lauck
Buddy and Sue Price, who own Abigail's Fine Catering, had fun fixing a typical Louisiana gumbo lunch for Capt. Mark Phillips, center, from Great Britain, who was in Baton Rouge to design a special course for the BREC horse facility at Farr Park.

ated a large arrangement of fresh flowers in a galvanized bucket. Price served the gumbo from a large black iron pot inherited from her great-great-grandmother. The vegetables, arranged in an old basket lined with curly lettuce, looked like a basket of flowers.

"Raymond suggested that we put a big drip coffee pot filled with flowers on the dessert table," Price said. And Babin insisted that the coffee be served Louisiana-style in demitasse cups.

Price was thrilled to have been chosen to cater the party, since she

has only been in the catering business for two years.

"I've been working in an engineering firm for 30 years," she said, "but I've always loved to cook. I always said that when I grew up, I wanted to be a caterer."

The New Orleans native actually learned to cook at a Catholic boarding school she and generations of the women in her family attended in Ohio. "They taught us how to cook and bake and how to set a table properly," Price said.

She still works at GWS Engineering for Wayne Sledge, who,

Price says, is "very supportive of her catering."

Every day, she fixes a hot lunch at work. "I practice on Wayne," she said. "You can't imagine what gourmet meals we can fix with a hot plate and a microwave."

Here is the recipe for the Crawfish Cheesecake Price served to Phillips and two of her other favorite catering recipes:

CRAWFISH CHEESECAKE

- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1 tbl. olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell peppers
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell peppers
- 1 lb. crawfish tails
- 2 tsps. minced garlic
- 2 tbs. Creole seasoning
- 1 tbl. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 dashes Tabasco
- 2 tbs. lemon juice
- 28 ozs. cream cheese
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup shredded smoked Gouda cheese

1. Mix the Parmesan cheese, bread crumbs and melted butter in a bowl. Press the mixture into the bottom of a (9-inch) springform pan.

2. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over high heat. Add the onion and bell peppers and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the crawfish tails, garlic, Creole seasoning,

Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco and lemon juice. Sauté for 1 1/2 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Beat the cream cheese and eggs with an electric mixer for 5 minutes or until thick and frothy. Add the heavy cream, Gouda cheese and crawfish mixture. Beat for 2 minutes until well mixed and creamy.

4. Pour the filling into the crust and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until firm. Cool to room temperature. Serve with crackers.

Serves about 30.
This freezes well.

HONEY SWEET POTATO BISCUITS

- 1/4 cup shortening (I use Crisco sticks)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbl. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tbl. grated orange peel
- 1 tbl. grated lemon peel
- 3/4 cup sweet potatoes, baked until tender, peeled and mashed (about 2 small po-

tatoes)
1/4 cup honey
About 1/2 cup milk

1. In a large bowl, cut in shortening with flour. Combine flour mixture, baking powder and salt. Add orange and lemon peel, sweet potatoes and honey. Mix well.

2. Add enough milk to make a soft dough. Knead 3-4 times and pat to a 1-inch thickness. Cut with a 2-inch round cutter.

3. Place on ungreased cookie sheets and bake at 400 degrees for 15-18 minutes or until lightly browned.

Makes about 18 biscuits.

— Sue Price

ALMOND TEA

- 10 cups tea
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 (12-oz.) can frozen lemonade
- 2 tsps. vanilla extract
- 1 tbl. almond extract

Mix together and serve over ice in a tall glass.

Serves about 10.