

David Landry never left home. He was reared in the Landry house that later became Landry's Seafood & Steakhouse and now he's owner and works there daily. "He really never left home," says his wife Grace, who is also his helpmate in the business. David's dad and mom, E.G. and Kathleen Landry had six children including David. One of E.G.'s "passions" or hobbies was to get together with the guys once a week and have a meal. Often E.G. did the cooking for the meals and over the years he developed a particular knack for seafood, David recalls.

Although E.G. was a sugarcane farmer, he decided in 1969 to open a bar and boiled seafood restaurant at his home. U.S. Highway 90 was still a proposed highway then. "It was mostly takeout orders," David recalls. By 1970, word about the great seafood that Landry's served had gotten out, and E.G. decided to expand the menu and the house – what is now the main dining room was added.

As the children grew, they helped out in the business. David recalls he hated working there, but had no choice as long as he was in school. Working in the restaurant – helping with the cooking – really cramped his style when he got old enough to date. In fact, to be able to see Grace he would send someone to pick her up and then she would watch him work all evening. "This is how I know it was real love," Grace says. "I wouldn't have done it otherwise." They married in 1974 and Grace became a cashier for the restaurant. "I swore I would never be a waitress, but I've done that and more throughout the years. You do whatever is needed. "I tell David all the time this marriage was built on love and endurance."

The two have been together 24 hours a day almost constantly since they were married. There was only a short time that David worked away from the restaurant. That was only for six months, and in 1979, when his father offered him a part of the business, David was ready to accept. "I'm really the only one of the children who had an interest in the restaurant." Besides, working in the place as part owner is a lot more satisfying than working there because he had to. Now he wants to.

And that's also when his period of learning really began as his father taught him all the dishes he knew. David still uses those dishes but sometimes modifies them with a little seasoning of his own choosing. The two men worked together, sharing all the work and the pleasures such as fishing and hunting, until E.G. died in 1986. After that, David bought the entire business.

His customers' favorite dish is fried shrimp, but his favorite dish to cook is crawfish etouffee. "I think I make a good etouffee," he says.

According to David, the restaurant was not a money maker when his father first opened it. "It was a long time before he made his first nickel." By then U.S. Hwy. 90 was being built and the service road was the only access to the restaurant. After rains, drivers had no choice but to stay in the ruts made by previous traffic. But eventually the road and the business improved, to become a very successful, full-menu restaurant which hires 13 people full time.

In spite of all the help, the Landrys say their place is unique because David does all the cooking, except for short orders. David says he is in no hurry to expand, but he's not without a vision for the future when maybe another Landry's Seafood & Steakhouse will open. "I just have to find the right location," he says. Until then, he'll stay where he started – at home, with Grace and the two boys, David, 8 and Christopher, 7.

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