

My Story about Fat Tuesday...

Thomas Gallo

January of 1999, I took a job as a prep cook for a restaurant in Akron, Ohio called Liberty Street Brewing Company. I knew little about cooking in general, let alone New Orleans cuisine.

Two months into my education, I was told that we would be having Fat Tuesday.



Not having a clue what Fat Tuesday even was, I helped prep for the day, went home and came back later that evening. To my surprise, I saw the restaurant like I'd never seen it before. The place was crazy! People of all ages eating, drinking, listening to music... It was truly one of the most amazing things that I had ever seen...

Over the course of the next year, under the watchful eye of my friend and mentor David Russo, I underwent an education in food, culture, life, music, soul, and self. Dave told me about his time in New Orleans, and I was amazed hearing the stories of his working with legends such as Emeril Lagasse, Paul Prudhomme, and the incomparable Julia Child. One might think that with company such as that, Dave would be more apt to talk about those experiences...

He was however, more eager to explain all the nuances of New Orleans... The culture, the music, the food...

Passionate about music, Dave knows as much about music as he does food. Late one evening, after a few cocktails, Dave had made a comment that he wished we could listen to more music in the kitchen. I took it upon myself to immediately install a huge stereo in the kitchen, much to the surprise, and I hope delight, of Dave. The musical education began...

Meanwhile, opportunities arose that allowed me to begin working alongside David. Over the course of the next year I began to absorb as much as I could and when the next Fat Tuesday rolled around, I was ready!

The day started with the unforgettable sounds of Kermit Ruffins, Professor Longhair, Dr. John, the Meters... This is the kind of music that you FEEL! Then we put on some Zydeco... Buckwheat, Beau Jocque, The Zydeco All Stars... and this is music that makes you MOVE! There were beads, cocktails, laughter, and that was just IN THE KITCHEN! Fat Tuesday at Liberty was a day unlike any other. The energy in the restaurant is unmatched to anything I have ever been a part of.

So that is what today is all about. A celebration of Food, Music, New Orleans. So enjoy yourselves!

I tried to keep the menu simple, and priced low so you can try a little of everything. We may run out of a few things, as I wanted to keep everything fresh and made to order... and may next year get even bigger and better...

And that brings us to THIS year... February 16th, 2010! Each Year we keep getting bigger and better, and my staff and I eagerly anticipate Fat Tuesday, as it has quickly become our favorite day of the year... well, other than Italian Day! Once again the Ohio Legend, the incomparable John Schwab is here, and joining us again this year is my good friend Rob Macabee and the New Basics Brass Band... These cats take happy hour to a whole new level... The bar shakes when they play! The chance to bring a little New Orleans to Columbus is a true thrill. Those of you who know me or who have been here before, know that I am beyond passionate about food... especially Italian and Creole. This day is about enjoying yourselves, enjoying each others company, savoring different cocktails and eating what I will humbly proclaim is some of the best Creole food in this City... While we encourage you to stay and drink and enjoy the music... I will again ask that if at all possible, please offer you seats to those who have yet to eat...

and as they say in New Orleans... Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler!!!

Special thanks to:

Superior Beverage – Matt Herron and A.J. Minard - www.superiorbeverage.com

Premium Beverage - Travis, Ron, and Scott www.premiumbeveragesupply.com

John Schwab - www.johnschwab.com

New Basics Brass Band – www.newbasicsbrassband.com

Tommy's Team (those responsible for healing my exhausted body)

Dr. Robert Briggs – Tommy's Chiropractor – who
Bethel Road right behind McDonalds. 614.326.9355

Marci McCreight – Massage Therapist, LMT – Dominic & Company (directly
across from Gallo's) 614.459.5848

On a personal note ... over the course of the last year, starting with Fat Tuesday 2009 and culminating with our Italian Day celebration in August... so many of you answered my call for your help and support of my good friend Captain Chad Vannatta. Chad served his tours in Iraq with the 137th Aviation Regiment, and I am elated to report that he is home safe. I often put so much into events like



Italian Day and Fat Tuesday that I become so exhausted afterwards, I fail to express my gratitude and inform you all of what the result of our efforts were. If you were unaware, with your support we sent over 500 pounds of supplies to Chad's Company, and on Italian Day we raised \$2700.00 for them to use on supplies and support of fallen soldiers families. It is with your support that these events were such a success and I am forever grateful. To the Soldiers, those who are fighting, serving, and those we have lost... it is with the utmost respect, appreciation, admiration, and gratitude that we support you.

It is my sincerest hope that Gallo's helped encourage others to show their support as well, and that these very principles become a part of America's everyday mentality. Get home soon... get home safe.
and to Chad... Simply put... Welcome home my Brother.