cabin along with 10 other children, has become world famous introducing the glories of crawfish etouffee and blackened redfish to sophisticates in New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. His Cajun comprere from Lafayette, La., John Folse, established the first culinary institute in Moscow (1988), a kind of gastric glasnost. Both men grew up cooking Creole and Cajun. "Until recently, the major difference was that the Creoles ate in the dining room, and the Cajuns ate in the kitchen," says Folse.

Once isolated and ridiculed as a kind of marshland bumpkin, speaking his "fractured French," the Cajun now has become an object of affection in America. Cajun restaurants and Cajun music have acquired a national prestige the Cajuns never aspired for. Americans seem quite fascinated with their homespun culture. Even the Grammy Awards recognize their unique music -- Cajun classique and zydeco. All over South Louisiana, the fiddles and the accordions have been dusted off. Cajun musicians, chefs, painters, quilt-makers, folklorists are emerging, it seems, from the country's cultural closet.

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