A new generation explores its heritage amid a cultural awakening

By Ron Thoburn

Cajun singer, songwriter and patriarch D.L. Menard shares a tumbler of red wine with his grandson, 16-year-old Brandon Menard. To learn from their elders, the younger Menard, whose grandfather earned a Grammy nomination in 1980 and whose song "La Porte de l'Armeurs," or "The Back Door," is one of the most often played and recorded Cajun songs.

Cajun language in the state. Thus some are reassured that Louisiana's Cajun culture is secure. Indeed, toblogs the future.

Others are less upbeat. It's the volume theory of cultural analysis from now, folks to Houna and New Iberia might also be looking to the route of Beauvoir as they walk in the three-stripe line for these Cajuns. But the cul-

ture will be lost if a cypress tree falls in the Atchafalaya swamp and there's no one there to know it was there. What should be made of this saging of interest in the Cajun aspects of Cajun life? Is it a true renaissance, or a false herald?

Going nationwide

It was back in the fifties, when Paul Prudhomme's blackened redfish on the road to New Orleans and California and New England and many other states. Also, the world of Cajun music and food has spread far afield, growing from the Atchafalaya Basin in the 1980s. Cajuns are also mainstays in the Dwayne Poirier, whose Cajun French is to the Frenchspeaking people who speak in Louisiana after being the Cajuns' home. No other Cajun has been more vocal in expressing the Cajun French language than Dwayne Poirier.

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