'First, you start with the roux'

Ask a Cajun cook how to cook and he'll tell you, "First, you make the roux."

The makers of Kary's Roux make that delicate and painstaking task a breeze for veteran and would-be Cajun cooks. They have taken a time-tested recipe and stir the oil and flour mix in huge cast iron pots to its rich chocolate brown consistency and bottled it for sale throughout Acadia, Texas, with shipments nationwide.

Kary Lafleur, for whom the roux is named, his mother, Ann Je Vidrine, and sister, Janie, are carrying on the tradition started nearly 40 years ago by his father, Archange Lafleur.

Archange Lafleur was an army cook and paratrooper in World War II and when he came home to Ville Platte he entered the restaurant business. During those modest beginnings, Lafleur and his partner developed a barbecue sauce that delighted the taste buds of customers at the Pig Stand Restaurant in Ville Platte.

The demand grew to the point where Lafleur began bottling Pig Stand Bar-B-Q Sauce, setting the foundation for the business which continues to offer the zesty barbecue sauce, along with Kary's Hot Bar-B-Q Sauce, The Pig Stand Basting Sauce, Kary's Roux, and Kary's Cajun Bisque Starter.

In 1975, when Kary was attending college at USL, Archange decided to market a ready-made roux after customers repeatedly asked to buy small quantities from the restaurant.

It was Kary who came up with the answer of how to preserve the flour and oil mixture. The preservative, which prevents rancidity, is used in minute amounts. It allows the roux to remain fresh on the shelf for up to four years and up to a year in your kitchen pantry, without refrigeration.

The Bisque Starter is a concentrate that requires only the addition of water and your choice of favorite seafood to turn out a gourmet Cajun dish in minutes. It's especially a big breakthrough for beginner cooks who can now turn out taste-tempting Cajun cuisine with ease.

The difference between a bisque and a gumbo is that a bisque contains tomato products and more seasonings. Bisques are also traditionally thicker than gumbos.

The Pig Stand Bar-B-Q Sauce, which began as the backbone of the Ville Platte business, is cooked in a 80-gallon pot and contains at least 17 ingredients. It remains a favorite of cooks who wish to add a special zip to any variety of meats.

Kary estimates that they make over 50,000 gallons of roux and nearly 40,000 gallons of Bar-B-Q Sauce a year. Kary's Roux, Kary's Cajun Bisque Starter and Pig Stand Bar-B-Q Sauce are distributed through major grocery distributors in Louisiana and east Texas. If you can't find these traditional Cajun products in your local store, ask your grocer to stock these products.

MARY VIDRINE, wife of the originator of Pig Stand Bar-B-Q Sauce, holds a bottle of the famed Cajun sauce, while other products of the Ville Platte manufacturer are pictured in front of her.