

Bread Basket's Terry Brewer says, "Thanks, BC"

by Biár Orrell

Brevard College alumni Terry Brewer brings business and the "staff of life" back home.

Terry Alexander Brewer of Brevard graduated from BC's class of 1975. Now he's owner and manager of the Bread Basket, Brevard's Victorian dining establishment.

Terry gives much of the credit for his success to BC. He says he learned diverse artistic skills, social qualities, and musical knowledge from professors Tim Murray, Sam Cope, and Adelaide and Harvey Miller, respectively.

After graduating from BC, Terry wanted to get away. He had been living in Brevard his entire life, and once he said, "I've got to see what it's like to move to a city."

So he moved to Greensboro and attended the University of North Carolina, where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in sculpture.

Terry lived in Greensboro for 11 years and decided city life was not for him when his job got out of hand. He says he was working with emotionally disturbed adults until "I got stabbed, and I decided to move on."

Terry met Lynn, his wife of two years, in Greensboro and began yearning to return to the mountains. So they moved to Brevard, Terry's homeland, and united with his parents to launch the corporation which named Terry its president and birthed the Bread Basket.

Having cooked since he was 12 years old, Terry has developed a natural feel for the kitchen and worked as a cook or kitchen prep while in college. He had no problem getting hired as a cook at the Student Union when he attended BC, especially since he had washed dishes for the college's cafe while in high school.

He says that in the mid 70's, the BC cafe was not run by ARA Services; but instead, by a little home-cooking goddess known by most as Mrs. Parker. Terry says,



Terry and his Aunt Pat put finishing touches on their classic homestyle cooking for Bread Basket's dinner guests. (Biár Orrell photos)

laughing, "She was one of those people that kept everything so clean that the health inspector had to work hard to find something wrong."

He says the food was as good as grandmom's, and the townspeople would often

eat there for club meetings, family dinners, or holidays. "At Thanksgiving, everyone would mob the place," says Terry.

The influences of Mrs. Parker are evident in Terry's working structure and style. He says the Bread Basket's philosophy is to serve "food more wholesome and nutritious than that of the average restaurant."

Several menu items reflect this philosophy, such as the marinated chicken baked without salt, and the locally grown fresh rainbow trout baked with little seasoning. Terry says, "We don't open cans."

Terry calmly moves through the kitchen as Aunt Pat Bishop with her little white sailor's hat cooks up a pan of "Suellen" stir fry in between batches of fresh, hot rolls. When Aunt Pat isn't cooking, she's teaching at Brevard High School.

Lynn Brewer is also one of the moonlighting master chefs, but by day, she's the activities director at College Walk.

Lynn played a large role in the interior design of the Bread Basket. She painted Victorian stencil patterns on the dining room walls while Terry's mother sewed curtains, napkins, and tablecloths.

Renovating and decorating became a family affair, and Terry says he learned many of his techniques from Sam Cope. "You see the influence of Sam Cope in me; it's very theatrical in here."

The walls are splattered with antique photographs, old tins lining chestnut shelves, and framed covers of old magazines. Even the speakers are covered with material to look like aged flour sacks.

"I wanted to be different from other people in town," Terry says, "I had ideas in my mind, so I started looking for things."

For a final touch, Terry pipes in soothing classical music that goes perfectly with any entree. "I really wanted to bring about a total atmosphere," he says. And, of course, he attributes his musical taste to Harvey and Adelaide Miller.

Terry sang with the Glee Club while at BC. "We got to make an album my first year for the 'Protestant Hour,'" Terry says, "a local radio program."

During the summer, Terry hopes to hire a masterful pianist to play for his dinner guests on the antique Knabe which monopolizes the corner of the room. "Maybe we could get Tony Sirianni or something," Terry says jokingly, "...make him play for his supper."

Terry sits reminiscing about old days at BC as the sun sets, and Aunt Pat starts preparing dinner. "When I was in school, it was kind of the thing to do to go streaking," he says, laughing. He recalls a bunch of guys going on a streaking-spree and getting locked out of the dorm by the RD.

Oh, and the time the Dean of Student Affairs went out to break up a snowball fight, and everyone turned on him with their white bombs, he remembers aloud.

And Mr. Burger, "He was such a scream," Terry says. He recalls a square dance the students had at school. Everyone went out for air and sat on the steps. When Mr. Burger got up he left "butterfly prints" where he was sitting. "We laughed about that for so long, and, of course, so did he.

Terry escapes back to the present from '75 and realizes he's back home for good.



Terry enjoys working with people, especially enthusiastic ones like BC student Angela Cromwell.