



EHLINGER & ASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTURE

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CAJUN HOUSE, NEAR ST. MARTINVILLE, LA. © 2004 Ladd P. Ehlinger



CAJUN HOUSE NEAR ST. MARTINVILLE, LA.

This month's limited edition print of a sketch by Ladd P. Ehlinger is of a typical Cajun (Acadian or French Canadian) cottage. This particular one is located in the Evangeline State Park near St. Martinville, LA. This is a paradigm example of vernacular architecture.

When the English sent away the Acadians from Nova Scotia in the 19th Century, many of them came to south and southwest Louisiana where they settled in along the bayous, swamps, marshes and prairies of the region. The Acadians brought with them their knowledge of French colonial building expressed in this cottage.

This cottage has a front porch with three bays, gable roofed with wood shake shingles, sided with wood clapboards and framing of swamp tidewater cypress, wood windows and doors of the French type with vertical board shutters on strap hinges, all sitting on a brick pier foundation raised to protect from flooding and dampness. The rear porch was probably a later addition. The attic was accessible in this one from the gable shutter, and perhaps from inside.

Some Cajun cottages had ladders on the front porch for attic access. The attics were used for sleeping as well as storage.

The plan of these houses typically had no hallways in the French manner and consisted of four rooms, all interconnected. Privacy as we experience it today by hallways was not afforded.

The French construction technique of *poteaux-en-terre* (posts-in-earth), where posts were inserted into the ground was quickly abandoned in south Louisiana for *poteaux-sur-solle* (posts-on-a-sill) where the sills were supported by masonry piers that would not rot in the damp earth or be attacked by the ever prevalent termites.

There were urban as well as rural versions of these vernacular houses. Some had hipped roofs that were at two different slopes - a shallow slope on the porch and steeper one on the main house, but the basic plan with no hallways, the types of fenestration, shutters, and construction are the same. They are found in the Vieux Carré and in other sections of New Orleans as well as in the remainder of South Louisiana.

LOOK AGAIN!

It's a tree! It's not a tree! It's a transmission tower, a faux tree. Neighbors objected to the appearance of the ordinary cell phone transmission tower structures (see ordinary tower photo, left) when first proposed to the city fathers.



This was the ultimate solution. It is a really odd thing to see as it towers above the neighborhood like a giant sequoia, but only has a few faux (plastic?) limbs and leaves to hide the actual metal and shiny stuff. Although when noticed as it sticks out from afar like a sore thumb, it goes mostly unnoticed today up close.

Incredibly it has become a sort of a hangout/sanctuary for the neighborhood birds which have taken an affinity to the thing. There are a few nests stuffed among the metal and wires. (However, the birds also build nests in the "non-camouflaged" towers.) Transient crows find the high spots especially inviting to perch upon in the morning and evening in search of prey. Mocking birds are constantly flitting in and around the tops and faux stubby branches below to chase the crows away.

Plenty of "chatter and chirping" at the local cell tower in Metairie, Louisiana.

A NEW GELATERIA

E&A is currently working on a retail space design for a new chain of Gelaterias, tentatively named "Roman Holiday Café". The first will be located in Huntsville, at a new retail development called Jones Valley Station, on Four Mile Post Road.

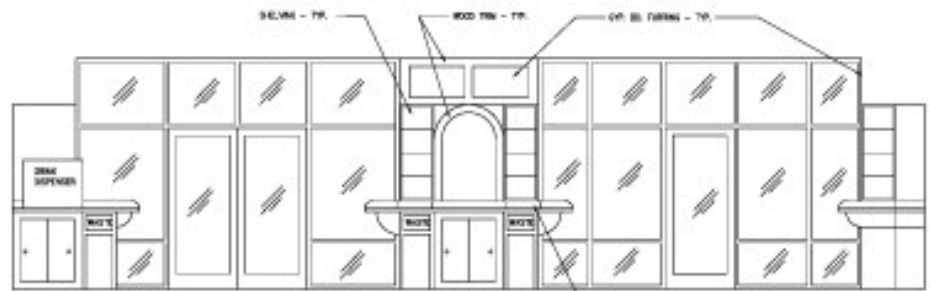
The owner, Nick Longo, is a native Italian, and is working to bring the Italian style ice-cream flavor to the States, where he is certain its popularity will take off (and we heartily agree!). His restaurant will also serve pizzas and deli sandwiches.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ICE CREAM AND GELATO

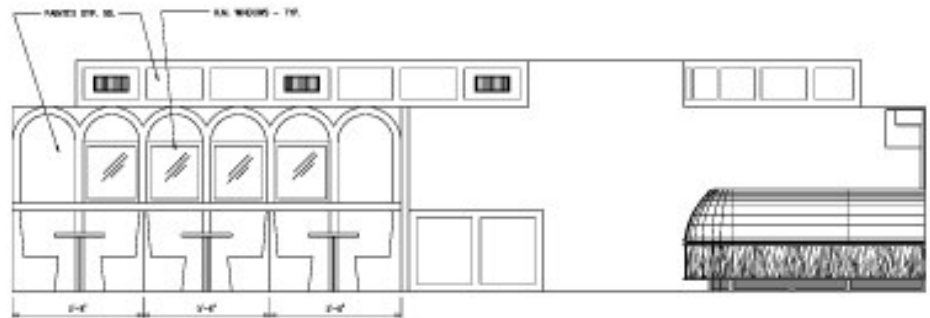
Directly translated from Italian, Gelato means Ice Cream. But the differences between American ice cream and Gelato, while simple, are profound. American ice cream is made with a cream base, which has a high butterfat content, so that as the ice cream is being made, air becomes entrapped as the cream is whipped, making the ice cream lighter.

Italian gelato is made with milk as its base, which does not have enough fat for it to whip, so it has a much denser, smoother texture. Gelato must also be stored at a higher temperature, as being frozen to a solid state destroys the rich texture. American style ice cream can withstand lower storage temperatures, and still maintain its texture because of the entrapped air. For this reason, Gelato has never been, and likely never will be, a popular grocery store item.

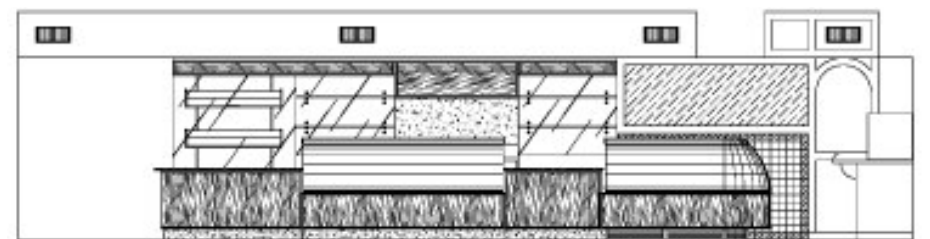
Gelato remains a specialty item that to be enjoyed must be served fresh, so be sure to stop by Mr. Longo's new café when it's finished and try some!



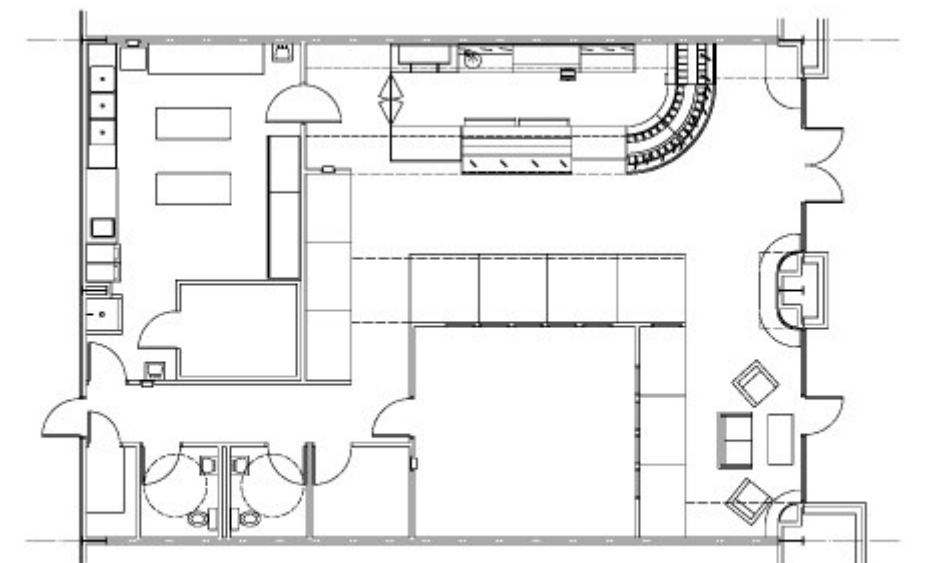
ELEVATION



ELEVATION



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FLOOR PLAN