

Restaurant History

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue….
In 1963, FT and OT crossed the sea.
It was just the beginning….

Our Founders

Fernand and Odette Tersiguel were both raised in Brittany, France. Fernand's family had a large working farm and at the age of eight, he became a shrewd business man studding rabbits. This was only the beginning for him. Odette's family owned and operated a local bar. It was only a matter of time before she too, dreamed of having a restaurant of her own. Both ultimately had dreams of coming to America and in time returning to France.

Fernand and Odette arrived in New York City in 1964. With little in their pockets and a baby on the way, Fernand immediately starting working at Top of the Fair. Fernand was quickly successful and was promoted to head busboy within three days of being employed there. He was the leader to 26 other employees. Odette at that time was cleaning homes and taking care of the new baby, Michel.

Over the next two years, Fernand worked in various restaurants and in 1966, he received his big break. He was hired as head bartender and manager at Du Midi's located on 48th Street in New York. It was only a matter of time from all the experience Fernand was gaining that he would open his own restaurant.

On November 6, 1968 Fernand opened his first restaurant, La Poularde, in New York. As most Fernand and Odette's friends and family know, the restaurant grew with great popularity. This put Fernand on the national map and the state of Maryland, struggling to grow, recruited Fernand to come and grow his business here. He began managing the restaurant at Cross Keys Inn in Columbia in 1972. Fernand then worked for Papillion Restaurant in Ellicott City until he and Odette opened Chez Fernand Restaurant at 8141 Main Street in Ellicott City in 1975.

Chez Fernand was the huge success both Fernand and Odette hoped it would be. They were able to grow both their business and contribute to the growth of Ellicott City and helping to create the "little town in Europe" feel the Ellicott City has become to be known for. Fernand and Odette were prospering in every way, until, November 16th, 1984. The restaurant they had labored for and loved burned to the ground.

It was a divesting time for them. Both were ready for a change and decided to move Chez Fernand to Baltimore City. The restaurant, located by the Shot Tower, was a success as Fernand and Odette knew it could be, however, after five years in Baltimore, the shrewd business man and the executive chef were ready to come back to Ellicott City. In October 1990, Fernand and Odette returned to Ellicott City and opened Tersiguel's French Country Restaurant at 8293 Main Street.

Although both are "retired," they each continue to contribute to the success of Tersiguel's. Fernand continues to host schools for lunch, taking about his past and the business, maitre d's on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and still continues to donate his free time in helping this great community he calls home. Odette cooks for Rotary, arranges the restaurants flowers and contributes her family's secret recipes to some of Tersiguel's most popular dishes. In the summer, they both work hard to maintain the farm. Not much of retirement, but both are happy and Tersiguel's would not be Tersiguel's with out them.