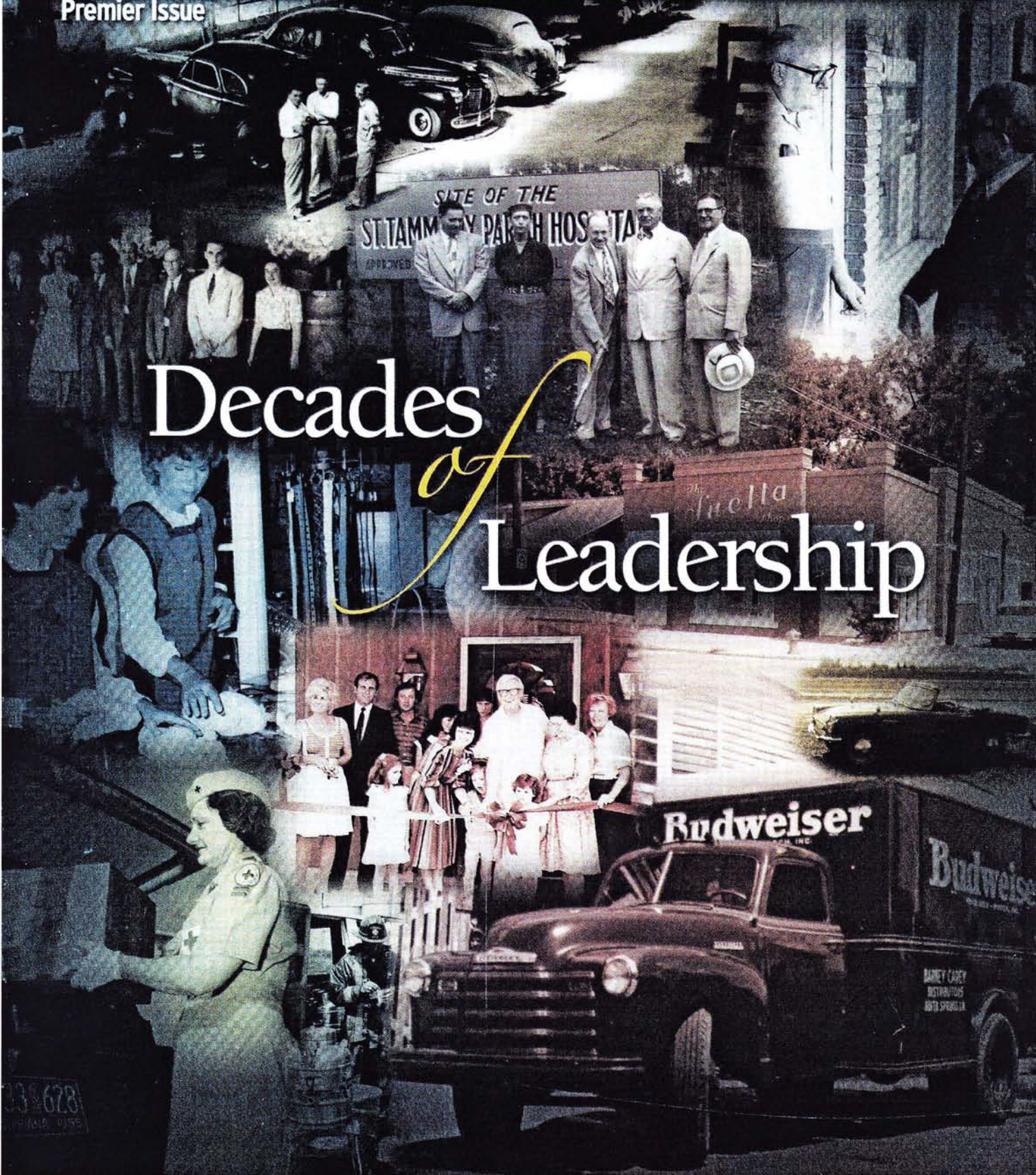


INSIDE Northside **IN Business**

2008

Premier Issue

Decades *of* Leadership

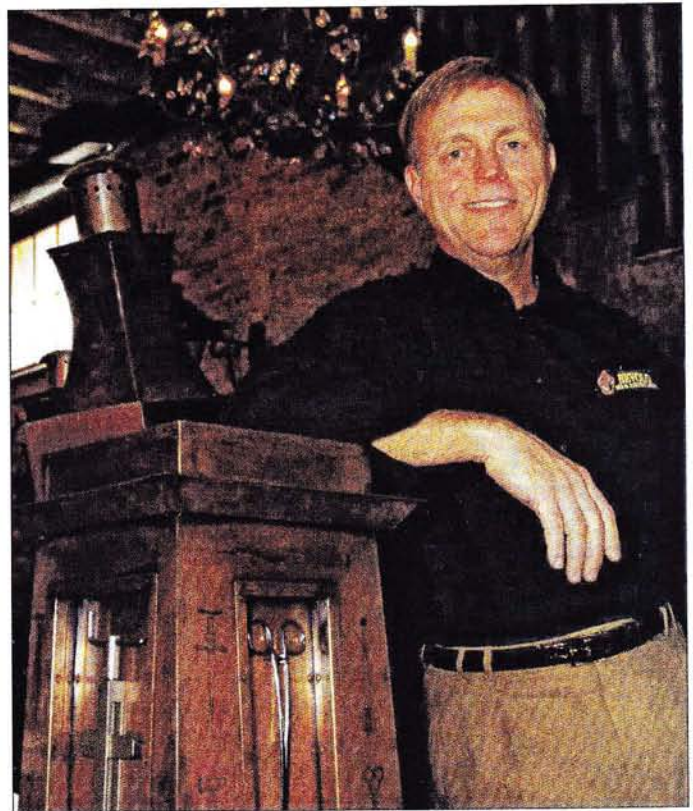


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PEOPLE COME FROM ALL OVER the world to catch the magic of the French Quarter. The quaint ambiance is particularly special at night, when Bevolo gas lanterns set off atmospheric spots of light from many of the historic buildings. These legendary lanterns are the work of Drew Bevolo; his uncle, Jim; and their creator, Andrew Bevolo Sr.

Andrew Bevolo's journey to Royal Street began at age 13, when he came to the United States from Italy to work for Ford in Detroit. In World War II, he learned the riveting process while working on airplanes. Later, he worked with Andrew Higgins building PT boats. In 1945, as a master craftsman, he decided to use his coppersmith skills to open his own shop to repair old fixtures. Bevolo Metal Crafts was born.

At this time, New Orleanians were bringing gas lanterns back from London, where the fixtures were made with soldered seams. Andrew noticed that overtime these soldered seams came apart. As an alternative, he created rivets by hand. This unique innovation of hand riveting is used to this day. A major contributor to the



Andrew Bevolo

Lighting for a Lifetime

Bevolo Gas and Electric Lighting

history of gas lighting, it helped make Bevolo unique.

The continuing Bevolo story is all about tradition, quality and value. Today, as you walk into the Vieux Carre workshop of Bevolo Gas and Electric Lighting, your eyes meet the history of an ongoing trade that no

other business of its kind can surpass. Handmade chandeliers and lanterns sparkle on the wide cedar-beamed ceiling. The aged-brick walls are dotted with the original designs of some of the 500 fixtures Bevolo makes. Tools and equipment from the past are

thoughtfully placed throughout the main room downstairs. It is easy to picture where Andrew Bevolo Sr. must have been sitting when renowned architect A. Hays Town inquired about the "gas lanterns" hanging outside the shop.

Town was walking through the French Quarter sketching lights for the design of the Architecture School at what is now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette when he heard some tick-taps coming from the shop on Royal Street. Entering, he said to Bevolo, "Hey, mister, can you make



me a light fixture?" Bevolo replied, "If you can draw it, I can make it." Town and Bevolo teamed up to make what is now Bevolo's trademark, the French Quarter lantern. It came to be used throughout the French Quarter, thus earning its celebrated name.

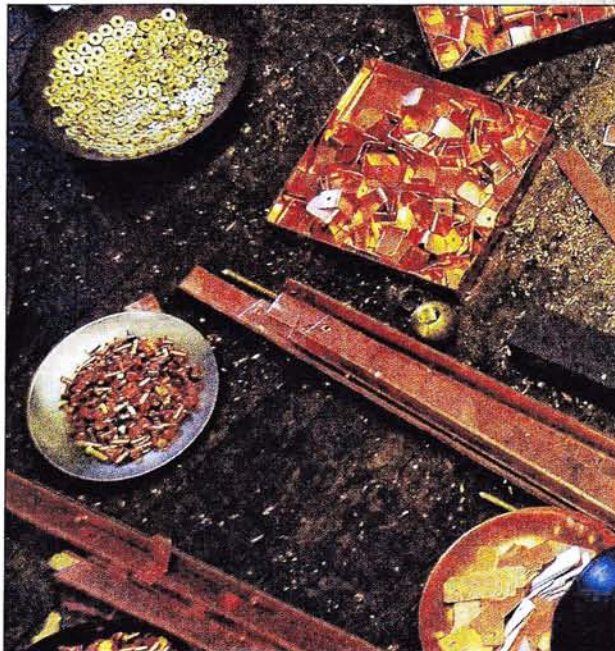
"My grandfather did lights for all over the French Quarter," says Drew. "It's a shame that some of the best are in the courtyards that no one gets to see," he laments.

In today's constantly changing culture, with its demands for doing things cheaper and faster, Bevolo has maintained the integrity of Andrew Bevolo Sr. by making each fixture individually, hand riveted by coppersmiths schooled in the traditional methods of metalworking. In the creative process that begins with solid sheets of copper, craftsmen use shears, templates and old machinery.

"Copper doesn't rust and will hold together through hail, sleet, rain. We are presently designing lights in the Bahamas and for a resort in the Cayman Islands. We do a lot of work in Florida. Caulterized lights will come apart in their climate," explains Drew.

"Our lights are designed with flow-through ventilation systems, with air coming in the bottom and going out the top. That has to be constant and steady. Flames that are too high will break the glass," Drew explains. "In 63 years, the only time the lights ever went out in the French Quarter was during Katrina."

When the lights are finished, they are oxidized and aged to look at least 10 to 20 years old. According to Drew, "The lights look like they have always been in historic locales such as the Thomas Jefferson House or the University of Virginia. Even though there was no gas



or electricity in 1776, people still think these are the original lights."

The unique Bevolo process has fashioned several hundred established designs requested by architects and designers. The French Quarter lantern is the most popular; other familiar styles include the London Street lamp, colonial Williamsburg and traditional coach house lanterns. Bevolo never discontinues a style and will take care of its products for their lifetime.

Drew works with builders, architects, designers and interior designers. He has done the lighting for home plans in Southern Accents, Coastal Living, Southern Living, Traditional Home, Veranda and Cottage Living. The firm has made lights for the Ritz Carlton courtyards, Harrah's, Donald Trump's 30-million-dollar penthouse, Harry Connick Jr., George Bush Sr. and various sports figures. Bevolo lights are in 50 states and 28 countries.

"As a young boy, I can remember learning the trade from my grandfather and Uncle Jimmy, who stressed the importance of quality, tradition, beauty, function and attention to detail with the enthusiasm of true master craftsmen. This craftsman's enthusiasm is the foundation that built and continues to help grow this company into the largest manufacturer of hand-made copper fixtures in the world," says Drew, proudly. IN



Bevolo has expanded to the northshore. A new retail store, managed by fourth-generation Chris Bevolo, is located at 68467 Hwy. 59 in Mandeville, telephone 985-249-6040. A Bevolo factory is located on Three Rivers Road in Covington.