

Clarence and Dudley Faulk

Lake Charles, Louisiana

This father-and-son team once ruled the southwest Louisiana game-call-making roost. Clarence "Patin" Faulk began selling homemade cane duck calls to hunters and guides in the mid-1930s. His son, Paul "Dud" Dudley Faulk, entered the game as a high school student. By the early 1950s, they were working together.



We have all heard the mantra: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. For well over 60 years the Faulk family of Lake Charles has been producing handmade calls with attention to detail and pride of craftsmanship that rivals anyone in the business.

Clarence Faulk began the **Faulk's Game Calls** with a goose call in the 1930s. Dudley "Dud" Faulk took over the company in 1951, and today Faulk's Game Calls is a multi-generational operation shipping calls across the United States, into Canada and 17 foreign countries.

And it all began by putting a lot of miles on the Faulk's vehicles.

"We'd make calls in our spare time, (and) then drive around Louisiana, stopping at places that sold sporting goods and sell the calls out of the trunk of the car," Rena Faulk said. "We got \$1.95 for them then; today we get \$14.95 for a handmade, hand-tuned wooden duck call."

When asked why they didn't start importing acrylic or molded parts from overseas, the matriarch of the family crossed her arms, frowned, and shook her head.

"We don't go for that," she said.

Every call is still hand-turned, hand assembled, and hand tuned. The equipment used today is what Dud Faulk got from Clarence Faulk, along with some he designed himself to ensure close tolerances.

The calls were originally limited to duck and goose. In the late '50s, Dud began to add a line of predator and animal calls, which were highly successful and remain in production today.

Canaan Heard beams with pride when he speaks of his grandfather, Paul "Dud"• Dudley Faulk. Dud is a true legend of waterfowl calling and manufacturing. He won the International Duck Calling Championship in 1954 and won back-to-back World Goose Calling Championships in 1961 and 1962. His passion for calling waterfowl remains evident today in the calls bearing his name. Faulk's has been successful while staying true to its roots.



Heard is determined to keep the family legacy alive. He believes the modern market still has room for small American companies adhering to tradition. It was his great-grandfather, Clarence "Patin" Faulk, who first started making Faulk calls in the mid-1930s. Patin was no slouch at calling and won the 1955 World Goose Calling Championship. Patin's early calls were made of cane, and hunters and guides from across south Louisiana would do whatever they could to get their hands on one. Faulk's Game Calls

was formally born in 1951 under the guidance of the Patin and Dud, a father-and-son team.

Today, Faulk's manufacturing facilities remain surprisingly simple. The entire company consists of a couple of small workshops in the backyard of a small house on two city lots in Lake Charles.

The inside of the main workshop looks like a museum dedicated to call making. It's dusty and dim. Old machinery lines the walls and there's an ashtray on the lunch table where call maker Arthur "Art"• LeJeune has been taking smoke breaks for over 45 years. Kwanchai Madith has been joining him for over 30. "I was 22 years old when I started here,"• LeJeune said. "I'd just back from the service and needed a job. Dud hired me on, and I've loved it from the first call I turned. I'm 68 now and I still love coming here and building calls. That's important you know, doing something you enjoy. It's never felt like work to me."•



Watching LeJeune turn a block of wood into a duck call is a lot like watching a president give a speech. He is authoritative, accomplished, and confident in every moment. It's as natural as walking for him. And the calls are beautiful. The low-volume tone of a wooden call hums through the shop each time LeJeune tests another before dropping it in a box destined for a marsh somewhere.

Over the years, Faulk's expanded their game calls beyond just waterfowl. They now produce waterfowl, deer, elk, turkey, small game and predator calls.

"It means a lot to me to carry on my family legacy," Heard said. "People around the world know the name Faulk's Game Calls, and that means a whole lot to me, because we

are just a small Louisiana company making calls in a traditional manner."

By Brandon Butler



"Dat little squeal at the en' of the call is special," said the late Clarence "Dud" Faulk as he sat at his bench on a cool autumn afternoon many years ago. "Oldtimers say dat dat soun' come from a hen with some age on her," Faulk continued in his lilting Cajun accent. "Others say dat's a hen mallard with her throat so full of food dat she squeak when she call. Dos' duck dat hear dat sound jus' naturally come, 'cause dey know dat ol' hen know what she's a doin'," Faulk stated. So was my introduction to one of the unique aspects of Louisiana-style duck calling.

The late Clarence "Dud" Faulk (foreground) and Clarence "Patin" Faulk calling from their blind near Lake Charles, Louisiana in about 1960.

That long-ago afternoon took place in the late '70s while heading to the World Duck Calling Championship, and at the time I was writing a great deal about calls and calling, and he invited me to come to Louisiana to experience its great hunting. During our time there we stopped by Dud Faulk's Lake Charles shop. Contrary to about everything written about Louisiana's best known call maker, "Dud" Faulk's first name wasn't Dudley, but Clarence, as was his father whose nickname was Patin. When pressed, Faulk couldn't really say why or how he got the nickname Dud, but Dud was it, and by it he went.

"We didn't invent calls, we copied them from hunters who came south to hunt," Dud Faulk said. In fact calls made upcountry from the Cajun's coastal marshes nearly all appear to be either Glodo- or Arkansas-style calls; Cajun calls are unique. "The first were copied from the Old hard Rubber calls," Faulk said. Copies they were, but with a twist. "Cajuns can't grunt into a call like they do in Arkansas,"





His granddaughter now carries on the family business--several cane calls, but the select ones were his Black Label cane calls whose labels proclaim, "Made especially for guides and hunters of Southwest Louisiana." "Dat call give you Hell boy," Faulk said when I asked to buy one. Made of native cane--"I grow cane all around Lake Charles," Faulk said--they blow very lightly, not much is air needed, and the notes easily end in the squeal of "Dat ol' hen mallard."

By John M. Taylor

The late Clarence "Patin" Faulk father of "Dud" Faulk, perhaps Louisiana's best-known call maker.

