

# THE SACRED ART OF GREAT BARBECUE



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It doesn't take long to figure out that Starr Teel, owner of Hubba Hubba Smokehouse, is passionate about what he does. After all, it isn't just cooking- it's an art form. People who aren't close to it may not know just how much energy and fervor goes into creating true wood-fired barbecue. It's a time-honored tradition that is serious business to those involved.

"It's tough to earn respect from the barbecue community, but if you steep yourself in the traditions of any given craft, you're on your way", says Teel. "It takes practice, just as it does with any art. But you're either in or you're out. There is no middle ground if you are going to produce great barbecue."

Teel saw the endeavor of entering the barbecue community as more of an opportunity than a competition. It was somewhat of a no-brainer. His wife, Virginia, had previously opened a gift store whimsically named "The Wrinkled Egg" in what had for generations been a community general store. Her store and a few others make up what came to be known as Flat Rock's "Rainbow Row." Teel felt that a barbecue restaurant would complement the feel of the area well. And he was no stranger to the kitchen, having been classically trained in French and American culinary schools.



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His goal was to craft a simple menu with great balance, do it all from scratch, and execute it incredibly well. That goal certainly seems to be met, as business is going well and rave reviews keep coming. An unexpected part of the business that has taken off is the catering side, which is booming. Hubba Hubba will cater anything from family gatherings to weddings, and the menu doesn't have to be strictly barbecue based.

Hubba Hubba was created on the premise that a restaurant can be more than just a place to get food. It can be an entire experience. And according to the name, you can be assured that it is intended to be a fun one. "Hubba





**HUNGRY HUBBA HUBBA CUSTOMERS** wait in line to order from a delicious variety of entrees and sides, such as stewed okra and tomatoes and avocado slaw

Hubba usually means something special. I always think back to the old black and white news reels when the USO girls would walk on stage and Bob Hope would say 'Hubba Hubba!' It's also something fun to say when answering the phone," laughs Teel.

This lighthearted attitude is reflected in the appearance of the restaurant as well, which is really more of a modern shack. Patrons go to the window and order from a handwritten menu on a chalkboard. When their names are called, they pick up their food at the window and dress it from the nearby sauce bar. They can then choose from a variety of outdoor seating (heat is even available under the covered area). A variety of well-chosen big band era standards coming from the speakers adds to the ambiance, as does the scattered folk art. Wood smoke is an integral part of true barbecue and it is easy to tell that Hubba Hubba is on it- from the huge pile of native hard woods, to the smoke wafting from the tin rooster perched atop the smokehouse chimney, to the smell. And oh, that smell!

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It's that type of experience that keeps them coming back. Well, that and the pulled pork. And the pulled chicken. And the brisket. And the cornbread. And the collards. And the sauce. 'Nuff said. If barbecue is the music of food, then play on Hubba Hubba. Play on. ▀

#### **Hubba Hubba Wood-Fired Smokehouse**

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