



BBQ CHICKEN LEG QUARTER



RACK OF RIBS



CHICKEN WINGS



BRISKET FRIES

BOAZ BBQ

BY DANNY FAIRCHILD

I think BBQ pits should be considered sacred altars. BBQ joints should be considered holy ground. Anoint my head with barbecue sauce. Salve my wounded soul with a dry rub. This is about as religious as I get.

My esteemed readers: I give you Boaz BBQ at 1689 Elm St. in Dubuque. On the corner of 17th and Elm.

If this location sounds familiar, it's because it's the former location of The Corner Grill. Take a moment to mourn that loss if you need to, but know that they still do catering. Then get your head out of your butt and celebrate the establishment of a barbecue place in town.

Because, my friends, Boaz BBQ is cause for celebration.

Owned by Donny Edwards, Boaz BBQ is founded on the goal of making a name for Iowa in the world of BBQ. Texas BBQ can Texas all it wants. KC can KC, Carolina can Carolina, and so on. But what's the point in having all these hogs in our state if we can't make a decent BBQ showing? I blame my people. The Scandinavian people. When it comes to methods to preserve meat, we have been known to smoke, but we also gave the world lutefisk. I'm sorry.

After working for another BBQ establishment, Donny developed his barbecue skills through a study and practice, as well as through travel. "I travel a lot because I have a moving company so I'm on the east and west coast a lot and in the south, and BBQ is huge everywhere, and certainly Kansas City in the Midwest is known for BBQ. I think it's time for Iowa to be known for BBQ. Right now, especially in Dubuque, it's kind of a BBQ desert. So we're starting locally and hoping to become something bigger."

This sounds soooo promising, y'all. There's a valuable piece of wisdom that many have failed to heed: Just because you know how to smoke meat doesn't mean that you know how to run a business. I can't count the number of really tasty barbecue places I've seen all over the country that can't grasp that fact. Donny knows how to run a business, y'all. AND he can barbecue. Is he single? I don't know. We didn't ask.

You will be absolutely impressed with the make-over Donny and his team have given the old place. The

remodel was mostly accomplished by upcycling old barn wood. It gives it a clean but rustic classic BBQ joint kind of feel. A place where they bring out ribs on big aluminum sheets. A place where you know the smell of barbecue is seeping into its very bones. As for the bathrooms, they seem largely unchanged from when it was The Corner Grill. Definitely clean. You needn't have any qualms about performing any bodily necessities. Well...don't sleep there. That's just rude.

You might be wondering where the name comes from. I thought maybe it was biblical. Boaz as in Ruth's fella. Then I thought that maybe it was to do with Boaz, AL since Alabama is another BBQ hub. Turns out BOAZ stands for "Barbecue On All Occasions." Look. It doesn't have to make sense. It's barbecue. Another thing barbecue has in common with religion (zing).

Let's talk about the food, shall we?

The first official day of full-service menu offerings will be the first day of fall, Sept. 21. So if you come before then, they will have great food, but as they continue to dial in the flavors, service, and process, not all menu items will be available everyday. Since they start everything from scratch, they're wisely using this time to work out the kinks.

As for the food itself, let me just put this in your ear: Boaz Beast Feast. Yup. I don't have to say anything more, and you're all in. But I will. The Boaz Beast Feast is six chicken leg quarters, two slabs of ribs—beef and pork—and big portions of size. That'll feast a family, all right. Or one person who no longer cares if they live or die. Point is, if you come here, you're gonna EAT!

They'll be doing daily lunch specials like pulled pork sandwiches or wings with some sides for about \$5 to \$6. That's a dang good lunch price for something that good.

Because dang is it good. Our first trip we were treated to some barbecue chicken and some pork ribs. They led to the chicken. It's like they've known me my whole life. BBQ chicken was my absolute favorite thing to eat as a very young kid. BBQ chicken to this very day always makes me feel kind of childlike. Fairchildlike, amirite? I love seeing a chicken quarter brushed or drizzled with sauce and then taking a bite and seeing how deep the smoke penetrated. It involves so many senses. This BBQ chicken makes you glad you have a tongue.

The ribs. Tiny Danny loved chicken, but larger and current Danny are all about pork ribs. As Donny's still breaking in his set up, these aren't the

fall-off-the-bone ribs—yet. There's a bit of toothiness to them, but they're by absolutely no means tough. They come clean off the bone with your bite, which is what you want. You just don't run the risk of taking the entire piece of meat off the bone at once.

As for the sauce, it's kind a peachy-tomatoey sauce similar to what I make myself, with a bit of a kick. I'm a little concerned it might be too much of a kick for Dubuque. I've never lost money underestimating Dubuquers' sense of what's considered spicy. Prove me wrong.

I didn't get to try them personally, but the 365ink team has delved deeper into the Boaz BBQ offerings with beef brisket and wings. The wings are the fried type and are served whole—drummy, flat, tip, and all. The brisket is served pulled over fries with cheese. Read that sentence again without drooling this time. And, of course, as I've mentioned, pulled pork is on the way.

You want to talk dessert? Okay, then. Are you ready for the Boaz Cream Fried Peach Wrap? Think of a creamy, peachy dessert eggroll. Now think of that again without drooling this time.

I'm excited to try the hot links. They look friggin' huge and delicious.

So blessed is the hardwood that smokes the meat at Boaz BBQ. Iowa is ready to make a name for itself in the world of BBQ. Join the movement. We have baked beans. ■

BOAZ BBQ
1689 ELM ST,
DUBUQUE, IA
563-500-6378

Hours:
Mon-Fri: 11:30 AM-10 PM;
Sat: 11:30 AM-11 PM;
Sun: Noon-9 PM



DANNY FAIRCHILD

DANNY DOESN'T TAKE CRAP FROM NOBODY, BUT HE'LL TAKE FOOD FROM ALMOST ANYBODY. IF YOU WANT TO FIGHT DANNY, OR FEED HIM NOM-NOMS, EMAIL HIM AT DINING@DUBUQUE365.COM.

