

# Bad Ash BBQ

By Danny Fairchild

I'd like to submit to you, the *365ink* audience, that the absolute height of human civilization was actually mastered pretty damn early in the timeline: Barbecue, y'all. My apologies to my vegan friends, but B to the B to the Q did a lot in getting us here.

Culinarily speaking, well... it speaks for itself. Breaking down connective tissue and applying smoke by cooking something low and slow, it turns out, is friggin' delicious. It's almost like we're genetically disposed to find this method of food preservation one of most delicious things we've ever put into our mouths.

Culturally speaking, well... barbecue, and its various translations, are a valuable part of pretty much every culture who ever evered. Barbecue. Tandoori. Churasco. Brai. Gogi-gul. I could go on with a simple search. Hell, even in the realm of American barbecue, there's KC-style, Texas-style, Carolina-style, Memphis-style, then a bunch of other American styles shouting, "Hey, Fairchild! Why didn't you mention me!"

Emotionally speaking, I can't think of another cooking method, except maybe baking, where love is a more crucial ingredient than barbecue. You don't cook something for hours and even days without loving it and imparting some of that love.

Socially speaking, well... ever hear of a neighborhood barbecue?

Artistically speaking, well... there's artists like Jimmy Frank at Bad Ash BBQ to show you what's what. Let me define "artist" in this case, please. While a crafter is someone who takes the generally accepted rules of a medium and effectively APPLIES them, an artist is someone who takes the generally accepted rules of a medium and effectively BREAKS them. Both are admirable, to be clear. But being an artist is way sexier. I'm not sure I would call Jimmy Frank sexy. I'm securely open to Jimmy Frank being sexy, mind you. Jimmy Frank is obviously sexy in that he can cook, which is ALWAYS sexy, in my opinion. And I will tell you that Jimmy Frank's Bad Ash BBQ is WAY sexy. Why the hell did I have to bring sex into this, anyway!?

Speaking of segues, let's talk about that wood, huh? At Bad Ash BBQ, it's all hickory, all the time. Lots of pitfolk have a signature blend of different hardwoods they use for different cuts. Hickory, mesquite, apple, cherry, pecan, etc. Jimmy Frank's Bad Ash BBQ says, "Cool, cool. But here's what I can make hickory do all

by itself." You know what it's like? It's like single-malt whiskey vs. blended whiskey. A blended whiskey, if I may go one simile further, is like a really good playlist with multiple artists. Bangers only. A single-malt whiskey is like an artist's greatest hits album. So, Jimmy Frank's Bad Ash BBQ is like... it's like... Bowie's *Changesonebowie*. Or, if you prefer, the Stones' *Hot Rocks*. Or, if you prefer, Madonna's *The Immaculate Collection*. I said what I said.

The experience. This is a food stand. I took my son down there and bonded with him in the light rain while waiting in line to order. These are just the realities of a food truck/stand situation, and we accept them and even find charm in them. Food stand. You're grabbing and going. Barbecue travels extremely well, so no problems there except traveling in a car filled with the irresistible smell of barbecue.

On to the food.

The thing about hickory is that you can get some BIG smoke flavor from it, and somehow Jimmy Frank manages to amplify that even more without it turning into a bitter, over-smoked slab of yuck. I am not kidding. Jimmy Frank manages to get some of the boldest, smoky flavor I've yet to experience. You know that kind of smokiness where it's almost too rich? That's Bad Ash BBQ. It's the kind of smokiness that doesn't need a sauce. Honestly. It doesn't. That said, I, like many of you, LIKE barbecue sauce. No shame in our game. Like any other self-respecting pitfolk, Jimmy Frank makes his own. We're looking at berry-based sauces. Blackberry? It's good. It works with the meat without the meat just being a sauce delivery device. A lot of berry-based sauces are a bit too cloying for my tastes. That's not the case here. While we're talking about sauce, we may as well talk about rub. It's peppery without too much heat. Or rather, there's heat, but there's not much burn. I'm going to go ahead and guess that it's Tellicherry pepper in there, which I absolutely love. My dad was the pitfolk, but Tellicherry pepper reminds me of mom.

My son and I wanted to sample a bit of everything, of course, but our passion is for pork ribs. So, we ordered a platter which included the sides I was most eager to try AND a rack of ribs.

First, let's talk brisket because it's so hip to talk brisket these days, and rightly so. This Iowa boy loves his pork, but if you're going to throw some beef into the mix, it better be brisket. This is some fall-apart succulent stuff, y'all. That Bad Ash rub translates well between pork and beef. Probably chicken too, but everything works on chicken. It's chicken.

That pulled pork. Ooooooh, that pulled pork. I can't remember where I saw it, but I remember seeing this clip of some



PHOTO: ERICA THEISEN

BRISKET



PHOTO: BAD ASH BBQ

RIBS





PHOTO: BAD ASH BBQ

JIMMY ROLLS

barbecue festival where the pork butt required little more pulling than taking a meat fork and pressing down on it. It just crumbled into meat candy. Maybe that was movie magic, but it's magic I believe in. I did not witness the pulling of the pork, but I'll tell you what I DID witness: I witnessed myself taking the leftover pulled pork and spreading it... yes, SPREADING it, on a cracker for breakfast the next day. My only regret is that I had no bagel. How the hell does Jimmy Frank get so much smokey flavor while getting all that connective tissue broken down so good? The answer to both questions is probably the same.

The platter also came with what are known as Jimmy rolls. What's a Jimmy roll, you ask? Picture a pork taquito at your favorite restaurant. Now, instead of frying them, smoke them. Oh, do I have your attention? The Jimmy rolls seem to go fast, so don't sleep on them. Hell, if there weren't all that amazing meat to devour, I'd go just for the Jimmy rolls.

I must preach the word about Jimmy Frank's smoked baked beans. Unless I'm fooling myself, there's some coffee in those beans. Pitfolk are dedicated to getting the biggest flavor possible. As a result, I've seen situations where coffee is incorporated into baked beans, and the coffee flavor is just way too strong. It even overpowers the smoky flavor, which... I mean, what are you even doing?! Jimmy Frank demonstrates that he also understands subtlety which is next-level barbecue. These are some of the best beans around.

Ahh, those pork ribs. These, it should be noted, are not completely fall-off-the-bone ribs. If that's a requirement for you, you've been warned. But also? Figure it out. Ribs are ribs. Pulled pork is pulled pork. That said, they are pretty tender, too. Not fall-off-the-bone, but

not stuck-in-your-teeth, either. That texture is right there all Goldilocksical.

So... yeah! Get your silly butt down to Bellevue and experience Jimmy Frank's Bad Ash BBQ. If you don't, you've only got yourself to blame. ■



**Bad Ash BBQ**  
 301 STATE ST, BELLEVUE, IA  
 509-270-3847  
 JIMMYSBADASHBBQ.COM  
 IG: @JimmysBadAshBBQ  
 Hours: Thu-Fri: 4-7 PM; Sat-Sun: 1-7 PM;  
 Mon-Wed: Closed

**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](mailto:DINING@DUBUQUE365.COM).



**BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE!**  
 VIEW OUR DINING ARCHIVE  
[DUBUQUE365.COM/DINING](http://DUBUQUE365.COM/DINING)





# Registration Open MASTER FOODIE

**THURSDAYS MARCH 21 - MAY 2  
6:00-8:00PM**

- Week 1- Where are Local Foods**
- Week 2- Cooking with Local Foods**
- Week 3- Local Food Packaging**
- Week 4- Distribution & Food Hubs**
- Week 5- Where Food is Grown**
- Week 6- Sustainability**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
 Extension and Outreach



**FOR MORE INFO**





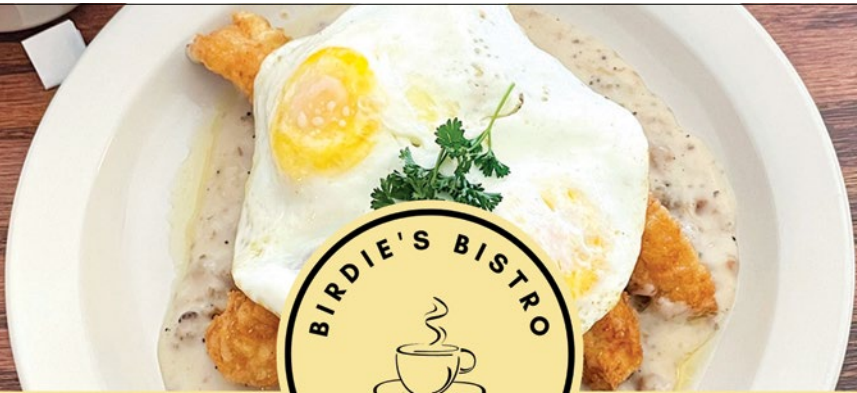
**Entrees Starting at \$10 Per Person!**




## CATERING! CARLOS O'KELLY'S

(563) 583-0088  
 1355 Associates Dr.  
[www.carlosokellys.com](http://www.carlosokellys.com)

**INSPIRED MEX**



**Breakfast & Lunch Served ALL DAY**



EST. 2023

**Senior Menu Available Wed-Fri at 7-10 am**

Online ordering for pick up or delivery [BirdiesBistroDBQ.com](http://BirdiesBistroDBQ.com)  
 1220 Iowa St, Dubuque, IA | 563-213-5583  
 Open Wed-Sun at 7 am-2 pm