

ARGUS-COURIER
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PETALUMA COMMUNITY

ABOVE THE BRIM

There's plenty of meaty barbecue to go around

The Wine Country Big Q is set for July 11. Held at Sonoma Mountain Village (across Petaluma Hill Road from Bud's Meats), this event is sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society and draws pit masters from all over the West Coast. Yours truly will judge at least one category, but hopefully more, so please come down, enjoy the food, and make sure to introduce yourself.

A few coveted competitor spots are still available for the Bold Bean Challenge, the Get Sauced Competition and the Tailgater Team Challenge. Entry fees are low (The Bold Bean Challenge has no entry fee at all), and prizes are plentiful with both Judges' and Peoples' Choice awards. These will include cash and other prizes, trophies and ... bragging rights. The Get Sauced Competition even has a category for Lagunitas beer infused sauces. I have to wonder if F.A. Nino's (faninos.com) Beer-BQ or Holy Moly sauces, both of which use Lagunitas beer (and are used by Lagunitas' chefs) inspired this category (winecountrybigq.com).

Ribs for Kids

In preparation for the Wine Country Big Q, I attended last weekend's "Ribs for Kids" Cook-off as a rib judge. How did it go?

"Delicious," I say while greasily grinning from ear to ear. Nevertheless, honestly, it is difficult to pick a favorite when all the teams make such a strong showing. (The smallest of margins separated first and second place.)

Only after the blind tasting did I learn that my favorite, which came in second place overall, was actually Q'ed by my good friend Kat's brother. Ironically, Kat is a vegetarian, but I always love seeing her at food events because it means more meat for me.

The event was held at Mario & John's and was organized by Petaluma's 20-30 Active Club, whose Oct. 10 "Burning Ham" (in Penngrove Park) promises to be an epic pork fest.

Sauced BBQ (saucedbbqandspirits.com)

... and speaking of even more BBQ, SaucedBBQ opened last week in Tres Hombrés' old location. Even though Petaluma was salivating at the idea of a downtown BBQ spot, for some reason they opened with little ado. Maybe I missed it, but I saw no grand opening announcement on their website or Facebook page, which is rather odd for a town with so many great food choices. Luckily, I was enjoying a killer flight of port wine and appetizers at La Dolce Vita last Tuesday evening when a friend walked by and invited us to Sauced's "friends and family" soft opening that evening. (La Dolce's owner Sahar even marks

the flight's glasses to help avoid drinker confusion — nice touch!)

The brisket was great, but it was the deep-fried pickle appetizer and deep-fried Oreos that were total standouts. I cannot comment on prices because the entire meal was free, which was a nice way for Sauced to introduce themselves to the town.

Small Bites ...

■ Copper River salmon is currently available at Costco. The flavor is second to none due to the higher than normal stores of fat and oil required for these fish to make their way up Alaska's chilly and turbulent Copper River.

■ Boulevard Cinemas has applied for an alcohol license. Here is to hoping they Go Local so we can enjoy a Petaluma Hills beer on tap or Petaluma GAP wine by the glass the next time we head down to the picture show.

■ Help name my new column! I am looking for a name that ties into the local food and restaurant scene as my column is slated to anchor the Argus-Courier's new Food & Wine section, a fortnightly offering that will also include a restaurant review and a wine column written by a local expert. Please submit your suggestions to the Above the Brim page on Facebook.

(I look forward to your feedback, as well as hearing about any Petaluma food news that you choose to share with me at "Above the Brim" on Facebook or abovethebrim@houstonporter.com.)



HOUSTON PORTER