



# TRUE 'CUE NEWS

## From the Campaign for Real Barbecue

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No. 6

### First Principles

In *Garden & Gun* magazine Patron Rien Fertel says some wise things about what makes a barbecue place great (<http://gardenandgun.com/blog/how-identify-good-barbecue-joint>). The first requisite is:

“The pits shouldn’t have ‘on’ and ‘off’ switches.”

### Something’s Cooking in South Wales

To be precise, Texas brisket and hot links, Carolina pork, Memphis ribs, and Alabama chicken (with white sauce) are cooking at **Hangfire Southern Kitchen** in the Vale of Glamorgan: <https://www.hangfiresouthernkitchen.com/>

In 2012-2013 owners Samantha Evans and Shauna Guinn took an epic American road trip in 2012-2013 and studied with some of the best, so it’s no wonder they were voted Wales’s “No. 1 Coolest Women” in a 2015 poll by *Wales Online*. Naturally they cook exclusively with wood and charcoal. Manager Lorrie Bonser says, “When we first opened we had to cut a hole in our floor to lower the [custom-built Parilla] grill into the kitchen and the guys that put it in place were more than a little confused when they couldn’t find a plug.” (See “First of All . . . ,” above.)

### Flavour of the Month

It’s not just in South Wales that Brits have discovered barbecue. A recent overview in the *Daily Mail Online* suggests, however, that their enthusiasm often comes with some strange ideas attached. Here’s an amusing link, with no additional comment: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3669705/From-12-hour-smoked-brisket-beef-ribs-big-dinosaur-bones-NO-cutlery-ready-Deep-South-barbecue-s-coming-Britain.html>

## 正宗的烧烤 in China

In news from the Middle Kingdom (<http://southwritlarge.com/articles/red-meat-bringing-southern-barbecue-to-the-middle-kingdom-by-bike/>), the on-line publication *South Writ Large* tells how two Americans introduced Southern barbecue to Ningbo, a city of some 7.6 million souls in eastern China's Zhejiang province.

North Carolinian David Straughan and Nick Jumara from Kansas City mounted a wood-burning offset cooker on a sort of flatbed tricycle and pedaled it around, cooking, for example, pulled pork for 200 people on Halloween. The boys initially met with skepticism, and had to explain what they were serving:

We would tell them “*hen man man de kao zhu rou*” (very slow, slow-cooked pork) and that it was “*wo men de te bie de jia li cai*” (our special hometown cuisine). The sour, spicy, and smoky flavor of our pulled pork was generally well received. There is a certain look of affirmation on someone's face when they're trying something new and decide that they like it.

“True ‘Cue” in Mandarin (as in the headline above) is pronounced *zhèngzōng de shāokǎo*. “Faux ‘cue” is *jiǎ shāokǎo*.

### “Best Barbecue” Lists

The urge to compile lists of the best barbecue restaurants seems to be irresistible, but even lists that rely on truly expert opinion have their problems, as Patron Robert Moss explains in an essay on “Click-Baiting Editors and Barbecue Lists”: <http://www.robertmoss.com/2016/07/click-baiting-editors-and-barbecue-lists.html>

Lists based on reader polls have even more problems, of course—so many that we've argued that they are essentially worthless (see *True Cue News* #5). When *USA Today* recently conducted a poll to ascertain the “best BBQ pork sandwich in North Carolina” some fine establishments didn't even make the short list: <http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-bbq-pork-sandwich-in-north-carolina/>

Nevertheless, we are pleased to note that the top nine are all wood cookers.

### The Wilber's Bypass

In May, a Raleigh *News & Observer* story about the opening of a US 70 bypass around the town of Goldsboro (<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/traffic/article80405172.html>) showed a fine sense of what constitutes real news in North Carolina by highlighting the fact that “Barbecue lovers will have to get off the bypass to get to Wilber's and McCall's.”

### New Leadership for True ‘Cue South Carolina

Jim Roller has stepped down as the Campaign's South Carolina agent, due to other commitments. Patron Lake High is now our representative plenipotentiary in the Palmetto State. Lake is the author of *The History of South Carolina Barbeque* and president of the South Carolina Barbeque Society.

## R.I.P. McCabe's

**McCabe's** in Manning, South Carolina, has closed. "One of our best," Lake High says. "The same old story, the old man retired and the children don't want to continue the business." Read about McCabe's, home of "the original 100-mile barbeque," here: <http://top100bbq.com/index.php/100-mile-barbecue/77-restaurants/83-mcables>

## Certifying a Wood-Cooking Institution

**Maurice's Piggy Park® BBQ** has been added to the list of certified wood-cookers in South Carolina. Its founder, Maurice Bessinger, was the best known and most successful of the four sons of Joe Bessinger of Holly Hill who carried on his barbecue tradition, with varying degrees of faithfulness. (Brother Melvin's place made *True 'Cue News* #3 for returning to 100% wood-cooking,) Maurice, who died in 2014, built a chain of 13 restaurants in the South Carolina midlands now run by his sons, Paul, Lloyd, and Debbie, assisted by a number of grandchildren.)



Paul and Lloyd Bessinger

As Lake High observes, "Maurice's is quite special":

They are the only barbeque house that cooks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Yes, even on Christmas. They have 18 pits (with 10 "back-up" pits for special days such as Labor Day and July 4th), and they cook all of their barbeque over hickory coals which they make themselves. They are the largest purveyors of barbeque in the nation (and therefore the world) and every last ham is cooked over real coals. In other words, the world's largest seller of barbeque is a True Cue operation. Take that, you cookers who insist on doing it the easy way over gas!

## On Barbecue and Politics

Whether you're talking about Maurice Bessinger or Bobby Seale, a man's politics have nothing to do with the quality of his barbecue (although they may be a reason not to eat it). In a fine essay on "Politics and Pork," Patron Jim Auchmutey observes that "in the South, we try to remember that the pigs are nonpartisan." You can read that essay in its entirety here: <http://www.angelfire.com/blues/jsreed/Auchmutey.pdf>.

## Wilmington BBQ Day

Speaking of politics, TrueCue North Carolina has been politically active in this election year, lobbying for the establishment of a new state holiday to commemorate the Wilmington Barbecue, a wood-cooking blow for freedom that predated the Boston Tea Party by some seven years. To read about it, click here: <http://www.southernfoodways.org/north-carolina-needs-a-new-holiday/>

So far the campaign has received the editorial support of the Durham *Herald Sun* and (not surprisingly) the Wilmington *Star News*.

## **A Campaign for Real Pork?**

In a magazine article entitled “It’s Time to Reconsider Carolina Barbecue,” Tom Wolf (no, not that one—and not the other one, either) says some nice things about us (<http://www.scalawagmagazine.org/articles/its-time-to-reconsider-carolina-barbecue>). But, he asks, “If the Campaign cares about the way in which barbecue has been made traditionally in North Carolina, shouldn’t it also care about how its main ingredient has been traditionally raised?”

That’s a thorny question, and Wolf presents the pros and cons fairly before concluding that Americans should be willing to pay more for pasture-raised pork, in order to support “a culinary tradition that treats humans, the environment, and animals with dignity.”

Well, he may be right about that, and if he starts a campaign for pasture-raised pork, we’ll tell you about it. We might sign up ourselves. But for now, it’s one cause at a time.

## **Time for a Spanking?**

Brian Coggins, a friend of the Campaign, writes to tell us about a sandwich place that is something of an institution in downtown in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Its menu has always offered “Carolina barbecue” which certainly wasn’t, but Brian let it go. (“It was only one menu item, and they weren’t pushing it.”) When he went in recently, however, he found the menu completely altered:

The club sandwiches are gone. [the restaurant] has decided to become, as their waitress put it to me, “a Southern-style barbecue place.” And sure enough, there on the menu was an assortment of “barbecue plates” and “barbecue sandwiches,” offering various meats straight from the crock pot, slathered in their house version of KC Masterpiece.

Obviously these people don’t know (ahem) their butt from a pit. Since Brian has signed the True ‘Cue Pledge and promised not to eat “meat cooked only with gas or electricity and mislabeled ‘barbecue,’ except when courtesy requires it,” he walked out. He says he understands that the Campaign for Real Barbecue is “too high-minded, too grounded in the ideals of good Southern manners,” to name and shame servers of faux ‘cue, but he’d nominate this place for a shaming if we did.

We’ll put it on the waiting list in case we change our minds.

## **Shameless Commerce Division**

Incidentally, to judge by sales from the merchandise page of our website, by far the most popular True ‘Cue image is this one:



It's available on pins, bumper stickers, tee-shirts, aprons, ball caps, you name it. If you'd like to sport this message, check it out at <http://www.truecue.org/merchandise/>.

### An Off-Topic Closing Thought

Finally, what is it with winged pigs? The critters seem to be everywhere. A Google search turns up over 400,000 hits for the phrase "flying pig" (and scores of remarkable images). These aren't your grotty barnyard pigs, either; nearly a third of those hits are in combination with the letters "BBQ." And they've been around for a long time: the one at the right is from a medieval manuscript.



Why does this bizarre trope seem so natural? Why not, say, a *swimming* pig? There's grist here for a great cultural studies dissertation. You could start by checking out the remarkable collection of pig lore at <http://www.porkopolis.org/>.

### The True 'Cue Challenge

Twenty-eight months and counting.

<http://uncpressblog.com/2016/04/06/reed-busting-barbecue-myth/>

**Please forward this newsletter to anyone you know who might be interested.**

If you have anything of interest to supporters of Real Barbecue—old places closing or turning to gas, new places opening, obituaries of barbecue legends, whatever—please send it along to [TrueCue@gmail.com](mailto:TrueCue@gmail.com).

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