

BREAK FOR SOUTHERN FLAVORS FOR NORTHERN FOODIES

By Sarah LaPlante
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Josh Davis sure knows barbecue.

He knows that locally procured applewood makes for great meat smoking (ditto hickory) and that the maple sugar shack down the street provides better maple syrup for his barbecue sauce and baked beans than he can find anywhere else.

Davis' newest "baby," the Smoke Shack in Boscawen, is a true foodie's dream. He's been working since October 2006 and word continues to spread about the modest restaurant that is bringing the flavors of the

south to the North Country.

"If you serve quality food, [customers] will come," Davis said.

The Smoke Shack started out as a catering venture of Davis'. He was an executive chef for years and when the company he worked for was bought out, Davis took the opportunity to live his passions. He's traveled all over the country sampling barbecue.

"I love barbecuing. It's what I cooked during my time off ... There's a lack of quality barbecue [in New Hampshire]," Davis said. He's particular about his ingredients and buys produce from local farmers' markets as long as it's available. The smell at The Smoke Shack is the true give-away that this dot on the map is a barbecue mecca.

The Smoke Shack prepares specific amounts of barbecue every day, seven days a week, from April 15 to around Oct. 5.

"We like to open [for the summer season] on Tax Day, when people need some comfort food," Davis joked. The smoker Davis uses is in plain sight, smoking up to 820 pounds of meat at a time and he sells out of all of it.

"We never run out of pulled pork, though," Davis said. Pulled pork is their best seller and it's available just about every way you can imagine. Davis employs two full-time and two part-time staff members whose sole responsibility is preparing pulled pork.

Last year, The Smoke Shack was one of the stops on a combat veterans' bike run. Davis has outdoor



seating space for about 125 people and went about booking a blues band to entertain the group while they feasted. During the summer weekends, Davis says, you can see anywhere from 50 to 60 motorcycles in the Smoke Shack parking lot.

"[The Smoke Shack is] a real casual place ... very family-oriented. We offer home-cooked food at good prices," Davis said. If that isn't reason enough to stop by, perhaps the country style breakfast (Saturday and Sunday, from 7 to 11 a.m.) will help tempt you out to Exit 17 off Interstate 93.

The Smoke Shack

145 King St., Boscawen, 796-2046, www.smokeshackbarbecue.com

On the menu

- **The BBQ Sundae:** Yes, a sundae. No, not sweet in the least. Layers of pork, beans and coleslaw are topped with two ribs. This and all the other dinner plates on the Smoke Shack menu come with your choice of two sides. Pick from coleslaw, potato salad, onion rings, hush puppies, baked beans, corn on the cob, macaroni and cheese, French fries, sweet potato fries, Cajun fries or the vegetable of the day. The BBQ Sundae goes for \$9.95.
- **The Smoke Shack Combo:** This choice is best when you can't make up your mind. You get pulled pork, BBQ chicken and ¼ rack of ribs, with two sides, in either a lunch portion (\$16.95) or a dinner portion (\$17.95).
- **The Smoke Shack Burger:** A traditional choice with a Smoke Shack spin, this burger is topped with BBQ sauce, smoked mozzarella cheese and apple smoked bacon, for \$4.95.
- **... And if you're still hungry:** The Smoke Shack offers up some truly Southern dessert options, including pecan pie (\$3.75 per slice) and sweet potato pie (\$3.25 per slice).