



Adam Amato Emerald

In his 25th year on the job, Bar-B-Q King Ken Fuller checks on his ribs and comments, 'Look at that one, she's ready!'

Sculpture, painting, photography ... *barbecue?*

Experts say barbecuing is indeed an art form that takes time and effort to excel at

By John Liebhardt
Oregon Daily Emerald

As the sun crawls its way back to the Willamette Valley, barbecues find their way from the cellars to the porches of Eugene.

While most parts of the country are shaking off the effects of winter, northwesterners are known to barbecue 12 months a year.

"We live in an area where the outdoors is a very big part of our lifestyle," said Bruce Bjorkman, a local barbecue and grilling expert. "This is a continuation of that."

Bjorkman hosts a radio show called "Cooking Outdoors With Mr. Barbecue," an hourlong show on 750 KXL in Portland. He also is the author of "The Great Barbecue Companion," (1996, The Crossing Press) and is the founder of BBQ-U, a six-hour training course on the ins and outs of the culture of the grill.

Bjorkman said that the Northwest adds three specialties to the national barbecue palette. First is the plenitude of fresh salmon, especially steelhead. Second is the large number of people who grow their own food in vegetable gardens and use those greens on the grill.

"Grilling tends to help bring out natural sugars in some vegetables," he said, pointing out that this is especially true for tart vegetables like zucchini.

The third aspect of Northwestern grilling is the abundance of Alder and Madrone wood, both of which add a smoky flavor to the meat or vegetables on the grill. Ken Fuller, owner of the Bar-B-Q King, a portable barbecue stand, said that the flavor of the smoke is what

gives food the true barbecue flavor.

"You don't want to cook meat too fast," Fuller said. Fuller fills his 5-by-5 smoker with mesquite and alder and cooks ribs and tri-tips for at least three hours. Pointing to his smoker full of the meat, he said "It's doing its thing, and I'm just sitting back waiting."

Both experts said smoke flavor is the most important aspect of the barbecue taste, which is why both of them stay away from gas grills.

"Grilling tends to help bring out natural sugars in some vegetables."

Bruce Bjorkman
barbecue and grilling expert

"It is very difficult to get a decent amount of smoke penetration on a gas grill," Bjorkman. "The flavor of smoked wood is why people purchase grills."

However, Bjorkman understands that gas grills provide convenience for those who want to grill food quickly.

Bjorkman instructed beginners to start with Weber's small Smokey Joe grill. Found on porches across the country, Smokey Joes provide an outdoor classroom that gives grillers great tutelage on the proper amount of charcoal and correct temperatures, Bjorkman said. Most importantly, he said, is the Smokey instruction manual, replete with cooking time instructions and recipes.

"Weber does an exceptionally good job with how to teach the

griller," he said.

However, Bjorkman said once the griller becomes versed with the small Weber, it is time to move to a larger, more complicated grill.

"Grilling is not unlike a career; you have a starting point," Bjorkman said. "Get your feet wet, and get used to what you are doing."

Fuller agrees, pointing out that barbecuing is an art form to constantly learn but never quite master.

"There are all different kind of ways to barbecue," he said. "After 25 years, I am still a student at it."

Learning his trade in Denison, Texas, Fuller said he learned to judge meat with three qualities: Tender, texture and taste.

"The sauce is like a treat," he said. "I don't want it to interfere with the taste."

Bjorkman offers beginners two pieces of advice: Use a thermometer, and write everything down.

"Almost every grill will have a hot spot and a cold spot," he said. "A griller will know what is the proper cooking temperature." He said that using a thermometer will allow the early griller to learn how to judge the proper temperature to place the food on the grill, and when to take it off. Another help, he said, is an instant meat thermometer to guarantee that the meat is done.

His second pointer is to write everything down. "This will be an instant reference for your failures and allow you to recall your success."

E-mail Pulse and features editor John Liebhardt at johnliebhardt@dailyemerald.com.

COUPON

FREE WINGS Tuesday All You Can Eat SPAGHETTI \$3.50
(Buffalo, Teriyaki, BBQ)

With order of any large pizza!

(Choose from 26 Varieties of Special Toppings)

FREE DELIVERY Expires 4/30/02

• Lunch
• Dinner
• Fine Wines
• Microbrews

2673 WILLAMETTE
(27th & Willamette)
484-0996

2506 WILLAKENZIE
(Oasis Plaza)
344-0998

campus cafés

Atrium Café

Willamette Hall | Atrium

Monday-Friday
8am-4pm

Saturday-Sunday
closed

Daily Grind Café

Knigh Library | Lower Level

Monday-Thrusday
8am-10pm

Friday-8am-6pm
Saturday-closed
Sunday-noon-10pm

Hearth Café

Lawrence Hall | 2nd Floor

Monday-Friday
8am-4pm

Saturday-Sunday
closed

the place for your campus coffee break

To earn a 4.00
in Brewology
all you need to
know is
STEELHEAD.

9 Award-Winning Micro-Brews

Soups, Salads Ribs Fresh Pizza

Sandwiches Pastas Burgers

Spirits Home-Made Rootbeer

TAKE A BREW HOME IN STEELHEAD'S BOX O' BEER

Steelhead Brewing Company

199 East 5th Avenue Eugene, OR Phone 686-2739
Eugene, OR - Burlingame, CA - Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, CA - Irvine, CA

ODE Classifieds...
Worth Looking Into!