

Lessons from a Legend

Smokin' Triggers Cooking Class – Hammond, LA

On Friday, July 21st, about 60 eager learners gathered to learn the art of competition barbeque from Johnny Trigg, chief cook of team Smokin' Triggers. Johnny is an honoree of the Barbeque Hall of Fame, winner of BBQ Pitmasters, 2 time Grand Champion of the Jack Daniel's Invitational Barbecue Contest among many, many other honors.

The class was held at Alack Culinary Equipment & Supplies Superstore (<http://www.alack.com>). Alack has room in the back dedicated for culinary teaching. There were no bad seats for Johnny's class. There were television monitors mounted up high that showed every detail of the action up front.

Johnny started on Friday morning trimming brisket and pork butts, interspersed with tales of burnt ends, money muscles and contest memories. After trimming, the big meats were seasoned before moving on to trimming ribs. Johnny didn't hold back anything! Seasonings, methods, timetables, he covered it all and answered questions from anyone there.

Before lunch was served, Craig Sharry, Texas Pepper Jelly (<https://www.texaspepperjelly.com>) and also president of IBCA (<http://ibcabbq.org>), went

into great detail on how he cooks an IBCA half chicken. Since some folks were there from Texas and cook IBCA, Craig's information was very valuable.

A delicious meal of gumbo, Cesar Salad and bread followed. Tommy, chef and owner of Tope-La Restaurant in Downtown Hammond did the catering. Then we went shopping at Alack!

Johnny lit his Jambo J-5 early on Saturday morning. Any attendee who wanted to get up at 2:30 am was welcome to be there. Several folks were there to observe (not me!). My arrival was at 6:30 am and it was time to wrap. Ribs were seasoned and put on the Jambo to cook. Alack's loading dock was full of Jambo Pits (<http://www.jambopits.com>). Barry, Bayou Boogie BBQ, brought his J-3 over to cook too. Johnny was cooking lots more barbeque meat than at a contest so that everyone in the class could taste his product.

We learned exactly what's in all those blue bottles! Trish Trigg gave a presentation on garnish in turn-in boxes. As the meat was cooked, the class got the full feel for how a turn-in box is built to be judged. Then we all got to judge!

Truly, eating Smokin' Triggers chicken, ribs and bris-

ket was a real treat (I had to leave before pork). Every attendee received a goodie bag with the rubs and sauces Johnny used. I'd bet that every person there goes home to their backyard and attempts to do it like Johnny does!

All in all, I'd give this class a 9-9-9! Even after cooking as long as I have (not nearly as long as Johnny!), I learned things that will be of use to me in competition going forward. If you are a competition cook or wannabe cook, take a class! It is money well spent.



Article & Pictures by Candy Weaver

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