

SF SN

SOUTHWEST FOOD SERVICE NEWS

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Always Something on the Fire

by John Lightle

Preparation for the lunch rush begins early at The Barbecue Station in San Antonio. The night before, brothers Zac and Freddy Freeman stoke a fire with a blend of mesquite and oak, then load on 350 pounds of brisket. Through the night, the meat absorbs a robust smoky flavor. By morning, briskets are nearing perfection.

Oil and gas figure doubly in the restaurant's story. As Bobby Peacock spent years traveling Texas in the oil and gas industry, he enjoyed stopping at small town cafés to sample the local favorites. When the industry took a nosedive in the early 1990s, Bobby and his wife Cindy turned to the restaurant business to see them through.

"Dad viewed his new endeavor as temporary. Once oil and gas came back around he slowly worked his way back into the industry," recalls Stewart, Bobby's son and store manager. "But he found out quickly that a restaurant does not run itself."

The day after Thanksgiving 1992, Bobby Peacock discovered a vacant Exxon station on North 410 that had his name written all over it. With his family on board, his new venture was launched. They filled the venue with the requisite rustic antiquities, then set out to develop recipes. Bobby



turned for advice to Doc Holiday of Rudy's Barbecue in Leon Springs. Doc recommended his friend Eric Mack, who teamed with the Peacocks until they could stand on their own. "Eric brought good base knowledge and good recipes, and worked with us for a year," Stewart says. Over time, the family developed the confidence to add their own tweaks to his dry rub recipe.

Catering from the outset and doors open seven days a week, The Station required steady manpower. The Freeman brothers offered to work and have remained loyal and valuable members of the organization, forming the basis of the knowledgeable pit team vital to recipe success. "Cooking barbecue is a challenge," Stewart says. "The cooking will change during the seasons. The

cold, wet days of winter will change the cooking times. Then there's the nature of brisket. Briskets are like snowflakes--each one is different," he adds.

In a state known for its barbecue, The Station must work hard and long to compete with its peers. The Peacocks receive three deliveries a week, and always aim to please. "We use prime, and choice if we can't get prime. But then, every cut is different," Stewart says. "Some have more fat content, some less. It takes a long time to figure out the nuances."

Along with brisket, The Barbecue Station offers the proteins expected at any good Texas barbecue house. Ribs, sausage, chicken and turkey are

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2nd Largest Foodservice Show in the U.S. Shows Why Texas is the Place to Do Business

The 2014 Texas Restaurant Association Marketplace lived up to its promise to be as distinct and original as Texas! The newly re-branded show was back in Houston June 22-23 after a three-year absence.

Approximately 10,000 industry professionals came to the show over two days to connect with their peers, experience the newest industry trends and see the latest, cutting edge products on the market. With 510 exhibiting companies showcasing technology, craft beverages, food products, equipment and more in 746 booths, attendees connected with suppliers that could help them increase profitability.

This was the 77th year that the Texas Restaurant Association produced a trade show, and a key goal in re-branding the event was to offer a highly engaged and business-conducive environment to attendees and exhibitors. Great strides were made in achieving that goal this year as 68% of attendees had buying power, an 18 point increase over 2013.

With quality attendees, a new show design and engaged exhibitors, TRA Marketplace was the place to be for industry professionals. "Our show is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for restaurateurs to network with industry leaders, stay on top of trends, and

do business with major vendors," said Richie Jackson, CEO, Texas Restaurant Association. "We are extremely pleased with the direction the event is going and will build on our success for the 2015 show in Dallas."

The TRA represents the state's \$42.6 billion restaurant industry, which is comprised of 40,000-plus locations and a workforce of over one million employees. Formed in 1937, The Texas Restaurant Association represents, educates and promotes the growing foodservice industry.

Plans are underway for the 2015 TRA Marketplace June 28-29 in Dallas. For details visit www.tramarketplace.com.

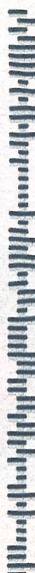
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The Barbecue Station in San Antonio

(Continued from cover)

menu standards. Combination platters and sandwiches are lunchtime favorites. Adding a touch of Tex-Mex to the menu, The Station offers a barbecue taco with one of five different meats.

To develop initial word-of-mouth buzz for their restaurant, the Peacocks relied on a big family and friends they had made across the state over the years. This form of advertising remains their favorite. "If I'm traveling through a small town looking for a barbecue place I'm not going to get on Yelp or something. I'll ask a few people at the local gas

by word of mouth," he states.

As the restaurant's reputation grew, the catering side of the business has required more attention. Just when the team had become comfortable catering barbecue for 100, a group called asking if they could serve 1100 guests. "We hit it hard, and dedicated all our cooking spaces to the effort. Then four days before the event, they called and let us know the guest count would be 1700!" Stewart recalls. In order to balance logistics, staff, and available space, the Peacocks temporarily shut the doors of The Station to meet the demands of their biggest-



The Peacocks jumped feet first into the restaurant industry, and have learned steadily along the way.

Since 2000, the restaurant has consistently made the rankings in The San Antonio Express News Reader's Choice or Critic's Choice Awards.

station for their recommendation. But that's just me," says Stewart. He believes that no daily social media posting or online content can match the sense of integrity offered by the spoken word. "The most loyal customer base is built

ever catering contract.

The day of the event, The Barbecue Station supplied 450 pounds each of turkey and brisket, 350 pounds of sausage and 25 one-gallon buckets of relishes. Testifying to the team's success, the client

now calls back every year to request a savory repeat.

The Barbecue Station has many other fans around San Antonio. Since 2000, the restaurant has consistently made the rankings in The San Antonio Express News Reader's Choice or Critic's Choice Awards. The Peacocks have built this strong following by staying true to the preparation which is key to their success. "There are two styles of brisket served as barbecue. Some places use a sauce on the meat just to hide overcooking or a lesser quality protein," says Stewart. "But we stick with a dry rub. We

don't put sauce on anything. In our opinion, if you cook it correctly it doesn't need sauce." He affirms with pride, "That's just our style."

The Peacocks jumped feet first into the restaurant industry, and have learned steadily along the way. With a solid work ethic, loyal staff and consistently good product, success has followed the family as naturally as the smoke follows fire.

"We've worked hard, adapted and had a little luck along the way," says Stewart. With a wink he adds, "We must be doing something right."

People, Places and Things

(Continued from page 3)

Impact Sales & Systems has promoted AMY ABEL as their CRM and sales training project manager...Server Products announced the promotion of JOHN RAYBURN, director of engineering & product development...Performance Food Group has named JIM HOPE the new executive vice president of operations reporting to GEORGE HOLM, president & ceo...Juice Tyme has added MARK SCHACHT as vice president of business development...Houston Seafood Company has hired MARC MOSLEY for the vice president/general manager position...LYDIA BROWN is the new key account manager for Rich Products...CONNIE MULLINS has been hired as chef at Pirch...PACTV has hired JOE MCMAHON as territory manager in Texas and

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SOUTHWEST FOOD SERVICE NEWS

Serving the Food Service Market in Texas and the Southwest.

Southwest Food Service News is a wholly owned subsidiary of SFSN, Inc. and has no affiliation with any other group or association.

POSTMASTER SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

Southwest Food Service News
P.O. Box 2008
Oldsmar, FL 34677-7008

ISSN # 1082-3204

FOUNDER
R. Dal Rasmussen

PUBLISHER &
SALES MANAGER
Sam Ballard

EDITOR
Patricia Dodge

PRODUCTION/ART MANAGER
Pages Communications Service

Division of SFSN, Inc.
Sam Ballard, President
3245 Main Street • Ste. 235-387
Frisco, Texas 75034

Telephone 972-943-1254
Fax No. 972-943-1258
www.southwestfoodservice.com
Published Bi-Monthly

Bulk Rate Postage
Paid in Dallas, Texas

Subscription Rate:
\$30.00 per year
\$5.00 per single copy
\$25.00 per Directory Issue

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BORDEN

IF IT'S BORDEN, IT'S GOT TO BE GOOD