

For the love of MEAT

story and photos by Hannah Brown

David Harrod cooking up one-of-a-kind barbecue for friends, family, communities

Although his love of University of Kentucky athletics runs deep, evidenced by the Wildcat logos on his company's trucks, Harrod Concrete and Stone President David Harrod also has a love for cooking — a skill he uses to give back to those who are working hard to make the world a better place.

Harrod is the second generation of his family to own the company. He took it over from his father, the late William “Bill” Harrod.

When his father was still alive, during UK football season, they would invite clients and friends to tailgate with them outside of the football stadium.

“Dad would tend the bar and I would tend the food and tickets,” he said. “We’d have pork sandwiches and ribs that I would





SMOKING TIPS FROM DAVID HARROD

- With ribs, rub them with a dry rub, then smear the meat with apple butter and smoke them until they're done and tender about 4 or 5 hours.
- Cook meat between 230-250 degrees.
- Take it low and slow, and be patient.

smoke here and then carry them out" to the games.

Harrod's food became so popular that soon people started asking him to cook for their events — mainly charity events. He never charges for his services.

Harrod cooks during events at Day Spring Community Living, a non-profit residential community in Louisville for adults with intellectual disabilities, alongside his business/barbecue partner and brother-in-law, Dick Barrett. Harrod's son has lived there in the past, while Barrett's daughter currently lives there.

After a few years of cooking together for events, the duo decided to step up their smoking game, packed up their smokers and other equipment and headed to Kansas City for a barbecue workshop.

"It really stepped us up a lot," Harrod said. "We learned a lot about making rubs and the finer points of smoking."

Harrod and Barrett continued to cook at events together and about 12 years ago decided to start bottling their barbecue sauce under the name "The Meat Men," which they got from residents at Day Spring.

"We would set up and start cooking at one of their big picnics and the residents would say, 'Oh the meat men are here.'"

All of the proceeds from the sauce go to Day Spring. Harrod is currently working on a rub that will soon be sold and the proceeds will benefit the Beacon House in Louisville, a transitional living house for addicts.

The sauce can be purchased at Bryant's Pic-Pac Supermarket on Second Street in Frankfort.

One of the biggest events that Harrod has cooked for was Heroes Night Out at Fort Knox, an event for 600-700 soldiers and their families.

"That one was special," he said. "Those guys are all banged up mentally and physically from serving the country and they're coming to us thanking us for cooking. What we've done is nothing."

THE SMOKERS

Harrod said he's most famous for his smoked ribs, but he also enjoys smoking brisket, chickens, turkeys and salmon. He also makes his own sides of coleslaw, green beans, baked apples and his most popular — baked beans.



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David Harrod's custom made smoker.

Harrod cooks using one of his 12 smokers, which he refers to as "toys."

He has a small box smoker, which is propane-powered and versatile. He also has a small electric professional-grade smoker he uses to cook brisket and butts. He typically uses hickory wood as his smoke source.

However, when he cooks for a large crowd, he wheels out a custom-made smoker that sits on a custom trailer behind his house. The smoker is big enough to cook at one time either 36 racks of ribs, 50 chickens or 16 briskets, among other meats.

"We built the smoker at the shop," Harrod said. "I drew it up on a cardboard box and had a welder at work, when he wasn't busy, build the smoker. We made it out of raw metal."

When Harrod's daughter, Eileen Logsdon, got married, she asked him to smoke briskets.

"I filled that smoker up twice with briskets and chicken for that wedding."

As for the new son-in-law, Drew, the first gift Harrod gave him was a smoker.

"Drew is pretty good ... he knows how to use it. I've showed him the basics and he's taken off from there."

CONTINUING TO GIVE BACK

Harrod is happy to have passed on some of his skills to his family members, and he looks forward to continuing to cook and give back to different charities.

"You can have all the money in the world, but there's nothing like what you get when you do something like that — it's a good, clean spiritual high.

"And, that's what we're trying to teach the guys at the Beacon House ... to get them to understand what it's like to care for somebody.

"I get more out of (cooking for charities) than having a successful year smashing rocks."

DAVID HARROD'S BAKED BEANS



INGREDIENTS: DIRECTIONS:

- 1 120-ounce can of baked beans
- 1 large onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- ¼ cup of apple cider vinegar
- 1 ½ pound of bacon

Cut bacon into 1-inch strips and fry. Strain the beans in a strainer and rinse to remove sauce. Put the beans and bacon in a large pot on the stove and heat over medium heat.

Chop up the onion and peppers and sauté over medium heat in a small amount of bacon grease until the peppers are tender. Add to bean and bacon mix.

Place mix in a large serving bowl and mix in the apple cider vinegar and Meat Men barbecue sauce to desired taste. Serve warm.

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Janna Gibson

502-227-4556 ext. 222

janna.gibson@state-journal.com

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meri.latek@state-journal.com

Building Downtown Frankfort

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502-227-4556 ext. 221

ryan.lipson

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