

# Where there's smoke, there's tasty goodness

BELMONT HOUSE OF SMOKE OFFERS BARBECUE AUTHENTICITY IN EVERY BITE

**D**ave Filipowski and Richard Katz, the owners of Belmont House of Smoke in Ghent, have gone to great lengths to understand the truth about barbecue. Considering each region of the United States has its own definition of what makes barbecue "real," their educational journey can best be described in one word: scrumptious.

Before debuting the latest incarnation of Belmont, the co-owners of the only smokehouse in Ghent spent three months traveling the highways and byways of the United States, acquiring the tips and tricks needed to guarantee mouth-watering Carolina pork, Texas-style brisket, Memphis dry-rub ribs, and beer-can chicken, all the while studying to become Kansas City Barbecue Society-certified judges.

Since returning to Hampton Roads, Katz and Filipowski have spent untold hours perfecting their craft. The payoff from their labor of love can be experienced in each and every bite of the uniquely authentic dishes at Belmont House of Smoke. "When we opened Belmont in 2001, it was a high-end bistro," says Filipowski. "Through the years, we morphed through a stage or two and now we're just chasing our dream of having something that's a real-people, real-food type of thing—something that's just more fun. For us, that's barbecue."

To create their new Smokehouse atmosphere, the partners purchased their very own "Cook Shack," a special smoker invented by barbecue legend Fast Eddy Moran, as well as what Filipowski calls a "Texas-style stick burner." These high-tech culinary marvels do more than just enhance Belmont's claim to barbecue authenticity—they turn dining at the Belmont into a multi-sensory experience. Whether it's the awe-inspiring sight of a half-rack of delectable ribs, the tantalizing smoky-sweet scent of the burnt ends, or the dribble-down-your-chin juiciness of the pulled pork, the guests at Belmont House of Smoke will know they've experienced barbecue at its finest.

In addition, Belmont House of Smoke's menu pays tribute to its roots, including the high-quality steaks, crab cakes, pasta, seafood, salads and soups that first made the restaurant the place to dine in Ghent. "We offer eight different kinds of wings with sauces that are made in-house and at least eight different styles of hamburgers," says Filipowski. "Belmont has always been known for its hamburgers and we've always used nothing but Hereford meat since we opened in 2001. We've never changed that. Our big thing now is obviously the barbecue, but you can still get a good piece of fish from the entrée menu as well as what I think is the best mac-n-cheese and collard greens in town."

Those who need a little extra incentive to come out and taste the cuisine might be interested in Tuesday's all-you-can-eat ribs, Wednesday night's 39-cent wings, and Friday's two-for-one happy hour appetizers. For those who enjoy Sunday brunch, Belmont House of Smoke also serves a delectable assortment of breakfast favorites with a barbecue flare from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday evening's all-you-can-eat chicken and catfish specials.

For those interested in taking a taste of Texas home—or those who'd like to add a little Memphis to their next special event or tailgate party—Belmont House of Smoke also offers a full take-out menu and a new catering service. "Probably half our lunch business is call-ahead takeout and that's a part of the business we'd really like to build," says Filipowski. "If you're planning a tailgate-party for an ODU game, we are the guys to call."

"We've also branched out into catering, but we're keeping that strictly barbecue and whole hog. Have smoker, will travel!"

Belmont House of Smoke is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. Dinner is served until 11 p.m. A light menu is available from 11 p.m. until closing.



## Belmont House of Smoke

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