

Londonderry

WINTER 2017

MAGAZINE

BLOOMS OF JOY

LOCAL GROWERS
ADD FLORAL TOUCH
TO THE SEASON

\$4.95



INSIDE

SHOW TIME:
A FLURRY OF
FESTIVE FAVORITES

DOWN-HOME
BARBECUE
ON THE GO

A FITNESS
RESOLUTION FOR
THE NEW YEAR



Where's Hickory Stix?

Check out hickorystixbbq.rocks

BARBECUE that comes to you

Food truck travels the town with smoky, spicy flavors

By JULIE HUSS • Photos by TIM JEAN



Co-owner Rick Gagnon of Hickory Stix BBQ removes a rack of ribs from the smoker in the back of the Texas-style barbecue mobile food truck.

It's a meal on wheels for anyone hoping to catch a whiff of some slathered, saucy ribs or grab a quick taste of some down-home barbecue.

On any given day, fans of beef brisket, pulled pork, chicken or other barbecue fixings, like sweet and spicy baked beans or macaroni and cheese, need not look far to find the bright red Hickory Stix food truck.

The local truck has become a fixture for barbecue lovers, often tucked away in a parking lot or well-traveled spot.

On one cool, windy afternoon, Hickory Stix was parked in the lot near Twins Smoke Shop near Exit 5 on Perkins Road. Sharon Vincent, the sister of co-owner Lisa Drake, was inside readying for the lunch crowd.

Vincent is ensconced in the business. She moved back to New England from Florida to help her younger sister and co-owner Rick Gagnon.

"We're a rolling restaurant, we have everything we need right here," Vincent says.

What's barbecue doing here?

Vincent and Drake were born and raised outside Boston, in Dorchester, and moved around a lot as part of a military family. Gagnon was born in Medford, and barbecue was not often a common sight on his New England family dinner table.

"I grew up outside of Boston, I had no

idea what barbecue was," Gagnon says.

Drake and Gagnon, married for 23 years, met each other in Londonderry in the early 1990s, but both had traveled the nation extensively prior to settling here. They often lived within earshot of each other around the country, including time spent in Texas.

That's where Gagnon says he first learned to build smokers to prepare his own style of barbecue.

Drake, 54, says she knew a change was coming as she got older.

The rolling restaurant once served as Drake's landscaping trailer when she worked creating colorful koi ponds, patios and other outdoor decor for area customers.

It was transformed, fabricated and designed to hold all the necessary materials for making good barbecue.

"When you get older, your bones don't work to do that hard (landscape) work any more," she says. "But I loved it, from the design to the finished product. My hands were in it the whole way."

In and amid that work, Drake says she would host big family gatherings where friends and family would get together to enjoy her home cooking.

"We always had big parties at our house," she says. "And I love to cook for people."

The couple started the barbecue business in 2016, always hoping the business plan would include moving the truck from place to place. Originally, Hickory Stix had a stationary location on Harvey



ABOVE: Co-owner Rick Gagnon fills the smoker with locally cut and split hickory wood. TOP: Co-owner and chef Lisa Drake and her sister, Sharon Vincent, work the truck.

MR. STEER

MEATS & MARKETPLACE

Don't Wait! Order Your Holiday Meats Early! Call 434-1444

You don't have to be rich to shop at Mr. Steer—just smart!

Compare Quality	Save Money	Service	Value	Price
• Beef	• All meat cut & ground fresh daily	• We offer one-on-one service to help you select the right cut & cook it properly	• All meat trimmed to perfection	• Lowest prices on the highest quality meats

THEN YOU DECIDE!
 4 Generations of Prime Quality Meats and Services since 1900
 Serving Southern New Hampshire Since 1975
Our Marinated Meats Speak for Themselves
 Famous Marinades since 1978.

BEEF USDA Prime & Choice • Tenderloin Roast • Prime Mignon • Royal Cut Prime Rib • Brisket Delicieux Roast • Brisket Burg Roast • Brisket Tip Roast • Short Cut Brisket Roast • Braised Beef Roast	LAMB American USDA Prime & Choice • Leg of Lamb • Boneless Leg of Lamb • Rack of Lamb • Crown Rack of Lamb • Braised Lamb Roast • Lamb Shanks • Marinated Lamb Tips • Loin Lamb Chops
PORK • Grilled-Pit Boneless Roasts • Fresh Ham • Bone-In Roast Pork • Corned Pork Roast • Braised Pork Roast	HAMS Made in NH North Country Bonehams • Boneless Ham • Boneless Ham • Spiral Ham • Bone-In Ham • Sweet Brined Ham • Whole or Spiral Cut • Ham Steaks
ALREADY PREPARED • Braised Boneless Pork Chops • Braised Chicken Breast • Braised Beef Roast • Cooked or Uncooked Meatballs • Cooked Chicken Cakes • Corned Beef • Eggplant Parmesan • All Meat Chicken Pan • All Meat Brisket Beef Pan • Turkey Pan • Pork Pan - 3 sizes available & Much More!	POULTRY • All Natural • Fresh Turkeys • 10th Anniversary • Turkey Breast • Fresh Capons • Cornish Hens • Omelette • Veal Chop • Ground Veal • Thin Slice Cutlets

Visit the **Long Day Beer Shoppe** Over 600 Imported & Craft Beers Available
LAY DRY Imported & Craft Beers Available
 12+ Varieties of our own **Marinated Meats** made by **MR. STEER** (Formerly from the Best Bars, Andover, NH)

Enter to win a **\$1000 Holiday** prize!
HOLIDAYS!

87 Buttrick Road, Londonderry, NH • Rt. 102 • 434-1444
 Hours: Monday - Friday 8am-6:30pm • Saturday 8am-6pm • Sunday 8am-4pm
 Check us out online for our daily specials at mrsteermeats.com

Road. Now the truck is on the move more and more.

Collard greens, no; baked beans, yes

Visitors approaching the truck can't help but get that waft of sweet-smelling hickory smoke.

Preparing brisket can take up to 18 hours, pork takes about 15. It's a long process and the smoker is always operating, preparing the next day's meaty menu offerings.

Smokers and all food preparation equipment in the truck are self-contained. It's an all-season service, Drake says.

She says her husband loves to smoke the meats, mostly the basics: brisket, beef and pork ribs, some chicken.

For the smoker, Hickory Stix uses New Hampshire hickory wood, and all meat served is 100 percent wood-smoked — no gas or propane is used in food preparation, Gagnon says.

Hickory Stix is a familiar fixture at many special events, including serving as a smoke presence during Londonderry's annual Summer on the Common series. Barbecue is also served up at sporting events, weddings and private family parties.

"We're the barbecue that comes to you," Vincent says.

Kurt Kendall, owner of Twins Smoke Shop, enjoys having Hickory Stix staff set up their own style of smoker road near his cigar business on Perkins Road, off Exit 5.

"We are in Londonderry, we are trying to add to the community, help the community. And everything here is good," says Kendall, as he orders up his usual brisket from the truck.

The menu can change daily, Drake says. That's why Hickory Stix posts its menu first thing every morning on its menu display sites. The truck's location that day is also revealed.

Specialties of the day could be a unique meatloaf offering, barbecue lasagna, chicken cutlets and Drake's specially baked beans. Add in a few fluffy cubes of cornbread, a few pickles for garnish and the meal is complete.

"But I can't seem to get people interested in collard greens," Drake says. That may be a regional thing, she notes.

It's Drake's beans that are often a big hit — a personal recipe that took her time to perfect. That included having



Lisa Drake, chef and co-owner of Hickory Stix BBQ, spices a chicken and pineapple dish before putting it in the smoker.

her husband taste test dozens of variations, spice levels and flavors until the right one made it to the menu.

It took about seven months to decide on the right bean brew.

"I told her, I'm not eating another bean," Gagnon says.

Movin' on

The best part about spending days smoking good meat and sharing home-cooked food? For Gagnon, it's having his own business. There are a few other



Hickory Stix BBQ food truck's barbecue sample slider features chicken, pork and brisket, with a side of baked beans, macaroni and cheese, and cornbread.

perks, too.

"I've even lost weight," he says. "I make food all day, I don't want to eat."

For Drake, it's the fact that the business is always on the move.

"The best part is the things we've gotten to see and be part of, things we've never seen before," she says.

Gagnon says they have met a lot of great people.

At a recent 50th anniversary party, the truck staff was on-site to cater the event and ended up celebrating alongside the guests.

"They insisted the whole crew do pictures with the family," he says. ★

AFFORDABLE CABINET REFACING

BEFORE **REFACED**

WE CAN DO IT! We will bring samples to your home and provide a FREE estimate. NO HIGH PRESSURE SALES!

TURN YOUR OLD, WORN-OUT KITCHEN INTO A SOURCE OF PRIDE without all the problems that come with a major remodeling job. By recycling your existing cabinets and giving them a brand new face, we save you time and money. In just a few working days you will have the kitchen of your dreams. **CALL TODAY!**

2012 - 2016
 SUPER SERVICE A+ rating
 Schedule your FREE in-home estimate or showroom visit today!
 800.277.1960 | www.AffordableCabinetRefacing.com

Affordable Cabinets Refacing
 Andover, MA

Happy Spa-lidays from Bare Necessities

Elegantly Wrapped Gift Certificates

Our gift certificates offer even more value when combined with a **Spa-liday Coupon** to receive \$10 off any single or combined services totaling \$20 or more.

See store for details —

- Facials • Manicures • Pedicures
- Waxing • Advanced Esthetic Services
- Teen Services • Gentleman's Retreats

75 Gilchrist Rd. #107, Londonderry
 434-3031
www.barenecessitiesnh.com