

Rivertowne BBQ is smokin' good!

BY ROB ROEDEL

Back in 2000, Kevin and Pam Doyle were told that a barbecue restaurant just wouldn't make it in Ozark. Fourteen years later, their dream is a charming establishment that is a regional favorite for barbecue lovers.

The thriving restaurant is located just off the downtown courthouse square and adjacent to the Arkansas River. The Doyles doubled the size of the original location in 2005 and it now encompasses what were three storefronts. Oftentimes, eager diners line up to enjoy the restaurant's made-from-scratch sauces, dressings, desserts, coleslaw, potato salad, beans and barbecue.

"We have two smokers and at least one of them is running every day," he said. "Our smokers run all week as we prepare cases of meat and chicken daily. One day, we sold 100 racks of ribs."

The Doyles, who were in the transportation and moving business prior to their Rivertowne venture, gathered many of the restaurant's recipes from family members. The couple credits their employees for the restaurant's success.

"This thing has really taken off," Kevin Doyle said. "There are

many good barbecue places out there, but we have the whole package with a great building, outstanding service and award-winning food."

Lunch began with the "Sweet Pea's Platter," which included "possum" dumplings, fried pickle spears and fried green tomatoes. Yes, "possum" dumplings that were served with "coon" gravy for dipping. Don't call the Arkansas Game and Fish Game warden as the dumplings are actually made with the pork trimmed from ribs. And, yes, they were delicious. The spicy fried pickles were great as were the thick fried green tomato slices.

A unique offering is the "Rivertowne Bean Slop." This creation is an overflowing bowl of chopped smoked pork, rice, "Rivertowne Beans" and hot sauce topped with cheese. Once the creation is lovingly mixed, it is baked to melt the awesome flavors into a bowl of barbecue goodness. Try this dish, you will love it!

For salad lovers Rivertowne offers the "Rivertowne Salad." The "whole" salad is a mixing bowl-sized garden salad with crisp, fresh vegetables and your choice of smoked beef, chicken or pork. My "sample" was of the chicken



Made-from-scratch sauces, dressings, desserts, barbecue and side dishes await hungry diners at Rivertowne BBQ.



The ribs fall off the bone and have great flavor.



"Rivertowne Bean Slop" is a melting pot of all things barbecue.

variety. The smoked chicken combined with the crisp salad was great. I sampled a smoked chicken dinner also, which was equally as good. The yard bird was cooked to perfection in color, texture and taste.

The smoked pork sandwich would please any barbecue lover as the smoky flavor was wonderful. A unique side dish was sweet potato fries served with a honey-sweet dipping sauce. The crispy

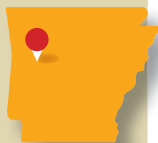
the eating essentials

RIVERTOWNE BBQ

205 South 3rd Street
Ozark
479-667-1808

Hours of Operation

Tuesday - Friday: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
and 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Saturday: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.



fries and the unique sauce is a side dish that could easily turn into a meal.

The link sausage sandwich featured smoked links topped with sautéed onions, peppers and cheese. If you can imagine a smoked sausage link, cooked just right, then you can almost taste this entrée. Peppers and sautéed onions accentuated the great smoked flavor.

The restaurant's smoked brisket dinner was presented with fried okra, coleslaw and Texas toast. The beef was smoked to perfection and the two sides were delicious. Rivertowne does not put barbeque sauce on most of their offerings. "We allow the customers to decide how much sauce they like," Doyle said.

Of course, I tried the ribs. They were fabulous! The ribs were tender and would make barbecue joints in Memphis bow in reverence.

For dessert, I sampled the establishment's homemade treats, including an apple cobbler, "Banana Puddin'" and the "Ooey Goey Chocolate Mess."

The apple cobbler was great with a homemade crust and a yummy apple filling. The "Banana Puddin'" featured creamy French vanilla pudding layered atop banana slices and vanilla wafers with whipped cream and toasted coconut.

The star dessert was the "Ooey Goey Chocolate Mess." This creation is

guaranteed to please chocolate lovers. It features a fresh-cooked brownie drizzled with melted caramel and topped with whipped cream.



The "Ooey Goey Chocolate Mess" is the star dessert.

"It has been a long road for us, but we really enjoy running the restaurant," Kevin said. ▀

Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at rroedel@aecc.com

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crossword answers

for puzzle on page 38

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