

Two Cool

Written by Mark Shaffer
Tuesday, 19 July 2011 15:17

The Backyard Tourist chills at two new hot spots in downtown Beaufort

We're a mile from the sun...



It's hot. It's *screen-door-to-hell* hot. It's so hot that we've received unsubstantiated reports of tourists from northern climes spontaneously combusting on beaches, golf courses and in outlet mall parking lots. Even hardboiled Lowcountry natives – fired in the kilns of brutal southern summers – have all but abandoned porch swings, picnic tables, softball fields and sandbars to cower indoors with the shades drawn. Some actually take refuge in a kind of hermetically sealed, climate-controlled hibernation not to be seen again until mid October, or – at the earliest – the inaugural home football game.

Regardless of where you stand on the topic of Global Warming, we're pretty sure summers are getting hotter and our resolve to brave these Armageddon-like temperatures has melted away like ice cream on hot asphalt. Here in the state-of-the-art offices of *The Backyard Tourist*, we've cranked the AC down so low that, if the humidity's just right, the occasional snowflake wafts through the air until it makes contact with a window pane and disappears in a tiny, agonizing puff of steam.

Let's face it: heat indices like those we've experienced this summer usually occur in places like, well, *Mars*. Apart from visiting the Red Planet, in order to prepare oneself for heat like this it would be necessary to spend about 10 hours a day leisurely strolling through burning buildings draped from head to toe in sopping burlap. Venturing out in such heat to actually do Backyard Touristy things seemed foolhardy and intensely sweaty with a high probability of chafing.

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However, we are nothing if not dedicated to you, dear reader. This proved motivation enough (along with a nagging need for a paycheck) to brave possible immolation in search of – what else? – places of cool refuge. Or cool places of refuge. Either way these first two choices in downtown Beaufort each involve a pair of partners with a unique plan and an old building in need of massive renovation.

Q on Bay

822 Bay Street, Beaufort

843.524.7771

Check out the hours and menu online at www.qonbay.com

Low and slow with a waterfront view



Enter the former Kathleen's from Bay Street and there's an instantaneous throwback sensibility to Q on Bay – a bit like stepping back into a bygone era, plucked from the past and newly polished for the present. Partners Jason Bailey and Chris Johnson had their work cut out for them during a long and arduous restoration process.

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“A few days into the project,” says Bailey, “we both looked at each other and said, *whose idea was this, yours or mine?*”

“Including the two of us,” says Johnson, “it was just four



guys doing the major renovation and all of the grunt work.”

He shakes his head at the memory.

“It wasn’t exactly fun,” says Bailey, “but it made things a lot more rewarding once we opened.”

“You’ve literally poured your own blood, sweat and tears into this place. Hopefully not so much blood.”

“More than you’d think,” Bailey deadpans.

While Bailey, Johnson & Crew ripped the restaurant apart and rebuilt it behind papered windows; they also kept a smoker going out on the patio permeating the waterfront with the mouth-watering promise of things to come.

“That was part of the plan,” Bailey confesses, “to get those smells in the air as we tweaked the

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different recipes.”



It worked. Any doubts about how a barbecue joint might play on Bay were quickly smothered beneath the enticing aroma of slow cooking meats. Carnivore ambrosia.

“So what sets Q apart in a region where barbecue is practically a religion?”

“It’s a mix of different regions,” says Johnson.

Bailey and Johnson have incorporated their own preferences in southeastern style barbecue (primarily Alabama and North Carolina) with a bit of western flavor in their lone star style brisket.

“We had a guy from Texas who said it was some of the best brisket he’s had,” says Bailey, “which is good.”

Johnson, whose family once farmed hogs in North Carolina, also spent a lot of time sampling Texas

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