

From the “Worst” to the Best

Written by David Campbell

Tuesday, 27 June 2017 13:40 - Last Updated Wednesday, 28 June 2017 06:13



The unlikely success story of Hank's Low Country She Crab Soup

For most families Saturday is a day of ritual - baseball practice, dance lessons, fishing, picnics on the beach, shopping, golf, a trip to Charleston or Savannah, but for many the ritual is to head to the Port Royal Farmer's Market at the Navy Heritage Park, open 9 - 12 Saturdays, rain or shine, to get the best food in the Lowcountry.

Tents are set up and loyal customers arrive on schedule to check out the freshest vegetables, eggs, shrimp, oysters in season, wonderful homemade breads, cheeses to die for, fruits, scones, pasta, bagels, plants, coffees, cookies, birds of prey to be admired, and, of course, she crab soup.

Hank and Wanda Yaden, residents of Pigeon Point in Beaufort, produce just about the best she crab soup in the Lowcountry.

A Southern staple, along with fresh grits and sweet tea (unknown in other areas of the country),

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Hank first started making the soup in 1983 for The Trawler restaurant in Mt. Pleasant. With success, he was lured away to another (to remain anonymous) Mt. Pleasant establishment, where he was asked to produce "their" version. What happened at that location was ultimately the push that Hank and Wanda needed to head out on their own.

Two Charleston women were having lunch, and when finished, asked if they could speak to the chef. Normally, one would think compliments were forthcoming, but the opposite occurred. The conversation went like this:

"Did you make the she crab soup?"

"Yes, I did."

"Well, it was the worst she crab soup we have EVER tasted."

Actually, Hank was not surprised, as the recipe was far different than the one he'd produced at The Trawler. This recipe called for evaporated milk, salty crab and no female roe - an essential component to the soup.

"I agreed with their assessment!"

Ironically, one of the women could tell that Hank was embarrassed with the criticism so she

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