



# FAVOR THE FLAVOR: Award-winning barbecue leads to success at Doc's Smokehouse

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**EDWARDSVILLE - Doc's Smokehouse** at 1017 Century Drive in Edwardsville is definitely a business that focuses on quality of service and barbecue excellence.

**Doc and Susan Richardson**, the owners and managers of the business, took two years developing unique rubs and perfecting their barbecue technique before opening their popular Edwardsville restaurant.

Doc's marked its second anniversary in February and is going strong into a third year.

"We competed on the professional barbecue circuit for many years before we opened the restaurant," Doc Richardson said. "We wanted to bring that craft to the restaurant. We take pride in serving fresh products, made from scratch. We want the food to speak for itself. We have a varied clientele that visit the restaurant from seniors to students. We have established a great partnership with SIUE Athletics, acceptance of the SIUE resident meal plan cards, as well as other relationships within the community."

Community service is important for Doc's Smokehouse and it supports several charities throughout the region. A favorite, Operation BBQ Relief ([operationbbqrelief.org](http://operationbbqrelief.org)), has provided over 644,000 meals for 1st responders, victims, and volunteers in disaster situations in 18 states.

"The barbecue community's hearts are huge," Doc Richardson said. "It's like one big family and the barbecue network all over the country helps out."

Over the years, Doc and Susan have won more than 200 barbecue awards and traveled throughout 10 states competing. Their team placed third in pork and eighth in ribs at the American Royal, the largest BBQ competition in the world. Doc and Susan's commitment to the restaurant has limited the two from having the time to compete recently, but the couple plans to host a barbecue competition sometime this summer.

Doc began to develop his passion for barbecue when he was young, watching his dad cook down in the Tennessee hills. The passion continued to grow over the next 20 years. While smoking meat in the backyard, he started a search about recipes and he discovered barbecue forums.

One person he met is fellow cook and competitor **Aaron Moore on the Big O' Dang O' BBQ team**. He encouraged Doc to compete and in his first competition, Doc took first place ribs, a glimpse of things to come.



The kitchen staff at Doc's Smokehouse start preparing a variety of foods from scr



atch at 6 a.m., much ahead of many other restaurants. Food quality and customer service are held in high regard at Doc's. The owner's strive for 100-percent customer satisfaction.

“We try to take time to speak with our guests. We want to know what they liked, or if there is something we can do differently next time,” Susan said. “We also make sure to thank them for coming in.”

The business has primarily grown by word of mouth. The name Doc's Smokehouse continues to spread around the Metro Illinois and St. Louis region. Doc's will focus on building the brand in the coming year.

One of Doc's top sellers is burnt ends, which are flavorful pieces of cubed brisket, double seasoned and smoked, the end result of a 20-hour process. The award-winning meats: brisket, tender pork steaks, slow smoked ribs, smoked turkey, chicken, smoked sausage and melt in your mouth pulled pork are all huge sellers at Doc's.

Susan and Doc both praised their "phenomenal team of employees."

"We could never do this by ourselves," Susan said. "The staff works so hard and often go beyond what is expected because they care. They are like a second family to us."

For Doc and Susan, they will continue to emphasize fresh quality and customer service.

"We love what we do," they both said.

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