



Sugarfire Smoke House Opens Doors in Edwardsville on Wednesday, June 5

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE – Sugarfire Smoke House announced Monday it will open its 13th location at 2323 Plum Street, Suite 100 in Edwardsville at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 5.

The award-winning smoke house will be located along the Madison County Transit Districts Goshen Trail.

Sugarfire founder Charlie Downs and founder-chef Mike Johnson plan to join forces with St. Louis natives and family members Jim Cook, Matt Martin, and Doug Lang to grow Sugarfire to the outer Missouri and Illinois markets. Sugarfire veterans, Cook and Martin have partnered with Johnson and Downs since 2014 as operating partners of Sugarfire's first franchised location in Winghaven, and expanded the partnership with family member Doug Lang via the opening of Sugarfire's Cape Girardeau location in 2018. The trio, along with founding members, looks forward to continuing their success.

A fast-casual concept, Sugarfire Smoke House opened its flagship in St. Louis in 2012, and since, chef Johnson has expanded Sugarfire's imprint across Missouri to eight locations, including a location within the National Blues Museum, and an extensive catering program. With a background in fine dining, and training under the iconic Emeril Lagasse, chef Johnson created Sugarfire's menu to reflect a variety of barbecue styles, techniques and influences found throughout the United States.

Known for its succulent brisket, pulled pork and ribs, as well as its signature sandwiches and sides, Sugarfire has consistently been ranked best barbecue in St. Louis by local and national publications alike. Additionally, chef Johnson has served as a celebrity guest pitmaster and competitor in events globally, including Hogs for the Cause, the Perth Yak Ales BBQ Competition, Memphis in May, Australia's Meatstock, The Kansas City Royal, Charleston Wine & Food Festival and the World Food Championships. Chef Johnson has also been featured on a variety of national television shows, including Food Network's BBQ, Brews & 'Que, Beat Bobby Flay! and Beat Bobby Flay! Rematch, Destination America's BBQ Pitmasters, and Travel Channel's Food Paradise, and recently worked alongside Budweiser to set the Guinness World Record for most people grilling simultaneously.

Having had interest in expanding into Edwardsville for a while, Johnson, alongside Cook, Martin, and Lang looks forward to offering Sugarfire's award-winning 'que to another locale of Illinois.

"Our group could not be more eager to open our doors to the people in Edwardsville," says owner-operator Doug Lang. "The community has a great buzz to it and is only a short skip away from our roots in St. Louis - We really think it's going to be a fun Summer in Edwardsville!"

"Edwardsville is such a great town and it continues to grow," says owner-operator and Sugarfire veteran Matt Martin. "The people around town are so nice and genuine - from the locals to the University Staff - we have felt so welcomed since exploring for locations. We believe that everyone in Edwardsville will really appreciate what we bring to the table (no pun intended!)"

Newly constructed by local contractor Contegra, Sugarfire Eddy will be the first tenant to open within the IronWorks development and will offer an enjoyable atmosphere for food fanatics, families, and SUIE students alike. The 4,500-square-foot space seats close to 125 guests total, with approximately 85 seats in the dining room and an additional 40 on the courtyard patio, which will be share “open ordering” with neighbor Global Brew and be outfitted with TVs, music, cornhole boards and more! Furthermore, the foot of the restaurant’s parking lot meets with the Madison County Transit Districts Goshen Trail, welcoming trail users to easily stop by for a quick bite or brew and further establishing the development as a gathering place for the Edwardsville community.

Upon entering, guests will be greeted by a larger-than-life “shake & beer” bar where customers may order brews, shakes and sodas prior to entering the ordering queue. Unseen in Sugarfires before, the 360-degree bar is constructed from a shipping container and allows easy access for diners looking to order additional drinks or a shake to-go. Inside seating consists of both high and low benches, stools and chairs, and larger groups may opt to gather at the long community-style tables or any of the custom eight-top booths, each crafted by Next Level Metal and outfitted with personal 27-inch TVs. Typical to the brand, glass mosaic flames by local artist Red Keel, hand-painted signage by Phil Jarvis, and reclaimed materials from St. Louis’s Reclaim Renew will make an appearance throughout, paying homage to the overall “sugar and fire” theme. Furthermore, a life-size bucking bull, hand-painted by Jarvis to resemble a tiger and appropriately named “Eddy,” stands tall atop the bar in the dining room. Setting it apart from other interiors is a floor to ceiling “Drip Wall” abstract commissioned by Kentucky artist Ami Beckman, as well as separate to-go counter to make life easy on those opting for takeout.

The Sugarfire Eddy menu will be consistent with the other Sugarfire locations, with main meats made-to-order on Ole Hickory smokers offered alongside signature sides and famous sauces. The counter-service menu will also highlight concept staples such as house made cookies, pies and boozy milkshakes, as well as over-the-top daily specials incorporating locally farmed produce and meats that are announced via the restaurant’s social media platforms each morning. A large selection of local craft beers, sodas, and specialty beverages will grace the menu as well.

Spearheading the kitchen as executive chef is Illinois native Rob Range. Previously of Sugarfire’s Valley Park, Mo. location, chef Range has served as an integral part of Sugarfire’s success and will proudly return to his roots with over 20 years of fine dining experience, along with the past two years beign at Sugarfire “44.” Joining Range is sous chef Jeff Riggle, and leading front-of-house staff will be Zachary Johnson, previously of Tin Roof and the Fabulous FOX Theater. Sugarfire Eddy will also house a pastry chef, fulfilled by Edwardsville’s own Tyrone Walls.

In celebration of the restaurant's grand opening on June 5th, Johnson will be onsite to greet all customers and will offer a "Day 1 Guest Giveaway," wherein one lucky customer will win a Yeti cooler fully stocked with Sugarfire swag, barbecue products, Sugarfire gift cards and more!

Open seven days a week from 11 a.m. until sold out, Sugarfire Eddy will provide counter-service, carryout, and delivery upon opening. Be sure to follow along Sugarfire Eddy on Facebook and on Instagram to stay in-the-know on daily specials and events. With like-minded brands Strange Donuts and Chicken Salad Chick opening soon within the development, Sugarfire looks forward to collaborating with its neighbors to further make IronWorks a food-lovers paradise.

For Sugarfire Smoke House food shots, headshots, interiors and more, please click here. (*All images courtesy of Green Olive Media).

For hiring information and/or to apply for a position at Sugarfire Eddy, please email your resume to dougglang4@gmail.com. For media inquiries surrounding chef Mike Johnson and Sugarfire's expansion, please contact Megan Brown, Green Olive Media, at mbrown@greenolivemedia.com.

ABOUT SUGARFIRE, ST. LOUIS, MO

Sugarfire Smoke House is an award-winning restaurant group, founded by Chef Mike Johnson, Carolyn Downs and Charlie Downs. Famous for its succulent brisket, pulled pork, ribs, signature sandwiches, and over the top daily specials, Sugarfire has consistently been ranked best barbecue in St. Louis by local and national publications alike. Johnson has served as a celebrity pitmaster and competed in events stateside and beyond on behalf of Sugarfire, including Hogs for the Cause, the Perth Yak Ales BBQ Competition, Memphis in May, Australia's Meatstock, The Kansas City Royal, Charleston Wine & Food Festival and the World Food Championship. Furthermore, Johnson has been featured on a variety of national television shows, including Food Network's BBQ, Brews & 'Que (feat. Michael Symon), Destination America's BBQ Pitmasters, Travel Channel's Food Paradise, and Food Network's Beat Bobby Flay!, to name a few, and has been praised by a variety of celebrities including Snoop Dogg. Today, Sugarfire has thirteen locations, including several locations across the state of Missouri (including a location within the National Blues Museum), as well as locations in O'Fallon, IL, Edwardsville, IL, Indianapolis, IN, and Westminster, CO. For more information about Sugarfire Smoke House, please visit sugarfiresmokehouse.com or connect with Sugarfire's flagship on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

ABOUT FOUNDER AND CHEF MIKE JOHNSON | SUGARFIRE SMOKE HOUSE & HI-POINTE DRIVE-IN, ST. LOUIS, MO

Hailing from a background in fine dining, chef Mike Johnson launched his culinary career under a young Emeril Lagasse before heading north to develop his skills under the expertise of Chicago's Charlie Trotter and Gabino Sotellino. Johnson then traveled to Paris to train at the prestigious Le Buisson D'Ardent, and served a stint under Belgian Master Chef Daniel Joly in Beaver Creek, CO before bringing his culinary expertise home to St. Louis, MO. Today, Mike is the chef and owner of St. Louis' Sugarfire Smoke House, an award-winning restaurant that shines light on Johnson's dynamic capacity. With thirteen locations (and counting), Sugarfire has consistently been ranked best barbecue in St. Louis and chef Johnson continues to establish himself as a culinary master and renowned competitor, placing 1st in the 2015 and 2018 Memphis in May World Championship (seafood), 3rd in the 2014 Memphis in May World Championship (poultry), 3rd in the 2015 World Food Championship (bacon), 9th in Overall Sides at the 2015 American Royal's World Series of Barbecue, 12th Overall at Meatstock Australia, 4th in Hog at the 2017 Murphysboro Barbecue Cook-Off, and most recently, spearheaded a grilling demonstration at the 2018 Budweiser Big Bud Sizzle, successfully breaking the Guinness World Record for most people simultaneously grilling at one time. Furthermore, Sugarfire proudly received a Patriot Award from the U.S. Department of Defense for supporting and hiring veterans. In December of 2016, chef Johnson's latest venture, Hi-Pointe Drive-In, came to fruition and has since been lauded as one of St. Louis' Best New Restaurants, also receiving national attention for its smash-patty burgers. To follow along chef Johnson's journey, follow him on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!