

# "We're Outside" Owner Literally Built Restaurant from Ground Up

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - When Troy Hughes decided to open We're Outside, he knew he'd have to put in some hard work.

But he had no idea how much that work would pay off. Two weeks after opening, We're Outside has taken Alton by storm with its hearty barbecue menu. Hughes watches it all

from behind the grill, serving up favorites like ribs, pork steaks, loaded nachos, pulled pork and 80 pounds of wings a day.

“It just turned out that everybody liked it,” Hughes said. “I didn’t know what to expect. The first day, the anxiety was up, but it turned out to be a good turnout. I was really happy with it.”

The turnout is still impressive; you can always count on a long line of eager customers. Located at 1692 Oakwood Avenue, We’re Outside is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from March to October.

As the name suggests, We’re Outside is an open-air restaurant with umbrellas and space to sit out in the grass. In the future, Hughes hopes to host bands, car shows and other fun events.

The restaurant has been Hughes’s dream for a long time. He spent 26 years working as a carpenter before he decided it was “time to shift gears” and give his plan a shot. When he found the lot at 1692 Oakwood, it was the perfect location, but it needed some serious work.

“It was just a lot with a bunch of trees and different things like that,” Hughes remembered. “I started checking prices, and it was too expensive. So I actually cut all the trees down myself, I built the building myself, all the concrete work and everything.”

It took 18 months of labor before We’re Outside was able to open. Calling on his carpentry skills, Hughes literally built the restaurant from the ground up.

While Hughes has always been the cook in his family, making enough food for hundreds of customers proved to be “a whole different ball game.” These days, he mans the grill while his crew mixes up sides like mac n cheese, baked beans and potato salad.

It’s been an exciting month, and Hughes has big plans for the future. He hopes to take on more hours soon as the restaurant settles, but in the meantime, you can always stop by or check Hughes’s [personal Facebook page](#) for information.

“The business is not going to run if you don’t get up and get it running,” Hughes said about his success. “You got to start somewhere. You got to put in work...It makes me proud that I can do something for the community, and everybody accepted it. It feels really good.”

