

DESTINATIONS ONTARIO

EAT DRINK GO SHOP EDITOR VIVIAN VASSOS



“There is no sincerer love than the love of food”

—George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Irish playwright, founder of the London School of Economics

WHY I EAT HERE

THE SMOKE

COLLINGWOOD When you think barbecue joint, what comes to mind? Likely the holy trinity of slow cooking: tangy pulled pork, juicy rack of ribs and fatty beef brisket. For sides, requisite slaw, fries and beans. All washed down with the only beverage designed for such a joyful mess: beer – and the hopper better. So here’s an observation that kind of misses the point of barbecue: this is not a cuisine known for innovation. This is macho, messy indulgence. Paleo on steroids. The no-apologies diet.

But up in Collingwood, there’s a

new barbecue joint that’s a true game changer. Owner-chef Cam Dymont calls it The Smoke, and he does all the usual stuff but adds some clever twists. How about meat loaf, a mix of pork, veal and beef topped with bacon and smoked for three hours (\$16)? Or smoked fish – Arctic char, salmon, local whitefish or local farmed rainbow trout – priced by the kilogram? Or a smoked eight-ounce burger that spends two-and-a-half hours in a smoky haze? “I gave one to my daughter,” Dymont says, “and she tells me, ‘That’s the best hamburger I’ve ever

had.’” He does other sandwiches, too, like smoked turkey burger, meatballs (“balls of meat”) and smoked cheddar, and smoked wild boar sausage (\$10–\$16, with a side or homemade soup).

Dymont turns poutine on its head. Thick-cut fries are topped with beef brisket and a creamy Béarnaise (\$12). Wings are smoked two hours, then grilled to order (one pound, \$11). Another oddity for a barbecue joint: salads – smoked trout (\$15) or smoked chicken caesar (\$13). You can taste the care in every dish or read about it on the menu, where prep details are →

DESTINATIONS



TIP!
The Smoke's
homemade
sauces – in
four different
flavours – can
be had for \$9
a bottle.

carefully described. Barbecued baked beans, made with house-made bacon, take 24 hours to make. On the menu, a warning: “When we sell out of an item, we’re out for the day.” One constant, the smoked banana ice cream, can be taken to go in pints (\$9) – and it’s worth every phased-out penny. This is the only food at The Smoke that’s ever been frozen.

Since opening in December, Dyment’s blown all his projections (he’s a bit of a numbers guy), so he’s trademarked the name and plans to franchise. He’s adding a 28-seat patio this spring, and no doubt he’ll need it to complement the 82-seat main room. Open from lunch till late, the scene is busy and getting busier, with equal action at the take-out counter and the dining room. Dyment’s planning to put a smoker on the patio – just one more reason to settle in, linger and breathe in the deliciousness. 498 First St., 705-293-5522, thesmoke.ca —Dick Snyder



WHY I DRINK HERE

BEAU'S ALL NATURAL BREWING COMPANY

VANKLEEK HILL Family-run, completely organic with a trophy case filled with awards, Beau's All Natural Brewing Company has been a key figure in Ontario's craft brewing renaissance since opening in 2006. An hour east of Ottawa in Vankleek Hill, the brewery is known for thinking outside of the

tank – they dabble in ancient beer recipes, have a robust barrel-aging program and throw one of the best Oktoberfest parties this side of the Atlantic (Oct. 4-5). No matter when you're in the area, though, know they're open seven days a week and offer free tours. 10 Terry Fox Dr., www.beaus.ca —Travis Persaud



WHY I EAT HERE

THE BLACK FOREST INN

HAMILTON If you love schnitzel (and who doesn't?), the Black Forest Inn serves up crispy, mouth-watering recipes from six different European countries. The food is homey delicious and won't break the bank. Goulash soup and homemade sausages are consistently good, and there is a fresh and tasty homemade soup or salad every day – included with your meal. The atmosphere

is cosy, with a European ambience and friendly staff. The dessert menu includes Euro classics such as Bavarian apple strudel and Black Forest cake. A great place to go with friends, family and even grandkids – you'll find tables for two and for large groups – the food and service don't disappoint. Oh, and don't forget to order the spaetzle. 255 King St. E., www.blackforestinn.ca —Julie Matus