



The Press-Sentinel

Drop us a message online at: staff@thepress-sentinel.com or visit our Web site at: www.thepress-sentinel.com

Jesup, Georgia 31545

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

50¢

The Pig set the standard for *real* pit barbecue

All I have to do is close my eyes and I'm there for the first time.

It was 1957 and I'm 9 years old sitting on a stool watching in mouthwatering amazement my first meal of *real* pit barbecue being prepared for me.

Gussie Priester speared a sizzling pork ham suspended over oak embers of the open pit behind the counter. While the bun was toasting, Gussie wielded the meat cleaver—*whomp, whomp, whomp!* Piling the succulent meat high on the bread, she slathered on a secret sauce that I can still taste today.

As my late friend Lewis Grizzard would say, "If God made a finer meal than this, then he must have kept it for Himself."

In the sleepy 1950s, Jesup was just a small dot on the ribbon of asphalt known as U.S. 301 that stretched through Southeast Georgia. It was a favorite of the New York to Miami-bound tourists. Interstate highways were still on the drawing board, but Sine and Vida Aspinwall put Jesup on the map with their barbecue and tangy sauce. "We ship anywhere," the sign said. And they did. Tons of barbecue with The Pig's label went everywhere.

My Opinion



**DINK
NESMITH**
Chairman

Until now.

As a little girl, Diana Aspinwall listened to the stories of The Pig. While her father, Al, was alive, he carried on The Pig tradition with backyard barbecues. Almost as closely guarded as the fabled Coca-Cola formula, The Pig sauce recipe was kept a secret. Thousands of barbecue lovers like me have tried to recreate that special taste introduced 70 years ago by Diana's grandparents. We could only come close.

Until now.

Diana has answered our prayers by chasing her dream. The former beauty queen has traded her tiara for an apron and a determination to bring

back the wonderful flavor of her heritage—The Pig.

Sitting on my desk is a pint of glorious memories. It's from the first batch of J.D. Diggs BBQ Sauce. Visit her Web site: www.jd-diggs.com. Diana and her business partner, Jody Tarleton, have commissioned Jesup's Ollie Lindell to produce The Pig's sauce in 16-ounce jars. Trucks are hauling it to stores right now.

I don't have to twist off the lid to know how it tastes or smells. Those sensations haven't left me since 1957.

No, no.

This commemorative jar won't leave my desk. It is a monument to Diana and her dream. Sine, Vida and their son, Al, are smiling from above. A bit of history has been retrieved from the past. That history will show The Pig helped put my hometown on the map.

And Diana has put The Pig's sauce back into circulation to satisfy our cravings.

Life is good, amen?

Let's eat.

Please pass the barbecue and some of that *wonderful* J.D. Diggs sauce.

dnesmith@cni newspapers.com