

## Due South BBQ offers genuine southern dishes

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Due South BBQ, a Christiansburg restaurant, offers up a barbecue experience that you'll be hard-pressed to find without heading south into deep barbecue territory.



Due South BBQ is located on Roanoke Street in Christiansburg.

Barbecue is the legendary pork creation promised to swell your belly from here to Georgia. Blacksburg boasts a few barbecue offerings here and there. They're adequate, but I, accustomed to the fresh delicious piggies of North Carolina, have been unable to truly sate my barbecue lust without making that long journey home.

Recently, I was alerted by a secret barbecue informant to the Christiansburg establishment Due South, which he said uses a real smoker. Now, this may seem insignificant to some, but I assure you, it is vital. The smoker, an apparatus that draws hot smoke over the meat in a slow cooking process, is to barbecue as the Force is to Jedi. Or a guitar to Jimi Hendrix. Or an electron to a covalent bond.

So I picked up two buddies and zoomed down 460 to Due South BBQ (located on Roanoke Street, shortly before the exit to 81). It's roughly fifteen minutes from campus, depending on the legality of your driving. If you see the signs for the StarLite

Drive-In theatre, then you'll know you're close.

The diner has a rustic look about it; neither old-fashioned nor abandoned, but homegrown. And the inside atmosphere matches the outside, sparkling clean and well-lit with paper towel spindles on each table that hint: this could get messy. Bluegrass music played gently (with a sign, "do not adjust volume") from wall speakers. I was nearly lulled into relaxation by Due South's charm, but I struggled to remain alert, suspicious. Only good food could satisfy me.

The menu is split into two parts — breakfast and lunch/dinner. I didn't get a chance to try one of the many breakfast options. Omelets, "flapjacks," biscuits and gravy, applewood bacon and smoked taters are a few of the available choices.

The lunch/dinner portion of the menu, the barbecue part, offers a few types of sandwiches, chicken and baby back ribs, smoked wings and pulled pork barbecue. With my desire for quality barbecue controlling my every action, I chose one of the plates, titled "The Trough," a \$7.99 combo featuring a jumbo pulled pork barbecue sandwich with two sides. There were plenty side options, with baked beans, slaw, hushpuppies, fries, potato salad, banana pudding, green beans, mac and cheese and even fried green tomatoes. I recommend the hushpuppies; they were just right. Some of the best I've had.

While I waited for the food (and you wait for the climactic conclusion of this review), I learned a bit about the history of Due South BBQ. It has been open for about a year and a half; the owners, Jared and Marie March, moved from South Carolina and were unable to find any barbecue that met their standards. So, using their experience from years of cooking barbecue as a weekend hobby for friends and family, they decided to open their own restaurant, offering fresh-smoked barbecue.

And fresh it is: near the door, a sign proclaims: "Have your dog fall in love with you again. Give your dog a free bone." Beneath, shrink-wrapped bones are stacked, proof that Due South BBQ isn't messing around when it comes to freshness.

The sandwich arrived very quickly, in no more than five minutes, with a smiling, confident "enjoy."

I dug in, and I was delighted. In a Ratatouille-esque moment, I was reminded of home, of some of the best North Carolina barbecue I'd tasted. My suspicions were allayed; I was not disappointed. Simply put, it was good.

Due South BBQ offers five different types of sauces: a sweet tomato-based red, a sweet tomato-based brown, a vinegar-based Lexington imitation, a mustard-based yellow similar to sauces I've had in South Carolina style barbecue, and a hot red. The hot red, a "1st place 2007 Va. State Championship" sauce, was my personal favorite, adding a spicy kick to the meal.

The portions were plentiful, the jumbo bun overflowed with pork barbecue and the plate was piled with fries, hushpuppies and fried green tomatoes. And every bite was a treat for my palate.

I have found my barbecue home away from home, so if you, too, have a barbecue lust that you need to sate, or even if you're just looking for a relaxing, enjoyable homegrown meal, then I recommend Due South BBQ.