Barbeque Master Kevin Mote owner of Smokey’s Barbeque

Mr. Mote started out his career as an engineer in the tech sector. He worked hard and took pride in his work which often led him to bring his career back home. After his son pointed out the lack of time he had to spend with this family Mr. Mote decided to hang up his hat and focus on his family. After about a year of helping out friends with jobs he decided to move onto his own catering business. From there he quickly found out that weddings and events often occurred on the weekends when he wanted to be spending time with his son. So Mr. Mote made yet another switch and began his own barbeque restaurant which he still ran a catering business out of. Thus Smokey’s Barbeque was born. It is a small building off of Chapel Hill Road in Morrisville that would be easy to overlook if it weren’t for the dozens of cars surrounding it. He finally had obtained his dream, a job he loved, friends and family in the work place, and plenty of time to spend with his wife and son. His new restaurant was influence by his upbringing and it shows in the food and on the walls. Smokey’s is full of hunting and fishing pictures, stuffed deer parts (ill just leave it at that), and Tennessee volunteers gear. While the walls show the humble beginnings of the restaurant the menu reflects Mr. Mote’s childhood. When Mr. Mote was a child he used to work in the tobacco fields priming tobacco. While he worked his dad watched and cooked pigs for sale. Barbequing pigs is something that has run in Mote family for generations and with Mr. Motes son helping out in the restaurant the trend may be continuing.

Although Smokey’s Barbeque caters to the professional crowd from Research Triangle Park which tends to range from young adults to empty nesters, Mr. Mote and his wife have a heart for children. They love to help with fundraisers and charities but especially when the area’s children have something to gain from them. One of their more notable collaborations is with the Knights of Columbus golf tournament in which not only do they sponsor several holes but they also cater the event. The proceeds from the golf tournament goes to help support kids with disabilities in the triangle as well as smaller efforts in other parts the state. Another golf tournament they sponsor is run by the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and it raises money to send inner city kids to camps and other activities in the summer. They do however also help with other charities such as the Durham Rescue Mission by donating leftovers from the events they cater for. All this generosity adds up to thousands and thousands of dollars given back to the communities in ways that will leave lasting impacts.

Along with Smokey’s Barbeque’s determination to better the community they also take every chance they get to better the food it eats. The restaurant is constantly running specials in which the produce used is from either local farms owned by friends or by the Mote family themselves. From peach cobbler made from Mr. Mote’s in-laws orchard to beans and corn that are grown on their own land many dishes sold are quite sustainable. Another cool idea that they have put into practice is inviting friends with local farms to come and sell their organic foods to his kitchen for specials or out in the parking lot like a mini farmers market. When it comes to specials the food seems to be quite local and healthy for the environment, but Mr. Mote says that he as well as his customers are more concerned with taste and price than with locality.

When it comes to barbeque there is a problem that a restaurant of this magnitude runs into when trying to purchase and cook local foods. The first and most prominent being finding a logical and steady source of product. Mr. Mote has looked into many local “sustainable pig farms” that could have been suppliers for Smokey’s; however, none of these farms could supply him for more than a few weeks to a month. The same goes for the beef and chicken he purchases. For this reason Mr. Mote is forced to buy from bigger suppliers who aren’t forced to kill off all of their livestock to supply the restaurant. The bigger supplier that the restaurant uses is Performance Food Group which combines meat taken from large companies as well as small farms, packages it, and ships it out to restaurants. Although most of the food isn’t local from this supplier Mr. Mote is quick to point out and rightly so that even if local foods tasted slightly better than their mass produced counter parts, after hours of smoking and the addition of the sauce the difference would be negligible. This leaves only the ecological benefits to gain from the local foods and this form of purchasing meat and produce insures that Smokey’s has consistent supply every week which is more important to resturants. It also thankfully allows for small amounts of local and sustainably grown foods to seep into a market that does not quite have the infrastructure to make the switch to sustainable foods.

Mr. Mote believes that the consumer is the ultimate decider of what the market provides. He does not believe that the government or entrepreneurs should be the ones to make the first move to local and sustainable foods. He says that if the customer wants more local and sustainable items on his menu and is willing to pay the price for them then he will alter his niche and provide the service that is demanded. All this being said Mr. Mote believes that with enough and proper regulation any form of food production can be sustainable and that local food is not necessarily the only answer. But for now, everyone seems to be enjoying the Smokey’s Barbeque that they know and love so why mix it up!

