

On this mailing list by mistake? Send a note to [listmanager@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:listmanager@ronshewchuk.com) to get yourself off. That didn't come out right. Oh well, you know what I mean. Anyway, here goes another edition of...



## Rockin' Ronnie's Barbecue Times

*Improving the quality of your barbecue lifestyle.*



Photos courtesy Ian Baird

Volume I, Issue #2, December, 2004

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### ***Season's Greetings From Barbecueville***

Welcome to the second edition of ***Rockin' Ronnie's Barbecue Times***. The barbecue competition season is over for the year, but as we enter the holiday season backyard cooking continues unabated. In fact, grilling and barbecue industry surveys tell us that the majority of North Americans grill all year round... and about one in five grill owners has cooked outdoors during a snowstorm! This, of course, confirms my view that barbecue is more than a way of cooking. It's a lifestyle whose proponents are just as committed as any self-respecting religious cult or music subculture. Long live barbecue! In smoke there is truth! Care for some Kool-Aid?

This is a good time to suggest that copies of my book, *Barbecue Secrets*, make great Christmas gifts for your employees, friends or family members. You can get it at Coles/Indigo/Chapters and other bookstores across Canada, buy it online at [www.chapters.ca](http://www.chapters.ca) or [www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca), or if you want ten copies or more, you can buy directly from me and I'll write personal inscriptions for you to each person. Just write me at [rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com) for more details.

In this edition of **Barbecue Times** you'll get another fix of news, advice, tips and stories about our smoky little hobby/obsession, from a full report on the Butt Shredders' experience at the Jack Daniel's Invitational World Barbecue Championship last month to the story of an eccentric Frenchman who has concocted a Rube Goldberg Device of a barbecue. So, sit back, light up the coals of your fiery imagination, and enjoy.

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### **Rib Tickler**

**"Always carry a flagon of whiskey in case of snakebite . . . and furthermore, always carry a small snake."**

- W.C. Fields

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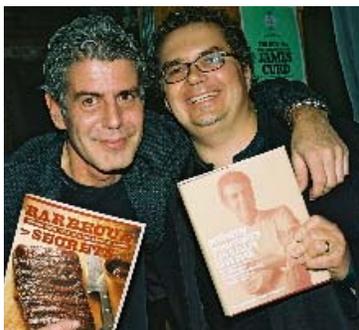
### **Ronnie's Barbecue BLOG**

#### **"Nanook of the Pork"**

The December edition of *Toro*, a great Canadian men's magazine along the lines of *Esquire*, features me as guest meat columnist. The column is about winter grilling, including ten tips to make frigid outdoor cooking safer and easier. Pick up a copy of *Toro* on your nearest newsstand or visit [www.toromagazine.ca](http://www.toromagazine.ca) for an online version of the article (which also features a great kebab recipe from *Barbecue Secrets*).



#### **Barbecue Confidential!**



I got a chance to meet one of my favorite authors on Nov. 5 when culinary rock star Anthony Bourdain came to Vancouver to promote his new *Les Halles Cookbook*. My wife Kate Zimmerman and I attended a book-signing event that attracted hundreds of Bourdain fans. Kate loves the guy (he's got a real bad-boy sex appeal that women can't resist). Her Bourdain interview ran in the Dec. 4 edition of the *National Post* newspaper's *Saturday Post*.

#### **Barbecue Secrets Hits the Big time**

Hey! My book got reviewed in the *Wall Street Journal* of barbecue – the *National Barbecue News*! [Check it out.](#)

## No Contest, No Cry

The tickets were bought, the barbecue rub and swimsuits were packed. Vince Gogolek and I were ready to head for Montego Bay, Jamaica to represent Canada and the Butt Shredders at the third annual International Jerk-style/Southern Barbecue Cook-off.



Photo courtesy Rocky Danner

Then Hurricane Ivan hit, and even though the massive storm delivered only a glancing blow, sparing the beautiful island from total destruction, the competition grounds were reduced to a shambles. So we will have to wait till next year to try our hand at Rocky Danner's ultimate barbecue championship in the place where real barbecue was born.

Sponsor Appleton Rum has promised to send us to next year's contest, which will probably be held in the fall.

## Back from the Jack

Rockin' Ronnie's Butt Shredders headed down to Lynchburg Tennessee in the third week of October for the big Jack Daniel's Invitational World Championship Barbecue. With a total of 11 people in the Butt Shredder camp this year, we were better equipped and more prepared than ever for an international contest. Unfortunately, being super organized and having lots of hands did not translate into our best performance.



Photo courtesy Sharma Christie

We came, we saw....and we placed 41<sup>st</sup> out of 62 teams.

Our trademark pork butt and our brisket were tasty but a tad underdone, lacking the melt-in-the-mouth texture that makes for winning barbecue. Our ribs were great, but we only made it into the top 25, and our chicken -- traditionally one of our strongest categories -- was a total bust, coming in second last. We're still picking over the bones, so to speak, of our less than satisfying showing.

One thing is for sure -- it's an extremely tough competition and difficult to predict what the judges will like. Last year's winners, Smokin' Triggers, came 18<sup>th</sup> this year. Memphis in May World Champion and one of the world's greatest barbecue cooks, Myron Mixon, ended up 10<sup>th</sup> overall. Swine Fellows and BBQ Boys, two of Canada's best barbecue teams, came 56<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup>.

So we take a little comfort in knowing that even the best of the best don't necessarily do well at the Jack. And, like all the competitors, we relish the experience of being part of the most prestigious barbecue contest in the world. Plus, we did get to go up to the "dance floor" to accept a trophy and a small cheque for our third-place showing in the "Home Cookin' From the Homeland" category, for which we cooked Lamb Racks with Balsamic Reduction (see last issue of [Barbecue Times](#) for the recipe).



Photo courtesy Chris Gafford,

The big surprise this year was the upset victory of [Mad Cows](#), a British team in only their second year of competition that stunned the crowd when they were named overall Grand Champions. When contest organizer Tana Shupe announced the big winner, there was a collective gasp of shock and disbelief from the assembled competitors. How could it be that a non-American team won the most prestigious barbecue championship in the world?

The answer is simple. Mad Cows cooked great barbecue – and they benefited from the Jack Daniel's contest's longstanding commitment to supporting and mentoring international teams. The organizers set out many years ago to make sure the contest had a strong international component and this year there were more teams from other countries than ever – a total of 16 – including four from Canada (Darren Clark's Ontario-based team, What Have You Been Smokin', came in 40<sup>th</sup>, beating the Butt Shredders by a fraction of a point).

I'm delighted that the British won the Jack, because it will likely bring more international attention to competitive barbecue. Mad Cows follow in the footsteps of the Butt Shredders as the second non-American barbecue team to win a U.S.-based competition. Perhaps the true meaning of the Butt Shredders' win at the Oregon State Open in 2001 and Mad Cows' win at the Jack this year is that barbecue has truly come of age as a global cuisine, with its roots in America, but with strong, fast-growing branches all over the world. For more pix of this year's Jack, visit [www.ronshechuk.com](http://www.ronshechuk.com).

## Crazy Frenchman Rigs ‘Rube Goldberg’ Barbecue Device

Well, maybe my friend Michele’s dad isn’t crazy, but he sure has built a crazy barbecue – if you could call it that! On a recent visit to France to visit with her father, Michele took some pictures of this odd contraption and e-mailed this one to me.



Composed of a rôtisserie engine, a chain from a Japanese photocopy machine, a fan from a kitchen ventilator, a forge from a forge-truck, various grates, lawn-mower wheels and a metal bed frame, the device features hand-made stainless steel skewers that rotate 1/4 of a turn every time they get to the bottom, so that the meat gets evenly cooked. I am stunned by its ingenuity and its nutty appearance. What a wonderful thing! Don’t you just want one?

Michele’s dad puts charcoal in the forge pan, along with dry pine needles as a flavouring agent. He runs the fan for 4 or 5 minutes until the charcoal is red, then stops the ventilation and puts on the meat. Rube Goldberg would be proud! Thanks, Michelle, for sharing this truly amazing story with ***Barbecue Times***.

Do you have an oddball barbecue or grill, or just an interesting story related to backyard cooking? Share it with me at [rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com) and I’ll share it with everyone else.

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## **Recipe of the Month: CHEATER RIBS**

It's winter grilling time; I don't do a lot of heavy duty smoking in the winter, but I grill all year round and usually stick to good old quick, reliable propane to help get me in and out of the cold as quickly as possible. These ribs, from *Barbecue Secrets*, are wonderfully tender, they taste great, and they don't take all day to cook – perfect winter grilling fare.

- 2 racks of side or baby back ribs, trimmed by your butcher
- 1 medium onion, peeled and halved
- 1 tsp./5 mL peppercorns
- 3 or 4 whole cloves
- 2 Tbsp./25 mL prepared mustard
- 1/2 tsp./2 mL granulated garlic
- 1/4 cup/50 mL or so Classic Barbecue Rub (recipe below makes about three cups):
  - 1 cup/250 mL white granulated sugar
  - 1/4 cup/50 mL celery salt
  - 1/4 cup/50 mL garlic salt
  - 1/4 cup/50 mL onion salt
  - 1/4 cup/50 mL seasoning salt (I like Lowry's)
  - 1/3 cup/75 mL chili powder (use a commercial blend, or if you want an edge, try a combo of real ground chiles like ancho, poblano, New Mexico or guahilla)
  - 1/3 cup/75 mL black pepper
  - 1/3 cup/75 mL paprika
  - 1-3 tsp./5-15 ml. of two or three of your favorite seasonings like powdered thyme, oregano, cumin
- 1 cup/250 mL barbecue sauce, the sweeter the better

Remove the membrane from the ribs if your butcher hasn't already done it for you. Fill a large pot with cold water and completely submerge the ribs in the water. Add the onion, along with the peppercorns and cloves. Bring the water just to a boil. With a spoon or ladle, quickly skim off the soapy scum that forms on the top of the water and reduce the heat to low. Gently simmer the ribs for about 1 1/4 hours or until they begin to pull apart easily. Take the ribs out of the water and cool them on a cooking sheet until they are easy to handle. Prepare your grill for direct medium heat. Coat the ribs with mustard, sprinkle lightly with garlic and coat with the rub. Let sit until the rub starts to glisten, about ten minutes. Grill the ribs for 3 or 4 minutes on each side, applying barbecue sauce with a basting brush as you turn them. Cook until the sauce is nicely caramelized and the ribs are lightly charred in a few places. Remove from the grill, let them rest for a few minutes, cut them into single ribs and serve with classic barbecue accompaniments like corn on the cob, slaw, beans, etc. Serves 4.

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**Do you have a favorite barbecue recipe you'd like to share? Send it on to me at [rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com).**

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**Ask Rockin'**

Ron:

I put my brisket on at about 10:30 p.m. but given the downpour we've been having for the last hour and a half I don't think I picked the best day to barbecue anything. I have a question if you... The brisket went up to 154°F and has stayed there for about 3 hours, is that normal? We've been running the smoker at about 210°F.

Peter Wilson, Vancouver

*Hi, Peter. Yes, that's very normal. With big cuts of meat you sometimes get to a point where you have to work a little to get the internal temperature up, especially in conditions like this. Anywhere above 150°F or so the connective tissue starts breaking down so your roast is on track to become tender, but ultimately you want the internal temperature to be above 170°F, and ideally about 185°F. One way to get the temp higher is to wrap the brisket in foil and then get your smoker up to the 250-300 degree range by adding hot coals and opening up the vents all the way. I have even been in situations where I've taken the water out of the water pan to jack the internal temperature up.*

*Again, good luck and let me know how it turns out!*

Ron

**And here's Peter's reply:**

Hi Ron

The Brisket was a success, we let it rest for one hour and despite my worries that it felt a little tough, it was excellent. My sister and brother in law were down here from the Sunshine Coast and they now think I'm a f----ing genius. The beef was delicious. Because the meat was much more tender at the thin end of the brisket than it was toward the heel - and because we had so much left, I put the heel end back into the smoker (after I had carved our dinner) and left it there for another two hours. It felt a lot more "jelly like" when I took it out. So now it's cooling down waiting to go in the fridge.



By the way, my wife Patt made baked beans following your recipe and she is now converted to the "rockin" way of cooking baked beans. She has made baked beans many times before but she is convinced your recipe is the best. We all enjoyed them. Great stuff.

Thanks for your help. It's really nice being able to bother you with my dumb questions and I really appreciate the fact that you are willing to help. Especially since we now realize how valuable experience is with these smokers.

Many thanks.

***Do you have a question or comment? Ask me at [rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com) and I'll feature a selection of letters in future issues of Barbecue Times.***

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### ***Rockin' Ronnie Watch***

#### **April 22 – 24, 2005: THIRD ANNUAL CANADIAN BARBECUE AND CHILI FESTIVAL COOK-OFF, FEATURING THE BC BARBECUE CHAMPIONSHIP – VANCOUVER, B.C.**

This year the BC Barbecue Championship is moving from its modest digs in Surrey to a major venue, Vancouver's BC Place, as part of the giant Eat! Vancouver food and cooking show. I will be there, doing barbecue demonstrations, flogging my book and, of course, competing for barbecue glory.

#### **June 4, 2005: SIXTH ANNUAL "SECRETS OF CHAMPIONSHIP BARBECUE" WORKSHOP – CALGARY, ALBERTA**

This all-day, hands-on workshop at the Big Rock Brewery is all about traditional, southern-style barbecue, the kind we cook in competition, and features my fellow Butt Shredders who share their copious knowledge. The event always sells out well in advance and there's only room for about 30 participants. Visit [www.cookbookcooks.com](http://www.cookbookcooks.com) for more info, or call 403-265-6066 to register.

#### **June 5, 2005 – ROCKIN' RONNIE'S BARBECUE CLASS – CALGARY, ALBERTA**

In this two-and-a-half hour class I'll share backyard grilling tips, recipes and techniques from Barbecue Secrets, including appetizers, sides, mains and desserts. Visit [www.cookbookcooks.com](http://www.cookbookcooks.com) for more info, or call 403-265-6066 to register.

**July long weekend, 2005: SECOND ANNUAL SECRETS OF CHAMPIONSHIP BARBECUE WEEKEND WORKSHOP – WHISTLER, B.C.**

Last July I hosted my first barbecue workshop in B.C. and it was a great success with rave reviews from participants. Next summer we're doing it again. Block off your calendar. More details will come your way in the New Year. (Actually, I have a question for you. If you are planning to attend the workshop, tell me something: it's the long weekend, and this year July 1 falls on a Friday. If I were to hold a half day afternoon grilling class the first day, and then an all-day barbecue workshop on day two, should I start on the Friday or the Saturday? My instinct is to start on Friday but let me know by sending me a note to [rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:rockinronnie@ronshewchuk.com).)

**August long weekend, 2005: THE CANADIAN NATIONAL BARBECUE CHAMPIONSHIPS – WHISTLER, B.C.**

Rockin' Ronnie's Butt Shredders will be back to Dusty's Bar & BBQ to defend last year's Grand Champion title.

**Sept. 2005 (date to TBD): JAMAICA OR BUST!**

Hurricane Ivan caused a one-year delay, but at the end of next summer, the Butt Shredders are heading for **Montego Bay, Jamaica** to represent Canada on **the International Jerk-style/Southern Barbecue Cookoff at the Sunset Beach Resort & Spa**. The trip is courtesy of Canadian National Barbecue Championships sponsor Appleton Rum.

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Well, that's another edition of *Rockin' Ronnie's Barbecue Times*. Till next time, happy cooking!



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*Rockin' Ronnie's Barbecue Times* is published four or five times a year. To get on or off the mailing list, just drop me a line to [listmanager@ronshewchuk.com](mailto:listmanager@ronshewchuk.com).

For more about Ron Shewchuk (including more recipes and a photo gallery), visit [www.ronshewchuk.com](http://www.ronshewchuk.com)

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