

# Chef hails smoked food

By Ariano Funke  
special writer

Robert Kasly sings the praises of smoked food. Mention a meat or fish and Kasly, chef at the Beverly Hills Grill, will find a way to smoke it. "It's really succulent and moist," Kasly said. "The smoked product should taste moist, with a barbecue taste."

Kasly, 28, has smoked the usual fish, pork, chicken, quail and ribs. But he's also experimented with bear meat, vegetables and a host of other foods.

Kasly, who has been at the Beverly Hills Grill, on Southfield Road between 13 Mile and 14 Mile roads, for a little more than a year. He grew up in Ulica and headed west to study at the California Culinary Academy. It was there that he began learning smoking techniques.

UNTIL RECENTLY, Kasly had used a homemade smoker that he'd rigged up. But that proved to be impractical because juices from the meat dripped into the wood chips where the heat was generated, causing flare-ups.

The restaurant has installed a versatile commercial smoker that Kasly deems to be "Mercedes-Benz" in quality and usefulness.

According to Kasly, smoked food

require a three-part process that begins with a 24-hour soak in brine. Brine is a solution of salt, water and spices. Its purpose is to draw natural sugars and moisture from food and form lactic acids to protect against bacteria that causes spoilage.

"There are millions of different brines and theories," Kasly said. For example, Kasly uses maple syrup and white pungent onions to soak pork. For fish, he combines honey, soy sauce, fresh ginger and garlic.

After the food is soaked, it is air-dried for 24 hours then placed in the smoker for several hours at a very low temperature. Kasly uses pieces of wood from apple, cherry, oak and other trees. Metal rods under the wood heat up causing the dry wood to smolder. Eventually smoke is released, cooking and flavoring the food. "You're trying to create condensed dry heat," Kasly said.

THE GRANDPARENTS of Kasly's wife Robin live in the Upper Peninsula, where Scandinavian-style smoked foods are prepared. Kasly, who sees many similarities between those traditional ways and his current creations, recently tried some smoked bear while visiting in the UP.

"I absorb some of the old ways," he says.

Kasly, who lives in Beverly Hills, dreams of someday opening a bed-

and-breakfast in northern Michigan. Meanwhile, Kasly keeps busy at the Beverly Hills Grill, which specializes in "innovative American fare." The restaurant, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, features several choices of smoked foods.

Smoked trout with scrambled eggs costs around \$6. It blends pieces of the smoked fish with eggs, cream cheese and mild onions. A smoked salmon omelet is in the \$6 price range. Smoked duck salad with a warm balsamic dressing is priced at \$7.25.

Autumn brings small game birds such as pheasant and quail to the menu, Kasly said. His aim is to present entrees that are lightly smoked and not "overbearing."

True enthusiasts could smoke their own foods at home, using box smokers, which are available at several hardware or sporting goods stores, Kasly said. He emphasized that the meat or fish must be soaked in brine before smoking.

The Beverly Hills Grill is at 31471 Southfield Road, between 13 Mile and 14 Mile roads, Beverly Hills, phone 642-2355. Opens at 7:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. Sunday. Brunch served weekends. Restaurant closes at 11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, midnight Friday and Saturday and 10 p.m. Sunday.

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# Green River offers cooks a medley of trout dishes

**GREEN RIVER BROILED TROUT**  
1 1/2-inch trout per person  
2 tsp. melted butter or margarine  
per fish  
lemons juice  
salt, pepper  
Paprika  
Garlic and celery salt, optional

Put cleaned, whole trout in 400-degree oven, on foil-lined cookie sheet for about 15 minutes or until back fin pulls out easily. Remove from oven and allow to cool until they can be handled. Don't allow them to get cold. Lift head and entire backbone

## Moisture is key to smoky goodness

Continued from Page 1

erness. Liquid hickory flavoring gives the meat its smoky taste.

Temperatures are kept below 200 degrees, Sheldon said. Turkey breast, which is dense, might be smoked for a period of seven hours, while lighter whitefish would be completed in three or four hours.

"The trick of smoking is to do it the same way over and over again," Marra said. "You want to add that flavor and keep it moist."

A chunk of smoked trout, upon sampling, was moist and tender with a light glaze and a delicate, smoky flavor. The taster pronounced it delicious.

Demand for smoked meats and fish intensifies during the fall months, with tailgate picnics, and continues through the holiday party season, according to Marra.

Boned and rolled smoked turkey breast, the most popular item, sells for around \$8 a pound. A whole boned and rolled turkey is a little more than \$5 per pound. Fresh rainbow trout sells for a little more than \$4 a pound, while smoked trout is around \$6 a pound.

If you're game to try something a little different, there's whole smoked domestic duck for almost \$4 a pound; a mallard fetches \$16-\$21 each. Customers may also buy a whole smoked goose, partridge and cornish game hen.

Got a hankering for buffalo sausage? Green River buys buffalo from a farm near Traverse City and grinds it into sausage. The shop also makes a whitefish pate, using salt-free butter, dill and cream cheese.

Also available are morel mushrooms from northern Michigan, as well as other mushrooms, leeks and unusual noodles and sauces.

Green River Specialty Foods is at 4254 N. Woodward Ave., North of 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak, phone 549-0110. Open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

up and off bottom fillet (fingers work best). Lay fillet bone-side in pan and lift off bones. Flip fillet over onto foil-lined broiler pan. Make sure foil is turned up a bit around edges. Lift off skin. Flip bottom fillet over onto broiler pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Salt and pepper fillets. Add dash of garlic and celery salt if desired. Cover broiler pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate or freeze until ready to broil. Can be prepared hours or days ahead of time. Pre-heat broiler and place trout about 4 inches above heat for 10-15 minutes or until fish begin to brown slightly on top.

Green River French Fried Trout

Bake trout and remove bones and skin as in recipe for broiler trout. Prepare batter by planing in bowl: 1 cup flour, 1 cup baking powder and 1 tsp. salt.

Mix together 1 cup milk, 1/4 cup oil and 1 egg. Add to flour mixture and blend thoroughly. Dip trout fillets in batter and deep fry for about two minutes or until lightly brown. Tastes great with garlic toast and a large tossed salad.

Robert Kasly's Brine for Smoked Trout  
1 qt. water  
3 lb. lemon juice  
2 oz. soy sauce  
4 oz. honey  
2 1/2 oz. kosher salt by weight  
2 lb. fresh ground garlic  
2 lb. freshly chopped garlic

Dissolve ingredients in water and mix well. Stir and mix fish into brine. Cover with a weighted dinner plate to keep fish in liquid. Soak 24 hours. Serves three pounds of fish.

Beverly Hills Grill Smoked Trout and Eggs

3 oz. chopped and flleted smoked trout  
1 oz. sliced mushrooms  
1 oz. cream cheese  
1 oz. sliced red onions  
1 scallion, thinly sliced  
kosher salt and pepper to taste  
2 large eggs, beaten

Sautee mushrooms, red onion and smoked trout together in small quantity of butter or olive oil. Add beaten eggs and stir. Add cream cheese and green onions, stirring. Adjust seasoning. Cook to desired egg consistency. Serve with biscuits or muffins.

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