

DINING

Barbecue's hot, blues cool at 'Red Hot & Blue'

EATING OUT IN THE SUBURBS

You used to have to drive pretty far south on I-75 to get Memphis-style barbecue, not anymore.

Red Hot & Blue, a national Memphis-style pit bar-b-que blues restaurant chain based in Arlington, Va., is here. Two restaurants, one in Southfield and one in Sterling Heights, are open, with a third scheduled to open the middle of September on Novi Road, just south of Grand River.

Red Hot & Blue is fun, casual and comfortable. The walls are red, which makes the place feel kind of cozy, and the ceiling fans help create that sultry Southern atmosphere that "ya'll" are familiar with. The place seats 240 people, at booths and comfortable tables.

If you know someone who loves singing the blues, living or listening to them, you've got to get acquainted with Red Hot & Blue.

Posters and pictures of blues musicians, and musical instruments fill the walls. The music to dine by is, what else? Blues.

Come hungry, and you won't be blue. Mouth-watering smells greet you as soon as you open the door.

"We offer simple, good food," said Tracy Mills, manager. "It's unique, something you can't get anywhere else. Our service is excellent, we make you feel like you're at home."

Red Hot & Blue slow smokes their bar-b-que meats for over 12 hours in hickory wood pits to make them "tender, moist and delicious."

Start dinner with an appetizer. Onion Ring Loaf, "fun-to-eat, crispy-thin onion rings, shaped into a loaf," is one of the popular ones. The homemade Brunswick Stew is loaded with smoked chicken, smoked pork, corn, onions and tomatoes. "It's a good hearty appetizer," said Mills. Other choices are Red Hot & Blue nachos and Smokehouse Chili.

Red Hot & Blue
Memphis Pit Bar-B-Que
Where: 29285 Southfield Road, Southfield (248) 557-0955 and 33800 Van Dyke Road, Sterling Heights (810) 679-9400.
Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.
Reservations: For parties of 15 or more.
Menu: Memphis-style barbecued meats including beef brisket, chicken, sausage and ribs. Salads and sandwiches also available. *Chili con carne* menu for kids 12 and under.

Cost: Moderate, huge portions. Platters \$7.99-\$12.99; ribs \$10.99-\$16.99; Sandwiches \$5.99-\$6.99; Main entree salads \$6.99.

Credit cards: All majors accepted.

Carry-out: Yes. Bulk orders, and smoked meats by the pound also available.

Benquet Room: For 50-60 people

For a taste of everything, try the Tennessee Triple Platter - your choice of three different smoked meats, ribs, pulled pig, beef brisket, or quarter chicken.

You may ask yourself, what is a pulled pig, I never heard of that. Pulled pig, a Red Hot & Blue specialty, is tender, moist pork shoulder, pulled off the bones, served with Mojo Mild bar-b-que sauce.

Mills also recommends the beef brisket, ribs and chicken. The St. Louis Cut Ribs are available - "Wet" - slowly smoked over hickory wood and gazed with Mojo Mild bar-b-que sauce, or - "Dry" - rubbed with a secret blend of dry spices. You can add your own sauce Mojo Mild or Hoochie Coochie hot at the table.

Share ribs with a friend and order a slab of ribs for two.

If you're real hungry, order one of the platters - pulled pig, beef brisket, chicken, smoked sausage or catfish. They're served with bar-b-que baked beans, cole slaw and fresh-baked bread. Starter salads are also available.

The smoked sausage is Earl Campbell's brand old-fashioned sausage, hickory smoked then grilled over an open flame. Catfish is Mississippi Delta farm raised, lightly breaded and fried.

"Our colelaw and potato salad is made fresh every four hours," said Mills. "We also make our own baked beans with diced green peppers and onions."

The bar-b-que sandwiches include pulled pig, chicken, and beef brisket are served "Memphis Style" topped with homemade colelaw. Sandwiches are served with homemade red skin potato salad and a crisp pickle.

If barbecue's not your bag, don't despair, Red Hot & Blue aims to please. You can get a Caesar Salad with or without chicken, a Grilled Chicken or



Triple treat: Tracy Mills presents the Tennessee Triple, a combination of beef brisket, quarter chicken, and pulled chicken for people who can't decide what to order at Red Hot & Blue Memphis Pit Bar-B-Que.

Blackened Chicken Salad. Sandwich options include Smoked Turkey on a Roll topped with fresh tomato and red onion, 1/2 pound Cheeseburger, or Grilled Chicken Breast Sandwich.

The Memphis Blackened Chicken Sandwich is a chicken breast grilled with dry spices, topped with lettuce, tomato and red onion, served with bar-b-que Ranch dressing.

Save room for dessert, pecan pie, Oreo brownie sundae, fruit cobbler, banana pudding and key lime pie are some of the choices.

Red Hot & Blue serves a variety of fountain drinks, including Bar's Root Beer in a frosted mug. Refills on fountain drinks, coffee and tea are free.

On tap is Red Hot & Blue Brew, microbrewed by Atwater Block Brewery. Try one of the new blended Daquiris or Marquitos, or tasty frozen drinks. A full service bar offers other choices too.

If you're on your way home

from work, and don't have a clue what to make for dinner, or need something different for a party, Red Hot & Blue can solve your problem.

There's a Memphis Bar-B-Que Pig Out for Four - full slab of ribs, whole chicken, 1/2 pound beef brisket, 1 quart each of coleslaw, red-skin potato salad, BBQ baked beans and dinner rolls for \$44.99, or a "Pig Out" for two for \$23.99. Hickory Smoked Meats including pulled pork, chicken, sliced beef brisket, turkey and Earl Campbell Sausage. You can order a half bar-b-que chicken or full slab of ribs, and even catfish by the pound. Whole pecan pies, fruit cobbler and banana pudding by the pint or quart are available too.

The name "Red Hot & Blue" is from the title of Dewey Phillips' radio show that played on WHBQ-AM in Memphis. He introduced Elvis Presley, Rufus Thomas and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Reservations: Accepted. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **Eurasian Grill** - 4771 Hagerty Road (north of Pontiac Trail) in West Wind Lake Shopping Center, West Bloomfield (248) 624-6109. Open: Monday to Thursday 4:30-10:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday until 11 p.m., Sunday until 9:30 p.m. Menu: Fusion or cross-culture cooking where East meets West in creative and unique dishes. Cost: First tastes \$2.85; fusion dishes \$13-20; Asian cuisine \$7-14. Reservations: Accepted. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **Encore** - 1801 South Telegraph Road (east side north of Square Lake in the Quality Inn), Bloomfield Hills (248) 335-3790. Open: Tuesday through Saturday 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Menu: American cuisine with fresh daily fish special. All entrees include bread basket, salad, appropriate starch and vegetable. Cost: Appetizers \$6-8; sandwiches \$6-7; entrees \$14-18.

■ **Avant Garde** - Where: 126 South Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 594-4499. Open: Monday to Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Thursday to Saturday until 11 p.m. Menu: Exceptionally flavorful, cutting-edge alternative dishes made without red meat, oils or dairy. Cost: Starters, sandwiches and salads \$5-8; main dishes all under \$16. Reservations: Not accepted. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **Beau Jack's** - Where: 4108 W. Maple (between Telegraph and Franklin Road) Bloomfield Hills, (248) 626-2630. Open: 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday; 4-9 p.m. Sunday. Menu: Something for everyone - fajitas, salads, sandwiches, soups & chili, pasta, steaks, chicken, fish, oven-grilled pizza.

Cost: Moderate, salads \$7.25-\$11.95; dinner entrees \$12.95-\$19.95; pasta \$9.95-\$14.95; burgers and sandwiches \$5.95-\$9.95. Credit cards: All majors accepted. Reservations: Not accepted. Entertainment: Piano bar - 7:30 p.m. to midnight Friday-Saturday.

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RESTAURANT SPECIALS

Restaurant Specials features restaurant openings and renovations, menu specials, and anniversaries. Send announcements to: Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or fax (734) 591-7279.

MENU SPECIALS

TOO CHEZ

Summer Nights by the Sea, every Friday in August beginning at 5:30 p.m. New England Steamer menu featuring Main Lobster, Steamer Clams, Redskin

Potatoes, and Corn-On-The-Cob. Cost \$14.95 per person, (excluding tax, gratuity and beverages). To complete your evening, stay and enjoy jazz on the patio. Too Chez is at 27000 E. Shorten Dr. (at Novi Road and I-96 service drive). Call (248) 348-5555 for reservations information.

JOHN CLEVELAND'S WATER CLUB GRILL

Summerfest menu through Sept. 6. Featured items include Salmon and the Angels, \$14.95. Chilled Oriental Shrimp Pasta, \$13.50. Grilled Whitefish Vera

Cruz, \$14.50, and Turnedoes of Beef, \$16.50. The restaurant is at 39500 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth. Call (734) 454-0666 for reservations information.

MARIO'S

Is celebrating its 50th anniversary in August with great specials. The restaurant is at 4222 Second Ave. in Detroit. They're open for lunch 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday-Friday; dinner 3-11 p.m., Monday-Friday, 4 p.m. to midnight Saturday, and 2-11 p.m. Sunday. Valet parking, reservations recommended, call (313) 832-1618. Anniversary specials served Sunday-Friday

THE LARK
Chef de Cuisine Dinner 7 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Aug. 24-25. Chef de Cuisine Marcus Haight will dazzle diners with his own personal cuisine. The menu features Tart of Seuted Fresh Foin Gras with fresh blueberries and cinnamon sauce, Sachet of Wild Mushrooms with Tarragon Sauce, Roasted Veal Loin en Croute & Roasted Veal Chop

"Jean Banchet" with truffle sauce, Potatoes Dauphinoise, seasonal vegetables and Creme Brulee. The cost is \$85 per person, not including other beverages, tax or gratuity. Last date for cancellation or reduction of reservations without charge is Aug. 15. The Lark is at 6430 Farmington Road, West Bloomfield. Call (248) 661-4466 to make reservations.

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