



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

Chef Richard Brooks, of Old Glory Bar-B-Que in Georgetown, has been tending the eatery's fires for 19 years.

Richard Brooks likes it hot!

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to The Washington Examiner

Working over a wood fire in Washington's summer heat is really hot stuff. But one of the coolest chefs in D.C. does just that: Richard Brooks, executive chef of Georgetown's old-timer, Old Glory Bar-B-Que. Even if he must mop his brow every few minutes, Brooks loves the smoke and the thrill of the job. After all, he's been in the same kitchen tending the fires for the past 19 years.

A native of Farmville, Va., Brooks got his earliest training in his family's kitchen. "It all started with my grandparents and my mom," he says. "They had pigs of their own, and they butchered, cleaned and smoked them. ... They were pig farmers. Around November, they cured and smoked country ham for Christmas presents. I did this as a kid."

But he got his foot in the professional door when he started working as a dishwasher at a local Olive Garden. On a day that two line cooks called in sick, Brooks was moved up the ladder to start cooking. He later moved on to other restaurants, including a local Black-eyed Pea and an Applebee's. The general manager of that Applebee's ended up moving to D.C. and working for Old Glory. He asked Brooks to come along, and the rest is history. "We have here an open pit with a hickory wood fire," he says. "I walked in, thought, 'This is heaven.'"

Not surprisingly, Brooks has

What is your comfort food?
I'm just a chicken guy — barbecued, grilled, pulled.

What's in your fridge?
A lot of salad, berries, apples, carrots, vegetables for fresh juices and chicken. So it is fresh juice and chicken.

What is your favorite restaurant?
Of course, the Old Glory or one of the other of the company's restaurants. I hardly go out to eat,

so I eat here. Or I go home to my wife, and I cook.

Who has been the greatest influence on your cooking?
My mom and my grandma. I learned from them. They figured out, "This guy really wants to cook."

Do you have a signature recipe?
Yes, a barbecue sauce I make. That is what won me first place in the People's Choice last year.

If you go Old Glory Bar-B-Que

» **Where:** 3139 M St. NW
» **Info:** 202-337-3406;
oldglorybbq.com
» **Hours:** 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Sunday to Thursday, 11:30
a.m. to midnight Friday and
Saturday

gained a certain reputation for his barbecue, and he recalls that one gentleman comes in for lunch three to four times a week, just for the brisket sandwich. "He works in a local law firm," says Brooks, "and for 14 years, he orders the same thing. Sliced brisket and a side salad and sweet tea. He says the brisket is so good, nice and lean."

When asked to describe his style

of barbecue — Memphis, Tenn., Texas, Kansas City, Mo., North Carolina? — Brooks shrugs and calls it regular old Southern barbecue with a little twist. Probably a Brooks secret, though he did describe the succotash side dish as very creamy with heavy cream, butter and red and green peppers. But for those who are looking for barbecue styles, Brooks points out that at each table, the staff has set regional sauces for the patrons' use and convenience.

For locals who attend the annual barbecue competition, the National Capital Barbecue Battle, chances are you have spotted Brooks hovering over one of his meaty creations — he has, in fact, won several second- and third-place awards for his work. And all that is not surprising, for as Brooks says, even after a 10-to-12-hour day, "You'd think that I would get tired. But I love what I do." That obviously shows in his smoky work.

The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

The influential wines of Charles Krug

When you have the most famous family name in California winemaking and also own the oldest winery in Napa Valley, the word that comes to mind is "stewardship." Stewardship for the land, stewardship for the wine and stewardship for the legacy. That is the fundamental philosophy at the core of Charles Krug Winery.

Charles Krug, a German immigrant who moved to San Francisco during the gold rush, was the first to recognize the tremendous potential of the region's rich soil and climate for growing wine grapes. In 1861, he moved to Napa Valley, purchased 170 acres of land and founded the Charles Krug Winery, using a cider press to crush his grapes. He soon became a major influence throughout the Napa Valley region, developing many cutting-edge wine-making concepts and techniques.

Following Krug's death in 1892, the estate was purchased by James Moffitt, a banker who had little use for a winery, and the operation fell into disuse. However, Cesare Mondavi, an Italian immigrant who was in the grape-shipping business, decided that he could restore the winery to its former glory. So in 1943, Cesare and his wife, Rosa, purchased the Charles Krug Winery and, along with his two sons, Peter and Robert, they began a mission to reinvent the Napa Valley wine movement.

Cesare died in 1959 leaving Rosa as president with sons Robert as general manager and Peter as vice president. Unfortunately, a dispute between Peter and Robert led to Robert's departure from Krug in 1965. However, Charles Krug continued on with Peter Mondavi Sr. at the helm and sons Peter Jr. and Marc learning the ropes.

Today, the third generation is at the helm of Charles Krug. Peter Jr. is responsible for running the operations at Krug, while his brother Marc concentrates his efforts at CK Mondavi. Together, they have ushered in a new era of grape growing under the Charles Krug label, replanting most of the 850 acres of vines now owned by the family. In addition, the wine-making operation has undergone a major renovation, including state-of-the-art temperature-controlled fermentation tanks and new crush pad

facilities. Their efforts and investments have paid off, and the proverbial proof is in the bottle. Retail prices are approximate.

The **2012 Charles Krug Sauvignon Blanc (\$18)** from the St. Helena region of Napa Valley is a perfect example of how good this varietal can be when the fruit is ripe and the acidity is high. Fragrant scents of tropical fruit and grapefruit dominate the nose and are repeated on the palate, where flavors of passion fruit and honeydew melon glide across the tongue. The bright acidity keeps the flavors focused and the finish — featuring a touch of lemon/lime citrus — clean and refreshing. **QPR 9.5**

Fruit grown in the Carneros region — which straddles the Napa and Sonoma valleys — is the beneficiary of the maritime effect that cools the region every evening. The grapes used in the **2011 Charles Krug Pinot Noir (\$27)** come from Carneros and produce a wine with a perfumed nose of wild strawberries and bright red cherries. Delicate flavors of fresh strawberry, plum and ripe cherry float delicately across the palate, all the way through to the elegant finish, which has just the right amount of acidity to keep all of the flavors in balance. **QPR 8**

The **2008 Charles Krug Zinfandel (\$25)** from the St. Helena region is a delightful blend of zinfandel, petite sirah and carignane and is a charming example of this varietal.

The wine features a fragrant nose of black raspberry and blueberry jam. Rich flavors of blueberry, blackberry cobbler and ripe black plum are balanced by silky tannins. Classic notes of crushed black pepper combine with a hint of vanilla on the hearty finish. **QPR 9**

Twenty months of aging in French and American oak barley tames the powerful **2010 Charles Krug Cabernet Sauvignon (\$29)** from the Yountville region of Napa Valley. The bouquet is dominated by aromas of blackberry, dark plum and cocoa. Flavors of dark red and black fruit join in with hints of mocha and vanilla on a full-bodied frame. The powerful-yet-elegant finish is supported by notes of tobacco, toasty oak and fine tannins. **QPR 9.5**

Note: QPR is a rating system that compares the quality a wine delivers relative to the price. A QPR of 10 is considered an excellent value.

