

BY POPULAR DEMAND

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costal minister and founding father of Jones Barbeque — might make an exception. “My dad made barbecue pits out of big, huge refrigerators. He made me one, and he taught me how to use it,” says the man behind the name that’s gaining fame for smoked ribs, beef and chicken prepared, as the slogan says, “The Way Barbecue is Supposed to Be.”

The original Jones, opened in 1988, begat a kiosk in the Crossroads Mall and now has slick new sister stores in Sodo and Columbia City. Jones and his family are also keeping busy with a catering business and a line of barbecue sauce. Sides, sauce and dessert all come out of a central commissary.

For the past three years, the Joneses have wooed fans and won first-place awards for barbecue at the Bite of Seattle. And, in a recent profile on the Food Network’s “BBQ with Bobby Flay,” the Jones family was seen showing the rest of the country how that’s done. “We have



At Jones Barbeque, it’s all in the family, says founder William Jones, right. Among the family team are, from left: his wife, Joyce Jones, who makes the cheesecakes; son Lance, who runs the Bellevue store and oversees sauce-making; daughter-in-law Kimberly, who heads up store No. 1, and daughter Leanne, company general manager.

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MIKE SIEGEL/SEATTLE TIMES FILE

Seattle firefighter and barbecue king William Jones says the secret to Jones Barbeque’s string of successes is tender, smoky meat and ‘lip-smackin’ sauce.

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Mackay brought more than 30 years’ experience with him when he appropriated the name of a legendary Seattle restaurant and re-created its splashy successor in the bowels of the former Sailor’s Union Building. “I learned a lot by taking on other companies’ problem restaurants and fixing them,” Mackay says.

Mackay speaks candidly of his own failures, including Chez Gus and its Pier 70 replacement, Rippe’s. He’s seen his share of difficulties at Troiani and at Waterfront Seafood Grill, El Gaucho’s surfin’ sibling, where they spent a million more dollars on it than they wanted to. El Gaucho kept it afloat.

IT’S ALL ABOUT ROMANCE

“We don’t worship at the altar of food,” says Paul. “We’re not a chef-driven restaurant, we’re a concept restaurant. We’re about the total experience. The job is to romance the customers and create that experience, to make them feel like king or queen for the day.”

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

“You can have the product, you can have the great service, you can have the great atmosphere, but if you don’t market it and market it well, you’re going to struggle.”

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

“We’ve got a great wheel, and we don’t want to reinvent that wheel,” says Paul. “I’m 64. I’m sated. I’m stepping out of the day-to-day operations, turning them over to my son, Chad. He’s 35, and he’s hungry. Dad’s not so hungry anymore.”

Jones Barbeque

OWNERS: William and Joyce Jones

ESTABLISHED: 1988

EMPLOYEES: 50

BACK STORY: *Fight fire with fire*

Any firefighter will tell you never to let kids play with an old refrigerator, but William Jones — Seattle firefighter, Pent-

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