

M-EATING UNDER THE TENT



CORY SHAFFER/SUN NEWS

While the Rib Burnoff is obviously about ribs, other tasty food items are available, like blooming onions, grilled veggies, sweet potato fries, pierogies and chocolate-covered strawberries. Here the Boncek family enjoys some of the offerings. Clockwise, from right, dad Nick, twins Madeline and Isabella, 3, and mom Cheryl, from Strongsville. For more on the event, see B3 in today's edition.

27th annual Rib Burnoff builds on recipe for success

By Cory Shaffer
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For 26 years now, the sweet and smoky smell of pork ribs slathered in barbecue sauce has filled Strongsville Commons for one weekend in June.

And the 27th year will be no different.

The Strongsville City Club's 27th annual Rib Burnoff kicks off at 4 p.m. today, June 20, in the heart of Strongsville at the corner of Routes 42 and 82.

After more than a quarter-century of success, it doesn't make sense to fix something that isn't broken. So City Club President Terry Toth said this year's burnoff will be the same event that the 20,000 attendees have come to know and love.

"We're not the biggest, just the best," he said, invoking the event's slogan.

This year's lineup of "prime ribbers" mirrors last year's: Desperado's BBQ & Rib Co. (Hinckley); Smokin'

Joe's Hog Wild Barbecue (Mansfield); Armadillo's Rib & BBQ Co. (Boardman); Sgt. Oink's (Tiffin); Old Carolina Barbecue Company (Massillon); Texas Pit BBQ (Willis, Texas); Pigfoot BBQ Co. (Mentor); and Smokin' Buckeye BBQ Co. (Cary).

Armadillo's Rib & BBQ Co. is returning after a clean sweep at last year's Rib Burnoff, taking home first place in the culinary division for best ribs and best sauce.

Meanwhile, the People's Choice

Award winner from last year, Old Carolina Barbecue Company, is still riding high from opening a sit-down restaurant in Strongsville.

Winners will be announced at 7:30 p.m. June 22, as judged by Chef Chris Olszewski and his team from Polaris Career Center, and the people's choice. Local celebrity judges will whittle down the field on June 20 and 21.

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RIBS

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With those eight serving up slabs of ribs, Toth said the event's size is somewhat of an asset, allowing it to offer something a lot of other multi-day festivals can't: cleanliness.

The festival has two eating tents that are continuously cleaned by dozens of volunteers, which Toth said adds to the quality of the event.

"It's big enough that you can hit everything but you're not sitting at picnic tables in three days worth of trash," Toth said.

And, though the Rib Burnoff might not sound too welcoming to vegetarians or those or who aren't fans of ribs, there's plenty of food available, ranging from grilled veggies, roasted corn and bloomin' onions to sweet potato ribbon fries, chocolate covered strawberries and fresh squeezed lemonade.

The Rib Burnoff isn't just about food. There's also a It boasts an entertainment schedule featuring four hours each of Midnite Groove and Funkology June 20 and 21, respectively.

On June 22, the final day, three acts will entertain the masses, starting with solo acoustic guitar performer Victor Samalot, followed by the Olmsted Performing Arts Dance Company and WKYC Channel 3's own Monica Robins's band, Mr. Mo, closing out the night.

And for kids, there's always the inflatables.

Toth said the food and the entertainment combine to create a unique event nearly everyone can enjoy.

The 27th annual Rib Burnoff opens at 4 p.m. June 20, 3 p.m. June 21 and noon June 22, closing at 11 p.m. each night. Admission is \$2 for adults, and free for kids 10 and under. For more information on the Strongsville City Club's 27th annual Rib Burnoff, visit strongsvillecityclub.org.