



The 400 Volume 55: Smoke Signals



Far from its beginnings as a method of food preservation, the art of cooking with smoke is expanding. From classic barbecue pits to refined applications at upscale restaurants, smoke is more than a cooking method – it’s a flavor trend. Chef Matt Abdoo, chef/owner of Pig Beach and Pig Bleecker in New York City, is taking smoke to new heights. Just like salt or sugar, Abdoo treats smoke as a flavor enhancer – absolutely essential to creating a perfectly seasoned dish.

“Smoke is the cornerstone at both my restaurants. Pig Beach offers traditional barbecue with a New York City twist, and Pig Bleecker is our refined, smoke-centric restaurant that takes the barbecue theme and refines it into something unique.” Every dish has a smoked element, from Pig Beach’s smoked pork shoulder with hatch vinegar sauce, to the elegant linguini with smoked ham hock brodo at Pig Bleecker – a Southern take on classic Italian.

Right now, Abdoo is all about pastrami. “If there’s an iconic New York City dish, that’s a definite contender,” he says. He starts with pork – this is Pig Bleecker, after all – and cures the outside muscle of the fresh leg in a traditional ham brine for a week. Next, he seasons it with a house-made rub of kosher salt, ground coriander, butcher-grind black pepper, sweet paprika, granulated garlic and onion, Coleman’s mustard powder and light brown sugar. Then it’s off to the smoker for an hour or two, where the rub crisps and transforms into a savory crust.

One of his favorite applications is a “BBQ-bano” sandwich. The Smoked Pork Leg Pastrami is sliced thin and stacked, along with shaved roasted pork loin, house-cured pickles, melted Swiss cheese and sweet and spicy mustard BBQ sauce. “When you’ve got all those flavors...the smoky pork, crisp acidic pickles, all on crunchy griddled bread...you just have to keep biting back for more.”

Take a look at how Abdoo brings the smoke on his menu:



- **Pecan Candied Bacon:** This Pig Bleecker bar snack is smoky, sweet, salty and crave-worthy – the perfect complement for beer, rose, or a creative cocktail.
- **Smoked Pork Leg Pastrami:** Abdoo’s smoked pastrami is featured across his menu, from sandwiches to the rotating charcuterie board to center-of-plate plancha-pressed steak and eggs – making it a real menu MVP.
- **Smoked Pasta Dishes:** Smoke is essential to Abdoo’s Americana takes on classic Italian. His Cavatelli with Smoked Bacon, Peas, Garlic Chives and Smoked Ricotta Salata, and the Linguini with Clams, Ham Hock Brodo, Scallion and Garlic Bread Crumbs both marry traditional Italian flavors with a touch of Southern-style barbecue, offering the best of both worlds.
- **Smoked Pork Chop:** Brined, smoked and served simply with seasonal jam, Abdoo’s technique – and the delicious pork – really shine.