



Smoke on the Water

CHARLEVOIX EATERY IS
COOKING UP SCRATCH
MADE CLASSICS AND BBQ

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

“My hairdresser used to be right next door. One day I said to her, ‘That would be the perfect place for a restaurant.’ She told me that someone had just moved in there and he was doing really great, that Mario Batali had gone there for the food.

One day, I went to his Facebook page to see when they were open and saw that he was selling it.

So, I came down and looked at it, found out what he was selling it for, then got his books and went to the bank. I came back, gave him a number and he agreed.

It was actually two years to the date that we signed the papers on this place from when we moved to Charlevoix—I’m from Minneapolis and this is my husband’s hometown.

We waited another five and a half months before we opened because it was the middle of winter. Then I quit my job, we opened the doors and haven’t looked back. We’re eight years strong now and we’ve got a great following.

Making food from scratch was the only option. I do not serve anybody else’s food in my restaurant. If somebody wants to eat somebody else’s food,

they can go to the grocery store and go to the frozen food section. To me, when I go out to eat, I really want good-quality food that's made with love, so that's what we do.

Everything that we do here is made from scratch. We're open for breakfast and lunch, but we're also a barbecue joint. If you're a barbecue person, I would definitely try our smoked meats. We use a real wood smoker, not an electric smoker with wood pellets. You see the smoke ring and you taste the smoke. It's fantastic.

Our drunken French toast is amazing: we make our own challah bread in-house, then it's soaked overnight in champagne, heavy cream, cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar and eggs. It has kind of a custard-like inside with crispy outside.

Our pulled pork hash is really good, too. Our brisket hash is more popular, but I prefer the pulled pork because it's not as rich. You get that smokiness and we serve it with barbecue sauce on the side. The sauce is absolutely amazing, too, and we're in the process of getting that bottled right now.

We absolutely have the best Reuben in northern Michigan. We make our corned beef in house. We don't make our own sauerkraut, but we make it unique. Plus, we make our own Russian dressing for it. It's a thin rye, not a marble rye and it's just delicious. I'm a Reuben fan, so I love it.

I think I started my first business when I was in my 20s. I was a secretary back then, so I organized offices and that

was very exciting. But I've always had the entrepreneurial spirit and my grandmother owned a restaurant back in Minneapolis, and we have a picture of it in the front of the restaurant. So, it's just in my blood, I think.

This is where my husband and I wanted to retire and having a restaurant has always been my dream."

-Julie Mann, Smoke on the Water

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