

## Dalie's Smokehouse: You won't leave hungry

By SUZANNE CORBETT

Smokehouse delicacies aren't always defined by pitmaster classics as pulled pork, burnt ends and ribs. There's so much more great food to enjoy. Just ask Dalie's Smokehouse general manager and pitmaster Craig Basler, the creator of Dalie's famous smoked turkeys, house-cured and smoked hams and pastrami. The latest specialty of the smokehouse is artisan charcuterie – now available on the catering menu.

"This is not your unusual meat and cheese tray. All the sausages are made, cured and smoked in-house," Basler said. "We're making three different flavors of Cotto Salami, and a cured, Smoked Pork Tenderloin. I'm also working on a smoked Bistro Beef Tenderloin to add to the mix."

Each charcuterie features three salamis, the cured smoked pork tenderloin and two kinds of cheese, one of which is smoked. Candied bacon is also an option that's made available upon request. Each

board is finished with hand-crafted relishes and garnishes, such as sweet-and-spicy pecans, pickled onions, and fresh herbs, harvested from Dalie's own herb boxes on the patio.

Cheeses that are cold-smoked in-house include Gouda, Cheddar and Pepper Cheese. The smoked cheddar is a must, especially when transformed into Dalie's smoked cheddar pimento cheese ball. It's a southern delicacy that Basler proclaims as "pretty darn good."

Sausage-making isn't really anything new at Dalie's. Regulars have been enjoying the smokehouse's homemade andouille for years.

"Andouille is what started it all. It was the first sausage we made because we couldn't find andouille that had the right mix of spice, sweetness and texture we wanted. So, we made our own," Basler said. "I enjoyed the experience, so I started to experiment with making more."

Dalie's charcuterie boards are sized small and large, serving 15 to 25 people.

Kin to sausage making, are the cured

and smoked ham and pastrami used to create Dalie's signature sandwiches: the Cuban and the Pastrami Reuben.

"I developed my passion for curing and smoking meats when my grandfather showed me how to cure and smoke hams and bacon when I was a kid," Basler said.

"We do both wet cure and dry cure techniques and blend our own spices. ... (making) the flavor profile exclusively ours."

Dalie's sells all its smoked meats by the pound, stacked on a plate or on a hefty sandwich, weighing in at 5 to 7 ounces. Composed sandwiches, such as the Cuban and Reuben, tip the scale at 6 ounces or more. Each of those sandwiches includes one side. Plates get two sides, with the option to add an extra side to your order for just a buck – perhaps the best "buck buy" in Missouri.

"We always try to give people their money's worth. And we have fun, doing what we do, especially when we bring new things on the menu," Basler said. "It's summertime, so the cucumber and tomato salad is back on the menu, replacing the cabbage and greens we have in the fall



Dalie's Smokehouse's newest specialty is its artisan, smoked charcuterie boards. (Suzanne Corbett photo)

and winter. Our new sandwich is a smoky, cranberry spiced chicken sandwich. We use boneless chicken thighs, glaze it with our cranberry cayenne sauce, then top it with fire-and-ice pickles, onions, Cajun mayo and lettuce. It's delicious."

When asked what the secret of success is and what drives the creativity that yields the superior smoked meats, sides and salads that have made Dalie's a stand-out among the crowded smokehouse landscape, Basler said, "We treat smoke as an ingredient, not a cuisine."

"We're priced affordably and provide generous portions," he said. "We try not to let anyone walk away hungry."

### Dalie's Smokehouse

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