

## SPOTLIGHT



**MITCH EVANITSKY**, owner of Mitch's Mobile BBQ & Catering Company, says the secret to mouth-watering barbecue is cooking with indirect heat.

*Photo by Bethany Boarts*

## Barbecue business on the move

By Andrea L. Zrimsek

Staff writer

**W**hen Mitch Evanitsky began making homemade barbecue sauce and buffalo sauce in the 1980s, he had no idea it would alter the course of his life.

He was just doing it because he liked to barbecue outside on his grill.

Then in the early 1990s, while operating an ice cream shop at the corner of Babcock Boulevard and Rochester Road in Ross Township, he bought a mobile barbecue pit and began doing a little grilling in front of the shop, selling food to passers-by.

The fresh, smoky food was an instant hit with his regular ice cream fans and drew in a whole new customer base as well.

He began going to rib cook offs where

own smoky meats and side dishes, he won "best sauce" at the Three Rivers Stadium rib cook-off.

Then one day a couple stopped by his shop and asked a question that would lead Evanitsky down a whole new career path.

"They asked me if I could cater a party for 180 people," he says.

It was quite different from firing up a barbecue pit outside his ice cream shop and selling whatever he grilled, but he did it.

And despite being over prepared and getting there far too early, the event was a success and everyone left with a full belly.

So Evanitsky decided to test the waters and took out a small catering advertisement. He ended up with half a dozen more jobs that year.

Sebak.

"That's when I got serious," he says.

Instead of renting trucks on an as needed basis, in 1997 he bought his first truck and catered a couple dozen jobs.

Suddenly, everything from weddings and graduations to corporate parties and birthdays were featuring tasty ribs, burgers, chicken and an array of side dishes, all made fresh by Evanitsky.

"Having someone come in with all the food, side dishes and condiments leaves time for the party host to have fun with their guests instead of standing over the grill cooking all day."

In 1998, he moved his ice cream shop and barbecue catering business to his current location on Middle Road in Gibsonia.

He continued making a wide variety of ice cream flavors during the summer months and also began focusing his

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# Mobile barbecue business on the move

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ness year 'round.

By 2000, he bought a second truck and 20-foot barbecue pit complete with turkey smoker and was catering 100 jobs a year. Some as small as a few dozen people and one as large as 10,000.

Evanitsky feels his success is due to the freshness of his food.

Everything down to the cole slaw dressing and salsa are made fresh by his own hands and his meats all have that pink ring that means they are smoked to perfection.

Evanitsky's mobile kitchen has earned him fans all over the Pittsburgh area and he says he easily uses 15 gallons of homemade buffalo sauce each week in the summer.

In fact, his fare is so sought after he has decided to not limit it to only those who attend his catering jobs.

So he is currently remodeling a building along Route 19 in Marshall Township to be Mitchell's Hardwood Grill & Barbecue.

The new eatery is expected to open this fall and will have indoor and outdoor seating.

The menu will include an



**MITCH'S MOBILE BBQ is on the move with construction underway on a permanent home for the business along Route 19 in Marshall Township.**

array of wood-fired ribs, beef and chicken as well as the homemade ice cream flavors that got Evanitsky into the food industry in the first place.

Once open, he will close up his Middle Road location and operate his catering business from the new site.

Though his career as a barbecue master was quite unexpected, Evanitsky says he

enjoys working outside and meeting different people at each job.

And, he does not mind that his gigantic barbecue pit is often the center of attention.

Mitch's Mobile Barbecue's new location will be at 16070 Perry Highway.

For more information, visit [www.mitchsbarbecue.com](http://www.mitchsbarbecue.com) or call 724-449-2733.