



Ken Hueston of Smoken Bones Cookshack shows off his slow-smoked beef ribs.

Smoken Bones Cookshack **721 Station**

Street, Victoria, B.C., 250-391-6328, smokenbones.ca From its modest strip-mall location in Victoria's West Shore, Smoken Bones Cookshack serves Southern barbecue flavors with a Vancouver Island twist.

While Smoken Bones offers Deep South specialties such as oyster po' boys, hush puppies, gumbo, and jambalaya, chef/owner Ken Hueston's most loving focus is on the meat.

Hueston uses only Vancouver Island alder and fruitwoods—sourced from a local tree salvager—to treat the meats at Smoken Bones. All cuts undergo a 24-hour brine, followed by another 24 hours in a dry rub, before being slow-smoked—each cut over a different wood. "I use smoke as a spice to enhance the flavors of the meat," Hueston says. He marries beef ribs with wild cherry wood, pork ribs with apple and alder wood, brisket with wild cherry and plum, and pulled pork with green alder.

Beef ribs are a stellar example. The tomato-based house barbecue sauce doesn't mask the meat but complements it, allowing the wood-smoke and the slightly sweet flavors of the dry rub to commingle. Pork back ribs, given the same respect, are exquisitely tender, with a good meat-to-bone ratio.

Sides include candied carrots, collard greens, cornbread, macaroni & cheese, smoky slow-cooked beans, and seasoned oven-roasted potatoes. The taster plate for two, featuring brisket, beef and pork ribs, and pulled pork, is a Flintstone-esque showcase of Hueston's talents.

Service is spirited and down-to-earth at this 74-seat eatery. Wines are on offer, but Smoken Bones specializes in top-shelf bourbons and craft brews—24 and counting—including a Smoken Bones Pale Ale created by Victoria's esteemed Phillips Brewing Company.

This is food you eat with your hands, primal and deeply satisfying. Lunch and dinner Tuesday–Saturday, dinner Sunday.

—Shejora Sheldan

Kenny & Zuke's Delicatessen

1038 SW Stark Street, Portland, OR, 503-222-3354, kennyandzukes.com Portland is short on delis—especially New York-style delis replete with table-top kosher salt, a deli case stocked with housemade pastrami and pickled fish, and more mustard than you can shake a spatula at. So this October Ken Gordon (previous chef-owner of Southeast Portland's Ken's Place) and Nick Zukin (internet foodie behind the Portland food blog ExtraMSG) opened their own.

Their 60-plus seat downtown Kenny & Zuke's Delicatessen serves housemade bagels and bialys (similar to a bagel but without a hole and not boiled); an assortment of well-stacked sandwiches ranging from pickled tongue to pastrami on rye; and other classic deli bites including latkes, matzos, knishes, and kugel.

Zukin and Gordon began peddling their secret recipe pastrami in Portland in the spring of 2006. That summer they kicked off a Saturday-only New York-style deli in Gordon's restaurant for several months. Now, back by popular demand, the duo has their own space on the same block as the Ace Hotel, alongside Stumptown Coffee and Clyde Common—one of the hippest strips in downtown Portland.

Bagels, bialys and breads are baked daily in the basement, and the pivotal house ingredient—pastrami—is cured and smoked. You can purchase this and more at the lower-level deli, or step up to the dining room and exposed kitchen where servers juggle the daily big-apple-sized feeding frenzy.



At Kenny & Zuke's, it's all about the house-made pastrami.

The Kenny & Zuke's grill is consistently crammed with juicy burgers (usually topped with pastrami and melted Swiss) and cuts of peppered brisket, while skillets sizzle with everything from Reubens and corned beef hash to challah French toast. And although there's plenty of wine and beer, the real deal is the 60-plus soda list with nearly 20 root beers. You can even order a soda flight and compare the flavors of various fizzy lifters. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner Tuesday–Sunday; open until midnight Tuesday–Thursday; open until 3am Friday–Saturday.

—Liz Crain