

**By Laurie Coyne**  
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If you were on the road between Bath and Brunswick last summer, you may have been treated to an aromatic whiff of smoky barbecue from a passing vehicle. That was Myron Spaulding, the Pitmaster, with pork barbecue in tow, on his way to a gig. Spaulding caters about twenty events a year, from backyard barbecues to weddings, taking his rig all over New England. On this particular day, Spaulding is serving up a barbecued pulled-pork lunch for employees at the Bath Iron Works James Building. Over one hundred hungry people have bought tickets. Proceeds will benefit the veterans at the Togus VA Medical Center.

Spaulding, an ample man with a bearded, friendly face and a crisp, white apron, holds court in the parking lot next to the building. On a flatbed trailer attached to his truck is his barbecuing rig, ready to roll, engineered and built by Spaulding himself from two huge oil drums. One drum, on end, is outfitted with a large door that swings open to reveal pork roasts on racks over the open fire Spaulding built early that morning. Another drum, placed on its side, can accommodate a pig on a spit.

For his day job, Spaulding is an engineer for BIW, but his sideline, barbecue, is what really fires him up. "You gotta have a passion for barbecue," he says. "If you don't, don't bother."

Spaulding and his one-man crew and apprentice, Kevin Burgoyne, also a BIW engineer, haul the steaming, tinfoil-wrapped roasts from the smoker. They set to work "pulling" the pork, taking it off the bone in succulent shreds. Burgoyne comments on the quality of the "bark", the crispy, caramelized meat on the outside of the roast. When Burgoyne talks enthusiastically about the delicious smoked chicken soup he improvised from some leftover barbecued chickens, you can see why Spaulding took him on. He's been working under the Pitmaster's tutelage for about a year now, and has done some events on his own.

Employees, lured by the aroma, periodically poke their heads out the door of the building and sniff appreciatively. Spaulding trades friendly barbs with them and promises a spectacular meal. "I shoulda rode my bike today!" jokes one, eagerly anticipating the calories. "Is it too early to get in line?" asks another. Spaulding unleashes a booming laugh, clearly pleased with everyone's hungry impatience.

"You know, food brings people together," he says. "To have the passion for barbecue, you really have to enjoy interacting with people."

Spaulding used to raise pigs on the family farm in his native Rhode Island before he found his true calling, barbecue. "I had pigs, and someone said to me 'why don't you have a pig roast?' The first one came out okay. Then, I did more and got better at it...now I spend from April to October every year doing barbecues and pig roasts."

Spaulding has been catering pig roasts and barbecues for fifteen years now. A number of the events Spaulding does are benefits for various organizations.

Does he have some favorite gigs? Spaulding starts laughing. "My favorite is for a motorcycle gang called the Renegade Pigs," he says. "I've done their event for the past five years and they've booked me for next year. They're actually all members of law enforcement. I just have the best time with those guys!"

And, after feeding the masses, Spaulding cooks dinner for his girlfriend, too. He believes that good food should be shared, and every meal should be a special event. "Every night, we sit down and have dinner," he says. "We have candlelight, we have wine."

But right now, he's got a hundred hungry people queuing up for the promised feast. Now, if you're a vegetarian you can skip this part. This is about the pulled pork. Tender, moist, smoky shreds with just a little crispy bark, complimented with a dollop of Spaulding's homemade barbecue sauce, sweet and tangy with a hint of some earthy sort of spice-nutmeg, maybe? We'll never know. Spaulding's recipe is a secret, but the sauce is for sale on his "Over the Hill Farm" website.

Spaulding says he turns away more requests for barbecue catering than he accepts. If it appears that a potential customer doesn't appreciate what he does, he won't accept the job. "This is meant to be fun," he says. A number of loyal fans book him year after year. "My business is about sixty-percent repeats," he says. "And I have a few contracts that are ongoing for years to come. "

He has even barbecued Thanksgiving turkeys for customers. But not last Thanksgiving. On the biggest food holiday of the year, the Pitmaster was on a Caribbean cruise ...letting someone else do the cooking for a change.