

Restaurant Review — Neely's barbecue delights palate

By Paul Knipple
Freelance Reporter

Who ya gonna call when you want food advice? Some big, well-fed guy like Justin Wilson right? Well, hey, skinny people know food too, especially when you've lived in the barbecue capital of the world all your thin life.

For the sake of knowledge, I decided to risk packing my entire six-foot, 140-pound body with cholesterol in order to find the best of Memphis barbecue.

Now that I have all this knowledge I have to share it with the rest of the world. The result is this whirlwind tour of the Memphis barbecue scene.

The only problem was where to begin. Normally, one would save the best for last for the sake of drama. I, on the other hand, decided to start with the best. It won't matter where I end because there is no truly bad barbecue in Memphis.

The next problem I had was deciding which of the three best restaurants to cover first. After much deliberation, I chose a name from a hat. The first name was Neely's Barbecue on Jefferson in the medical center.

Neely's has the juiciest ribs in town. The ribs come swimming in sauce. They are so tender that you could put a rib in your mouth, let it just melt, and then spit out the bone. (You

could do it, but it's not recommended when with a date.)

Neely's also makes an incredible sandwich. The large is a huge sandwich and seems to never end. Until it's gone, that is, and then there never seems to be enough.

Neely's is also the first place where I encountered the miracle of barbecue spaghetti. Rather than an Italian style sauce, you simply cover the pasta with barbecue sauce and a little chopped pork.

Yes, miracle is the appropriate word. I've had barbecue spaghetti in other places, but none measures up to Neely's.

Beans and slaw are almost as important to a good barbecue meal as the meat itself. Neely's has the best beans anywhere. They're not too sweet and not too smoky. I'm not a big fan of slaw, but I like Neely's slaw. It's nice and mild and adds a perfect texture to your food.

Usually when you go out for barbecue you think about what kind of sauce the place has. (If you don't, you should.) Neely's sauce is a splendid blend of hot and sweet. It's never too strong either way. It should be obvious by now that I

like Neely's. With a menu filled with absolutely delicious food, who wouldn't love it? You'll love it. And if you think you're hungry now, don't forget there are two more best barbecue places in Memphis to come.

Neely's Barbecue
Address: 670 Jefferson
Telephone: 521-9798
Hours: Sunday through
Thursday 10:30 a.m. to 9
p.m., Friday and Saturday
10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Fare: Barbecue
Price range: Sandwiches
\$3, Dinners \$7
Payment: Cash and Credit
Card
Alcoholic beverages:
Beer, tap and bottles
Service: Full
Dress: Casual