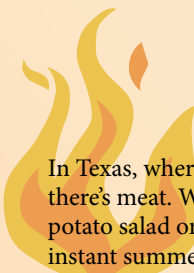




FORT BEND'S FAVORITE BARBECUE

LOCAL EATERIES SERVE UP A TEXAS TRADITION

By Julie Battelle & Photography by Marisa Hugonnett



In Texas, where there's hickory smoke, there's meat. Whether you favor sides of potato salad or baked beans, nothing says instant summer party like a big spread of pit-cooked beef, chicken, pork, or ribs slathered in barbecue sauce. Short of grilling in your own backyard, these Fort Bend hot spots dish up the next best thing. So, grab a napkin and dig in!

Dozier's Grocery
8222 FM 359
Fulshear
281-346-1411



Even the most cursory list of Fort Bend barbecue joints would be incomplete without a mention of Dozier's in Fulshear. As a kid, my father used to drive me and my sister out to Fulshear, which was way out in the country to us city girls, to eat sliced brisket off of white paper on Dozier's wooden tables. Ed Dozier opened his grocery and market in 1957, and has established his little place as one of the state's premier barbecue stops. With Texas favorites like marinated chicken, sausage wraps, and chopped beef, Dozier's serves up a taste of Fort Bend barbecue history.

Otto's BBQ & Catering
11222 Fountain Lake Dr.
Stafford
281-313-6886



Now in its third generation, Otto's is a Houston tradition, with its original store located on Memorial Dr. It was made

world-famous by the patronage of President George Bush Sr., who made Otto's a regular stop whenever he was in town. Other notable celebrity patrons of Otto's include Liberacci, George Foreman, Ron Howard, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Jerry Lewis. Now with a location in Stafford, Otto's has some of the best hamburgers in the business, along with their handmade, smoked barbecue brisket.

In 1950, Otto and Annie Sofka opened a little grocery store off a then two-lane dirt road called Memorial Dr., that sold 25-pound blocks of ice for 5 cents and farm fresh eggs for 13 cents per dozen. Annie began grilling hamburgers for some of her regulars. Her hamburgers became so popular that within two years, Otto decided to clear the shelves of groceries and filled his store with tables and chairs. In 1963, Otto and his family expanded the restaurant's menu from made-from-scratch hamburgers to barbecue dishes. A lot has changed in 50 years, but Otto's still grinds its hamburger patties fresh every day and slow-cooks its briskets in a hickory-smoked barbecue pit for 18 hours.

Schulze's Bar-B-Q
1214 First Street
Rosenberg
281-342-4445



The Schulze family tradition of feeding the good folks of southwest Texas began with their grandfather, the late Julius Dietrick Schulze, in the 1920s. Still family owned





Andrea, Lee, and Brielle relax at the Swinging Door



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and operated, Schulze's menu features a Cajun pork loin and homemade pies - whole or by the slice - along with slow-smoked brisket, chicken, ham, and sausage. Stop by the well-known establishment in Rosenberg to experience its family hospitality or take along its family packs to feed your brood of four to six or your family reunion of 50 and be the star of your next gathering.

Swinging Door

3814 FM 359
Richmond
281-342-4758



In 1979, Swinging Door owners, Steve and Ward Onstead took first prize at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo barbecue cook-off. The rest, as they say, is history. When you're in the mood to head out to the country for some boot-scooting and old-fashioned Texas grub, there's no better place to go than the Swinging Door. Family owned and operated, the restaurant is anything but pretentious with its wood paneling, miles of Texas memorabilia, and traditional red- and white-checked tablecloths. You'll find a plate of pickles and sliced white onions on the table waiting to punctuate slow, pecan-smoked brisket, ribs, and chicken with all the sides, including cole slaw dotted with raisins - a personal favorite. For about 20 bucks, you can feed the whole family with Swinging Door's all-you-can-eat special, which includes meat, sides, and even dessert. Check the restaurant's website for details on its weekend dancehall with live Texas music.

Vasos Bar-B-Q

9920 Hwy. 90
Sugar Land
281-242-8585



Family owned and operated for more than two decades, this Sugar Land establishment is a lunchtime favorite for office workers and contractors alike. Vasos' slow-smoking process gives meat a special signature flavor, and diners love the restaurant's stuffed baked potatoes. Their chef salads with heaping piles of beef, chicken, or turkey are outstanding, especially when finished off with a piece of awesome homemade baklava. Vasos also has an on-site banquet room available for parties of 20 or more, with a variety of menu selections beyond their barbecue, including steaks and stuffed chicken breasts, a Mexican-themed cantina party, breakfast meetings, or a Greek family-style dinner. They'll also pack it all up and deliver it to your home or party room to make a lasting impression on your guests and help you keep your hostess hands clean. Real Texas barbecue, with a little dash of Greek makes this a hometown favorite. SLM

JULIE BATTELLE loves Fort Bend barbecue, but at the top of her list is also City Market in Giddings on the way to Austin.

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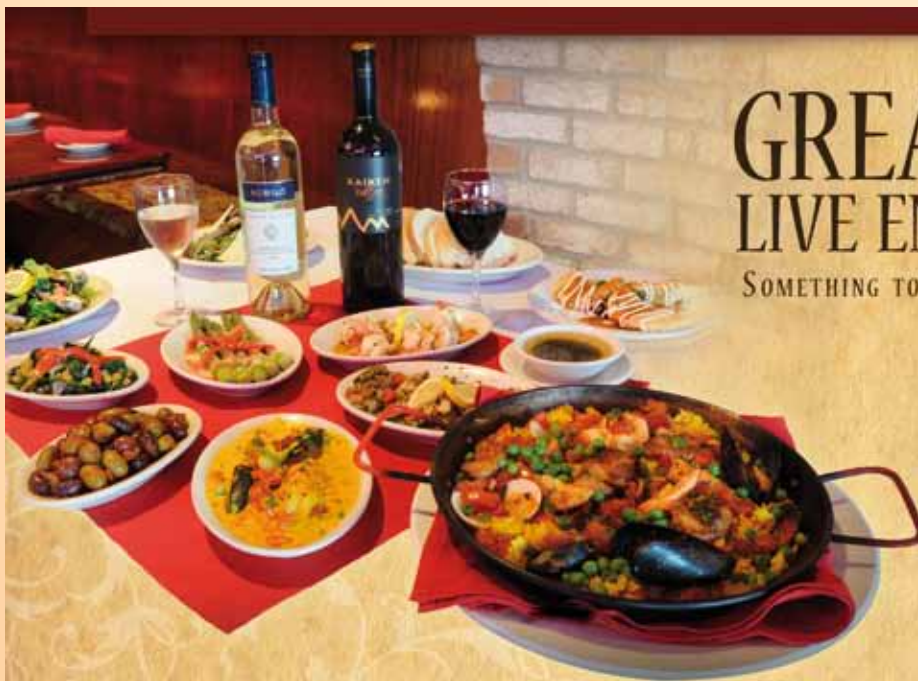
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Schulze's dishes up delicious
barbecue in Rosenberg



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