



Brisket Sandwich served with Sweet Potato Fries.



Island Jack's Famous Fish Tacos

## Moving on Up

BIG IRON HORSE BARBECUE OPENS NEW, URBAN CHIC LOCATION IN DOWNTOWN BARRINGTON

**M**AKING THE ROUNDS at Big Iron Horse Barbecue, Scott Hansen learned that a large group of diners had traveled on motorcycles, all the way from Iowa, to eat at his restaurant. “They saw someone at a biker bar wearing one of my T-shirts with the logo on the back of it,” Hansen said. “When anyone wears it on a motorcycle, it’s like a moving billboard.” The diners were proof Hansen reached the demographic that inspired the concept for his restaurant, a target market he refers to as “Rolex Riders,” affluent professionals who ride motorcycles and love to travel far for good barbecue.

Hansen grins, recalling how he sold out of 400 logoed T-shirts in less than three months. Lately, he has a lot to smile about. His restaurant moved last spring from its original location on Hough Street to a newly remodeled, 2,000-square-foot rustic, urban chic space at 205 Park Avenue in downtown Barrington, next door to McGonigal’s

Pub. “It’s not the typical Texas, 10-gallon hat and chaps type of barbecue,” Hansen said. “It’s fusion style, featuring flavors and cooking techniques of Mexico, the Southwest, and the Caribbean.”

### NOT YOUR BACKYARD BARBECUE

The spelling of barbecue in the restaurant’s name is intentional. “Both spellings—barbecue and barbeque—are correct,” Hansen said. “Restaurants true to their origin go by barbeque, if the style of cooking has more of a French influence and barbecue, if it’s Spanish.”

For starters, top sellers on the menu are fire roasted salsa and fresh guacamole, served with delicately crisp tortilla chips. The restaurant’s signature entrees include smoked-beef-brisket, pulled pork, and baby back ribs. Smoked for a minimum of 12 hours, the brisket is prepared with the restaurant’s very own rub and slathered in an original chipotle maple barbecue sauce. Sweet and tender, the baby back ribs have a flavor that is “off



the charts good,” Hansen said.

It was a Missouri state barbecue judge who ordered the ribs at the pizza place Hansen formerly operated in town, proclaiming them to be “the best barbecue he had ever experienced,” that inspired Hansen to launch the business in 2012 as a catering company and three years later, as an original concept restaurant. Another stand-out on the menu is Kogi pulled pork tacos in a Sriracha-based sauce, true to its heritage and nothing like it’s tomato-based rival. On Friday nights—the only night of the week it’s available—customers line up out the door for “Island Jack’s Famous Fish Tacos” and live music. The fish tacos were supposed to be a one-off item at the Barrington Rotary Club’s





*Big Iron Horse Barbecue features an rustic, urban chic interior.*



*Guests mingle at Big Iron Horse Barbecue.*



*Kevin Mileski and Colin Cimmarusti perform at Big Iron Horse.*

International Festival, Hansen said, but made its way on the menu after customers kept requesting it. Diners with less adventurous palettes will be happy to know that prime steaks and fresh seafood will soon be featured daily. To end the meal on a sweet note, there is mouthwatering gelato in double chocolate, vanilla bean, and salted caramel varieties.

### CHEERS

Complementing the fusion-style barbecue are distilled spirits from such celebrated Midwest brewpubs as 3 Floyds, Half Acre, and Fist City, as well as domestic and internationally sourced whiskeys, scotches, and infused bourbons. In time for the holidays, private and semi-private dining areas are available to accommodate parties of up to 125 guests.

### A CULMINATION OF EXPERIENCES

Hansen has been in the industry for more than

three decades. Before purchasing his first restaurant 15 years ago, he worked his way up through the back and front of the house at Houlihan's and several white tablecloth, Italian American fine dining establishments. Big Iron Horse Barbecue is an opportunity for him to shine at what he does best while satisfying his entrepreneurial spirit.

At the entrance of the restaurant, a sign, illuminated by LED lights, reads "Let's Meat Here," a play on words that perfectly describes what Hansen is out to achieve with his latest venture. "I wanted to create a gathering place where people from all over could come and enjoy a barbecue meal," he said. "And a place where employees love working and growing in the industry." The restaurateur and chef lives in Long Grove with his wife Denise, who happens to be vegetarian, an irony not lost on him.

*Big Ironhorse Barbecue is located at 205 Park*

*Avenue in downtown Barrington. Open six days a week; closed Mondays. For more information, call 847-382-IRON or visit [bigironhorse.com](http://bigironhorse.com).*

*Melanie Kalmar is a freelance writer specializing in business and human-interest features. When she's not writing, she enjoys spending time with her family. U*



*Big Iron Horse has plenty of nearby parking spaces.*