



BBQ Review

category:
Long Island BBQ, Huntington Station BBQ, Merrick BBQ

Hog House Barbecue (closed)

200 W. Jericho Tpke
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(CLOSED)
(631) 271-4200
www.hoghousebarbecue.com

139B Merrick Avenue
Merrick, NY 11566 (CLOSED)
(516) 543-4141

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Huntington Station: (12/23/06) (12/23/07)
Merrick: (04/19/07)

The Joint

This joint on the Jericho Turnpike just west of Route 110 is a cozy, inviting space that has a 2-seat bar, seven closely packed tables, a TV playing pig cartoons and pig decorations everywhere. They serve Pork Slap Ale. You get the feeling before you even look at the menu that you'll see the word "artisanal" somewhere on there.



The original location (now closed) in a strip mall in Huntington Station.

The Menu

The menu offers a wide variety of barbecue, near-barbecue and non-barbecue items. St Louis pork ribs are available by the rack and half rack. Brisket, pulled chicken and pulled pork are available on platters and sandwiches. Outside the barbecue realm, there's pastrami, sausage and peppers, and a big salad with or without smoked meat. Appetizers include chili, wings, mini pastrami Reuben sandwiches, and fries with chili and/or cheese.

If you want more than one barbecue meat, you have only two options: order the "It All Looks So Good That I Can't Decide" platter (5 meats, 5 sides, \$19.95 per person), or add a half rack of ribs to any order (\$7.99). This approach doesn't provide the kind of flexibility that's the norm with 2-meat and 3-meat combos offered elsewhere. Neither does the rigid policy on sides. All sandwiches (\$9.79) come with cole slaw, sweet potato chips and house-made pickles; all platters come with cole slaw, two mini cornbread muffins and house-made pickles. No substitutions.



Second location (now closed) on Merrick Avenue in Merrick.

The Meats

On my first visit to the original Huntington Station branch, I asked the pitmaster/chef what the best sandwich on the menu was, and without hesitation he replied, "We have the best pulled pork on the Island!" So that's what I ordered, to go. The pork, nearly dwarfed by its thick bulkie roll, was pulled into long strings and sauced to resemble Underwood deviled ham. I didn't taste much smoke or spice, and I didn't see any bark. The meat (aside from the sauce) was dry and the overall flavor was odd, so the "best pulled pork on the Island" let me down. I did like the chips though, and the slaw was very good.

A few months later, I found myself in Merrick during their second (now-closed) outpost's first week of operation. This time I ate onsite and this time I tried the pork on a platter, adding a half rack of ribs and a side of



A friendly space (Merrick) with whimsical decorations and pig cartoons.

collards (\$1.99). The pork was an improvement over my first taste in Huntington Station, with bigger chunks and a little more bark, but the texture was mushy. The ribs were very tender and very mild. I liked their moistness and briny undercurrent, but I didn't like their lack of crust, their lack of spice and lack of smoke. I asked the server if they even used a smoker and was told that they do, but purposely aimed for a milder smokiness, because that's what their customers like. If these ribs were served in a different context and not billed as *barbecue*, I might consider them decent. But as *barbecue ribs*, they just didn't do it for me. For kids, they're perfect.

A year after my first visit, I returned to Huntington Station to re-sample both the pulled pork sandwich and a half-rack rib dinner (\$13.99). There wasn't much of a change from my first taste of each. The take-out order included no napkins and no utensils. The slaw was again very good, but with a \$10 sandwich, there should have been more of it.

The Sauce

I've tasted barbecue sauces that I've called ketchupy, but Hog House takes this to a new extreme. I wouldn't be surprised if it was pure ketchup. Sauce should enhance the meat, but this detracted from it.

The Sides

I liked my order of collard greens. The sweet potato chips are a nice touch. Their creamy, well-seasoned cole slaw might just be the best on the Island. The cornbread muffins were OK on one visit, dry on another.



Peanuts tide you over while you peruse the menu.



The Bottom Line

I really wanted to like Hog House. If they had one of those pizza joint vibes and a more flexible ordering/pricing structure, their low-in-smoke, low-in-flavor, ketchup-as-sauce approach wouldn't be as disappointing. But their highbrow atmosphere, though admirable, sets the bar higher than their ability to clear it.

other opinion/info:

[Long Island Press review of Hog House Barbecue](#)
[Newsday review of Hog House Barbecue](#)

Pulled pork sandwich from the first visit.



Another look at the pulled pork.



Pulled pork dinner in Merrick, with an extra side and 1/2 rack add on.



A closer look at the ribs.



More pork in Huntington Station, just like the first batch a year earlier.



More ribs in Huntington Station, just like the first batch in Merrick.



Another look at the ribs.

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