

Charlotte

APRIL/MAY 2020

# HOMIE

DESIGN & DECOR

GREAT  
*Escapes*

*PLUS:*  
SOUK SHOPPING WITH  
HOUSE OF NOMAD

EXPLORE  
BRITISH COLUMBIA



# CROSS-STATE BBQ ESCAPES

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Photography by The Plaid Penguin

With the hint of spring in the air and the thought of summer around the corner, we all get the itch to get out of town, to take the first true break since the busy start of the year.

The warm air signals a slowdown in the fast pace of life and all of its great responsibilities. While spring in Charlotte is a delightful break in and of itself, it's always nice to escape for a few days.

Birmingham is my family's top escape destination right now, where we visit our daughter, son-in-law, and grandson. But my second favorite escape is to drive the North Carolina roads I grew up on, riding alongside my dad on his furniture sales trips and stopping

at the roadside restaurants where he became a regular during his travels. My love of barbecue began on those trips.

Of course, some of those restaurants have since closed. But the great thing about barbecue in North Carolina is that the tradition is still very much alive. A cross-state trip will take you to some of the best barbecue restaurants in the entire country.

At the top of my Carolina-barbecue-escape list is Honey Monk's Lexington BBQ, less than an hour's drive from most parts of Charlotte. I now count the Monks as close friends, as they were instrumental, and incredibly gracious, in helping me to realize my dream of opening Noble Smoke. Just writing about it, I can taste their tender, lightly sauced pork shoulder.





## “A CROSS-STATE TRIP WILL TAKE YOU TO SOME OF THE BEST BARBECUE RESTAURANTS IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.”

Next, I’d head to Stamey’s, which is just up the road in Greensboro. Its barbeque sandwich is often voted the best in North Carolina. Charlie, Chip, and Carver Stamey have carried on the legacy, which started way back in 1930 by Warner Stamey, who was the first person to serve hush puppies with his barbecue.

Heading farther east to the small town of Dudley, about a three-hour ride from Greensboro, you’ll find Grady’s. Husband-and-wife team Stephen and Gerri (two of the nicest people I’ve ever met) prepare whole hog, pit-cooked barbecue with Gerri’s delicious recipes for sides like butter beans, steamed cabbage, black-eyed peas, and collards. But don’t leave without a helping of the luscious banana pudding.

You’re probably already feeling full, but there is one more eastern North Carolina spot I wouldn’t pass up on this trip. Pete Jones opened The Skylight Inn on his family’s farm in Ayden when he was just seventeen years old, and it has since become emblematic of Eastern Carolina barbecue. Pete passed away in 2006, but his family continues the legacy. And you’ve likely

heard of his grandson, Sam, who opened his own restaurant, Sam Jones BBQ, in Winterville.

The truth is, no matter which direction you’re heading in North Carolina, you can easily find some great barbecue along the way. And the places I’ve just named are far from the only ones you

should consider. We’ve compiled some of the stories of our state’s barbecue icons in the Legends section of noblesmokebarbecue.com, and honor them at the Legends Counter in the restaurant. My hope is that they will encourage you to explore some of North Carolina’s small towns and the family-owned establishments you pass along the way. You never know who you’ll make friends with or what new love you’ll discover. ♦

