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Fun Facts about the Ribbers who will compete at the 2024 Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival

AUGUSTA, N.J., May 16, 2024--Four of the nation's best ribbers will be at the Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival, Sussex Fairgrounds, Augusta, N.J., June 28-30, serving their popular signature dishes to the public while competing for cash, trophies and the prestigious Optimum People's Choice Award.

- Pitmaster Petey Marshall, [Off The Bone BBQ](#), Canal Winchester, Ohio, participates in some 25 BBQ competitions a year. He follows his mother and maternal grandmother's tradition of cooking ribs "low and slow." Although he lives in Ohio, he described his BBQ style as Alabama. "Hospitality is Alabama style," he says. "You don't need teeth to eat our meat." He cooks with dry rub and apple juice, then he grills the ribs and when they are 90 percent done, he puts on a little more dry rub before serving them. Asked what's most important, Petey responded: "The customers. We want to win trophies, of course, but the biggest accomplishment is our relationships with every customer." He travels with a team of 10.
- "We leave every festival with an award," said [Ribbins BBQ](#) pitmaster Rondell Adams, who returns to Rock, Ribs & Ridges Festival for the third year. In 2023 Ribbins, with more than 20 years under its belt, won second place in both Best Ribs and Best Sauce competitions. "We compete in some 10 to 12 festivals around the country every year," he said. He usually brings 10 to 12 workers but as many as 28 for the huge festivals. It's a family affair, he said. At the Festival, you might meet his mother, Peaches, from North Carolina. She attended last year. When asked why should Ribbins win again this year, he says, "Try a sample of everyone's ribs and you'll know the answer. Meat prep is key—it's all about offering the best quality to the customers and how you handle the meat. It's also about having a good time with friendly staff and all the food-- not just the ribs, but our sweet potato corn bread, pork, Saint Louis style ribs, brisket, pulled pork, chicken and the traditional sides such as homemade mac and cheese and collard greens."

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- Enrique Vega shared the history of [Cowboys BBQ](#). It began with Dallas and Tahnya Green, who started with a tarp, two by fours, and a smoker on the side of the road 32 years ago. They opened a restaurant in Richmond, Va. in 1988 followed by an invitation to the World Invitation Rib Championship Cook Off, which put them on the map: Cowboys won the People’s Choice Award for best ribs.

In 1996 the Greens met 11-year-old Enrique Vega at a festival in Trenton, N.J. He worked at the event and subsequently traveled to competitions with the family, forming a mentor/mentee relationship with Dallas. Enrique married the Green’s daughter, Lauren—now also his business partner. He founded Buck ‘Em BBQ and took over Cowboys BBQ after Dallas died. The Buck ‘Em BBQ fare, served up by a different team with distinctive seasonings, sauces and finish, is available to VIP attendees at the Festival. Enrique covers about 10,000 miles a year in the U.S. and Canada, with 9 team members. He says, “every event is different—as are the attendees. Compared to other festivals, the Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival is more of a party. Some visitors camp out and enjoy themselves and the Festival does a great job entertaining them.

- Paul Myers, manager of [Chicago BBQ](#), Burr Ridge, Ill., has been with pitmaster Tom Ferguson for 20 years. This is the first year the team will compete at the Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival. They attend about 10 competitions every year “from almost coast to almost coast,” says Paul. There are from five to 15 on their team. Paul said that customers in the restaurant Tom founded in the Chicago suburbs in the 1980s loved his barbecue. In 1985 he was invited to the first Best in Ribs in America event in Cleveland and his team came in 6th out of 50. Next on his plate was the Kansas City Barbecue Society World Invitational where “he won, got a taste for traveling and doing BBQ outside four walls.”

Paul says, “There is a difference in festival visitors if you’re going into a place that’s not had festivals before. Novice BBQ customers freak when they see pink in the middle of BBQed meat. It should be pink. Smoke cooks the meat—it’s not raw. Otherwise, it’s the same everywhere—some people like spicier ribs; others sweeter. Our success depends on being flexible and serving delicious ribs.

The music lineup this year includes southern rock headliners Blackberry Smoke, Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes, Molly Hatchet, The Outlaws, Larkin Poe and more.

Visit [#rockribsandridges](#), [@rockribsandridges](#) or www.rockribsandridges.com for all the festival info and to purchase tickets – day, weekend and VIP passes. There are many camper perks, including a special campers-only karaoke on Friday and Saturday nights, 24-hour access to restrooms and showers and a Sunday Morning Breakfast Get Together. RV Passes are selling quickly and will sell out, so buy your 2024 camping and RV passes now. Prices subject to change without notice.

Rock, Ribs, and Ridges, presented by Franklin Sussex Auto Mall, is produced by Promol of Fairfield, NJ, with more than 40 years of event marketing production.

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Address: Sussex County Fairgrounds, 37 Plains Rd, Augusta, NJ 07822

Hours: Friday, June 28: 6 pm-10:00 pm; Saturday, June 29: Noon-9 pm; Sunday, June 30: Noon to 8 pm

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