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Instructor's Name

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Date

The Little Juke Joint

On the corner of North 6th Street and Garrison in Fort Smith, Arkansas, stands a little “juke joint” by the name of Neumier’s Rib Room. Every person there can feel the excitement of hickory-smoked barbeque ribs and entrancing blues music tickling the senses.

While soaking in the nightlife and bright lights of downtown Fort Smith, most people waltz into the doors of the Rib Room mainly to start their night with a gigantic rack of Bill Neumier’s award-winning ribs. For all of the skeptics who need plenty of proof about the quality of the food there, I have plenty of proof. Bill, owner of this fine eatery, brought his ribs to the Arkansas State Meat and Poultry Cook-Off competition to decide how these tasty morsels fared against the best restaurants and weekend warriors in the state. After little debate, Neumier’s dry-rubbed, Memphis-style baby-back pork ribs won not only the meats division, but he also won the overall competition as well. The following year, the successful Mr. Neumier debuted the awesome dish at the annual New Year’s Eve Ball Drop. Even before the clock struck twelve, or nine for that matter, 400 racks flew off the grill, and 4800 bones, completely dry, were piled into a massive garbage can. Of course, the only real way to test my facts is to taste-test his succulent ribs.

What makes the “juke joint” complete, in this case, is the “juke” that brings over two hundred people together for the music. On most nights, I usually like to relax with a soft drink and sip and listen to the great musical experience on stage. Bill strives to bring the best bands in

all genres for what he calls “The Beer Garden.” The list includes such great names as national recording artists Los Lonely Boys, Jim Suhler (lead guitarist for George Thorogood and the Destroyers) and Monkey Beat, and rap star Afroman. The list continues longer than my grandfather’s fishing stories. Not only do these artists have great prestige, but they are also great people to all their fans as well. I remember Mr. Suhler handing me his maracas to play during one of his songs. While the group was playing, the bass player and I chatted about music and the various lovely ladies that aimlessly made their way to the dance floor. During the intermission of every other performance, I find myself talking to every person of each band about each individual’s musical influences. Almost every band which has passed through the gates of The Beer Garden has found its way into my CD player as well. Many people pass by the bouncer and through the tall black iron gates of The Beer Garden for the exciting atmosphere alone. But by the time the band is finished with their sound check, and after the alcohol has been flowing for some time, the people loosen up to the point that all the blues hounds in the joint lose their second “left foot” and become a brilliant choreographer. The sound of a dirty blues Selmer tenor saxophone and the smooth howl of a Gibson Les Paul guitar can be distinguished as far west as Oklahoma and as far east as the end of town. The band doesn’t quit until the wee hours of the morning when either the bartender runs out of the devil’s brew, the band has run out of songs, or Mr. Neumier shouts from behind the bar, “Last call for alcohol!”

Most wander into Neumier’s Rib Room by day for the fantastic, award-winning ribs. Others meander through the tall iron gate of The Beer Garden to hear the soulful, stylish sounds of the rhythm and blues. Either way, no place in Fort Smith or the entire planet rivals the awesome feeling that arises whenever the band hits the first chord in front of a gigantic rack of Bill Neumier’s dry-rub ribs from the famous Neumier’s Rib Room and Beer Garden.