

Legendary Texan takes part in 3rd year of BBQ championships

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For Where It's @

MESQUITE — Johnny Trigg is headed to Mesquite for the third annual Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ Championship, taking place today through Sunday, and the colorful 73 year-old former insurance industry executive makes no bones about why he makes the trip each year from Alvarado, Tex., about 35 miles from Dallas-Fort Worth.

"I never knew about Mesquite before three years ago," Trigg said. "When I heard there was \$40,000 in prize money, I knew I was going to go." Luring Trigg and his Smokin Triggers team to the Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ Championship is more than an idle accomplishment. The man is a legend in the business who could participate anywhere in the world and has, as evidenced by his travels to the Middle East to feed U.S. troops.

In BBQ circles, he has a stellar list of accomplishments, including that he captured the Jack Daniel's Championship in 2000 and 2003 and has won more than 40 Grand Championships nationwide.

"He is considered one of the grandfathers of BBQ competition," said Mesquite Gaming Sporting Events Manager Christian Adderson. "For him to travel more than 1,300 miles to compete in the Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ Championship is not only an honor but a tribute to the event, the CasaBlanca and the City of Mesquite."

Trigg was on the original The Learning Channel Pit Masters TV show Pit Masters; considered the true source of BBQ competition in nation in a nation where even NASCAR is embracing the phenomenon.

A retired former insurance industry executive, who worked for Fireman's Fund out of San Francisco, Trigg wasn't worried about the weather when he packed up his truck and motor home and headed for a Mesquite that wasn't in Texas during his 22nd year of competition.

"It can be hot in Mesquite, but the people there do one he lluva job taking care of the cooks and presenting a great event," said Trigg, who won't go near a computer and might even be part of a group that thinks "Windows" is what you throw a computer out of. "We were so happy there last year that we stayed at the CasaBlanca until Wednesday before going on to Grand Junction, Colo. "I really hope I win it this time. I had a good year and we're paying the bills."

While Trigg loves making people laugh, his soft side is evident when he starts talking about feeding U.S. Troops in Kuwait.

"Four of us went over and cooked 110 briskets at each post," he said. "It was a very touching experience and the boys had tears in their eyes. We had a great time even though it was about 135 degrees."

For Trigg and his wife, Trish, their lifestyle is unmatched. They pack up their 40-foot Diesel Pusher motorhome and also bring a

Dodge truck.

“Some people retire and play a lot of golf,” he said. “I got to cooking instead. It’s a hobby and there’s also a financial gain. I have cooked all over the country. You learn that you need to travel as light as possible. I tell some cookers to write down everything and then check off what you didn’t use when the competition is done.” Trish is also an important part of the team. She spearheads the setup and teardown while keeping her husband in order as he continues his quest to remain the king of cooking top quality ribs while maintaining the philosophy that winners purchase quality meats; use a rub or spice that will bring out the flavors; don’t overcook the meat and make sure to use a temperature gauge; and also use lump charcoal rather than bricks.

While he’s providing invaluable advice: don’t soak the wood chunks since that tends to add too much smoke flavor.

Now in its third year, the Smokin’ in Mesquite BBQ competition, sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbeque Society, offers a bonus to the top finishers from the Best Damn BBQ held on Memorial Day weekend in Boulder City along with the Mesquite event. In addition, a \$3,000 bonus is provided to the Nevada State Champion who has the best combined scores from both events.

Log onto www.mesquitebbqchampionship.com or call 888-711-4653, ext. 51, for more information.