

Charlotte

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2019

HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

Arts & ARCHITECTURE

AT HOME WITH
PAM STOWE

PLUS:
ART MEETS FUNCTION

IN THE STUDIO WITH
HOLLY KEOGH

TOUR THE TOWN:
GALLERY CRAWL

SMOKE SIGNALS

By Jim Noble



Beyond the meal, so much goes into creating a great dining experience.

There's prep work, cleanup, reservations, hiring, training, inventory, and ordering, among other things. All of these factors influence how diners feel, but are less evident than what's on the plate.

The same is true for activities we undertake before we even open our doors. I'm talking about design and construction—my focus for the new year.

With the holidays over, I'll be spending a lot of time at our new barbecue concept, Noble Smoke. Creating the plans for it took almost a year, and I spent eight years before that searching for the right spot. Now is the critical time when we move from paper to reality.

Noble Smoke draws influence from the best barbecue houses



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in North Carolina and Texas. We'll have masonry pits similar to ones found in Lexington, North Carolina, and offset smokers similar to those found in Texas, where great brisket is made. In Texas, you order your food and sit down. In Carolina, you sit down, and someone takes your order. I loved the idea of people being able to see the meat getting cut, but I didn't want them to have to get up to order more. So we designed the meat cutting station to be highly visible, even if you're walking by or sitting down.

The biggest departure from both styles is the inclusion of a hotel-style kitchen, which will allow us to prepare lots of sides in small batches, plus salads, grilled fish, and desserts. Like the meat cutting station, it will be out in the open. Kitchen traffic should flow smoothly but also add a warm bustle to the atmosphere.

We've spent hours on details like these. We'll have handwashing stations in the dining area (sometimes paper towels aren't

enough), and a Legend's Counter that pays homage to those who helped define Southern barbecue. The beer garden will have a walk-up bar for ordering food and drinks outside. Those who prefer a fried chicken sandwich can have one brought up the short hill from Bossy Beaut's, and a full-on audiovisual system will let folks enjoy great music or catch the big game.

Noble Smoke is designed to be a place that celebrates the rich tradition of barbecue while adding to it. I've spent decades researching how to make the best barbecue, but I also know that the food is only part of the equation. Hospitality is about how you make people feel, and much of that is accomplished off the plate. So, if you don't see me around these next few months, I'm probably over there, working to make people feel welcome before we even open our doors. ♦

CHEF JIM NOBLE is the executive chef and owner of Noble Food & Pursuits. Noble Smoke, Copain, and Bossy Beaut's are set to open in early 2019. For more information, visit NOBLEFOODANDPURSUITS.COM.