



David Bessinger (left) is well known for his Big Joe pork sandwich and secret mustard-based sauce that's been handed down for generations.



# MELVIN'S BBQ

Barbecue has been a family business since David Bessinger's father, Melvin, opened Eat at Joe's in Holly Hill. After a series of restaurants, Melvin's Legendary Barbecue opened in 1982. Each restaurant used the top-secret barbecue sauce recipe passed down by "Big Joe," Melvin's father. David took over for his father and still uses the secret recipe for a mustard-based sauce that his grandfather told his dad would, "make you a million dollars one day."

**Best-Seller** The Big Joe Pork Sandwich  
**Secret Sauce** The famous Big Joe sandwich is soon going to be made with Duroc pig from the Compart farm in Minnesota, something Bessinger says sets Melvin's apart. "It's the best pig you can buy. I'm getting away from commodity meats," he says. "I want to buy from a smaller, family-run business like myself. You can definitely taste the difference."

Bessinger says his mother's family recipe for macaroni and cheese and his own recipe for Country BBQ Hash over rice make Melvin's stand out.

"They've been doing hash over rice since Colonial days," Bessinger says. "It's just leftover parts of the pig you don't use...we cook it for about 24 hours...add some more ingredients...and I'll tell you it's a meal by itself."

Bessinger also brags about his Hand-dipped Golden Onion Rings: "It looks like a doughnut and customers love it."

**BBQ Passion** "Other places out there, they are going to say they have Duroc pork, but it's not the all-natural Compart pork," Bessinger says. "That pork is so marbled throughout. You can't explain it unless you can taste it."

**Takeaway** Melvin's sells its sauces at the restaurants and over the Internet. Sauces include the "million dollar" sauce Bessinger's grandfather invented; the Southern Red invented in 1972 by Bessinger's father; Southern Hickory and Golden Spicy. Also for sale is the rub and the onion ring mix.

**Last Word** "I believe in treating these animals fair," Bessinger says. "I want to support people who treat these animals right and don't fill them with hormones and antibiotics."

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