


Tuesday, June 5, 2012 - 7:50am

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June 2012

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Palmetto Based BBQ Sauce Shoots for the Stars

Published Tuesday, June 5, 2012 12:02 am
by [Dennis Maley](#)

PALMETTO – Everyone always told Elmer Hilker that his barbecue sauce was good enough to go big time. For the last 27 years, the Manatee-based owner of Hilker Media has been dazzling friends with his homemade finishing sauces that always seemed a cut above even the best brands available on grocer's shelves.

However, barbecue lovers no longer need to have a personal connection to score some of Elmer's scintillating sauce. It's already available in some local stores and judging by the success, you'll soon see it everywhere sauce is sold.

The first run of **E's Best Sauces** – "Smoky Mountain" and "Killer" – were in retail outlets just in time for the the 2012 barbecue season on Memorial Day Weekend. Though he and his wife Jan have lived in Manatee County since 1983, Hilker was born and raised in Charlotte, NC and says his recipes come from the barbecue tradition of the Carolina Smokies.



Elmer with Palmetto Meat Shop's Roger Talbot

"We started making these sauces in the late 80's, giving away jars to our friends at Christmas," said Hilker. "The demand exploded as our friends shared the sauce, so we realized we might have a commercially viable product. Our initial weekend launch has certainly confirmed that to us."



E's Best Sauces are already available at Palmetto Meat Shop and **The Chop Shop** on Manatee Avenue in West Bradenton, where they sold a whopping 13 cases combined over opening Memorial Day Weekend.

"We've had tastings in our shop for a long time but we have never seen product move in such volume as E's Best sauces did on that first Saturday," said Susan Ambrose of The Chop Shop.

Hilker says that the initial success has already put a sizable dent in his inventory and that he's already working on a second run, as new retailers are continuing to come onboard throughout Florida and the Carolinas. A share of the proceeds from every bottle will go toward supporting Christian outreach projects. For more information on Hilker's new line of sauces, email info@ebestbarbecue.com.

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Who has the best french fries in Manatee County?

- Shake Pit
- 5 Guys Burger and Fries
- The Rod and Reel
- Gecko's
- Hooter's
- Pier 22
- Starfish Company

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Clara Franks	06/02/2012
Jeanne Booth	06/02/2012
Aline Surette	06/02/2012
Tracy Priestler	05/28/2012
William Lance	05/24/2012
Sara Cotterman	05/30/2012
Victor Muth	05/31/2012
James Houston	05/27/2012

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