

## COMMUNITY

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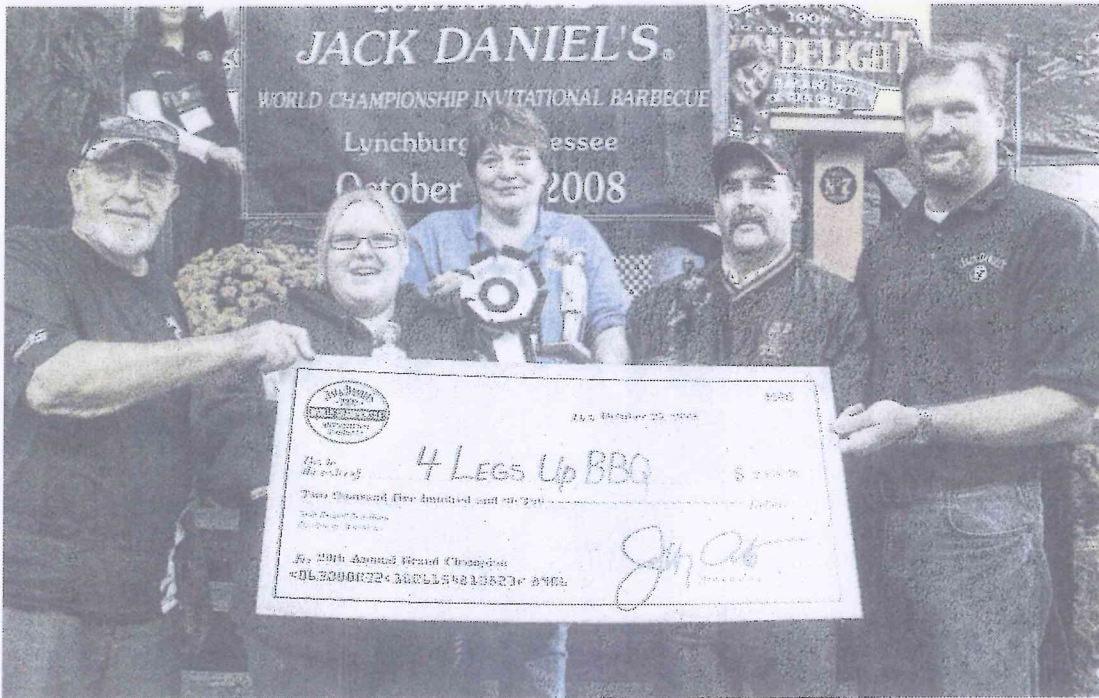


Photo submitted

The 4 Legs Up BBQ team headed by Kelly Wertz of Grand Bend, Kan., second from right, will compete in the third annual Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ Championships Sept. 2-4 at the CasaBlanca. Shown from left to right are Frank Bobo, retired Jack Daniels master distiller; Kelsi Wertz, Roni Wertz, Kelly Wertz, and Jeff Arnett, master distiller. Kelly Wertz will also teach a class on the art of barbecue Friday, Sept. 2, at the CasaBlanca.

# Kansas expert to teach barbecue class

or the Desert Valley Times

Kelly Wertz of Grand Bend, Kans., who has been teaching the art of barbecue for the past seven years, is bringing his class to the CasaBlanca Resort Friday, Sept. 2, as part of the third annual Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ championship.

The class, scheduled from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. is certain to cover every aspect of the barbecue trade, from the selection of the utensils needed to the cooking procedures.

"We will cover chicken, ribs, pork and brisket," said Wertz, a 49-year-old native of Nebraska who now operates an award-winning restaurant called 4 Legs Up BBQ

and Steakhouse with his wife, Roni, in Great Bend, Kan. "It will be kind of a contest class on how to prepare for competition. We will gear it to everything from beginners to intermediate cooks.

"Even the backyard barbecue people who want to improve their work will enjoy it."

Wertz said he has never been to Mesquite, but he's looking forward to the trip. He said barbecue competition is a lot like auto racing in that while the prize money in most events may not be big (the purse for the Mesquite event is \$40,000 which is one of the largest on the barbecue circuit), the friendships are always memorable.

"For \$150, you will get more tips, techniques and ideas and different ways of looking at things," he said about the class being offered. "The money is cheap for what people will learn. It's unreal and in addition, people will create friendships that will last for a lifetime. I have been all over doing classes like this from Florida to New York and the rest."

Wertz's own credentials are very impressive. What started out as a hobby grew into big-time competition and the restaurant is so respected that it has become a popular barbecue stop for lunch and dinner, with an award-winning prime rib on Fridays.

In fact, the couple's prime rib is so famous it has been featured in Paul Kirk's book "America's Best

BBQ, 100 Recipes from America's Best Smokehouses, Pits, Shacks, Rib Joints, Roadhouses and Restaurants."

Wertz's 4 Legs Up BBQ team has won the Jack Daniels World Invitational Barbecue championship. In addition, the team has 24 grand championships; 12 reserve championships; 68 top-10 finishes and 46 first-place finishes. The team has competed in 12 states, winning contests in every state.

Since 2007, 4 Legs Up has finished in the top 15 out of more than 4,500 teams in the Kansas City Barbeque Society Team of the Year points. The team is also the only team to have won the Frisco, Colo., and Dillon, Colo., contests in the same year.

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 Dam Barbecue 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.

More information about this year's event that runs through Sept. 4 may be found by visiting [www.mesquitebbqchampionship.com](http://www.mesquitebbqchampionship.com) or by calling Christian Adderson at 888-711-4653, ext. 51; or emailing him at [cadderson@casablancaresort.com](mailto:cadderson@casablancaresort.com).