

A Note of Gratitude from Managing Partner Matt Coggin

What a year this has been! Wished I would have had the time to write a blog about "Opening Your First Restaurant", but I was far too busy keeping my head above water. Sometimes literally as in October when the torrential rains came and the roof leaked.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who made this first year not only possible, but also a success. Starting with my partners, James Erlich, and my mother Lee Coggin, who helped me get open and provided advice along the way. Special thanks to my father, Tom Coggin, who provided the marketing support when I most needed it. And thanks to my brother Scott for reminding me when times were tough that this is what I wanted to do.

As in all start up ventures, some staff changes are made along the way. I want to thank my staff that has been there from the beginning: David Quist who started with us as a host who now manages the restaurant when I am gone and is also our catering manager; Julie, Chelsea, John, Wayne, Jessi, Jessica, Alycia, Luis and Luis. Thanks to all of you for hanging in and helping us through our first year.

I have deep gratitude to Drew Kirkland who came on board in September. Not only did he bring his skills as a barbecue pit master, but his Lang smoker as well. I got to know Drew when we worked together at Kevin Rathbun Steaks. I want to thank my friend Jason Hill, owner chef of Wisteria, for stepping in to manage the kitchen while we were waiting for Drew to come on board.

Our goal was to be a neighborhood restaurant that served great barbecue in a friendly and casual setting. We got involved in numerous community events while working towards that goal. We were sponsors for Morningside's Monumental Ball, Virginia Highland's Annual Home Tour, The Taste of Highlands and Morningside's Celebration of Summer. We have had Dine Outs for Morningside Elementary School and for Spark.

We never miss a chance to party and have a good time, so whenever there is a holiday or reason to celebrate you can count us in. If you missed us this past year for our 4th of July and Labor Day parties with the Page, Liebman, Burke Trio, or our first Pig Pull for Monday Night football when the New Orleans Saints played the Atlanta Falcons (those Saints fans know how to party) or didn't order a Thanksgiving smoked turkey...there is always this year, because we intend to do it all over again!

We celebrated Saint Patrick's Day, becoming the best Irish pub in Virginia Highland, Fat Tuesday that let us show our love for all things New Orleans, and Cinco de Mayo (El Texas Brisket enchilada anyone?) with Snavé in the Grass providing a real party atmosphere. Valentine's Day brought our fund-raiser for "Hearts for Haiti" with ServeHAITI, an organization that was already in place when the earthquake hit. Mother's Day was especially fun with Mudcat, Little Joe from Chicago, and the rest of the band out on the patio on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Those little kids were just mesmerized by the music.

I have always had deep appreciation for music and musicians and am pleased whenever they come to DBA. We have dedicated a wall with the names of some of our favorite musicians and bands in their honor as well as a wall covered with album covers. Many thanks to those of you

that have brought in a cover for the wall and we still give a free appetizer of your choice if you bring us another album cover. We are fans and supporters of WRFG and sponsors of the Atlanta Blues Society and The Sean Costello Fund for Bipolar Research. Just in the last few weeks we helped sponsor a fund raiser for Eddie Tigner who recently had his car and keyboard stolen.

But my very special thanks go out to you, our patrons and neighbors because without you we would not be here. I have worked in this neighborhood for over 12 years and knew many of you from the other restaurants where I worked. I am proud and happy to see you in my restaurant. Thanks to each of you for helping us become that neighborhood restaurant that I envisioned. We hope to see you during our First Year Celebration on Memorial Day! If not then, we hope to see you soon!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Coggin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Coggin
Managing Partner
D.B.A. Barbecue