



Rodney George: Rod's KC Bar-b-q

On any given Saturday or Sunday, you can't fail to notice the characteristic sound of knives on a cutting board, the spicy savory steam that surrounds Rod's KC Bar-b-q and the fixed calm demeanor of Tucson's bar-b-q master, Rodney George. Tucson Farmers' Market is about celebrating relationships new and old. One particular friendship blossomed eighteen years ago; before Tucson Farmers' Market at St. Philip's Plaza was in existence.

Manish Shah, market manager and owner of Maya Tea Company befriended Rodney George in 1992 as he regularly ate at Rod's KC Bar-b-q when it was located at North Stone. Rod's was the kind of family business where you could find his wife Dee, and his mother, father and brother coming in and out of the scene. Rodney's grandfather, an old Tennessee bar-b-q-er, is the originator of the family recipes. All of the recipes and chronological history was documented when Rodney hired Manish to do marketing for his business. Manish also designed a new menu and logo for Rod's KC Bar-b-q. In 1994/95, Rod's KC moved into a strip mall on 4th Avenue where Magpie's is located. Rodney and Rod's KC Bar-b-q has been there ever since. It has been a struggle to serve bar-b-q as a sit down restaurant for various reasons but particularly because bar-b-q is a novelty in Tucson and not as established in the culture as it is in other regions.

The recipe that has yielded the most success for Rod's KC is serving sandwiches at farmers' markets. In 2002, just 5 to 6 months following Manish becoming market manager at the Tucson Farmers' Market at St. Philip's Plaza, Rodney came to the market and asked if he could sell sandwiches. The farmers' market venue has allowed Rodney to showcase his high quality unique products and build up his clientele to the extent that 95% of the catering that Rodney does is from the farmers' market. Unquestionably, after all these years, Rod's KC Bar-b-q continues to satisfy Tucson Farmers' Market patrons' stomachs and souls with mouth-watering bar-b-q.