

101 BBQ

Text and photography by Hope S. Philbrick

Learn the secrets to cooking barbecue during a two-day class at Wiley's Championship BBQ in Savannah



Wiley McCrary is spilling secrets to a room full of people taking careful notes.

It's a BBQ 101 class and the students are learning from a master. They sit on wooden chairs listening to expert instructions while breathing in the intoxicating blend of smoke and spice aromas drifting in from the kitchen. Later, they bite into perfectly seasoned and toothsome meat that they hope to replicate at home.

**"You don't barbecue meat.
You smoke it until it becomes
barbecue."**

Before opening Wiley's Championship BBQ restaurant in Savannah in 2008 with his wife, Janet, where the couple now hosts quarterly classes for eager fans, McCrary worked as a barbecue caterer for 25 years. Throughout that time, the McCrarys racked up an impressive number of awards in professional barbecue competitions, including National BBQ News Caterers of the Year, Georgia State Champions, South Carolina State Champions, Alabama Reserve Grand Champions, Nashville FanFair Reserve Grand Champions and North Carolina State Reserve Grand Champions. In barbecue competitions across the nation, Wiley and Janet have earned five "180" pins for impressive and difficult to receive perfect scores.

At Wiley's, Janet and Wiley McCrary, barbecue competition champions for more than 25 years, share grilling secrets in quarterly classes. Each two-day course provides insights into barbecue essentials from equipment basics to meat grades and cuts.

