



This is brisket: Brisket is a cut of meat from the breast or lower chest of beef or veal. The beef brisket is one of the nine beef primal cuts. — SUPPLIED PHOTO

MEET MEAT

BY ANDY FRYE

For Sun-Times Media

Ten years ago, Jared Leonard was an equity options trader. The money was good but, after looking at one too many charts and graphs one day, Leonard started to think about what in life there was that he enjoyed more. He thought about that fact that he loved to cook.

"One of my favorite things has always been to cook and eat with friends," Leonard said.

Now a decade later, he's possibly Chicago's premier expert in old-style barbecue. On a shoestring budget, Leonard and his wife, Amanda, opened up Rub Backcountry Smokehouse just more than four years ago, not only for a love of food but also a passion for the slow style of cooking that makes great barbecue what it is.

Situated in West Rogers Park, Rub is about as authentic as barbecue gets. Rub's dining room and outdoor patio have the ambiance of a secret treasure you might find only by veering off-course in the backwoods of the Mississippi River Delta. It also has the food to match the flair.

Among the most popular meaty offerings are the beef brisket and pulled pork, both of which are marinated and seasoned with typically smoked for up to 16 hours. Rub also has pulled chicken, which is just as tasty, not to mention barbecued meatballs and a Texas smoked sausage that tastes almost like a wood-fired Polish kielbasa with a spicy dust-bowl kick. Other classics, such as smoked ribs, are also available.

Rub Backcountry Smokehouse is at 6954 N. Western Ave. in Chicago. You can drop in for lunch or dinner every day except Monday, or call about barbecue classes in the pit room at (773) 675-1410.