

Barbecue with a Mediterranean twist

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When Armen Mamadjanian and his son Art opened up shop two years ago this June, they served mainly Mediterranean cuisine: kebabs, eggplant, tabbouleh. Business was average, but Mamadjanian wanted to make a change.

“A lot of people don’t know what it is... so we quit the kebab and [went] with the ribs, the pulled pork, the brisket,” said Mamadjanian.

Now, Art’s has become Crescent City’s most coveted hole-in-the-wall barbeque joint. Although, you’ll still find the brisket and pulled pork is being served in pita wraps, among other Mediterranean touches.

“It has a little, little middle-eastern twist in it, like seasoning wise.” said Mamadjanian.

The twist Mamadjanian was alluding to is the Aleppo pepper they use in their spice mixture, which is a staple in Mediterranean dishes. Additionally, their homemade hummus and Armenian garlic sauce are a hit with customers, Mamadjanian said the garlic sauce is a perfect match with the chicken wrap.

Mamadjanian moved to Los Angeles from Armenia in 1992 to work as an electromechanical engineer. Then, about five years ago on a trip to Crescent City, he noticed there were no Armenian restaurants in town.

Having some experience from helping out at a family member's restaurant in Armenia, he decided to try his hand at the food business.

Mamadjanian said they keep the menu small to maintain quality, as well as keeping their expenses down to keep prices low for customers. Although recently, meat prices have skyrocketed due to inflation, according to news reports.

“The meat has more than doubled since Christmas,” said Mamadjanian.

Despite the uptick, Mamadjanian said they will keep menu prices the same, in hopes that meat prices will level out soon.