

Swingbellys Beachside BBQ review: Wings, mac and cheese stand out at Long Beach restaurant

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▼ CAPTION

St. Louis ribs are served with salad, cornbread, and mac and cheese at Swingbellys Beachside BBQ in Long Beach. (Credit: Yvonne Albinowski)

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Location info

Location: 909 W. Beech St. Long Beach, NY 11561-1428

User rating: ★★★★★

Description: The true 'cue experience requires sticky fingers and greasy lips; platters of glistening meats are ...

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Having seen the wrath of superstorm Sandy, two renovations and five different pitmasters, [Swingbellys Beachside BBQ](#) comes out swinging harder than ever. Credit pitmaster co-owner Dan Monteforte, who was on the scene when the place opened eight years ago and returns after a two-year absence.




To appreciate his skill, order your 'cue without sauce. An ingenious mix of dry-rub spices forms a pebbly coating on the meat, which is imbued with a haunting smokiness. Plump meaty chicken "swingz" are juicy, nuanced. So, too, are smoky, tender St. Louis ribs and pit-smoked chicken. Pulled pork, which often relies on a coat of BBQ sauce, stands proudly on its own. It's only brisket that comes out a trifle dry on one occasion, even when topped with pico de gallo, guacamole and sour cream in one of the restaurant's "smoke pit" tacos. Of the six kinds offered, the smoked pork belly version is the one to get.

One specialty that should not be missed is the opulent "mac and Pete," a bowl of creamy, al dente mac and cheese laced with brisket burned ends, topped with crisp fried onions and served with a warm square of cornbread that's only subtly sweet and tastes of corn.

If you're lucky -- or smart -- enough to hit the place on a Tuesday, know that it's when fried chicken is served. It's crunchy, juicy and definitely worth waiting for. On the side: panko-topped mac and cheese, cleverly served in a little bread tin, as well as a BLT salad featuring excellent house-smoked bacon. Or get a sandwich. Both the brisket grilled cheese and the Cuban (featuring pulled pork, Swiss, ham, house-made pickles and mustard BBQ sauce) are winners.

Bacon crème brûlée capitalizes on the bacon-in-everything trend. It's a trifle greasy and easily bypassed in favor of a pecan pie that's appropriately first-rate.



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