



The Pitmaker team

Last week I had the honor of joining the Pitmaker BBQ Addiction competition team at the 2013 World Food Championships in Las Vegas. Pitmaker makes barbecue pits and trailers that not only cook awesomely but look like works of art. George Shore and Victor Howard design and build their pits in their Humble, Texas shop. I have been cooking on one of their BBQ Vault pits for 4 years now and have done very well. Not only do they build the best BBQ pits in the world, they also know how to cook on them, winning numerous championships and first place awards every year. This year George and Victor pulled one of their trailers up to Lynchburg, TN for me to use in the Jack Daniel's Invitational World BBQ Championship allowing me to fly out from California. The drive would have been a little too much for me this year. They invited me to join them at the upcoming World Food Championships as a member of the Pitmaker team and I jumped at the chance.

The World Food Championships bring together over 400 competitors competing in seven food categories for a \$300,000 purse. The event is invitation only. Each participant won a qualifying contest that got them an invitation to the WFC. The categories are barbecue, chili, burger, dessert, sandwich, bacon, and recipe. It is a tournament style competition. The top 10 winners in each category compete again to determine the category winner. The seven category winners compete against each other to determine the world food winner. The event was filmed by A&E and will be a 6 part series on that channel next spring. In addition, Good Morning America was filming for a segment to be shown on their program.

The barbecue competition kicked off on Friday with the preliminary round. Categories were ribs, pork shoulder and beef brisket. The Pitmaker finished 23rd in ribs, 14th in pork, and 5th in beef brisket giving them 9th place overall and qualifying for the finals. The finals category was Anything But, meaning anything but the three meat categories from the previous day. While some of the teams chose more exotic meat entries like rack of lamb, bison tri-tip, or pork belly, the Pitmaker team chose to stick with a traditional barbecue staple, chicken. After all, this was a barbecue contest. There were 10 judges in the finals and each team was required to submit two platters, provided by the WFC, with five judge portions and one presentation piece. Since most

things are big in Texas the Pitmaker team decided to go big. They cooked 12 chicken halves, one for each presentation plate and 10 for the judges. Each judge got half a chicken. As George Shore explained it, in KCBS contests most teams cook 6 thighs, legs or wings for their chicken entry. In Texas most contests require half a chicken to be turned in. It's much more difficult to cook half a chicken and get the dark meat and breast cooked perfectly without drying out the breast. The Pitmaker team decided to show them how it's done.



Preparing the Finals turn-in

I have to admit I was a little skeptical about their choice of chicken since I knew the other teams were doing something more exotic. But the Pitmaker team pulled it off, winning first place in the finals and the title of World Barbecue Champions. The chicken was excellent. Moist, juicy, tender and flavorful. We thought it was perfect and the judges agreed.



World BBQ Champion winning entry



[Visit the Photo Gallery for lots more photos](#) from the Pitmaster BBQ Auction. It was a fun