

BBQ Team Celebrates 20 Years

AT THE STAR OF TEXAS BBQ COOK-OFF



"YOU COMIN' OUT TO RODEO?" — this is the question members of the La Pasadita BBQ Team will ask a thousand times the next few weeks. "Rodeo" is how they refer to their annual shindig at Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo (STFR hereafter) BBQ Cook-Off. La Pasadita is more than just a BBQ team though — with 20 years under their belt, they've grown into a charitable legacy rich with family, friends and a strong dose of tragedy-inspired determination.

Like all the other teams, their goal is to garner sponsorships, throw a great party to inspire attendees to put tips in their jars, and donate all the proceeds to the Star of Texas Scholarship Fund — they've been doing just that for 20 years.

It all started in the spring of 1990 — Bill and Jane Ann Benton along with Dan Steakley and a few friends entered a team in The Travis County Livestock Show BBQ Cook-Off (now the STFR BBQ Cook-Off) to promote the title agency they had just opened and, as they had kids of their own, thought that helping to send Texas kids to college was a fitting cause. With the help of Sid Terry, Kenny Dryden, Bill Archer and Jay Owens, they pulled a team together and started raising sponsorships for supplies and the Scholarship Fund. But they still needed a team name and furniture for their tent. On a trip back from a south Texas hunting lease, three of them came across a defunct bar selling its furniture — bar stools, tables and chairs — and that old bar was aptly named La Pasadita.

The team operated under small tents for a few years, but by 1995 their venue had grown to a 40x90-foot tent, a 32-foot bar, jukebox, 350-square-foot stage and cookers, plus tables and chairs to seat thousands of the public for two days. Of course, as the team's venue and event grew, the man hours needed to pull it off also exploded. Luckily the founders had willing participants in their sons and their friends, who gradually took the reins — likely making La Pasadita one of the only second-generation teams at the Cook-Off. The team's numbers have waxed and waned over the years as friends move away and return, and friends are invited to join. The core team though, is made up of friends primarily from Austin's Westlake area, some having known each other since they were toddlers. The feat is something to marvel at ... old friends who may not see each other all year come together to pull off an event whose size would challenge even a seasoned party planner. They are as eclectic as the public who wanders into their tent and a listing of their professions reads like a classic joke — an exotics ranch manager, a loan officer, a yoga studio owner, a wine rep, an air marshal, a lawyer and the list goes on.

Their rich friendship history comes together each year for the benefit of kids throughout the state of Texas. From the beginning and still to this day, the team's number one goal is to be the top fundraiser for the ST Scholarship Fund. Numbers from those first couple of years are hard to come by, but as far as most memories serve, La Pasadita has been the top fundraiser at the Cook-Off all but one year since they started. There's a scandalous rumor that one year a last-minute check was written by a sponsor of another team just to beat the winning run of La Pasadita. In the end though, that "missed" year only inspired the team to up the ante and make sure that Top Fundraiser was a title they could claim every year since. That determination has resulted in some impressive donation totals for a little ol' BBQ team — in 2006 they raised \$47,000 and in both 2007 and 2008 they raised over \$50,000 — all of which put them over the half-a-million-donated mark at their 19th showing last year.

But La Pasadita is a team with more than friendship and a charitable goal driving them. In 1996, tragedy struck the team when just a month after the Cook-Off two of its cherished members, Brent Benton and Chad McLaughlin, were killed in an auto accident. It was a devastating loss to their families and friends. Both young men often expressed their love of "rodeo," and eagerly anticipated its arrival each spring, making it that much harder for the team to imagine throwing the event without them. There were many dark days leading up to the next Cook-Off, but La Pasadita gathered their strength and dedicated their efforts in the name of the friends, the brothers, the sons they lost. Today you can find two sets of initials flanking the team's logo to remind the team and others that Brent and Chad are right there with them.

March is here again and the team is making preparations for their 20th year of throwing the best party and raising the most money at the Cook-Off. The event will commence Friday, March 20 through the wee hours Sunday, March 22 and you're all invited to join them! There will be great BBQ, free beer and live music by LC Rocks — a popular 80s rock band here in Austin. La Pasadita just humbly requests that you put cash in their tip jars so they can send Texas kids to college and maybe claim that coveted Top Fundraiser title once again. —**ALYSON STRINGER STEAKLEY**

Become a sponsor! Your donation is tax-deductible and gets you a spot on sponsor boards, a link on lapasadita.org and access to the VIP Club on Saturday, March 21 where they serve members' harvests — grilled quail, cajun Redfish, Axis sausage, plus smoked tenderloin, bacon-wrapped shrimp and more. For more info, email lapa@lapasadita.org. La Pasadita is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Lookin' for a Party?

LA PASADITA INVITES YOU TO THEIR TENT AT
Rodeo Austin's BBQ Cook-Off
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 20-21 • NOON-2AM

Celebrating 20 Years
AND OVER HALF A MILLION DONATED TO SCHOLARSHIPS

GREAT BBQ

Brisket • Yardbirds • Sausage • Catfish • Fresh-Cut Fries & More!

COLD FREE BEER

Music by LC ROCKS

Bring Cash for our Tip Jars!

Tips go to Star of Texas Scholarship Fund which has awarded over \$24 million to over 13,500 students in 120 Texas counties!

Join the legacy and become a sponsor!

Receive spots on our boards, links on our website and access to our VIP Club with special offerings from our smokers. Sponsorships are tax-deductible. Email lapa@lapasadita.org for details.

LA PASADITA
It's All for the Kids



PARTY PHOTOS • VIDEOS • SPONSOR INFO • MAPS • TEAM HISTORY
LAPASADITA.ORG



Country Line's SXSW Showcase

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BRANDON RHYDER If you listen to Brandon's first and second CDs, you might be surprised at what you hear. Songs about drinking, broken hearts and small town stories fill the air. The normal, predictable melodies and progressions play track after track. Yes, the first couple of CDs might not fit the mold of what you think when you think of Brandon Rhyder. The main aspect I take away from those records is his evolution. It is obvious not only by his lyrics, songs, and vocals, but even the album covers tell the story of where he started from and where he is now. They say that change is a fact of life, that you must roll with the times or you will be left behind. It is very obvious that Brandon has become a pro at that aspect. His dedication has led him to a career that takes him all over the country, yet he still calls Austin home.

CODIE PREVOST Canadian Codie Prevost has developed a sound that is truly unique and unconventional in the realm of country music. In 2006, Codie was awarded the Saskatchewan Country Music Association's "Rising Star Award" as well as "Album of the Year" for his debut album, *The Road Ahead*. His second and current album *Spin 6-Pak Vol. 1* has received rave reviews north and south of the border and his current and latest single "Call Me When You Get There" is considered one of Codie's best to date. Influenced by many illustrious artists as well as a wide array of music genres, Codie

has written with Texan Willie Mack, Jason Blaine and Steve Fox, and has opened for The Oak Ridge Boys, Doc Walker, Emerson Drive, Aaron Pritchett, Deric Rutman and Gord Bamford. With a bona fide passion and a wholehearted commitment to his art and fans Codie Prevost's high energy performances leave a deep-rooted impression on all, time and time again.

JASON EADY You listen to a Jason Eady song and you go back in time. You go back to the days where time moved a little slower, where everything was black and white, where you could sit and watch the world turn. For only being in the business for four years, Jason is mature beyond his years. A style that mixes blues, bluegrass, and something more of a timeless nature; his music stands out among the mix of the repetitive one-dimensional material you mostly hear these days on the radio.

JYPSI Playing a soulful kind of country and dressing in retro chic, the Nashville-based band Jypsi has a set of influences that run from Alison Krauss to alt-rock. Comprised of four siblings from the Rische family — Lillie Mae, Frank, Scarlet, and Amber-Dawn — Jypsi spent years together on the road playing festivals and showcases before landing a regular gig on Nashville's famed Lower Broadway in 2003. Their combination of classic country harmonies and youthful attitude entertain and captivates any crowd in front of them. This group of siblings is sure to stand the test of time, proving that being true to your roots is always the best way to go. **CL**