



Sloan Rinaldi

Texas Q

Kingwood, TX

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World of Barbecue

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Bailey Benson: Hello. This is Bailey Benson from Southern Foodways Alliance recording an oral history with Sloan Rinaldi of Texas Q. It is currently 5:30 on November 16th, 2022. So why don't you go ahead and state your name.

Sloan Rinaldi: I'm Sloan Rinaldi with Texas Q.

Bailey Benson: And I gave you a brief introduction of being Sloan Rinaldi of Texas Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to that introduction?

Sloan Rinaldi: Well, I would say I'm Sloan Rinaldi, the pitmaster of Texas Q. [Laughter] There we go.

Bailey Benson: Nice. All right. Let's go ahead and jump into this interview. You ready?

Sloan Rinaldi: Yes, ma'am. Let's roll.

Bailey Benson: All right. Tell me about your upbringing and adolescence. Who did you consider to be your family growing up and what are your fondest memories of growing up?

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, wow.

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My adolescence was a little complicated by my mother. My mom and dad divorced when I was ten and my mom was unfortunately pretty mentally ill and became a drug addict and alcoholic so I was kinda bounced around from town to town, small town to small town in Houston, although I'm a fourth generation Houstonian. My dad was always my rock, my stability. So my family, obviously my immediate family, myself, my brother Anthony [sp], my sister Marty [sp], my

brother Dominic [sp], my dad, my mom-- although obviously mentally ill, I tried to do the best I could to take care of her most of my life even as a kid. So growing up my fondest memories are spending summers with my grandparents, my mamaw and pawpaw. They'd take me up to Arkansas and we'd go camping and I always enjoyed that. It was a great time. And then Christmases. Christmases were always great.

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Bailey Benson: Nice. I like that a lot. I like that you spent a lot of time with your family. And speaking of family, if your friends and family could describe you in four words, what would they be?

Sloan Rinaldi: Well, there's four things that I've heard most of my life from childhood. They would say that I'm dynamic, that I'm passionate, that I'm tenacious, but I also have a very kind heart. I hear that quite often. So I'll take that. I'll take all four.

Bailey Benson: I like that. I like that. So speaking of passionate, some people are passionate about food and cooking from a young age while others stumble into the food world later in life. And where would you say you fall in that spectrum?

Sloan Rinaldi: Very early. Very early age. I remember being in the kitchen cooking in cast iron at the age of five.

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Frying eggs in bacon fat the southern way. Making gravy and biscuits very early on. And also being quite enamored with culinary TV, Julia Child obviously, "The Galloping Gourmet." Those

people predate you, but I'm fifty-nine so I was born in 1963. So by the time I was ten years old even they were all over the airwaves and I was fascinated by cooking shows.

Bailey Benson: That is amazing. And then, in terms of food as a career did that start early as well or . . . ?

Sloan Rinaldi: No.

Bailey Benson: You mentioned having a career before your barbecue, being a pitmaster. Tell me about that and the transition from your previous career . . . in commercial landscaping--?

Sloan Rinaldi: That's correct.

Bailey Benson: -- to barbecue.

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Sloan Rinaldi: Well, I started in commercial landscape construction very early on right out of high school and quickly started my own business called Commercial Landscape Development. And we did largescale commercial projects, a lot of new Walmart construction, new apartment construction, school projects, things like that. I did that for thirty-two years and in 2012 I retired from landscaping. And then, also I would say construction, which is the same in barbecue, very heavily male dominated. I was the only woman just about in Texas that was doing what I was doing. And same thing in barbecue. There's only three women in Texas that do what I do. And I transitioned in 2012-- I retired basically from construction and by 2013 I had a light-bulb moment watching *BBQ Pitmasters* like so many people do, but I am a fourth generation pitmaster. It's in my family. I had just stayed away from it.

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But I did, I had that light-bulb moment, decided that's what I could do, and just jumped into it feet first.

Bailey Benson: Amazing! And speaking of being a fourth generation pitmaster, it seems like you're pretty comfortable with that word, with that phrase.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yes.

Bailey Benson: And what does being a pitmaster mean to you?

Sloan Rinaldi: A pitmaster is someone who masters the craft of barbecue and that's all encompassing from proprietary rubs, the way you trim your brisket or your meat, fire management, and how you render a succulent, melt in your mouth, smoked bite of meat.

Bailey Benson: Yeah. And then, what's your favorite part of being a pitmaster would you say, and then, what's your least favorite part?

Sloan Rinaldi: I saw that question on here, and I'm gonna be very honest 'cause I'm very passionate about what I do and at my age if I were not passionate and did not completely love every aspect of what I'm doing I would not be doing it.

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It's not something I have to do. It's something I have a passion for. So there is nothing related to barbecue that I do not enjoy, even if it's the business end of it, because it all goes together. I'm here to make money obviously but it's creating great barbecue that's memorable to people. That's what keeps me going.

Bailey Benson: That’s a great answer. And then, what specifically attracted you to the craft of barbecue? Was it your love of food maybe or was it-- I know that having a love of food and having a love of cooking for others are two very different things.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: So what about barbecue as a craft attracted you to [**the skill** 0:06:54]?

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah, it’s kinda multifaceted. I like a challenge. I’m very competitive.

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When I first got into barbecue it was via a competition, realizing quite early on that, although I love competition and I’m very competitive, it’s the actual creating craft barbecue that satisfies my passion and satisfies my heart and soul. Creating craft barbecue and the response that it gets, I think that’s what draws me to it and keeps me going within barbecue. I think what attracted me obviously is I have a passion for food and I can cook anything. My wife says, “Why would you have chosen barbecue when you can cook anything?” For me, again, it’s a huge challenge.

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Not many women are doing this. I had an affinity for fire management. I have a large fire pit in my back yard. I always have, whether it was at my ranch or if it was here in the back yard in town. I loved creating fire and managing it. So really when I saw that show, *BBQ Pitmasters*, immediately that light-bulb moment attracted me to wanting to do that and create something that was food that really made people happy. So between the way that I feel about food, which is I have a love for all types of genres of cuisine, but the ultimate I think what attracts you most, and

I think most people that sell food will tell you, it's how people respond and react to your food and the love that you're-- my wife says that I'm expressing my love for people through my food.

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Bailey Benson: I think that is incredible. And just for the audience for clarification, could you, one, clarify what is fire management, and then, two, as well, what's the difference between craft barbecue and competition barbecue?

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Fire management; it's something that can be taught but it's also something that I think it's very inherent in you, you either have it or you don't kinda thing. So obviously constructing a fire and throughout the course of the cook, whether it be four, five hours or twelve hours, your responsibility in fire management is to be able to look at your fire box, look at your temp and be able to determine how much wood you need to sustain that temperature for however long that you need to. So you're restoking it obviously every thirty minutes or so.

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But you may not do it at thirty minutes, it may be at forty-five minutes because the fire is dictating how much wood you put on. What was the second part of that question? Oh, the differences between competition and craft barbecue. They're very distinct. Competition, for one, particularly on a brisket, they are going for a lot of different flavor profiles that aren't necessarily related to, say, craft-style barbecue, and we'll get to that in a minute. They're really going for a lot of just innovative flavor profiles, whether it's injecting, creating different flavor profiles in their rubs, in their spice blends, and then presenting an absolutely picture-perfect bite of barbecue, whether it's brisket, ribs, pork, whatever you have.

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And that goes into a box and it's all about presentation, then that's turned in to be judged. Now, also I would say the difference is really about just that, that it's a lot of different flavor profiles, trying to create something that's different to get a judge's attention and score points and then win that competition. Craft-style barbecue, completely different. Everything also is proprietary, seasoning blends, rub blends, but it's about starting with the absolute best beef that you can get, pork, and poultry and then creating something that's succulent, melt in your mouth barbecue, next level. In Texas, for instance, brisket, we do fat cap up. In competition they trim all the fat off the brisket.

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So in Texas we do fat cap up. It's very simple, salt and pepper. We use a very specific type of pepper. We grind it ourselves. It's hard to source. It's from India. It stays on the vine a little longer and it's much more aromatic, a lot more citrus notes to it, and it's very distinct in our rub so it kind of sets it apart. And then we use pecan wood, as well. So craft barbecue is taking everything next level. Our sides: in barbecue in Texas you're going to have usually baked beans, potato salad. You'll have a mac or something like that, coleslaw. So you can have those items but you take them next level. So it's all about using premium ingredients, the best that you can get, crafting everything by hand. Nothing's prebought or premade. Our mac, for instance, is a five-cheese, jalapeno, white truffle mac. It's not an ordinary mac and cheese. Our baked beans, they're candied baked beans, caramelized on top.

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Everything's next level with a lot of flavor. We do corn pudding and a fried cabbage in bacon fat, caramelizes it. Right now, especially in craft barbecue, it's not just about the meats, it's about your sides. You gotta bring it all. That down to your desserts. Our desserts are decadent, next level. So that's the difference. [Laughter]

Bailey Benson: I see. That's incredibly useful for the audience because a lot of people don't know the difference between competition and craft barbecue outside of the barbecue world. And I think a lot of people think they're the same thing where pitmasters are making the same thing wherever they go and that's definitely not the case.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: But speaking on your barbecue and the style of barbecue that you prepare, what style of barbecue would you say that you practice if you had to categorize it, or if it's to your own, I guess, genre, category that you're making?

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Sloan Rinaldi: Well, it's straight-up Texas craft barbecue.

Bailey Benson: All right.

Sloan Rinaldi: And really, as far as obviously being in Texas, we think of it as the best barbecue in the world. Obviously that's arguable given that there's Memphis barbecue, North Carolina, Carolinas have a barbecue, Kansas City has its barbecue. But Texas barbecue is the biggest thing in the world. When you go to Paris they set up on the streets in Paris. The same pit maker that made my pit sent a pit there and the guy sells out Texas barbecue day in and day out. It's Texas

barbecue. They're not looking for Memphis barbecue or Kansas City or North Carolina. No offense. [Laughter]

Bailey Benson: Yeah.

Sloan Rinaldi: But they're looking for Texas barbecue worldwide and it's one of the hottest things in the culinary world.

Bailey Benson: I completely agree. I think Texas barbecue is incredibly popular, not only in the United States in general but on an international stage.

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Sloan Rinaldi: Yes. Global.

Bailey Benson: Yeah, globally.

Sloan Rinaldi: Absolutely, global.

Bailey Benson: Especially when you think of barbecue, when most people think of barbecue they think of Texas Q.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah, absolutely. Texas Q. We were aptly named. [Laughter]

Bailey Benson: Yes.

Sloan Rinaldi: Totally appropriate. My barbecue sauces were sold in H-E-B, which H-E-B is the largest grocery retailer in Texas. They were sold there from 2015 to 2020. And in Texas you don't need barbecue sauce but if you can create an exceptional sauce to go alongside your barbecue then you're really onto something.

Bailey Benson: And it seems like you are.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: And then, building off of that, I know that barbecue is extremely difficult from the outside because there are so many seemingly minor aspects that can drastically change the output of your product.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: How did you hone your style over time and great consistency in your product as a pitmaster?

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah. And consistency is the key word.

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That's everything, literally everything in barbecue. Having an off day can cost you in Texas a top fifty spot in the top fifty barbecue joints in the state. Just having an off day when they happen to show up to critique or review your food, if it's off that day then you're in bad shape. So bottom line is that consistency is everything. And you're gonna have rainy, cold days. You're gonna have 104, 114 degree days where it's so hot and humid you can't bear it. It feels like a wool coat. But you can't let that affect your cook no matter how cold or how hot. So it's all about fire management, again, and really honing in. Getting your pit to where you need it to be and then keepin' it there no matter how hot or cold it is out. Does that answer your--

Bailey Benson: Yeah, it does, a hundred percent.

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And then, shifting narratives a little more, shifting directions, how does your identity shape how you barbecue or what you create or shape your work as a business owner? And how does your identity factor into your everyday professional life? And your identity can be anything, any label that you identify.

Sloan Rinaldi: Sure. I think that, again, I'm a passionate person and I'm very driven. I want very much to succeed in barbecue on many levels. And as a woman and as one of only a few in Texas I think that my identity itself is very integral to what I do in barbecue, and it drives me to want to be the best.

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Who I am, just bottom line, whatever I do I want to be the best at and I'm gonna give it my all. I may not always end up being the best, but I'm gonna be a hundred percent and I'll be damn near very close if not the best. [Laughter] So regardless I'm very competitive that way and in doing this and my passion and my drive to be recognized as a serious contender in barbecue regardless of my sex, that's very important to me. So that's how my identity I guess is reflected in what I do.

Bailey Benson: I love that. And I like to hear how passionate you are. Especially as a woman who's very underrepresented in the barbecue world it's so important to have that drive and to have that passion--

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, yeah.

Bailey Benson: -- because people really are looking at you and watching what you do.

Sloan Rinaldi: Well, thank you. We are very underrepresented.

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And if I can do anything in barbecue that would be the thing that I really want to do most is to bring more attention to women in barbecue. We are very underrepresented and there are more of us coming along. I've been trying to think of someone that I could say that I would like to recognize and that would be-- there's a young lady named Rita Olsen. She's extremely creative, so imaginative, and has just a great way of plating food also that's so appealing and just very creative. And just the plate that she puts together, I think she just deserves a lot of recognition.

Bailey Benson: I love to hear that.

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I think it's great when people as successful as you are in the barbecue space use their platform not only to speak on issues or speak about [inaudible 0:20:06] that isn't as popular or isn't as, I guess, widespread and also point to specific people who are doing amazing things.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: I so appreciate that.

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, thank you.

Bailey Benson: Still on the topic of, I guess, what type of barbecue that we consume, what is your personal favorite style of barbecue and why? And what does your ideal barbecue plate look like?

Sloan Rinaldi: Okay. Well, obviously my favorite style of barbecue is gonna be Texas craft barbecue and my favorite plate is called the "Texas trinity." That's gonna be brisket, ribs, and

sausage, and I like a spicy sausage. I don't like cheese in my sausage. I'm a purist. And then my sides are probably gonna be beans, candied baked beans, our candied baked beans or any good baked bean, and I really like fried cabbage.

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That's a favorite of mine. So that's my ideal plate, with some really good pickles. We do craft pickles, so I like a good pickle. I'm very particular about that. And a great slice of bread with sauce on the side. There you go.

Bailey Benson: I think that's a wonderful plate. Being a pitmaster, it's hard. It takes long hours and it's physically and mentally taxing.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: What about being a pitmaster keeps you going every day? You said you loved the craft and there's nothing that you didn't like it because you said if you disliked something about it you wouldn't be doing it.

Sloan Rinaldi: That's right.

Bailey Benson: So what specifically about this craft keeps you going? When you get up every day what are you looking forward to?

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, wow. That's kinda easy for me. It is really about the customer response. That drives you. To have someone tell you that they've eaten barbecue all over the country and that what they just ate is the best they ever had. I mean, once you hear that it's hard to go back.

[Laughter]

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It keeps you going. And that's really it, it's the customer response, creating food that's memorable to them, that they talk about, and they tell their neighbors and their friends and their family. And then those people come in and get your barbecue and then they tell their neighbors and their friends and their family. That's what keeps you going. It's an amazing thing when you can create food that's memorable to somebody, that's a personal experience.

Bailey Benson: Yeah. And barbecue has been around for a long time in the United States but there's only a few who do it amazingly and get so much attention as you would. Can you take me to the time where you realized you had something that was different or you had something that was really special?

Sloan Rinaldi: There were a couple of times. The first was a good friend of mine-- I had started smoking barbecue in 2013. I had never done brisket before.

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I had done ribs and a few turkeys on the holidays, but I had never attempted a brisket. And pretty much the first time I nailed it and I had friends over and they were telling me that they had eaten barbecue their whole life and it was really special. So I started thinking, hmm. And right off they were telling me I needed to do something with this. So that, and then the first time we competed in competition I won with ribs. And I was the only woman there and there were, I guess, about forty, fifty teams.

Bailey Benson: Wow.

Sloan Rinaldi: So I kind of thought then, yeah, I'm onto something. We might have a formula going here that can work. And then things started picking up. I started doing catering and popups. And next thing I knew H-E-B heard about us and asked us to come cook for them. And so I went and cooked for them and they were blown away and they put us in an unprecedented amount of stores right off the bat, all over the state.

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So yeah, each step of the way I realized I was onto something but very early on, I really knew that I had a gift very early on.

Bailey Benson: That is amazing. And then, leading into the world of barbecue in general, where do you see yourself typically fitting into this huge world that is barbecue?

Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, wow. I really do want to claim my stake. I want to be recognized as one of the best pitmasters in the country, not just in Texas. I want to be recognized eventually and I want to work for it and achieve a level of success in barbecue that will maybe at some point make me a legendary status in what I do. Ms. Tootsie, I think she just turned eighty-eight. We've met several times. She's got a good thirty years on me and she is a legend.

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And if I could I guess even just get close to her that would be a dream. That would be a dream, and I hope to achieve that. I really want to do something that's never been done in barbecue and that is as a woman be extremely successful, get recognition nationally, which I've had some of that recognition and I like that, but I just really want to be recognized as a woman and as a pitmaster as being the best at what I do.

Bailey Benson: Yeah, I think that is a great goal and I think that's a great place to fit and work from in the barbecue world. And speaking of the world of barbecuing, where do you see the world of barbecuing going in the future and do you think it's going to continue to expand?

Sloan Rinaldi: I really do. It's become a global thing, especially Texas barbecue.

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I see it only continuing because it's evolving all the time. There are so many creative, innovative chefs in barbecue that all of us are always trying to develop and hone new techniques and recipes to create the next incredible dish. So I see it on the culinary spectrum as something that's gonna continue to grow, it's gonna bring more people in, there are gonna be more women getting involved, and I only see just a great potential for growth. In Texas there's no such thing as too much good barbecue.

Bailey Benson: I a hundred percent agree with you on that. In terms of in the future for the world of barbecue, do you think there's going to be more inclusion involved or how do you feel about that?

Sloan Rinaldi: I would definitely hope so. I would definitely hope so. The people that have been - I would say the men specifically that have been the most helpful to me have been the most successful at what they do.

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They're very secure in themselves, in their own success. They shared a lot of things with me whether it's from the business aspect of it or plating, how much do we put on a three-meat plate, as simple as that. So I would hope for more inclusion. I would hope that there would be more

women involved. There's more Asian influence in barbecue today. There's obviously a large Hispanic presence in barbecue today. Obviously, a lot of African American presence in barbecue. So I would say that the least and most underrepresented by far is women. So I see a great future for us. There's just great room for growth, absolutely.

Bailey Benson: And is there anything you could think of that would make this space more inclusive or things that you try to do, or you feel would be helpful to make a more inclusionary space in the barbecue realm?

Sloan Rinaldi: I think it would just for me always being open.

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I would like to see my colleagues and brothers in barbecue be a little bit more open minded. They can tend to be somewhat stereotypical in the good ol' boy mentality. I'm hoping that by my experience with them-- for instance, after nine years I'm invited this Sunday to a-- it's called the Houston Barbecue Festival BBQ Throwdown. And they've selected and invited only eighteen pitmasters and barbecue joints, the best in Houston, to participate. But it took nine years and I'm the only woman they've ever invited. So with that being said, I'm very hopeful that each time I experience interaction with these guys, and we have that camaraderie, and they see that I keep my head down, I do the work-- you will never ever, ever hear me say that mine is the best, that I do the best barbecue, or that our barbecue is the best.

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What we'll say is we do everything we can to create the most memorable experience we can for our customers. In doing that we try to keep our head down and just do good barbecue. So I think

they see that and have some respect for it, and I'm hoping as we develop these relationships and they see me out there more and more and they realize that I'm here to stay that they'll be more open to welcoming more women into the fold, into the barbecue world.

Bailey Benson: I love that. And then, getting around to the final question, the final conversation here, so this project of-- I'm documenting the voices of BIPOC women in barbecue but women in general because the amount of women in barbecue is so small.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: However, women go largely unrecognized like you mentioned.

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And you mentioned a little bit before with Rita Olsen as someone you wanted to shout out and give some attention to.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: Is there anyone else that you feel needs more recognition in the field, and feel free to tell me who they are, if so, or give me more of a synopsis on who Rita is and what her barbecue style is.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yes. I'm trying to think. There are just so few women that I don't really know that many right now and that's unfortunate. But Rita is somebody that-- she hasn't been on any shows yet. She doesn't necessarily have her own barbecue joint but she works in a joint with her partner, but she keeps her head down and she's so creative and works so hard. I would just like to see her get a little bit more recognition, build up her confidence, and see her step out there a little bit more on her own.

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Absolutely. But I'm trying to think of other women right now in Texas even. The only other woman that I can think of is actually really busting out on her own somewhat and she's part of Goldee's. They're the number one rated barbecue joint in Texas. And every four years *Texas Monthly* rates the top fifty joints.

Bailey Benson: Wow.

Sloan Rinaldi: And the top ten is the golden tier. They're specifically ranked number one to ten. Everything else is just random up to fifty. They are the number one. They came out of nowhere. It's like four or five twenty-somethings. They have grown up together and I believe one of them is a woman and I cannot recall her name. But they're Goldee's if you want to look, G-O-L-D-E-E-S, and they are just killin' it. Out of nowhere they just opened and became the number one joint in Texas.

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Do you know how hard that is?

Bailey Benson: That is insane!

Sloan Rinaldi: It has to be a level of consistency that is unparalleled for them to within a year become the number one joint in Texas.

Bailey Benson: That is insane.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah.

Bailey Benson: Texas has one of the longest barbecue histories in the whole country.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah, absolutely.

Bailey Benson: How did you differentiate yourself and how did you even-- of all the different pitmasters that existed in the state how did you work up the ranks the way you did? I have another question.

Sloan Rinaldi: That's okay.

Bailey Benson: Do you think the way you went about starting the barbecue world was the best way and in hindsight looking back would you have done it the same way?

Sloan Rinaldi: Okay. Well, again, that's where my competitiveness and drive come into play.

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Once I knew I was good at barbecue I looked at the business of barbecue. I realized I wanted to create something much bigger than just having a barbecue joint. I know that my end game is to ultimately have a culinary show evolving around women in barbecue. I'm a visualizer. I believe that if you can visualize it you can do it, and that you have to be able to visualize your success thoroughly each step of the way. And each success emboldens you and empowers you to the next. So it's like when I created the brisket and they said, "This was amazing!" I said, okay, so I've created an amazing brisket but I need to create my own amazing sauce. So as soon as I created the sauce I visualized immediately that it was a perfect fit in H-E-B. From our logo to the name of my business, that it was a natural fit. So I visualized that happening. And then, the next was I want to be on TV.

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I want to be in a culinary way on TV and represent women in barbecue. So I kept doing popups, I kept doing catering, but popups was really where it was at. We would sell out no matter how much we made. We would sell out within a couple of hours. So we started building up this following. And then, yes, *Food Network* calls and we were able to represent Texas in a *Chopped Grill Masters* tournament and I was the only woman selected to represent Texas. Obviously, there's not many of us, but I was very happy to be able to do that. And from that it led to so much-- did so much for our business. The exposure, whether it was through getting us more catering opportunities, allowing us to do more popups, exposing us to more media opportunities, local CBS affiliate, local NBC affiliate.

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And then *Top Chef* calls and they want me to come on as a barbecue VIP this last season. So every step of the way, each thing has led to the next. There's a show called *Texas Country Reporter*. It's been on for fifty years. It started in 1972.

Bailey Benson: Wow!

Sloan Rinaldi: They travel throughout Texas. It's about all things Texas. And they came out and did a feature on me that will air in February so that's a huge thing, too. Our local CBS affiliate came out during women's history month and did a feature on me. So those things help with exposure. People see you on TV, they call and want your barbecue. But you keep your head down, you do the work, you stay humble, and you hope that your food is memorable.

Bailey Benson: That is incredible. Those are really all the questions I have for you.

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Is there anything else you'd like to add for the record to tell the audience what you're interested in or anything else you'd like to mention?

Sloan Rinaldi: Well, I would say this. I really want to encourage as many women as I can to get involved in barbecue. If you have an affinity for fire management, whether it's your back yard fire pit or your fireplace in the house and you like to cook, combine those two things. Try it. Especially if you like barbecue yourself, you like to eat it, I would say give it a shot. Man, go out there and throw down some barbecue in the pit. You can't go wrong. You try it. If it doesn't turn out what have you really lost? But you may find that you have a love for it. So I really want to try to encourage more people to get involved. It's not as hard as it looks sometimes. [Laughter] On a smaller scale it's not that hard although it is time consuming. I would say that I have been very blessed to follow my passions in life.

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Obviously, my first passion in commercial landscape construction and [blank in recording 0:37:05] barbecue, I could not be a more blessed person. Not many people get to follow their passions in their careers, and I think that that's been God's greatest gift to me by far. So I'm an extremely blessed woman. I'm so blessed to be able to be good at what I do [Laughter] and to try to continually improve at what I do. You are never really the best. I want to be the best, but you're never the best. Always striving to be better. And that's what I enjoy most about barbecue is it's always a challenge to do better.

Bailey Benson: Well, Sloan, thank you so much. I so appreciate you and you doing the interview. And it's an honor on behalf of me and Southern Foodways Alliance to get to hear your perspective and have you share your narrative with us.

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Sloan Rinaldi: Oh, baby, bless your heart! Thank you so much. I'm so encouraged to see young people like yourselves doing what you're doing. And it speaks well of what our future might look like, so keep doing what you're doing, and all the best to you.

Bailey Benson: Thank you so much. All right. Thank you. I'm going to go ahead and end the recording if that's okay with you.

Sloan Rinaldi: Yeah, absolutely.

[End]