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Metal and munchies: Rock-themed Mosh Pit Eats serves up signature sandwiches in Martinez

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Owners of Mosh Pit Eats Jason Parrish and Amber Parrish pose for a photo in their restaurant on Monday, Sept. 26, 2022. Katie Goodale, Augusta Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

Teresa Belchyk doesn't mind the skulls or the pounding rock music. At Mosh Pit Eats, she's just there for the sandwiches.

"The food keeps me coming back," said the Martinez resident, who's about to turn 65. "I get something different every time I come."

Mosh Pit Eats is owned and operated by husband-and-wife team Jason and Amber Parrish, who say they're not just selling food at 111-D Old Evans Road in Martinez.

"We turned our lifestyle into a brand," Jason Parrish said. "We've been in food forever. We enjoy concerts. We enjoy going to live shows. We enjoy working at festivals and things like that."

Merging metal music and munchies, the Parrishes named their new business after a "mosh pit," the offstage area of a hard-rock performance venue where high-spirited concertgoers slam their bodies into one another during songs.

The Parrishes moved to Columbia County more than 10 years ago, seeking good schools and stability for their three children, now 19, 17 and 13. Jason worked as an emergency medical technician for Gold Cross ambulance service.

He and Amber also had years of experience in food service, working at chain restaurants such as Ruby Tuesday, Panera Bread and Red Lobster, and more regional chains such as the now-closed Fatz Café. They operated a catering business while they worked their regular jobs, but they felt they had more to offer – not just food, but community involvement.

"We've been managers of corporate places, and we decided that we wanted to do it for ourselves," Mr. Parrish said.

The catering business is still thriving. Last November, as the Augusta area recovered from COVID-19, the Parrishes opened a walk-in storefront for Mosh Pit Eats.

The take-out-only eatery contains walls filled with art that spans the history of rock 'n' roll, showing artists such as David Bowie, Ozzy Osbourne, NWA and Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the singer and guitarist often credited with sowing some of the first seeds of rock music.

Tharpe has a namesake sandwich at Mosh Pit – the Sister Rosetta Reuben. Each sandwich and wrap on the menu is named to honor a song, album or band. The Mob Rules sandwich is a shout-out to heavy-metal band Black Sabbath. The Aces High sandwich shares a name with the lead track on Iron Maiden's 1984 album "Powerslave."

There's even a veggie wrap called "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" as a tribute both to musician Joan Jett's first album with the Blackhearts and her longtime vegan diet.

"We built our menu around what we were allowed to do," Jason Parrish said.

Cleaving to state Department of Agriculture regulations, the eatery operates as a "cold kitchen," where food is prepared but not cooked on-premises.

Mosh Pit Eats also offers gourmet strawberries that are dipped in chocolate, custom-decorated and available by the dozen.



Chocolate-covered strawberries at Mosh Pit Eats on Monday, Sept. 26, 2022. Katie Goodale, Augusta Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

Mosh Pit also offers coffee – not as a beverage, but fresh-roasted in bags and in a variety of flavors. That's where part of the sandwich shop's community involvement comes in. Mosh Pit offers customized labels for organizations that wish to resell the coffee for fundraisers, such as for the Grovetown High School football team.

"We started out just thinking about football teams and stuff, but the bands have been interested. Cheerleading has been interested. Whole schools have been interested," Amber Parrish said.

Mosh Pit Eats has steadily grown a customer base that now includes regulars whom the Parrishes can recognize by the sandwiches they order. The most popular? The spicy Cowboy from Hell, named for Pantera's 1990 album "Cowboys from Hell."

"Nothing on this menu is basic," Jason Parrish said. "The Cowboy is a huge seller."



The spicy Cowboy from Hell, a popular sandwich at Mosh Pit Eats in Martinez, contains roast beef, provolone, spring mix, spicy "winkle" pickles, sweet-and-spicy coleslaw, pickled red onions, jalapenos and chipotle mayo on a hoagie roll.

MIGUEL LEGOAS/THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE

It's not uncommon for customers to order their food, then spend a few minutes chatting with the Parrishes about music.

"That was our worry when we first started: Is the public going to get it? Because we're heavily skull themed, you know, rock 'n' roll," Jason Parrish said. "But the feedback we've gotten is phenomenal."

Mosh Pit Eats is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. On Mondays the hours are 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Mosh Pit is closed Sundays. Menu items also are available through online ordering platform DoorDash.