



the best doggone

HOT DOG

A family tradition brings out hot dog lovers in the Upstate

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SENECA — From a bald head to a hot dog. What's the connection you ask?

It was back in the late 1930s when a young Lloyd Thrasher made his way into a barbershop and got his head completely shaved.

"From that point on, everyone called him Skin," said his son, Mike Thrasher. "The rest is history."

The rest really is history, as the work ethic and nickname of Lloyd Thrasher has turned Skins' Hot Dogs into one of the most successful franchises in the Upstate, not to mention the venue for

what many locals call, "The best hot dog you can get, anywhere."

Lloyd bought a small building in Anderson and ran a shoe shop, while the second half of the building was a pool hall.

"He kept it as it was when he bought it in 1946," Mike added. "But then the owner of the pool hall died in a car accident, and that's when my dad decided to sell hot dogs exclusively at the location."

But it wasn't just about selling the product. Lloyd was hard at work, every day in the kitchen, perfecting the now famous chili that adds a special something to each dog.

"It took him about three years to get the recipe just right," Mike said.



Members of the Thrasher family enjoy the grand opening of a new restaurant in Anderson. Starting from their original site in Anderson, the franchise now boasts 11 locations in several cities.



In no time, the standalone restaurant brought in numerous hometown locals, eager to get their hands on the perfect dog.

"Watching my father run that store was a lot of fun," Mike said. "You could tell he loved it. He loved visiting with the customers, he loved making the chili and he loved serving hot dogs. That's just how it was."

When Lloyd retired, his son Mike knew exactly what he wanted to do.

"Our dad asked us what we wanted to do with the business," Mike said. "It was a no-brainer."

Mike took over operations for his dad and, within six months, he doubled business and began brainstorming ideas on how to expand.

"My brother Matt and brother-in-law Wayne joined me, and we really put our all into the business," Mike said. "With the one store, we simply didn't have enough to meet the demand. The kitchen was original from the 1950s. We needed more, that was the bottom line."

By the end of 1996, the one restaurant had multiplied into six. By 2010, a total of 11 Skins' were being frequented in Pickens, Oconee and

Anderson counties.

"It's been great to see us grow," Mike said. "This is a family tradition that we are extremely proud of, and we love that the community loves us too."

The mentality that Lloyd had was simple.

"He wanted to treat every customer like they were a guest in his own home," Mike said. "He wanted his customers to feel good and be comfortable in a warm family atmosphere. That's what drives us and, really, it should drive every business."

The staff turnover in the 11 restaurants has been extremely low over the years, and Mike said it's because his employees know they are truly valued.

It isn't just the Thrasher effort that makes Skins' such a successful family tradition either. The majority of the Thrasher clan has had a hand in growing the business.

"The kids, grandkids and even great grandkids have worked here in one way or another," Mike said. "It's a lot of fun."

Patsy Peterson, 72-year-old Seneca resident, said she goes to Skins' about twice a week.

"It's one of those things that



Lloyd "Skin" Thrasher was the original, or Godfather, of the Skins' Hot Dog franchise in Oconee, Anderson and Pickens counties. He passed away in 1998.

you just look forward to," she said. "I get two hot dogs and take them home in a paper bag. With so many choices of what to put on them, I do onions and chili and am absolutely stuffed when I'm done. It really is the best hot dog I've ever had in my life."

Two Skin's locations are Dogwood Plaza in Seneca, 275 Market St., (864) 885-9811 and 193 Anderson Hwy., Suite 120, Clemson, (864) 654-4422.