

# JON CARROLL:

GROWING EDIBLES, SMOKING BOWLS, AND POURING PINTS

By Doug Mace

**J**on Carroll's career around restaurants actually started at the Baltimore Comedy Factory where he was swiftly thrown into serving in an emergency; the dreaded no-call-no-show. More recently he acted as the Bar Manager for Gertrude's where he became close friends with chef/owner, John Shields and Smoking Bowls truly began.

Jon expressed his gratitude for Shields saying, "My father is still alive and has always been amazing to me, but John Shields is like a second father figure."

This is where the story begins and how Jon became



a bartending, teaching, pop-up restaurant owning, father.

Jon and John teach a five part kitchen and gardening class called Edible Evergreen at the Evergreen Museum and for the last six years, introduced gardening techniques as well as interesting foods like edible flower and rosemary soda recipes to attendees. Using his hands and growing his ingredients also became a focus while learning to cook.

Jon explained how gardening provides the foundation for everything he does. "Gardening is my main thing and it's my main connection with food. I feel it's been the part that's made me able to excel further than I should be able to go."

Cooking began as just a few random shifts after messing around in the kitchen. Enlightened after reading a Momofuku cookbook and Thomas Keller's Under Pressure, Jon began to play around more and more.

"I got really into making ramen at home and then I had thought about doing a ramen pop-up. So I talked to my friend Alec [Franklin] from Blue Pit." Closed on Sundays, Blue Pit BBQ & Whisky Bar in Hampden became the perfect pop-up location for the birth of Smoking Bowls.

Despite widespread popularity and re-

peat events he says, "I kind of have no idea what I'm doing, but I think it tastes good."

Now Jon Carroll can be found cooking ramen, Asian steam buns, hot dogs, and cheeseburgers for Smoking Bowls, or bartending at Union Craft Brewing's taproom.

Gertrude's is also where Jon's love affair with Union began. After hosting beer dinners as the bar manager at Gertrude's and meeting some of the members of the Union team, Jon bartended a few anniversary parties and became a full-fledged Union bartender in May of this past year.

### It's Cookout Season

Coming up on July 27th Jon and Smoking Bowls hosts "Cookout at Union" starting at 5pm

Cookout, is a collaboration of, as Jon puts it, "Korean BBQ meets American cookout food meets Smoking Bowls meets Union."

The event will of course feature Union brews and the menu includes hotdog and bratwurst steam bun sandwiches, teriyaki wings and vegetable kabobs, as well as some items cooked table-side for reserved seating.

Jon enjoys bartending at Union and plans

**One Person You'd Most Like To Serve At The Bar:**  
Eddie Murray

**Favorite Book:**  
'I Love New York'  
– An 11 Madison Park Cookbook

**Favorite Movie:**  
The Godfather  
-- Part 1

to move with them to the new facility located on 41st street in Hampden. The new warehouse space emphasizes bringing manufacturing jobs back to Baltimore. Union and most other brewers make the majority of profits by bottling, canning, and kegging so naturally they empathize with other manufacturing businesses. Announced tenants include The Charmery, Baltimore Whisky Company, and Earth Treks.

Not failing to show love for Baltimore beers as a whole, Smoking Bowls following event will be August 12th at Waverly Brewing Company with ~ local favorite and former one-man pop-up oyster bar - The Local Oyster.

Jon stays busy. When he's not educating, taking orders for Old Pro Gose or holding 250 person crossover cookouts, he takes care of his newborn baby boy, Desmond.

As a dedicated father, Jon plays guitar with his son every day. After not playing for over two years, Jon has picked it back up as he thinks music is an important thing to learn.

You may think this is slowing down the development of Smoking Bowls, but Jon sees it as an opportunity for the business to grow and blossom.

"It actually allows me to be a little more selective even. I can take more time to plan out events that have a little more impact."



**Favorite Union Beer:**  
"Cosmic Giggle, but I really like Duckpin when it all comes down to it."

If this all paints the picture of a spinning-plate circus act, that's what I first thought too. But with laser focus Jon continues to have success while sitting back with Union Craft, Smoking Bowls and Edible Evergreen.

Visit the Union Craft Brewing website

for news and upcoming events. For more information on Smoking Bowls you can contact the Facebook page. To find out when classes at the Edible Evergreen are held, visit the Evergreen Museum website calendar. ■

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