

# Woodfired Life

The best BBQ in the DMV, with a wonderful story, a great team, and the freshest offerings. From the beginning at the Farmer's Market to their current *brick-and-mortar location*. There's no better place to be than 2Fifty Texas BBQ



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## My Interview with Fernando Gonzalez

By Vanessa Niño

I arrived 20 minutes early and waited in the main dining area, watching as customers came and went, some with carry-out orders, others to dine in; the movement never stopped. The dining area is small and quaint, and the menu is written by hand with selections that change by season.

I've been here several times before with my family and friends, and we have always enjoyed a wonderful meal. That's why, when I decided to add interviews to **WoodFired Life**, I asked **2Fifty Texas BBQ** first, to my delight they responded quickly and within 1 week, I was sitting here, waiting for Fernando Gonzalez, co-owner and Pitmaster of 2Fifty Texas BBQ.



**Q: What first sparked your passion for barbecue, and how did that evolve into becoming a pitmaster?**

“It might sound unexpected, but I think it was the engineer in me,” he says, laughing. “I’m a civil engineer by training, and back in 2014, I was living in San Salvador. One night, I was watching the movie *Chef* with some close friends, and there’s this scene set in Austin, Texas. They’re picking up briskets at this massive smokehouse operation—and there’s Aaron Franklin pulling briskets from a 1,000-gallon offset smoker.”

That moment ignited something deeper than just curiosity. “I remember thinking, *That’s something I really need to try*. I had so many questions—*How are these guys cooking in these gigantic smokers? Why’s the food wrapped in butcher paper? What even is a firebox?*” he recalls. “Coming from a place without any barbecue culture, it sparked this obsession.”

Then, in 2017, he made his first trip to Central Texas. “Originally it was a short visit, but I had to stay longer than planned—and I turned it into a three-day barbecue pilgrimage,” he says. “Franklin BBQ, Louie Mueller, Terry Black’s, The Salt Lick, La Barbecue... the food was amazing. But what truly pulled me in was the hospitality.”

“You’d walk into these places and ask for a pit room tour—and they’d welcome you in like family,”

he says. “Coming from El Salvador, a country struggling with violence and instability, that warmth really stayed with me. I already had a daughter, and I thought, *We need to bring this experience to our community back home.*”

His wife Debbie—“a third-generation restaurant owner and operator,” as he proudly points out—was immediately on board. And that’s when things got real.

“I literally rolled a 135-gallon propane tank through my living room,” he laughs. “It wasn’t a smoker yet, just a big, beat-up tank. I started welding, cutting, figuring out how to turn it into a fully functional Texas-style offset smoker. That was the beginning.”

By the end of 2017, they’d launched a small catering operation in El Salvador. And that’s where 2Fifty’s roots took hold.

“We’re on a mission—an unofficial one—to preserve fire cooking,” he says. “Wood-fire is more than just technique. It’s expression. It’s hospitality. And we’re slowly losing it. But for us, it’s worth preserving.”







### Q: How does your Salvadoran heritage influence your approach to barbecue?

“First off, I always like to mention—we didn’t start in this location,” he says, gesturing to the space that now houses 2Fifty. “Back in 2018, we were serving barbecue across the train tracks at the local farmer’s market.”

That’s where everything began. “One day, our current landlord approached us—very casual conversation. He said, *‘Hey, I have this great corner lot by the park. It’s been vacant for years. There’s room for a smokehouse, parking, plenty of potential... if you want it, it’s yours.’*” That little spark turned into a full move—taking over the old Dumm’s Pits & Subs building on Riverdale Road, integrating their kitchen, and expanding what would eventually become one of the most beloved live-fire operations in the region.

But from the very start, the soul of the place was shaped by something deeper. “Some of our roots were there since day one,” he says. “And not in a way that felt forced—we weren’t trying to *announce* our heritage or wave a flag. It was just, *we know we can do great Texas-style barbecue... but the sides? The sides can’t be an afterthought.*”

That’s where Salvadoran flavors started to shine. “What do we eat for breakfast in El Salvador? We eat platanitos fritos—sweet, ripe plantains, fried. Our beans? They’re not pintos or kidneys. We import them from Central America. We don’t crack open a can and throw in peppers. We make them how we know how.”

He breaks it down like a menu, his pride unmistakable. “You’ll find charred corn with jalapeños, onions, greens. Cucumber salad, tangerine salad, bean salad. If we’ve already got a heavy protein-based plate, we balance it with brightness. And now we’re doing things like *buñuelos*—Colombian-style. Even our soups and specials reflect our broader Latin American influences.”

What’s most remarkable is how fluid and intuitive this fusion feels. “It all evolved naturally. Cooking over coals, fire-roasting—it just speaks to us,” he says. “Even our specials reflect that mix: *entraña*, grilled Argentinian-style skirt steak—very *asado*. It pairs beautifully with smoke and fire.”

He’s also quick to give credit where it’s due: to the openness of Texas barbecue culture itself. “Texas barbecue has made space for so many culinary backgrounds. That’s what’s amazing,” he says. “You go to Texas now, and you can get Egyptian-style barbecue. Syrian, Ethiopian, Laotian... all filtered through the lens of Texas tradition. Not just pitmasters—entire culinary teams are adding their voices.”

He points to Burnt Bean in Seguin, Texas, currently ranked number one by *Texas Monthly*. “One of their most talked-about dishes? Sunday morning brisket with huevos rancheros. That says everything.”



## Q: So what does a typical day look like for you—from prep to service?

He laughs, “Honestly? It’s very boring right now.” But as he begins to unpack the layers of what his day actually involves, it becomes clear—it’s anything *but* boring.

“We’re a team of 59 people now, plus two part-timers,” he says. “My job has shifted a lot. These days, it’s mostly about quality control—making sure that the standard we’ve set doesn’t slip, even as we grow.”

A big part of that starts well before the smoke rolls out each morning. “I plan the menu one month in advance, especially our specials,” he explains. “And I plan seasonally. We’re not just running a restaurant—we’re trying to work as an *ecosystem*.”

That mindset—of food as part of something larger—has been part of 2Fifty since day one. “We were born in the farmer’s market. That shaped us,” he says. “We still work closely with farmers. We don’t source commodity proteins. Everything we use is locally and ethically raised.”



He breaks it down: “We hand-pick the farmers we work with. They have to meet certain values—humane animal treatment, low CO2 footprint, reduced water waste. We’re talking pasture-raised, hormone-free, no antibiotics. And the same goes for our vegetables, greens, and herbs. Either we’re growing them in-house, or they’re coming from small local farms or the market.”

That level of intention requires constant communication. “I’m always checking in—*What are you planting? What’s coming in this month?*—so I can shape the menu around what’s fresh and local.”

Mornings start early. “My warehouse team gets the first look at our deliveries,” he says. “If something doesn’t meet our standards, they flag it immediately. We make decisions together—can we work with this or not? It’s not about being picky—it’s about integrity.”

His day is also dotted with check-ins at both 2Fifty locations. “I’ll send reminders—like, *Hey, the picanha special is coming up—make sure you’re pulling basil fresh from the edible garden*. It’s little things, but they matter.”

He saves his closest focus for the proteins. “I stay hands-on with the barbecue. I like to taste throughout the day—brisket, whole hog, ribs, turkey. I move through them all, just checking quality. But I’m also really mindful of barbecue fatigue,” he says, smiling. “It’s real. You have to pace yourself.”

Still, even with all the logistics, his day is built around one principle: creativity. “I try to keep things simple but creative,” he says. “And creativity, I’ve found, really thrives in a free environment. That’s what I try to give my team.”

Just then, the conversation turns to something unexpected.

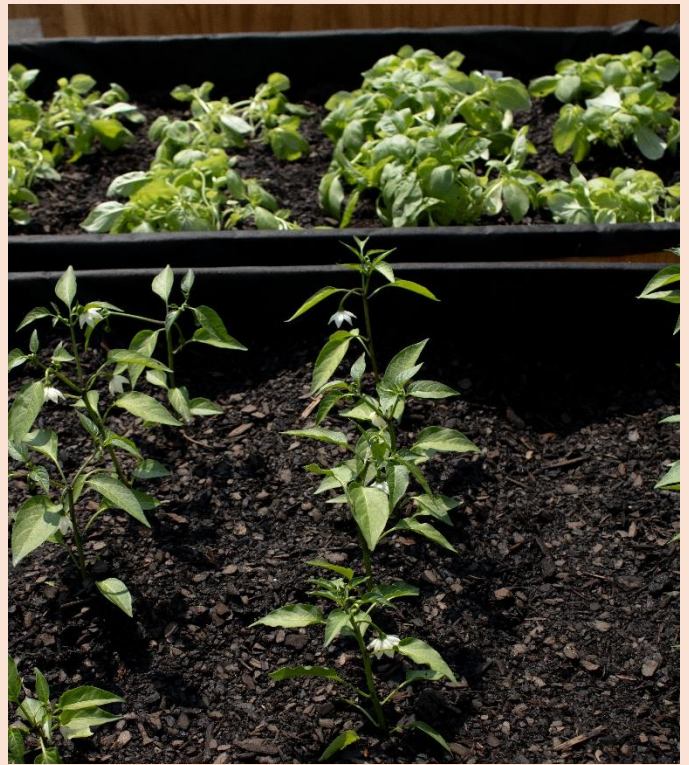
“You mentioned basil from your garden—wait, you have a garden here?”

He nods. “Right here. Right in front of the restaurant, next to the smokehouse.”

He grins. “We’ll take a look before you go.”









**Q: Tell me about your smokers—what types do you use, and why did you choose them?**

Step behind the scenes at 2Fifty and you'll find a lineup of serious firepower—each piece of equipment chosen with purpose.



“We have two primitive pits, both 1,000-gallon,” he says. “They’re great for short cooks—anything in the four- to six-hour range.”

Then there are the stars of the show: the Mill Scale pits. “We’ve got two of those as well—also 1,000 gallons each. They’re what I call the Cadillacs of brisket,” he says proudly. “They came all the way from Lockhart, Texas. And we load them with 100% briskets. All day, every day.”



“We also have one M&M rotisserie—a 1,000-gallon wood-fired smoker. No gas,” he adds quickly, with pride. “And then there’s our direct-heat setup, a Santa Maria-style grill, also from M&M. Again—all wood. You can see it. You can *taste* it.”



The fire, the smoke, the machinery—it all points toward one purpose: honoring the ingredient.

**He speaks about the smokers the way an artist might speak of brushes. Each has its own function, its own place in the rhythm of the kitchen.**

**Q: You're incredibly intentional with your meats—ethically sourced, pasture-raised. But when it comes to selecting a butcher, what matters most to you? Is there something special about the person behind the cut?**

"That's a great question," he says, clearly appreciating the deeper dive. "We only source, cook, and serve *prime grade* proteins. That's our baseline."

He explains the beef grading system: "You've got select, choice, and then prime. Then there's Wagyu—American or Japanese. But for us, prime is what consistently gives us the balance of marbling and flavor we need."

It's a high standard—and one that's not easy to maintain. "Ethically sourcing is already a challenge. But when you layer on only using prime grade? You feel that cost."



He's candid about the business reality. "Honestly, it's not the wisest financial move. Not on paper. Restaurants that run protein-heavy menus—like we do—are already dealing with thin margins. Add on ethical sourcing *and* premium grading? You've got to run high volume just to keep it sustainable."

But quality wins, every time. "We don't cut corners. We won't. Because this food is a reflection of who we are."

He gives full credit to the person who makes the balance possible. "That's where my wife comes in. Debbie's the mastermind behind our financial strategy. She's third-generation in restaurants. She's the one who makes it all work."

I smile. "It's a good partnership. A necessary one."

"Absolutely," He says.

"That's what you need," he nods.



**Q: You've kind of touched on this already, but in a field as saturated as Texas-style barbecue, what makes yours stand out? Why do people choose 2Fifty?**

He smiles at the question. "See, I get that a lot—but honestly? It's not crowded here. Not in the Mid-Atlantic."

He pauses, then adds with a laugh, "Now, if you're talking about Texas? Sure. Or the Carolinas? Absolutely. But here? There's still room. And more importantly, there's still *curiosity*."

Before opening 2Fifty, he and his team did their homework. "We ran a market study," he says. "It showed that while people were *hearing* about Texas barbecue, it was often just a slogan—used commercially. Not many were offering it with full understanding or respect for what it *actually* means."



That gap in authenticity opened the door.

“When you start asking questions—about sourcing, technique, smoke profiles—you quickly realize: not all barbecue is created equal,” he says. “What we found was that our community here was ready. Ready to move past commodity food. Ready to choose ethics, traceability, and quality over mass production.”

He credits part of that readiness to the region’s own deep-rooted food systems. “Our local farmers market has been here since 1990. People in this area know where their food comes from. They care. We’re just meeting them where they already are.”

And when they opened the restaurant, that community showed up. “They saw the difference—and they tasted it.”

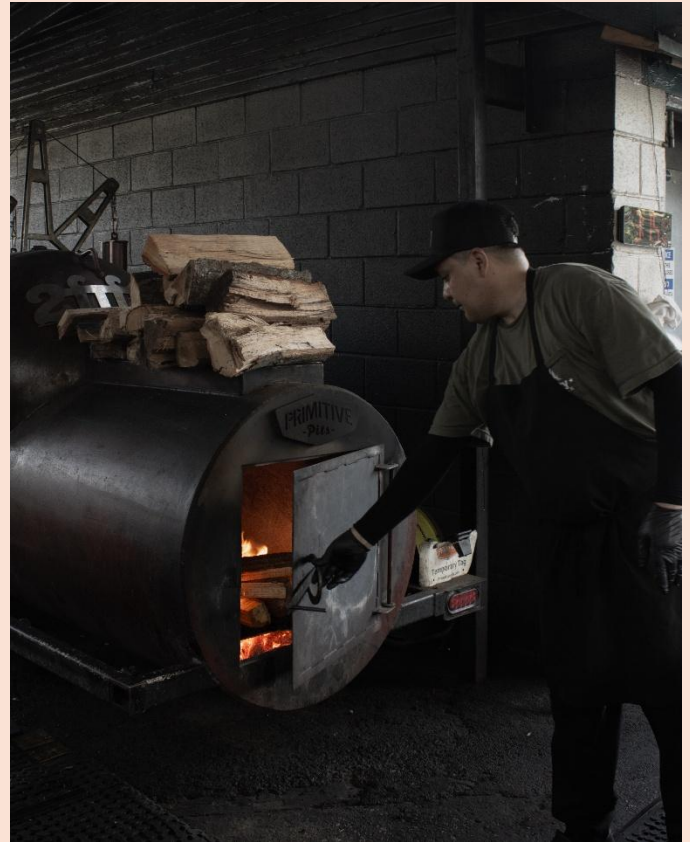
**Q: You’ve talked a lot about the role of wood in your cooking. I read that the Prince family supplies your wood—can you tell me more about that relationship, and what types of wood you use?**

“We use 100% oak,” he says firmly. “Right now, it’s a mix—about 90% white oak, 10% red oak. It’s what grows naturally here, and it’s what we can consistently source.”

Consistency, he stresses, isn’t just about availability—it’s about performance. “We need wood that’s uniform in size, in moisture, in seasoning. And the Prince family? They get it. They’re here every single week. They’ve become one of the most important partners we have.”

I interject, “Without them, there’s no fuel.”

He first met the Prince family in the most organic way possible. “I was visiting local farms, looking for ingredients, and saw a huge pile of wood that said *Firewood for Sale*. I started asking questions, and it led us here—to a 600-cord allocation, locked in for the next several years.”



That kind of planning is essential, especially in the colder months. “We burn through two to three cords a week,” he says. “And during harsh winters, you can’t rely on whatever comes off the truck that week. You need seasoned, dry-aged wood that’s been covered, rested, and ready to burn clean.”

Clean combustion isn’t just a technical term—it affects everything. “If you don’t get it right, you get creosote buildup in your pits. You get dead smoke. It affects flavor, texture... everything.”

He admits it wasn’t always perfect. “We struggled for the first two and a half years. But the Prince family adjusted with us. Now, we’ve got consistent wood for 9 to 11 months out of the year, and I still season it here on-site for another month. So we’re aiming for that one-year mark, every time.”

You can tell this isn’t just logistics—it’s part of the craft.

“I have wood seasoning in my yard for a year before I use it,” I tell him.

He nods, knowingly. “You *have* to. Absolutely.”



**Q: What accomplishment are you most proud of with 2Fifty? And why does it mean so much to you?**

"We were named this year semi-finalists for the **James Beard Award**," the team shared with immense pride. "It means a lot because it's way beyond food. It's about sustainability, it's about advocating for others, for yourself. It's about educating yourself on how to use your voice for things that matter to the rest of the industry. It's about climate survival, it's about the relationship with farmers."

He emphasized his deep admiration for the James Beard Foundation's mission: "I love what the Foundation does way more than a plate of food. The food is great, it can be great. But there are so many questions around that plate of food that the Foundation is advocating for." For 2Fifty, this recognition is a powerful validation: "I really appreciate that we were selected as semi-finalists because that means we're doing something not only from a menu or a business perspective, but way beyond that."



**Q: What is the toughest challenge you've faced running 2Fifty? And how did you overcome it?**

"I think keeping our doors open is pretty challenging right now," he admitted. "As we speak, we're facing probably one of the highest records in history when it comes to beef prices, and operating a Texas-style barbecue, beef prices are directly impacting our operations."

This isn't a silent struggle for 2Fifty. "We talk about this in our social media posts. We have a whole tab in our website to talk about it, there's a blog about that. We talk about these matters all the time." He expressed a concern for the future of barbecue, especially outside of Texas: "I don't know if in the next 10 years, not only us as 2Fifty, but barbecue restaurants, the way we do things, are going to be sustainable."

Fernando believes education is key to overcoming this hurdle: "In Texas, I think the barbecue culture is well-established. And I think people understand why a pound of beef costs \$34-\$35 per pound, or why they are paying \$6 for a side, or why is it relevant for me as a consumer to pay for a rack of ribs that was ethically sourced. I think we still have a lot of work to do for people to understand that; again, **not all barbecues are created the same.**"



Ultimately, it comes down to informed consumer choices: "That decision as a consumer, needs to be informed, and I think it's our duty to try to inform them, at least to present the facts and give them the opportunity to make a decision on that."



**Q: Your barbecue has a reputation for consistency. How do you train and lead your team to maintain such high standards?**

"I am training myself, constantly, and my culinary team is in constant training," he explained. "And my smokehouse pit crew has been also trained in Texas. And I have also brought to the restaurant a few pitmasters to do onsite masterclasses for 3 or 4 days. So there's a lot of research, there's a lot of training behind what we do."

Consistency begins with their ingredients: "I think consistency starts with what we were discussing, **ethically sourced products**. If you're not producing something in a massive way, chances are your product is going to be more controlled."



"All the credit to my culinary team. I mean, the prep room, they do an amazing job preparing every single protein in the way that we can cook it properly. And, just take the best out of it." In explaining further, Fernando used turkey as an example: "It's just a boneless turkey breast, but if you know how to trim it, how to brine it, how to cook it, what temperature, how to wrap it, how to serve it, how to push it, then if you control all of that, then there's consistency as an added value to it."

This unwavering commitment to quality is why 2Fifty isn't expanding. "We're not expanding 2Fifty all over the place, because it's not going to be a local franchise despite the opportunities that come through our door

weekly... We are consciously deciding against that because of **quality control and because of consistency**." Fernando cherishes their hands-on approach: "The moment Debbie and myself cannot be here every single day out of two locations... then we are disengaged from that consistency, we're disengaged from that quality control, and more importantly, we disengage from our one-on-one customer experience."

Fernando and Debbie believe personal connection is paramount: "I sit down with customers and talk to them or see their reactions or check on their tables all the time. And that's how I'm happy at the moment. I'm not happy because I need to visit 10 to 12 restaurants, then I won't be happy anymore. And I just don't want to not be happy. So, it's a conscious decision that we've taken."

**Q: I know you taught barbecue in El Salvador; what was that like?**

"Surprisingly, it was a pretty good experience," he recalled. He noted the strong ties between the U.S. and El Salvador, partly due to the country's civil war and subsequent immigration, leading to a significant American presence. "You see this huge immigration wave from Salvadorans coming to the United States. But it's also one of the factors why we have the largest US embassy in Central America in El Salvador. That means a lot of diplomats. It means a lot of staff from the United States. That means a lot of Texans living in San Salvador and Salvador in general because of that."

The demand for barbecue was immediate. "My brother-in-law in Salvador, he put the idea out there on social media and a little website, and surprisingly, the response was almost immediately, They heard things such as 'Hey, I'm from Texas, I miss barbecue.' 'Bring some brisket.' 'Hey, I used to live in Houston, do you know how to do ribs? Bring them over!'"

Despite early challenges, the passion for barbecue shone through. "We were selling out. We were selling out every single weekend. And probably the barbecue was not that great back in the day. One because of sourcing. Secondly, because I was still learning, I'm *still* learning, but I was learning on really basic stuff. I didn't have access to a consistent amount of wood or



a protein that I was 100% happy with." Yet, the experience underscored barbecue's unique power: "Still, barbecue has the power to sit people down on the same table and have that conversation such as, 'Hey, what type of wood do you use? What type of brisket is this? Where did you get it? How did you smoke it? What's your favorite rub?' That kind of thing. Would it have worked with other type of cuisine? I don't know, but it really worked with barbecue. And that's the beauty of barbecue."

**Q: Are the cuts in El Salvador the same cuts that they are here because I know a lot of cuts are very different from one country to the other?**

"That's a very good question," he responded, highlighting the complexities of sourcing. "I was able to source pretty good locally sourced chicken. I was able to make my own sausages, and I was going to one of the biggest markets that imports goods from the United States to source my spare ribs."

However, **brisket presented a significant challenge.** "Brisket was non-existent. I had to go to a specialized butcher in the west side of the country so he could cut some brisket especially for me, and even then, they were so lean, there was barely any fat in there." Ultimately, they resorted to importing: "I ended up importing some brisket from the United States. So, price-wise, it was pretty challenging because it is expensive here. Imagine importing that thing over to our side. So it was challenging. But again, the reaction was great."



**Q: Have you considered teaching here?**

"Yes. We're gonna have our first barbecue class, August the 1st," he enthusiastically announced. "It's a partnership we're doing with *Skillette Cooking Academy* in DC and us."

The class will be highly focused: "It's gonna be half-day trimmings, seasoning. It's going to be all about brisket, because only on that topic you can spend three days. We're going to call it ***All Things Brisket***. But I don't think we're going to have time for all that, let's say a solid 4 or 5 hours only focused on this. It's coming out August first."

When I asked about advertising, he noted, "I think it should be coming up soon."

**Q: Is there a favorite ingredient you like to use that people may not expect?**

"I can't think of one in particular," He began, "What I can say is how **pungent our greens are that we grow in house**. It might be surprising for some people." Fernando attributed this to the quality of their produce. "You know why? Because if you go to the supermarket, chances are, they put all kinds of stuff in it. And the soil where that vegetable comes from is 100% not the same soil as what we are growing ourselves. So, our parsley, is pungent, because we're growing it and washing it and serving it probably the same day. And you can't beat that freshness."

They even have customers noticing the difference: "Sometimes we are slicing onions all the way in the back, in the prep room, and here in the dining room, people are saying, 'Why am I crying? Why am I feeling onions in my eyes?' Oh, because those onions come from the farmer's market and farmer Fajardo's produce does not use all the pesticides and all the weird chemical stuff that you are used to consuming. So I embrace it!"



**Q: You've learned from legends like Francis Mallmann and Aaron Franklin. What did they teach you? And how did that shape your barbecue philosophy?**

"All right, let's talk about Francis," he began, describing his experience with Francis Mallmann as "something." "I think I was surprised, listening to Francis Mallmann speaking about how **fragile fire is.**"

He explained how Mallmann's approach contrasted with common perceptions of fire: "When you think about fire, it might sound something really violent and something really intentional and something really aggressive, cooking with fire, but it was quite the opposite, learning from him and listening to him and seeing how he moves around fire. Surprisingly for me, his most repeated word, 'fragile'—'This is fragile, the fragility of smoke, the fragility of the fire, the fragility of the embers.'"

Mallmann's philosophy extended to forming a connection with each unique fire. "It was almost surreal to see how he talks to the fire in a way that he tries to create a bond with that fire, knowing that every single fire is different. So he immediately tries to create that bond with that specific fire to see how can he use that fire to guide the fire and guide the protein or the vegetable, or the fruit he is cooking, to do what he envisions as the final result, knowing that it is still completely unpredictable." This acceptance of the unpredictable was a key takeaway: "You just try to guide the fire to, let's say, char these vegetables, but you never really know exactly what's going to happen at the end, because the vegetable is going to behave in a certain way that you don't expect, or the fire is just going to do something completely different. So that fragility is also for you as a cook, knowing that there's going to be room for a different outcome. And that's totally fine, that's okay. I think that was the biggest lesson, trying to understand, how you can try to handle the 100 variables on that specific cook, but there's still room for that cook to go in another way because of how fragile the fire is. That was something."

Transitioning to Aaron Franklin, he humorously stated, "Aaron Franklin... if Francis Mallmann is all

about romance, romance with fire, then Franklin is all about **rock and roll**. It's rock and roll and fire and smoke." He was particularly impressed by Franklin's adaptability: "It was very interesting to see how he was navigating in Argentina, this happened in Mendoza, Argentina, so looking at him, how he was pulling tricks and pulling a different card on how to make this Argentinian cattle that he is not used to cooking, in a completely different environment and a different altitude with completely different wood, different humidity, and still able to produce an amazing brisket. That was something special."

The environment in Maryland also presents unique challenges. "We are cooking in a very different environment than if you were in Texas. This is 100%, tropical, highly humid weather, and that really affects your cook." The overarching lesson from both masters was embracing unpredictability: "So just having that room to adapt to every day and knowing that at the end you can't really control all the variables. There's going to be always room for something here and there that you're not completely happy with it, but that's life, too. Every single animal is different. Every single marbling is different. Every single woodblock is different. Every fire is different. Your mood is different one day to the other. Your energy level is different one day to the other. So I think the biggest lesson cooking with these guys for 3 or 4 days was, leave room for a different outcome and accept it."



**Q: What advice would you give home cooks like me, people who love cooking on fire and want to push the boundaries with flavor?**

"The same thing I've learned over these years," he offered. "Approach every single cook as a learning process. You are never going to know everything about cooking, the way we approach things here is we are always learning. What are we going to learn today? If you approach your cook that way, then chances are you're going to be more satisfied with the outcome. Because again, fire and smoke are so unpredictable that you need, really need to leave room for that unpredictability, *be patient*."

He stressed the importance of patience, especially with live fire cooking. "You can char, sear and smash and create a Maillard reaction, super hard, super fast, super hot, but the preparation to get to that point is also very long when it comes to getting your wood, thinking what chop are you going to use or what kind of grill are you going to use. And then building that fire the way you build that fire, how much time you need to get that plancha or that stove top or that chapa or whatever you're using to that point. There's a long prep to get to that point, and that also really needs a lot of patience."

He compared the choice: "So it's your decision right there, you can turn on the gas stove and bring it all the way to the max and smash burgers, or you can build a nice, beautiful fire, take your time with that plancha to be ready for smashing or whatever you're cooking. So just be patient." For more involved cooks, planning is key: "Not to mention if you're cooking a brisket, that takes 24 hours just prepping, cooking, resting, serving, carving. Plan ahead. Plan ahead and be patient."

**Q: What dish on your menu is closest to your heart and why?**

"Oh, man... I think I'm really enjoying the **wire roasting cooking that we're doing and cooking on the embers**. You know, cooking straight on the embers, cooking as close to the embers as we can. We're straight on the fire. Right on the plancha, right on the chapa. I truly enjoy that."

The engineering aspect of barbecue also fascinates him. "As an engineer, I truly enjoy the process of taking this 18 lb brisket into something succulent that is going to weigh 6 or 7 lb at the end."

I shared my appreciation for the depth of flavor achieved through ember cooking. "Cooking on embers, I think, has taught me the difference in flavor that can come out from one way of cooking to another way of cooking. I just recently put some sweet potatoes over the embers and then just let them go. Basically forgot about it. And the color, the sweetness and the texture. It's incredible."

Fernando noted the simplicity and magic of this method. "Even red onions, you put it on the embers and it ends up as super sweet onions, it's so magical. And I think we overdo it around here, it's like 'oh that, you know, it needs more seasoning.' You cook this vegetable on the embers, you drizzle some balsamic, some extra virgin olive oil, some sea salt, maybe some honey, that's all you need, don't over complicate it."

**Q: How do you want your guests to feel after eating at 2Fifty?**

"Oh, I want them to feel **welcome**," he said warmly. "It's the same feeling that attracted me to the barbecue world. I was trying to flee from El Salvador because of the violent environment. I went to Central Texas, and I was instantly welcomed into the barbecue family. I want them to feel the same way. You know, welcome to this family."

