



## A NIGHT AT THURN'S

It's 1:30 a.m. on a Thursday, and fourth-generation butcher Albert Thurn is waking up for work. Across the street, at Thurn's Specialty Meats, the fire that fuels the shop's smoker is dying down, and it's time to add more wood. The smoker has run nonstop since Tuesday afternoon, flavoring beef tongue, imported trout and landjaeger sausage. Tonight, Albert is smoking beef bones that will be sold as dog treats, because nothing, not even bones, is wasted at Thurn's.

Albert walks around the back of the butcher shop in the dark and opens the tiny door containing the smoker's pit. He pulls a couple red oak and mulberry logs from a big pile, dropped off earlier in the week by tree trimmers, and tosses them in. Years ago, Albert found hickory was too pungent for his 60-odd cured products, whereas red oak is milder and complemented by the fruitiness of mulberry. Those two woods have been the winning combination ever since.

Albert props the smoker door open so a draft can continuously fan the flames. He stokes the fire every 30 minutes in between moving hams to the freezer and setting out spices. By 8 a.m., the shop will open and regulars will start pouring in. There isn't time to sleep. He'd rather be working, anyway.

"You don't even count your hours," he says, smiling. "My father told me years ago, 'The money's just a byproduct.' You just don't worry about it. Eventually, it'll come. And it did.

"'Passion' is the key word," he continues. "And what gives you the passion is seeing your customers stand in front of you who sincerely appreciate your efforts." [thurnsmeats.com](http://thurnsmeats.com)

### Three specialty Thurn's products to try now:

#### **Souze headcheese** (\$4.95/pound)

"It's an inherited taste," Thurn says. "Kind of creamy and mild with chunks of tongue that we flavor in a salt water-garlic brine. If you hit one of those, it has a little more of an intense taste. It's sour, like eating a pickle."

#### **Smoked trout** (\$18.95/pound)

"They come out of a little bay in Scotland that is totally conducive for raising them—water, climate, etc.," Thurn says. "It's probably the best fish we've ever had in here. The meat is really rich and oily and tasty."

#### **Beef tongue** (\$13/pound)

"We cook them and pickle them in vinegar, brown sugar, onions and prepared mustard," Thurn says. "My son claims it tastes just like South Carolina-style barbecue."