

Grits Head-to-Head Results

Loyal readers have asked about the outcome of the head-to-head grits tasting mentioned in the “It’s Grits; They’re Great” blog. Colvin Run was matched against a classic, revered product from Marsh Hen Mill of Edisto Island, South Carolina located on the coast about midway between Charleston and Hilton Head. Marsh Hen was originally known as Geechie Boy Mill, the nickname of the previous proprietor.



The current owners took comments seriously about the appropriateness of appropriating the name of the Gullah Geechee people, West and Central Africans enslaved in this country who developed a unique culture in the Southeast. After much reflection and many grits, Marsh Hen, a rail bird that populates the island that would rather run than fly, got the nod.



Our hostess prepared the grits side-by-side, using the same ingredients. Our host prepared the shrimp topping based on a Charleston recipe featuring bacon AND sausage.

Opening the packages revealed the first difference. Marsh Hen’s grits were finer than Colvin Run’s. They were closer to Colvin Run’s “quick grits.” Recall that grits are ground corn filtered through a sieve with eight holes per square inch. To get quick grits, regular grits are placed on a 30 holes per square inch sieve. What falls through is corn flour; what stays on top are quick grits. Finer grits for quicker cooking.

The difference in textures was apparent as the grits were cooked in boiling water then doused with milk. Marsh Hen’s thickened up at the seven-minute mark while Colvin Run’s stayed soupy. Typically, Colvin Run’s require at least 20-30 minutes or more cooking on a stove top. The hot grits were topped off with a handful of cheddar cheese.





Our host creatively arranged asparagus spears to separate the two steaming grits. Colvin Run's, on the left and Marsh Hen's on the right. The latter appear creamier and the former displaying flecks of corn. Topped with the shrimp sauce the true test awaited: tasting.

The six reviewers judged both grits excellent and were unwilling to declare a winner. Marsh Hen's

were velvety smooth, Colvin Run's more toothsome. Admitting to some prejudice, I would venture that Colvin Run's had a slightly cornier taste – a product of the grittier texture.

Even a draw against a South Carolina classic is a great complement to Colvin Run. So, when the urge strikes for genuine grits smothered by a delectable topping of your choice, Colvin Run grits, regular or quick, can't be beat. And to top them off, they are local, fresh, and less expensive. It's grits; they're great!

