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FINNISH SOLID FUEL GRILLS TO FLORIDA, USA – CASE
STUDY: CARELIA GRILL

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to study the potential for a successful market entry into a new market for Carelia Grill, a Finnish company manufacturing solid fuel grills. The study focuses on the grill market of Florida and defines the key factors needed to succeed in the market.

The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Primary data was collected through observations of the Florida grill market and interviews. Secondary data was collected from various sources, including statistics, articles, online sources, and literature.

The thesis consists of six chapters. First, the background, aim, methodology, and outline of the thesis are presented. Second, the thesis discusses entry modes of international business. Then, the business environment and the grill market in Florida is analyzed. Finally, a marketing and brand strategy for Carelia Grill is created, followed by conclusions.

The results of the thesis concluded that Florida is a potential market for Carelia Grill. The key factors for success in the market are branding and marketing communications. However, further research is recommended before entering the market.

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Background.....	4
1.2	Aim of the study	4
1.3	Methodology	5
1.4	Outline of the report.....	5
2	ENTRY MODES OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS	7
2.1	Exporting	9
2.2	Licensing and contract manufacturing.....	12
3	BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE GRILL MARKET IN FLORIDA	15
3.1	Legislative factors	15
3.2	Economic factors	15
3.3	Socio-cultural factors.....	17
4	ANALYSIS OF THE GRILL MARKET IN FLORIDA	19
4.1	Overview of the grill and firepit market in Florida.....	19
4.2	Target market	20
4.3	Competition.....	21
4.4	Opportunities for Carelia Grill in Florida market.....	24
5	MARKETING AND BRAND STRATEGY FOR CARELIA GRILL	28
5.1	Product	28
5.2	Price	29
5.3	Distribution channel.....	30
5.4	Promotion.....	31
6	CONCLUSIONS	34
	REFERENCES	35

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Analysis of grill selection on retailer's websites
- Appendix 2 Contact information for potential retailers

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Grilling food is popular around the world, and the global barbecue and grill market is expected to increase and reach \$8.1 billion (6.9 billion euro) by 2023, compared to the \$5.1 billion (4.3 billion euro) in 2019 (Globe Newswire 2020). In the US, 64% of the adult population owned a smoker or a grill in 2019, based on Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association's State of the Barbecue Industry Report (2020).

In addition to a way of cooking, grilling can be also seen as a past time activity, a part of culture and a way to relax and spend time with friends and family. The barbecue industry report states that in US the most popular reasons for grilling were flavor, lifestyle, convenience, and entertainment (Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association 2020).

Carelia Grill is a trademarked product line owned by FinEq International Oy, a company founded 2015 and located in Lehmo, Finland. The Carelia Grill product line includes handmade multi-purpose solid fuel grills and fireplaces and accessories manufactured from steel in the North Karelia Region of Finland. (Hämäläinen 2020.)

The grills are suitable for outdoors, as well as for huts and gazebos, where the fresh air ventilation is sufficient. Solid fuel, such as wood, coal or briquettes can be used in the grills. Carelia Grill's main markets currently are Finland, Russia, and central Europe, and next the company is next aiming at North America. Their products can also be ordered from their web store with shipping available worldwide. (Hämäläinen 2020.)

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the thesis is to study a new market for Carelia Grill, in order to determine the potential for a successful market entry. The study focuses on

analyzing the solid fuel grill market in Florida as a potential market. The aim of the study is to answer the following research questions:

- What are the key factors for success in the Florida grill market?
- Is Florida a potential market for Carelia Grill?

In the end, conclusions, and recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis was conducted using mostly qualitative research methods. However, to collect information on the Florida grill market, also quantitative research methods were used. Primary data was collected through observations and an interview with an industry professional, Ben Purvis, the president of the Florida BBQ Association, and the owner of a barbecue catering business. Secondary data was collected mostly from online sources such as government statistics, articles, industry websites, and news releases. Some secondary data was acquired from a literary source.

An exchange rate of 1€ = \$1.18 is used throughout the thesis, based on the European Central Bank's exchange rate from October 26, 2020 (European Central Bank 2020).

In this thesis the term grill is used to broadly describe a product used for cooking outdoors using gas, charcoal (or other solid fuel), pellets, or electricity as an energy source. Grilling, in this thesis, generally refers to all cooking done with a grill, and is not limited to specific food items.

1.4 Outline of the report

The thesis consists of four main parts. Firstly, the thesis focuses on the business environment of the grill market in Florida. The analysis takes into consideration three kinds of external factors: legislative, economic, and socio-cultural.

Next comes an analysis of the wood-burning grill market in Florida. This gives an overview of the market, and further discusses the target market, competition, and opportunities for Carelia Grill.

Thirdly, the thesis focuses on the brand and marketing strategy for Carelia Grill with the help of a marketing mix.

The last part discusses the results and conclusions of the study and gives recommendations for Carelia Grill regarding market entry.

2 ENTRY MODES OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

When a company decides to expand its operations to a new foreign market, it needs to choose an international entry mode. In other words, the company needs to have a plan on how it can enter a new foreign market as successfully as possible. (Varma 2019.)

Different entry modes can be divided into three main categories - trade-related, transfer-related, also known as contractual, and investment-related (Figure 1). Trade-related entry modes entail the least, and investment-related entry modes the most resource commitment, risk, control, and profit potential. The entry modes can also be divided to non-equity modes (incl. trade-related and transfer-related) and equity modes (Incl. investment-related). (Varma 2019.)

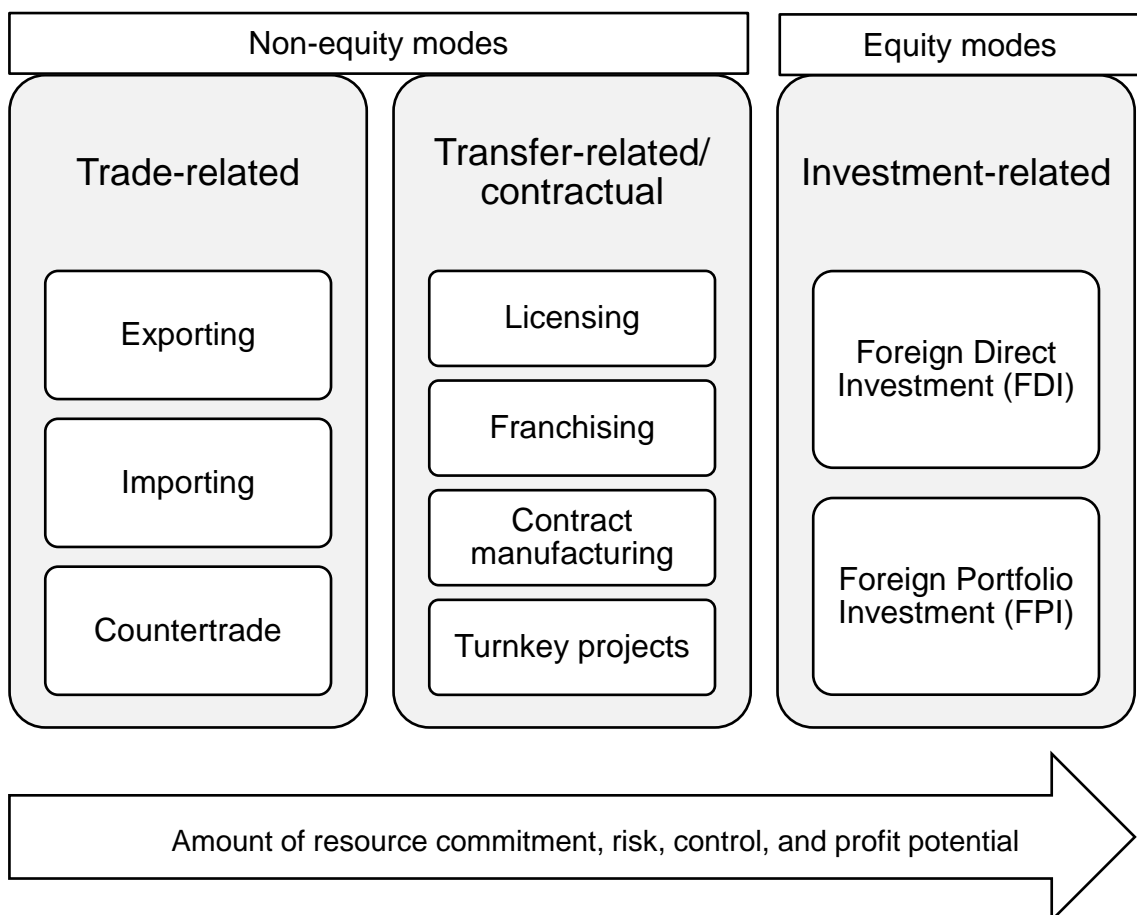


Figure 1. Different entry modes divided to three categories.

Trade-related entry modes include exporting, importing, and countertrade. These modes require the least commitment and resources from the company. (Varma 2019.) As exporting is considered the most basic level of entry, companies often begin their expansion to international markets with exporting (Hopkins 2017).

In transfer-related, also called contractual entry modes, a company enters a contract with a foreign partner to transfer ownership, or a right to utilize its tangible, or intangible property often in exchange for royalty fees. Transfer-related entry modes include licensing, franchising, contract manufacturing, and turnkey projects. The difference to trade-related entry modes is that in transfer-related entry modes, the foreign partner acquires specific rights of the company's property (e.g. use of technology). (Varma 2019.)

In investment related entry modes, the company acquires ownership of property, assets, projects, and businesses located in a foreign country. Investment-related entry modes include foreign direct investment (FDI), and foreign portfolio investment (FPI). (Varma 2019.)

Carefully considering the best entry mode for the company is important, not only to ensure success, but, because unlike with some decisions, market entry decisions are hard to reverse or change afterward. As mentioned before, different entry modes vary in the level of resources they require, reward they offer, risk they pose, and the control the company has. Therefore, to choose the most suitable entry mode, several external and internal criteria need to be considered. (Hopkins 2017.)

External criteria consist of several different market characteristics. Market size and growth potential influence, for example, the amount of financial and human resources required to operate in the market now and in the future. On the other hand, the business environment of the market, for example legislative, economic, and socio-cultural factors as discussed in Chapter two of this thesis, affect the amount of risk the market possesses for the company. (Hopkins 2017.)

Government regulations of the foreign market may limit the entry mode options by, for example, having high tariffs, and import quotas that might force the company to manufacture in the country. The competitive environment in the market affects the return on invested capital – when there are more competitors,

the return is smaller. The difference in infrastructure in the new market area may require delegating some functions outside the company and/or participating in unfamiliar practices. (Hopkins 2017.)

Internal criteria examine the company. What the company wants to achieve, how much control the company wants to have, how much resources the company has and is willing to use, and if the company has a lack of competency that requires an in-country alliance are matters to consider when choosing an entry mode. (Hopkins 2017.)

2.1 Exporting

When a company is producing products or services in one country (often the company's country of origin) and is selling and distributing those products to customers in another country, it is called exporting. Commonly, the company keeps the manufacturing activities in the country of origin, but distribution, marketing, and customer service is done in the export market. The company can decide to handle all activities in the export market on its own or use foreign intermediaries to carry them out. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 376.)

The majority of companies in the beginning of their international expansion select exporting as the mode of entry, because exporting involves less risk and requires less financial resources and prior knowledge of foreign transactions and markets. Nonetheless, exporting is a common entry mode choice even among companies with already vast international activities and experience. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 376.)

Exporting can be divided into two types: indirect and direct. In indirect exporting the company makes a contract with intermediaries located in the company's country of origin. These intermediaries are typically tasked with finding foreign buyers, shipping, and getting paid. Contrarily, in direct exporting the company works together with intermediaries located in the export market. The foreign market intermediaries act for example as negotiators on behalf of the exporter (a company exporting its products), and handle responsibilities such as local supply-

chain management, pricing, and customer service. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 378-379.)

The company should consider the amount of time, capital, and expertise it is willing to commit before deciding between direct and indirect exporting. Other factors to consider are the nature of the company's products, the strategic importance of the export market, and the availability of competent foreign intermediaries in the desired market. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 378-379.)

Indirect exporting generally requires less resources, is more straight-forward and has lower risk compared to direct exporting, but a company has also less product control over the brand and its marketing (Hopkins 2017). Direct exporting requires substantially more resources than indirect exporting, but alternatively it provides the exporter with more control over the export process and increased potential for higher profits. It also enables a closer relationship with the buyers in the foreign market. There are also many companies that actively export indirectly and directly. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 378-379.)

Exporting in general has many advantages. It is a feasible international entry mode for many different sized companies because it requires less resources. The exporter benefits by gaining first-hand insight and expertise of the foreign market (Varma 2019). Compared to other entry modes, exporting helps to maximize flexibility and to minimize risks and costs. It can be used to test new markets, before committing to an entry mode requiring more resources and offering higher profit potential. The increase in overall sales volume, after gaining sales in the export market, increases economies of scale, resulting in lower manufacturing costs per unit. Through exporting it is possible to diversify the customer base, which reduces dependence on the domestic market. A foreign market can help stabilize fluctuations in sales resulting from economic cycles, or seasonality of demand. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 377.)

There are also some disadvantages to exporting. For example, it predisposes the exporter to tariffs and other entry barriers. The fluctuations in exchange rates can lead to losses in profits. Compared to for example foreign direct investment,

exporting offers fewer possibilities to gain knowledge about the unique aspects of the specific market. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 378.)

Intermediaries

Working with intermediaries is especially helpful for companies that have limited or no experience in exporting. It enables a company to enter a foreign market often more quickly, with minimized risk and without extensive prior knowledge. However, it also leaves such a company with less control. It is paramount to select the intermediaries carefully, as the company needs to be able to trust that their products and brand are in good hands. (Hopkins 2017.) Choosing a suitable type of intermediary to work with depends on the needs and expectations of the company. Intermediaries vary on the level of support and types of services they offer the company. (Varma 2019.)

Examples of intermediaries:

A foreign distributor is an intermediary based in the export market that enters a contract with the exporter. Foreign distributors purchase products from the exporter, add a profit margin, and then resell the products in the export market. In other words, they take title to and distribute the exporter's products in the foreign market. Foreign distributors usually take care of marketing activities such as sales, promotion, and after-sales service for the product, as well as offer financing and technical support. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 386.)

A manufacturer's representative works under contract for the exporter and handles sales in the export market. Manufacturer's representatives do not take title to the exporter's products and usually work for a commission. The exporter is required to handle the physical facilities, as well as marketing and customer support activities. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 386.)

A trading company is typically a high-volume, low-margin reseller involved in both import and export. Trading companies often import, and export various products and services and they generate profit by adding profit margins to what they sell. Trading companies take care of international marketing activities for companies that lack resources or will to sell their products abroad. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 386.)

An export management company (EMC) is an intermediary based on the exporter's country of origin. EMC's find customers, negotiate terms of sale, and organize international shipping on behalf of the exporter for a commission. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 386.)

2.2 Licensing and contract manufacturing

Licensing is when a company owning intellectual property allows another company to use that intellectual property for a defined time period, for royalties or other compensation (Figure 2). Intellectual property includes ideas, works, discoveries and inventions created by a company, such as technology, business systems, production processes, know-how, trademarks, design, logos etc. and they are protected against unauthorized use by intellectual property rights. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 440.)

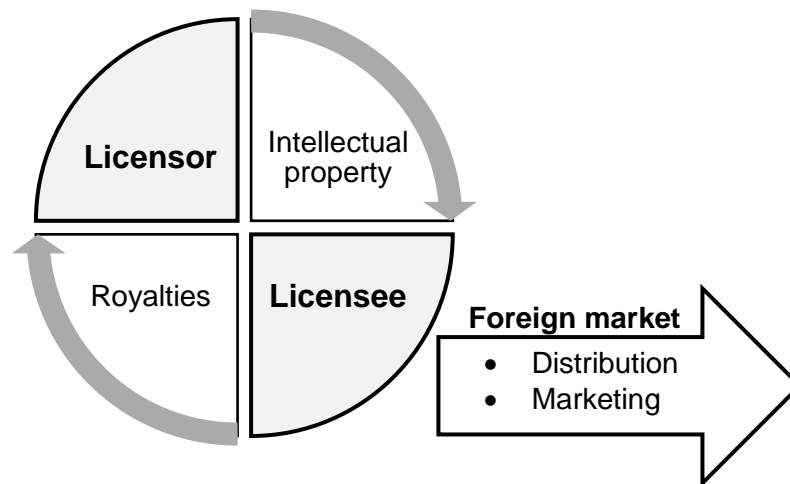


Figure 2. Organizational structure of licensing.

The nature of the licensing is specified in a licensing contract between the intellectual property owner, licensor, and the user of said property, the licensee. Typically, the licensee pays a fixed amount to the licensor upon signing the licensing contract to cover the costs of transferring the licensed property, such as consultation, training, or adaptation. In addition, the licensee pays continuous royalties to the licensor for the period of the contract, which is typically five to seven years, after which it can be renewed at mutual will. After the intellectual

property has been successfully transferred to the licensee, the licensor is typically no longer directly involved, and the licensee is in charge of production, distribution, and marketing. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 442-443.)

Licensing as an entry mode does not require a big investment from the licensor to enter a foreign market, and the licensee is the one bearing most of the financial risks. It also a way for the licensor company to make profit on pre-existing assets and test the foreign market before possibly making a bigger investment in the future. However, the profits are generally smaller than in other entry modes, and the licensor does lose control over the property. The licensor is not able to control for example product quality or marketing anymore, which can have negative effects on the image of the company. There is also a risk that after the licensing contract ends, the licensee becomes future competition. (Hopkins 2017.)

Contract manufacturing is an entry mode in which a company contracts an in-country manufacturer in the foreign market to manufacture its product either partly or completely. In contrast to licensing, in contract manufacturing the company is still responsible for the distribution and marketing of the products (Figure 3). (Hopkins 2017.)

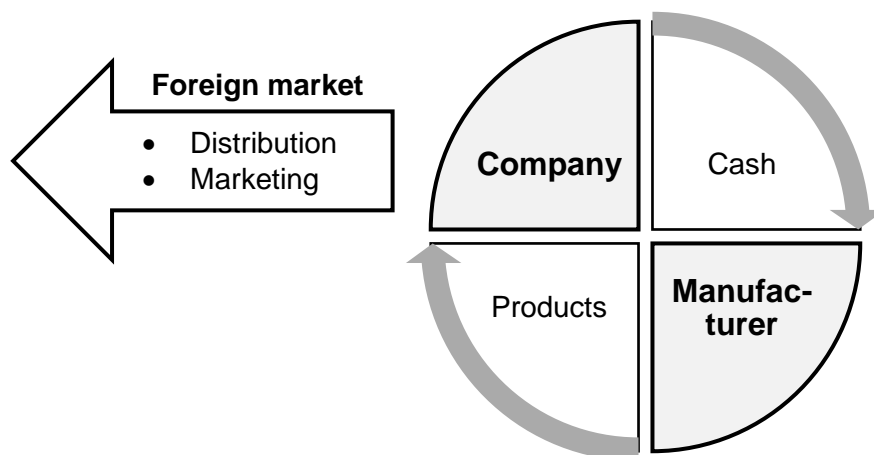


Figure 3. Organizational structure of Contract Manufacturing.

In contract manufacturing the company needs to closely monitor the product quality and production levels, especially in the beginning, to ensure the manufacturer meets the demands of the company. As in licensing, there is a threat that the contract manufacturer will become future competition. Contract

manufacturing requires more resources and presents a bigger financial risk for the company than licensing, but it also has greater profit potential. (Hopkins 2017.)

Both licensing and contract manufacturing can be suitable entry modes for foreign markets that restrict foreign ownership or are challenging to enter because of trade barriers, tariffs and bureaucratic requirements. In addition, the in-country production removes the need for complex international logistics as the products are already in the market area. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 445.)

3 BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE GRILL MARKET IN FLORIDA

3.1 Legislative factors

The grill market in Florida is not highly regulated. There are not any specific standards, licenses, or certifications for solid fuel grills. However, it is important to have proper warnings with the product to minimize the threat of lawsuits, especially in United States, known for its litigious culture.

Open burning for recreational purposes, which includes having a fire in an outdoor fireplace or cooking device, is allowed and does not require authorization by Florida state laws. However, counties and municipalities may have their own additional regulations and requirements on open burning. (Florida Department of Environmental Protection 2020).

In general, grilling in backyards, for example, is allowed in Florida. Some Homeowner Association areas in Florida such as some gated communities, and condominiums, may have restrictions against grilling. These might include for example the prohibition of gas grills or making any open fire in the area or then only allowing grilling in a specific communal area. (Purvis 2021).

Florida's taxes are on the lower end compared to the rest of the United States. Florida's corporate income tax is 4.458%, which is on among the lowest in the United States. Florida's sales tax is 6%. Combined with average local sales taxes it increases to 7.05% which is less than the United States' national average of 7.12%. (Tax Foundation 2020.)

3.2 Economic factors

Florida's economy is expected to expand in the following years. Despite Florida's Gross State Product (GSP) estimated decline of 6.00% in 2020, the GSP is expected to grow annually by an average of 2.6% during 2020-2023. This surpasses the forecasted average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 1.6% in US, over the same period. (Institute for Economic Forecasting 2020.)

During the past five-year period, the euro (EUR) to the U.S dollar (USD) exchange rate has been EUR 1 = USD 1.1330 on average, with the minimum of EUR 1 = USD 1.0364 and maximum of EUR 1 = USD 1.2493 (Figure 2) (European Central Bank 2020).



Figure 4. EUR to USD exchange rate development over a five-year period from November 23, 2015 to November 24, 2020 (European Central Bank 2020)

Exchange rate volatility makes economic forecasting more challenging for an exporting company as it will affect the revenue. When the U.S dollar is strong against the euro, the U.S customer buying power increases, which can have a positive effect on the sales of European goods in the U.S market. If the U.S dollar weakens against the euro, the company's profit margin will decrease.

Covid-19 has affected economies all over the world, and Florida is not an exception. The unemployment rate in Florida has been affected by the global pandemic and was 7.6% on September 2020, which is a notable increase from 2.9% the previous year, but the number has come down from 13.8%, where it spiked in April 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020).

3.3 Socio-cultural factors

The population of Florida is over 21 million; of that 80.3% is 18 years old or over, and the median age is 42.4 years old. The residents come from diverse backgrounds as 21.1% of the population are foreign born. These individuals have originated from Latin America (76%), Asia (11%) and Europe (9%). More than 30% of the population use a language other than English at home. (United States Census Bureau 2019a.)

Floridians are accustomed to diversity and varied ways of living, which can make them more open to try new things. The food culture in Florida has been impacted by the fact that most Floridians have migrated from somewhere else, either from another state in United States, or from abroad. Especially Caribbean influences can be found in the cuisine. (Moma 2017.)

The general attitude towards imported goods is positive in Florida. People in Florida are used to buying products made overseas, and they are often not interested in where the product was made. The origin country of a new grill does not have a huge effect on the customer's buying decision. (Purvis 2021.)

In Florida, there are 5,838,385 single-family homes, which amounts to 60.4% of all housing units (United States Census Bureau 2019b). A total of 294,120 single-family homes were sold in 2019 (Statista 2020). Single-family homes are more likely to have a suitable yard for grilling than other types of housing. The median household income in Florida is \$59,227 (50,192€) (United States Census Bureau 2019a).

Grilling is a popular pastime in Florida, as there were more than twenty competitions scheduled for 2020, and more than ten are already planned to be held in 2021 (Florida BBQ Association 2020). The most popular times to grill in the US are different holidays such as the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day, as well as other special occasions such as birthdays, and Super Bowl Sunday. The leading reasons for cooking with a grill are added flavor, lifestyle choice, convenience, entertainment, and grilling being a hobby. (Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association 2020.)

As in any industry, trends in grilling change frequently, and new trends are emerging constantly. One of the big trends in grilling are vegan substitutes for meat. Especially millennials, who often value health and environmentally-friendly options, favor these new products. Another emerging trend is the slowly rising popularity of pellet grills, which have been modernized with technology that allows to control the grill through a smartphone. Charcoal grills are also gaining popularity and changing from gas grills, which has been the most popular choice for years, to charcoal is also a trend that is seen happening in the industry. (Raichlen 2019.)

Because of Covid-19 pandemic, people have been staying at home more to practice social distancing. That has increased the amount of cooking people do at home in the US, and many think they will continue to cook more at home in the future as well. (Taparia 2020.) In Florida, this has led to increase of grill sales (Witthaus 2020), as people want better equipment to make their homecooked dinners.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE GRILL MARKET IN FLORIDA

4.1 Overview of the grill and firepit market in Florida

Based on the popularity of Google searches on the topic of “grilling”, Florida is number 42 out of 51 states in the US (Google Trends 2020a). The number of searches on the topic usually peak in Florida, during mid-May to mid-July (Google Trends 2020b), which is aligned with the fact that the most popular grilling day on the US is Fourth of July (Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association 2020).

In US, most grills are purchased in retail stores, and only 15% of the grills are purchased online. The most favored type of fuel among US grill owners is gas (61%), charcoal being the second (49%). (Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association 2020.) In 2019, the combined sales of gas, charcoal and electric grills in US reached \$2.65 billion (2.25 billion euro) and are expected to reach \$3.27 billion by 2025 (Statista 2019).

According to Ben Purvis, the president of Florida BBQ association, cooking with a grill in Florida and in other southern parts of US is separated to grilling and barbecuing. The term grilling refers to cooking food items such as hot dogs, hamburgers and steaks, and barbecuing refers to more slowly cooked food items such as brisket, pulled pork and ribs. Currently, gas grills are the most popular choice for grilling in Florida, whereas for barbecuing the favored choices are charcoal and wood-fired grills. However, the trend of pellet grills slowly gaining popularity can also be seen in Florida. People who appreciate convenience are more likely to choose a gas or a pellet grill over charcoal and wood-fired grills, but many Floridians still want to keep the old barbecue traditions that have been passed through generations alive. (Purvis 2021.)

Grills are sold in various places in Florida. For example, department stores such as Target and Walmart and hardware stores such as The Home Depot and Lowe’s Home Improvement offer wide selections of grills. There are also specialty stores for grills and outdoor kitchens, as well as online shopping sites such as Amazon, where grills can be purchased. The average grillers in Florida commonly purchase their grills from the department and hardware stores, whereas the grilling enthusiasts and people with higher incomes tend to visit specialty stores

with more exclusive product ranges. Online shopping sites are not popular for purchasing grills in Florida. (Purvis 2021.)

To determine what kind of grills are on sale in the market, the grill selections of the four state-wide retailers; Target, Walmart, The Home Depot, and Lowe's Home Improvement, were analyzed based on their websites. In accordance with gas being the most favored fuel type in the US, all four example retailers have the most options in gas grills, when comparing four grill categories (gas, charcoal, pellet, and electric) available on their websites. The second biggest category is charcoal grills; the third is pellet grills, and the fourth is electric grills. (Appendix 1.)

The price ranges in each category vary considerably, depending on the features and quality of the grills. In general, both the most expensive options and the cheapest options were in the gas- and charcoal grill categories. The prices for gas, and charcoal grills start at c. \$25 (13.89€) for a very simple grill to a professional grill costing c. \$5400 (c. 4576€). The price range for pellet grills ranged from c. \$200 to \$600 (c. 169€- 508€), and for electric grills from c. \$70 to \$1800 (c. 59€- 1525€). (Appendix 1.)

When comparing the top sellers on each website the most popular brand for gas, charcoal, and electric grills was Weber, and for pellet grills, Pit Boss. Both of these are US based companies. (Appendix 1.)

4.2 Target market

In the US, men are almost twice as likely to be the main griller of the household compared to women (PR Newswire 2015). Therefore, the target customer is a male who is interested in more exclusive products and prefers visiting specialty stores over department and hardware stores. He has a medium or higher income, as Carelia Grills products are in the premium segment with their higher prices. He is looking for products that are new and special. He enjoys having a certain status that owning an exclusive and rare grill brings, to separate him from average grillers. He is a grilling enthusiast who values the experience of cooking with a solid fuel grill and is not only looking for a quick way to cook food. He also enjoys hosting and spending time socializing with friends and family around the grill.

The target customer lives in a single-family home or owns a vacation house, as they are likely to have a yard with a space for grilling. Especially new homeowners are potential customers, and a total of 294,120 single-family homes were sold in 2019 in Florida (Statista 2020).

4.3 Competition

Carelia Grills' competition consists of direct and indirect competitors. Indirect competitors are those that fulfill the same need as Carelia Grill. This includes for example any cooking appliance, firepits, or a restaurant.

Direct competitors are those that offer the same or a very similar product. Therefore, for example Kota Grills, and Kudu are Carelia Grills' direct competitors.

KUDU

Kudu is a U.S. based company, but the company's grill has been inspired by a South African tradition to gather around a fire to cook and spend time with friends and family. The Kudu grill (Picture 1) is a round, portable, solid fuel grill, with racks that can be elevated and adjusted to the user's needs. It has a similar look and features to Carelia Grills' products, except Kudu's design does not come with a hood. (Kudu Grills 2020a.) Kudu grills are manufactured in China (Kudu Grills 2020b).



Picture 1. The KUDU Grill (Kudu Grills 2020)

Kudu grills are available on the company's website, which does not list any authorized retailers. The price range of the Kudu grill varies from \$499 to \$1000 (c. 423€-848€), depending on the accessories included in the package. Several accessories are also available for purchase separately, and there are some differences in accessories between the Kudu grill and Carelia Grill. Kudu grill offers a Dutch Oven, a large pot for stew making that Carelia Grill does not offer. On the other hand, Carelia Grill has a blazing board in their selection. The shipping is free on orders over \$500 (c. 424€), and if the order is less than \$500, the shipping costs are \$79 (c. 70€). (Kudu Grills 2020a.)

Kudu's website is available only in English, and the content in their social media accounts are in English. Kudu has over 15,800 followers on Instagram, over 14,000 followers on Facebook, and a YouTube account with around 1,000 subscribers and over 269,800 views.

On the company's website, in addition to general information and the online shop, the company features how-to videos, a blog, and recipes for cooking inspiration. Kudu also offer an affiliate program on the website. It is free to sign up, and the affiliate earns a 10% commission of purchases made through the link. (Kudu Grills 2020a.)

Polar Grilli and Kota Grills

Polar Grilli is a grill product line of the Finnish manufacturing company Polar Metalli. The grills are manufactured in Keminmaa, Finland, and their main export markets are the Nordic countries, Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Central Europe in general and North America. (Polar Grilli 2020.)

Polar Grilli's domestic retailers include for example hardware stores such as K-Rauta, Kodin Terra, and webstores Netrauta.fi, and Taloon.com (Polar Grilli 2020). In North America, Polar Grilli's exclusive supplier is a Canadian company, Kota Grills, which sells Polar Grilli's grills through its website (Kota Grills 2020).

The grills are round, solid fuel grills, with adjustable racks, and a hood covering the grill. This makes them similar to Carelia Grill's products. Polar Grilli lists six different grill models on their website, whereas there are three different grill packages available on the Kota Grills website: Terrace Kota Grill, a hooded grill (Picture 2), Kota Hut Grill, suitable for installation inside e.g. a hut or a gazebo, and Backyard Kota Grill, an easily movable and lighter grill without a hood. There are also accessories available to be purchased separately, which again do not include a blazing board like Carelia Grill does. (Kota Grills 2020.)



Picture 2. The Terrace Kota Grill (Kota Grills 2020)

Depending on the model, the price range of the Kota Grills varies from \$1995 to \$2800 (c. 1691€-2373€), excluding shipping costs (Kota Grills 2020). As an example, the shipping costs of the Terrace Kota Grill to Florida are approximately \$460 (c. 390€) in addition to the sales price of \$2395 (c. 2030€) (Dawson 2020).

Polar Grilli's website is available in Finnish, English, and German, and the company has multiple social media accounts, with content both in Finnish and in English. Polar Grilli has 772 followers on Facebook, 293 on Instagram, and 7 subscribers on YouTube.

On YouTube, Polar Grilli collaborated with an account called Pitmaster X in 2020. The account is run by a Dutch social media influencer with over 449,000 subscribers making barbecue and grilling related content in English. From May 28, 2020 to June 11, 2020, Pitmaster X released three videos sponsored by Polar Grilli. In approximately six months the videos have gathered over 856,000 views, over 900 comments, and thousands of likes. (Pitmaster X 2020.)

Kota Grills' website and social media has content in English. They have an Instagram account with 153 followers and a Facebook account with 44 followers.

4.4 Opportunities for Carelia Grill in Florida market

A situation analysis of the company helps determine its competitiveness on the market. For the analysis, two internal and two external factors are considered, and they are further divided into positive and negative categories. Internal factors include the strengths and weaknesses of the company operating in the market and are factors the company has control over. External factors include opportunities and threats for the company in the market and are factors the company cannot control. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016, 79-80.) The factors of the situation analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Carelia Grill's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Florida grill market.

Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control over the product as a manufacturer - Focused on branding - Versatile product which stands out in the market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manufactured far from market - The market is not familiar with the kind of product. - SME's lack of economies of scale
External	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing number of new houses in the market area - Easy to differentiate from competitors - Favorable climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substitute products - Technological advancements in the market - Exchange rate volatility
	Positive	Negative

One of Carelia Grills strengths are their products. They are high quality, hand-made items, positioned in the premium segment. The grills are versatile as there are multiple solid fuel options to use; wood, briquettes, and coal, and contrary to a gas grill, the grill can be used as a fire pit as well. Carelia Grill manufactures the grills themselves which gives them more control over the process and quality, and therefore the ability to timely react to different demands and circumstances in the market.

Carelia Grill has focused on creating a strong brand. Strong branding is a strength when entering a new market. A captivating story built around the brand will help new buyers to connect with product.

The fact that similar grills to Carelia Grill's products do not widely pre-exist in the market (Purvis 2021) can offer Carelia Grill a competitive edge and help to position the company in the market, as well as differentiate it from the competitors. Retailers might be interested in a more exclusive product, which can help them also to differentiate from other retailers. Carelia Grill provides a different and fresh perspective on grilling as not just a piece of equipment for

cooking but as an activity. It offers a way to enjoy cooking, delicious food and spending time with friends and family.

On the other hand, as the brand and the product are not known in the market, the consumer needs to be convinced to change from a familiar brand and product to a new and unfamiliar one. Consumers tend to use more time and consideration in decision making when purchasing a new grill than when buying a frequently purchased convenience product for example. Grills are not generally renewed annually but are rather considered a more long-lasting investment.

There are many products that can substitute a solid fuel grill, such as other types of grills, ovens, and in general any appliance for cooking. The use of a solid fuel grill is dependent on consumers' ability to attain solid fuel. If they are not able to procure wood, briquettes, or coal easily, they are likely less interested in the product. In the future, the technological advancements in the grill industry and an increase in smart grills can rival the more traditional grills and further increase the competition.

Exporting products overseas from Finland to Florida requires extensive planning and resources in terms of logistics and costs. For an SME it is more challenging to benefit from economies of scale. Exchange rate volatility can also affect the profitability of exporting.

New housing is being built in increasing numbers in Florida, and new house owners are potential customers for Carelia Grill. In 2020, total new housing in Florida amounted to 122,143, and the number is expected to increase to 161,638 housing starts in 2023 (Institute for Economic Forecasting 2020). Also, the total population of Florida is expected to grow on an average of 1.5% yearly during the five-year period of 2019-2024 (Office of Economic and Demographic Research 2020).

The weather in Florida is often warm and sunny, and therefore the state has earned the nickname of the Sunshine State in the US. The climate in Florida provides suitable weather for grilling outdoors year-round. Due to the climate, Florida is also a popular destination for vacations, and according to a research done by Visit Florida, it had more than 130 million visitors in 2019 (Visit Florida 2020). Many of these visitors also stay in vacation homes.

During the Covid-19 pandemic people are spending more time at home and as a result have more time to cook at home. Grilling outdoors is a safe way to spend time and socialize with people during the pandemic and still follow social distancing guidelines. This can create a trend that will continue even after the pandemic has subsided.

5 MARKETING AND BRAND STRATEGY FOR CARELIA GRILL

Marketing and brand strategy defines how a company will position itself and its offerings in the new market, which customer segments it will target, and the level of standardizing or adapting its marketing elements (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 466). Carelia Grill's marketing strategy is developed with the help of a marketing mix, which consists of four marketing elements: product, price, distribution channel, and promotion.

5.1 Product

The product is the company's offering in the market. To create a successful marketing strategy, there are several decisions to be made regarding the product. These include deciding which product is most suitable for the desired market, how to brand and position the product to appeal the target market, and how to differentiate the product from competitors in that market.

Carelia Grill's products are unique in Florida, as similar grills do not currently exist on the market. This differentiates the grills from its competitors. They are targeted at grill enthusiasts who want to try something new and stand out from other grillers. The grills should be positioned as high quality and exclusive premium products at the higher end of the price range in the Florida grill market.

To support the positioning as an exclusive premium product, strong branding is essential. Branding should emphasize the uniqueness of the product to excite the target market. Carelia Grill has already focused on creating a strong brand for the company, which can be utilized also in the Florida market. Carelia Grills' branding consists of an origin story highlighting the Karelian traditions of gathering together around the grill, to cook with fire, surrounded by beautiful wilderness. The emphasis is on the whole experience and lifestyle rather than just cooking food to eat. The story behind the product as well as the emphasis on the experience of cooking help further differentiate the grill from competitors.

In the beginning, only one or two products should be introduced to test the new market. The chosen product should comply with the planned positioning in the market. Potential options for the first product to introduce to the Florida market are Carelia Grill's premium models:

- Carelia Grill 9K-80 High Premium
- Carelia Grill 9K-80 Low Premium
- Carelia Grill 9K-100 High Premium
- Carelia Grill 9K-100 Low Premium

All premium models have four color options and include same equipment but vary in size. The final decision of which product or products are chosen for the Florida market should be made after contacting possible retailers and considering their opinions on the best product for the market area.

5.2 Price

A suitable pricing strategy in international trade is a complex issue. If the price is too high it might decrease demand, whereas if it is too low it will decrease profit. The price of the product is affected by multiple factors, such as the company's profit expectations, costs of production, marketing, logistics and other value-chain activities, the nature of the market and the product's positioning in the said market, taxes, exchange rates, and a retailer's mark up. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 476.)

In the Florida market the price of the grill is comprised of multiple components. The base is the company's export price which includes for example production costs and the company's mark up. Logistic costs include for example packaging, containers, shipping, and tariffs. The corporate income tax to be paid by the company is 4.458% in the state of Florida. The average markup for specialty stores selling grills varies between 15-45% with the average being 30% (Hearth&Home 2018). Finally, the total sales tax paid by the consumer in Florida depends on the municipality the retailer is located in. It can be as high as 8%. The average sales tax in Florida is 7.05%.

5.3 Distribution channel

For a customer to be able to find and buy a product, there needs to be a distribution channel. In international trade, the most common choice for a company is to work with an independent intermediary (exporting), or to establish a subsidiary in the targeted foreign market (FDI). (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 484.)

In the beginning, for Carelia Grill, working with an independent intermediary is a good option when entering a new market, as it involves less risk and requires fewer financial resources compared to establishing a subsidiary. The chosen intermediary needs to be able to reach Carelia Grill's target customers and have the products easily available for them.

Carelia Grill's target customers in the Florida market are grill enthusiasts who look for exclusive premium products and are willing to be the front runners in trying out a new product. These types of products in the market are offered by specialty stores focusing on grilling and grill equipment, and these stores are often interested in carrying products that can differentiate them from competitors (Purvis 2021). Therefore, a grill specialty store is a suitable distribution channel for Carelia Grill.

There are several grill specialty stores located in Florida that can be potential retailers for Carelia Grill (Appendix 2). Two of these are introduced here. In addition, the Florida BBQ association can be contacted to help find potential retailers in the future.

Gentry's BBQ General Store

Gentry's BBQ General store is founded by Chris Gentry, who is an all-around grill enthusiast. He has prior to opening the store been a part of the competitive BBQ circuit, started a catering business, launched his own BBQ sauce and seasonings product line, and has done pop-events around central Florida.

The store offers various grills, smokers, and pizza ovens, as well as grilling accessories, and solid fuels (Charcoal, wood, pellets). It advertises having a wide

selection of grills not found in other retailers in Florida. In addition, the store carries Gentry's BBQ sauces and seasonings.

Gentry's BBQ General store is located in central Florida, in Orlando, which is easily accessed from around the state. The company has a website, as well as active social media presence both in Facebook and Instagram.

Grill & Provisions

Grill & Provisions is a specialty store offering charcoal, gas and pellets grills, and smokers, as well as outdoor kitchens in west-central Florida. In addition, the company sells fuel, accessories, sauces, and seasonings for grilling. The company also has a selection of craft beers and specialty meats available.

Promoting the outdoor cooking experience, gathering with friends and family, quality, and creativity in cooking, and building a lasting customer relationship is at the core of Grill & Provisions' business strategy. The company also has a membership program which offers members benefits such as discounts, giveaways, newsletters, and early access to events. The company has a website and active Facebook and Instagram accounts.

5.4 Promotion

Promotion, also known as marketing communication, is a set of activities that aim to inform current and potential customers about the product. It is a way of communication between the company and the customers, and the goal is to generate demand. Promotional activities are planned based on the characteristics of the market, who the target customers are, and resources available. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger 2017, 483.)

Social media

For B2C marketing, social media is one of the main promotional channels for Carelia Grill in the Florida market. Although Carelia Grill has pre-existing social media accounts, in order to effectively communicate to customers in Florida, and generally in the US, Carelia Grill needs to create new additional social media

accounts. These accounts are dedicated to solely English content, which is specifically directed to US customers.

Pre-existing promotional pictures and videos showing the grills in beautiful Finnish scenery can be used as well in the US accounts to emphasize the grills' exotic origin story and unique branding. In addition, new promotional pictures and videos showing the grill in scenery that is more familiar to the US customer will help relate and bring the product closer to the customer. The customer needs to be able to imagine the lifestyle in order to desire it.

Because the style of Carelia Grill is unknown and new to the Florida market, creating a series of how-to videos, where the different features of the grills and the lifestyle are showcased helps the customer to realize the product's potential and the opportunities it offers. Video of cooking traditional Finnish blazed salmon, an unconventional way of cooking for Floridians, is an effective way to gain attention, and it supports Carelia Grills' branding as something new and different.

To reach a wider audience, collaboration with a social media influencer, such as, Florida-based Darrin Wilson working under the name of Fire & Water Cooking, is a good option. Fire & Water Cooking has over 40,000 followers across different platforms, including its website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, as well as a blog and a podcast (Fire & Water Cooking 2020).

Other promotions

To increase visibility in the market and to reach potential customers, Carelia Grill should participate in events held in Florida. There are not grill industry specific trade fairs organized in Florida, but there are many barbecue competitions and sporting events that companies can collaborate with and participate in (Purvis 2021). Having a showcase in a barbecue competition and introducing the grills to the audience would be an effective way to reach the target customers, as these events are popular to grilling enthusiasts.

In addition to competitions and sporting events, Carelia Grill can become a member of Finnish American Chamber of Commerce (FACC) located in Florida. FACC aims to promote and encourage Finnish-American business and holds numerous events throughout the year in collaboration with their members. FACC

also has a close connection to the large Finnish community residing in Florida, which is a potential customer group for Carelia Grill.

For point of purchase advertising, in other words, advertising in a retail store, Carelia Grill can, for example, organize a showcase together with the retailer. The implementation of the showcase could include, for example, having a cooking demonstration using the Carelia Grill products and having a traditional Finnish food tasting such as offering blazed salmon and grilled sausages.

Personal selling is important to Carelia Grill for B2B sales, as well as for arranging collaborations with events. A Carelia Grill company representative needs to arrange meetings with possible retailers and event organizers, to promote the products, and to convince them to include the grill to their selection, or to collaborate with Carelia Grill for an event.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The grill market is growing in Florida and offers potential for new companies to successfully enter the market. The increasing number of new houses being built and the strong grilling culture in Florida provide a sufficient target market for Carelia Grill. Even though there is existing competition, Carelia Grill's advantage is its unique products that do not have an exact counterpart in the Florida grill market. The products are easy to differentiate from competitors to catch the interest of grilling enthusiasts.

The key factors for success in the Florida market for Carelia Grill are branding and effective marketing communication. To successfully reach the target customers and to make Carelia Grill a known brand in the new market, marketing activities, such as creating new market specific social media channels and content and cooperating with different events and retailers, need to be implemented.

During the implementation of this thesis, finding Florida specific data has proved to be a challenge. Before entering the market, it is recommended to do further research to determine the detailed costs of market entry and to make calculations of the needed product volume to make Carelia Grill profitable in the market. To get information on possible quantities, prices, and distribution terms, and to further discuss Carelia Grill's success potential in the Florida market, the company should contact retailers such as specialty stores focused on grilling and grill equipment.

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Analysis of grill selection on retailer's websites

		Gas	Charcoal	Pellet	Electric
Lowe's	Number of products	190	156	59	37
	Best seller brands	Char-Broil, Weber	Char-Broil, Weber, Dyna-Glo	Pit Boss	Weber, Americana
	Price range	\$100-\$3600	\$35-\$3270	\$200-\$1400	\$70-\$320
Home Depot	Number of products	261	116	70	44
	Best seller brands	Weber, Royal Gourmet	Weber, Masterbuilt	Traeger, Life Smart	Weber, Kenyon
	Price range	\$120-\$5400	\$30-\$1030	\$250-\$1600	\$70-\$1800
Target	Number of products	90	87	10	5
	Best seller brands	Coleman, Char-Broil	Weber, Kingsford	Pit Boss, Green Mountain Grills	Char- Broil, Weber
	Price range	\$50-\$2800	\$25-\$1400	\$350-\$1200	\$150-\$320
Walmart	Number of products	880	96	117	25
	Best seller brands	Weber, Royal Gourmet	Weber, Dyna-Glo	Pit Boss, Cuisinart	Weber, George Foreman
	Price range	\$35-\$3600	\$25-\$560	\$25-\$560	\$60-\$600

Contact information for potential retailers**Gentry's BBQ General Store**

Address: 1215 N. Orange Ave.
Orlando, FL 32804

Phone: 1-407-516-8229

Email: info@gentrysbbq.com

Website:

<https://www.gentrysbbq.com/pages/about>

Pinecraft Barbecue

Address: 3303 Bahia Vista St,
Sarasota, FL 34239

Phone: 1-941-217-6995

Website:

<https://pinecraftbarbecue.com/>

The BBQ Depot

Address: 5881 Pembroke Road
Hollywood, FL 33023

Phone: 1-877-983-0451

Website:

<https://www.thebbqdepot.com/bbq-grills/charcoal/freestanding/>

Jupiter Grill Center

Address: 2562 West Indiantown
Road,

Jupiter, FL 33458

Phone: 1-561-972 - 4876

Website:

<https://www.jupitergrillcenter.com/>

Fireplace & BBQ Emporium

Address: 2539 Palm Bay Road NE
#6,

Palm Bay, FL 32905

Phone: 1-321-373-2955

Email:

tracy@fireplacebbqemporium.com

Website:

<https://fireplacebbqemporium.com/services/custom-fire-pits/>

Grill & Provisions

Address: 3501 N. Armenia Ave,
Tampa, FL 33607

Phone: 1-813-879-4647

Email: info@tampagrillpro.com

Website:

<https://www.grillandprovisions.com/>