

# We don't need a T-shirt to tell us it's hot — but a lot of folks want one

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Published 26 August 2011 09:48 PM



Don't want to sound like a broken record, but the Summer of 2011 isn't just one for Big D's history books.

It's found its place on some T-shirts, too.

Thanks to the "Margarita Man" — Texas icon Mariano Martinez — I've got three lime-green, 100 percent cotton artifacts on my desk to prove it.

Reprising a slogan he used on T-shirts in 1980 when Dallas set a record with 42 straight days of triple-digit temperatures and 69 in all, Martinez ordered 500 shirts that read: "I Survived the 2011 Dallas Heat Wave On ... Mariano's Frozen Margaritas."

I'd rather have one of his famous margaritas than a T-shirt, but that's another story.

It's time to eat a little crow — cold crow, at that.

Two weeks ago, when Dallas' string of 100-degree days was snapped at 40 in a row, I lamented that, alas, we faint sun slaves wouldn't get to sport T-shirts proclaiming "I Survived Big D's 2011 Record Heat Wave."

And the very next day, in my own newspaper, the marketing gurus at *The Dallas Morning News* ran an ad trumpeting a fresh batch of hot-off-the-presses T-shirts.

"Get 'em while they're hot!" the ad proclaimed, pitching the \$20 to \$23 T-shirts celebrating the end of the streak: "I Used to Be Hot. I Survived the DFW Summer of 2011."

Thanks for the heads-up, guys.

Who could foresee a market for a collarless shirt boasting a second-place finish in the record books?

Martinez's original supply of shirts went fast.

"We just ordered 1,000 more," Martinez said in a telephone interview from Pebble Beach, Calif., where he owns a vacation home. The new batch should arrive at his restaurants on Wednesday.

Martinez, a Highland Park resident recently featured on ABC's *Nightline*, said he just decided to have as much fun as he could with the heat since it has been a hot topic at his restaurants and all around town.

"Had we broken the record, I would've sold them for \$20.11," he said. "We didn't, so they're just \$11."

Martinez, a high school dropout who invented the frozen margarita machine in 1971, said the summer of '80 was worse on him, and his restaurant, because the economy was in dire straits and the air conditioning constantly was quitting on him.

But the T-shirts he sold back then were a breath of fresh air.

"They went worldwide," he said, noting that "a bunch of FBI guys who used to hang out" in his restaurant even took a batch of the shirts to England with them on a rugby trip.

Martinez said most people like to occasionally poke fun at themselves and the circumstances in which they find themselves, and T-shirts are a good vehicle to do that.

Of course, Martinez, 67, can afford to escape the heat these days.

“I’ve got the fireplace going right now,” he said on Friday, with temperatures in the 60s along the California coastline. “I’m putting on a sweater as we speak.”

Doesn’t seem fair, does it?

Martinez gets a vacation home in Pebble Beach, and all I get is a lousy T-shirt.