



Thor kitchens hpg34 pellet grill

My experience as a pellet grill repairman.

Repairing the Thor kitchens hpg34 pellet grill.

I actually really like the pellet grill. For instance, a 10 pound bag of chicken leg quarters takes 3 hours from turn on to excellently done and tasting leg quarters. The grill is a cross between a stainless steel gas or pellet grill and the traditional black pellet grills. Plus it costs about 1/3 the price of the stainless types and ~1/2 the traditional type pellet grills.

FWIW pellet grills use compressed wood formed into pellets about 1/8" in diameter and 1/4" long. You load a hopper, start it up and an auger moves the pellets to the centrally loaded fire box. During ignition a rod gets hot (called the hot rod) which heats up the pellets and a combustion fan pumps air through to start and maintain the combustion of the pellets. After that the speed of the auger is varied to control the grill temperature from ~180-500 F per whatever you set the controller to. There is also a meat temperature probe to display the meat's internal temperature and a bell type sound to let you know when a preset meat temperature was reached. Functionally it's kinda a cross between a bbq grill and oven.

I was having problems with the grill shutting down and finally just not igniting. My web research revealed three things that could cause no ignition. First, the auger could be jammed from such things as using wet pellets. Second, the combustion fan could be not working. And finally the hot rod could have failed.

During my testing I discovered that the pellets were being pumped to the fire box, the combustion fan was working but the pellets would not ignite. That and with no heat felt in the fire box, indicated to me that the hot rod had failed.

On line you tubes showed (with a normal grill) you remove the pellets, remove the fire box to remove the hot rod, and remove the hopper (with 4 screws) to get access to the wiring/controller and importantly the other end of the wires to the hot rod.

So I removed the pellets which required removing a top grate and scooping them out.

I then decided to place the screws I removed in envelopes labeled where they came from.

I then unscrewed the two screws on the controller and heard nuts and washers fall into the hopper from one side and the other side did not unscrew completely. The idea was to slide the controller into the hopper then to remove the hopper.

I then started removing the fire box, taking out all the racks, drip pans, the fire distributor above the fire box. The 4 screws to the fire box were nicely seized up so I found my impact screwdriver and with that and a hammer was able to remove the screws. (impact screwdriver is about \$10 or so and obviously well worth it.) And got the hot rod loose. All just like the you tubes.

Removing the hopper was another story. I remove screws on the top frame, a gusset, the stainless ledge on front, inside the grill to the hopper, but still not magical 4 screws to remove the hopper. So now I'm up to ½ dozen envelopes with screws. Plus have found a nut, washer, and lock washer on the ground from the controller bolt.

I then notice there is a bottom plate held in the 6 screws. Some of which are tight.

For those of you who don't know me I have spinal stenosis with a fused lumbar, one hip bone on bone, the other inflamed and almost. I have constant pain in my back, hips and the front of both legs. So it takes me 5 minutes or so to get on the ground, a couple of minutes to roll over, and minutes more to get back up.

None the less, I get on the concrete and start removing the 6 screws. Two were tight so I get up, get the impact screwdriver and hammer, hammer on a screw upside down and after a few minutes the screw loosens. Then plate drops down and I have access to the wiring and controllers. Including the hot rod wires.

So I disconnect the connector, tie a twine to it (so I can pull it back), get up, and pull the hot rod and wires out through the firebox.

So I sit down on the porch, have a coke, pull out my free with purchase multi meter and measure the resistance of the hot rod. It was 75 ohms just like the you tubes said it should be. I then look at the connector. For those not familiar connectors have male (jacks) pins and female (sockets). Those are connected to wires and then pushed into a plastic holder the clicks them in place. I notice that one

female socket in the connector was only half way in. So I push it in and it clicks. Certainly it couldn't be that the factory had not pushed it in and it was just barely making contact at the ends not being totally pushed around the jack? No please say it wasn't that 'easy'. LOL

So I tied the wires back on the push twine and thread them through the first box back into the hopper. Sure enough the connector now is hard to push in and makes total contact with the other connector. So I add pellets, plug it in and start it up. The auger is working, the fan is working, AND THE HOT ROD IS NOW HEATING UP. And the pellets start smoking and ignite just as they should.

This entire process plus the final assembly takes about 8 hours. Actually I still have a few screws and the controller bolt to replace. LOL

After all that work all I have to do was remove the 6 bottom screws, measure the resistance of the hot rod, push the female pin into the connector, reconnect, and replace the bottom. Everything else was unnecessary.

Just though you might enjoy my trials as a pellet hopper repairman. LOL

I'm now at my desk at work waiting for my skinned from the concrete forearm, elbow to heal up.

If you in the local area let me know if you want some leg quarters sometime.

Robert (Beaslbob) Beasley

beaslbob@aol.com