



February 2020

FISHTALES™

A Samuels Seafood Magazine

HAWAIIAN™ KANPACHI

In this Issue:

Hawaiian Kanpachi - An Ocean Raised "Wonder Fish"

In The News:

A Special Look at the Eater Awards

In the Spotlight:

Maplewood III - A Literal Family Tree

In the Current:

We're Glad for Shad

Spotlight

Maplewood III

Vineland, NJ

Strong Roots and Strong Branches

by: Jessica Jewel Tyler



The warm and charming Maplewood locations are far from a chain restaurant and more like a "tree" restaurant. Named after the large Maplewood tree that overlooked the first location long ago, the Maplewood restaurants have branched out into four separate family owned and operated locations in New Jersey. Although the apple doesn't fall far from the original tree, each location is run by a different family member and is just a little bit different in a special way. Esposito's Maplewood III in Vineland, New Jersey for instance, is known for its seafood which comprises over 50% of the menu!

In 1945, the first Maplewood location was born in Hammonton, NJ and nearly twenty years later restaurateur Joe Italiano left the restaurant in the hands of his son, Joe Italiano Jr., and his son in law, Howard Esposito. They went on to open Maplewood II in Mays Landing and Maplewood III in Vineland, NJ. Howard fell in love with Maplewood III and decided to focus his attention on this location while the rest of the family continued to run the others.

Maplewood III was different. Because of the residential area it's located in, the business required a more creative and varied menu with many new daily specials. Vineland is a close-knit community, not a destination like the other locations, so customers may dine there as often as 2 or 3 times a week. This forces the restaurant to constantly innovate. There was also a great opportunity to fill the local demand for seafood. This was quite demanding, but allowed them to use more culinary artistry and skill. For the Esposito family, it was a thrilling opportunity and a deeply gratifying challenge.

After nearly 40 years of success and accolades, Howard's son, Ken Esposito, is now leading the team. Ken started out as a dishwasher at the age of sixteen and learned to cook with his parents during his summers. While growing up, Ken worked his way through every aspect of the restaurant until he became the head chef, kitchen manager, dining room manager, and now owner. Because of this history, there is a lot of pride behind the Maplewood III's name. Ken, who has the original menu hanging in his office, maintains the same quality, philosophy,

and passion that brought Maplewood III such a big audience in 1983.

The other ingredient that keeps customers coming back is the innovation. In line with the newest trends, Maplewood III has introduced Oysters both raw and cooked like Fried Oysters and Oysters Casino. Seafood in general has been a huge draw to Maplewood III. They have even been awarded in The Best Seafood and Best Italian categories of the Local Daily Journal.

This comes after years of constantly striving to provide what their customers want. The daily specials are like a playground for Ken and Head Chef, Andrea Perez, to develop new ideas that will satisfy the town's ever-changing tastes. Currently, they are featuring Shrimp & Lobster Francaise prepared with a white wine lemon sauce and pan seared Hybrid Striped Bass topped with a roasted corn and chickpea relish. The delightful mix of flaky, meaty flesh paired with the rich yet fresh and delicate taste of this unique fish is faring well to impress! Ken says his guests rely on seafood to make their dining out experiences special every time and he most looks forward to the moments his guests try something new and make a memory at Maplewood.

Maplewood III is an excellent example of how to offer guests unique dishes while still holding true to the classics like Shrimp Scampi and Crab Gravy. In doing so, the Esposito family pays great homage to all Maplewood restaurants but more importantly to their own family tree. Ken is even preparing the next generation of Maplewood restaurateurs. His wife, Janet, and son, Nicholas, work front of house on the weekends and Nicholas will be ready to start back of the house this summer!

When you start with great roots, you are bound to flourish. That's why Maplewood III has made such an impact on Vineland. Full of family and employees with 15 - 30 years of Maplewood knowledge and experience, the dedication is just stronger. Even Howard Esposito, who has long retired, still watches over the restaurant every chance he gets as a volunteer "mystery diner."

Employee of the Month



Since starting with the marketing team, Joe Mintzer has always taken the bull by the horns. This enthusiasm has allowed him to quickly become a true fishmonger.

In just a short time, Jovan Johnson has become an integral member of the inventory team. He has proven that he can do whatever it takes to get the ball rolling.

For the past six years, George Smith has been a dedicated driver. He never stops surprising us and makes sure things don't slip through the cracks.

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Hawaiian Kanpachi: An Open Ocean of Possibilities

By: Jessica Jewel Tyler



While it may still be winter, we're serving up the hottest fish in seafood on our plates. From the pristine, tropical open ocean surrounding the Aloha State, comes the distinctly delicious Hawaiian Kanpachi. A premier member of the Amberjack family, Hawaiian Kanpachi has been served at America's top restaurants, featured at several James Beard Foundation Dinners around the country, and showcased annually at the Hawaiian Food & Wine Festival. But what makes it so special? According to Fortune Magazine, for taste, versatility, and sustainability Hawaiian Kanpachi is simply a "wonder fish."

With a delicate mouthfeel and firm texture carrying its rich, nutty flavor and clean finish, Kanpachi will take your tastebuds on a "Hawaiian rollercoaster ride." This naturally fatty fish is an unsurpassed option for raw plates and is even considered a delicacy in Japan. In addition to the pleasant texture and unique sweet and savory flavor, the refreshing aftertaste will always leave your guests wanting more.

While raw preparations will melt in your mouth like butter, when cooked, this tantalizing and tender fish really holds up on the grill. And because of the rich oil content, it sautés beautifully with a succulent, fine flake and delicious, crispy skin. For this reason and many more, Hawaiian Kanpachi has become a standout in the market with prized flavor from sushi to sizzle.

The versatile Hawaiian Kanpachi is also a sustainable American fish with amazing presentation. As the only Kanpachi Open Ocean

Aquaculture operation in U.S.A, Blue Ocean Mariculture produces fish with unparalleled freshness, flavor, and quality. In addition, because it's raised in the deep blue waters farther away from the Hawaiian Kona Coast, and uses the most sustainable production methods, Hawaiian Kanpachi has been rated a "Good Alternative" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program.

Blue Ocean's facility is fully integrated to mimic and optimize the natural life cycle of the fish from hatch to harvest and each step of the process is carefully monitored and controlled. The fish are hatched from native, locally and sustainably caught brood fish. Then juvenile fish from the hatchery are transferred to offshore ocean pens where they are raised on only the best feed from other certified sustainable fisheries. Fully submerged in the powerful currents of the vast, open ocean, the net pens minimize the impact on water quality and maximize the health of the fish. Hawaiian Kanpachi also benefit from very low stocking densities which promote less stress among the stock.

Additionally, Hawaii's warm, tropical waters promote faster growth; the fish grow to full maturity in 18 months, half the time of some other species. When Hawaiian Kanpachi reach the ideal size, they are harvested to order and then rapidly chilled to ensure the freshest product. If you're looking for an easy environmental choice, that's also versatile and delicious, say Aloha to Hawaiian Kanpachi, now on special for the month of February. Hawaiian Kanpachi is available in 5-7lb whole fish and Collar on or off Fillets. Talk to your Samuels Agent for more information.



In The News...

By Jessica Jewel Tyler

The Eater Awards and the Chefs Who Impact Food Culture



For a look into the future of the food industry, there's no better place than the Eater Awards. This is an extraordinary honor because

Eater truly recognizes and celebrates the impact chefs make to the city's food culture and takes a special look at their brilliantly executed dishes, beautifully designed dining spaces, and the chefs with the biggest, brightest futures in the industry. We want to congratulate all three winners from Philadelphia; My-Le Vuong and Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon at Kalaya, Adam Diltz at Elwood, and Jean-Georges Vongerichten with Jean-Georges Philadelphia at the Four Seasons.

Kalaya has garnered attention for capturing bold, and genuinely authentic Thai flavors that so few get to experience on this side of

the world. With dishes like perfectly spiced hot and sour soup overflowing with Prawns, Barramundi, and mushrooms, it's no wonder Kalaya is our 2019 Eater Restaurant of the Year. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Chef Adam from Elwood wins Chef of the Year for highlighting local flavors in ways we might have long forgotten. With classic Pennsylvania plates like expertly prepared Snapper Soup and Bluefish, Elwood brings us back to our roots. Last but not least, Jean-Georges Philadelphia wins for Best Design. The stunning location, on the top floor of the Four Seasons Hotel, opened just last year and is the first Philadelphia concept for this Michelin Award winning chef. We can't wait to see what will happen next for Philly's trailblazers.

We also want to congratulate an extraordinary restaurant for winning the Eater Las Vegas Restaurant of the Year! After traveling and participating in fishing tours, Chef Gina Marinelli has returned to Vegas with a deeply inspired coastal Italian concept, La Strega. Thanks to all our talented customers who everyday share their passions with us on a plate.

Shad: More than a Fad, An American Hero

By Jessica Jewel Tyler



The only cuisine more American (and perhaps more delicious) than apple pie, is of course the American Shad. This fish is a member of the Herring family but not closely related to any other species of Herring (or other even other Shad species) in North America. For this reason, American Shad proudly brandishes "The Land of the Brave" in its species name. But that's not the only reason it's considered all American.

American Shad was discovered in the Delaware River by our forefathers and even proclaimed to be George Washington's favorite fish. And most interestingly, during the Revolutionary War, when Washington's troops faced starvation while staying in Valley Forge, the migration of the American Shad is what changed their fate. Even before General Washington discovered this exceptional fish, Native Americans were cooking the abundant, local Shad on wooden planks. It's also how the Philadelphia neighborhood "Fishtown" got its name.

The wild, anadromous Shad spend most of their lives in the open sea, but as spring nears they make their way into freshwater to spawn. It's an exciting time for East Coast seafood lovers because, the Shad spring migration that saved our troops is here once again. This is widely celebrated in restaurants, communities, and even aptly named "Shadfests" (Shad Festivals). Though we truly honor this historic fish, the most amazing appeal is Shad's incredibly sweet, rich, and robust flavor along with its tender texture.

Chefs, Gastronomes, and Shad newbies alike get excited to diversify their menus, and palettes, this time of year. Especially because this unique fish is flavorful enough without many sauces, herbs, or spices but adaptable enough to pair well with even the boldest flavor profiles. Traditionally, it's boiled, filleted, pan-fried, or baked and sprinkled with just a little vinegar. Another great way to make Shad is to flake out the meat after poaching or smoking to enjoy a one-of-a-kind salad or appetizer. This also offers so much versatility for flavorful soups, fritters, or anything you can imagine.

Another great option Shad offers is a true American delicacy, Shad Roe. The bright red pair of egg sacs that each female Shad produces, cooks to a silvery beige with impeccable, delicate flavor. Although Shad Roe is indeed fish eggs, the taste differs vastly from traditional Caviar. Shad Roe is mild and nutty with a soft succulent texture that beautifully absorbs the flavor profile of any dish.

Our favorite Shad Roe preparations are when it's poached with creamy Plugra Butter or sautéed with the rich smoky flavor of Kurobuta Bacon. Additionally, Shad Roe works well when treated like liver and pan fried with onion. The possibilities are endless. Our chefs love to grill it and even cure it with a simple salt and sugar mixture. Adding thyme, fennel, celery seed, or other aromatics really take it to the next level.

When it comes to dining, Shad and Shad Roe have been in the shadows for far too long. This is largely due to the elaborate Y-shaped skeleton that makes the tender flesh difficult to get to. Because of the arduous journey American Shad make during their lifetime, this support system contains an estimate of hundreds to over a thousand bones, but the flavor is truly worth it and there's no bones about that. That's why master fishmongers study for years to expertly debone this fish. Over the years, this practice is becoming somewhat of a lost art. But luckily at Samuels, we offer a beautiful selection of wild caught, hand cut and deboned American Shad Fillets and exquisite Shad Roe Sets that are ready for all your recipes.

Caught up and down the East Coast and most prominently in Georgia, this is a local fish that satisfies. The unique and alluring flavor of American Shad give diners something to look forward to each spring and something to dream about during the rest of the year. It's time for Shad to come out of the shadows. It's time to rediscover our ancestors' favorite fish. Stay in touch with your Samuels Agent for the latest availability of American Shad.

Photo by: Jessica Jewel Tyler



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Chase the Winter Blues Away

By Chef Anne Coll

February can be a rough month for many...it might be the shortest month of the year but the cold dark days of February can be brutal. One way to drive out the doldrums is by enjoying Hawaiian Kanpachi. This delicious fish is so versatile and clean tasting it is sure to brighten one's palate, menu, and table. Whether you are serving it raw or cooked, Kanpachi steals the show with its buttery sweet tasting flesh. Hawaiian Kanpachi is also a great addition to any tasting, Valentine's, or even Banquet menu.

Hawaiian Kanpachi is out of this world when served raw. Whether you are preparing sushi, sashimi, crudo, etc., Hawaiian Kanpachi is a delicious fish for raw applications. Sliced thinly and prepared simply with Santa Ines Extra Virgin Olive Oil, lemon, and sea salt is a wonderful way to enjoy the sweet clean flavors of Hawaiian Kanpachi. I really enjoy preparing Kanpachi as a crudo. It pairs wonderfully with tropical flavors and citrus. These flavor profiles really make it pop. The brightness of the citrus enhances the texture of this tender fish.

Finger limes also give a great bite appeal when placed on top of the fish. Sliced radishes and chilis enhance the Kanpachi and give the crudo more texture and heat. Draped over a shrimp cracker, the Kanpachi crudo is complete with sweet, sour, and salty components that really make the Kanpachi Crudo sing.

Another fun way to spice up the Kanpachi is with grilled Kanpachi Collars. These Kanpachi Collars are superb grilled over an open flame. (Especially if the Collars are grilled on a charcoal or wood burning grill.) Simply marinate the Collars in olive oil, lemon zest

and juice, garlic and fresh thyme. Grill until the Collars are cooked through with a little char on the outside of the skin. If you want to be more daring, baste the Collars in a gingery BBQ sauce or better yet, a spicy Korean chili sauce. These Kanpachi Collars make a great starter or a fun bar food paired with an IPA.

The versatility of Hawaiian Kanpachi is evident when doing a cooked application of the fillet. This delicate fish pairs with almost any flavor profile. It is wonderful grilled, roasted, seared, poached, and steamed. Hawaiian Kanpachi can stand up to robust flavors or be paired with very delicate flavors.

During the winter months, I enjoy pairing fish with more of a broth/ brodo. It might be a delicate Thai curry broth or a shellfish nage. A simple dashi broth is a wonderful accompaniment to a roasted Kanpachi. It's a little smoky, salty, and sweet, which enhances the Kanpachi's buttery flavor. Roasted Royal Trumpet Mushrooms add a complex earthiness to the dish and gingery shanghai bok choy elevates the Kanpachi even more.

Hawaiian Kanpachi is a great menu addition to any table. Because its clean taste pairs well with many different types of cuisines and flavor profiles, Hawaiian Kanpachi can be prepared many different ways to please your guests. It is wonderful raw and cooked and the Collars add another element of fun to Kanpachi. It is a great menu addition for a first course or as the center of the plate. Hawaiian Kanpachi will be sure to please even the fussiest of eaters! Brighten up the February blues with Hawaiian Kanpachi.

Photo by: Paul Stamegna



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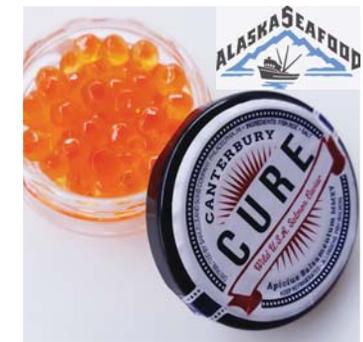
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