



June 2020

FISHTALES

A Samuels Seafood Magazine



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**Spot
light**

The Victor Cafe

Music Lovers Rendezvous



In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Greg DiStefano, third-generation owner of Victor Café, recently re-opened for take-out and delivery business. It's a first for his century-plus old South Philadelphia landmark, which is perhaps best known as the fictional Adrian's Restaurant from the "Rocky" franchise.

"It's the first time in a hundred years that we're doing this," DiStefano said. "You have to adapt to stay viable. It's the only way to survive."

DiStefano's pivot to lessen the coronavirus' economic toll, mirrors the adapt-to-survive tactics his grandfather and generations between them have repeatedly employed to keep the business solvent.

Back in 1918, when his grandfather, John, first opened his Gramophone shop – hence the 'Music Lovers' Rendezvous' designation – Philadelphia was in the grips of another deadly global pandemic, the Spanish Flu. By years' end, it would claim the lives of more than 16,000 of the city's residents, and millions more around the world.

Sheer perseverance, top-notch hospitality and a passion for music – not to mention precautionary measures to slow the spread of Spanish Flu – Victor Café survived the worst infectious disease outbreak since Black Death swept Europe in the 1300s. That same nimbleness allowed Victor Café to withstand many of tests time would dole out in the decades following. Two world wars, multiple economic downturns and a dwindling demand for opera recordings among them.

First came the value-added espresso and spumoni served to the music-lovers who visited the shop in its earliest days in search of new opera records. During the Great Depression, the menu was expanded to include sandwiches and other modestly priced small plates, which customers could enjoy while listening to the shop's records for free. Following Prohibition's repeal, yet another opportunity presented itself, a liquor license. With that came a new focus that would ultimately redefine the business forever.

To meet his clientele's changing needs, he shifted from selling records and record players to serving a more expanded menu of Italian-American fare. The music itself went from wax pressings to real life performances by patrons and visiting opera stars right there in the dining room. To this day during dinner service, singers perform every 15 to 20 minutes, filling the dining room with their tenor and mezzo-soprano voices. Since the 70s, the café's talented staff handles the nightly performances.

Now more than a century later, and in the midst of another global health crisis, stay-at-home orders, a bottomed-out economy and a nebulous at best plan to return to some sense of normalcy has restaurant-goers skittish about risking infection and spending money as economic uncertainties loom. Like his grandfather, who transformed a record store into a restaurant, DiStefano is adapting to meet the challenges of the day.

"It's not exactly rocket science," he said. "Obviously we had to make changes in order for it to work."

Chief among those changes were tweaks to Victor Café's menu to make the meals better suited for a to-go format, and a little easier on the wallet.

"We're focusing on neighborhood favorites," Distefano explained. "And we have to be more competitive with prices."

Like dine-in service, sumptuous dishes ordinarily served tableside like porcini mushroom and gorgonzola stuffed ravioli and whole fish presentations are currently on hold. Now satisfyingly simpler comforts like chicken parmesan, linguine and clams and penne puttanesca top the bill of fare. He also offers a multicourse banquet option, which was a big hit for Mother's Day. He expects a repeat for graduation and Father's Day celebrations in the coming weeks.

"It's an unbelievable deal for a family," DiStefano said. "You get three courses and dessert, and it all works out to about \$25 per person."

As for the music? That too was modified. Staying true to that Music Lovers' Rendezvous epithet, he devised a workaround for the social distancing guidelines that keep his dining room empty. As customers line up outside – six feet apart, obviously – to pick up their orders every Thursday through Sunday evening, DiStefano throws open the café's second story windows at 6:00 pm sharp so his staff can perform for patrons below. Each night, one singer performs two arias, lasting about 15 minutes each.

"Who knows what the restaurant business will look like once we come out of this thing," DiStefano said. "But until we do, we're going to keep doing what we do best, have some fun and learn a thing or two as we go."

To place an order with Victor Café, please visit www.victorcafe.com

Employee's of the Month



Orlando Santiago, Nick Passio and Ron Eels

Samuels has the best drivers in the food industry and they are the true heroes during these uncertain times. While all of our amazing drivers excelled during April, there were three that really shined. Congratulations to Ron Eels, Nick Passio and Orlando Santiago on earning employees of the month. These drivers fearlessly deliver product to our customers no matter where the location. They also possess professionalism and communication skills that make them appreciated by the sales team and customers alike. All three men are highly dedicated team players that always get the job done well.

FISH TALES Magazine

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Jail Island Salmon – A Sea of Grilling Possibilities



Warm weather means time for grilling! If you're looking for fresh Atlantic Salmon in time for the season, there's no need to look very far. Delivered fresh from the cold, clean waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Jail Island Salmon gives even more reason to enjoy healthy and easy grilled dishes for a fresh, light taste of summer – sold exclusively by Samuels Seafood.

Considered some of the finest quality Atlantic Salmon in North America due to its unique breeding ground, Jail Island Salmon is responsibly harvested to preserve a healthy marine habitat for the future. With a delicate flavor and a satisfying medium-firm texture, chefs and consumers alike count on Jail Island Salmon for a superior food handling experience and exceptional fresh taste – every time! Grilling or barbecuing can be embraced as the shining light of summertime normalcy from the comfort of home, more so now than ever during these uncertain times. The tradition and ease of the grill is enough to look forward to in the warmer months – it's no surprise 75% of North Americans own an outdoor grill or smoker.* When it comes to grilling Jail Island Atlantic Salmon in a restaurant, or at home, there is no better way to enjoy fresh summer meals that

are quick and easy to prepare. Maybe it's the beautiful color. Or maybe it's the subtle infusion of delicious smoke made in minutes. Either way, there is no doubt that grilling is an ideal cooking method for simply delicious Atlantic Salmon brought to you by Jail Island.

If we haven't convinced you yet, there is a sea of grilling opportunities for enjoying Salmon. Our favorite pairings for a burst of summer flavor include sweet chili-lime, lemon butter, orange rosemary, citrus glaze, and honey barbecue glaze for a fine balance of sweet and smoky. Simple flavor pairings lend themselves well to grilling for bringing out the fresh, delicate flavor our Salmon has to offer. As a firmer fish, Salmon is cooked directly on an oiled grill, or with a pre-soaked cedar plank for added flavor. Generally, it will take less than 20 minutes on the grill (depending on variants such as size, cooking appliance and temperature) - making summer grilling with Jail Island Salmon a breeze.

Beyond the incredible health benefits, authentic taste, and ease of preparation, you can feel good about grilling Jail Island for your guests and family because it's the fish that gives back. For every pound of Jail Island salmon sold, Samuels Seafood will donate a portion of the proceeds from each sale to the Fundy Salmon Recovery Project. The goal of the project is to increase the number of spawning Atlantic Salmon in the inner Bay of Fundy, currently an endangered species. The project has already seen record breaking numbers of wild Atlantic Salmon returns thanks to the World's First Wild Salmon Marine Conservation Farm on Grand Manan Island in New Brunswick, Canada. Samuels is proud to support an initiative that is working to enhance and sustain such an important ecosystem and with your help, they will continue to make a positive impact to the cause.

Warm weather doesn't last forever, and unfortunately, neither does grilling season. Make the most of it and feel good about loading up your grill with Jail Island Atlantic Salmon - a flavorful taste of summer without the fuss (or guilt!).

**"Barbecue Lifestyle, Usage & Attitude" Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA)*

In The News...

James Beard Awards Honors the Industry's Best



Though its annual awards ceremony is currently postponed, tentatively until September due to COVID-19, the James Beard Foundation is still recognizing the hard work and tremendous talent of the hospitality industry's brightest and best. While its annual "Oscars of the Food World" is on hold, the foundation has refocused efforts in recent months to help the hurting industry through work with the Independent Restaurant Coalition, as well as its own

James Beard Foundation Food and Beverage Industry Relief Fund. Still, to honor those restaurants and chefs that already made it through the nominating process, on what would have been the 30th anniversary of the James Beard Awards on May 4, this year's finalists were announced.

In the months ahead, should plans go accordingly, chef and restaurant winners will be announced and celebrated at the rescheduled gala. While that ceremony awaits, Samuels Seafood is proud to pay tribute now to all the immensely loyal customers recognized by the Beard Foundation this year. They include Kalaya Thai Kitchen for Best New Restaurant; Marc Vetri (Vetri Cucina) for Outstanding Chef; Nicholas Elmi (Laurel), Rich Landau (Vedge), Christina Martinez (South Philly Barabacoa), and Amy Brandwein (Centrolina) for Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic; Alex Stupak (Empellon) Best Chef: NY. Congratulations to you and your staffs. It is truly both a privilege and a pleasure to serve such amazing customers and businesses. Here's hoping that sometime soon we can celebrate with you.

Samuels: More Than Just Seafood



Kurobuta - Berkshire Pork, French Rack

Per the old adage, human beings cannot live on bread alone. The jury is still out on whether the same holds true for seafood, thankfully. Either way, Samuels continues to expand the scope of quality products that fall outside the boundaries of the sea kingdom.

Some of these non-seafaring items, like fresh lemons, horseradish and crab seasoning, are naturally suited to play well with seafood. As such, they have been available at Samuels from day one. Just the same, as sushi has continued its skyward trajectory over the past 30 years, everything from sushi rice and nori to kaiware and fresh wasabi root have earned space on our warehouse's shelves. Now our deep list of sushi ephemera includes chopsticks, soy sauce, eel sauce, pickled burdock root and literally, dozens of additional items.

Along with products that pair perfectly with seafood and sushi, some items here at Samuels are stocked simply because they are essential to the restaurant business. Things like eggs – organic Jidori, traditional farm fresh and even those laid by quails are available every day – as well as butter and our own exclusive Santa Ines Extra Virgin Olive Oil are crucial to the professional kitchen and an added value when tacked onto a seafood order. While many of these items are no-brainers, Samuels' continued diversification of offerings means you will find even more products that you may not expect from a seafood company.



Pasture Raised Lamb

One early breakout star from the landlubber world was a full line of local, grass-fed lamb. Pasture raised and lovingly cared for in Pennsylvania, this lamb has become one of the bestselling non-seafood items at Samuels. Chefs love the flavor of these well marbled cuts, and appreciate the sustainable and humane husbandry practices employed by the family-owned farms that raise the livestock. The added convenience of a weekly custom butchering schedule only makes it more advantageous for busy, discerning chefs. French racks, legs, loins and shanks are the most popular cuts, but with a week's notice, most custom cuts can be accommodated.

Lamb sales far exceeded all expectations, making it apparent that our customers were hungry for more select premium meats. So the next logical step was to expand the non-seafood offerings with a line of equally impressive pork.



Santa Ines Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Enter Berkwood Farms, and its unparalleled 100 percent certified heirloom Berkshire (aka Kurobuta) pork. These pigs are raised by a cooperative made up of 60-plus family-owned farms based primarily in Iowa. With its distinctive color, extraordinary marbling and unrivaled flavor, it too quickly became a hit with our customers. Like our local lamb, Berkwood Farms pigs are brought to slaughter and butchered to customer specifications on a weekly basis. Regularly stocked cuts include French and English racks, extra thick cut bacon, bellies and tomahawk chops. As with lamb, there are countless custom cuts available for special order.

When the COVID-19 crisis hit in March, Samuels was quick to further its product line expansion. Rising to the occasion and leveraging its established distribution networks, Samuels brought on even more items to further assist chefs while ordinary supply chains experienced interruptions. Organic whole chickens, assorted poultry cuts from local farms and even ground beef were added to the mix. Through home delivery and direct to consumer sales out of Giuseppe's Market at Samuels HQ in Philadelphia, a vast line of prepared foods was quickly rolled out. Tuna meatballs, crab cakes, fish cakes, deviled clams and the like are currently offered daily. There's even icebox cakes and Japanese cheesecakes, should your sweet tooth beckon.

Sweet Summer Breeze and Grilling Jail Island Salmon



Chefs Corner



Chef Anne Coll

Questions or Comments?

Chef Anne will be happy to assist.

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By Chef Anne Coll

Summer fun is upon us. The nation can finally enjoy the great outdoors and small social gatherings outside. Nothing says summer like a great barbecue with friends and family enjoying the sweet summer breeze. After a long time in quarantine and packing on the "Corona 15" Jail Island Salmon is the perfect protein to enjoy on the Barbie. Jail Island is not only a healthy choice for that first summer barbecue, it is also a sustainable, affordable and plentiful protein choice to enjoy either on the grill or packaged for take-out or delivery.

Jail Island Salmon is farmed in the pristine, nearby waters of East Coast Canada. The deep-water farming allows the fish plenty of room to freely swim about. The great aquaculture practices applied creates a sweet, succulent and firm flesh that I associate with Jail Island Salmon. This also makes it a perfect Salmon for many cooking applications. Jail Island Salmon also makes great fish for raw, smoked, cured, roasted, grilled, steamed, and sautéed applications. If you really want to wow your guests, a whole grilled Salmon is fun to prepare as well. The abundant summer produce found at the local farmers' market or perhaps from one's backyard victory garden will provide the perfect tapestry for the Jail Island Salmon.

Jail Island Salmon goes very well with smoky flavors such as chipotle, which bring out the fattiness of the fish. Roasted sweet corn succotash and grilled local asparagus make perfect accompani-

ments to grilled and glazed Jail Island Salmon. Grilled spicy pineapple is a fun garnish for grilled Jail Island Salmon. Try it along with a nice summer quinoa salad, grilled summer squash and a light herb vinaigrette. The preparations are endless with Jail Island Salmon because it pairs so well with many different cuisines and flavor profiles. It is also a fast cooking protein so it requires less time to cook on the grill, only 4-6 minutes on either side.

Jail Island Salmon is also a favorite of mine for raw applications. This is a great way to showcase Jail Island Salmon on a warm summer day. I normally like to pair it with a drizzle of Santa Ines Extra Virgin Olive Oil, juice and zest of a lemon or lime, a little chili, some fresh chiffonade of cilantro, and a little avocado dice and perhaps a fine dice of an heirloom tomato. This goes great with some tender summer lettuce or by itself with a few crispy chips. Jail Island sliced sashimi style is another fun way to enjoy this great protein. All you need is a little olive oil, salt and pepper, lemon, and a splash of soy and or chili and you are all ready to sit and enjoy.

Enjoy all the season has to offer on these long summer days. Take time to grill some Jail Island Salmon and enjoy one's friends and family. Jail Island Salmon is that perfect protein for any barbecue, dinner, lunch or brunch, whether at home or served to go at your restaurant. Its versatility makes it a great choice for that outdoor grilling time.

A Special Note to Our Customers:

We are here for you. At Samuels, we understand that keeping your account current may prove challenging during these uncertain times. If you need help, we are happy to work with you. Please call 267-838-2107 and one of our Account Managers will work with you.



MONTHLY SPECIALS

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Sale Dates: June 1st - 30th

*Special Pricing is Reserved for Current Samuels Account Holders and Giuseppe's 7 Fish Club Members Only.

*Price and Availability Subject to Change.

*Additional Freight and Delivery Charges may Apply –

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FRESH YELLOWFIN TUNA - Skin on Loins Cut from 30-50 lb Fish. 8-10 lb Loins. For Sushi & Grilling
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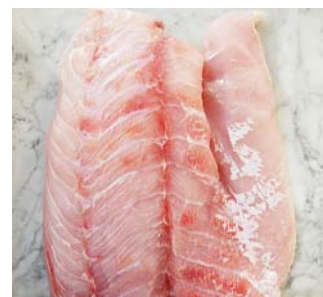
CANTERBURY CURE FRENCH TROUT ROE - Full Pop with Slightly Sweet Flavor. 2 oz Glass Jars
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June 2020



THE FISH THAT GIVES BACK

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