

Food

RECIPES

Seared Halibut
With Asparagus and English Pea Risotto

Fennel-Crusted White Sea Bass
With Sautéed Squash
and Oregano Chimichurri

White Fish
With Tomatoes and Basil

E2



WHITE FISH & VEGETABLES

Top of the Market chef shows how they go together like a summer romance

STORY BY NICOLE SOURS LARSON

FOOD STYLING
BY JEREMY LOOMIS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
EDUARDO CONTRERAS

With summer upon us and temperatures rising, most of us are looking for quick and easy meals facilitating a quick escape from hot kitchens.

For sultry summer days, there's no better choice than the many varieties of light white fish because of their speedy cooking and adaptable character, taking on the flavor of their embellishments.

To learn more about summer's seasonal fish, I recently spent a morning with Darren Gorski, fishmonger for The Fish Market restaurant on the San Diego Embarcadero, and Jeremy Loomis, the newly minted executive chef at Top of the Market, The Fish Market's fine-dining upstairs sister, who prepared two dishes pairing these fish with summer produce.

Gorski, the son of a New Jersey Shore scallop boat captain, grew up fishing and crabbing along the East Coast before moving west. He operated his own fish wholesaling business before joining The Fish Market 30 years ago. With bicoastal fishing experience, he's developed a breadth of knowledge about fish that's invaluable to any purveyor or restaurateur.

At The Fish Market, Gorski oversees both fresh fish sales to the public and fish provisioning for their flagship San Diego

SEE WHITE FISH • E2



Fennel-Crusted White Sea Bass With Sautéed Squash and Oregano Chimichurri

VEGGIES RULE IN THESE MEATLESS GRILLED KEBABS

BY AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

When it comes to grilled kebabs, vegetables are often an afterthought, typically used as a filler on meat-heavy skewers. But this treatment often leads to mushy, burnt vegetables with no flavor of their own. We wanted to create a recipe that would put the vegetables front and center.

We started by choosing the right vegetables. We wanted a good mix of flavors and textures, but we knew that not all veggies would hold up to the high heat of the grill.

Our choices were bell peppers, which sweetened

beautifully over the flames, and zucchini, which held its shape nicely and had a satisfying texture. Portobello mushroom caps were the perfect addition to the kebabs; as they released their moisture over the flame, they picked up great char and developed a deep, meaty taste.

Tossing grilled vegetables with a bold dressing can amp up their flavor considerably, but for our vegetable kebabs, we took the idea one step further. We tossed the vegetables with half of the dressing before skewering and grilling them, giving them great flavor from the start.

We pumped up the com-

SEE KEBABS • E3



DANIEL J. VAN ACKERE AP
Grilled Vegetable Kebabs. See recipe on page E3.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

OCEANSIDE'S SUJA OFFERS LINE OF LOW-CALORIE KOMBUCHA

The pick: Suja Organic Kombucha flavors

Why they rate: Founded by four San Diegans, Oceanside-based Suja produces an ever-growing line of organic juice products, including a line of six kombucha varieties. Kombuchas are fermented, effervescent tea-based drinks that are believed to have health benefits.

Suja's Organic Kombuchas are flavored with the company's cold-pressed juices and are loaded with vegan probiotics. The drinks have no



artificial flavors or extracts, are non-GMO Project Verified and are low in calories. The Suja kombucha flavors are Mixed Berries, Green Apple, Super Greens, Pineapple Passionfruit, Peach Ginger and Ginger Lemon.

Info: A 15.2-ounce glass bottle of Suja kombucha is about \$3.49. Available locally at Vons, Sprouts, Jimbo's Naturally, Bristol Farms and Target stores. Learn more about Suja products online at SujaJuice.com.

WHITE FISH • When uncut, it stays fresh longer

FROM E1 Embarcadero and Del Mar/Solana Beach restaurants. While the San Diego location launched in 1989, the combined restaurant-market concept debuted in 1976 in Palo Alto, the dream of four avid fishermen eager to provide fish from their own boats. There are now six California locations.

For our session, Gorski selected and prepped two fish — a white sea bass that's a seasonal delight and an Alaskan halibut, the fattier, fuller-flavored, colder-water cousin of the leaner California halibut.

As he cut and filleted the fish, Gorski explained the linkage of a fish's diet with the coloration of its flesh. The somewhat darker and pinker-fleshed white sea bass, he explained, eat

squid, anchovies and sardines, while the whiter Alaskan halibut eat primarily white pollock.

Key to the quality of fish and seafood is its handling after it's brought aboard a fishing boat, Gorski said. Fishermen should bleed the fish and store it on ice or in an ice-and-water slurry mimicking ocean conditions.

"Anything bled is going to have a cleaner, better flavor," he said.

Although The Fish Market owns its own boat, the Chula, the small chain relies on local fishermen to supply most of the fish for all their restaurants, although non-local species, including salmon, are flown in.

"We guarantee that the fish in the sales case is never there more than three days.

On the fourth day, it's portioned and sent to the restaurant for use," he said.

Whole, uncut fish stay fresh longer than cut fish, Gorski added. About 85 percent of the chain's fish stays whole until being cut for sale or restaurant use.

"It's about taking care of the product," he said.

Freshness, quality and accountability are prime reasons to buy fish at a neighborhood fish market. Increasingly, Gorski explained, customers want to know where their food is coming from and where it's sourced. Local fish markets can provide those answers.

But many people don't have easy access to a fish market, so they rely on supermarkets for their fish. With longer supply chains, supermarkets rarely offer

fish that's less than a week old. Much of the fish comes from great distances, including Asia, and arrives at stores prepackaged.

That's why you want to make friends with your fishmonger, especially at supermarket fish counters. Ask what's best and freshest, when it arrived and its country of origin. If your fishmonger steers you away from buying something, be sure to listen. Often supermarket fish staff — whom I've befriended — suggest an alternative to the fish I requested. I've never gone wrong taking their advice.

Learn what to watch for when buying fish. Look for color, texture, sheen and moisture. Fish, whether whole or cut, should be firm and shiny, but never soft, mushy, sticky or oily, signs

of age. White-fleshed fish, such as halibut, sea bass and grouper, should have a distinct pinkish color when fresh, Gorski explained. Avoid fish if it has a strong odor or looks too white, an indication of possible bleaching or chemical additives, common practices among some Asian exporters.

Most white fish varieties are interchangeable in recipes. Differences in flavor and texture are subtle, making it easy to substitute one white fish for another. Choose what's best, most available and freshest. West Coast fisheries offer an abundance of species, about 300 varieties in the grouper, croaker, flounder and sea bass families, sold under familiar names including halibut, white sea bass, black sea bass and cabrilla.

"White fish is pretty forgiving," Gorski said. "It likes to take on the flavors of what you're cooking, unlike oily fish, such as salmon."

To demonstrate our fillets' versatility Chef Loomis, a Michigander who trained by apprenticing in restaurants and who joined

Top of the Market following a stint at the Gaslamp's Searsucker, chose first to sear and then roast both fish. He matched the halibut with an asparagus and English pea risotto and the white sea bass with an exotic squash and oregano chimichurri mixture, producing delicious results.

For best outcomes, Loomis recommends roasting, baking or steaming most white fish.

"It's not good for grilling, except in a buttery sauce, because it's not fatty enough," causing it to stick to surfaces, he explained.

He advises undercooking fish rather than cooking it until it flakes, showing it's overdone, he said. Like many restaurant chefs, he prefers cooking at a higher temperature — 450 degrees — which cooks faster, seven to 12 minutes, depending on the fillet's thickness.

With a little creativity, you'll discover delicious results pairing the fish of summer with local summer produce.

Sours Larson is a San Diego freelance writer.



EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T PHOTOS

Fishmonger Darren Gorski fillets a white sea bass at The Fish Market restaurant.



Seared Halibut With Asparagus and English Pea Risotto

Makes 4 servings

FOR THE RISOTTO

2 tablespoons (1 ounce) olive oil
1 small yellow onion, cut in small dice
1 cup Arborio rice
½ cup dry white wine
1 quart vegetable stock, divided
⅓ cup (3 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese
2 ounces (half a stick) butter

FOR THE FISH

2-3 tablespoons canola oil for sautéing
Four 6-ounce Alaskan halibut fillets
Salt to taste
1 bunch asparagus, chopped and blanched
¼ pound frozen peas, defrosted
½ cup (6 tablespoons) olive oil, divided
Juice of 1 lemon, divided
1 bunch Italian parsley, chopped
1 bunch watercress, washed

Heat 1-2 tablespoons olive oil in a sauce pan over medium heat and sweat the diced onion until translucent. Stir in Arborio rice and continue to cook until rice starts smelling fragrant and toasted. Add white wine and stir until the alcohol has cooked off. Start incorporating vegetable stock one cup at a time while stirring, until you have used three-fourths of the stock. Remove from heat and cool risotto, setting aside until you're ready to prepare fish.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. In a medium oven-safe sauté pan, heat canola oil on high. Season halibut fillets with salt on both sides. Once the oil starts smoking add the fillets to the pan and sear until they start to brown. Place the sauté pan with fish in the oven for about 8-10 minutes, according to thickness. While fish is in the oven, in another pan sauté the blanched asparagus and peas in about 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add the partially cooked risotto and the remaining vegetable stock. Once the rice absorbs the stock, stir in the grated Parmesan and butter along with the juice of half a lemon and a generous pinch of chopped parsley.

To plate: In a small bowl, dress the watercress with the remaining lemon juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Spoon the asparagus and pea risotto onto the plates. Top the risotto with a seared halibut fillet. Place the watercress salad on top of the fish and drizzle the plates with remaining olive oil.

Recipe from Jeremy Loomis, executive chef at Top of the Market.



Fennel-Crusted White Sea Bass With Sautéed Squash and Oregano Chimichurri

Makes 4 to 6 servings

OREGANO CHIMICHURRI

1 bunch or package oregano, chopped
1 bunch parsley, chopped
½ medium shallot, minced

4 cloves garlic, minced
2 ounces red wine vinegar
5 ounces olive oil
Salt to taste

FOR THE FISH

2 tablespoons fennel seeds
Four 6-ounce white sea bass fillets, skin on
Salt to taste
2-3 tablespoons canola oil
½ cup (4 ounces) olive oil, divided
1 medium zucchini, sliced ½-inch thick

1 yellow squash, sliced ½-inch thick
1 medium shallot, sliced in julienne strips
1 pint cherry tomatoes
2 ounces dry white wine
1 bunch basil, chopped
Juice of 1 lemon, divided
1 bunch arugula

Put all chimichurri ingredients in a bowl and whisk together. Place half the mixture into a blender and blend until smooth. Return the blended sauce to the bowl to create a chunky chimichurri. Season with salt to taste.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place fennel seeds in a spice grinder and grind until coarse. Season sea bass fillets with salt and ground fennel seeds. Heat canola oil in a medium ovenproof sauté pan over high heat until it smokes. Sear sea bass fillets skin-side down, loosening them slightly to prevent sticking. Place pan in oven for 8-10 minutes until fish is fully cooked. Remove fish from the pan and let rest on a towel or tray, skin side up.

Meanwhile heat 2 ounces olive oil in a large ovenproof sauté pan until just before smoking. Sauté the zucchini, squash, shallot and cherry tomatoes until they start to brown. Deglaze the pan with the white wine, and season the vegetables with chopped basil, salt and the juice of half a lemon.

Dress the arugula in a bowl with 1 ounce olive oil, the juice of half a lemon and salt.

To plate: Spoon the vegetable mixture onto the center of the (4 or 6) plates. Place the sea bass fillets over the vegetables. Drizzle the chimichurri over the vegetables and fish. Garnish the fish with the arugula salad and drizzle the remaining 1 ounce of olive oil around the plates.

Recipe from chef Jeremy Loomis at Top of the Market.

White Fish With Tomatoes and Basil

This recipe was developed originally for cabrilla, a member of the grouper family, but works equally well for halibut, white sea bass or any other white-fleshed fish.

Makes 2 servings

2-3 tablespoons basil-flavored or other olive oil, divided

¾ to 1 pound cabrilla, halibut, sea bass or other white fish fillets, skin removed

1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
Juice of 1 lime or ½ lemon

Salt and pepper or seasoned salt to taste

1-2 Roma tomatoes, coarsely chopped, or 4-5 sundried tomatoes, chopped

Large handful of basil leaves, chopped or sliced in julienne strips

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brush an ovenproof baking dish with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Place fish fillets in baking dish. Rub both sides of fillets with cut garlic. Sprinkle both sides with lime or lemon juice and salt and pepper or seasoned salt. Let stand 15-30 minutes to marinate. Cover fish with chopped tomatoes and basil and drizzle with remaining olive oil.

Bake 10 to 20 minutes, according to thickness (a thinner fillet will be done in 10-12 minutes, a thicker fillet in 15-20 minutes). Fish should still be firm and slightly translucent.

Recipe from Nicole Sours Larson.



94TH AERO SQUADRON

8885 Balboa Ave., San Diego | 858-560-6771 | 94thsandiego.com

Early Brunch Special: 9am-10am | Regular Brunch: 10am-2:30pm
Early: \$27.95 | Adults: \$32.95 | Children: \$15.95

Join us Sunday for our Champagne Buffet Brunch. Buffet includes Omelette Bar and Eggs Benedict, Belgian Waffle Station, Carved Meats, Fajita Station, Pasta Station, Dessert Station, Chocolate Fountain and Much More.

BUFFET STYLE

COCINA DEL CHARRO

890 W. Valley Parkway, Escondido | 760-745-1382

1020 San Marcos Blvd, San Marcos | 760-471-6644 | Cocinadelcharro.com

Adults: \$18.99* \$3 more for bottomless champagne | Children 10 & under: \$9.99

9am-2pm in Escondido | Until 12 noon in San Marcos only

Come join us at Cocina Del Charro for Champagne Sunday brunch! A variety of Specials changing throughout the day, with items like fresh fruit, Aguas Frescas, pancakes, French toast, bacon, sausage, ham, papas con chorizo, chilequiles, paella, sopes, enchiladas, Chile Colorado, chicharron, Cochinita Pibil, sweet tamale, posole, menudo, omelet station, ceviche, ice cream station, and an amazing dessert bar.

BUFFET STYLE

OLD TOWN TEQUILA FACTORY & CANTINA

2467 Juan Street across from Old Town's Heritage Park | 619-260-8124

A spectacular scenic hillside spot for your Saturday or Sunday Champagne Brunch with panoramic views from the Coronado Islands, over Old Town to Mission Bay. This traditional Mexican Buffet served 9am to 2pm, features: Fajitas Sizzling Steak, Shrimp, Carnitas & Chicken and includes favorites like Fresh Menudo and Pozole, Cheese Enchiladas, Homemade Chile Rellenos, Agave Glazed Ribs, Fresh Fruits, Salad, Omelette and Taco Stations, Bunuelos, Churros and flowing Champagne. At \$24.99 (\$10.99 kids under 12) it's perfect for Bridal/Baby Showers, Birthdays, Anniversaries, Holiday Parties and Reunions.

BUFFET STYLE

CHINA MAX

4698 Convoy St., San Diego | 858-650-3333

Experience the true delight of an authentic Chinese Dim Sum Brunch, dozens of varieties (From \$2.45) and our famous Reg. menu Sat. & Sun. from 9am.

TABLE SERVICE

KAISERHOF RESTAURANT

2253 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., San Diego | 619-224-0606

Enjoy Sunday Brunch in our award winning and quaint German American restaurant. Served from 11:30am-3pm the brunch menu features dishes such as German Pancakes, Eggs Benedict, Kaiserschmarren, Steak & Eggs, Poached Salmon, an omelet and more. Includes a glass of champagne, mimosa or orange juice and fresh rolls & butter. From \$12.95.

TABLE SERVICE

OLD TOWN COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL & RESTAURANT

2660 Calhoun Street, San Diego CA 92110 | 619-297-1874 | Oldtowncosmopolitan.com

Saturday and Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm | Entrees priced at \$7.95-\$13.95

A blend of American and Mexican favorites served in our uniquely historic setting either on the patio or indoors. \$7 Mimosas and Champagne. Kids under 12 Eat Free — one per paid adult. Additional Kids \$5.95.

TABLE SERVICE

PARKHOUSE EATERY - UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS RESTAURANT

4574 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92116 | 619-297-7275

Cool, Hip, Funky, Cozy, Casual, and Elegant. Just a few adjectives to describe both the ambiance and the grub at Parkhouse Eatery. This old home converted into a restaurant back in 1996 has created some of the original and now popular dishes that continue to make our Brunch super fun and one of the most popular in town. Our mimosa flights are some of the best in town with over 8 different flavors to choose from. Our pancakes are house made which is very rare. (No box mixes here) house made Breakfast Pizza, Churro Pancakes, Cowboy Benedict, Avocado toast (the original), Chilaquiles, Linguini and eggs and more. From eclectic grub, local suds and California wines, Parkhouse Eatery is one of kind.

Located in the outskirts of Hillcrest in University Heights, Parkhouse Eatery features our garden patio, our bright window-lit living room, or the cozy warm room with a wood-burning fireplace the locals call "the hearth room." We serve Brunch and Dinner seven days a week with happy hour Monday-Friday.

TABLE SERVICE

Prices may vary for holiday & special occasions. Note: Please call restaurant for children's prices.

What's Happening

Main events

Hawaiian Christmas in July: 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday at Iron Pig Alehouse, 1520 Garnet Ave., San Diego. Iron Pig Alehouse and Deschutes Brewery will host the second annual Ugly Hawaiian Shirt Contest. Dress in your best Hawaiian attire and compete for first prize, the Pineapple of Awesomeness. There will be Deschutes draft specials like Pacific Wonderland (\$3) and Passionfruit IPA (\$5), and Hawaiian-style barbecue dishes like Kalua Pork Tacos with grilled pineapple salsa and Kalua Pork Sammies served with Hawaiian slaw and crispy onions. Free admission. bit.ly/2MGX880

Cocktail-Making Workshop: 6:30 to 8 p.m. Friday at Vom Fass Hillcrest, 1050 University Ave., Suite E103, San Diego. Each cocktail will be demonstrated, then guests will have the opportunity to create their own signature cocktails. Light appetizers will be served. \$35 per person. bit.ly/2KttnBN

Vista BBQ Classic: Noon to 10 p.m. Saturday at Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista. The ninth annual festival features award-winning barbecue from all over the country, with complimentary dishes like macaroni and cheese and chili. There's also a food fest marketplace, beer and spirits garden, fair-style contests like dancing, pie-eating, all new Jam-boree Concert Arena, Old West shooting demonstrations and the Miss Q country-style beauty contest. Kids ages 8 to 16 can compete for prize money in the second annual Kids BBQ Classic. Tickets range from \$20 to \$60; children 10 and under are free. Tickets are an additional \$10 per person at the



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Celebrate National Hot Dog Day at Wienerschnitzel with 5 Chili Dogs for \$5.

gate. vistabqclassic.com

Wine Dinner: 6 p.m. Saturday at The WineSellar & Brasserie in Sorrento Mesa, 9550 Waples St., San Diego. Celebrate Bastille Day with a multi-course menu paired with French wines from the Loire Valley. \$79 per person; \$69 for wine club members, plus tax and gratuity. Seating is limited. Reservations: (858) 450-9557.

Free scoop of ice cream: In honor of its reopening and National Ice Cream Day, CREAM San Diego will offer guests who purchase an ice cream cone a second cone for free on Sunday and Monday. The shop is located near San Diego State University at 5157 College Ave., Suite B, San Diego. (619) 230-5177. creamnation.com

National Hot Dog Day: Wienerschnitzel is celebrating the national holiday with an exclusive, one-day event July 18 at all 16 San Diego-area restaurants. Guests can purchase five of its World Famous Chili Dogs for \$5. There is no limit to

the number of hot dogs purchased, as long as supplies last. For locations, visit wienerschnitzel.com

Del Mar Wing Feast: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. July 28 at the Del Mar Race Track, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd., Del Mar. The second annual gathering features signature chicken wings (\$1 per wing) with rubs and sauces like honey habanero barbecue, sweet glazed teriyaki and garlic Parmesan, as well as wines, live music and horse races. Bryce Willingham of Ravage Winery will be pouring the latest 2016 vintage of Ravage Cabernet Sauvignon, boasting flavors of dark berries and plum layered with vanilla and mocha, and will talk about pairings for grilling. Free admission to the event with paid racetrack admission (\$6); children under 18 are free and must be accompanied by parent or guardian. dmcc.com

Email calendar items at least two weeks in advance of the event to foodevents@sduiontribune.com