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WW farmers' market offers a Shore thing

By: Faith Bahadurian , Special Writer

We work with local fisherman and bring their catch the next day directly to New Jersey farmers' markets every week

Eating locally is being carried to new heights — or depths — with a seafood vendor joining the West Windsor Community Farmers' Market.

This farmer of the seas is Jim LaPrete, a life-long resident of New Jersey. His company, Shore Catch, specializes in bringing "Jersey Fresh" fish to farmers' markets across the state.

Mr. LaPrete lives in Barnegat and spends most of his time on the water, he says, clamming and fishing with family and friends. He got the idea for Shore Catch when he realized he could combine his experience with working at farmers' markets and his relationships with local fishermen. Shore Catch allows him to support the farmers and the fishermen.

"We work with local fisherman and bring their catch the next day directly to New Jersey farmers' markets every week," he told me. "The quality of fish coming into Barnegat Light's commercial ports is second to none."

New Jersey's thriving seafood industry, overseen by the state Department of Agriculture, has a great Web site, www.state.nj.us/seafood. It is full of information about the fishing fleets and industry, aquaculture (including organic), events, what's in season, and many recipes, some even accompanied by videos of New Jersey chefs preparing the dishes.

Two of the recipes below are from that Web site, the third from Joe Colanero's "Down Jersey Cooking," which is full of lore and recipes from the southern part of the state. The tuna is a classic Asian preparation that is a sure pleaser for dinner guests any time of year. The scallop sevice and marinated mussels are great starters for summer dinner or a light lunch on the patio or deck.

The day I visited him, Jim had tuna, scallops, flounder and monkfish for sale. What with seasonal fluctuations and a complex quota system to ensure sustainability, the selection Jim offers will change throughout the summer, so it pays to be flexible in your expectations.

As Jim says, "Sorry folks, you won't be finding Alaskan King Crab legs at our stand. See you at the market!"

The West Windsor Community Farmers' Market is open Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Vaughn Drive lot of Princeton Junction Train Station. (609) 577-5113. On the Web: westwindsorfarmersmarket.org.



Jim LaPrete of Shore Catch specializes in bringing 'Jersey Fresh' fish to farmers' markets across the state, including West Windsor's.

SESAME SEARED JERSEY TUNA

from www.state.nj.us/seafood

4 servings.

1¼ cup soy sauce

1 tablespoon mirin (Japanese sweet wine)

1 tablespoon honey

2 tablespoons sesame oil

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

4-6 ounce Jersey tuna steaks

½ cup sesame seeds

1 tablespoon olive oil

Wasabi paste

In a small bowl stir together the soy sauce, mirin and sesame oil. Divide into two equal parts. Stir rice wine vinegar into one part and set aside as a dipping sauce. Spread the sesame seeds on a plate. Coat tuna steaks with the remaining soy sauce mixture, then press into the sesame seeds to coat. Heat the olive oil in a cast iron skillet over high heat until very hot. Place steaks in the pan and sear for

about 30 seconds on each side. Serve with the dipping sauce and wasabi paste.

SCALLOP SEVICHE BRUSCHETTA

adapted from www.state.nj.us/seafood

(Chef Fred Madonna)

6 servings.

10 medium-sized sea scallops, cut in 1/4-inch pieces

3 Jersey tomatoes, cored and cut into bite-size pieces

1/2 bunch basil, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped fine

10 Kalamata olives, pitted and coarsely chopped

Dash pepper to taste

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Juice of 1 lime

1/8 cup balsamic vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

1 baguette French bread

Additional olive oil for toasts

Additional Parmesan cheese for toasts

In a large mixing bowl combine scallops, tomatoes, basil, garlic, and olives. Add the lime juice, oil, vinegar and cheese. Add pepper to taste and refrigerate for 1/2 hour, or a little longer if needed, so that the acid from the lime and vinegar has "cooked" the scallops and they are opaque.

Meanwhile, cut the bread into one inch slices, drizzle with the oil and a dash of cheese. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown. Spoon the scallop mix on the toast and eat.

MARINATED MUSSELS

adapted from "Down Jersey Cooking,"

Joe Colanero, Down Jersey Press, 2004

Serves 4-6.

Marinade:

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons white or red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon capers, minced

1 tablespoon roasted peppers, or pimento, chopped

3 tablespoons parsley, minced

Freshly ground black pepper

4 pounds mussels (from inspected/approved waters, of course)

Lemon wedges for garnish

In a medium-size bowl, mix oil, vinegar, capers, peppers, parsley and black pepper.

Scrub mussels and remove their beards. Discard any with cracked shells, or those that do not close when tapped lightly.

Put 1/2 cup water and the mussels in a large pot; cover and steam over high heat until mussels open, 8-10 minutes. Remove mussels from pot, cool for a moment, then remove meat from shells.

Add mussels to the marinade in the bowl, and toss. Refrigerate, covered, for several hours or overnight. Serve garnished with lemon wedges.

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