



HEARD & SCENE THE FISHERMAN CHEF A19

GREATER NEW YORK



BRUNCH BOX SPICE MARKET RAMP UP A16

WSJ.com/NY

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Saturday/Sunday, August 10 - 11, 2013 | A15

HEARD & SCENE



Floyd Cardoz, North End Grill's chef, left, heads to shore with his son Peter after fishing off the shores of Groton, Conn.

Chef's Fishing Expedition Yields Freshest of Specials

By LUCY COHEN BLATTER

"All chefs should fish, garden or hunt," chef Floyd Cardoz said while standing on the deck of the Helen III, a private fishing boat off the shores of Groton, Conn. "When you catch or grow things yourself, you learn not to waste as much; and your appreciation of that food increases exponentially."

We were on the first leg of a two-part trip, during which we witnessed Mr. Cardoz, executive chef and partner at North End Grill, do two out of those three tasks. The boat trip was part of a two-day fish-to-table journey. We joined Mr. Cardoz on the Long Island Sound, along with North End's general manager Kevin Richer and some of Mr. Cardoz's family and friends.

Mr. Cardoz, an enthusiastic fisherman, has made an annual pilgrimage to Groton for the past five years. But it's a hobby that started young. "When I was a little boy growing up in Bombay, we lived near the water. My mother was too afraid for us to go in, but my brother and I would sneak out with bamboo rods to do some fishing in the Arabian Sea." Mr. Cardoz's brother, Bryan, came along for the trip as well.

"I always loved eating fish, too," said Mr. Cardoz, who runs a seafood-centric restaurant in Battery Park City. "My mom says that when I was little, I'd come home for lunch every day during school and would cry if we didn't have fish."

On the water, he is calm and focused. "Fishing is all about patience and waiting," two virtues often unappreciated in a



busy restaurant kitchen.

Mr. Cardoz turned out to be the most successful fisherman of the bunch, reeling in lots of bluefish and porgies. The final tally for all of us was a few dozen fish—mostly blues, and porgies, with one fluke and one black sea bass rounding out our catch. Usually, Mr. Cardoz takes his catch home, where he uses them in fish curries and gives any extras to friends and family. This time, though, the

fish were destined for a spot on the North End Grill's menu.

And if you're wondering what a chef-led fishing trip is like, it should be noted that ours featured craft beers, halibut salad nicoise, corn salad, grilled vegetables and a salad of lobster, shrimp and calamari.

Back at the restaurant, we accompanied Mr. Cardoz and North End Grill's pastry chef, Alexandra Ray, up to the restaurant's rooftop garden. Ms.

Ray tends to the garden often, helping out a part-time gardener who was hired this year.

The 1,000-square-foot garden has rows of vegetables, fruits and herbs—including okra, kale, radishes, beets, heirloom cucumbers, kohlrabi, turnips, lettuces, strawberries, watermelon, mint and rosemary—presenting a contrast to the gleaming skyscrapers around it. Ms. Ray said she has been amazed at how well some of their plantings have done.

Mr. Cardoz and his team often create special dishes around what's fresh upstairs. Mint grown on the roof is often used for cocktails downstairs.

"We recently got some great lemon verbena, which I used to make ice cream," Ms. Ray said.

With their hands full of mustard greens, cucumbers and kohlrabi, the chefs headed downstairs where it was time to cook at last. For that night's and the next's special, Mr. Cardoz made an appetizer of grilled bluefish topped with julienned raw beets and served with pickled cucumbers, mustard greens, sorrel and radishes. Everything but the red onion and seasonings were harvested by Mr. Cardoz. (He said his wife would get a grilled porgy for dinner when she came in that night.)

As he finished plating his bluefish dish—which tasted as fresh and delicious as you might expect—the chef made a confession. "I had no idea what I was going to make with the bluefish when you asked me before," he said. "But I went upstairs and saw what looked good. That's the only way I know how to work."

Andrew Hinderaker for The Wall Street Journal (6)

Photo by Andrew Hinderaker for The Wall Street Journal (6)



Above center, Mr. Cardoz with Matt Marinelli, first mate of the Helen III. Left, the day's catch. Right, Mr. Cardoz with pastry chef Alexandra Ray in the restaurant's rooftop garden. Below, left, Mr. Cardoz prepares a bluefish caught on the trip for grilling, right. For more photos, visit WSJ.com/NY.

