



IF YOU HAVE VACANCIES, GIVE US A TRY.
RENTALS BY-OWNER
Summer, Vacation & Year-Round Rentals - short & long term

Cape Cod
Martha's Vineyard
& Nantucket

508-563-3933

Renting...
CAPE SUMMER RENTALS.COM
We have you covered!

New Shop Smokes And Packages Gourmet Salmon

by Debra Lawless

The motto of Nantucket Wild Gourmet and Smokehouse is “luxurious edibles, the way food was meant to be.”

Inside the store at 1223 Main St. in Chatham is a refrigerator stocked with bright pink/orange salmon that is smoked in a smokehouse downstairs. The store is chock-a-block with luscious artisanal foods that are made in small batches.

Our story begins with the smoked salmon.

“Peter was working on Nantucket,” says Marco Protano, 43, referring to his chef-partner and co-founder, Peter O’Donovan, 33. “He wanted to begin a smokehouse. All the salmon was farm-raised and mushy.” O’Donovan hails from Southern Ireland, right on the seacoast, where some of the best salmon in that nation are to be found.

It is a recent Saturday afternoon, about three weeks after Nantucket Wild Gourmet and Smokehouse opened its doors, and Protano is enthusiastically showing off his salmon and other foods. The next part of the story, Protano says, is that he and O’Donovan began to investigate just how they might obtain the best quality salmon here and smoke it in a way that came up to their high standards. Their quest took them to Scotland and Ireland, where a fish smoker named Sally Barnes trained them.

“We had to investigate the most modern way of smoking fish but keeping to a craft tradition,” Protano says. “We’re keeping true to our philosophy that we want to provide better food. It’s luxurious eating that can be good for you.”

Protano obtains the Pacific wild salmon from the Gulf of Alaska and rivers such as the Copper. “All of our salmon is caught by fishermen who we know by name,” Protano says. It goes without saying that the fish is free of hormones and pesticides. It is line-caught, from waters that have not been overfished.

When the salmon reaches Chatham, O'Donovan fillets it by hand and salts it for five hours in a blend of European and Asian organic and kosher salts. He then smokes it in small batches for 10 to 13 hours using various woods -- maple, fruit and oak, all from Canada and pesticide-free. O'Donovan then slices the salmon by hand and seals it in vacuum packs.

"We're the only ones doing this in the Northeast," Protano says. "No one is smoking wild salmon. Not on a craft basis."

Yes, there are some large plants in the region that turn out smoked salmon. But their product differs from that of Nantucket Wild Gourmet. Protano says you can taste the difference.

Protano and O'Donovan are devotees of Slow Food U.S.A. This is a 20-year-old movement that stresses artisanal foods over those prepared using industrial and standardized methods. The Slow Food movement aims to revive the pleasures of the table, sort of the antithesis of fast foods. The organization now has 80,000 members worldwide.

O'Donovan trained at Ballymaloe Cookery School in Ireland and Peter Kumps Cooking School in New York City. He has worked as a private chef in New England and Palm Beach, and has won Gold Medals in the 2006 Great Taste Awards given by the Guild of Fine Food Retailers in the United Kingdom.

While O'Donovan is the culinary expert, Protano brings a strong business background to Nantucket Wild Gourmet. He worked at Bank of Boston for seven years and has an MBA from the University of Virginia. He taught strategic marketing at New York University. Originally from southeastern Massachusetts, he now lives in Sandwich.

7/20/06

CLICK ON THE MENU ON THE LEFT FOR MORE OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES

0 0 0 1 5 8

*For more stories about Chatham, Harwich and the lower Cape, see the print edition of **The Cape Cod Chronicle**, on news stands every Thursday. [Click here](#) for a list of news dealers who carry the paper, or contact us to [subscribe](#). Contents copyright 2006, The Cape Cod Chronicle.*