

## Wild Alaska seafood gets upscale treatment at Elliott's

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SEATTLE — On a clear, starlit night along the Seattle waterfront, Dutch Harbor king crab tails were among the tempting dinner starters at the Elliott's Oyster House.

The famed 21-foot-long oyster bar aside, this classic Northwest seafood dining Mecca boasts a steady stream of new wild Alaska seafood appetizers and entrees, along with fish from the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, Europe and even Iceland.

The king crab tails, as with other menu items at the restaurant on Pier 56, are the creations of 33-year-old executive chef Jeremy Anderson, a passionate aficionado of wild Alaska seafood.

“The fishermen have always known about (the king crab tails), but I'm the first to play with them,” said Anderson, who recently traveled to Alaska to see for himself how red king crab are harvested and processed in Dutch Harbor.

“I get them in the shell and peel them out. I bought 1,000 pounds of them,” he said. There's a little labor involved to get 1.5 to 2 ounces of meat out of the tail of the king crab, “but it's worth it,” Anderson said. So far he has come up with 15 recipes for a part of the king crab many processors previously threw out.

This evening, Anderson has marinated the tails with ginger, garlic and sweet chili, and then grilled and served them over papaya-melon salsa.

“Give them a little extra love,” he said, offering a sample of the succulent crab tails, “and they'll go a long way.”

Also on the dinner menu that night at Elliott's were Dutch Harbor king crab legs, served steamed with roasted garlic, mashed potatoes and market vegetables. Also being served was Alaska coho salmon Wellington enclosed “in Tunisian briks dough layered with spinach, lemon herb butter and wild mushroom duxelle,” then served “over fall vegetable succotash and finished with tarragon beurre blanc.”

Other selections include planked San Juan king salmon, Oregon blue cheese crusted king salmon, grilled mahi mahi, served over a creamy parmesan polenta, and Icelandic haddock, flown fresh from Iceland, pan seared and finished with truffled lemon caper brown butter.

The menu also clearly states the management's opinion on wild versus farmed

fish. "We believe wild salmon has a more natural lifestyle and consequently has a better taste and texture than farmed," the menu advises. "Our salmon are caught in the ocean when they are still feeding through the natural food chain, thus ensuring a deep, rich salmon flavor."

Every day Anderson goes over the menu, coming up with fresh ideas to excite loyal patrons and newcomers alike. His supply list for 2007 includes 40,000 pounds of halibut, 65,000 pounds of Alaska true cod, 101,000 pound of assorted salmon, and he's looking to buy 10,000 pounds of frozen king crab legs.

Born and raised in Washington state, Anderson is the grandson of Earl Owens, Elliott's first executive chef. Anderson started his restaurant career at the age of 13, as a dishwasher, then worked at Seattle's Union Square Grill in high school.

He studied at the Culinary Institute of America and majored in hotel and restaurant management at Washington State University. Along the way, he developed a passion not only for the seafood he prepares, but the people who produce it.

"It's nice to meet and see the people who live that lifestyle; to see how they actually catch and process the seafood," he said.

He has also become good friends with harvesters and groups like the Norton Sound Economic Development Corp. in Nome, through which he purchased Norton Sound king crab after a trip there earlier this year. "Our summer sales included \$20,000 in sales of Norton Sound king crab," said Anderson, who was so pleased he sent the economic development corporation a large batch of his spicy crab chowder for their annual council meeting in Nome.

"It's about making partnerships," he said. "You shake a hand and make a personal connection in their community." Traveling to Dutch Harbor in October, Anderson wrote a blog on the Elliott's Oyster House Web site, to share his travels, with photographs and insights on crab fishing, with his restaurant patrons.

On a visit to the Unisea processing plant in Dutch Harbor Oct. 30, he wrote, "I guess it would not be a true Dutch Harbor experience if one did not get fogged in, and have to stay a couple of extra days ... More time to learn about crab and keep good company with the locals ... At least I have a bit of king crab to snack on."

If he knows his harvesters, Anderson also knows his customers.

"I'm willing to make a commitment to top quality," Anderson said. "I'll spend premium dollar for fish."

In summer months, when many tourists come to the Pacific Northwest, they want Alaska seafood, he said. Elliott's complies by featuring wild Alaska fish

from specific river runs, and wild Alaska king crab. "There is no Russian king crab on this menu," he said.

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