

## A Chef's Shopping List: Dory Ford, Monterey, Calif. And how suppliers can make the sale

Each issue we check in with a noted restaurateur to discover what's on their wild catch shopping lists.\* Today, we meet Dory Ford, executive chef at the Portola Café and Restaurant at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

### ■ Which types of wild fish do you serve?

Wild Alaskan salmon, halibut off the coast of British Columbia, and our shrimp are trap-caught, usually from Georgia. We use the only company that's using turtle-exclusion devices on its nets.

When wild salmon goes out of season, I go to wild Arctic char, and we'll use sea bass in the winter from the South Pacific and Fiji, and John Dory. British Columbia black cod is another fish that we've found is very good. We stay away from swordfish, tuna, and Chilean sea bass because they're endangered.

### ■ Do your customers care whether your fish is wild or farmed?

Yes, they do. We're seeing that from the questions asked and our comment cards.

### ■ What do you look for when purchasing wild fish?

I usually buy salmon with the head on because the eyes are a good indicator. It should smell like the ocean and not like fish, and the flesh should be firm; it should spring back if you touch it with your finger. Halibut should be translucent, and be a pinkish-reddish color as opposed to a grayish-brown color on the side where the skin was. Most of my shrimp comes in frozen. I look at the eyes and make sure they've not clouded. I like to buy them when they're still moving or if they were frozen right away.

### ■ Portion size?

Six ounces. I'm trying to turn the Americas around from being fat. I round it out with vegetables, and I use a lot of beans, legumes, and edamame to make up for the smaller piece of protein.

### ■ Do you have a favorite wild fish?

Halibut and salmon are the cornerstone of my menu. We take a very seasonal approach, so having versatile fish like salmon and halibut makes it easy for us.

**Fishers/suppliers/distributors:** If you have a product that meets Chef Ford's specifications, he wants to hear from you — but not directly, please. Writing books, managing a restaurant, and working as a line cook, he won't have time to listen to your pitch. UNLESS ... you fill out a pitch list form found on our web site: [www.wildcatchmagazine.com](http://www.wildcatchmagazine.com). Download it, fill it out, and send it as an attachment to

### Chef Dory Ford: The Pacific Rim is his palette

**AFTER PAYING HIS** dues in restaurants in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest — and absorbing the region's local-food ethos — Dory Ford moved to Hawaii, where he immersed himself in the cuisine of the Pacific Rim.

Arriving in Southern California in 1996, he became executive chef for Gai Klass Catering, rated the best caterer in Los Angeles by Zagats. He then became executive chef for the Huntington Museum Library and Botanical Gardens in Pasadena. He later served the prestigious Jonathan Beach Club in Santa Monica before moving to the Monterey Bay Aquarium as executive chef in 2005.

At the Aquarium, he focuses on food that is not only fresh and seasonal but that which complements the institution's commitment to sustainability. He's created new menus for the Portola Café and Restaurant, as well as bringing a new approach to the aquarium's catering/banquet division. He was the host chef in cooking solutions for the annual Monterey Wine Festival.

### ■ Here are some of Ford's favorite dishes:

Salmon is great with artichokes. I pan-sear it, finish it in the oven, and serve it medium rare. For the artichokes, I pare them down, par cook them in a salt and lemon butter, then cut them up and stew them with olive oil, shallots, and fresh herbs or sauté them with potatoes.

Halibut is very versatile. I can serve it with risotto, potatoes, and vegetables. Sometimes I smoke it lightly, or cure it; it doesn't do quite as well with grilling as salmon.

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