



West Coast approach

'bit of novelty'

Vancouver Island has become a hot destination spot for gastro-tourists looking to sample local fare. Fine-dining restaurants are catching on, creating locally-inspired menus and using the trend to promote another thing the Island is famous for: Healthy lifestyle choices.

"We're right on the water, many of our guests use our hiking trails and the atmosphere is casual. We want to offer food that feels good in the experience," says Kelsey Bailly, marketing co-ordinator at Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa.

The resort has recently revamped the concept of their fine dining restaurant, SeaGrille, with a focus on seafood and local produce. It is the only five-star waterfront resort in the area, overlooking the Saanich Inlet with a marina below.

"People come here wanting seafood because of the elements around us. But they're also aware of the health benefits," says Bailly. "It's a low in fat and sodium, light, feel-good food."

Studies suggest that seafood, high in Omega-3 fatty acids, helps lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, depression

and mental decline with aging. For pregnant women, eating fish has been shown to increase brain development in infants.

"We also use a lot of extra virgin olive oil and compotes and not as many heavy rich sauces," say Scott Dickson, executive chef at SeaGrille. "Right now is halibut season, so that's our biggest seller."

Other seafood items include King Crab and squid-ink risotto, Alaskan scallop and prawn ceviche, a smoked fish plate, Merridale Cider Mussels and Grilled Chilean sea bass.

Dickson says they also use a lot of local, seasonal produce and products in the restaurant, which also has an extensive list of island and B.C. wines, promoting a field-to-table experience.

"The seafood and local stuff is a bit of a novelty for people coming from Alberta," says Dickson, who picks up seasonal fruits and vegetables from Saanich farms. Really, it's a very West Coast approach."

EXCERPT FROM :
© TIMES COLONIST
HEALTHY LIVING
APRIL 24, 2007