

eating out

Program tracks food – source to table

By Christine E. McDermott

It's not unusual these days to see the names of local farms and purveyors featured on menus at restaurants throughout the state.

Taking the farm-to-table movement a step further is Trace and Trust, which lets diners know precisely where their food came from and the story behind it. Close to 20 Ocean State restaurants participate in this program that connects chefs, customers, farmers and fishermen.

Trace and Trust, which launched with one Rhode Island fisherman in 2010 and has since expanded around the country, lets chefs access a "foraging network" through which they can select products and suppliers that meet their criteria. They offer an array of marketing tools, including printable handouts and materials to train staff members to discuss dishes with patrons.

"There is clearly an interest and a market demand for more of a story about the people who are behind the food that we're eating in restaurants," said Trace and Trust CEO and founder Michael Clayton. "Our goal is really to be positioned to celebrate the tremendous diversity that exists there."

Diners can visit traceandtrust.com to peruse



Newport's One Bellevue uses Trace and Trust to source fresh items like the blackfish and scallops used in these dishes.



a log of recent deliveries from suppliers to restaurants. On a recent Thursday, you would have seen that Thames Street Kitchen in Newport was serving Atlantic sea scallops from the fishing vessel Karen Elizabeth, while Local 121 in Providence had Atlantic striped bass from Westerly Handline Fishermen, and Ella's Fine Food and Drink in Westerly was featuring Angus beef from Beriah Lewis Farm in North Stonington, Conn.

You can click to learn more about each restaurant, product and supplier and, on each page, track deliveries related specifically to them. For example, if you're craving bluefish, you

can see which eateries have recently received deliveries. (Coming soon: an iPhone app that will send you customized notifications.)

Kevin Thiele, executive chef at Newport's One Bellevue at the Hotel Viking, has been using Trace and Trust for several years and sees many benefits.

"It's the freshest fish you could get coming straight from a fisherman to the restaurant," he said. "There's no middle man – it's not delivered to a warehouse where it could be sitting around before it eventually gets to the restaurant."

His menu includes Trace and Trust logos next to each

traceable dish, with a note inviting diners to ask their servers about it. Servers hand out cards that tell a bit about the chef, the boat or the farm that supplied the produce or seafood, and a QR code the guest can scan with a smartphone to learn more.

"You could put 'local' on any menu but to prove it and show the guest exactly where this fish was caught and everything, it's pretty amazing," Thiele said.

Scott Kaiser, executive chef at Twin River Casino, introduced Trace and Trust at Fred & Steve's Steakhouse this summer. While the restaurant is known for hefty portions of steaks and fish – and that is not changing – they decided to supplement the regular offerings with some seasonal farm-to-table dishes.

Blue oyster mushrooms harvested in West Kingston and Atlantic striped bass from Point Judith were among the Trace and Trust ingredients they incorporated earlier this summer.

"The one thing we really liked with Trace and Trust is not only the relationships they build with the farmers – the vessels that are fishing, the farms that are doing the proteins – they also have a lot of tools that you can use to get the word out," Kaiser said.

These are the Rhode Island restaurants that use Trace and Trust:

BRISTOL

Hourglass Brasserie
382 Thames St.
Persimmon, 31 State St.

CRANSTON

Basta, 2195 Broad St.

LINCOLN

Fred & Steve's Steakhouse, 100 Twin River Road

NARRAGANSETT

George's of Galilee, 250 Sand Hill Cove Road

NEWPORT

One Bellevue at the Hotel Viking, 1 Bellevue Ave.

Spiced Pear, 117 Memorial Blvd.

Tallah on Thames, 464 Thames St.

Thames Street Kitchen, 677 Thames St.

PROVIDENCE

Birch, 200 Washington St.
Chez Pascal, 960 Hope St.

Cook and Brown, 959 Hope St.

The Dorrance, 60 Dorrance St.

Local 121, 121 Washington St.

Rogue Island, 65 Weybosset St.

WARREN

Eli's Kitchen, 40 Market St.

WESTERLY

84 Tavern on Canal, 15 Canal St.

Ella's Fine Food and Drink, 2 Tower St.

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