

A CULINARY ADVENTURE

West Coast Fishing Club serves up a delicious combination of food, fishing and fun in the magnificent wilderness of Haida Gwaii.



BY MICHELLE HOPKINS

Every summer, executive chef David Hawksworth heads over to the exclusive Clubhouse — one of four fishing lodges owned by the West Coast Fishing Club in Haida Gwaii — for some serious fishing and a little cooking.

Hawksworth is the visiting celebrity chef at The Clubhouse, the remote resort famed for its salmon and halibut fishing.

“A few years back, Brian Grange [one of the proprietors] asked me if I wanted to come up and cook,” says Hawksworth, who opened his restaurant, The Hawksworth at the Rosewood Hotel Georgia, this month. “I’ve always dreamed of fishing up there so I was beyond excited to say ‘yes’.

“It’s such an incredibly beautiful spot ... it’s as close to a religious experience as you can get.”

Hawksworth says the culinary adventure series has been a big hit with avid fishermen and wilderness lovers alike.

“We bring sommeliers with us as well and every day there are cooking demonstrations, cocktail parties and, of course, fishing,” says the former executive chef at Vancouver’s West restaurant. “We take about 43 guests per session.”

There is so much to do there, says Hawksworth, who has been the resort’s visiting celebrity chef for the past five years. The club offers helicopter rides, hikes, on-the-water adventures and remote beach lunches.

Grange says this culinary adventure is the first of its kind in the northernmost island in Canada.

“We book solid every year,” says Grange. “We have had many luminary chefs over the years, including Vikram Vij [of Vij’s and Rangoli restaurants].”

Although the focus is always on the fishing, the culinary trips offer guests an opportunity to go home armed with new recipes, along with their fish.

There are a few spaces remaining for the Hawksworth & Friends Culinary Weekend, July 24 to 28. During the five-day trip, guests will also learn culinary secrets from master chefs Ryan Stone of The Clubhouse, Langara Island, and Dino Renaerts of Diva at the Met.

The West Coast Fishing Club’s other culinary adventure series is with executive chef Jamie Kennedy, who hosts the Fish, Forage and Fun at The Outpost, in Haida Gwaii, from July 4 to 8. To book a spot on either culinary adventure, phone 888-432-6666 or 604-233-9232, or visit www.westcoastfishingclub.com. ■



Pan-Seared Wild Salmon with Butternut Squash and Wild Mushrooms

Courtesy of: David Hawksworth
Serves 4.

- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) unsalted butter
- 2 shallots, minced
- ¼ of a small butternut squash, peeled and cut into ¾-inch (2 cm) cubes
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 ½ cups (300 ml) chicken stock
- Sea salt
- 4 ounces (120 grams) wild mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 4 teaspoons (20 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 to 5 ounces (120 to 150 grams) salmon fillets, skin-on
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) lemon juice
- 12 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
- 4 sage leaves, finely chopped

Melt 1 tablespoon (15 ml) butter in a large pot over low heat. Add the shallots and cook until they are soft but not brown, about four to five minutes.

Add the squash, garlic and thyme. Cook for five minutes, stirring frequently, without browning. Add the chicken stock and bring to a gentle simmer. Season to taste. Cook covered until the squash is tender but not falling apart. Remove the garlic and thyme.

In a medium frying pan, melt the remaining tablespoon (15 ml) of butter over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and sauté until soft. Season to taste and add to the squash mixture.

Preheat the oven to 400 F (200 C). Heat the oil in a large, preferably non-stick frying pan that can go into the oven. Season the salmon and place in the pan skin side up. Cook without turning for three to four minutes until the fish is lightly browned around the edges. Place the frying pan in the oven and cook the fish for seven to 10 minutes until cooked through. Re-warm the sauce mixture and add the lemon juice, cherry tomatoes and sage. Spoon into warmed bowls and top with the salmon. Serve immediately.

Celebrity chefs, from left, Vikram Vij, David Hawksworth and Dino Renaerts.
TOP: The Clubhouse, the food, the accommodation at Haida Gwaii.
OPPOSITE PAGE: David Hawksworth

