

## NATIONAL AQUARIUM ANNOUNCES AREA'S TOP CHEFS TO HEADLINE SPRING FRESH THOUGHTS SEAFOOD DINING SERIES

*Jesse Sandlin, Bryan Voltaggio and Jill Snyder to lead cooking demonstrations for spring series*

(January 27, 2010- Baltimore) This spring, area top chefs **Jesse Sandlin, Bryan Voltaggio and Jill Snyder** will headline the National Aquarium's third installment of *Fresh Thoughts: A Sustainable Seafood Dining Series*, which celebrates sustainable seafood choices.

The first event of the series will be held on **Tuesday, March 23** and will feature Marvesta shrimp prepared courtesy of **Chef Jesse Sandlin**.

A Baltimore native and a recent contestant on *Top Chef, Season Six*, Chef Sandlin has spent 14 years working in professional kitchens from Maryland to Australia. She initially developed her passion for food while working for Paragary's Restaurant Group in California under chefs Andrew Tescher and Kurt Spataro. Since her return to Baltimore, Jesse has been an integral leader in several top kitchens in the city. Her unique cuisine highlights local and seasonal ingredients while bringing an innovative twist to European flavors and techniques.

The second Fresh Thoughts dinner will be held on **Tuesday, May 18** and feature arctic char prepared by **Chef Bryan Voltaggio** of VOLT.

Chef Voltaggio is reinventing American cooking through his restaurant VOLT in his native Frederick, Maryland. Most recently a contestant alongside his brother Michael on '*Top Chef, Season Six*,' Chef Voltaggio was classically trained at one of America's most prestigious culinary schools and has risen through the ranks of the kitchen with the help of his mentor Charlie Palmer. Chef Voltaggio's passion for cooking was fostered during childhood in Frederick County where meals often included produce harvested from the family garden. At VOLT, his menus are driven by the fresh, seasonal offerings of local farmers.

"I want to strengthen the relationship between chef and grower," says Chef Voltaggio, who has become an advocate for meats, seafood, and produce that are local, sustainable and organic. "Through our choice of ingredients, we become engaged in more than creating a great dining experience, but in supporting local agriculture."

The final event of the series will be held on **Tuesday, June 22** and feature scallops prepared by **Chef Jill Snyder** of Woodberry Kitchen.

Born in Latrobe, PA, Chef Snyder's culinary interests were sparked at a young age when she began helping on her uncle's farm picking berries and baking cookies for the local farmer's market. After graduating from Baltimore International College, she gained experience in several restaurants, both in Pittsburgh and Baltimore, and currently works at Woodberry Kitchen.

Chef Snyder, though she enjoyed her experience as a *Top Chef, Season Five* contestant, prefers to show off her skills at private dinner parties and is eventually looking to teach children.

This unique series of three dining events features educational cooking demonstrations by well-known local chefs followed by seated dinners overlooking the Aquarium's coveted view of the Baltimore Harbor.

Each evening is themed around one sustainable seafood choice that is available in this region. Guests will enjoy a cocktail reception and cooking demonstration led by the guest chef, followed by a three-course fine dining experience that includes the sustainable entrée paired with perfectly matched regional wine. The evening will conclude with a stroll through the Aquarium. Guests will leave with complete recipes and information about where to purchase sustainable seafood locally.

### **Fresh Thoughts: A Sustainable Seafood Dining Series**

Tuesday, March 23: Marvesta Shrimp featuring Chef Jesse Sandlin

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Cost: \$79 members; \$89 non-members\*

Reservations required.

Event details at [aqua.org/freshthoughts](http://aqua.org/freshthoughts) or 410-576-3869

Tuesday, May 18: Arctic char featuring Chef Bryan Voltaggio

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Cost: \$79 members; \$89 non-members\*

Reservations required.

Event details at [aqua.org/freshthoughts](http://aqua.org/freshthoughts) or 410-576-3869

Tuesday, June 22: Scallops featuring Chef Jill Snyder

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Cost: \$79 members; \$89 non-members\*

Reservations required.

Event details at [aqua.org/freshthoughts](http://aqua.org/freshthoughts) or 410-576-3869

\*Tickets will be available for sale on [aqua.org](http://aqua.org) beginning **Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**. A special ticket package that includes all three dinners at a reduced rate will be offered for a limited time only. Check [aqua.org/freshthoughts](http://aqua.org/freshthoughts) for details.

Fishing practices worldwide are damaging the oceans. Bycatch, loss of habitat and breeding grounds, and overfishing all contribute to reduced species populations. The National Aquarium's Fresh Thoughts sustainable seafood dining series not only offers a delicious evening out, it's also a great way for people to learn more about sustainable seafood practices and make informed choices when purchasing seafood. If individual consumers support sustainable seafood choices, we can make a difference in fish populations and the health of our oceans.

The National Aquarium is proud to partner with the Classic Catering People for Fresh Thoughts. All of these events will be environmentally friendly.

<http://www.aqua.org/freshthoughts/>