

dine

# Fish story

By Mike Shanley  
Photos by Heather Mull



An old adage says that you don't order fish at a restaurant between Sunday and Wednesday. Traditionally, fish deliveries arrived on Thursdays, so the salmon or tuna cooked at the beginning of the week might not be the freshest catch. At the Original Fish Market Restaurant, that belief has gone the way of the rotary phone and the typewriter.

Say you order Arctic char. You'll be served fish that was delivered a few hours earlier from a farm in nearby Man, West Virginia.

Brian Annapolen, the Fish Market's executive chef, takes the concept of buying fresh seriously. He orders only as much product as he'll use on a given day. Most product comes from smaller handlers, like Isis, the Arctic char farm in West Virginia. This "buy local" story really caught our attention, since "locally raised" seafood certainly is tough to come by in southwestern Pennsylvania. "It's important for us to support local farms because we need them here," Annapolen says. "If there's nothing but houses everywhere, who's going to grow our food?"

While blue fin tuna, scallops or shrimp naturally have to come from beyond the tri-state area, Annapolen still believes in buying close to the source. "The product is a lot fresher," he says. "I think I'm supporting a smaller economy that way. I'm helping the boat captain, the shrimper, so he's not losing money selling to somebody else. And it's the synergy between a chef and a farmer or a chef and a fisherman or a chef and a boat captain that's important to this business."

Annapolen knew how he wanted to make a living from an early age. He grew up in New Jersey, the son of a chef who enjoyed presenting the skills of the trade to the next generation. By the time he reached his teens, Annapolen was familiar with sushi and developed a taste for high-end cuisine. He never went to culinary school; instead, he developed his skills by working directly with chefs around the country and in Europe. These experiences inspire his work today, as he passes his knowledge on to chefs who work with him.

