

“SEAsonality” FOR WORLD OCEANS DAY

RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX IS TAKING ACTION TO SERVE SUSTAINABLY
CAUGHT FISH, CRUSTACEANS, AND MOLLUSKS.

SINCE 2009, IN MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES, THE 580 MEMBER
PROPERTIES OF RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER
TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG THEIR GUESTS ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PRODUCTS. FOR THE SIXTH STRAIGHT
YEAR,
RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX WILL CELEBRATE WORLD OCEANS DAY ON JUNE
8, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ETHIC OCEAN.



UNITED NATIONS WORLD OCEANS DAY IS ON JUNE 8, 2023, and this year’s theme is “Planet Ocean: Tides are Changing.” Oceans cover most of our planet and this day is designed to make protecting those oceans a priority in the eyes of the public, which means no longer depleting its resources and proactively restoring marine ecosystems.

Relais & Châteaux wants to amplify this vital theme, as approximately 20% of the association’s establishments are in the immediate vicinity of a body of fresh or salt water. Many Relais & Châteaux restaurants will therefore be serving dishes that respect seafood sustainability.

SEAsonality: Unearth what ‘in season’ really means when it comes to seafood

When it comes to being ‘in season,’ fish, crustaceans, and mollusks are nothing like fruits and vegetables. Though one can establish seasonal calendars for seafood products, it is important to understand that seasonality on land is radically different from seasonality under water. Seafood seasons refer to the periods in which a given species is more plentiful at the markets, which most often coincide with their reproduction periods: the species gather in schools to spawn, making this the time when they are easiest to capture—so the notion of “seasonality” is not necessarily a criterion of sustainability. Consequently, it is our collective duty to understand what constitutes sustainability for fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. The first and most essential criterion is verification of stock status. Sustainable fishing also entails understanding and accommodating the reproduction cycles of aquatic animals.

To this end, Relais & Châteaux has joined forces with Ethic Ocean to clarify what SEAsonality really means and provides specific examples:

- For **European sea bass** (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), it means **avoiding consuming bass during its spawning period**, when it is heavily fished, a target for fishers because bass gather schools to reproduce. Outside this period, bass lead largely solitary lives and tend to be caught accidentally.
- For **flatfish** (plaice, sole, etc.), **consumption should be avoided during their reproduction periods**, which vary with the fishing areas. Their flesh is softer and more difficult to work with, resulting in economic losses and needless food waste. For females, the eggs they carry impact their weight, making the fish more expensive to buy for the consumer.
- For **eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna** (*Thunnus thynnus*), Relais & Châteaux, in conjunction with Ethic Ocean, committed in 2009 to no longer serve these fish at all. Thanks to the management measures put in place, this stock has improved over the past eleven years. It is fished when the adults congregate in schools in more fishing-accessible areas, meaning its season of market availability is the time when it migrates to the Mediterranean and the spawning period. **Bluefin tuna harvesting is now strictly regulated.**



- The **European eel** (*Anguilla anguilla*) is a species that is on the verge of extinction and eel **consumption should be avoided at all costs**. This critical state has been caused by overfishing, illegal fishing, habitat loss (dams, pollution, etc.) and climate change, and eel farming does not improve this perilous situation. Eel reproduction is not controlled in captivity and what are known as eel “farms” are, in fact, fattening farms: young glass eels are taken from the wild to be “raised” there for market.
- For **Pectinids**, the opening and closing of the fishing periods are established in the interests of **stock management and species preservation**. This is the case for **king scallops** (*Pecten maximus*) **in France**, but also for the second-most-fished scallop species in the world, the **Atlantic sea scallop** (*Placopecten magellanicus*) in specific parts of **Canadian waters**.
- **Species from aquaculture**, such as trout, sea bass, and gilthead sea bream, can be consumed **throughout the year**. But the farming conditions (feed, animal welfare, veterinary care, working conditions, etc.) must be verified.



SEAsonality (#SEAsonnalité #SEAsonality) to unearth myths and showcase that the tides are changing (#planetoccean #tidesarechanging)

The involvement of Relais & Châteaux members in this annual initiative is a continuation of the **Ethic Ocean Charter**, a pledge signed in 2009 **to preserve marine resources**, and the **Relais & Châteaux Vision** presented to UNESCO in 2014 to “make a better world through cuisine and hospitality.” Of the 20 Relais & Châteaux Vision commitments made by the members, No. 4 is to “initiate strong relationships with local farmers and fishers,” while No. 5 includes the intent “to protect the biodiversity of the oceans.”



Throughout the month of June, **hundreds of Relais & Châteaux chefs will be showcasing sustainable seafood products and explaining this accurate definition of seasonality that counters many preconceived notions**. Be it on their menus or in their cooking classes, the sustainable species selected, and the responsible choices made will be subject to both sampling and discussion to encourage consumers around the world to rethink their dining choices and showcase that the tides are changing.

The Relais & Châteaux World Oceans Day 2023 campaign

Three Relais & Châteaux members will address the implications of SEAsOnality at their properties with respect to ocean and freshwater fishing as well as aquaculture:

- **Chef Elena Arzak** (Restaurante **Arzak**, Donostia, San Sebastián, Spain) shines a spotlight on the **European anchovy** (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), for which stocks in the Bay of Biscay have been replenished by virtue of a five-year fishing ban between 2005 and 2010. This resource is now carefully monitored, and the chef remains consistently involved in the process with local fishers and the local AZTI research center.



- **Chef Scott Bacon** (The Ivy Hotel - **Magdalena restaurant**, Baltimore, Maryland, United States) has added an invasive species from the Chesapeake Bay, the **blue catfish** (*Ictalurus furcatus*), to the menu to focus attention on a little-known species that, when treated as a food fish, can impact an entire ecosystem.



- **Owner Hannes Bareiss** (**Hotel Bareiss**, Baiersbronn-Mitteltal, Germany) has established one of the most modern and innovative fish farms in Baden-Württemberg for hatching, rearing, and maturing trout. By modernizing the Forellenhof Buhlbach aquaculture station over a five-year period, he developed a leading-edge model of sustainable aquaculture that is environmentally friendly and respects animal welfare.

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*“Relais & Châteaux’s member properties are unified in their commitment to making the world a better place through cuisine and hospitality,” explains **Relais & Châteaux President Laurent Gardinier**. “While our chefs are ever aware of the vital importance of sustainable fishing, the association’s involvement in World Oceans Day gives their daily actions greater impact and scope, highlighting the role that Relais & Châteaux can have by virtue of its global presence across the five continents.”*

*“Working on the seasonality of seafood products means challenging a lot of preconceived notions and shifting focus to the state of the stocks of fish, crustaceans, and mollusks, as well as the fishing conditions involved in harvesting them. To learn to respect marine life by rethinking this concept of seasonality and thanks to the work of Ethic Ocean, Relais & Châteaux chefs have access to the most up-to-date scientific data on the state of seafood stocks. This way, they become public ambassadors for best practices – not only in the restaurant, but at the fishmonger’s, too. This notion of SEAsonality helps us better grasp the true urgency of protecting the ocean,” says **Mauro Colagreco, Vice President of Relais & Châteaux**.*

*“Ethic Ocean is very proud to support Relais & Châteaux members in this process. The association’s chefs were pioneers back in 2009 when they committed to saving the bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, a species that was close to collapse. This powerful commitment demonstrated the kind of impact that can be generated when an entire network takes unified action. The continuous and ever increasing work by the members on complex issues such as these generates widespread change in everyone’s practices,” states **Ethic Ocean President Gilles Boeuf**.*



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Local initiatives and events

There will be many events held across the globe on this day, be it a local press conference hosted by one of our members, dinners for our valued guests, special menus featuring sustainable seafood, cooking classes, or fish-free menus.

Join us for United Nations World Oceans Day (#UNWorldOceansDay) to celebrate SEAsonality (#SEAsonality #SEAsonnalité) and inspire the world to take action showcasing that the tides are changing (#planetoocean #tidesarechanging).

[The Ivy Hotel](#) in Baltimore - Many species in Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay are threatened by the invasive blue catfish, so Chef Scott Bacon is making sure to catch them and put them on the menu at Magdalena.
*video asset [here](#)



[Sonora Resort](#) in British Columbia - The beautiful wilderness resort not only practices ethical wildlife viewing, but they also teach guests about fishing regulations and how to do catch-and-release fishing on saltwater salmon trips. Sonora Resort proudly supports the Gillard Pass Fish Hatchery to replenish the stock of Chinook salmon.

[Ocean House](#) in Rhode Island - In an effort to fight climate change by reducing pressure on the wild stocks of sugar kelp, Ocean House has partnered with local kelp farmer, Stonington Kelp. Kelp farming introduces more seaweed into the ocean, which allows for excess nitrogen and carbon to be pulled from crops each year.

To see campaigns from previous years, visit the website for the Relais & Châteaux magazine Instants: <https://www.relaischateaux.com/us/magazine/our-commitments/fish-unknown>

RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX

A MOVEMENT WITH MEANING

ESTABLISHED IN 1954, Relais & Châteaux is an association of 580 unique hotels and restaurants throughout the world, owned and operated by independent entrepreneurs – most often families – who are passionate about their craft and deeply committed to forging warm, lasting relationships with their guests.

Relais & Châteaux members protect and promote the wealth and diversity of the world's culinary and hospitality traditions, to ensure they continue to thrive. They are equally dedicated to preserving local heritage and the environment, as articulated in the association's Vision presented to UNESCO in November 2014.

ABOUT ETHIC OCEAN

Ethic Ocean is a non-governmental environmental organization dedicated to the conservation of fisheries and marine ecosystems. Its mission is to create opportunities for change and help implement sustainable practices in the fisheries industry. Ethic Ocean works with all stakeholders to help them source species having stocks that are not overfished or which have been farmed responsibly.

For more information, visit www.ethic-ocean.org.

CONTACTS

J/PR Contact Information: relaisandchateaux@jpublicrelations.com | 212-924-3600

www.relaischateaux.com @relaischateaux

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