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YACHTING LIFE

**Compliments to the Chef**  
 Geoff Fisher of *Slipstream* is ready for anything. By Mary South

It might be going too far to say that a great charter experience is only as good as its onboard chef. But, let's face it: We all love a great meal and when you're paying for a luxury charter, you should expect truly exceptional cuisine.

YACHTING decided to track down some of the industry's best chefs at the Antigua Charter Yacht Show in December, and give you an inside look at these galley magicians in a new quarterly feature.

*Slipstream* (see "Yachting Registry," page 26) looked like a great place to start. A 60-meter steel and aluminum yacht built by CMN—even on the docks at the ACYS, which are cheek to jowl with gorgeous superyachts—she stands out.

And, as it turns out, so does her chef. Editor-in-Chief George Sass, photographer Alex Espriella, and I rendezvoused at 0800, ready to eat. Geoff Fisher, a cherubic-looking Brit in kitchen whites, greeted us from behind a steamy range, where he was putting the finishing touches on a pan-seared fillet of mackerel with a salad of pineapple, cho cho, and tomatoes with lime-pickled red onions and a ginger coriander dressing. I can't speak for my colleagues, but any trepidation I felt about my breakfast of champions was eased by news of dessert: a rum chocolate brownie with coconut ice cream and mango three ways. This was probably going to be okay.

Fisher's been a chef for 15 years, starting out in England's Lake District, then working in London for eight years, where he was the head chef at Knightsbridge. A friend aboard *Alfa Nero* convinced Fisher he should try cooking aboard a yacht and he's been at it for more than three years now. He started aboard the 35-meter *Wheels*, then worked aboard *Elements*, where he established himself by winning the ACYS Concours de Chef award. He's been with *Slipstream* for two years now—first aboard the old *Slipstream*, now aboard the brand-new CMN *Slipstream*.

Fisher has high praise for CMN and the pains they took in accommodating design input throughout the build, but especially in the galley, where he was able to get exactly what he wanted. After all, cooking fine food at sea is challenging even with the perfect tools.

You have to be a certain kind of chef to work aboard a charter yacht. "It's like a massive jigsaw puzzle," says Fisher. "You might have 12 guests and they each have something: one is gluten-free, one is no-dairy, one is a vegan..." Two typical tricky spots are diets and allergies. "I've had guests who are allergic to melon, kiwi, curries, and nuts." Then you

factor in personal dietary preferences. Some want sushi, some want Thai, some even (inexplicably, perhaps) want English food—which requires that a chef have flexibility and range.

Even larger than the challenges of guest whims are supply issues. "You have to be organized," Fisher points out. "When you're in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives, and someone wants something, you have to make it." What that means is that if you didn't plan ahead, you have to find it. "In a remote area," Fisher says, "I go to local sources and luxury hotels."

Most yachts supply charter guests with a preference sheet in advance of the trip, so they can provision accordingly. But that's no guarantee there won't be spontaneous special requests or midnight cravings.

"It takes more of a personal touch—there's no 'table six,'" grins Fisher. "If the guest wants an Indian banquet for 12 at 2:00 a.m.? You do it." He relates the story of one charter where the guest requested Biryani every night. The guest had brought along his own chef because he was so particular, but after three days, he let his personal chef go home.

I wondered if Fisher had any regrets about taking to sea, but he seemed to relish the challenges. You get to

YES, CHEF: Fisher, left, makes something sculptural with hot sugar. Desserts, below, are his favorite things to cook.





**FEAST FOR THE EYES, TOO:** Not only is the chocolate-rum brownie with coconut ice cream (above) delicious, but, like the pan-seared mackerel entrée (below), it's also beautifully finished and plated.

see the world, of course, and unlike other crew jobs, the skills you burnish aboard charter yachts only make you a better chef should you decide to go back to land.

But how was the food? *Sublime*. The sweet and sour of the salsa and lime pickle was the perfect flourish for the slightly salty, crisply seared mackerel. And the chocolate rum brownie with coconut ice cream? I'm going to go with the highly specialized food writer's

vocabulary and say *insane*. Breakfast will never be the same.

"You really have to cook what they want," Says Fisher. "When the guest is happy, the chef is happy." □

*Slipstream is available for the summer season in the Mediterranean at weekly rates beginning at €315,000, and in the Caribbean during the winter, at weekly rates beginning at \$392,000.*

Contact Burgess, (305) 672-0150; [www.burgessyachts.com](http://www.burgessyachts.com).



## TRY THIS AT HOME!

This sensational entrée will wow your guests whether by land or by sea.

### PAN-SEARED MACKEREL WITH SALAD OF PINEAPPLE, CHO CHO, AND TOMATOES, LIME-PICKLED RED ONIONS, AND A GINGER-CILANTRO DRESSING

(Serves four)

#### INGREDIENTS

- 4 fillets of mackerel
- 1 small pineapple
- 1 cho cho (also known as christophene or cayote)
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion
- 1 ¾ oz. fresh grated ginger
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 lime
- 6 ¾ oz. olive oil
- pinch of salt
- pinch of sugar

#### PREPARATION

1. Peel and thinly slice the red onion, grate and juice the lime, and pour over the onions to marinate.
2. Trim the fish fillets, checking for any small bones, and season with salt and pepper.
3. Cut tomatoes in half, sprinkle with sugar, salt, and a little olive oil. Place in an oven at low heat for 30 minutes until partly dry, but still soft.
4. Put the peeled ginger, cilantro, and half of the olive oil into a blender and pulse until smooth.
5. Peel the cho cho, remove the stone, and cut into very thin strips. Peel and core the pineapple, and cut into bite-size pieces.
6. In a heated nonstick frying pan, add a splash of olive oil and place the seasoned fish skin side down over medium heat. Once the edges start to cook, turn over and remove the pan from the heat.
7. To serve, arrange the pineapple, tomatoes, and cho cho in the center of the plate, place the fish on the salad, then top with the marinated onions. Drizzle the ginger-cilantro dressing around the edge of the salad to finish.