

EXTRAORDINARY PERSPECTIVE



Lobster

Hello, Maine, The World is Calling:

STORY & INTERVIEW BY COLIN W. SARGENT

Venice Denizens

It's Heaven when you have lobster on the menu. **Hotel Monaco** on Venice's Grand Canal knows how to hit the spot—"Fettuccine Fatte in Casa in Salsa D'Astice... Homemade Fettuccine with Lobster Sauce." Whatever floats your gondola.



Turns out we **don't know everything** there is to know about the **lobster market**. Now's our **chance to seize a global opportunity**.

In Paris on rue Coquillière, you can snap up a lobster roll for 28 euros (\$35 U.S.) at the trendy **Lobster Bar**, the talk of the town.

As restaurateur Mathieu Mercier puts it, "*Le pitch: Faire avaler aux gourmets parisiens sa lobster dwich' mania tout droit débarquée des côtes outre-Atlantique.*" Translation: *Maine lobster is très chic across the sea*. Everything has changed. And the astonishing thing is, we Mainers are the ones who will have to re-imagine lobster in order to capture emerging



Mania



Matt Jacobson, executive director, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative

global opportunities.

“We think that China is likely the biggest international market for lobster of all kinds, Maine included, and growing the fastest as well,” says **Matt Jacobson**, the new executive director at Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, with offices above Three Dollar Dewey’s on Commercial Street in Portland. “South Korea is also a significant market.”

As demand has increased, the received wisdom Mainers cherish about lobsters has become less and less valuable. For example, the recent surge in interest has little to do with hot-buttered lobster (which has slipped from 54-percent of dishes to 36 percent) while emerging flavors such as cilan-

TOP: CREATIVE COMMONS CHENSITUAN; LEFT: STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS
RIGHT: FILIPP KOTISHCHEVSKIY

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tro, wasabi, ginger, and mango are transforming the dish and therefore our desires.

Enter Jacobson, 53, a Naval Academy graduate and Air Force pilot; former President and COO of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroads; former CEO of Maine & Co., a business statistics non-profit specializing in bring new business into the state; and former candidate who sought the Republican nomination for Maine governor in 2010. Intent upon upgrading the database we use for investing in the future of Maine lobster, Jacobson has commissioned Chicago statisticians Technomic to serve notice on what's being served on menus across the country.

Successful lobster-roll food trucks in New York City and now Washington, DC. Luke and his company, Cape Seafood, have really been a leader in this innovative way to market. His success, coupled with the data from this and other sources, leads us to believe that Maine lobster rolls might work in a lot of places.



Tropical Lobster

Sometimes global branding happens one person at a time. **Kennebunkport native James "Shaymus" Alwin** is now head chef at the exclusive **Royal Hawaiian** resort near Diamond Head. He's surprising Hawaii with his creative lobster dishes.



We hear your father's in the industry?
Yes, that's true! He's been a lobsterman for over 35 years.

Tell us about your connection to lobstering in Maine, and the Kennebunk River?

From a young age, I was always out on the boat with my dad, helping him haul traps. It's always been part of my life and our main source of income for a while. Most of all, it helped us physically put food on the table.

Have you worked at any restaurants in Maine?

I worked at a place called Seascapes (now Pier 77) from age 15 to 19, working my way up from dish washer/prep cook to line cook over time. My mother has worked at Arundel Wharf Restaurant for 30 years; she was a server and is now a manager.

Which of your Hawaiian fusion lobster dishes most amazes your parents?

I'd say my lobster brioche that's currently on the Papaaina Menu at Azure Restaurant.

Fastest-Growing Lobster Flavors

- 1 Ginger
- 2 Honey
- 3 Wasabi
- 4 Cilantro
- 5 Caviar

PORTLAND MAGAZINE GRAPH. DATA FROM TECHNOMIC INC.

These graphs are beyond enlightening. How important are the new flavors?

While some of the specifics we are seeing from the menu surveys are unexpected, the information certainly whets our appetite for more data to base our marketing decisions. Chefs are using Maine lobster in new and fascinating ways. I tried a recipe the other night for Thai-spiced Maine lobster tails with coconut. Fabulous!

Tough work, but someone has to do it. Another graph seems to reveal that lobster rolls—loved by Mainer, diners in Manhattan, a spectacular exception in Paris, and a few food truck customers in San Francisco—are comparatively undiscovered elsewhere. Is this a huge marketing opportunity?

One of our board members, Luke Holden, is the Luke of Luke's Lobster—one of the suc-

You've suggested that some of our prior information about Maine lobstering verges on "fable." Your starting point has been to secure reliable data about present shipping and wholesaling. Is that because

we can't know where we're going until we know where we are?

Information about where Maine Lobster is popular and where it commands the high-



Chef Alwin's "Azure Ocean Risotto," \$49: Lobster tail, prawns, clams, scallops, soffrito, saffron, aromatic arborio rice, sugar peas & marinated Hamakua tomato.

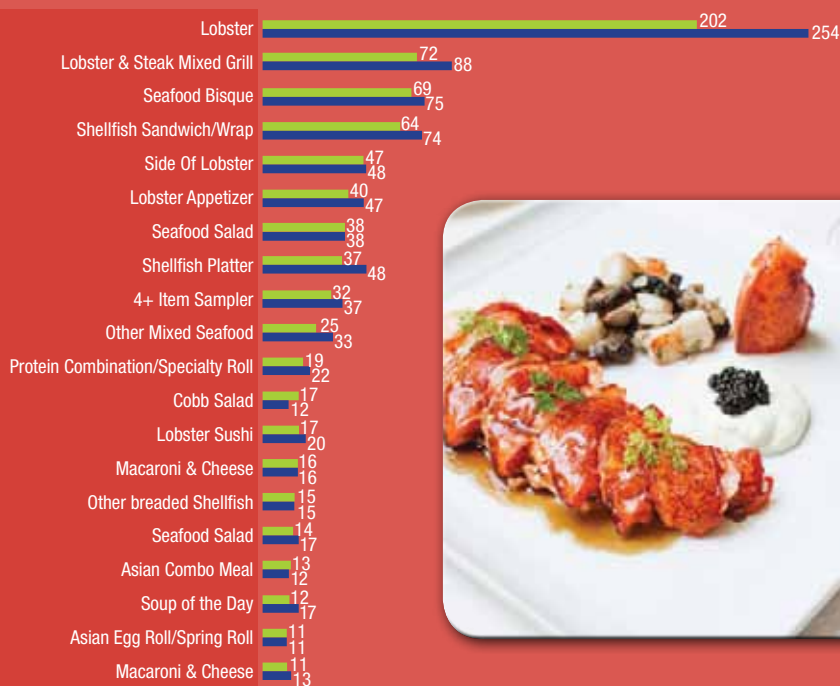


The biggest macro dining trend about lobsters is their traceability.

est price are issues we are very interested in learning more about. We are beginning to define the specific data we could use. Shar-

Center-Of-The-Plate Lobster Is Top Menued Format, Despite A Steep Decline in 2014

Top Overall Lobster Formats Across U.S. Operators



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ing of information within the industry will allow all the players, including the Collaborative, to make better business decisions.

Does this mean our presumptions about marketing lobsters have had us trying to sell our lobsters to a vanished demographic?

I'm not sure I accept the premise—the industry has done a pretty good job over

Lobster by the Numbers

"We contracted with a company called Technomic for a year's worth of menu data gathering. I believe this service cost about \$30,000."—Matt Jacobson

time—after all, some estimates are that the Maine Lobster Industry is worth more than \$1B to the Maine economy. That said, more information and data about our customer's attitudes, preferences, and locations

will only make us stronger. And while marketing food is complex and not without challenges, we are starting from an extraordinarily strong position. One data point here: We asked 21 of the country's best marketing agencies if they might be interested in partnering to help us market Maine lobster, and all but three submitted proposals. We have a great brand. We have the best stories about the people who catch the fish; where they do it; and the unique sustainability of the Maine Lobster fishery. I am very optimistic that a focused, data-driven marketing effort will have demonstrable results.

You've met your marketing counterpart from the pork industry. What did he know that you don't know?

There are more than 20 Federal "Check Off" programs administered by the USDA that help market beef,

pork and other commodities. Several state boards do similar jobs but are sponsored at the state level, like Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. The COO from the American Pork Board was extremely generous with his time. And while there was much to learn from him, he did tell me his budget for pork will be about \$97M this year. It puts



London Calling

"Like many of the girls in my town, I grew up with my name on the side of my father's boat."

—Christina Lemieux Oragano

"Lobster is on a roll" in London, according to Cutler native **Christina Lemieux Oragano**, who's lived there since 2005. On her maine-lylobster.com blog, she writes that the city's wildly popular restaurant chain **Burger and Lobster** serves 700,000 lobsters a year, but she tells us it "sources all its lobster from Canada...I've struggled to find Maine lobster on menus [here]...I'd love to see more efforts to get Maine lobster into the London market in a branded way...Otherwise, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, they'll be left thinking a lobster is a lobster is a lobster!"



PHOTOS FROM TOP: COURTESY MATHIEU MERCIER(2); RESTAURANT-TOURISME/FEL.COM; MAINE-LYLOBSTER.COM; CREATIVE COMMONS EINDRUCKSCHINDERDOMAIN
GRAPHS: BASE: MENU OFFERINGS ACROSS 6,656 U.S. FULL-SERVICE AND LIMITED-SERVICE CONCEPTS SOURCE: MENUMONITOR; TECHNOMIC, INC.



French Connection

Easy Jet Magazine says it best about Mathieu Mercier's success at "Paris's famous **Lobster Bar**...[where] Maine's most famous export (barring Stephen King) is taking Europe by storm."

When we call Mercier, the chef/owner of the attraction, he explains: "My first trip to the U.S. was when I was a teenager, in Jamaica Point, Maine [Belgrade Lakes]. I ate my first lobster and my first lobster roll there, a total shock...Then, seeing that no lobster bar existed in Paris and that I love the product, I decided to open Lobster Bar and to twist the recipes with a French touch." Taste Mercier's recipes at lobsterbar.fr

"I ate my first lobster... a total shock."

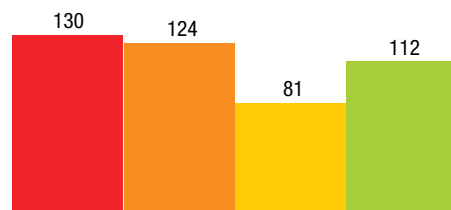
—Mathieu Mercier, Lobster Bar, Paris

our \$1.5M for 2015 in perspective. He also has granular data about his industry: He knew for example that a 1-percent decrease in the supply of pork resulted in a 3-percent increase in price at the retail level. That sort of detailed data about pork really sparked my interest in developing similar useful data about Maine lobster.

One shocker graph shows the West Coast and South mention lobster more often on menus than the East Coast. Really?

More Maine Lobster Mentions Are Found On Menus In The West Than Any Other Region In The U.S.

Maine Lobster Menu Mentions Incidence, By Region



Menu Mentions

- West
- South
- Midwest
- Northeast



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There are at least two take-aways here. First, we are starting from a position of strength: Maine lobster is loved all over the U.S. That is really good news as we try to extract more value for our industry. The second thought is that lobster consumed in New England is often served at home and not necessarily in a restaurant. No matter what, data like this will help inform us where we ought to go to be the most successful.

What do these graphs *not* tell you that you're hoping to learn?

I'd like to learn more about the value equation. Who pays most for Maine lobster and why? Where can our pro-

Rumble in Manhattan

Who gave New York the right to conduct an annual Lobster Roll Rumble to decide who makes the best lobster roll in America? At least Maine lobster shacks are the perennial winners. Luke's Lobster ruled in 2009 & 2010. The Clam Shack in Kennebunk won Fans' Choice in 2012 & 2013; Eventide Oyster grabbed Editor's Choice in 2013; and Robert's Maine Grill in Kittery

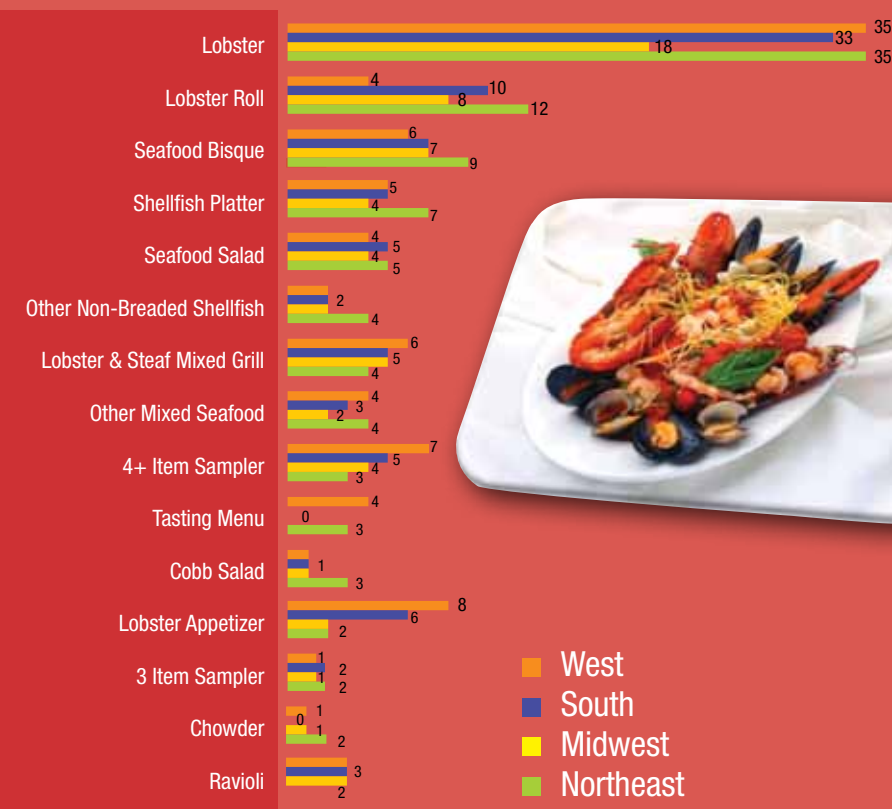


2014 Lobster Roll Rumble contestants await judging in New York.

won Editor's Choice honors in 2014. According to the *New York Daily News* "Daily Meal," the second-best lobster rolls in the city are Red Hook Lobster Pound's food trucks' "Maine Style" rolls, \$16 each. First place goes to Pearl Oyster Bar in Greenwich Village, which serves a brimming lobster roll with fries and a salad, \$28.

Lobster Rolls Are Most Popular In The Northeast While Appetizers Are More Frequent In The West & South Regions

Top Maine Lobster Formats Across U.S. Operators, By Region (2014)



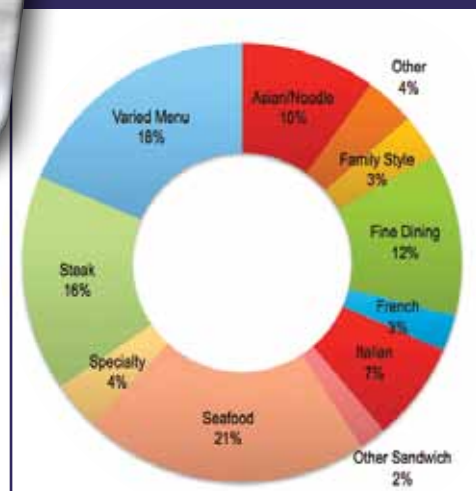
cessors and wholesalers sell their products for the most value? As we get farther away from Maine, the costs of logistics rise. Finding markets that value Maine Lobster but don't require extensive and expensive supply chains will be a focus for us.

Please tell us how it is that Maine lobsters are called Boston Lobsters in China, and what you hope to do about it.

Primarily in Asia, but in other overseas locations, it is not hard to find "Boston Lobster" featured on a menu. This is because the point of debarkation in the United States was the port of Boston, and that's what's printed on the Customs documents. That documentation follows straight through to the menus.

Branding Maine Lobster is our challenge,

What Type of Restaurants Serve Lobster?



and one that we will systematically approach all over the world.

What's one advantage Mainers don't understand about the Maine lobster business?

One of the things that is unique and special about our fishery is that every lobster is caught and inspected by hand. That sort of care and dedication of our lobstermen and women is unique and inspirational. Look for us to be telling their stories around the world in the near future.

If you were to appear on *Shark Tank* in support of Maine lobster futures, how would you sell it?

I think the biggest macro trend that is important for us is the notion of sustainability and traceability. There is a powerful trend in food where people all over the world, and especially in the U.S., are interested in where their food comes from; how it is harvested, and by whom.

Tell us about the marketing competition and what will happen after the early December reveal?

We've contacted more than 20 of the best marketing agencies in the world. And nearly all of them have expressed interest in part-



Wow in Macau

Robuchon au Dôme, at the top of Macau's Grand Lisboa Hotel, the tallest on the city skyline, just earned its 3rd Michelin star for the seventh year in a row. The menu shimmers with "Maine lobster in turnip ravioli," according to lady-birdofleisure.com

FROM LEFT: MORGANIONE YEAGER; REDVISITOR.COM; GRAND LISBOA HOTEL MACAU



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nering with Maine lobster. We are in the process of determining which of them will be best for us and are excited at the quality work we are seeing...After we make our final decision, we'll get to work right away defining the data we need to get and begin to make some choices about where we target our efforts.

Are we talking about celebrity endorsements (Mary Tyler Moore, not so much. But maybe Diane Keaton)? We haven't a clue yet! A lot will be determined by which geographic areas we target and which sales channels we focus on. There are plenty of celebrities who might be interested in helping us, but we haven't yet decided how, or if, we might go about that. I could also see us partnering with celebrity chefs along the way. The data will guide us on the most effective way to proceed. ■

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative was created in 2013. *Graphs (2014)* by Technomic, Inc. To see more graphs from the study, visit portlandmonthly.com/portmag/2014/11/lobster-graph-extras.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne J. Yee, D.D.S., P.C." The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

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Plasma Arc, Laser, and Digital Dental Technology helps to Create Beautiful Smiles Often in Only One Day!

By: Marianna Gold

A smile that gives self-confidence and happiness is priceless. It can help you to start a new life, or to succeed at that interview for the job that you always wanted. Having a healthy appearance is a quality of life issue that can affect how others see and judge us, and how we see ourselves.

Obtaining High Quality Aesthetic (Cosmetic) Dentistry is easier to achieve than you may think. Just doing a professional 4 session Plasma Arc Bleaching is sometimes all that is needed to brighten a smile. And with today's Laser and ultrasonic filling technology you can in most cases totally avoid local anesthesia using needles. No more pain or hours of numbness. For Crowns the process of Digital Dentistry uses a Computer that guides a porcelain milling robot into the fabrication of custom designed and precisely fitted cosmetic teeth. Crowns/Laminates that could take several weeks to make can now be completed in as little as 1.5 hours.

The following photos were taken of an actual case completed in the office using Computer Assisted Design (CAD), and Computer Automated Milling (CAM) techniques. Temporaries that could easily fall off were not needed. This entire crown case was completed from start to finish in only One Day. Laser white fillings required less than 3 minutes per tooth because no wait time is needed for the patient to get numb. Plasma Arc bleaching helped to balance the colors prior to the start of treatment.



Will people know?

After this "Dental Make Over," few (even close friends) recognized what was done. But they all knew that the patient looked a lot better, and appeared healthier. This phenomena occurs because in conversations people focus more upon each other's eyes -- the teeth are not typically noticed as the immediate source of this healthy



new look, even if within their field of view.

But if the smile looks too white, or too flat, or too perfect the secret is given away and it draws attention immediately to the teeth; in which case they would appear fake. The secret to a perfect smile is by adding imperfections, but in the way that Mother Nature would. Look at the before and after pictures again. See if you can identify the natural teeth from the cosmetic bondings and porcelain crowns. The answer will be in next month's issue.

A Healthy Foundation

In order to have a lasting affect, all Aesthetic Dentistry must start with quality Dental care, healthy gums, and proper hygiene. A comprehensive approach requires your willingness to get your teeth and gums into the best shape possible. This critical effort on your part will greatly increase the life of your Aesthetic Dentistry.

Having a perfect smile is really specific to each individual. One smile cannot fit all. A perfect smile is subjective to the person who wants it, and the environment in which the person intends to be in.

Philosophy of Dental Aesthetics

"In over 20 years of Practice I have learned that the best Aesthetic Dentistry occurs only in an imperfect world. I try my best to copy and maximize the beauty of that imperfect world. Rather than trying to make every tooth geometrically the same I try to lean in the direction that nature's form and function takes me; unique to each individual.

I purposely make teeth ever so slightly 'imperfect' with tiny chips, waves, twists, and turns, but I do so in the way Mother Nature would make these teeth. The net result is a 'perfect smile,' but not a fake smile."

-Quote by Dr. Wayne J. Yee