



Steps Away... Miles Apart

restaurant ■ bar ■ catering
ocean beach, fire island, 631 583 8088

Newsletter - 2020

The Best Way To Say Thank You

Life is a series of decisions-some big, some small. Every one of those decisions effects how your day goes. Each decision is loosely or not so loosely connected to the next. My staff and I recognize this from the start. To be sure - we will do everything and anything in our power to affirm that you made the right decision to spend your hard earned money and precious time inside the space we call Island Mermaid. We thank you for making the decision to spend time with us.

What I Have Learned

Over the past 43 years of Fire Island Life and 30 of those steering the ship here at Island Mermaid, I have had a one of a kind front row seat to much. I have learned that we all share a deep love of this place and each bring our own layered perspective which is deserving of sincere respect. Whether you make a living here, live and work here year round, or find joy and refuge here from your home in Manhattan or the South Shore - we all find good reason to cherish and keep this one of the most extraordinary places on earth. Lets not forget that.

Things You Can't Teach

Often, guests will reach out to me with a tale of something special or sweet our staff has done for them or their family. It reminds me that, at its core, our success rests inside the culture of caring I have gone to great lengths to locate and nurture in the hiring process for 30 years. If you start with just the right clay, it's easier to mold, bend and twist into a warm work of art. Being Mermaid material is a "thing". I hope you love all of this years new hires and get to know them over the next decade.

Water Water Everywhere

Unless you are just not paying attention, it's hard not to recognize the serious level of concern about "normalized flooding" without a big weather event. I am calling upon our Village government to ratchet up all efforts to address this phenomenon which, by itself, jeopardizes all stakeholders investments on a daily basis. The long considered idea of utilizing a catch basin type system can not wait. Whatever the cost, let's please get it done!

"Barefoot " Is Back

I call the nights when our dinner guests are joined by their families and friends to dance after dinner, the "barefoot" nights. We are intent on keeping these totally carefree nights, where you know all the people on the dance floor. You can easily find love (for a night or a lifetime) just dancing barefoot. Over the last 2 seasons, these romance filled evenings are roaring back at the Mermaid. The casual elegance with which we choose to host you and your families for after dinner music and drinks sets a unique tone that intends to wrap you in just that kind of embrace. Get treated right the whole night. Bring your friends, family and housemates on down to the most comfortable, air-conditioned dance floor in town. We got the beat right after dinner and the locals are back in full force. New this season are our late night weekend Pies and Pitchers Parties from 11pm - 3am. Sit on the deck for a Pizza Pie & Pitcher of Beer just \$30.

The Man Behind The Mermaid - Gerry Lynas

Most of our regulars have seen the 8 ft - 600 lb sculptured Mermaid above our bar. Since she also turns 30 this year, I thought we would again pay tribute to the supremely talented artist who created her in a one of a kind project at my request 30 years ago! His name is Gerry Lynas. If you have ever seen a two story sand or ice sculpture on a beach or in Central Park, it's most probably his creation. A famous documentary filmmaker as well, he designed and built our Mermaid in the basement of his upper west side apartment building in 1990. When he was ready, 6 of us drove into Manhattan to truck her back along the beach, where Jamo Ragusa, Doug Wycoff and their crews hoisted her onto her platform. Only then, did Gerry agree to finish the Mermaid's final coat up there on a scaffold because he insisted she be displayed only with Fire Island sand. As far as we know, we are the first and only establishment to attempt such namesake tribute like this. All our love to Gerry and his family!

Have You Had A Thin Crust Yet ?

By any measure, Dockside Pizza (next door to us) was a smashing success in its inaugural season. Few first year shops experience the kind of accolades that Travis and his staff earned. The real "star" might just be Archie, the 5000 lb blue granite rotating brick oven from Genoa Italy, that fast bakes thin crust artisanal pies in under 3 minutes. Not only is it a "beast", it is an actual work of art you must stop by and see! The hand crafted granite is 8 inches thick and it glows at night. With on premise dough making, 20 toppings, plus cauliflower crust, and vegan options, you create your own high speed meal. Free deliveries from OBP to Summer

Club arrive hot and fresh. Travis is having Kids Kamp Kitchen this year with OBYG. Make em and eat em in under 15 minutes! Call Dockside 631-583-0303, or order on line at docksideobfi.com

Did You See Us on TV ?

Last season was a pretty cool year for us, especially when we were featured on two television programs. Stone Grissom's Food Show on News 12 shot a segment with Chef Rago and GM Hailey as did Jill Nicolini of Channel 11 for her "Field Trip Fridays" morning travel segment. We were also recently featured as one of the top 5 must visit waterfront eateries on Long Island by Pulse Magazine.

Gimme Shelter

The giant, colorful market umbrellas we added 3 seasons ago now have a new brother and sister making it 6. If all goes well, the final 2 family member units will be added in 2021. These high end, full tilt and swivel works of art are becoming a big part of our curbside appeal meets guest comfort vision. We'll keep making you more comfortable every day so you can keep supporting our vision.

Baby On Board!

Longtime Exec Chef Joe Rago and his bride Amy now have a brand new little boy at home. We all wish Joe and Amy the great joy we know comes with that sweet bundle.

Did You Know...?

The Albatross used to be two stories with sweeping bay views and called The Bayview!

CJs was originally owned by Giovanni whose son was named Christopher John aka CJ ?

The "Zippy" Cocktail, known in far corners of the world, was invented by AJ Stillman and the crew of Housers?

That Casey Morano (of Matthews) daughter, Reed, is one of Hollywood's hottest cinematographers and directors!

New - New Delivery App

You will now be able to order your favorite lunch or dinner items for home delivery at Mermaidobfi.com by May.



We look forward to serving you in our 30th season when we re-open Friday, April 17th See you at the beach! Scott & the staff.



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N e w s l e t t e r - 2 0 2 0

30/30 in 2020

A true milestone. In 1990, a young East Islip kid rolled the dice after toiling for 8 previous years for his two predecessors here at (what has become) Island Mermaid. Working through college and law school first for Leo Shumer of Leo's and then for Wally Pickard of Wally's fame, I got the once in the lifetime chance to buy this building and bend it towards my dream. Here we are, 30 years later, and I love it like it was my very first day with the keys. I hope that every time you return, I am here to greet you. A more intimate look at that story and journey is on our website, if you are interested. This milestone would not be possible without the support and help of my wonderful family, Jaimee, Luke and Carson. They continue to inspire me and allow me to follow my dream.

Dockside Pizza at the Bar

You may have noticed all the guests feasting on delicious, thin crust, bar pies like The Caprese or MeatLovers. That's right. The pie masters next door at Dockside Pizza hand deliver these fresh, artisan, hot pies right to you at the bar. We also have limited pie orders at the tables, for our vegan and gluten free diners. Grab me anytime to see if I can expedite a pie to your table if there are dietary concerns and you need a gluten free, cauliflower crust or vegan creation. Each pie takes less than 4 minutes

Catering - Your Next Party

We already had the largest variety of catering choices. Now, our catering menus include unique options to add Dockside Thin Crust Pizza and Big Boy Beach Burritos to any event. No one has it all. Except us. Let us make your house party easy, fun, inexpensive and memorable. Catering menus are now available at the host stand all the time.

Entertainment Calendar

Most bars would kill to have 2 big nights a week. We are totally blessed. We have 6. That's because Tuesday's Bitchy Bingo is a total hoot with big prizes and drag queen Ariel Sinclair. Wisdom Wednesday's with songstress Vicki Wisdom playing her heart out following Caitlin Bell's 4 year residency, Industry Thursday's with DJ Just Joe and then Barefoot Ballroom with DJs Decoy and Just Joe killin it for you on the weekend dance floor. Finally, Sunday's with Ziggysmall and the Zigon Band round out the weekend. Topping that off are our 4x a summer Drag Shows with Ariel Sinclair and friends. Our full entertainment lineup is on our website islandmermaid.com.

Ride Home On Us

If you live in Kismet, Saltaire, Fair Harbor, The Grove or Pines, you know its gotten awfully expensive to join us for dinner by water taxi. Not anymore. For years, we have had a partnership program with F I Water Taxi that YOU need to take advantage of. In partnership with the taxi, we pay the ride home. Modest requirements exist Tuesday thru Friday nights. Come on down, have dinner and the ride home is on us. Special thanks to Sean and the water taxi staff for keeping this program working.

OBCOC Starts It's Second Year

The Ocean Beach Chamber of Commerce now boasts 67 members, 5 working committees and a lovely Welcome Center. Staffed by volunteers, the Welcome Center is located just inside the ferry terminal waiting area. Information on and from every Village organization can be found there, as well as National Seashore materials. Thanks Jen

Giving Back Feels Great

After so many early years of struggle, it's nice to finally be able to support some off Island causes we feel strongly about. Since day one, Mermaid has supported well over a dozen traditional fire island causes and still does. However, for the past 3 years, we have really expanded and branched out our support to off island charitable causes as well. Your love and patronage of The Mermaid now supports both New York's City Harvest feed the homeless campaign and the 4 Oceans, save the ocean campaign. Ask me or our staff to explain. We are thrilled to do this for the next 30 years. We hope you feel good about helping us give back

Game Changer for The Ladies

Lets face it our bathrooms were horrible. We can't make them bigger so we did the next best thing. We made it feel bigger and actually a whole lot better. Apologies that it took 30 years. These newly constructed bathrooms are a game changer for us! Thanks to the Cernilli crew.

Have Faith In Wisdom

Announcing "Wisdom Wednesdays" and wishing Caitlin Bell all the success in the world of Nashville. Cait's sidekick and BFF Miss Vicki Wisdom has teamed up over the winter with Cait's guitarist Andy Mac to get ready for all new Wisdom Wednesday late nights. The spirit, tradition and vibe continues!

Well Earned Promotion

He started as a culinary school extern from the CIA in Hyde Park. We are delighted and proud to elevate Huntington native Kevin (Coop) Manning to Sous Chef after his many years of strong and dedicated service on our kitchen team. Kevin has really found a love for Fire Island and his skills

now match his passion for creating wonderfully composed meals for our 50,000 plus food guests each summer. Try doing that in a kitchen that's 12 x 15. Congrats Coop!!

A Word From Exec Chef Rago

Each season I look for special ways to remind our guests how much passion our back of the house team has for quality while we strive to develop interesting and unique ingredient combinations. The changing and evolving nature of social food consumption requires that we increase guest choice for healthier and in some cases vegan and vegetarian options. This year, we will focus on making that happen.

A New Longevity Leader

Last years departure of our 29 year veteran prep cook Rosa Guzman, paved the way for a new staff "old timer". A bartender of extraordinary skill, Mike Brocco, now leads the longevity list at 27 years! In fact, Mike and his wife Danielle were the second staff marriage for the Mermaid. It's no secret, they won't be the last. We love you Mike and your family. Here's to your own 30 year Mermaid celebration.

More Fun Stuff On The Back

We look forward to serving you in our 30th season when we re-open Friday, April 17th See you at the beach! Scott & the staff.