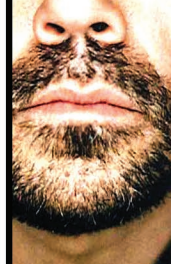
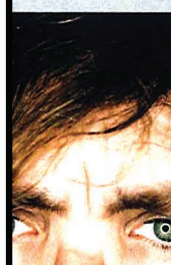
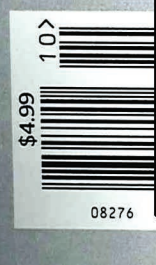


Esquire

MAN AT HIS BEST

THE

OCTOBER 2013



80

THE TWEETED RECIPE
@chefhopkins

BISCUITS
• 1c White Lily self rising flour
• 2T Cold butter

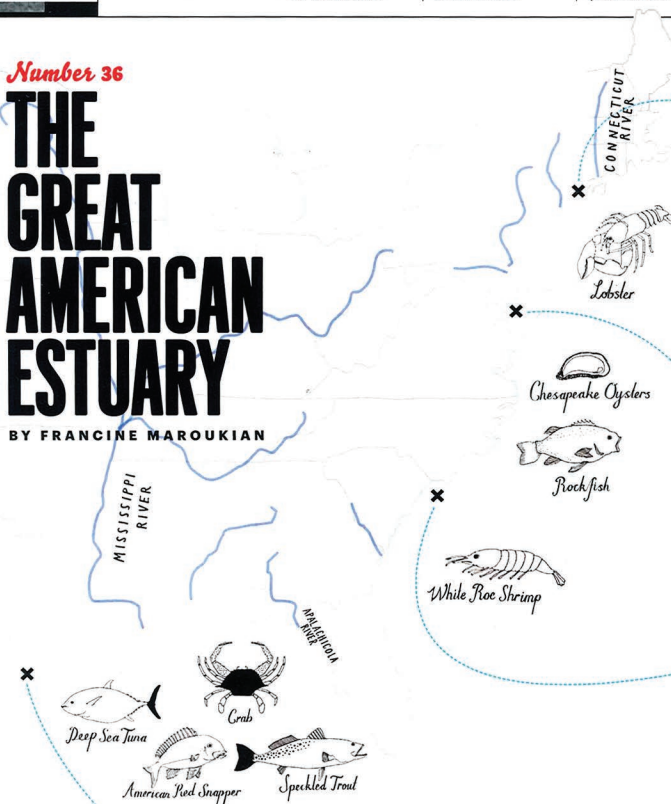
• 1/3c Buttermilk
• Roll, cut, bake 9m at 500
• EAT (Tweeted on August

7, 2013, by Atlanta chef Linton Hopkins, of Restaurant Eugene)

Number 36

THE GREAT AMERICAN ESTUARY

BY FRANCINE MAROUKIAN



NOS. 37-40
THE ESTUARIES

LONG ISLAND SOUND
and coastal properties
from southern Connecticut to Maine

CHEF: Bill Taibe
RESTAURANT: The Whelk, Westport, Connecticut
DISH: Taibe combines two hallmarks of Yankee cooking (seafood and dairy), pulling flavor from a lobster by cooking the meat in "lobster tar," a sauce made from the roasted shells, and ladling it over fried potatoes made aromatic with roasted leeks, lemon, and fresh lacy dill.

CHESAPEAKE BAY
specifically Maryland

CHEF: Spike Gjerde
RESTAURANT: Woodberry Kitchen, Baltimore
DISH: When rockfish are running 36 inches, Gjerde offers a full rockfish menu, including collar meat (behind the gill) glazed with fish pepper, a 19th-century heirloom chile once grown in local African-American gardens.

Charleston waters and
COASTAL CAROLINAS

CHEF: Mike Lata
RESTAURANT: The Ordinary, Charleston, South Carolina
DISH: Applying his native New England's Portuguese influence to a low-country classic, Lata gives poached white-roe shrimp an escabeche-style sherry-vinegar marinade, studs the mix with vegetables, then adds a reminder of Charleston's importance on the spice trade route: toasted cumin, caraway, and coriander.

GULF COAST
from Galveston, Texas,
to Apalachicola, Florida

CHEF: Donald Link
RESTAURANT: Pêche Seafood Grill, New Orleans
DISH: A reminder of the city's seafaring Sicilian heritage (the French Quarter was once known as "Little Palermo"), Pêche's spaghetti and crab is built on a foundation of shallots, leeks, and chiles deglazed with crab stock to make a sauce for spaghetti and Lake Hermitage crabmeat.

Plenty of chefs know their way around a fish; few, however, know how to navigate an estuary. Estuaries are those murky coastal transition zones where rivers flow into oceans, where fresh and salty water mix to create the kind of habitat that makes the right kind of chef really excited. A chef like Spike Gjerde, who sources from the Chesapeake Bay for his restaurant Woodberry Kitchen, in Baltimore, and then donates all his used oyster shells to construct reefs that enable repopulation.

Estuaries, not so long ago, were in bad shape. You can have all the federal and state regulation you want, but marine stewardship has to happen at the community level. These chefs think of nearby waters the way farmers think of their fields. But unlike the "buy local" agricultural movement, which can pinpoint the origin of every lettuce leaf, estuarine sourcing has a mysterious quality because water moves. After a decade of having their cooking style reduced to the one-size-fits-all cliché "farm to table," chefs are being drawn to the challenge of balancing profitability on the razor's edge of the water's dynamism. This requires treating ecosystems not as resources to be exploited but as relationships to be nurtured. "We connected ourselves to these Atlantic fisheries," says Gjerde of his relationship to the Chesapeake. "And we will rise and fall with the changing tide."

While most chefs serve fish from distant waters, estuary-centric ones like Gjerde, Donald Link, Mike Lata, and Bill Taibe are enthralled by what you might call *merroir*—a marine twist on the wine term *terroir*, the impact that soil and environment have on the flavor of a wine. If that sounds like silly food talk, consider this: East Coast American oysters can be big or small, creamy or briny, flinty or sweet, but every one, from Nova Scotia to the Gulf of Mexico, is the same species (*Crassostrea virginica*).

Some publicist will inevitably reduce all this to a meaningless catchphrase like "boat to table," but the chefs are motivated by something deeper—the chance to stand in the mud with local watermen to source tonight's dinner. That's the whole point, of course: They want to cook you something you couldn't eat anywhere else in the world.

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BEGINS ON

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baltz & company