



PRESS RELEASE

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Hooked on Sustainable Tuna from Local Artisanal Fishermen

Zürich, Switzerland and Manila, Philippines – The Philippines is a well-known country of origin for many seafood products that are traded and consumed worldwide. While it maintains a reputation as a global seafood producer, local seafood consumption remains significant and is beginning to get hooked on more responsibly caught seafood.

“The Philippines, especially Manila, shows great potential for using seafood only from sustainable sources,” says Executive Chef Marko Rankel from Diamond Hotel.

Filipinos have a long tradition of consuming locally caught seafood, but with issues of overfishing and poor fisheries management stressing local stocks, the country has become increasingly dependent on imported seafood.

Adding to this demand for foreign imports is the high-end consumer perception that imported seafood is higher quality than what can be found locally. Certain chefs in the country are trying to educate their clientele against this false perception by serving sustainable, high quality, local products.

Chef Jose Luis Gonzalez from The Vask explains, “It is the chef’s responsibility to make sure that the food we use is of course high quality, but is also not damaging to our environment. This is a top priority of our restaurants and we feel a responsibility to use our menu to educate those who may not be informed on the importance of sustainable fish.”

As locals are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of implementing more sustainable fishing practices in the Philippines to rebuild their troubled fisheries, the Manila-based company, Meliomar, Inc., has started to promote sustainably caught tuna from local, small-scale fisheries operating under the Artesmar® Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP).



The FIP works with artisanal fishing communities in 10 different provinces around the archipelago, providing a functional framework for stepwise fishery improvement, and has reached more than 8,000 fishers.

“The concept involves the tackling of basic issues such as compliance with Non-IUU regulations first, which we regard as fundamental for any future improved management measures for coastal fisheries in the Philippines,” Oscar Almaden, Fishery Outreach and FIP Manager at Meliomar.

Shangri-La Makati’s Executive Chef Paul Lenz says, “We work with Meliomar to show our commitment to sustainable fisheries. Their program targets plentiful species and mandates environmental safeguards like curbing bycatch, in order to protect these precious resources into the future and support our local fishing communities here in the Philippines.”

Under the Artesmar® FIP, Meliomar has also developed a unique traceability system that incorporates the tagging of each individual tuna upon landing, which allows the company to reliably trace all tuna products direct from their origin.

According to Mark Dia, Regional Oceans Campaign Manager for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, “In order to rebuild stocks and bring Philippines marine resources back to a productive level, a concerted effort by the government, municipalities, industry, civil society and fishermen is needed – and Meliomar seems to be ready to take an active role and become a champion for change on the industry level.”

The investments Meliomar makes into its traceability system and the program of fishery improvement are significant. “Thankfully, more and more chefs understand the change we are making on the water and are interested in becoming part of the solution,” assured Christian Schmidradner, General Manager of Meliomar. “It is of utmost importance that all stakeholders who have an impact on ocean sustainability collaborate and join their efforts for change. This includes policy makers, law implementing bodies, NGOs, industry players like exporters and importers, chefs in hotels and restaurants as well as the end consumers,” he continued.

Chef Gonzalez appreciates the company’s efforts, stating that it is “the only fish supplier at present to deliver fresh fish to our restaurants that fulfills our sustainability requirements.”

The products, which are sold under the Artesmar® consumer brand, have been well received by a number of chefs from high-end hotels and restaurants due to their high quality as well as their environmental and social sustainability.

The Hyatt City of Dreams Manila’s Executive Chef Michael Luedtke also sources Artesmar products. “As part of Hyatt’s worldwide efforts to make a real difference when it comes to sustaining the global food supply and eliminating the sourcing of highly vulnerable seafood species, we appreciate Meliomar as a local partner and supplier of sustainable yellowfin tuna.”

“By participating in the Artesmar® supply chain, hotels and restaurants are directly contributing to the program of fishery improvement and, therefore, become part of the sustainability solution for the eventual rebuilding of marine resources in the Philippines,” says Schmidradner.



Meliomar plans to increase market outreach and sales in an effort to commit other food service and culinary outlets to more responsible seafood sourcing. The company, which supplies yellowfin tuna and Mahi Mahi from artisanal handline fisheries at present, is working to broaden its species offerings with the development of assessment criteria in an effort to bring more sustainable choices to local hotels and restaurants.

ABOUT BLUEYOU CONSULTING

Blueyou Consulting is an internationally recognized consulting and service company focused on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and their related seafood supply chains. The Blueyou team of consultants includes professionals in the field of fisheries and aquaculture as well as those in supply chain management, logistics and marketing. Blueyou Consulting works within an extensive worldwide network, which includes government and non-government organizations, scientific research institutions as well as private companies in the seafood production and market sectors.

MEDIA CONTACT AND FURTHER INQUIRIES

For more information about Artesmar® or Blueyou Consulting's other aquaculture and fishery improvement programs, please contact Laura Peet at laura.peet@blueyou.com and visit us on the web at www.artesmar.com and www.blueyou.com.

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