

First Look: Our New TV Series!

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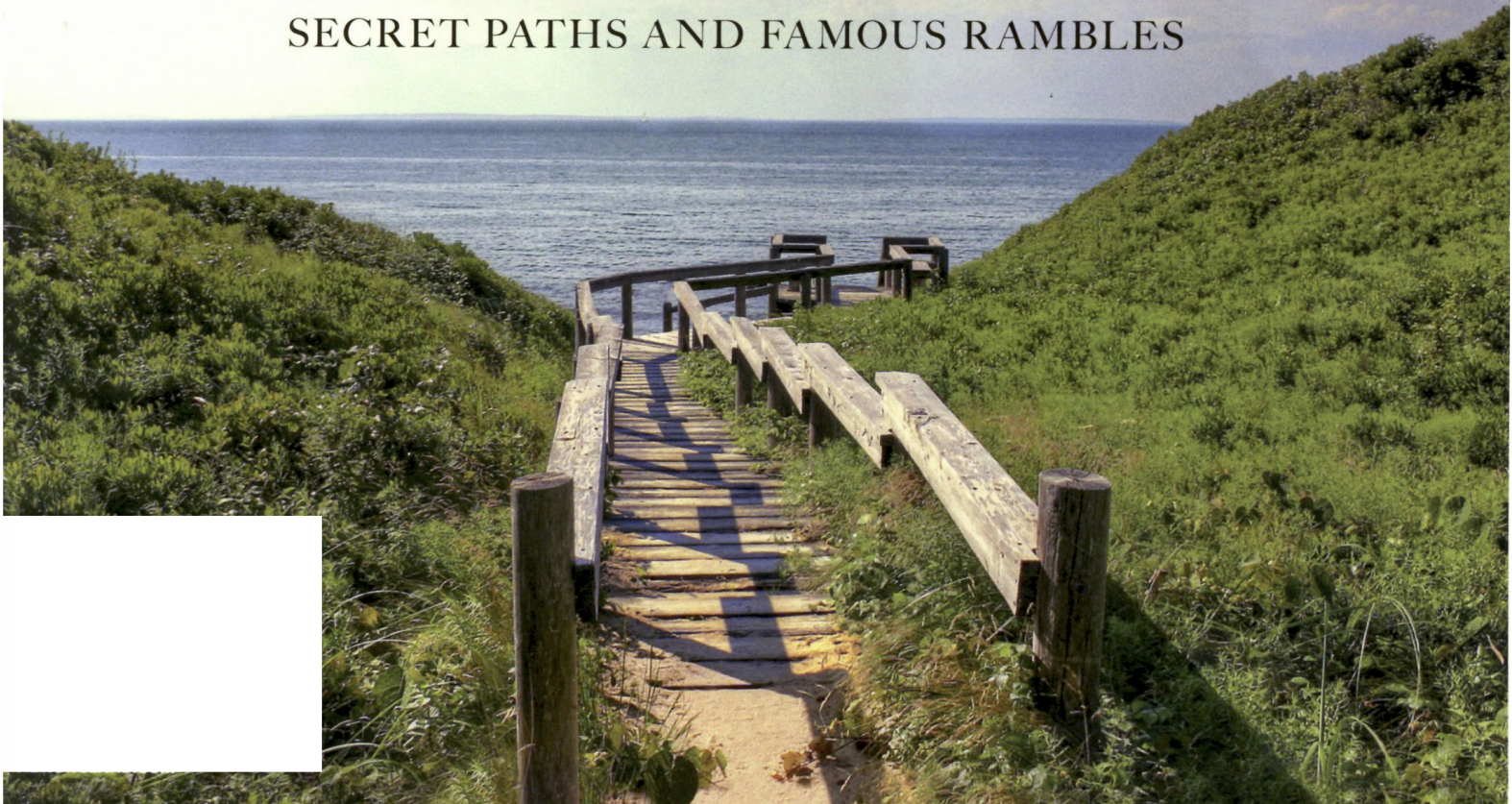
ON THE ROAD
WITH A COUNTRY VET

YANKEE

NEW ENGLAND'S MAGAZINE

OCEAN WALKS

SECRET PATHS AND FAMOUS RAMBLES



The GUIDE FOOD

JEREMY SEWALL'S OYSTER STEW

"WEEKENDS" WARRIOR

Food editor **Amy Traverso** searches out delicious dining in our new WGBH television series, *Weekends with Yankee*.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK FLEMING • FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY CATRINE KELTY



On Martha's Vineyard, a late October cold snap strips away any illusions that the modulating Gulf Stream breezes will keep winter at bay forever. One week it's roses and a last trip to the beach; the next week it's frost. The gingerbread cottages at the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association are mostly closed up now, as are the Oak Bluffs arcade and the Flying Horses Carousel that so recently thrummed with vacationing children. Circuit Avenue is eerily quiet, though Linda Jean's is still serving up breakfast sandwiches and morning gossip for the real residents, the ones who stick around even after the winds turn bitter and damp.

I am here with the last of the tourists to capture these final beautiful days for our new public television series with WGBH, *Weekends with Yankee* (debuting in April; check local listings). It's not quite dawn, and looking out my hotel window I see a thin line of orange light cracking the horizon over Nantucket Sound. A cold wind is whistling around the window frame, and I'm thinking I should've packed warmer socks.

Down in the lobby, I grab a Linda Jean's sandwich from WGBH associate producer

Adrienne Rahn, who has made a 6:30 run to pick up breakfast for our small crew. Call time is 7, and we sip coffee and wonder how chilly it will be on the water. At about 7:30 we'll board the 36-foot fishing boat *Payback*, out of Edgartown Harbor, to dredge sweet bay scallops from Cape Poge Bay. I'll be cooking on the boat—or at least prepping raw scallops with citrus and chilies, in the style of an Italian crudo. So despite the poor sleep and thin socks, I'm buzzing. It's another day of adventure, another day of making television.

Down at the Edgartown docks, we wait. This, I'm learning, is how TV works. We wait for the director, Rennik Soholt, to pre-interview the boat's captain (Rennik wants us to meet him for the first time on-camera, so that it feels more authentic). We wait for Alan Weeks, the director of cinematography, to adjust his camera settings every time a cloud passes over the sun or to reset a shot from a different angle. It's fine. We are filming in the most beautiful places in New England, destinations we mapped out over many

months with the idea that the series would bring viewers the best of the best. It's as if we've jumped into the pages of *Yankee* itself. And Richard Wiese, the show's host—you may know him from his other show, PBS's

Scenes from the Martha's Vineyard shoot for *Weekends with Yankee* (FROM LEFT): Amy Traverso and host Richard Wiese; aboard the *Payback*; shellfish biologist Rick Karney.



Born to Explore—helps pass time by telling stories of hiking Kilimanjaro at age 11, of skiing to the North Pole, of living among Batwa pygmies in Uganda. I'm the food correspondent, so I'm filming just one segment per show, but he's always there, ready to share a tip ("Once the camera starts rolling, don't forget to take five steps before you start talking," he reminds me—multiple times—yet I still forget).

Rennik signals that it's time to board the boat. Already my feet are cold. The blood from my better-insulated upper half flows down to my feet, drops 10 degrees, then heads back up. Captain Donny Benefit hands me a rubber coat,

plus gloves, to layer over my down jackets, but it's a whole other world among the 4-foot swells. And so, a new challenge: speaking with a steady voice when my body is convulsing with cold. The hair I so carefully styled at 6 a.m. is now a swirling rat's nest at war with an elastic band. Still, this is heaven. Captain shows us how he drops his chain nets down to the bay floor, where they rake over the eelgrass beds where scallops thrive, leaving the grass mostly intact. Rick Karney, a shellfish biologist and director of the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group, explains how his team seeds these beds with young spats, which can take up to a year to reach

maturity. And when we haul up our first net full of sea life—crabs, whelks, clams, and a few scallops—he points out which ones are too small to harvest. We toss them back into the water.

After several runs—delayed by the need to move the crew to the harbor-master's boat for a wide shot, to get the right interviews, to find the fertile beds—we have enough mature scallops to start shucking. Captain easily cracks open the shells and yanks out the viscera with a quick flip of a knife blade, leaving the cream-colored knob of adductor muscle to slice out and eat; I pop one into my mouth and taste a creamy sweetness that underscores

Cast and crew bundle up for a segment on bay scallops, which includes (TOP, FROM LEFT) plucking them from the sea and transforming them into scallop crudo with citrus-ginger sauce.



why bay scallops are called “nature’s gumdrops.” With about 40 shucked scallops in hand, I duck into the heated wheelhouse and carve a work space out of a 2-foot shelf. The waves make it difficult to slice evenly, and I have to brace one leg against a bench to stay upright. But I manage to juice two oranges and a lemon, grate some ginger, and arrange the scallops on a plate with the citrus sauce, a little oil, and a sprinkling of chilies, mint, slivered shallots, and sea salt. As crudo should be, the dish is a play on contrasting flavors and textures: hot and cold, silky and crunchy, sweet and sour. The heat from the chilies feels like sunshine. The guys gobble it up—all except Captain, who doesn’t eat scallops raw. Instead, he sets some aside to fry up on a single burner.

Food consumed, we turn around and make our way through the narrow Cape Poge Gut as the tide begins to ebb. Captain has another job to head out to that afternoon, and he’s already given us more time than he had to spare. Back on land, we remove our layers, marveling at all the heat reflecting off the sidewalk, a sensation we wouldn’t have noticed before. “It was a warm day,” Rick assures me. “This is just the beginning of the season.” I wouldn’t dare contradict him. Nor will I ever complain about the price of bay scallops again.

It is the great privilege of journalists to be able to enter the world of a stranger, even live in it for a day or two. Making *Weekends with Yankee* is a similar experience, only compressed into a high-octane joyride: Today it’s scalloping; tomorrow it might be making cheese in Vermont, baking clams in a remote cove on Mount Desert Island, or cooking on a windjammer in Rockland Harbor. I’m a New England native and have worked at *Yankee* for nearly 10 years. I’ve covered the region from so many angles, but in making this series I’ve fallen in love with it all over again. If we’ve done our job right, you will too.

The following recipes are just a sampling of the delicious dishes that we



SCALLOP CRUDO
WITH CITRUS-GINGER SAUCE

prepared on-camera while filming *Weekends with Yankee*. For more information, visit the show’s website at weekendswithyankee.com.

SCALLOP CRUDO WITH CITRUS-GINGER SAUCE

TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES

HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES

Crudo, which means “raw” in Italian, is a preparation in which pristine uncooked seafood is served dressed with citrus, good olive oil, and sea salt (additional seasonings optional). Unlike ceviche, in which the fish “cooks” in citrus juice for several hours, crudo is a last-minute preparation meant to highlight contrasting flavors. I

made this variation aboard the Payback, using scallops just pulled from the sea. As always, you should consume raw fish purchased only from trustworthy sources.

- 1 serrano chili pepper
(or ½ jalapeño)
- 1 small shallot
- Juice of 1 ½ oranges
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 piece fresh ginger root,
½-inch long, peeled
- ½ pound fresh bay scallops,
halved crosswise
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 mint leaves, thinly sliced
- Chili flakes
- Sea salt flakes

Cut the pepper in half and use a straw or chopstick to scoop out the inner seeds and membrane. Next, slice both pepper and shallot into paper-thin slices (a mandolin is a great tool here).

In a small bowl, whisk together the citrus juices. Grate the ginger root into the juice with a Microplane or other fine grater to extract the juice and some pulp, but not the root's coarse fibers. Whisk to combine.

Divide the scallops among 4 salad plates. Pour the citrus dress-

ing around the scallops, then drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with pepper slices, shallot slices, and mint leaves. Sprinkle with chili flakes and sea salt to taste. Serve immediately. *Yields 4 appetizer servings.*

I came by my next seafood feast with far less feigned machismo: While Richard boarded a boat in the early morning with Jay Baker of Fat Dog Shellfish, an oyster farm in New Hampshire's Great Bay, I slept in

(there wasn't room on the boat, alas). Around midmorning, we met up at Row 34, the Granite State outpost of the popular Boston oyster bar, where we prepared a fresh take on oyster stew with chef-owner Jeremy Sewall.

While I'll admit I'm a serious apple lover—I wrote a book on the subject—it never once occurred to me to combine apples and oysters. But Jeremy used diced apples as a garnish to delicious effect, adding fennel, thyme, celery, and onion as complementary notes. When he served up the stew in wide-rimmed bowls over toasted sourdough bread, I savored every bite, despite the total absence of suffering.

JEREMY SEWALL'S OYSTER STEW

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES

HANDS-ON TIME: 40 MINUTES

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 rib celery, thinly sliced, leaves reserved
- 1 fennel stalk, thinly sliced, fronds reserved
- 1 small onion, diced
- ¼ cup dry white wine, such as pinot grigio
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 stems fresh thyme
- 16 medium oysters, any variety, shucked, with ½ cup oyster liqueur (juice) reserved
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 4 slices of sourdough bread
- 1 tart apple, finely diced

In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter and add the celery, fennel, and onion. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables are translucent, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the white wine and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for 3 minutes, then add the cream, bay leaf, and thyme. Continue to simmer until the cream is reduced by almost half.

ALLISON HOOPER'S SQUASH
AND GOAT CHEESE GALETTE

While paying a visit to Vermont Creamery owner Allison Hooper (far left), *Weekends with Yankee* checks out her innovative Ayers Brook Goat Dairy.



Add the oysters and their liqueur and bring the stew back up to a simmer. Warm the oysters through, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let sit for 30 seconds. Season to taste with lemon juice, salt, and pepper.

Lightly toast the sourdough, then place each slice in a small shallow bowl. Spoon the oyster stew over the bread. Garnish with diced apple, fennel fronds, and celery leaves. Enjoy warm. *Yields 4 servings.*

Allison Hooper is well known among New Englanders who love great cheese and butter. Her company, Vermont Creamery, produces more than 4 million pounds of fresh and aged cheeses, crème fraîche, butter, and other dairy products. You may also recognize her from the pages of *Yankee*: Our May/June 2016 issue told the story of Allison and her business partner, Bob Reese, and their newest venture, a model farm called Ayers Brook Goat Dairy, where they work to develop healthier goat breeds and best practices. The goal? To produce milk for the creamery and offer Vermont dairy farmers struggling with the volatile milk commodity market a sustainable alternative to raising cows.

When we visited Allison, we began the day at Ayers Brook, where we were greeted by a herd of 500 beguiling Saanens, LaManchas, and Alpines, then headed north to tour Vermont Creamery's 14,000-square-foot cheese-making facility in Websterville. Donning hair nets and sanitation suits, we moved from one

atmosphere-controlled room to the next, each calibrated to optimize milk culturing, curd development, and cheese ripening. Finally, we decamped to Allison's hillside farm in nearby Brookfield—home to the original milk house where the company began more than 30 years ago—to make a delicious savory tart with her own products. We cooked together and shared stories. It was dark by the time we pulled the sweet-savory tart from the oven, a cozy fall evening enriched with a deeper understanding of what farm-to-table really means.

ALLISON HOOPER'S SQUASH AND GOAT CHEESE GALETTE

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS

HANDS-ON TIME: 40 MINUTES

FOR THE CRUST

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for counter
- 2 sticks cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon table salt
- 2–4 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE FILLING

- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 1 large Vidalia or other sweet onion, diced
- 12 ounces fresh goat cheese (chèvre)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh sage or 1 teaspoon crumbled dried sage
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 medium delicata squash, halved lengthwise, seeded, and sliced into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch half-moons
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cherries or cranberries

FOR THE GARNISH

Toasted pepitas

Heat oven to 350° and set a rack to the lower third position. Make the crust: In the bowl of a food processor, pulse together the flour, butter, and salt until the butter breaks down into pea-size bits. Drizzle water into the bowl, and pulse until the dough just comes together—don't overmix.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured counter and knead two or three times to bring it together. Form a ball and flatten it into a disk, then wrap in plastic and chill at least 1 hour (up to overnight).

Next, make the filling: In a medium frying pan over medium-low heat, melt the butter, then add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until nicely caramelized, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the goat cheese, milk, egg, sage, salt, and pepper. Stir until smooth.

Add the caramelized onion to the cheese mixture and stir to combine. Set aside to cool.

On a floured surface, roll the dough out to a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick circle. Transfer the dough to a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Spoon the cheese filling onto the center and spread evenly, leaving a 2-inch border around



the edges. Layer the squash over the filling in concentric circles and sprinkle with dried cherries or cranberries. Gently fold the edges of the dough over the filling, pleating as you go. Transfer to the oven's lower rack and bake until the squash is tender and the crust is nicely browned, 45 to 50 minutes. Top with a sprinkling of pepitas and cut into thick wedges to serve. *Yields 6 servings.*

One of our most dramatic days of shooting happened in Acadia National Park on a lesser-known strip of the northern coast, between Eastern Bay

and Frenchman Bay. We set up a traditional beachside clambake among the rock formations known as the Ovens, which are accessible only at low tide and mostly only by kayak. There is no public parking in this corner of the park, but we were guests of Andrew Taylor, whose family has a house here and who, with partners Arlin Smith and Mike Wiley, owns two of Maine's most acclaimed restaurants, Eventide Oyster and Hugo's, both in Portland.

The Ovens are geological marvels, caves carved out of weaker rock exposed to eroding tides. For our clambake we assembled lobster, potatoes,

clams, salt pork, a few eggs (tradition has them acting as a sort of timer for the lobster meat), and Red Snapper hot dogs (a Maine delicacy), building a fire on the beach and cooking the food, layered in seaweed and burlap, on a large steel tray Andrew had fabricated for just this purpose. Time was of the essence, as the tide was heading in while the lobsters were cooking. The rocky ground would soon be underwater, and all we could do was wait.

Having spent their adult lives in the compressed heat of restaurant kitchens, Andrew, Arlin, and Mike aren't



At the Ovens with restaurateurs Arlin Smith, far left, and Andrew Taylor and Mike Wiley, right, to learn the art of the clambake—and to feast on the results (ABOVE).



EVENTIDE OYSTER'S
BROWN-BUTTER LOBSTER ROLL

SHELLFISH
ON THE HALF SHELL
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inclined to break a sweat—but as the water inched up toward the glowing coals and the seaweed steamed under its burlap cover, they began to fidget. Finally, Andrew called it. They pulled the heavy tray off the fire and carried it over some rocks to higher ground. As they returned to finish cleaning up, a wave washed over the still-hot coals, sending a 12-foot plume of steam into the midday air.

Ravenous, we picked at the food with our bare hands, dipping lobster meat into a rich brown butter sauce that the Eventide team makes by cooking powdered milk with unsalted butter until it takes on a walnut hue. This butter is the base of Eventide's signature lobster roll, a departure from Maine tradition served on a Chinese-style steamed bun. We've adapted their recipe to serve on regular hot dog buns, but that addictive butter is well worth a try.

EVENTIDE OYSTER'S BROWN-BUTTER LOBSTER ROLL

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick)
unsalted butter**
- 2 tablespoons nonfat dried
milk powder**
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**
Sea salt or kosher salt, to taste
- 1 pound cooked Maine lobster meat,
cut into medium chunks**
- 4 hot dog buns, steamed**
Minced chives

In a medium skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Whisk in the milk powder and cook, stirring often, until the solids begin to brown and take on a nutty aroma. Pour the butter into a bowl and add the lemon juice and salt. Wipe out the skillet and add the butter and lobster meat, cooking until just heated through. Divide lobster evenly among the buns and top with chives; serve warm. *Yields 4 servings.* 🍷