

COASTAL DELICACY

LOUISIANA-HARVESTED CAVIAR BECOMES AN AFFORDABLE INDULGENCE

LOUISIANA HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED for the quality of its seafood. The nutrient-rich waters of its estuaries contribute to the fresh flavor that makes our seafood special, so it comes as no surprise that Louisiana fish are now being used to produce Cajun Caviar, a brand of bowfin caviar that's popping up on menus across New Orleans and the Gulf South.

Cajun Caviar was introduced in 1986 by the Louisiana Caviar Co., and since 2016, it has been owned and operated by Alden Lagasse, Alison Vega-Knoll, and Amy Wilson. Alison owns Bucktown seafood restaurant Station 6 with her husband, Drew Knoll. Alden is married to celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, whose restaurant company is based in New Orleans. Amy is

married to Chris Wilson, who is the culinary director for Emeril's restaurant empire. The trio had grown familiar with Cajun Caviar over the years, so when the company went up for sale in 2016, they jumped at the opportunity.

The bowfin, also commonly known to Louisianans as choupique, is a prehistoric fish that thrives in the waters of North America, and it is one of three true caviar-producing species in the United States, along with sturgeon and paddlefish. Louisiana Caviar Co. net-fishes its bowfin from the Atchafalaya Basin, and the product is processed and packed locally.

Whereas sturgeon caviar can be described as capturing the essence of the sea, Cajun Caviar has a mild, delicate flavor, with less than 5 percent salt content. Amy says that the bowfin the company uses are of higher quality than any others on the market, which gives Cajun Caviar a less muddy flavor and helps the eggs separate in the mouth.

"Our bowfin are feeding on seafood delicacies that are indigenous to Louisiana that we all love, like crawfish and Gulf shrimp," Amy says. "We also have a spicy bowfin [caviar] that's infused with ghost peppers."

While caviar is still viewed as an extravagant indulgence, Cajun Caviar delivers a quality product at a more affordable price point than other caviars on the market, often coming in at a fraction of the price.

"We wanted more people to be able to experience caviar at home, so it's much more approachable than other caviars on the market and much more affordable," Amy says.

Left: French Fries with Crème Fraîche at Station 6

Opposite: Oysters on the Half Shell at Station 6



WHERE TO FIND IT

Martin Wine Cellar
martinwinecellar.com
504.899.7411

Destin Ice Market
destinicemarket30a.com
850.502.4100

cajuncaviar.com



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