

BREAKING FOUR MORE BODIES PULLED FROM RUBBLE IN MIAMI-AREA CONDO COLLAPSE, BRINGING DEATH TOLL TO 16



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The chef's version of 'What'd you do over the summer?'

By **Alexandra Hall** Globe correspondent, September 10, 2018, 4:02 p.m.

PORTLAND, Maine —

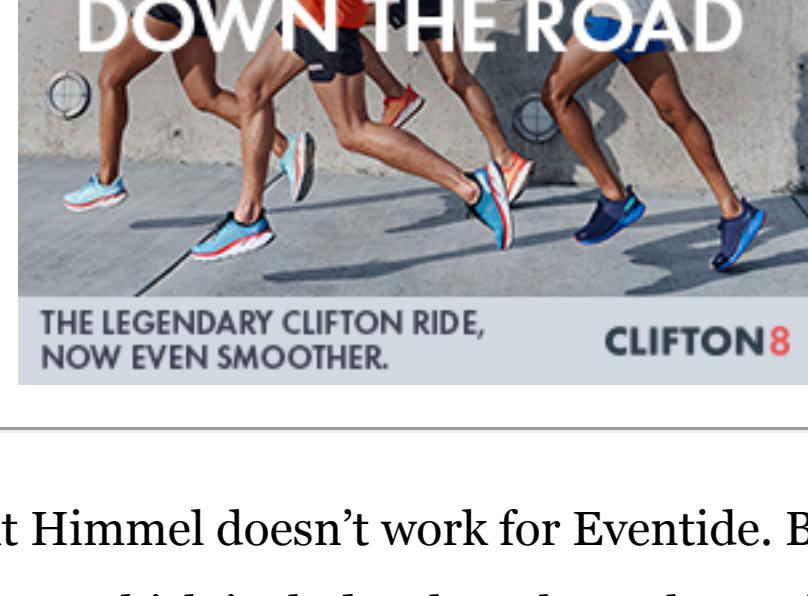
“These were in the water an hour and a half ago,” said Arlin Smith, general manager of Eventide Oyster Co. restaurant, lifting up a just-shucked littleneck clam that drips with brine in its shell and glistens in the setting sun. A long slice of marsh behind him, lit to an electric green by that same sunset, is home to oyster beds belonging to Winter Point Oyster Farm — a tiny family operation perched on this pristine swath of Mill Cove in West Bath, Maine.

“Eventide has partnered with Winter Point as long as I can remember,” said Chris Himmel, thus opening up a discussion about how the James Beard award-winning seafood restaurant’s weekly orders (it has a location both in Portland and as of last year, Boston) of bivalves has almost singlehandedly kept the farm in business.



Himmel Hospitality Group brought together Eventide Oyster Co. chefs and Winter Point Oyster Farm employees for dinner on Winter Point in Portland, Maine.

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What’s a little strange, though, is that Himmel doesn’t work for Eventide. Boston diners know him as the president of Himmel Hospitality Group, which includes the urbane, heavy-hitter restaurants Post 390, The Harvest, Bistro du Midi, and Grill 23 & Bar. So why, then, is he taking all this time to talk up Eventide?

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Because on nights like this, they all might as well work for the same place. For the third summer in a row, in a program titled “Himmel Hits the Road,” the company has spent weeks bringing its top-performing chefs, beverage directors, and managers, and servers on lengthy road trips to many of the farms they work with, and to join up and cook with other restaurants that work with those same farms. The first summer they got in an RV and spent 23 days driving, cooking, and eating their way from Washington, D.C., down through Atlanta, Florida, New Orleans, Austin, Texas, Las Vegas, and LA, ending up in Bawley, Calif. — home to one of Himmel’s most prized and longstanding family farm producers, Brandt Beef. Year two they took on the Pacific northwest, starting in Seattle, moving on to Portland, Ore., and wrapping up in Napa, Calif.

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This year, though, the trip was all about New England, and that proximity made it possible to bring along even more staff than in years past. There was the dinner cooked by the Bistro du Midi team with the whole Island Creek Oysters crew on their Duxbury Bay farm. And there was the feast conjured and consumed by The Harvest staff and their longtime farming partners at Kimball Fruit Farm on the border of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. “That’s one of our oldest relationships,” said Himmel. “And it was a blast for Tyler [Kinnett, chef of The Harvest]. He loves wild foraging and finding new produce, and they have 80 varieties of heirloom tomatoes and peaches there.”

Then it was on to Vermont, where they spent a day learning the process of farming and processing grains for bourbon and rye at Whistlepig Farm — a brand that features heavily in the beverage programs at all of the Himmel group’s restaurants. “We were some of the first to carry them. So our bartenders finally got hands-on lessons in how they’re made,” said Himmel. In Springfield, Vt., they settled in at Spring-Rock Farm, owned by former scientist-turned-Wagyu cattle farmer Sheila Patinkin. There, Post 390 chef Nick Deutmeyer and sous chef Casey Lovell took over Patinkin’s kitchen to cook, after she’d taught the group the best and most creative ways to use the whole animal. “She uses a very scientific way of raising and using as much of it as possible” explains Himmel. “Nick and Casey grew up doing that, but she showed them even more about getting a game plan together for how we’re going to integrate it into our menus.” In the end, the restaurant went through a half a cow on the trip; Patinkin only sells by the whole or half animal. “Those are the kinds of people we want to partner with,” said Himmel. “People who say, ‘Yeah, I could go along with what the market dictates, but I want to do something different.’ When we go on these trips, we want our people to be inspired by that and bring it home to Boston.”

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And then in Maine, there was the dinner on Winter Point.

“I’ve been a big fan of the Eventide folks these past years,” said Himmel, watching as his executive chef at Grill 23 & Bar, Peter Agostinelli, sears lamb lollipops and 100-day aged ribeyes. “In our industry, we have limited time for chefs to connect with other restaurants. This is our chance to embed ourselves into the farms and learn more from them about how they partner together.” How places like Eventide have helped Winter Point and vice versa, for example. “Yeah,” he said, smiling. “And it also gives us a whole lot to talk about when diners back in Boston ask us, ‘What’d you do this summer?’ ”

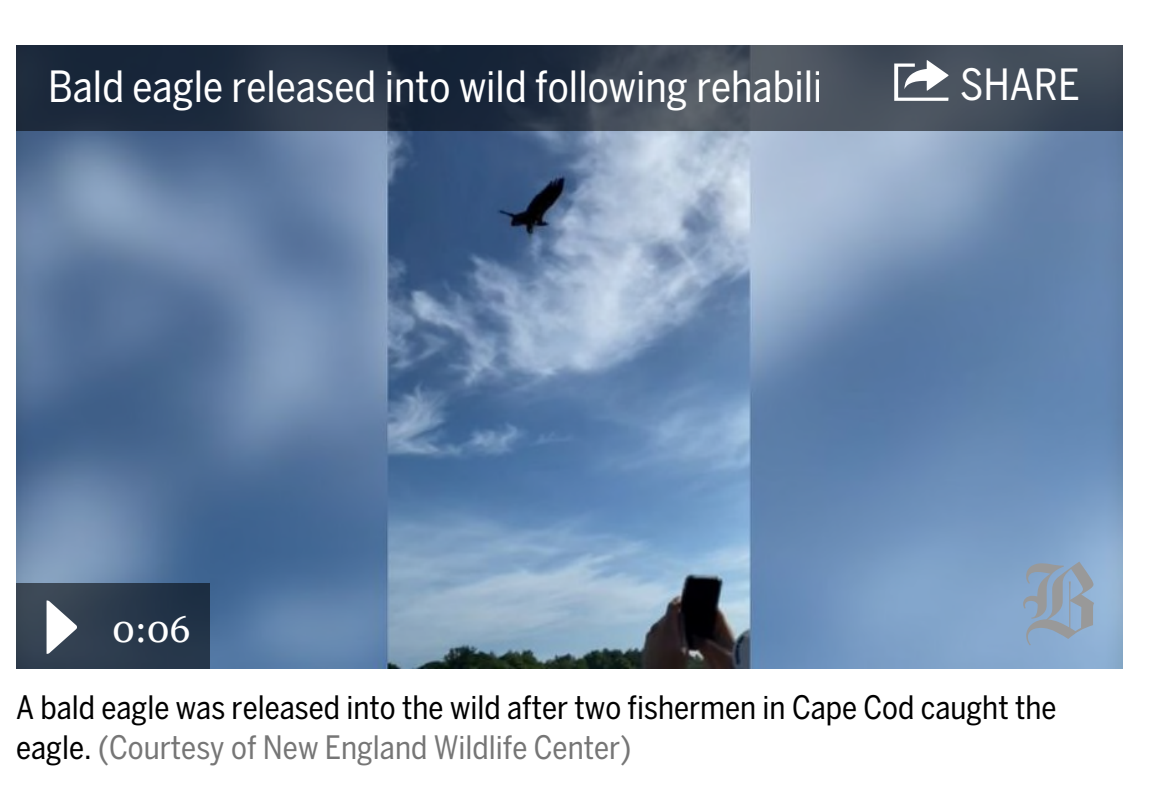
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Together with the Eventide crew’s New England clam bake and platters of gleaming sashimi, Grill 23’s specialty meats will comprise a dream-team effort in what could arguably be considered the ultimate in surf ‘n turf dinners. People carry dishes, pour wine, and grab plates for one other. Behind them in the open field abutting the bay stretches a single long table, set for the staffs of both restaurants to sit down to dinner.

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