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FOOD & TRAVEL MAGAZINE

CEVICHE KING ISSUE 6 - SEPTEMBER 2013 DISCOVER THE SECRETS OF NEW YORK CITY'S BEST CEVICHE CHEFS | AN EXPLORATION OF CEVICHE'S ORIGINS BY COOKBOOK AUTHOR MARICEL PRESILLA | Q & A: WITH WORLD-RENOWNED ILLUSTRATOR EDEL RODRIGUEZ | AN INSIDER'S GLIMPSE INTO THE SECOND LARGEST FISH MARKET ON THE PLANET | MOVING CEVICHE MEMORIES AND MORE | WWW.LATINLOVER.US


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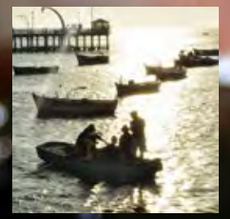
CONTENTS

ISSUE # 6, SEPTEMBER 2013

CEVICHE KING

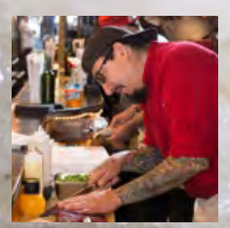


JULIAN MEDINA *Toloache*

ALEX UREÑA *Rayuela*

MIGUEL AGUILAR *Surfish*

ERIC RAMIREZ *Raymi*



DOMINIC MARTINEZ *Desnuda*

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL AND MATEO ALAYZA

Photo by JR Sheetz

Edel Rodriguez
self portrait
acrylic on paper, 11” x 14”

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THE KING OF NEW YORK

Welcome to Ceviche King, LatinLover's sixth issue. We've prepared something for you that is fresh, raw, up close and very real, inspired by our research into ceviche, the dish that says sun, sea and summer in the language of just about every Latin American place and people.

We're presenting the secrets of New York City's best ceviche chefs, who will compete at our upcoming launch event to be crowned Ceviche King. We're featuring an exclusive interview with world-renowned illustrator Edel Rodriguez; an exploration of ceviche's origins by cookbook author Maricel Presilla; a profile of documentary film maker Marco Williams; an insider's glimpse into the second largest fish market on the planet; and moving ceviche memories from UK comedian Trevor Lock and our very own LatinLovers and winners of our recent social media contest.

A big gracias to all our talented contributors, editors, advisors, partners and sponsors, who made this issue and associated events such a delicious reality!

Perhaps our biggest discovery in putting together this issue: the strong feelings we share for ceviche are rooted in childhood, in memories of family, trips to the sea and time spent in the warm embrace of the ones we love. This issue has special meaning for us here at LatinLover, because during its production we lost three of our loved ones. For this reason, we would like to dedicate the issue to the memory of Julia Garcia, Margarida Augusta Amado and Lauren Zaleski. May your beauty and love live on in these words and in our hearts.

Best,

THE LATIN LOVER TEAM

Photo by Carmen Cardumen

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Brothers Gabriel and Mateo are artists based in Lima, Peru. They own and operate Hermanos Magia, a graphic design and illustration firm. Their work has been featured in various magazines and newspapers, including *Dedo Medio*, *El Comercio*, and *Cosas*. They have illustrated numerous books, most recently, *Navegantes*. Gabriel works as a professor of art at La Pontifica Universidad Católica del Perú and El Centro de Imagen, and Mateo is the lead singer of the salsa band Mambo Glacial. They both enjoy boating, bagpipes, Russian cars and literature, particularly the works of Charles Dickens.

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Empire State of Mind, Miami

by Mario Gamper // illustration by Fumi Koike

November 2009 was a good time to come to Miami. That fall, the country was in love with hope. Obama had won the presidency. The economic free fall had halted just shy of collapse. Hurricane season had come and gone, without the usual havoc. It was time to look up again.

I wasn't doing badly either. The rental car company had upgraded me mysteriously to a brand-new white Prius, the one with some traffic light appeal. I had stumbled upon a beautiful vacation apartment in a 1920's villa, on a street in Coconut Grove overgrown with tropical trees. Every morning I woke up to the happy flirring of palm shadows on a lightly blue painted wall.

Did I mention the owners of the place also drove a Prius? Unlike Senator John McCain, I was in the right place at the right time. I had come to Miami to spend a month with my daughter, as I did every November. She was about to turn 13.

A day or two or after my daughter's birthday, one breezy evening, we were ambling through Coconut Grove. She had become a semi-adult, one I could take to dinner and have a conversation with. That is, if I overlooked the harassment that came with my drinking alcohol, or even looking at the Sauvignon Blanc. It was then that we found the "Jaguar Ceviche" restaurant.

Finding the "Jaguar Ceviche" restaurant was nothing we had planned. We were probably looking for a pizza place. But there it was, right next to Coco Walk, a fake-stucco, French colonialist Franken-mall. We didn't even understand that "Ceviche" was a food. If my daughter had asked, I would have told her it was a special kind of Jaguar. Like a Siberian Tiger. Back then, I still had to have answers for everything.

While we waited for our table, the waiter offered us ceviche. I asked what it was. "It's our seafood specialty," he replied. And we boldly ordered the sampler. In no time, a plate with six big spoons arrived at the bar, each a nest for some ecstatic colorful food stuff. Not quite sushi, but close. Meatier, bolder than its Asian cousin, yet still sublime.

My daughter and I aren't the kind of people who appreciate the niceties of, say, Japanese Imperial Tofu Cuisine, but our first taste of ceviche had us at hello. There was such a confusion of adjectives: tangy, pure, mild, spicy, healthy, fun. Latin and Asian taste worlds fused together in the most unexpected way. I remember one spoon that combined lime-cured fish with ginger, soy and soft avocado bits. Another was a straightforward marriage of strong chili, onions and corn. I was happy that my daughter enjoyed the adventure. Teenagers have taste buds with the mood swings of Hollywood divas.

Apart from the taste, however, the food had another extraordinary effect: it made me curious. How many more unknown taste continents were out there? Were there other cultures right now ready to introduce us to some new greatness? I've always believed that eating is like thinking. We chew on new facts, digest different thoughts, and spit out answers. We understand new cultures by placing them into our stomach. I suddenly wondered what Peru was.

Sitting at the bar, we watched the show-and-tell traffic floating by on Grand Ave. The latest Lamborghinis, old Nissan Sentras with neon underfloor lighting, both polished and gleaming by the early Miami dusk. Usually the music pouring from passing cars follows the bi-polar Miami scene: relentlessly spinning salsas from El Zol 95 or the bump-and- thump RNB of 99Jamz. But not that night. Climbing out of every car was the same song: "Empire State of Mind." A song about the unpredictability of dreams, growing up, tough journeys. A song about New York being back. A song of hope, delivered with the street cred of Jay-Z and Alicia Keys' fuse-blowing energy.

I was watching my daughter eat her much safer main course of chicken Caesar salad. I wanted her to live with that energy. South Floridians like to joke that "the best thing about Miami is that it's so close to the United States." But in those closing weeks of 2009, the best thing about Miami was that it was close to the Empire State of Mind. And somehow, for me, that state of mind still lives in six spoons of Ceviche. ❖

CEVICHE ME CONTEST • WINNER •

LINKS IN THE CHAIN:

The New Fulton Street Fishmongers

by Brian Waniewski // photos by JR Sheetz

The neighborhood of Hunts Point, in the South Bronx, is forbidding in the early morning hours. Lodged beneath a knot of expressways, river on all sides, its dark industrial streets are lined with low barbed wire-edged buildings. A non-stop stream of long-haul trucks rumbles in from all over, with fresh edible cargo, billions of pounds each year— vegetables, meat, fish. That's why we're here. Where the Bronx and East Rivers meet sits the New Fulton Fish Market, the oldest in the U.S., and the second largest on the planet after Tokyo.

The action starts early at the New Fulton Fish Market: Monday through Friday at one a.m. Outside, in a fog lit by the sprawling warehouse, trucks park higgledy-piggledy. They make a maze that hi-lo forklifts whiz around, beeping. Men in hoodies huddle over wet cardboard boxes. They argue. They smoke. One guy starts jumping rope. And here comes a young dude waving a heavy steel hook, as big as his face, asking for our parking ticket.

That's the first thing you notice at the market, all the guys have hooks. As in Captain Hook: big and sharp, with wooden butts. They use them like extensions of their arms, like second nature. "I've never once used it as a weapon," says Ed Cruci, one of the first fish sellers we stop to talk with. "I couldn't work without it. I wouldn't even come onto the floor without it. The only thing we don't do with our hooks is masturbate. Just to show you how versatile this tool is."


PERISHABLE


Fresh

Inside, on the floor, the activity continues. The long space is generously partitioned into areas by wholesaler. Within each area, so many fish washed up and staring in the bright cold florescent light! All colors and kinds: snappers, swordfish, tuna, mullet, pompano, perch, sea bass, shark, skate. On ice, their silvery skin and eyes shine like jewels. A man runs his hand over the backs of crayfish packed tight and, briefly, the whole box comes alive.

"After forty-one years, I still like it. I still like what I'm doing," Robert DiGregorio tells us. He's the resident tuna expert, with a book on the topic to prove it. *Tuna Grading and Evaluation: The Complete Tuna Buyer's Handbook*, available on Amazon. "I like to handle the fish. I feel like I'm fulfilling God's plan for the tuna. Feeding the people. I'm just a link in the chain."

In 1972 DiGregorio came home from the Marines with no clear next step. A friend brought him down to the market, and that was that. It's a story many of the guys at the market share. Jerry Phillips, another fish seller, came into the business through his older brother thirty years back. At that time, the Fulton Fish Market was actually down on Fulton Street, in Manhattan, near Wall Street and the South Street Sea Port, close to where the market first opened in 1807. "In summer, you had the sun rising over the Brooklyn Bridge. It was great," Phillips recalls. Another fish seller butts in. "It was a real shit hole," he says. Cobblestone streets. No fork lifts. "When it snowed, we got snowed on. When it rained, we got rained on." And yet the old market was exciting. On that, they can agree. "You had all these girls flashing their boobs. You didn't know if someone was getting murdered or shot. In the old days, everything went. Barbara Streisand. Nick Nolte. Everyone made a movie down there. And we had to deal with the gangsters!"

In 2005 the market moved up to its current location in the South Bronx, a much improved, custom-built, four hundred thousand square foot facility, with ample refrigeration and mechanical movers. According to the New Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, the market is now home to thirty-seven wholesale operations that handle about one third of New York's total seafood demand, and about five percent of U.S. seafood sales. That's millions of pounds of seafood daily, up to three hundred varieties, with annual sales in the billions.

Tim Wilkisson's family has been responsible for a lot of that business. They've been at it for four generations, over a hundred thirty years. "I was going to be the next Jacques Cousteau. Didn't work out. No money in it," says Wilkisson wryly. In fact, he dropped out of college in his third year to help his father and his mother, then in need of open heart surgery. His father begged him not to. "Thank God I did," Wilkisson goes on. "I got to work side by side with my father for a year. Then one day he took a heart attack in my arms, and I drove him to the hospital." It was then that his father, with a formal salute, handed over the heart of his business, a little black book with all his customers' details. "So at age 22, I'm running the oldest fish company there is. It was a big reality check."

Wilkisson's stepson—a lanky teen with long hair in a black stocking cap—heaves a shovel to spread some fresh ice on the snapper. Wilkisson takes out an iPhone and starts flicking through photos. He wants to introduce us to the next generation in the business: a smiling baby boy holding both toes. "It's in our blood," he says. "Some people are in it. Some people aren't."

A whole day passes at the fish market before the rest of the city gets out of bed. "You can still make a living in the world being honest," Wilkisson wants us to know. "You don't need to be a scum bag." ❖

Cebiche, Ceviche, Sebiche, Seviche

A Latin American Kitchen Miracle

by Maricel Presilla

In Piura, on the northern coast of Peru, a region of arid brushland sandwiched between the Andes and the Pacific and punctuated by green, river-fed oases where mangoes and cacao grow, cebiches are bountiful and nourishing. Beautiful without artifice, they come to the table looking like edible sculptures, the irregular pieces of fish or seafood heaped high on plates generously garnished with hot boiled yuca and sweet potato (camote), toasted corn (cancha), and, often, boiled zarandajas, small white beans that are a staple in this region.

These are meals in themselves, enjoyed with refreshing clarito, a mild, fizzy corn chicha that could be compared to a young vinho verde. The combination of flavors and texture is masterful, every sip of the tangy chicha reinforcing the acidity of the lime juice, which is the seasoning heart of the cebiche. After consuming a substantial dish like this with a clay jar of clarito, a siesta is in order, and it is a lucky tradition that this is strictly a noon meal, a nod to ancient principles transplanted to colonial Peru, classifying fish as a cold food that could be dangerous when eaten at night.

Traveling to Piura, or just about anywhere on the Peruvian coast, and not taking the time to explore the picanterías, cebicherías, and makeshift eateries (huariques) that specialize in the iconic "noon" cebiche is like visiting Valencia and not eating paella. Cebiche is part of the fabric of coastal Peru, a symbol of regional identity that transcends time and joins cultures.

In Piura, firm-fleshed cabrillón (rock sea bass), succulent corvina, several types of grouper, oily bonito and caballa (mackerel) and concha negra (black clams oozing inky juice) are among the favorite marine ingredients for a proper cebiche. Cooks season it simply with salt and the freshly squeezed juice of tiny limes, most likely from the Chulucanas Valley, where they are justly famous for their tang and good flavor. Tossed with plenty of red onions and slivers of fiery limo pepper, the seafood makes it to the table in a flash, with barely enough time to become opaque through the action of the lime juice.

Long a popular offering in humble restaurants and an early morning pick-me-up at markets along the Peruvian coast, the lime-juice "cooked" cebiche has become not only a star of Peruvian cuisine, but the most popular Latin cooking technique to cross over to North America. Bright as the spotlight has become, however, it has not illuminated the obscure origins of the method, the etymology of its name, nor the reason for its various spellings (cebiche, ceviche, seviche) throughout Latin America.-

When working on the Cebiche chapter of my cookbook "Gran Cocina Latina" (W.W. Norton, 2012), I chose to focus on the cebiches of Peru (thus the preferred Peruvian spelling),—and its neighbor to the north, Ecuador. At first, I looked to the Philippines and Spain for the possible origins of the technique, wondering if the idea of preparing fish in citrus juice crossed the Pacific with the galleons that controlled Spain's Asian trade through the port of Acapulco. I concluded, however, that Peru is the cradle of cebiche.

I considered the possibility that ancient Peruvians used the tart and perfumed juice of a fruit now called *tumbo* or *curuba* (*Passiflora mollissima*), a member of the Passiflora genus, to prepare fish and seafood. Having studied the pre-Inca peoples of Peru's north coast, the Moche and the Chimu, I thought it plausible that one among them had the brilliant idea of flavoring raw clams or fish with hot pepper and a squeeze of tart fruit juice. I had seen tiny passion fruit and tumbo seeds that archaeologists had unearthed on Mocha sites side by side with hot pepper seeds and the remains of shellfish and fish bones. I also knew that the earliest Peruvians were no strangers to vinegar made from yuca roots or fermented corn chicha, which is also acidic and can coagulate the proteins of fish or seafood just like lime or bitter orange juice.

As plausible as this scenario seemed, I could not ignore the fact that cebiches are not "cooked" with anything of local origin, but with citrus juice from Old World trees brought by the Spaniards. This seems to indicate that the Spanish colonists either embraced an existing Peruvian technique, transforming it with familiar ingredients, or stumbled upon the method on their own. Anyone who marinates meat or fish in Latin America is bound to notice what acids do to proteins. And we Latin cooks marinate everything, having inherited this flavor-imparting practice from medieval Spanish cooking. Look at the *Libre de Sent Sovi*, a fourteenth-century Catalan cookbook, and you will find marinades for fish and seafood made with vinegar or the juice of limes or bitter oranges.

An interesting hypothesis formulated by the Peruvian historian Juan José Vega examines a related dimension of this Spanish connection. Vega claims that the word "seviche" is a Spanish deformation of the Arabic *sibech,* which means acid food and is the source of "escabeche." Vega claims it was the female Moorish slaves (*las moriscas*) that the Spaniards brought to Peru as cooks and servants in the early sixteenth century who first added citrus juice to the pre- Columbian preparation of raw seafood seasoned with hot pepper and seaweed.

Unfortunately, the chronicles of the conquest of Perú yield no information about cebiches, though they do mention that ancient Peruvians ate raw fish. The writers of those chronicles, even the Peruvian-born El Inca Garcilaso, focused on the highlands, where the first Spanish capitals in the Andean region were located, not the coast, where cebiches must have originated. To my chagrin, while colonial cookbooks from Peru and elsewhere in the Americas have plenty of recipes for escabeches, they contain nary a reference to cebiches.

Perhaps legends surrounding the word can give us clues to its origin. In Peru you hear that cebiche was created by fishermen lost at sea who were forced to eat raw fish cooked with the juice of limes they had conveniently stowed onboard. I like to imagine them have a grand time, cutting off little bits of *anchovetas* as if for bait (*cebo*) and sprinkling them with lime and a bit of salt. What is telling about this story is that the fish for the cebiche is compared with *cebo*, bait. Perhaps the word was born of a creative compromise between *cebo* and escabeche, which is also prepared in an acid medium. In medieval Spanish, the word *cebo* also meant food, not just for fish, but for men. It came from the Latin word for food, *cibus*, and it was first documented in the twelfth-century Castilian poems of Gonzalo de Berceo: "And he blessed his *cebo*, when he wanted to eat." This is my own grain of salt, or squeeze of lime juice, for the ongoing debate.

Much as I like the cibus connection, it seems that the word was originally spelled "seviche." In *La Mesa Peruana, El Libro de las Familias (The Peruvian Table, The Book of Families),* a late nineteenth-century cookbook published in Arequipa, the author instructs the cook to prepare a fish or crayfish seviche in the morning to eat in the afternoon. Besides the use of the original spelling, the book shed lights on traditional aspects of cebiche preparation such as "overcooking." Letting the seafood or fish rest in its tangy marinade for hours was common practice in some parts of Peru until a few year ago. Today, chefs consider it an abomination.

Long before exploring cebiche in its birthplace, I knew there was something magical about it. The late Peruvian chef Felipe Rojas Lombardi, my friend and mentor, spoke incessantly about the cebiches of Lima, his hometown. He dreamed of opening a *cebichería* in New York, his adopted home. That dream was realized in the mid 1990's by one of his admirers, the Cuban chef Douglas Rodríguez, whose Chicama in the posh ABC building was named for a seaport north of the Peruvian city of Trujillo. The successful but short-lived Chicama was a revelation, with a broad variety of cebiches, most the product of Rodríguez's wild imagination, served at a central counter.

Though Peruvian chefs, like their counterparts around the world, are beginning to play with the traditional concept of the cebiche, there is a purity to the original that I find seductive. Gastón Acurio, a celebrated Lima chef known for his imaginative take on Peruvian food, is almost reverent when speaking of cebiche. When I ate at his Lima *cebichería* La Mar soon after it opened (he now has branches all over Latin America and even in the U.S.), Acurio served nine cebiches ranging from a Japanese-Peruvian (Nikkei) inspired yellow fin with sesame oil and soy sauce (*siyao*) to a traditional *pejerrey* (Peruvian silverside) flavored with Andean

CHORRILLOS, LIMA-PERU
Photo by Carmen Cardumen

yellow pepper (ají *amarillo*). Though presented with modern touches, all had a clean, pristine quality that distinguishes the best Peruvian cebiches.

Traditional and innovative cebiches also coexist comfortably at La Huaca Pucllana in San Isidro, one of Lima's most beautiful restaurants. On its airy terrace, diners have an unobstructed view of a fifth-century pre-Inca adobe pyramid. At night, the site is dazzlingly illuminated, and the veranda is warmed with glowing charcoal braziers.

Owner Arturo Rubio and chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, who has since departed to open his own restaurants, Malabar and Amaz, came up with an ingenious method of searing crayfish on a hot stone that is brought to the table. When a waiter pours tangy cebiche marinade over the shrimp, the liquid evaporates on contact with the stone, rising in a plume of fragrant steam. (I was so impressed with the effect that I asked Arturo and Pedro Miguel for the recipe, and when I opened my restaurant Cucharamama, they presented me with 100 perfectly cut stones for this purpose.)

At Malabar and Amaz, Pedro Miguel uses Amazonian fish like *doncella* (*Pseudoplatysoma fasciatum*) and gigantic *paiche* (*Arapaima gigans*) in cebiches flavored with tiny peppers from the same region (*ají charapita*) and broad-leaf culantro, which in the Peruvian Amazon is called *sacha culantro*. I also enjoy Punta Sal, a popular, five-location chain of *cebicherías,* where owner Adolfo Perret Bermúdez serves cebiches and tiraditos seasoned with the assertive flavors of Piura, his native region.

Tiraditos, sashimi-like slices of raw fish that are seasoned like cebiches, owe much to Peru's twentieth-century influx of Japanese immigrants, the most famous of whom is Nobuyuki Matsuhisa, the celebrated chef-owner of Matsuhisa in California and Nobu restaurants in New York and elsewhere. During a lovely dinner at my favorite Japanese restaurant, Toshiro's in Lima, I discovered that its owner, the genial Toshiro Konishi, is more likely responsible for popularizing the tiradito. While working at Nobu's Lima restaurant Matsuei, Toshi said, he created a new presentation for an antecedent dish from the north coast. Toshi's immaculate tiradito treats sliced, white-fleshed fish with near reverence. Fresher fish would be swimming.

For a more casual but still intense raw fish experience, go to Sankuay (a.k.a. Chez Wong), where chef Javier Wong is a one-man cebiche band. Wong, who is of Chinese descent, runs the restaurant out of his home, and does everything -- cooking and serving -- with a white golf cap on his head and a cigarette hanging from his lips. One morning, several years ago, when Wong's place was still a well-guarded secret and a kind of private cebiche club for the cognocenti, my friend Arturo Rubio took me for lunch at Sankuay. Large, meaty Peruvian flounder (*lenguado*) is the most prized fish for cebiche, and that day we found Wong slicing a huge specimen with amazing dexterity. He quickly tossed big, uneven pieces of the flesh with lots of salt, Peruvian hot pepper and lime juice, and served our cebiche ungarnished. It was delicious, and we ordered more.

That minimal presentation is worlds away from creative cebiche, which, like creative sushi, can contain all manner of ingredients. At private homes, upscale restaurants and small eateries all over Peru, I have eaten cebiches made with vegetables, chicken and duck. (The latter two, which are cooked, are considered traditional.)

One much-imitated, modern-day cebiche is flavored with milk and cheese, and a few years ago I went to El Callao, Lima's port, in search of its birthplace, a small restaurant called La Cabaña de Maquila. El Callao is a fascinating city dotted with beautiful, time-ravaged old mansions and *huariques* (popular restaurants) where you can eat very well. (It is also a dangerous place to get lost, as we did looking for Maquila.)

The place looked like a beach shack, and owner Arturo García Calderón, a tall, rugged man then in his sixties, greeted us warmly. He took me in his tiny kitchen and demonstrated the famous recipe, which he created in 1984. He cut up a luscious piece of flounder into bite-size pieces, and placed it in a bowl with slivered red onion, parsley, hot pepper, lime juice, and grated parmesan cheese. Then he opened a can of evaporated milk, which he poured slowly into the cebiche while beating vigorously to make a creamy emulsion. We took a seat at a table overlooking the ocean and ate his cebiche. It was pretty good. Of course, I am not Italian and have no problems mixing cheese with seafood. And what Latin person does not love evaporated milk?

Whatever the ingredients, the origin of the word and the simple and ingenious cooking method, cebiches are delicious, whichever way you spell them – cebiches, ceviche, sebiche, seviche. If you love this ingenious Latin kitchen miracle, get out there and explore cebiche in its many manifestation in the place of its birth. ❖

For Your Enjoyment

by Trevor Lock // illustration by Ayu Iwashima

One Sunday afternoon in the north most tip of the Miraflores district in Lima, Peru, I was hungry and looking for a place to eat. It was Sunday so it had to be ceviche, for Sunday is the day of the Christians and fish is the dish of Jesus and it is a personal rule of mine to eat ceviche for lunch on Sundays whenever possible. But where, in a city full of excellent places to eat ceviche, should I go?

I find that the problem with going anywhere that has been recommended to me is that however pleasant I subsequently do in fact find it, I always end up worrying it wasn't as good for me as it was for everyone else. Take Machu Picchu for example. I know Machu Picchu isn't a restaurant (it doesn't even have a McDonalds. Yet.) but everyone had told me how amazing Machu Picchu was that when I eventually got there myself I spent the whole time wandering around the place thinking "Well this IS amazing, but am I being amazed enough? What if there's something really amazing that I'm missing? Is there one bit that is supposed to be the most amazing bit? Is everything supposed to be amazing? Because there was a bit back there when I wasn't so amazed...?"

Ceviche is a bit like that for me too. Except I do it to myself. I do. And that's what really hurts. I do it to myself. I go around telling everyone "Ceviche?! Oh my god! You haven't had Ceviche? You don't know what Ceviche is? Ceviche's probably my favourite dish in the world!" Every dish is probably my favourite dish in the world if you haven't had it. "Croutons?! Oh my god! You haven't had croutons? Croutons is probably my favourite dish in the world. Dried orange peel? My god! Dried orange peel is probably my favourite dish..."

So I go around telling everyone how amazing Ceviche is and eventually, sooner or later I find myself in Peru again, on a Sunday, actually having to eat the stuff. And I spend the whole meal watching myself and wondering, *worrying*, if I'm really enjoying it as much as I tell everyone I do. Is Ceviche *that* amazing? Is *this* an amazing Ceviche? Is Ceviche *really* all it's cracked up to be anyway? Am I a bad person?

The first time I ate Ceviche I was quite frankly nonplussed by it. Perhaps it wasn't a Sunday? Certainly no one had been telling me for ages how amazing it was. I'd just rocked up in Peru one year in the glorious ignorance of my youth, knowing nothing about my surroundings, as usual, and then one day found myself in a restaurant where the prospect of raw chunks of fish next to an orange potato and some over sized sweet corn seemed to me rather underwhelming. To be fair I should make it clear that I usually find any dish that doesn't have melted cheese on it underwhelming. There are surely few things in life that can't be improved by melting some cheese on them? But Ceviche, along with velvet trousers and cigarettes, is probably one of them.

And like velvet trousers and cigarettes, I gradually learned to love Ceviche. And learned how to order it too - poco aji for my delicate gringo tummy and only for lunch, never for dinner, to ensure the fish is as fresh as possible. It doesn't look particularly exciting on the plate but to my mind Ceviche is the complete meal (minus the melted cheese if course). I call ceviche the Fisherman's Plowman's lunch - minus the hanky of course (If you find a hanky in your Ceviche send it back. Come to think of it if you find a hanky in your Plowman's send it back. Plowman's lunches haven't been wrapped in handkerchiefs since there were real plowmen doing real plowing. I think. Maybe no dish has ever been wrapped in a hanky, perhaps I'm just thinking of birthday cake wrapped in a paper napkin, the icing stuck to the paper when you try to unwrap it when you get home. Anyway, back to the narrative: I'm in Lima and hungry. Plus it's a Sunday so we know I'm looking for somewhere to eat ceviche as I stumble through the humid heat of summer. But where?

I live my life like a cross between Clint Eastwood in High Plains Drifter and Mr Bean in Mr Bean, which means I'm a mysterious loner but nobody thinks I'm cool. And I often end up eating on my own in restaurants. Often, I'm almost high from a lack of blood sugar due to having forgotten to eat for several hours, inducing a kind of tunnel vision and obsessive paranoia that I must eat NOW. And that's how I end up eating some ill advised things, in some ill advised places. And it's how I ended up eating in Fusion on La Mar in Miraflores on this Sunday afternoon. Alone. And on my own. As in I was the only customer. I felt like I'd accidentally walked onto a film set but no one

had told the other extras. Not only was I the only one in there, I was by now also dizzy with hunger. I was so hungry and the place so empty, I wondered if I'd hallucinated the restaurant but was just too weak to hallucinate anyone in it.

The waiter came to take my order and he appears to be one of those hipster waiters who's got the job because he's really an actor preparing for a role. In this case presumably the role of Mr Timothy Claypole in a new South American production of Rent-a-Ghost. I'm aware that's a rather niche and provincial reference for a US based magazine but once again I invite you to step out of your comfort zone and Google "Timothy Claypole" and "Rent-a-Ghost". This was a man playing at being a waiter, pretending I was a customer. For a moment I was back in kindergarten and he was an eager adult indulging my fantasy and ruining it with his over the top acting.

It was the way he spoke to me mainly. Over-rolling his Rs flamboyantly like he was doing his own drum roll before everything he said. I couldn't work out if he thought this was classy or he'd just clocked me as a gringo and was merely teasing me for his own amusement. When I inquired, he told me I'd just missed the other customers and the place had been full only half an hour before I turned up, in a tone that challenged me to believe him. I wondered if I was actually the victim of a hidden camera prank show. Did there have to be a reason he's not behaving like any waiter I've ever met in real life and instead like someone who learned how to be a waiter by watching Twin Peaks? In Mexico they have the day of the dead, in Peru do they have the day of false restaurants? Afternoon of the silly waiters? Was he really a silly waiter or was I just a silly customer? But then aren't all customers silly to a waiter?

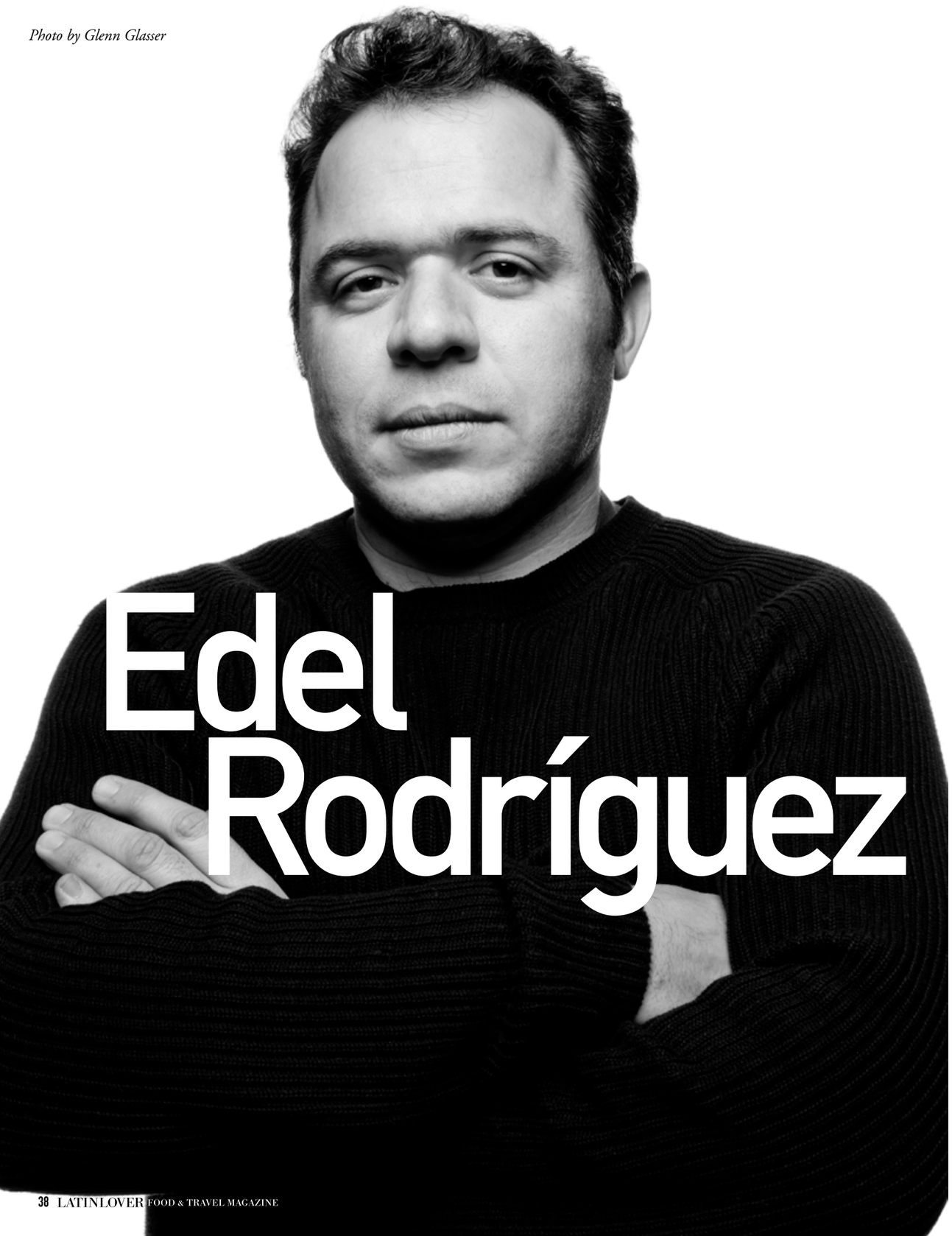
The young man described everything on the menu as being "for my enjoyment". When he brought anything to the table or took it away he did so with the unnecessary flourish of a stage magician producing a bunch of flowers or a rabbit. But crucially without producing a bunch of flowers or a rabbit. If he had produced a bunch of flowers or a rabbit I'd have welcomed them. Not because I like magic particularly but I do like flowers and rabbits. And often think a rabbit on your lap would give you something to stroke whilst you're waiting for your starter. I've never understood why restaurants don't do this - and don't say live animals are unhygienic - they've got dead ones in the kitchen.

Eating alone is pleasant enough and often less stressful than dining in company when you have to mind your manners and think of interesting things to say. But eating alone when you're the only customer and you're frightened of catching the waiter's eye in case he comes over pulls out another invisible rabbit is another prospect entirely. I felt like I was in an experiment, even when the waiter wasn't looking at me, there was a sense that somehow I was being observed - I had to be. How could I be entirely alone in a restaurant - the food must have been prepared by someone? And then, out of the corner of my eye, much like when you're on a nature trail looking for badgers or meercats, I spotted a movement. It was another man! Older than the waiter. He was standing about 20 feet away from me watching me from an open doorway to the kitchen. Another customer?! No. When he noticed that I'd seen him he looked away and quickly crossed the floor to stand behind the bar and pretended to clean things, where perhaps he felt safer or to where maybe he felt I'd feel safer if he stood there. And then another face appeared from behind the same door. The chef? His was a younger more surprised countenance, peeping his head cautiously around the corner and regarding me with curiosity. It was as if they'd all heard of customers, they knew what a customer was, they'd prepared their whole careers for the eventuality of customers but until today, until I'd walked in and sat down at one of the many empty tables, they'd never actually had one in their own restaurant. And so for the next few minutes I ate my ceviche, and they watched me. I was rather self conscious at first but then gradually I got used to their presence and I started to relax. And as I relaxed they seemed more at ease too. And as the last morsel of ceviche had entered my grateful mouth, the man behind the bar - the owner? - who was still watching me surreptitiously, caught my eye and beamed a smile at me from behind the bar and nodded gently, as if to say "Yes, that's right. Well done, you enjoyed that, didn't you? All is well."

So was it any good then? The ceviche? Yes. It was fine. By Lima's standards. Which is to say if you're travelling from anywhere outside of Lima it was outstanding. Absolutely delicious. I recommend Fusion on La Mar. For the food but mainly for the waiter and the overall experience. I recommend it because I want you to go there and tell me if you're the only one in too, and does the place and the waiter, the chef and the owner actually exist objectively, outside of my own consciousness? I need to know this. Don't order the ceviche though, try the Tiradito instead. Tiradito?! You haven't heard of Tiradito? Oh my god! Tiradito is probably my favourite dish in the world... ❖

CEVICHE ME CONTEST WINNER

Photo by Glenn Glasser



Q&A

EDEL RODRÍGUEZ

by Chris Yong-García

In April 1980, a couple hundred Cubans, fed up with a bleak economy, stormed the Peruvian embassy in Havana demanding asylum, and over the next few days their numbers grew to over 10,000. In response, Fidel Castro opened the port of Mariel to anyone wishing to leave Cuba, anyone who could arrange to be picked up by boat, that is. Family and friends in the U.S. quickly organized themselves and sent hundreds of boats from Florida, in what became known as the Mariel boat lift. 120,000 people made it out, among them, a 9 year old boy named Edel Rodriguez. How a nine year old boy starting from zero could go on to become one of the most celebrated illustrators in the U.S. is anyone's guess.

Edel Rodriguez, graduated from New York's Pratt Institute in 1994 and Hunter College's MFA program in 1998. He has exhibited internationally with shows in L.A., Toronto, New York, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Spain. Edel's paintings and graphic art are regularly published in The New Yorker, The New York Times, and on the covers of TIME, Newsweek and many other major publications. His work has been commissioned by book publishers, theaters and operas, and by clients such as Nike, MTV, Pepsi, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He is the recipient of a Gold and three Silver Medals from the Society of Illustrators, and a Bronze Cube from The Art Director's Club for his theatre posters.

The Sopranos (LA Times)

In 1980 during the Mariel boat lift, you and your family jumped on a boat and started a trip that put you on the path to a new life. What was on your mind during that trip from La Havana to Miami? Is there a particular image or feeling that stands out in your memory?

The pier in Havana was much higher than the boat, with the waves making the boat bob up and down. The one image or feeling I always remember is being loaded onto the ship, hanging in mid air, with someone hanging on to my arms above and someone else pulling my legs below. I felt like I was going to fall into the water at that time, but I was taken care of. I was exhausted from the ordeal after having spent a week at a Cuban detention camp as my family waited for permission to leave the island. When I was finally on the boat, I went to sleep and woke up sporadically during the night. I had never been on a boat, I remember seeing fish flying around the boat, jumping out of the water and flapping their wings. They were flying fish, something I'd never heard of. I also saw some dolphins for the first time. When I arrived in Key West, I was in awe of how bright and clean everything was —the streets, the cars, and the packaging on things like toothpaste and soda cans. I also remember eating many things for the first time, an apple, grapes, a pear. Trying to figure out how to eat them and the flavor of these new things made for a lasting memory.

It must have been very difficult for your family to arrive in a new country and start over with nothing. What can you say about your journey from there to being a world renowned illustrator?

It was a pretty difficult adjustment at first. When we arrived in the U.S., my parents began to miss our town and their own parents whom they had left behind. I remember walking in on them at times when they were very emotional about all of that and about adjusting to the language and customs of the U.S. I arrived in May, at the end of the school year. My parents didn't know what to do with me that Summer so I ended up going along with my father to some of the odd jobs he was able to find at first. I worked with him at a flea market, at a junkyard, on a vegetable truck and painting apartments. Later on, he started a trucking business and I would spend my Summers with him on his truck. He always told me to study hard so I wouldn't have to work on the truck or at the auto repair shops and junkyards we frequented. I've always thought that I learned many life lessons and even business instincts from my dad on that truck.

What is your favorite place on the planet? What is your favorite place in Latin America?

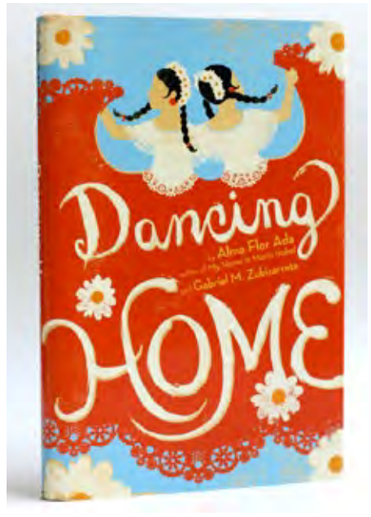
I've always loved going to Spain, and especially Barcelona. When I'm there I'm reminded of the roots of the culture I grew up in. My mother's family were farmers in Cuba, but their ancestors had originally come from Spain. Many of the words and colloquialisms I heard as a child, or the food I ate (caldo gallego, fabada, chorizo) have their roots in Spain. It's fun to walk around Spain and be reminded of family and childhood. The entire country reminds me how much the traditions of Cuba are grounded in this ancient European culture.
I've yet to travel through much of Latin America, but love the food of Colombia and Venezuela. I've visited a few spots in Mexico, Belize, and Honduras. My favorite is still a trip back to Cuba to visit family and discover some new places. Last year we headed West from my family's house in the Havana countryside to the province of Pinar del Rio. The valley of Viñales there is one of the most spectacular sites I've seen in all my travels. It is definitely one of my favorite places now and want to go back again soon.

When traveling . . .Instagram or an old school sketchbook? How do you capture images and ideas?

Drawing and photography capture two different aspects of a place so I tend to do both when I travel. If there's a quick moment that I want to capture then I take some photos. When I have some quiet time to take in a spot then I bring out my sketchbook. I'm mostly interested in color relationships, scale, characters, and a bit of a storyline about a place. I find I learn a lot about a country and its people by just sitting down, observing, and drawing.

As an artist, what's the most productive way for you to immerse yourself in a new place or culture?

Much of my itinerary is taken up by museum and architectural visits, I feel this gives me a good foundation



Clockwise:
Mao, TIME Magazine cover, Stamp for the US Postal service, Ray Barretto (The New Yorker), Varoom Magazine.

Clockwise:
Celia Cruz documentary film poster, Opera Grand Rapids poster, Newsweek Magazine, Simon & Schuster book cover.

about the place. Then I head out to restaurants and beaches. Marketplaces are also a great place to get immersed in the culture and atmosphere of a place. I also like visiting the houses of well-known artists. See their studios, the environment where they worked and so on. I spent a week in Giverny, where Claude Monet lived and worked in France. Wonderful little town, home and gardens.

Do you have cravings for Cuban food? Is there a particular dish you're craving? Do you cook?

I don't cook much, but I love Cuban food. Every time I go back home I ask my mom to make me "rabo encendido". It's ox tail stewed for hours in a sofrito of onions, garlic, oregano and who knows what else. Served over white rice with a side of plantains. Also love a "media noche" sandwich, kind of like a traditional pressed Cuban pork, ham, and swiss sandwich on an egg roll with pickles and mustard. And then there's "lechon asado", the roast pork that we have at Christmas or New Year's. I could go on.

You mentioned that you would like to work on a reportage story for a magazine, go somewhere and spend some time and tell the story as you see it. Has this happened yet? What kind of story would you imagine? What kind of place?

I think there are a lot of stories that magazines tell with photo essays that could have a different impact if they were told through drawings. I created an illustrated essay for TIME magazine years ago, titled "A Vision of Cuba", a detailed accounting of stories I came across while driving around Cuba in the 1990s, soon after the Soviet Union had cut off financial support for the country. It was a story about the changes that were happening within the country, things that much of the world was not aware of. I can see travel or culture related stories about other countries illustrated the same way—A look behind the scenes of a certain film production, a story about the goings on in the kitchen of a well-known restaurant, etc. News and war stories could also be told in a similar way, highlighting the people and the situations they encounter on a daily basis.

I once read in an interview about your first visit to the Illustrators' Society, feeling like, with all the Anglo names on the wall, you would have to change yours in order to "make it." How do you feel about your identity as a "Rodriguez" now? How has your sense of what's possible, in terms of career success, for a young Latino today evolved?

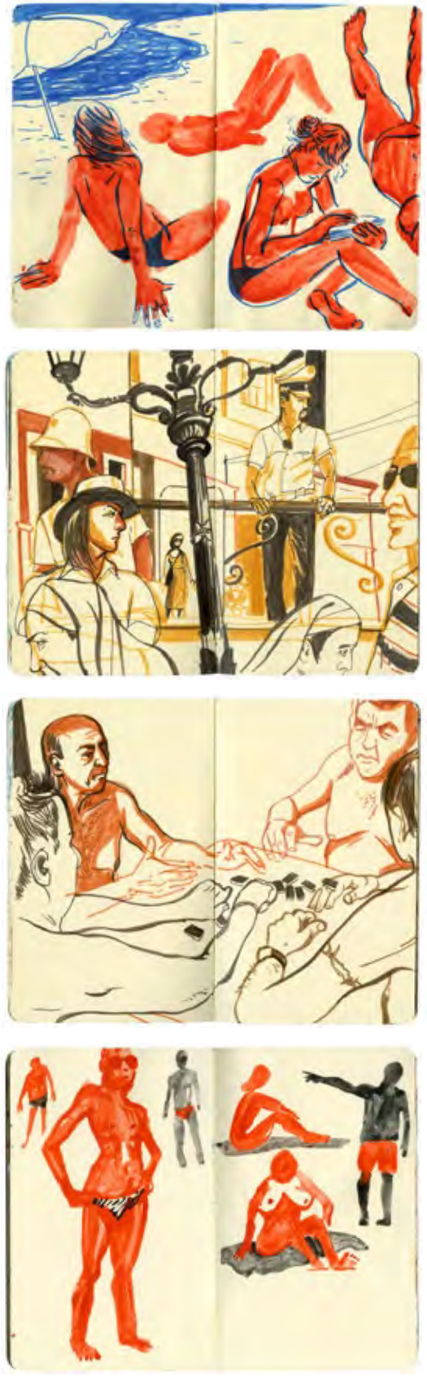
Having grown up in Cuba as a child and later in Miami as a teenager I never felt different, like I was part of a minority or any of that. Most of the names where I grew up were Perez, Garcia, Ramirez, etc., so I never thought about these things. Later, when I was 19, I left for New York City, and felt like I had to work much harder to become part of the place. I think someone at that age always starts wondering where they fit in and if their dreams are possible. I guess I started looking for role models or teachers in the art field with a similar background to mine and didn't find any, so I began to wonder if this was possible for me. Over the last 20 years things have changed quite a bit, if anything I think diversity is encouraged and wanted nowadays.

You left behind your full-time job at Time magazine to dedicate yourself to personal projects and family. What are you up to now?

I stay pretty busy with a combination of work for gallery shows and commissions from magazines, book companies and advertising clients. I'm currently making new work for an upcoming gallery show in Chicago at Curly Tale Fine Art and writing an illustrated memoir of my childhood growing up in Cuba during the early years of the Revolution.

Is there anything you've left undone in your career? Any challenge you're hungry to take on?

I used to design and build sets for the theater when I was in college. Creating sets for a professional Opera or Theater company would be a welcome challenge and a unique way to transform my work into a complete environment. ❖



Sketches from trips to Barcelona and Rome

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Illustration by Ursula Sanchez

CEVICHE KING:

Five of New York City's Top Ceviche Chefs Spill Their Secrets

FOR THESE FIVE TOP CHEFS, making ceviche is an intensely serious, deeply personal affair, rooted in childhood memories of sea, sun and family. When they prepare a ceviche for their customers, they are making those memories fresh again. And we can feel the love. Here we give you everything you need—wherever you may be—to sample for yourself the warmth of the sun, the sea, a family's embrace. We invite you to decide for yourself, who from among New York City's top ceviche masters should be crowned king.


JULIAN


ALEX


MIGUEL


ERIC


DOMINIC

TOLOACHE JULIAN MEDINA

on hidden inspiration

photos by Vanessa Griggs

166 E 82nd St, Manhattan, NY
www.toloachenyc.com

Where are you from? What's your first ceviche memory? When did you first fall in love with it?

Mexico City. I used to go to the beach five times a year. I love the water. I remember when I was eight loving fresh shucked oysters in Acapulco. For me, ceviche brings me back to my childhood, having lunch at Barra Vieja in Acapulco, with my toes in the sand, looking at the water. Every December my parents used to take us there. Shrimp ceviche with saladitas. It was the best lunch ever!

Who or what inspires your ceviche making these days?

I love Peruvian ceviche. I'm inspired by Gaston Acurio and by the cevicherias in Queens that all Peruvians go to. I always look for the hole in the wall place, the hidden spot, and go get my belly full of maiz cancha, ceviche picante and sweet potato.

What's the best ceviche spot on the planet?

Sira la Morena on the beach in Acapulco.

What ceviche are you going to share with us?

My favorite and the favorite of my customers: tuna ceviche with watermelon. I made it when Toloache first opened, and I still think it's a great combination of flavors!

Atun Ceviche

Spicy yellowfin tuna, lime, Vidalia onion, radish and watermelon

Yield : 3 portions

For the Sauce:

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup rice vinegar

¼ cup light soy sauce

1 T Sambal Olek, Thai chili-garlic sauce

¼ cup yuzu juice

¼ cup lime juice

For the Tuna Ceviche:

1 pound sushi quality Yellowfin tuna, diced

3 T Vidalia onion, thinly sliced

5 t radish, julienned

5 T watermelon, ¼ diced

2 T chives, chopped

Kosher salt to taste

For the Sauce:

1. In a medium bowl combine all the ingredients and whisk vigorously until a well-incorporated sauce forms.

For the Tuna Ceviche:

1. In another bowl combine together the tuna, onion, radish and watermelon; hand toss until the ingredients are mixed together well.

2. Pour the sauce over the ceviche. Be careful not to drown the salad. To better incorporate the vinaigrette, mix the ceviche by hand.

To Assemble and Serve:

1. Place ¼ of the salad per plate; sprinkle the chives on top for garnish.

RAYUELA
ALEX URREÑA

on starting simple

photos by Vanessa Griggs

165 Allen St, New York, NY
www.rayuelanyc.com

Where are you from? What's your first ceviche memory? When did you first fall in love with it?

I was born in the northern part of the Dominican Republic, in a city called Santiago, close to Puerto Plata, bathed in crystal clear Caribbean waters. I spent every weekend at the beach. The whole family would go to enjoy the water, sun, food and drinks. I remember watching the fishermen bring in the conch, and then prepare it right there at the dock. They used to remove the flesh, add fresh lime juice, salt, olive oil and pineapple. It was fantastic! I fell in love with ceviche the first time I had it. I had to be about eight years old. Conch ceviche was the most common, so that had to be my first.

What goes best with ceviche?

In terms of what is best to prepare it with, I like to add fruits, mostly tropical. The sweetness makes a perfect balance to the acidity. In terms of pairing it, I think ceviche should be eaten alone as a starter. There's no better way to start a meal. When I was a kid, we used to have arroz con grandules right after we were done with the ceviche.

What ceviche are you going to share with us?

One of my favorites: red snapper with carrot ginger and orange . We serve it as a special. When it comes to ceviche, you want to bring out the best flavor in the simplest possible way. I try to keep it simple: less is more.

Red Snapper Ceviche

Yield : 6 portions

Ingredients:

4 cups carrot juice

3 cups orange juice

2 oz sliced ginger, peeled

2 habanero peppers

1 stalk lemongrass, chopped

Combine everything in a pot and allow to boil for 5 to 8 minutes. Puree in a blender, strain and allow to cool.

1.5 lbs red snapper filet, without skin, thinly sliced

1.5 cups lime juice

¼ cup olive oil

1 cup red onion, thinly sliced

1 cup scallion, thinly sliced

1 cup carrot, julienned and blanched

1/2 bunch cilantro, chopped

2 grapefruits, segmented

Mix together the oil and lime juice. Add the snapper. Add the vegetables, fruit and carrot sauce. Plate the mixture in deep bowl or martini glass.

SURFISH MIGUEL AGUILAR

without taboos

photos by Pako Dominguez

351 5th Ave, New York, NY
www.surfishbistro.com

Where are you from? What's your first ceviche memory? When did you first fall in love with it?

I'm Peruvian, from Lima. La Punta is my neighborhood, a beautiful place surrounded by the ocean. It's full of fishermen. So the ocean was very important in my life, since I was a little kid. I learned to love it and respect it, when fishing or surfing. The ocean was giving me joy, when I was catching waves, and it was giving me happiness, when I was taking the catch of the day and preparing a nice meal at home. I used fish a lot, cooking together with my father. He was the one who taught me how to make ceviche. I remember making it with him and the fishermen right at the boat. The fish was so fresh! We used to squeeze the limes, add aji limo, garlic, salt and pepper and make a quick tiradito. Or I remember going to the fish market in El Callao with him. We would buy kilos of sea urchin; use a little garlic, lime juice, chopped onions, avocado and olive oil. That is the best ceviche you can imagine! Next to nice bottle of red wine, we spent hours like that on Sunday.

Have you ever had a bad experience with ceviche?

It was a long time ago in high school. My teacher was making ceviche for us, and she did not have enough lime juice for the fish. It tasted horrible! We had to eat it anyway. Thinking about it makes me laugh.

Are there any ceviche taboos for you?

When I was on the Food Network, in my first round on the show Chopped, they gave me big clams, nopales, Chinese persimmons and Italian bitters. Kind of hard to cook with those ingredients, so I went for ceviche! I made a clam ceviche—kind of ceviche de conchas—and they loved it! A very successful dish that proved there are no rules for ceviche.

What ceviche are you going to share with us?

Salmon Anticuchos, it's one of my favorites! Raw salmon, diced, skewered, seared, glazed with soy sauce, then bathed in a fusion sauce I make with "leche de tigre," huacatay, capers and aji Amarillo aioli. The Anticuchos have to be rare. Red onions, and *listo*! Enjoy!

Salmon Anticuchos /
Salmon Kebabs
Yield : 4 portions

Ingredients:

1 lb fresh salmon fillet

1 T capers

1 t chopped cilantro

4 T mayonnaise

2 T huacatay paste

5 large limes, juiced

1 t yellow aji paste

2 t soy sauce

White Peruvian corn, shelled

Salt and pepper to taste

8 Bamboo skewers

2 t olive oil

Method:

Cut salmon into 1-inch cubes and thread 4 pieces of salmon onto each skewer. There should be enough for 8 kebabs or 4 portions. Season with salt and pepper.

In a large bowl combine lime juice, mayonnaise, soy sauce, capers, yellow aji paste, huacatay paste and chopped cilantro. Mix until ingredients are well incorporated into a silky sauce.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat and cook skewers for 30 seconds on each side. Remove from heat and place on a large platter.

Pour sauce over the kebabs and serve with shelled corn sprinkled on top.

RAYMI ERIC RAMIREZ

keeps it classic

photos by Vanessa Griggs

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Where are you from? What's your first ceviche memory? When did you first fall in love with it?

I'm from a place called Clifton, born and raised in New Jersey, two hours west of the Atlantic Ocean. My family and I used to go to the beach every weekend in the summer. My first memory of ceviche was my mother preparing it. But I actually fell in love only two or three years ago. I was on an R&D trip to Peru and was eating amazing ceviches that really changed my perspective.

What's it like making ceviche in New York? How do you work with the ingredients?

The limes are very different from the ones in Peru. With the limes here, you have to find the proper balance. Also, the ajis we get here are not fresh. They come frozen, so that also plays a major part in making leche de tigre. You need to learn how to adapt and make the best that you can with the ingredients available.

What ceviche are you going to share with us?

The classic ceviche. For me it really represents Peruvian ceviches. If you can make that one, you can make them all. It has a certain sophistication. It's pure and straight- forward. And it's also hard to get right, because it has only a few ingredients.

Corvina Ceviche
Classic ceviche
Yield : 1 portion

Ingredients:

4 oz	golden corvina or wild striped bass
2 oz	leche de tigre (see recipe)
.5 oz.	red onion
Pinch	chopped cilantro
.5 oz.	sweet potato, medium dice
Pinch	finely chopped habanero

Method:

Cut corvina into ½ in. cubes and refrigerate. Save scraps for leche de tigre. Prepare leche de tigre (see recipe) and refrigerate until ready to use. Thinly shave red onion and submerge in ice cold water for 30 seconds. This will make the red onion nice and crisp and will take some of the bite off. Drain red onion and place in a bowl with paper towel. Take a small to medium sized sweet potato and bake on a bed of salt at 350F until tender. Let the sweet potato cool and then cut into medium sized cubes. Take 1 habanero and split and half. Take seeds and veins out. (Make sure to use gloves when handling.) Cut habanero into thin strips. Then turn habanero clockwise ¼ of the way and cut into a very small dice. Take 1 gram of cleaned cilantro leaves and chop with a very sharp knife to avoid bruising. All ingredients, when done, should be placed in small containers in an orderly fashion and refrigerated.

Finishing:

The ceviche that you're about to prepare must be very cold. Take 4oz. of the cubed corvina and place into a stainless steel bowl that is set on ice. Lightly season the corvina with salt and a squeeze of fresh lime. Add habanero, cilantro and shaved red onions. Mix once or twice. Then add leche de tigre and mix again. Adjust seasoning with salt. Take a bowl that has been refrigerated and serve the corvina along with the juices. Garnish with cubed sweet potatoes.

Leche de Tigre Clasico

Ingredients:

2 t	Garlic
1 T	White onions
1 T	Celery
Pinch	Ginger
6.5 oz.	Lime Juice
4	Cilantro stems
Pinch	Habanero/thai chili
1 oz.	White fish
2.5 oz.	Ice
6.5 oz.	Fumet
	Salt to taste

Method:

Mix all the ingredients lightly in the blender. Once everything comes together strain through a fine strainer. Reserve juices and refrigerate.

DESNUDA DOMINIC MARTINEZ

on hangover helpers

photos by Pako Dominguez

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Where are you from? What's your first ceviche memory? When did you first fall in love with it?

I'm from Riverside, southern California. It's about an hour from LA. As a kid growing up, in the summer time we would go to the beach a lot. I remember once my uncle coming home hung over, and he said, 'Here. I'm going to show you how to make ceviche, best thing for a hangover.' It was a very simple shrimp ceviche. Also, my mother took me to Baja California a few times. We had ceviche on the beach, and that's when I knew I loved it.

Where did you learn most about ceviche?

From my family. My aunts and uncles were always making ceviche in the summer. I used to be Chef de Cuisine at Bond St. Working there for eight years, I learned a lot about fish and also different techniques for curing it.

What ceviche are you going to share with us?

It's my shrimp ceviche, a take on the ceviche my uncle made when I was a child. The ceviche has equal parts lime juice and orange juice, toasted cumin, jalapeno, red bell pepper, red onion, avocado, cucumber, shrimp, cilantro and salt. It's very simple, very delicious.

What should we have with it?

The beach, a nice cold beer, maybe a pisco sour and good company!

Shrimp Ceviche

Yield : 1-2 portions

Ingredients:

4 oz orange juice

4 oz lime juice

6 to 8 16/20 shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 pinches cumin, toasted

half of an avocado, medium dice

3 T cucumber, deseeded, medium dice

1 T red bell pepper, deseeded, medium dice

1 t jalapeno with seeds, minced

2 T extra virgin olive oil

salt to taste

Mix all ingredients and enjoy!

FLESH FLASH: The Latino Mark

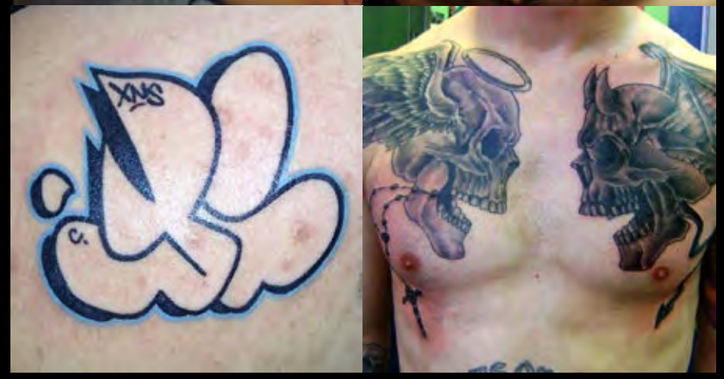
by Lauren Zaleski

Photos courtesy of Freddy Negrete & NB40, special thanks to Billy Burke

The tattoo has made its mark on mainstream culture. In 2011 Mattel released an inked Barbie doll. And the Pew Research Center reports that over thirty percent of young Americans now sport a tattoo. The "black and gray" tattoo scene, once confined to Chicano culture and its symbols, has taken off too.

Freddy Negrete is seen as the pioneer of Chicano tattoo culture, or what tattoo artists refer to as the “back and grey” scene. No color. Tattoos that look like they came out of prison—revolutionary type, Aztec art, religious symbols, girls. Negrete began tattooing professionally at Good Time Charlie’s in East Los Angeles in 1976. Before that, he tattooed in prison and out of his home. “When I started, I was the only Hispanic anywhere,” Negrete recalls. “I did tattoo shows. I was the only one. No one would give me a chance, but Ed Hardy and Jack Rudy did, and that started the door to be opened, and the style getting big.”

Thanks to Negrete, younger Latino tattoo artists were able to break into the scene. Like NB40 of Tuff City Tattoos in the Bronx. NB40 started with the basics of black and grey, looking deeply into the symbols and the cultures that produced them. Then he added his own artistic flair. For instance, he adapted the traditional "California script," used by gangs, into a "Wild Style" evoking graffiti, with a characteristic East Coast feel.



"A lot of people always want to let another person know where they are from. So many people are proud of their country—Puerto Ricans, Brazilians, Dominicans, Peruvians, Colombians, Cubans," NB40 observes. "No one really denies where they are from." Not anymore. Negrete smiles at all the change he's seen in his career. "Now you go to a tattoo show, and there are the Latinos tattooing. A big majority have found something they can do artistically and make a living and share in the American dream by owning their own tattoo shop. So it's been a good thing for them."

"Nothing new as far as the imagery goes," Negrete comments. "It's just done better, more realistic, different artists finding different ways of doing the same style." It's going to be rising Latino tattoo talent, like Antonio Mejia and Chuey Quintanar of Goodtime Charlie's, that will continue to evolve what Negrete started.

THE ULTIMATE
LATINLOVER

MARCO WILLIAMS:
A Bone-Deep Sense of Fairness

by Bryan Giemza // photos by JR Sheetz

A prolific filmmaker who teaches at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Marco Williams has produced or directed more than a dozen documentaries. His fictional work has screened on Showtime, and Williams received a primetime Emmy Award for *Freedom Summer* (2006), his chapter of the PBS series *Ten Days that Unexpectedly Changed America*. His films have garnered many awards, including prizes from the Miami International and Full Frame Documentary Film Festivals. *Two Towns of Jasper* (2003) helped bring national attention to the murder of James Byrd, Jr., and it brought Williams to *Nightline* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. He is a regular on film festival juries, including at Sundance, and his work has brought the story of race in America to screens around the globe. But it's his latest documentary film, *The Undocumented,* which aired on PBS in May, that makes him this month's Ultimate Latin Lover.

From under long dreadlocks, Marco Williams speaks with the quiet but carefully chosen words of a seasoned interviewer and teacher. In his deliberateness—even in the way that he seems carefully contained within his stature—is a focused energy for speaking truth. In the latest chapter of a career devoted to pursuing justice, Williams has chosen to train that energy on U.S. border policy and its human cost. "The Sonoran desert is beautiful after the rainy season. All the cacti bloom. It's lush green. There are yellows and purples." Williams recalls time spent along the U.S. Mexico border, behind a camera. "Then I realize I am out with a border patrol agent, looking to apprehend someone who is undocumented." This is ground zero of American immigration policy, and a territory Williams enters willingly. Screened nationally on PBS and to recent acclaim at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, *The Undocumented* offers an unflinching account of the hundreds of undocumented migrants who die annually in the Arizona desert crossing into the United States. Williams interviewed people caught up in the messy actualities of immigration policy on all sides: coroners; government officials; border patrol agents; citizen groups; family members; and, of course, the migrants themselves.

The civil rights dimensions of the immigration debacle speak to the arc of Williams's documentary work and his own family history. During the Great Migration, when over six million African Americans fled the southern states, his grandmother and three of her sisters moved from Georgia to Philadelphia, where they subsisted on day work, piece work and housekeeping. "Something I retain a great pride in," says Williams, "is that these four sisters lived together, ultimately raising families in this one house, and effectively purchased a home together over the years." Williams was born in Philadelphia, but raised in New York, in a Lower East Side neighborhood Williams recalls as "multiracial and multiethnic," with a heavy Puerto Rican presence. "From the earliest age I wanted to learn Spanish," he remembers, "because that kind of infiltrated my daily life. So I think that,

if there was some kind of proclivity or desire to be sensitive to the Latino culture, that's probably where it started."

As work on *The Undocumented* unfolded, analogies between the African American and Latino experience emerged. "Moving from one place to another, working to be assimilated, how do you fit in. The lightbulb went off," Williams observed, "and I realized that Latino immigration in this regard is not unlike the Great Migration." For viewers of the film, this analogy is crystallized in the moment when a migrant without papers is run to the ground in the desert and handcuffed. "There was a familiarity," Williams admits. "In some sense, I might be able to say to someone, Look, while I don't know your experience explicitly of crossing the US-Mexico border, I do have some sensibility about migrating from one place to another and trying to integrate or make a life in a different place."

Williams held his ground and insisted that the film faithfully document images of the dead, and eventually broadcasters relented. In his experience, "People will say it is at times difficult to watch, but they don't think of it as being gratuitous. They understand the decision and feel it's critical. If I were to obscure their faces, and if I were not to present the dead how they are"—here he broke off and continued with channeled intensity—"how else is an audience to have the empathy, the deeper insight and understanding, recognition that these are human beings, and how else can I as a filmmaker say, *I refuse for these people to be anonymous*?"

Williams points to the marked change in American attitudes toward the Vietnam war, once the press started releasing images of body bags coming home. His decision to film the unclaimed bodies of the undocumented may cost him a place at some film festivals, but Williams takes it as an article of faith that, "It's not the artist's responsibility to censor him or herself. I tell my students, Don't censor yourself. Let other people censor you."

One of the most poignant stories in *The Undocumented* was unanticipated: the case study of Marcos Hernandez, a Mexican migrant in search of his father, who vanished crossing into the U.S.

Here again, Williams acknowledges an art-to-life connection. An earlier documentary, *In Search of Our Fathers,* chronicled Williams's seven-year search for his own father, whom he never met. "Often enough," Williams admits, "for a documentary filmmaker, the people who get transformed are not the people in the film."

Asked about his relationship with the Latino community, Williams speaks about continuing to be a bridge-builder, "an emissary across a black-brown border." Even while making *The Undocumented*, which had him filming human remains returned to a Mexican village, for instance, even in the midst of wrenching circumstances, Williams forged connections. "Every Mexican I met gave to me. They gave to me at the high point of grief. They gave to a total stranger. Clearly they had their own personal motivations, but nonetheless it was very generous. I was taken in by families, food was made. You know, things that are, just, transcendent. Great gifts of humanity." It is an experience that will resonate with many who have crossed the Mexican frontier. ❖

ABUELA's RECIPE

by Jessica Solt // photos by Pako Domínguez

Photo by JR Sheetz

Chilean-born Patricio Osses plays the part of fish buyer to Manhattan's top eateries. He brags about the fact that his day starts so late— at 4 a.m.—a luxury he can now allow himself, as an established business owner. By the time Patricio rolls into the fish market at dawn, the freshest fish is already waiting for him, thanks to a network of trustworthy providers. "I'm very selective," he warns. "If I don't like something, I send it back. I would never buy something that isn't 100% great. I'm very demanding with the fish I buy."

It's Patricio's impeccable eye and sense of taste that we're counting on, as we take a journey into his home and into his kitchen. What delicacies from the sea await? Join us as we get to know Patricio, his past, his passion and his favorite fish preparation.

It may come as a surprise that someone who works with fish day in and day out didn't grow up eating it. "Growing up in Chile," remembers Patricio, "my father used to say he was going to take me to the beach to eat a fine piece of fish. But once I got there, I inevitably ordered steak and fries."

While Patricio was still a boy, his family suffered a diaspora. His parents divorced; his father moved to New York, where he started a business importing seafood from Chile; and his mother moved to the Netherlands. Patricio and his siblings stayed behind for a few years, before moving across the Ocean with mom. "I didn't eat much fish over there either," he remembers. "I started eating more and more when I finally moved to New York and saw the variety that my dad used to sell."

It's one of those beautiful summer days, and Patricio is already busy, when we arrive. The plumpest octopus you've ever seen sits cooked on a tray. The salmon trout and the *toro*—fatty tuna belly, which he cleaned himself the night before—are ready to be grilled on hot coals outside. He prepares a fresh salsa to accompany the seafood. "It doesn't matter that I'll use the same salsa for the octopus and the fish. They'll have a totally different taste," he says. Seeing how hungry we've become, Patricio offers an improvised snack: octopus with olive oil and a bit of Spanish paprika. The flavors are outstanding.

Patricio enjoys color, variety and freshness in the food he cooks. He loves using lemons and coarse salt to boost flavor. Having worked at a handful of New York restaurants, he has picked up a few magic tricks from the chefs he observed. When he eats out, he wants to enjoy what he offers his top-name clients: consistency. "My job is about bringing the best product every single time. I can run to five different places, until I find what's worthy of my clients, because I want to offer excellence. That is the most important part of my job."

Patricio remembers one occasion when a chef at The Four Seasons, one of his biggest clients, needed sea urchin and sardines for the James Beard Awards banquet. "There was a problem, because sardines only came once or twice a week from Portugal, and none came that week. The menus were already in print, and the chef couldn't change anything. I made a few calls and found a friend who had three boxes of fresh anchovies. I went over to him, handpicked 70 of the best-looking ones and brought them over to the chef. He was nervous, but in the end the anchovies saved the day!"

When talking about his true passion in life, Patricio talks about his family. "I like to cook, be with my wife, my kids. We're like a clan. We go everywhere together," he says with a big smile. Meanwhile, his phone is buzzing with messages from a "spy" he planted at his son's tennis match to send updates. "Felipe won!" Patricio says with a grin on his face, knife in one hand, phone in the other.

If you're looking to engage Patricio's services, you might just have to wait. Today he works with only a few select clients in an effort to deliver the best possible results. The New York *Times* article that featured him in 1999 catapulted him into a kind of seafood seller's hall of fame, which had an Oprah-effect on his career. Patricio is a true problem solver, someone his clients rely on one hundred percent, and that trust is what matters most to Patricio, ahead of growth or profit. And that means, for many New York City diners, Patricio is the person to thank next time you get caught eating the freshest fish in town.

Seafood in Fresh Salsa

(Yield: 6 servings)

Ingredients

FOR THE SALSA

1 tomato, seeded and finely chopped

1 bell pepper, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 celery rib, chopped

3 tbsp. cilantro, chopped

2 green onions, finely chopped

3 lemons, juiced

1 fresh jalapeño, seeded, deveined and finely chopped

Coarse salt, to taste

Black pepper, to taste

Adobo Goya, to taste

¼ cup Olive oil

Combine the ingredients and add condiments to taste.

Set aside.

FOR THE SEAFOOD

1 large octopus

4 fillets of salmon trout

1 large piece of toro (fatty tuna)

To cook the octopus, defrost completely. In large pot, bring plenty of water, enough to cook the entire octopus, to a boil. Immerse the octopus by the head in the boiling water and immediately remove. Repeat 3 or 5 times, making sure you do it an odd number of times: 3,5 or 7. Then add the entire octopus to the pot, and let it cook for 40 minutes on low heat. The octopus should be soft, not rubbery. Once it feels like a cooked potato, turn off heat and let it rest in water for 20 minutes. Remove from water and pat dry.

Cut off the legs of the octopus and grill on hot coals, along with the salmon trout and fatty tuna. Make sure you do not overcook, as fish tends to cook very quickly.

Place cooked seafood in a platter, along with the prepared salsa. Serve with white rice and salad.

Mirasol's Food for the Soul

by Patricia Codina // photos by Guillermo Figueroa

It was an unseasonably warm April day in Lima, Peru. I was driving along the coast, headed to Mirasol, the newest restaurant in Chorrillos, an oceanfront district, and home to some of the city's top seafood eateries. I had heard that the best ceviche in Lima was likely to come from Mirasol, where chef Elio Alegria commands the kitchen.

Mirasol's main dining room floor was a sea of polished blue cement, with grooves describing waves. I navigated past tables made of weathered wood from old fishing boats—with the vessels' names and defining colors still evident—and up a set of stairs to a balcony overlooking the bay. The sun was shining, and the ocean, dotted with surfers, looked refreshingly inviting.

I sat down with Elio and Andres Rosas, the owner and soul of Mirasol. Andreas is a slight, soft-spoken man, his sunburned skin evidence of a life lived at the ocean's edge. We started our conversation over a crab causa, octopus salad, Mirasol's signature ceviche and a sweet and sour salad topped with oatmeal-crusted shrimp, each dish a composition of flavors, colors and textures in delicate balance.

Andres explained that the unifying thread in the menu is a key ingredient that also lends the restaurant its name: the Mirasol chili pepper. "Mirasol is the dried yellow *aji*. My idea was to make this ingredient, which is not very widely used, the basis for our menu. It has a very intense golden color, and the subtle sweetness of something that has been slowly dried and roasted by the sun. We're using it in everything, even Mirasol infused pisco. We've been testing recipes and have discovered some very interesting flavors. We've developed a Mirasol risotto, ceviche and tiradito."

One of Andres's motivations in starting his own restaurant was to rescue his family's recipes and celebrate the traditional cuisine of Chorrillos, which he has called home all his life. According to his mother, his first real meal, as a baby, was at the beach, a fish *aguadito.* "That is the first flavor engraved in my memory, and since then I have been developing my palate. I have recalled many of the dishes I grew up on. My father was a fisherman, and we would go to the beach every weekend. My mother would rest, and my father would fish and prepare ceviches and dolphin musciame, which was very popular at the time. But then dolphin fishing was banned, so my father would make the same

"One of Andres's motivations in starting his own restaurant was to rescue his family's recipes and celebrate the traditional cuisine of Chorrillos."

recipe with octopus. That dish is now our octopus salad. My mother also enjoyed cooking. She would bake cakes, and the restaurant's home-made ice creams are made using her recipes. "

If Andres was Mirasol's soul, chef Elio's passion brought the menu to life. Elio made a name for himself as a ceviche master trained in the ranks of renowned chefs Gaston Acurio, Rafael Osterling and Don Cucho La Rosa. "My dishes tell the stories of all Peruvians," said Elio. "We love and live our food."

"What is your favorite ceviche?" I asked him. His face lit up. "That depends on the time of my life," he replied. "When I was a kid, and lived in the 'hood', it was the mackerel ceviche, the cheapest fish we could get. When I got older, we would buy silverside (*pejerrey*) and made ceviche with it: awesome. Then when I graduated to the Major Leagues, with Gaston, I started preparing grouper ceviche. I love it. It has a great texture, and the flavor is very subtle. I like my ceviche very simple: lime juice, limo aji, salt, a touch of ajinomoto, cilantro and red onion."

Mirasol's signature ceviche? Elio's own interpretation of a dish popular in fishermen's markets: a silverside ceviche with fried squid. "We do it with a white fish, grouper for example, and fried calamari. The combination is excellent." As I took a bite of the soft grouper flesh, and warm crunchy calamari, drenched in cool spicy lime juice, I had to agree: delicious.

Mirasol's menu is constantly evolving. "Some dishes have even come out of clients recommendations," Elio explained. "For example, I used to have a *tacu tacu* with *lomo saltado*. One of our regular clients asked me to add a seafood stir-fry. The result was our own version of a surf-and-turf that became so popular, it is now one of our signature dishes." Mirasol's ultimate goal: fresh, seasonable, sustainable, respectful of yearly fishing restrictions and the seasonality of different fish species.

We continued chatting over *tacu tacu* topped with a seafood stir-fry, a slow-roasted goat shank, Mirasol risotto and shellfish in an herbed butter sauce. The sun started to sink into the ocean, as we ended our meal with Andres' mother's home-made ice cream. I walked to my car and headed home, my stomach, content, and my heart, full. Mirasol's food is not only delicious and original, but best of all, full of soul. ❖

CEVICHE ME CONTEST • WINNER •

Isabel's not-your-Peruvian-mother's Ceviche

by James Willimetz // illustration by So Yeon Kim

"Really?" I said to Isabel. What I wanted to say, to shout, was, "No way! Blasphemy! You can't make it with that! That's not ceviche!" She had just told me that she added ketchup to her Ecuadorean shrimp ceviche.

Ceviche, to a Peruvian (and to a gringo who grew up in Peru eating ceviche), can *never* have ketchup. Or mustard. Or orange juice. How many times had I scoffed at the Mexicans, who sometimes put tomatoes in their version of ceviche? And Isabel used ALL of these ingredients. But I have learned to never say never and anyway, how could I complain when I had a mouthful of Isabel's heavenly, mouth-watering shrimp ceviche. I just mumbled, "Really?"

I wanted to try making it. She told me all the ingredients, but when I asked her how much of each ingredient, she said, "Lo que es, no mas." (Just the right amount, no more.) "But how do I know?" I insisted. "Hay que llegar al punto de sabor." (You have to reach the point of flavor.) Easy for her to say, she knows how it's supposed to taste. I understood that you have to find a balance between sweet and sour, but I wanted something more codified, a recipe. She agreed that the next time she made it, I could watch her and try to calculate and write down the amounts of each ingredient. The results are in the recipe. It's easy to make and fabulous.

I offered to make this ceviche for my Peruvian family when they visited once, and though they mumbled and grumbled at the ingredient list, now they beg me to make it every time I go to Lima.

You serve it in a bowl with a spoon with chifles (salty plantain or banana chips). In Jipijapa, Ecuador, they serve it with a peanut butter sauce. Weird, but OK. And then Isabel told me the most shocking thing they serve it with, American-style popcorn. My jaw dropped. I said, "Really?"

CEVICHE ME CONTEST • WINNER •

NEW FULTON FISH MARKET, SOUTH BRONX – NEW YORK

Photo by JR Sheetz