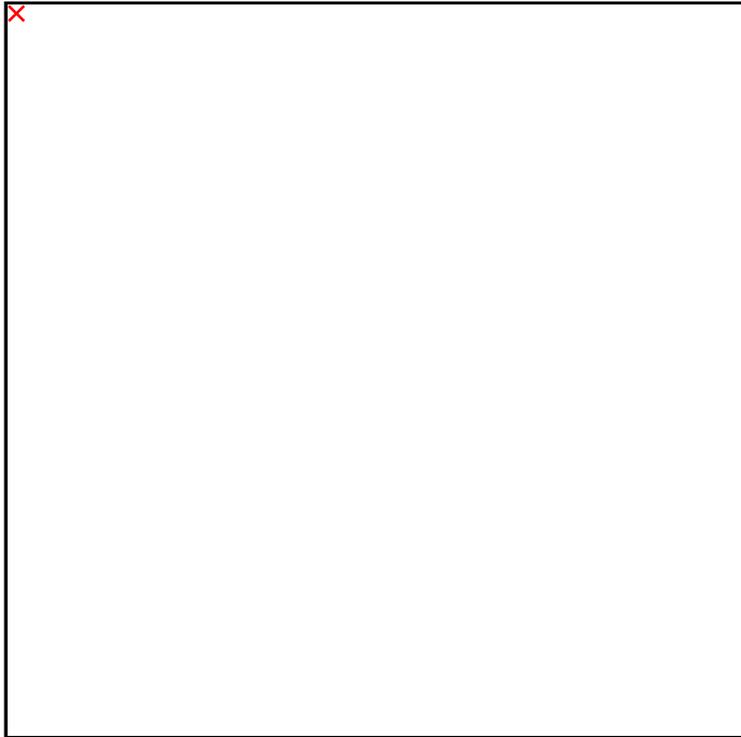


BENCHMARK® Raises the Bar on Sustainable Dining

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The Woodlands (Houston), Texas, September 2021 ... Sustainable fish farming in ocean waters, environmental preservation, and a healthful, delicious salmon served on stylish and eco-friendly French dinnerware unite in two new partnerships forged by [BENCHMARK®, a global hospitality company](#). Noted brand leaders in sustainable practices, [Verlasso](#) and [Revol](#) join Benchmark in its ongoing efforts to provide carefully sourced, healthful and environmentally responsible food, coupled with an exceptional guest experience. Verlasso is a salmon brand, sustainably farmed in Chile's Patagonian region. The company farms salmon by taking the process from hatchery to harvest. Revol, a 250-year-old French company, produces bakeware and dinnerware made from clay created in Sainte-Uze, a small village in the Southeast of France.

"Benchmark has been committed to creating innovative, sustainable practices in every aspect of our operations, especially pertaining to our culinary offerings," says Olivier Gaupin, the company's director of culinary operations and Maitre cuisinier de France. AquaChile, one of Chile's leading fish farming companies, will supply premium Verlasso salmon to Benchmark's properties and Revol will provide its exceptional and environmentally-friendly dinnerware. Verlasso salmon and Revol dinnerware are expected to debut at Benchmark properties throughout the US in the coming months. Diners can look forward to this premium fish presented creatively on Revol tableware. Says Olivier Gaupin, "This exciting partnership is another way Benchmark is elevating its cuisine while also ensuring sustainability remains an important part of our business model."

"Now that our industry is in recovery mode, it is essential that we continue to evolve these practices by aligning with partners who share our core values and commitment," Gaupin notes. "Consumers are increasingly concerned about the source of their food and the methods by which it is grown, harvested, prepared and served. Every facet of the process is under review from the use of pesticides and the humane treatment of animals to the safety of dinnerware used." Gaupin also points to concerns about seafood that have increased, even as the public becomes aware of its nutritional value. Fish may lower the risk for certain conditions, such as heart attack, stroke, and even depression. Loaded with nutrients, fish contains high-quality protein, Vitamin D, and a host of other vitamins and minerals. It is also a source of omega-3 fatty acids, which is essential to growth and development. Fish are an essential part of such popular eating plans as The Mediterranean, Pescatarian and Paleo Diets.

"Unfortunately, fish isn't always a healthy choice for ourselves or the planet," observes Olivier Gaupin. In researching fisheries and their methods, he came upon Verlasso, based in the pristine and protected Patagonian region of Chile. Verlasso's parent company, AquaChile, is one of only a few companies authorized by the Chilean government to work in this highly sensitive area. This led to a meeting with the Verlasso brand's Kelly Haden and the formation of a new partnership where Verlasso salmon will be supplied to Benchmark, assisting the company in its efforts to provide ongoing education to chefs, team members and guests about the importance of eating sustainably raised fish.

According to Kelly Haden, Verlasso salmon is raised in the Humbolt current, a cold low-salinity ocean current that flows north from Southern Chile to Peru. The current supplies a fresh, constant supply of water and supports rich ocean nutrients to feed the salmon, resulting in fish that are healthier, firmer, rounder and more active. In addition to these nutrients, the Verlasso salmon are fed a proprietary feed created by AquaChile, that is made up of a mix of plants, algal oil, forage fish trim, and supplements. The Verlasso diet ensures a consistent flavor and color for which the fish are known. The salmon features a firm and flakey texture that imparts a buttery taste in the mouth. It can even be enjoyed sashimi-style.

Nor are there any hormones or preventive antibiotics fed to the fish that make up the Verlasso brand. Because heavy metals are always a concern in the fish we consume, AquaChile developed a steel alloy netting system free of anti-copper foulants. Pens are low density, to avoid overcrowding that too often results in an inferior fish product.

These responsible and innovative practices enable the Verlasso brand to supply premium salmon year 'round and to offer consistent quality and long-term pricing. One of the most important aspects of brand's sustainable policies is that fish are only harvested when they are ordered. "We don't sell on the spot market and we don't harvest and store our fish," Haden affirms. The company is especially committed to proper stewardship of its location in Patagonia, a protected area of glaciers, forests and pristine waters, governed by Chile.

Dinnerware at Benchmark properties will reflect both sustainability and style. Revol porcelain creates these exceptional dishes

and cooking utensils literally from the ground up. For 250 years, the French company has made its own porcelain from clay, kaolin, feldspar and silica. Enamels are made of toxin-free components. The family-owned firm has passed these processes down from generation to generation, creating an internationally recognized product line that meets health and safety standards set by numerous states and countries. All Revol products are cadmium- and lead-free.

According to Revol's Helene Fouchy, Revol porcelain is fired at extremely high temperatures, making it non-porous. "Unlike other culinary porcelains, Revol porcelain does not absorb oils or odors. Consequently, it does not affect the taste of your food and guarantees perfect hygiene," she says. Designed to last, the smooth and resistant enamel on the porcelain does not scratch, and is easy to clean thanks to its inherent non-stick attributes.

Concerned about preserving the environment, Revol has put in place an eco-friendly plan that impacts every aspect of its operation. Industrial waste water is recycled, liquid waste is treated at a purification station while mineral waste is taken to a cement factory. A new, low-consumption kiln has been installed that is also used to heat the factory workrooms. Fouchy also points out that 90% of Revol's packaging is made from recycled cardboard.

Benchmark's Olivier Gaupin has been aware of Revol's products and heritage since his apprenticeship as a chef in his native France. "Revol's cookware is highly regarded by culinarians and the versatile dishes with their varying shapes and colors give us limitless creative options," Helen Fouchy agrees. "Our tableware is ideal for hoteliers. One set and color can be coordinated for in-room dining, others for different restaurants on the property and to create a customized service of banquets and events."

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