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THE
FOOD
ISSUE

WHAT'S COOKING?

Denver's 5-star chef Dana Rodriguez talks food, drinks and what she's cooking up that's sure to change the local dining scene forever.

Check this out!
Loca's Pork Green Chile from Work & Class is courtesy of the doña loca herself, Dana Rodriguez. Turn to page 44 to make this delicious dish at home.

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fish supplier

Man on a mission

President and CEO **Derek Figueroa** supplies fresh fish to our favorite seafood restaurants in Denver and the surrounding areas. *by Kerrie Lee Brown*

Devoted to sustainable and responsible sourcing, 24/7 handling and beyond, Derek Figueroa heads up Seattle Fish Co., one of the world's leading suppliers of fresh fish and seafood based right here. On a busy day, this 104-year-old company will receive, butcher, pack and ship over 85,000 pounds of product and stock over 200 varieties of seafood. From luxury hotels to caterers to grocers to first-class restaurants throughout Denver, the Rocky Mountain area and culinary destinations around the globe, Seattle Fish Co. is our little (big) secret that we thought you should get to know. It was an absolute honor to interview this notable man on a mission.

What is your background?

"Seattle Fish has been my long Summer job! I started at the company pre-college when I was looking for my calling. My first jobs were in food with my longest stint grilling steaks at Trail Dust Steakhouse—thinking that if I needed a job then I might as well work somewhere they would both pay AND feed me. My formal education is in finance with a Bachelor, Masters in Finance and MBA, however, my work experience is in sales and operations at Seattle Fish."

What does your business do?

"Seattle Fish is a seafood and specialty gourmet foods company. On the surface, we source, process and supply fresh and frozen fish, value-added seafood and specialty gourmet products. Over 70% of the products we sell and distribute are fresh, never frozen, and that adds to the complexity of the operation. Seattle Fish is [also] a big advocate for conservation improvement and sustainable food systems. Through industry involvement and collaborations with other thought leaders in the food industry, we're able to influence positive change in how fish are raised, the inputs that are required and drive innovation in practices, packaging and education."

What happens at your facility?

"On a daily basis, our buyers source products from around the world and arrange for those products to be quickly shipped by air and truck to our facility here. Once in Denver, our quality and receiving teams go through an intensive quality evaluation to ensure the products meet our stringent requirements before we let that product enter our production facility. Teams of skilled packers and cutters process the fish by hand as orders are received, packing the product in ice for delivery the very next day. Our drivers complete the cycle by delivering the product in refrigerated vehicles to our customers."

Describe a typical day for you.

“As CEO, my responsibilities are long-term planning, development of people and high performing teams, setting and supporting culture, driving performance and representing the company. This means my work on any given day is extremely varied and primarily involves working with people. The variety and opportunity to work with bright, smart and driven people to make a long-term, positive impact is the best part of my role.”

Who do you work with closely?

“It’s tough to narrow down specific chefs or retailers because we work with so many talented folks across the Denver Metro area and mountain regions. Each of those relationships are meaningful to us both as a business and as a company of people who truly love the hospitality industry. But, if I had to name a few: Pete Marczyk, Josh Pollack, Josh Wolkon, Sheila Lucero at Jax Fish House and Jen Jasinski at Crafted Concepts, among many others.”

Why do you love your job?

“I’m passionate about food, and even more about building sustainable food systems. I didn’t have a ‘calling’ to join a fish company in landlocked Denver—and I certainly didn’t expect to be here 30+ years when I started. However, Seattle Fish has provided a platform to drive meaningful change, given me enormous opportunity for personal and professional growth, modeled the core values that I believe in, provided a challenging job in service to a higher purpose and has me fortunate enough to work with passionate, smart and inspirational people that are making a difference in our industry.”

Any last thoughts?

“Restaurants are where we all come together to nourish our bodies, to celebrate, to mourn, to escape, to seek comfort and to connect with others. That is the heart of the hospitality component of what makes your favorite restaurant so special to you. This hospitality is driven by the pride, passion and purpose of the folks running the locations. In essence, the culture and community they create. Seattle Fish is fortunate to call many of the most creative and inspirational leaders in food our customers. I feel fortunate to learn from and be inspired by these community leaders—it’s what makes my job so enjoyable.” 



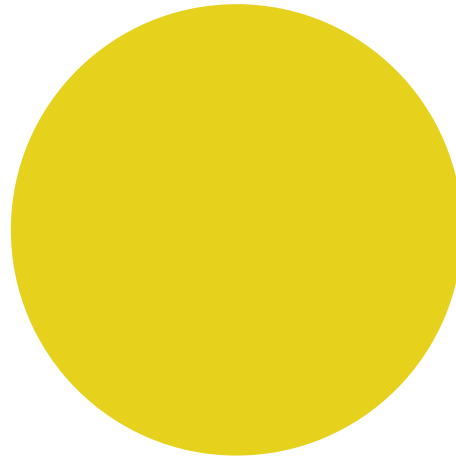
SEATTLE FISH COMPANY

6211 E. 42nd Ave. | 303.329.9595

seattlefish.com | derek@seattlefish.com

**Contact Seattle Fish Co. for a tour of their facility.*

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