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Sunday, August 20, 2017

## LOCAL CHEF SERVES UP NEW DISHES AT CHICAGO SUMMIT

George Fisher grew up in Beach Haven, Long Beach Island, where his parents owned Fisher's Diner: a local spot where everyone in the neighborhood would eat. The mayor and police came in at 8 a.m. every morning. This was before the Wawa trend, so everyone in town would grab their coffee at Fisher's.

George Fisher helped out around the diner, and by the time he was a teenager, his passion for food took over and he followed in his parents' footsteps.

Fast-forward to 2017. Fisher is the executive chef for Spectra by Comcast Spectacor for both the Atlantic City Convention Center and Boardwalk Hall.

Fisher recently took his vast knowledge of the culinary business and, along with 12 chefs from across the country, flew to Chicago for a summit and competition.

Billed as its first Culinary Innovation Summit, Spectra by Comcast Spectacor gathered its top culinary experts at US Foods Inc. in Chicago from Aug. 9 to 10 to incorporate the latest food trends into new dishes and reimaged fan favorites.

Fisher and the others discussed target markets, looked at the rise of the millennial palate and then created eight new dish ideas with one dish to be featured in future menus of Spectra-managed venues.

For his dish, Fisher and his crew created the turkey "Sustain-a-Burger": a sandwich that included a ground turkey patty blended with quinoa, oyster mushrooms, soy sauce, ginger and spices made for a healthier and more sustainable choice than a beef burger. The burger was topped with tomato ginger chutney and served on a pretzel bun with a side of flash-fried brussels sprout petals seasoned with lemon myrtle.

The name Sustain-a-Burger was inspired by marketplace movement toward healthier, environmentally friendly beef-burger alternatives — something Fisher notices more and more with younger generations.

"They want responsibly sourced foods and are looking for animal care, non-GMO and no hormones," said Fisher, of Tuckerton. "I'll go to a venue and just want a beer, but this generation (of millennials) is conscious in these types of things."

It's a new type of customer for Fisher, who has been in the business for more than 35 years.

Fisher graduated from the Atlantic Cape Community College Academy of Culinary Arts in 1984. More recently, Fisher worked at Asbury Park Convention Hall and the Golden Nugget Atlantic City before joining Spectra by Comcast Spectacor in 2013.

By the end of his time in Illinois, Fisher hadn't walked away as the winner of the challenge — that title went to Mark Borowski of Miami's Jungle Island, who created an encrusted meatball — but Fisher said he's taking the lessons he learned in Illinois and bringing them back to Atlantic City.

He said he wants to bring in new vendors, create a new menu and focus on food-conscious variety.

Having a new network of chefs doesn't hurt either.

"This is where I can bring (ideas) back and plus, I have a camaraderie and can call any of those chefs and ask for help or ideas," he said.