

# Concept of Merroir

**Patrick McMurray**

**The Ceili Cottage**

**World Champion Oyster Shucker**



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**World Champion Oyster Shucker**

- Patrick McMurray is owner of The Ceili Cottage, an Irish pub in Toronto.
- McMurray has brought oysters and fresh fish to the city for more than 15 years known for opening Toronto restaurants Starfish Oyster Bed & Grill (2001 to 2014) and Pearl Diver (2014 to today).
- McMurray is a World Champion Oyster Shucker, holding the Guinness World Record for the most oysters shucked in 1 minute and 39 seconds as well as the most oysters in one hour (1,114).
- McMurray is the author of a book on oysters, titled “Consider the Oyster — A Shucker’s Field Guide.”

# MERROÛR

THE OCEAN'S TASTE OF PLACE

Oysters and other tasty tidbits...

# Introduction- Patrick McMurray aka @ShuckerPaddy

- Born in Toronto, Canada - not on the Ocean as most people think
- 30 years in the restaurant trade, 25 years Oystering - 2.3 million oysters opened
- Owner The Ceili Cottage, Starfish 2002-2014, Consultant on multiple operations
- Champion Oyster Shucker - 4-time Canadian champ, 2002 World Champion, and now, 2017 Guinness Record holder-39 oysters in one minute, 1114/ hour
- Author - Consider the Oyster - a Shucker's Field Guide 2007
- Inventor - Pistol Grip Oyster knife distributed worldwide by Swissmar
- Translator of Fisher's & Growers work to



# Species - “an oyster is an oyster”

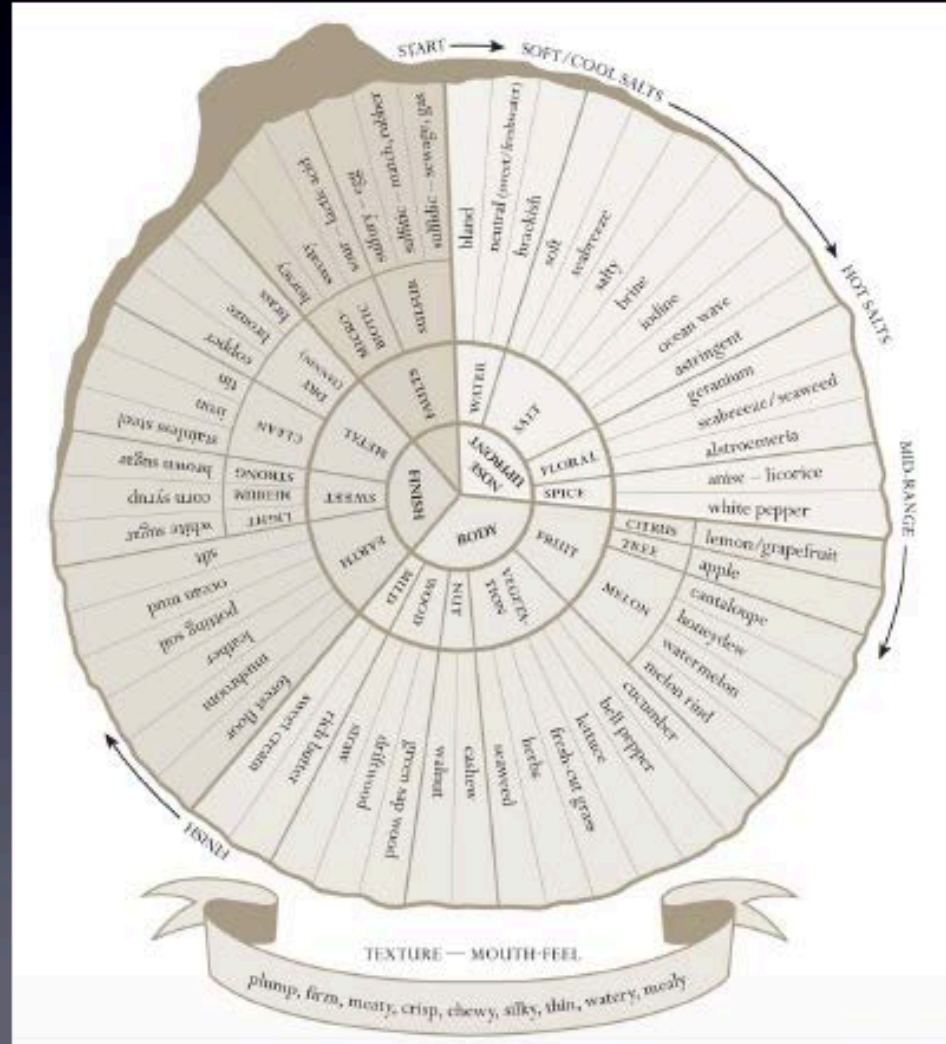
-not.

- North America - has 5 species to enjoy, and 100's of choices within the species
- *Crassostrea virginica*
- *Crassostrea gigas* (Asia)
- *Crassostrea sikaema* (Japan)
- *Ostrea edulis* (EU)
- *Ostrea lurida/conchaphila*
- this is why I developed my theories in Merroir



# Taste of an Oyster - Merroir

- taste of the location, the “merroir”
- Species
- Location
- Depth in the water
- Finishings - moving the locations to finish



# Crassostrea virginica

## N.A. East Coast Oysters

- N.B. to the Gulf of Mexico
- salty sweet, mild, plump to light texture
- colder the water, greater the flavour
- 100's of different flavours&textures
- proposal of sub-classification areas NB, PEI, MIslands, Maine, BluePoint, Wellfleet, Chesepeake, Gulf



# Crassostrea gigas

The Pacific, West Coast, or Rock Oyster

- Pacific Rim origin - then to NA, and EU
- most grown oyster around the globe
- hearty, can grow most anywhere, and take over
- salty, sweet cream, melon, cucumber - meaty and plump





# Crassostrea sikaema

## The Kumamoto Oyster

- grown in WA, starts in Hawaii - 3 growers
- perfect pure bred - from a “found” bed
- deep cupped morsel, sweet cream and melon, light salt



# Ostrea edulis

European Flats, Belon, Natives

- stronger, more complex flavour, oceany
- sea salt, seaweed, earth, tannin, metallics
- meaty, crisp texture
- Ireland, UK, France, Scandinavia, US, Canada



# Ostrea lurida

## The Olympia Oyster

- indigenous to NA Pacific coast
- only 2-3 growers
- smallest market oyster, biggest taste
- most complex - umami
- saline, buttery sweet cream, seaweed, fresh cut grass, dry metallic finish



# How to properly taste Oysters

- no sauce or lemon
- two bite chew
- aerate - breathe in through mouth
- swallow, and continue to think of the flavours as they develop



# Flavour Factors

Location & Depth affect taste

- location of the oyster -all C.V. are the same, but taste different
- Depth in the water - Phyto & Zooplankton
- BC Pearl Bay sea farms
- French - “Claire” pools



# Merroir in other Shellfish?

- yes - it is possible
- must enjoy as clean as possible - raw, no sauce is best
- raw, or light cooking methods
- clams, scallops, mussels, sea urchin, shrimp, seaweeds



# Clams

- littleneck & cherrystone
- PEI vs Rhode Island



# Mussels

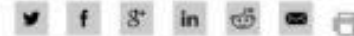
- mussel tasting 2012
- PEI, BC, Maine, Irish, France
- steam only to cook, allow flavour to come through

## Answering the call of the wild mussel

Blue, alive, freshly delivered: Jacob Richler samples the first mussels of the season

[macleans.ca](http://macleans.ca)

December 1, 2012



Reena Newman

Last week, the first wild Irish blue mussels of the season arrived at Toronto's Starfish Oyster Bar & Grill to customary fanfare—a crowd of expectant, hungry customers numbering approximately three. The reasons for the modest turnout are easily explained: even in these seasonally attuned and provenance-focused times no one seems to remember we ever had a mussel season. For decades, the national taste has embraced rope-cultured mussels from P.E.I., a cheap, quality product available freshly harvested throughout the year.

Like all cultured mussels, those from P.E.I. lead a sedentary, well-fed life and so are always pleasantly plump. As they are raised in mesh socks, and dangle in armchair comfort above the sea floor rather than moving hungrily about in its sand and dirt, their unpalatable byssal threads—or beards—are rendered conveniently thin and slight from disuse. What's more, that perch encourages them to maintain a living quarters that is clean and grit-free, in unwitting consideration of their future sauce.



# Sea Urchin

- New Brunswick vs Maine
- BC vs California



# Shrimp

- white wilds vs cultured
- Spot Prawn



# Lobster

- Maine vs everyone
- have not tasted enough to find a difference - but every fisher says they have the best



# Seaweed

- the next big thing in culinary
- Dulse/Dillisk
- Irish moss
- Kelp - Pacific vs Atlantic



# Any Questions?



- Thanks for coming out
- Shuckingly Yours, Paddy