

# The Sag Harbor Express.



Andrea Shastid, proprietor of the Dock House on Long Wharf.

## BUSINESS TODAY

# Clamoring for Clams

ANDREW RUDANSKY

The inconspicuous little building on Long Wharf which houses the seafood shack, The Dock House, has been Sag Harbor's worst-kept secret for decades. Customers clamor for the clam chowder and other seafood offerings here, and even *Travel and Leisure* magazine has taken notice lately. The Dock House co-owner Andrea Shastid explains that it was the charm of the seaside location that partly attracted her to the business when she bought it three years ago. At the time, Shastid thought it was a great place with good food, but that it could be even better.

"It just needed some more spices in some of the sauces," she said.

The Dock House is not only a must stop for locals and tourists in the Hamptons, but now with its recent mention in *Travel and Leisure* magazine diners who may have never found the place on their own are lining up as well. In its summer 2009 edition, the magazine named what it considered to be the top four seafood shacks in the nation — The Dock House made the cut along with shacks in Massachusetts, Maryland and California. The article described The Dock House by writing, "Even the swankiest beachgoers love this kitschy Hamptons joint, where pan-fried crab cakes and lobster salad are gobbled up at outdoor picnic tables."

Shastid was more than surprised to find out that her business was awarded this accolade.

"I didn't even know that I was written up," Shastid explains, "until a couple of the costumers came in and said, 'Congratulations!' And I said, 'For what?' And they said, 'Well, you were written up in *Travel and Leisure* magazine.' And I said, 'I was?'"

It's no surprise to any of The Dock House's regular customers, however, who have come to expect the unique blend of traditional seafood shack fare and contemporary international seafood dishes. Shastid has been slowly transforming the menu at the restaurant to incorporate more and more unusual dishes.

Her "4C Soup," a creation that Shastid debuted at The Dock House last week, has been "a big hit." The creation is a crab, curry, corn chowder inspired by Shastid's trip to India and South East Asia. "People have been coming in asking

if I can make it again," she says laughing.

Shastid, a former commercial pilot, incorporates flavors and spices from around the world in many of her dishes. "My traveling did me a good deed by exposing me to all different types of flavors around the world. I have been just about everywhere. I just loved the fact that when I went to different countries I tasted different spices and different flavors."

Soups are a specialty at The Dock House, which won the Chowder competition at the 2007 HarborFest in both categories. "I sell soup like Starbucks sells coffee," Shastid says proudly.

Once Shastid acquired The Dock House from the previous owner, Ed Geldmacher, she jumped right into the kitchen and began creating original recipes with the chef, who goes by the single name of Alfredo.

"He is just wonderful," Shastid said, "I have worked with him and we have been experimenting, we have been putting different specials on the menu."

But traditionalists need not be afraid as the kitchen staff are more than happy to whip up any of The Dock House originals. Shastid says that people come in all the time asking for "their strips, their fried foods or their grilled salmon, or any grilled menu items." It is a delicate balance that Shastid has created at The Dock House between new bold creations and local food institutions, as she describes, "We have something for everyone"

One of the first creations that Shastid made in the kitchen of The Dock House, that has since become a classic, is the seafood burger, a mixture of crab, shrimp and salmon with lettuce, tomato and tartar sauce on a hamburger bun. Shastid personally recommends the salmon, her favorite, which The Dock House charcoal grills in a soy, teriyaki ginger marinade.

"The salmon is absolutely delicious," Shastid says. "It melts in your mouth."

Be sure to also check out the fried crab cakes and the lobster seafood salad, both "stand-out" dishes mentioned in the *Travel and Leisure* article.

The Dock House (Long Wharf, Sag Harbor, 725-7555) is open Monday through Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.