

# Your Chef And Climate Change: William Dissen of Market Place Restaurant

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by [Eden Canon](#)

Executive Chef and owner of [Market Place Restaurant & Lounge](#) in Asheville, NC, William Dissen creates a unique cuisine using farm-to-table ingredients sourced within 100 miles. Market Place Restaurant provides fresh and delicious dishes which contribute to its community's health. To further aid this endeavor, Market Place Restaurant has supported the arts, local-needs and education programs in Asheville for over 30 years.

## Why insist on sustainably sourced seafood from local suppliers?

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Sourcing sustainably and locally was always my first choice when looking for the best ingredients because they come from people who care about the animals they are raising, the process in which they are growing their plants and tending to their animals, and they care about the impacts their decisions make toward our planet. Sourcing sustainably equals having a greater outlook on the future. If we take care of our farms, fields, and oceans now we will also be able to harvest from them in the years to come.

Has ocean acidification, or any other impacts on the seafood industry due to climate change, influenced your seafood purchasing options?

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Since I have begun cooking, I have noticed a decline in the quality of certain species of fish (i.e. snapper, grouper, etc.). The size of different species of seafood has decreased as well as the length of their fishing seasons. This is due to over-fishing of these species, but is also directly related to changes in the acid levels in our streams, rivers, and oceans.

As our ocean levels and water temperature rise, fish will begin to change their migratory patterns and these changes are going to cause us to search in new places for the delicacies we are used to. These impacts will increase our carbon footprint. If we are proactive and advocate the harvesting of “local & regional” seafood we will be able to slow down this dramatic pattern.

Are there any other challenges you’ve encountered in trying to find local suppliers of sustainable seafood?

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I have been very proactive in researching the best outlets for quality, sustainable seafood. I have had to play “hard ball” with my fish mongers for transparency in the authenticity of their seafood as well as to demand sustainability ratings in their wholesale order guides.

Unfortunately it always comes down to money. When you paint a financial picture about how much seafood you purchase, and then demand for the best, sustainable species, wheels begin to turn and changes finally happen. For me, it’s been a long path, but we’ve begun to raise awareness and our suppliers have also begun to be proactive for us.

If you could change or accomplish one thing that would make local, sustainable food more accessible, what would that be?

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Education. If we are able to teach our youth about the importance of making healthy decisions about local, sustainable food, then we will be able to create a more sustainable world in the future. At the James Beard Food Conference last year, we discussed “Trust in Food.” If we can create an environment where young people demand great ingredients, sustainable ingredients, we will achieve a value system and camaraderie between our farmers, our fishermen, our suppliers, and the people who love their food and support what they do.

Any other thoughts on how climate change will affect the restaurant industry?

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Weather plays a major role in the retail industry. With more and more severe weather affecting our country and our planet each year, it is getting harder to make seasonal predictions on what our weather will be like. If it snows heavily or there are tornado or hurricane warnings, it becomes difficult to operate a business effectively.

Climate change is also affecting the way our farmers grow the food that nourishes our planet. With warmer winters and hotter, drier summers, our farmers are struggling to maintain their farms to feed the people. This is inevitably going to become a problem that plagues the globe.

Water is our biggest resource. Keeping it plentiful and clean will become our biggest challenge.

*Photo credit: Market Place Restaurant*