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## Du Jour: Chef Philippe Parola

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

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Baton Rouge-based Chef Philippe Parola is on a crusade to rid the world of a pesky invader by putting it on the plate. The last few weeks have found him on *ABC World News Tonight*, on NPR and in newspapers nationwide, revealing his campaign to rebrand the nonnative Asian carp from ecological spoiler to the culinary delicacy now named "silver fin." Parola is the front man and engineer of the campaign, which was officially launched by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in January. Other states are concerned about the carp as well. In fact, the Obama administration just sunk \$78.5 million to block the carp's path toward the Great Lakes. There, as in Louisiana, the carp could substantially threaten native fish populations and upset the fish industry.

The impetus for the culinary campaign sprang from Parola's personal experience. He was fishing for alligator gar with Jeff Corwin, of the Food Network's *Extreme Cuisine*, in a bayou near Pierre Part when a large carp leapt into his boat—a common tendency for this surface swimmer. The fish has been regarded locally as a trash fish because of its high blood and bone content, but Parola spied an opportunity. He took it home and bled it, achieving a clean white color, then steamed it to easily separate bone from meat. The resulting flavor profile, he says, was a cross between scallops and crabmeat. A handful of partners have signed on to mass-produce silver fin steaks, which should be in regional supermarkets in the next few weeks.



Meanwhile, the Paris-born former local restaurant chef continues his other food-related ventures, including a [225batonrouge.com/.../dujour-chef-ph...](http://225batonrouge.com/.../dujour-chef-ph...)

forthcoming all-purpose sauce and marinade, and a new culinary show called *Tips from the Pros*, broadcast on Cox Channel 4. Upcoming episodes will be shot at a Rouse's Supermarket outside Lafayette to demonstrate how to forage for ingredients that yield simple, wholesome meals. "Cooking together is an important family value, and it's not that hard to do," he says.

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