

# French chef Philippe Parola to demonstrate at Grafton flea market



Oct. 21--GRAFTON -- For anyone who missed New Orleans-based French chef Philippe Parola on his last River Bend visit, he returns this weekend and Tuesday to demonstrate fish preparation techniques.

Parola dedicated his life to the culinary arts more than 30 years ago. But he is equally dedicated to a crusade to help stabilize the natural environment while developing a human consumption market for invasive and nuisance species, such as alligator, wild boar and snow geese. And now, he has developed his Asian carp invasion solution.

"If one jumps in your boat, just keep it, because it's good eating," Parola said Tuesday during a telephone interview with The Telegraph.

Last month, during the fourth annual Mississippi Earthtones Festival, Parola, president and CEO of Chef Parola Enterprises, demonstrated how to prepare the Asian carp as a delicacy and handed out samples and recipes.

He will do the same thing this weekend from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Grafton Riverside Flea Market, which is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days and adjacent to the Loading Dock Bar and Grill on the banks of the Mississippi River in Grafton. He will start with cutting and filleting, and then he will fry the fish and give samples away to seafood lovers, foodies or anyone willing to try something new. He will talk about the fish and answer questions.

Parola also will demonstrate his expertise at the dedication ceremony of the Jerry F. Costello National Great Rivers Research and Education Center Confluence Field Station at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

The French, Italian and Louisiana continental cuisine chef has opened several restaurants, both in the United States and overseas. Parola, a world-renowned chef with his own culinary school, television series and line of gourmet accessories, has perfected a method of deboning and cooking the carp, creating a delicacy that is palate-pleasing.

"We are fortunate to have him this weekend," said Ben Allen, one of the founding members of Grafton Summit Enterprises LLC. "What he does with this fish is amazing."

Another founding member, Gray Magee of Grafton, said the fish prepared as Parola demonstrates tastes a lot like crab or scallops.

"It's not a bottom feeder or trash," said Magee, who first met Parola in New Orleans when Grafton Summit Enterprises representatives met with other concerned and involved parties to consult with Parola. "It eats plankton. It has a high Omega-3 rating and no mercury."

Magee describes himself as a "seafood lover."

"If Asian carp was not any good, you can bet I wouldn't put my name on it," he proclaimed. "I wouldn't sell a bad-tasting fish."

There are two species of Asian carp that proliferate at the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers in Grafton. They are the silver Asian carp, which jump, and the bighead, which do not jump,

Magee pointed out.

Lewis and Clark Community College President Dale Chapman, who is the chairman of the Jerry F. Costello National Great Rivers Research and Education Center Confluence Field Station, also supports Parola's and Grafton Summit Enterprises' ideas, Magee said.

"He's very much in favor of our plan," he noted.

For the last several years, the Grafton area has been trying to decide how to deal with the problem of Asian carp filling commercial fishing boats. Grafton Summit Enterprises is attempting to bring their plan to open a local fish processing plant to market the fish to the public's attention. Parola is a consultant and also a partner in the venture.

Parola has joined a growing number of concerned hopefuls who are wanting to bring about a permanent name change from "Asian carp" to the more taste bud-tantalizing "silverfins," sell the idea that it actually is both tender and tasty, and build processing plants to market and sell the fish.

Visit [www.chefphilippe.com](http://www.chefphilippe.com) for more information.

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