

This chef/owner, originally hailing from France, has nicely orchestrated an intersection of French cuisine and seafood in a Brewster space.

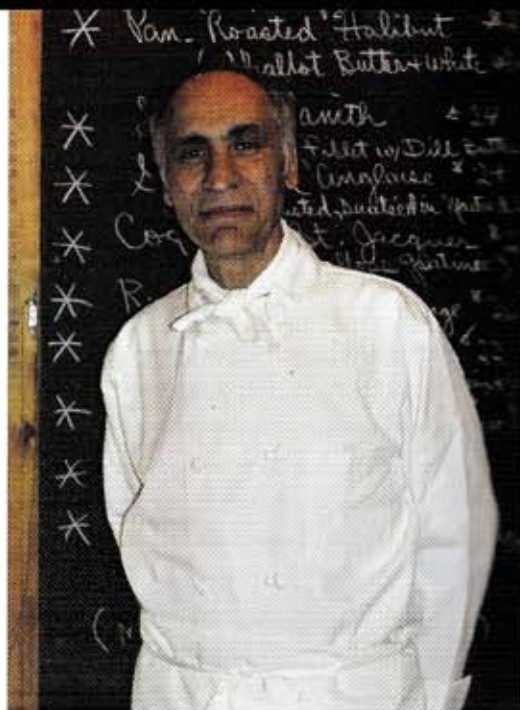


PHOTO BY MARIA FERRI

## His Hidden, Little Gem

Peddler's Café in Brewster is easy to miss. Its small wooden sign is undoubtedly overlooked by passersby on Thad Ellis Road. For some restaurant owners this relative obscurity might be worrisome. But for Peddler's chef and owner Alain Hasson, it's perfect. "Although I'm only about 100 yards from 6A, I'm pretty well hidden," Hasson says. "People who want my kind of food seek me out. One of my guests referred to me as a hidden gem."

The fortunate few who do stumble upon Peddler's Café will feel like they have crossed the Atlantic into Southern France. With its small tables covered in clean white cloth, the setting sunlight sneaking through vine-covered windows, and fresh flowers on every table, Peddler's oozes with romance. Hasson says his wife has always enjoyed a romantic dining atmosphere and, after a pause, admits that he does as well.

Originally from Provence, France, Hasson came to America with his family as a boy but returned to Nice at the

age of 17 for formal training. After training for four years and working in restaurants in France until he was 25, Hasson returned to America. He worked in hotels and country clubs on Long Island, eventually shedding his chef's hat for a managerial position. (Although Hasson visits France occasionally to see family, he is adamant that America, and Cape Cod specifically, are now his home.)

Although Hasson, 63, and his wife came to Brewster eight years ago with plans of retirement, he couldn't quite settle down. "I didn't feel fulfilled," Hasson says. "I had to have my little restaurant to fulfill my dream." And so, on a dead end road, hidden in lush greenery and set back from the steady flow of traffic on 6A, an intersection of French culinary expertise and fresh Cape cuisine was born.

"I've kept my fundamentals in French cooking but I apply them to the won-

derful fish we have here," Hasson says, calling the Cape's seafood, "among the best in the world." Visitors can ogle their options on an oversized blackboard that features the evening's choices in chalk. For those who prefer landlocked fare, Hasson recommends the filet mignon au poivre.

He insists that his patrons take their time, saying that, "food is to be savored," and that he and his wife are not in the business of turning tables. "When I was a little kid I loved watching my mother cook," Hasson says. "There's something about feeding people, making people happy, by cooking a great meal. To eat well is one of the greatest things that I can think of doing."

To extend the experience, diners might choose to add an exclamation point to their evening in the form of a traditional French flaming dessert. Hasson offers a banana caramelized in butter and sugar and flamed with rum. The dessert is aflame when it leaves the kitchen and Hasson says that whenever one is ordered, he can be assured that its eye-catching presentation will guarantee more to follow.

When he isn't busy perfecting each dish, Hasson enjoys mingling among his guests, which can number up to 30 on a crowded summer night. "In large restaurants you deal with a waiter, you never deal with the owner," Hasson says. "Our place is so small it's like going into someone's home and having a chef cook for you."

With word slowly spreading about Peddler's quaint atmosphere and delectable fare, the number of patrons seeking out chef Hasson's offerings is sure to grow.

Peddler's Café  
67 Thad Ellis Road · Brewster  
508-896-9300  
Entrée range: \$18-29

### PROFILE

By Rick Bach

