

best seafood – 1st place

blue point grille

People who love seafood love Blue Point Grille. The Warehouse District restaurant has received top honors in *Northern Ohio Live's* Best Seafood category for three consecutive years, and placed second in 1999 and 2000. Its secret?

"The fresher the fish, the better the taste," says George Schindler, owner of Hospitality Restaurants (parent company of Blue Point, Salmon Dave's Pacific Grille and Cabin Club). Fair enough. But adhering to such a simple creed is difficult: Being in the Midwest

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– albeit by a Great Lake – presents its share of logistical challenges. Perch might be plentiful, but Blue Point's ocean-fresh specialties – live Maine lobster, Alaskan king crab and, of course, oysters – are a little harder to come by. Luckily, the restaurant's team is resourceful.

"We're always doing our own research," Schindler says. "We don't just call up a seafood company and say, 'What've you got?' We take trips to Florida, Alaska and California, among other places, and we're constantly talking to locals and finding the best purveyors. That ensures we get seafood that's in season, at the height of the season, when it's the freshest."

Some of the restaurant's most important relationships are with those companies that supply oysters, Blue

Point's signature dish. Served on the half-shell, Asian style, Rockefeller, imperial or "crispy fried," among other variations, the oysters are what keep customers coming back. "When we opened in 1998, it was rare to find good, fresh oysters in Cleveland," Schindler says. That quickly changed – Blue Point now serves approximately 75,000 of the shellfish each year. It would seem patrons agree: *Fresher is better.* – *Sally Law*



700 West St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland. 216-875-7827. Lunch Monday-Friday 11:30 am-3 pm; dinner Monday-Thursday 5-10:30 pm, Friday and Saturday 4-11 pm, Sunday to 9 pm. ADiD; MV/\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Reservations recommended. Handicapped accessible.