

## WHAT IS MERROIR?

Like wines, an oyster's flavor reflects where it was grown. The merroir is an oyster's taste of a place, and Rome Point oysters have been described as having a "salty start, sweet finish" and as having "medium brine flavor to start and a sweet, buttery finish."

## DOING GOOD THINGS FOR THE POND, AND FOR YOU

- Oysters are nature's filtering powerhouses. One oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water each day; an acre of oysters can filter the entire pond in just over one day.
- Oysters absorb nitrogen, removing it from the water where too much of it can cause harm.
- Natural oyster reefs, as well as aquaculture gear such as cages, provide habitat for marine life and nursery areas for a variety of species to grow.
- Oysters pack a big health punch, containing only 47 calories per six medium oysters, while providing heaps of vitamin B12, iron, zinc, manganese and selenium. In addition to health-boosting omega-3 fatty acids, oyster farming requires no inputs like food fertilizer, pesticides, or antibiotics and requires little freshwater. In fact, farmed shellfish have the lowest carbon footprint of any protein source.



# OYSTER FARMING OFF ROME POINT

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



*Hungry yet? Scan here to learn where to buy local oysters, how to eat them at home, and to see oyster farmers in action.*

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## ROME POINT

The John H. Chafee Preserve in North Kingstown is also known as Rome Point. While most know this place as a series of beautiful hiking trails leading to a rocky beach, the offshore waters are popular for clamming, boating and kayaking. A place for all seasons where wildlife such as deer and seals abound, Rome Point also offers a sheltered and fertile place for shellfish farming, or aquaculture. The farmers you may encounter as you enjoy the beach work year round, and the industry as a whole adds over \$5 million to the state's economy, supporting hundreds of jobs and contributing to our culinary culture and robust appetite for local seafood.

Rhode Island shellfish farmers have grown shellfish and kelp off Rome Point

since 2001. Today there are about 35 acres of farming activity, supporting four individual Rhode Island-based small businesses. The farms sell their oysters and kelp to local, regional, and national markets and restaurants. As with all aquaculture in the state, the submerged land is leased, rather than owned, by the growers and is approved and managed by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council in coordination with other state and local agencies and stakeholders. The rigorous review and approval process is designed to ensure that farming operations are not harming the local environment, are compatible with other water uses, and are providing benefit to the industry and the public commons on which they operate.



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## WHAT YOU'LL SEE ON THE WATER

As you look out over the water or walk along the edge of the shore, you are likely to notice different signs of aquaculture activities. Growing oysters takes place in submerged cages, floating cages, or directly on the bottom. You might see cages upright, out of the water, a technique used to dry algae and other fouling organisms that stall oyster growth. Farmers are often on their small boats or barges at work on their farms, which require tending daily. Rome Point offers clean water and good flow through, allowing oysters to grow fast and healthy over the summer season. In addition to growing oysters for consumption, Rome Point farms host restoration activities, growing oysters to benefit the environment, in cooperation with state agencies.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATE MASURY