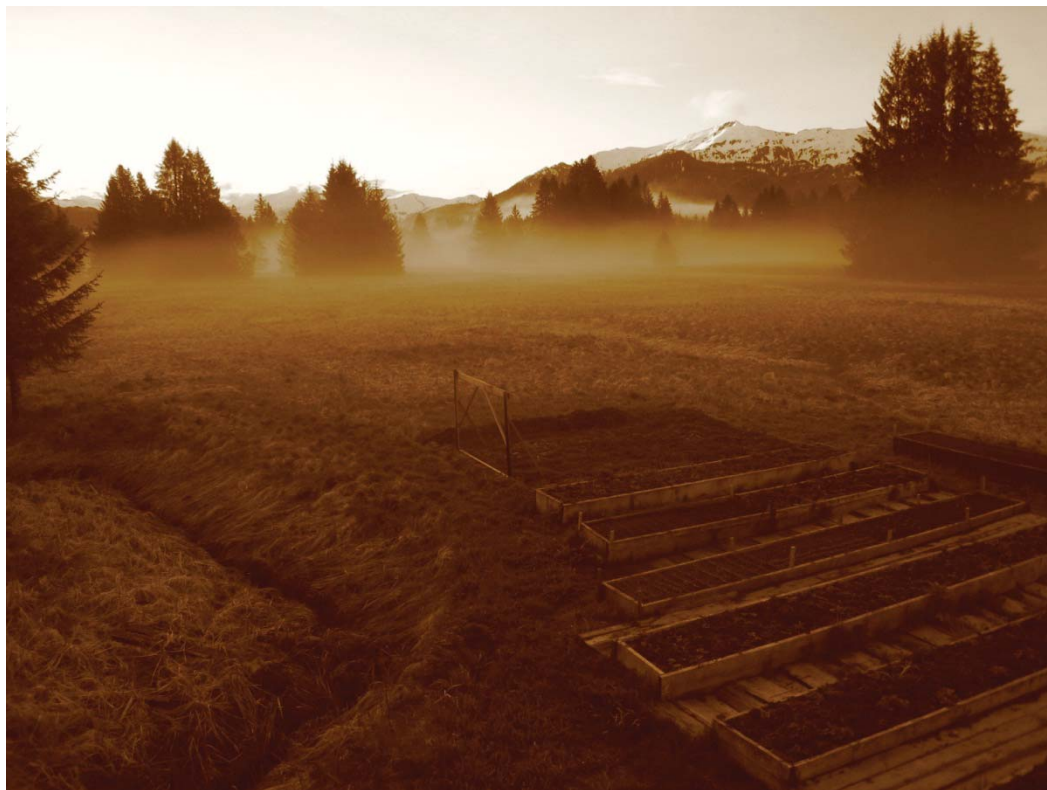




TRACIE TRIOLO CHEF

This past summer (2011) Tracie arranged a relationship between local SE Alaskan farmers Bo Varsano and Marja Smets of Farragut Farm and the *Catalyst*. Tracie had met Bo and Marja at the Petersburg Farmer's Market in 2010. She corresponded with them over the winter, talked seeds and vegetables, and planned rendezvouses with them to pick up their delicious fresh organic produce the next summer. We are now partnering with them to provide our guests aboard the *Catalyst* with the freshest and tastiest produce we can. With it our chefs are able to continue to create delicious and healthy meals for all those who travel with us. Thank you Tracie, Bo and Marja.

Below is a short piece Bo and Marja wrote about their farm and their relationship with the *Catalyst*.



Farragut Farm

“Wake up!” nudges Marja early on a cloudy Southeast Alaskan morning. Light streams in through the window, but that doesn’t mean the day is late because in June the sun barely sets in these parts. “Catalyst day” she says and we roll out of bed to start harvesting veggies. By 10am we are almost done; baby beets, carrots, snap peas, Napa cabbage, speckled lettuce heads, mizuna, basil, shimonita onions, savoy cabbage, and big bags of baby salad mesclun bulge over the sides of the coolers. Whatever is fresh and ready for harvest, Tracie will want, and LOTS of it. She gets so excited by a big, bright bunch of collard greens that we sometimes worry about her. Bring her a pound or two of fragrant basil and you get a huge hug!

Having a farm in Farragut Bay isn’t easy. The rich Farragut River valley soil is only above high tide if it sits a good distance back in away from the shore of the bay. There’s not a road within 25 miles and the only way in or out is by boat or plane. All of these factors make transporting fresh vegetables a major challenge.



So we wait for high tide, then wheelbarrow the packed coolers to the edge of the slough and load them up onto the rowboat. I’m about to shove off when Marja comes running up with a bunch of tiger lilies in a Mason jar. “Flowers for the cook” she explains; almost forgot the flowers for the cook, close call. The boat is so full of veggies there’s not enough room for the both of us to make the trip down the slough and into the bay. Bobbing up in down in the chop of the open water, my handheld radio squawks, “Farragut Farm, this is the Catalyst”, and here she comes gliding into the inner bay looking for her cabbages. “This is your vegetables speaking...” I announce, and within minutes we are sidled up to one another like old friends.





Tracie is at the rail with tarps rigged over the Catalyst's foredeck refrigerators and we swiftly unload and stow the vegetables. Poor babies, merely two hours ago it was just another summer morning and now they find themselves being prepped for tonight's salad. The transfer from rowboat to mother ship happens in just a few minutes and I'm shoving off for home but... Damn, there's that Mason jar of lilies hiding in the row boat, forgot the cook's flowers again! I quickly pass them up over the rail and shove off again but wait, stop, here's Tracy running up the deck with the Mason jar and she should have been an NFL quarterback with an arm like that -- I'm just glad I was able to catch the darn thing as it barreled down through the air towards my boat.



Back at the farm we weed for the rest of the day and pick some veggies for our own dinner. The Catalyst's visits to Farragut Bay are something we look forward to each week during the summer months. It's a challenge and a privilege to deliver the highest quality, freshest vegetables that we can grow to a discerning and creative cook. It has become a big part of our lives and ever increasingly has allowed us to make our living right here at home in what we think is one of the most beautiful places on the planet. We look forward to a long future of growing vegetables for the Catalyst's table.

-Bo Varsano and Marja Smets,

Farragut Farm, Alaska

