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## **Last Look**

### **Ocean Farm**

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## Ocean Farm

TWO MILES OFF the Puerto Rican island of Culebra, Pedro Gomez power-washes the top of an Aquapod, a 3,000-cubic-meter, spherical fish cage owned by aquaculture company Snapperfarm. When he submerges the cage, the open ocean's currents will better flush out the waste created by the 10,000 Culebran cobia

teeming inside—and that will make the fish taste better than shore-farmed cobia, since fish take on the flavor of the water in which they live.

Open ocean water also keeps the fish free of methylmercury and other coastal contaminants. And anchored far from shore, the fish won't disrupt coral ecosystems, as some of the world's growing number of coastal farms can do.

Brian O'Hanlon cofounded Snapperfarm in 1998. Growing up selling fish alongside his father at New York's Fulton Fish Market, he observed that seafood companies' problem was not selling fish, but finding enough high-quality product. Indeed, wild fishery capture levels have remained stable since the mid-1980s at 90 million to 93 million

tons per year, even though global demand for seafood is quickly rising. (The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations predicts that by 2030, fish farmers will have to produce 40 million more tons of seafood just to maintain current consumption levels.)

O'Hanlon is still tweaking his business, one of the few open ocean farms in the United States. He'll move to Panama this spring, where he can add red snapper and other fish to his offerings with less red tape, and experiment with an all-grain, fully sustainable diet for the fish. He'll also automate more of the farming process, he says, since Gomez's job can be dangerous given the rough waters and occasional hurricanes.

—JENNIFER ROBERTS