

## Cooking Channel Looks to the Science Barge for Fresh Ingredients



Cooking Channel show host Claire Robinson (left) and Science Barge Educator Jennifer Sloan being filmed for the special, "Quest for the Fresh"

By James Baron

Cooking Channel host Claire Robinson recently boarded Groundwork Hudson Valley's Science Barge as part of a search for the freshest cooking ingredients in the region. Her Science Barge appearance will be featured on "Quest for the Fresh," a special produced by BSTV Entertainment that is scheduled to air on October 7 at 9 p.m.

The show followed Robinson on her quest to locate a variety of produce at the very pinnacle of their flavor. Along the way, she gained first-hand experience in what it takes for purveyors to achieve such quality. During her travels, she dove for clams in Easthampton, milked goats in New Jersey and went nose-to-nose with pigs and ostriches on local organic farms.

Her introduction to the Science Barge was particularly eye opening. Science Barge Educator Jennifer Sloan took Robinson and the Cooking Channel crew on a guided tour of the operation, demonstrating the Barge's unique hydroponic systems and the myriad crops that are grown both inside and outside of its greenhouses. Powered by solar and wind energy and bio-fuels, the Barge operates completely off the grid.

Robinson was fascinated to learn that such a self-sustaining enterprise exists so close to New York City and grows such robust fruits and

vegetables.

"I think our mission of creating sustainable agriculture perfectly complemented Claire's mission to find the freshest produce," said Sloan. "She was certainly surprised to find fresh produce in such an unexpected place — a boat on the Hudson River in Yonkers."

The tour was fun and informative. Robinson was particularly impressed that vegetables can grow in an environment without using soil. She was amused to learn that the fertilizing process involves manual pollination and includes fish secretions!

While onboard, Robinson plucked a selection of fresh herbs and lettuce. Viewers of the TV special will watch her prepare a unique dish from the ingredients she collected on the Science Barge. The show's executive producer, Blake Swerdloff, said the other mouth-watering courses will include clams casino with pasta and a peach and lardo crostini.

Sloan was pleased with the Cooking Channel visit.

"We tasted arugula, tomatoes and herbs right off the growing plants," said Sloan. "We all had a wonderful time and I am proud that the Science Barge will have a chance to spotlight our programs on the TV special."