

"WELCOME TO OLDE PORT INN"

These are very special words for me because you being here is a dream come true.

In 1967, when I was 26, I was a fisherman and also operated the wholesale fish market below the upstairs part of the restaurant. I used to go up there late in the afternoon to build and repair my nets. At that time it was the roof of the fish market. There were no walls and the pier was unsafe even for walking (the holes were so big you could actually fall all the way to the water). The only people here were a handful of fishermen and myself.

Well, one afternoon in July I was up there hanging (building) my nets and took a break. I sat on a fish box and looked out over the harbor. "I love this place" was what I was thinking. I was also thinking that other people would love it too. My thinking turned to daydreaming. I should build a restaurant up here! Then the people could sit here and see what I'm seeing and feel what I'm feeling. I'll unload a boat, fillet some fish, run up here and cook it for them. Wouldn't the people love that!

Then back to reality. I was told "no way would anyone drive this far to eat". The pier was unsafe and very basically I did not have any money. One man felt different, Leo Brisco (at that time president of the harbor district). He encouraged me and said that the harbor district was going to repair the pier. He also told me that he too had a dream to build a harbor that lots of people could enjoy. My dream was part of a bigger dream.

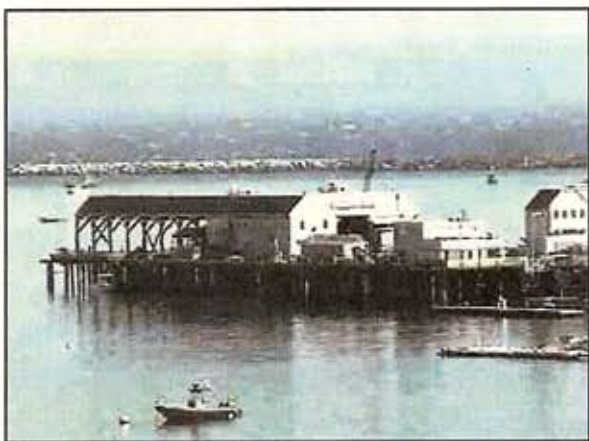
I found a semi truck load of cedar that was rejected from the mill. It was mine for three hundred dollars. It was enough for the whole restaurant. Look at the walls in the upstairs part of the restaurant, that's it.

After working on it for over two years, the restaurant was ready to open. It was mine for three hundred dollars. It was May of 1970. More people came than I expected and soon they were waiting on the stairs. The State Fire Marshall told me that was not acceptable. What is now our office (across the way and up the stairs), I made a waiting room. I filled a fish box with ice, beer and wine. We sat there over on fish boxes talked, drank wine, wrote things on the walls and waited for dinner. I guess I was the first entertainment at Olde Port Inn.

That was really fun for all of us, but the Alcoholic Beverage Commission said I could not use that building as part of the restaurant and therefore could not serve beer or wine. That was the birth of the bar (originally about one-fourth of the existing bar and grill). If you look for it, you can see where we had to open up the far wall to expand the bar. The building, the bar itself, and most of the furnishings were built from pieces of the old pier. I guess you could say the décor was done in "early poverty".

After a year, the original bar was so packed on weekends that it had to be expanded. That expansion lasted about two years before it too was overcrowded. To solve that (good) problem, I built an outside patio. That outside patio became so popular that I covered it to become an all weather patio. The patio I am talking about is to your right as you walk into the bar and grill and has "see-through" tables. Check it out. I think you'll love it.

During this time, my son Leonard, worked his way up from dishwasher to manager, training his replacements as we went. He finally bought the restaurant from me and became the new owner. He too expanded the restaurant to include the new patio (straight ahead as you walk in) and a downstairs kitchen. Take Leonard's passion for wine (he also owns a winery), his culinary expertise, my dream, add the freshest possible local seafoods to it and you get the recipe for a great "Olde Port Inn".



Well, that brings us up to date. As for me, I am still the guy building nets and daydreaming with the same thought in mind, "wouldn't the people love that". I'm right next door in the fish market making sure you get the finest and freshest seafoods. Drop by and say hello. So now you know what we are trying to do here. You helped make our dreams come true. I only hope we can do the same for you at Olde Port Inn. Thank you for coming.

Ray A. Cohen