

Even sand is new at landmark wharf business

Stagnaro Brothers reopen restaurant

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SANTA CRUZ — Fifteen months after being razed, the landmark Stagnaro Brothers restaurant and fish market on the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf has reopened with more room, more neon, and more seafood than ever.

"Everything's new, from the sand up," said restaurant manager Larry Bryson.

Not only was the restaurant building replaced, but so was the wharf decking and all of the pilings supporting it, Bryson said. Old pilings were replaced and more were added for extra stability, meaning restaurant patrons can no longer feel the building tremble under the impact of waves on stormy days.

The old building came down Sept. 8, 1986, and the new one opened for business Dec. 23, 1987. The new design is similar to the old, but sleeker, more modern and much larger. The new restaurant seats 96 customers instead of 52, and sports large new offices, a deck and restrooms on the new second floor.

An elevator has been installed, as well as a huge ice machine and an emergency generator capable of powering the entire building when the electricity goes out.

And the numerous porthole windows are real, Bryson noted, popping one open for proof.

"When it's hot we open 'em up for ventilation," he said.

The building is the second one that Stagnaro brothers Ernest and John have built in this location. The family opened its first restaurant in 1937, and there are now 11 family members from three generations working in the business in some capacity, Bryson said.



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Above, the new Stagnaro Brothers restaurant and fish market is nearly a replica of the old family business, at left, which was razed 15 months ago.