

# Stagnaros Sell Their Landmark Family Charter Boat Business

One of Santa Cruz' landmark family businesses, C. Stagnaro Fishing Corp., has sold its charter boat business.

The buyers are Les Clayton and John Draeger, both of Santa Cruz. They have purchased the company's three boats, the Stagnaro I, Stagnaro II and Cottardo, as well as Stagnaro leases on the wharf and in the small craft harbor.

Family patriarch Malio J. Stagnaro, the chairman of the company's board, and board president Robert Stagnaro decided to sell the holdings because family members no longer had the manpower to maintain them, a company

spokesman said.

However, the family will retain Gilda's Restaurant on the Municipal Wharf.

Cottardo Stagnaro came to the United States from Genoa in 1898, buying his first fishing boat in Santa Cruz in 1908 with his father.

The family initially rented a tiny spot on the railroad wharf, using two upended fish boxes as a counter.

When the Municipal Wharf was built, the family moved its seafood retailing business there.

In 1919, Cottardo's brother, Malio, joined the

business, having just graduated from high school.

By 1929, the father and two brothers had amassed enough money to buy two fishing boats, the Stagnaro I and Stagnaro II. With the purchase of the boats, they diversified the company's ventures into charter fishing.

Four years later, Malio received his father's permission to go into the newfangled speedboat business.

During the 1930s, the Stagnaros gave rides to more than 200,000 passengers from the end of the

old Pleasure Pier off the Boardwalk on their speedboat fleet.

During World War II, the Stagnaro speedboats were requisitioned by the U.S. Navy.

The family later ran Malio's Restaurant, which it sold last year, and Gilda's Restaurant.

Clayton and Draeger plan to continue, and perhaps expand, the charter boat business.

They may begin running dinner cruises and "whale watch" tours, according to a Stagnaro spokesman.

The holdings were reportedly sold for "several hundred thousand dollars."