

## **The Galley: a Morro Bay Tradition Freshened**

*By Judy Salamacha*

As teenagers their first paychecks were written by **The Galley** of Morro Bay. Then life took **David Peter, Henry Galvez, and John Anderson** in different directions. New Year's 2008 they're working together again. The three friends have joined forces to open the new **Galley Seafood Grill & Bar** on Morro Bay's Embarcadero.

**David and Aglaja Peter** are the new owners and general managers of the long-anticipated re-opening of the popular restaurant. Peter said, "Our goal is to open a few days before New Year's, but we have a tradition to live up to – the Anderson's legacy of personalized service – and we want to make sure we do it right from the beginning."

**Bud and Rita Anderson** and their three children **Rodger, Molly and Jeff** owned and operated **The Galley** for forty years before it closed in 2004 to develop the new concept for the waterfront property, which includes the restaurant plus the Anderson Inn and a gallery.

"My dream since a kid has been to own a restaurant on the Embarcadero," said Peter, who spent 20 years traveling worldwide in the technology industry. "Traveling throughout the world was exciting, but after awhile it becomes a job. I wanted to spend time with my family and become a part of the Morro Bay fabric. In my dreams I never thought I'd have the opportunity to partner in The Galley. I've come full circle."

He recalled his family used to come to The Galley after Little League. When he was eleven years old **Bud Anderson** asked him if he would like to join his "farm team." Not sure what that meant the boy said sure and Anderson told him to come back when he was fourteen. He'd give him a shot as busboy.

"I kept bugging him. Then on August 11, 1976, a few days after my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday I started working at The Galley. Until I was 21 I worked through Cuesta College doing various jobs from greeting or serving to running wine before I graduated from San Diego State."

He remained friends with the Andersons and in 2002 while working in Germany where he met Aglaja, he called to check in with them – just to chat. They confided they were interested in transitioning into the boutique hotel business. They wondered if he might take over the restaurant. It was the "dream come true" he was waiting for. He and Aglaja moved back to Morro Bay and by 2004 plans were solidified.

And although it has taken a year and a half to permit, design, build and open, all should be satisfied and excited the wait is over.

In his worldwide travels Peter gleaned ideas and menu items from his favorite restaurants. He was confident he wanted to preserve the best practices of The Galley while offering local customers and visitors a fresh and satisfying experience.

As stated on their website, [www.GalleyMorroBay.com](http://www.GalleyMorroBay.com), their fish philosophy is "Only Naked Will Do" meaning fresh, premium seafood is best served naked with a selection of light dipping sauces. Their goal is to obtain only the freshest seafood from local waters and beyond, and purchase wild caught fish from Morro Bay's local fisherman whenever possible.

"We'll take that a step further," said Peter. "Our servers will be schooled where and how the fish is caught and if the customer is not familiar with the offering what it might be comparable to in taste and texture."

Peter is proud of the final product which was built by **Chuck Eras** complimented by a subdued island theme designed by **Jeannie MacDougall** with hand-crafted use of rare

Kona woods and bamboo by woodworker **John Bourgalt**. All the booths and tables take advantage of the incredible view of the bay and Morro Rock.

While training the staff and testing the menu with the families of his servers, Peter was just as excited and surprised the Opah they were serving which was typically caught in Hawaii had been caught in waters just beyond Morro Bay.

“Today’s customers want to experience fresh and local seafood and we will provide that. They are also curious about new tastes and we intend to surprise them with a variety.”

Locally known sommelier **Tim Gabriel** consulted on the 75-strong wine list with half available from Central California. Directly paired with the menu, other unique tastes are from around the world. Gabriel will also be around weekends to help customers learn and select the most complimentary wine for their menu item.

And for the beer drinkers a must try is Reisdorff Koelsch imported from Cologne, Germany available on draft.

“Our produce will also be the freshest,” said Peter. “I met Henry working at The Galley. He has a family farm in Los Osos and we intend to grow seasonal produce and vegetables for the restaurant. He has family who will continue to work the farmer’s markets and find other produce needed.”

In order to insure Galvez would be available to become his head chef and kitchen manager, Peter found him a temporary position during the development phase at the Morro Bay Golf Course. Galvez began working for the Andersons in the mid-1970s and has been instrumental in developing the philosophy and menu items for the new Galley.

John Anderson, Rodger’s son, is the assistant manager. He started working in the original Galley when he was twelve washing dishes and busing tables. He attended Chico State, but his love of the restaurant business always brought him home to The Galley. While the new Galley was in development he didn’t wander far. You could find him right next door working at the Otter Rock.

His philosophy on customer service plus restaurant and bar experience only enhanced Peter’s desire to maintain the new Galley’s legacy with the Anderson family. When asked if John was nostalgic for the former restaurant, he said, “We’ve taken something from 1966 into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and made it better. The food is delicious, the room beautiful. If you’re not changing, you’re not improving.”

Peter also wants his customers to expect surprises. It might be a homemade cookie or something spied in the kitchen while viewing the flat panel near the bar or a sample of one of Chef Henry’s new menu items. It could be a taste of a new sorbet flavor or it just might be the driver of the night of The Galley’s Tin Woody, a 1954 vintage Chieftan, available by asking for “Woodie” if you live in Morro Bay when you call for reservations at 772-2777.

Former customers, you need not worry about the loss of an Andersons’ presence or a favorite menu item. The original recipe for Clam Chowder and Steamed Clams will accompany an Anderson greeting customers. John explained, “There was always an Anderson on deck. The restaurant was always seen as the clubhouse.”

And it remains David Peter’s philosophy – new and returning members of the clubhouse, you are welcome.

*Judy Salamacha writes for the Sun Bulletin, a division of the San Luis Obispo Tribune.*