

Port Walk #14



What's in a Name?

People from many parts of the world have come to San Francisco to live off the sea's bounty. In the early days, Chinese fishing boats were a common sight in local waters. Chinese immigrants were followed by Italians from Liguria and Sicily in the 1880s and 1890s. To get a good sense of the area's diverse population, just look at the names on the boats.



The Poetry of Vietnam

Vietnamese fishermen, like the Chinese and Italian immigrants who preceded them, are adding to the strength and diversity of San Francisco's commercial fishing fleet. Vietnamese skippers often give their boats poetic, melodious names like, which roughly translates to "happy, elegant, and richly full."



The Ladies of Italy

Italian skippers, in a tradition common to fishermen of European heritage, usually named their boats after saints or important women in their lives – their wives, sweethearts, mothers, or sisters. Many of the commercial fishing boats at Fisherman's Wharf still bear women's names today.



Fun Names

Some of today's skippers choose whimsical names for their boats.



Hedley Prince, Harbormaster

"Fishing is a dangerous profession. Men and women who fish for a living, in general, are a superstitious lot. And probably for good reason. They believe their boat name brings luck and want to be sure not to use a name that brings bad luck. Names that may cause bad luck are those that challenge the elements and are too boastful is an example of that."