



Owner Dominic Mercurio

Monterey's Fishermen's Wharf is like home to Dominic Mercurio. Since 1968, he's spent most of his time there. "A bunch of us used to come down here every day in the summer time," he recalls. "We were 10 or 11 years old, and would leave home in the morning and not go back until dark. We'd be fishing every day, catching little smelts or mackerel.

Some years later, Dominic's favorite roof-top diving board would house his restaurant below. Named after his mother, Josephina, Cafe Fina has been specializing in homemade pasta and fresh fish since 1989. "When the guys from the local fish company eat out," he remarks, "this is where they come. When you work in the fishing industry, you only eat truly fresh fish."

Dominic is part of the living legacy of an industry that once was the backbone of Monterey's livelihood, one that enticed the imaginations of a unique breed of people from all around the world who were drawn here to make their living from the sea. The fishermen who settled on the shore of the Monterey Bay followed a harvest that would begin locally with sardines, then ventured north to Alaska for salmon and later headed for South America for tuna, seasons that are still observed today.

"My father, Jean, is retired now, but still helps out on my brother's fishing nets," Dominic says, pointing to one of the many photos lining the walls of Cafe Fina. "He was born in a French province of North Africa, one of a group of Sicilians who went there to fish the sardines and got kicked out during the French Revolution in the '50s. That's how he and his five brothers ended up coming here, for the sardines."



Dominic also owns Domenico's on the Wharf, offering fresh seafood and Italian cuisine, which he opened in 1981.

Dominic's cooking has enabled Dominic to be the sole caterer for John Madden's induction ceremony into the Football Hall of Fame in 2006 and has earned him visits from Rachel Ray and other TV stars.

In addition to Dominic's restaurants, he owns J.D. Almonds, which he started in October 2000. J.D. Farms sits on a 25 acre almond orchard in Los Banos, California, and produces fine crops of almonds available in a number of flavors.

Regardless of his entrepreneurial opportunities, he remains committed to his local community, donating on a regular basis to a number of organizations in the Monterey area.

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