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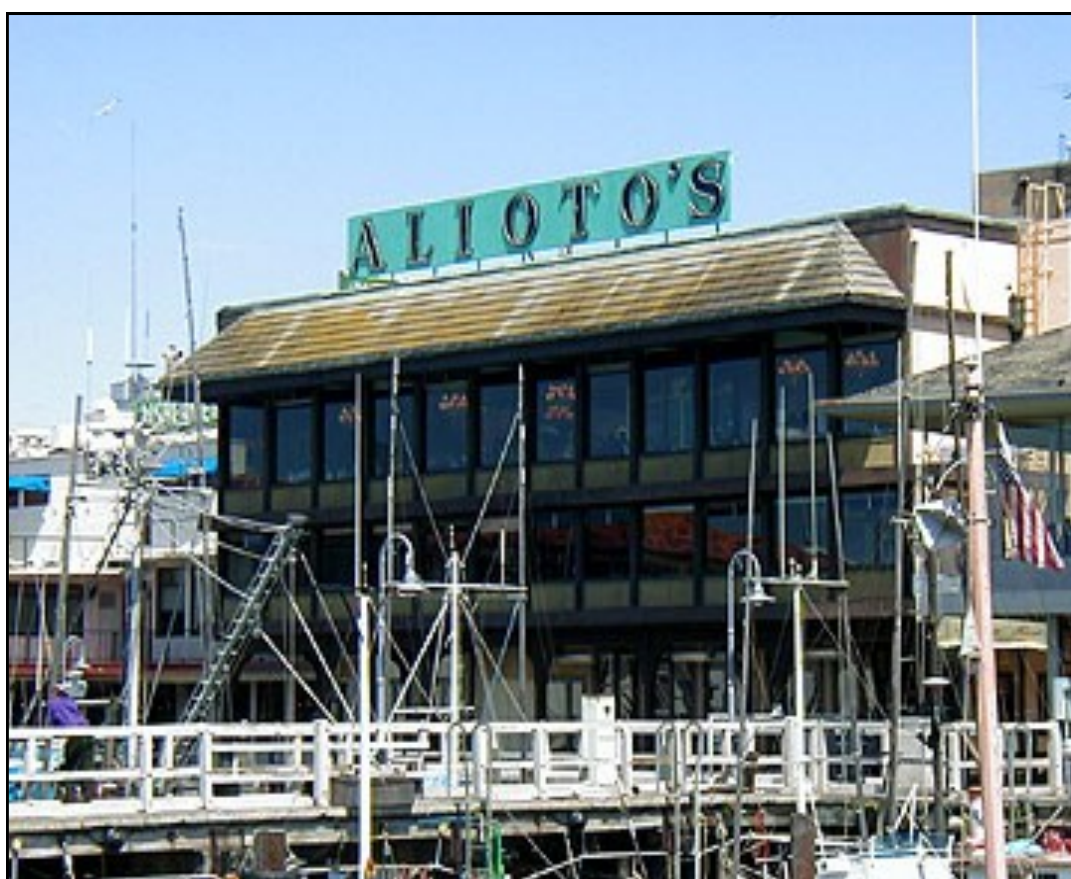
# Alioto's



by  
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Anyone who knows anything about San Francisco recognizes the Alioto name. Success in business has made the Alioto family something of a dynasty, both in San Francisco business and society....and Alioto's certainly does have quite a history, both in restaurants...and in matchcovers!

“Alioto's Restaurant, a San Francisco landmark located on Historic Fisherman's Wharf, has long been apart of the City's rich history. What grew to become a tradition in San Francisco dining, actually began as



a fresh-fish stall, founded in 1925 by Nunzio Alioto, Sr., an immigrant from Sicily. In 1925, the Wharf consisted of an enormous lumber yard, train tracks, a union hall, wholesale fisheries and fishing boats. At Stall #8 Nunzio sold lunchtime provisions to Italian laborers. His business grew steadily, and by 1932 he had constructed the first building at the historic corner of Taylor @ Jefferson, by combining the fish stand with a seafood bar specializing in crab and shrimp cocktails and steamed crab.

In 1933, Nunzio Alioto, Sr. passed away. It brought an end to his own plans, but his dream was to be carried on by his widow, "Nonna" Rose and their three children. Rose took over the business and became the first woman to work on the wharf. By 1938 she had installed a kitchen in the original structure and officially opened Alioto's Restaurant. It was here that Rose Alioto first created a shell-fish stew called Cioppino. Cioppino has become a San Francisco culinary legend.

A number of historical events contributed to Alioto's phenomenal growth and the eventual establishment of Fisherman's Wharf as San Francisco's most popular tourist destination. With the completion of both the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges in 1937, San Francisco was quickly becoming the urban center of Northern California. In 1939, the San Francisco Exposition and World's Fair brought tourists from around the world to the City. Alioto's Restaurant flourished, yet it was not until America's participation in W.W.II that its reputation became firmly established. Fisherman's Wharf became one of the Ports of Embarkation for sailors. Alioto's kept busy serving fresh seafood, hearty clam chowder and their famous Cioppino to these men and their families. Word about Alioto's delicious food spread quickly. The restaurant continued to expand as public demand grew.

By 1950, Rose enlarged her restaurant by purchasing her neighbor's stall. On this joint property she built a one-story building. In 1957, Alioto's underwent a second major face-lift, when a second story was added, making it the tallest building on the Wharf. A disastrous fire gutted Alioto's Restaurant that same year. Undeterred, the family, led by the intrepid "Rose", rebuilt the restaurant from scratch on the same site. Fortunately, rescued from the devastating fire was a wall composed entirely of thousands of clam shells, saved from diners' meals through the decades. This wall still stands today in the entrance to the main dining room.

Alioto's unique menu offers distinctive Sicilian recipes handed down through the generations of the Alioto family. These Sicilian dishes can be identified on the menu by the three-legged triangle next to the menu item. This symbol, called the "Trinacria" represents the three corners of the island of Sicily. In 1998, the Alioto family commemorated their history in a permanent exhibit, "The Wall of History". Located in the restaurant's stairwell, this collection of photographs, newspaper clips, old menus and postcards date back to 1925. The exhibit documents the history of Fisherman's Wharf and the Alioto family's contribution to San Francisco's favorite visitor attraction, Fisherman's Wharf.

On this historic street, Taylor at Jefferson, you will find not only Alioto's Restaurant overlooking the fishing boats, but there is also a new "Nonna Rose" Trattoria, as well as a Crab Stand right next to the new "Cafe 8" where you can sit right on the walkway where everything began in 1925. And, today Alioto's Restaurants are operated by Nunzio and Rose's grandchildren. Nunzio, Joe and Roseanne Alioto can be found there daily. They continue to keep Nunzio & "Nonna" Rose's dream alive." [<http://www.aliotos.com>]

I don't particularly collect restaurants, but I was easily able to find several cover issues from this San Francisco landmark. The one pictured on the front page is an early one, going all the way back to World War II, making it at least 50 years old. It's also a nice Patriotic. There are a variety of later 20's and 30s, as well. I don't recall seeing any other sizes, but there may certainly be some.