

BY JOHN HINTERBERGER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIMI LOTT

Sitting by the docks

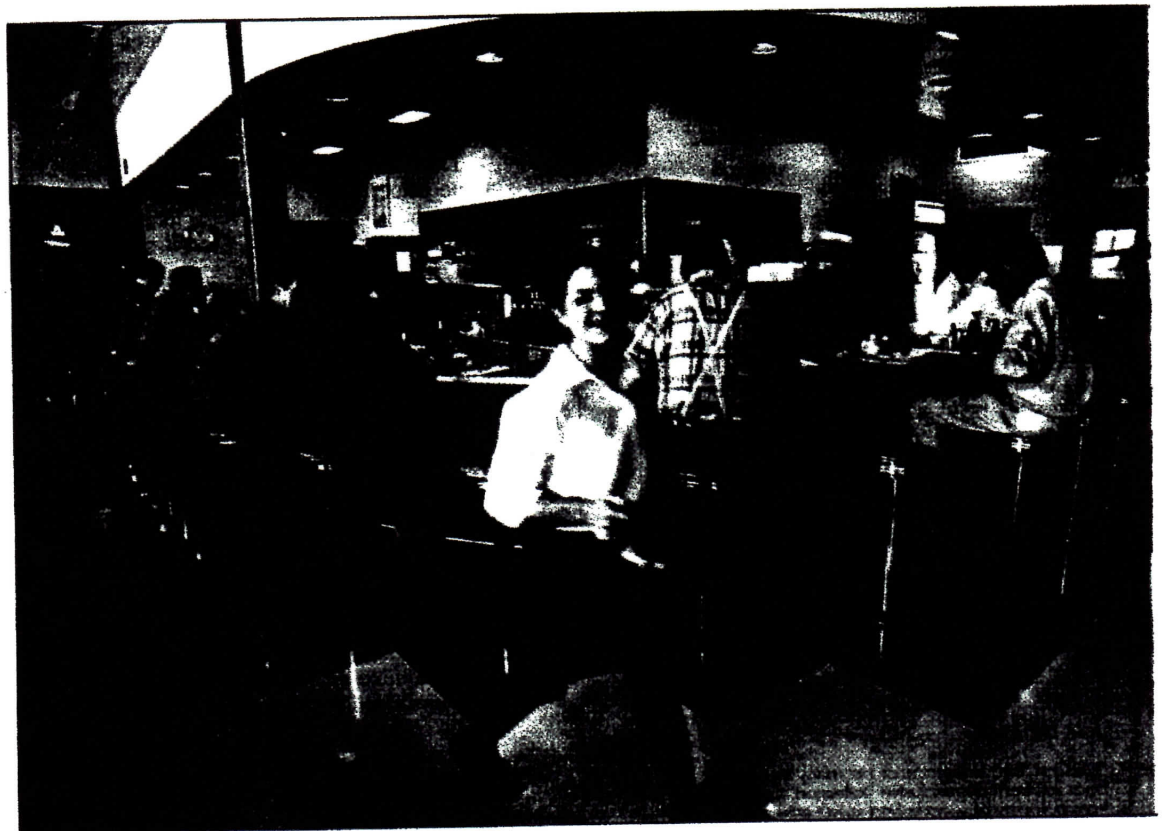
Bay Cafe's friendly vibes (and honest food) pack them

LOOKS ONE OF THE side views in the city. It's most of the time. Some of us eat there twice a day. Some eat there three times a day. Some eat there every afternoon. The Bay Cafe, at Fishermen's Terminal, is virtually unknown to most of the restaurant trade. No one goes on a prom date there (unless it's an unceremonial break—no culinary cutting edge, almost impossible to get a reservation). It serves no gastronomic pleasures from a very normal

journalist colleague suggesting stiff's restaurant." It's quite correct. Specifically, it serves fishermen, their families. Most are here to consider themselves most of the time they go as much as they'd like. There are dozens of places like it, but that are beyond (or above) the norm. The menus, except for the specials, could have been printed in any city. Soups of the day, chicken-fried steaks, hash and chips.

Bay, especially fish and seafood, but when it's in season; the rest of the time.

It shares a wharf with the Chinook's, which is noisy, celebrative, and sports an ambitious menu. Just north of the restaurant, bisected by the bronze memorial to Seattle at sea, is a series of finished with the swaying rigging, wind-worn flags of the Puget Sound coming fleet. It is a setting that dates in an older time, utilitarian. The piers are open to the city—a photographer's joy in the city's fascinating strolls.



Clean, quick and friendly at Fishermen's Terminal.

Bill and Carole Polimenakos opened the Bay seven years ago after arriving here from Chicago.

"Bill hated Chicago," Carole said. "He thought it was too hot. Here" — she spread her arms toward the gray-green waters of the harbor — "he says it reminds him of Greece. And he likes to hunt, which you can't do in Chicago."

What's remarkable about the Bay, besides the daily loyalty of its clientele, is its cleanliness. It's a health inspector's dream. Gray tabletops, teal-blue counter stools, burgundy vinyl booths and expanses of stainless steel all

gleam. As one customer noted, pointing to the industrial steel girders spanning the ceilings: "It's even clean up there." Then he remembered he was talking to the press. "Now I'll NEVER get a booth!"

Actually, if you arrive even a few minutes before noon, you can usually get a table, and almost always find a seat at the counter. Breakfast trade, (served from 6:30 a.m. until closing) is steady through the morning, but you can find a seat. After 1 p.m., the place slowly empties out.

Saturday and Sunday mornings (service begins at 7 a.m.) are some-

thing else. There's almost a line. I usually settle for a counter seat and hope to flag down a waitress. The staff that looks seriously tended.

What's the attraction?

A sense of fraternity, common occupation, common triumphs and common concerns compete with each other and tend to like each other.

The food? Quite good, really, not fancy, but nothing frumpy. The seafood is carefully, if simply, prepared and relatively inexpensive.