

Provincetown 2003



Portuguese Festival & 56th Blessing of the Fleet

Thursday, June 26 - Sunday, June 29, 2003 • Boas Festas!

CELEBRATING OUR PORTUGUESE-AMERICAN HERITAGE



Ferdinand Salvador

It is an honor
to dedicate our
efforts for the
Portuguese Festival
to our ancestors,
as well as to our
friends and
neighbors.

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Town is readying for our 56th Blessing Of The Fleet

By Jan Kelley

The present is in good hands. The festival grows in size and lengthens in time. So much good work by so many willing people, many not fisherman and many not Portuguese. Through the years the fleet has changed, the town has changed and memories are stacked up, precious thoughts of a bygone era. We began our palaver with the planning of Provincetown's First Blessing of the Fleet. Jan Kelly

Coelho "The 40's, 60's and 70's, the Blessing was big. It was a fishing event."

Joe Taves "I was on the "Jimmy Boy" with my uncle Joe Roderick. It was family fun; no one not even crew was on those boats until the festival. It was dangerous. We would have a pic-

nic at the point. After the Holy Water, we went from work to play. You didn't have to be invited, it was one day then, now it's a week long festival.

Maureen "Who came up with the idea?"

Clem "Domingo Godino and my father, "Arthur Bragg", he was named for his godfather, Arthur Bragg so he was called "Arthur Bragg" Silva well, they said if Gloucester can have it we can do it. So they both visited and when they got back, they called all the captains. Everybody liked it so my Dad said; 'We are going to have a Blessing Of The Fleet.' Then, they went around to collect money for the book. They got a band from New Bedford

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and wherever else we could get one. The representatives of the bands came to town and they set a date, it was the last week in June. Then they figured out the particulars, that the boats would join, and circle, etc. It was a day for the fisherman. The night before we had a dance at the Provincetown Inn for the wives, the whole bit. My dad took lobsters, clams, and fish for the priests and on Sunday the fisherman marched from church to the wharf, carrying the statue of St. Peter. My dad was big in the Knights Of Columbus and he led the parade, plumes on his hat and sword and cape.

"Yeh Gene Poyant used to love that outfit".

Clem, Yeh, Gene Poyant. The boats would go in a circle, we had no jetties then, and Bishop Connelly would bless each boat. And, then we went "under the point", north side, safe in the harbor and we would feed everybody. What delicacies we had, a wonderful time it was the event of Provincetown. It started in 1947.

Cordeiro "Remember that storm in the early 60's? We were all under the point and it got so dark and the wind started to blow SW to NW, the wind blew like hell and it was cold!

Roderick "That was a big storm. I put the people down in the hold; kids were in the pilothouse. Had people in the engine room, the Fo'c'sle. Mine was a narrow boat, "The Jimmy Boy". I had so many people, if they were all on one side we would tip over, so I had to yell out, "Do not change your position!" I was afraid if I didn't have the proper insurance and then there would be no more blessing. When we finally got back to the wharf, I hadn't drunk half beer before everybody vanished. "I wouldn't recognize anybody on the boat. I'd ask 'Do you have permission to be on this boat?' Yes, your cousin Louis Rivers told me I could get on."

Rivers "That storm stopped a lot of boats from joining in.

Coelho "That could have put us out of business.

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Cordeiro "Was a good storm, scary, Anus Jud, Oh, god."

Clem "How about the dory races we had? Was a rowing contest, 16 dories, half way to the point and around the buoy."

Cordeiro "Yeh, me and Billy Segura came in first, got \$50 prize money."

Clem "Yeh, but how did you win?" (lots of laughter)."

Cordeiro "We borrowed the coast guard dory, no seaweed on the bottom. We took the \$50 and went to Johnny Motts, the Fo'c'sle and set up the bar."

Coelho "My first blessing, I have a picture of myself in a baby carriage, my mom and dad and George Leyden, High School principal."

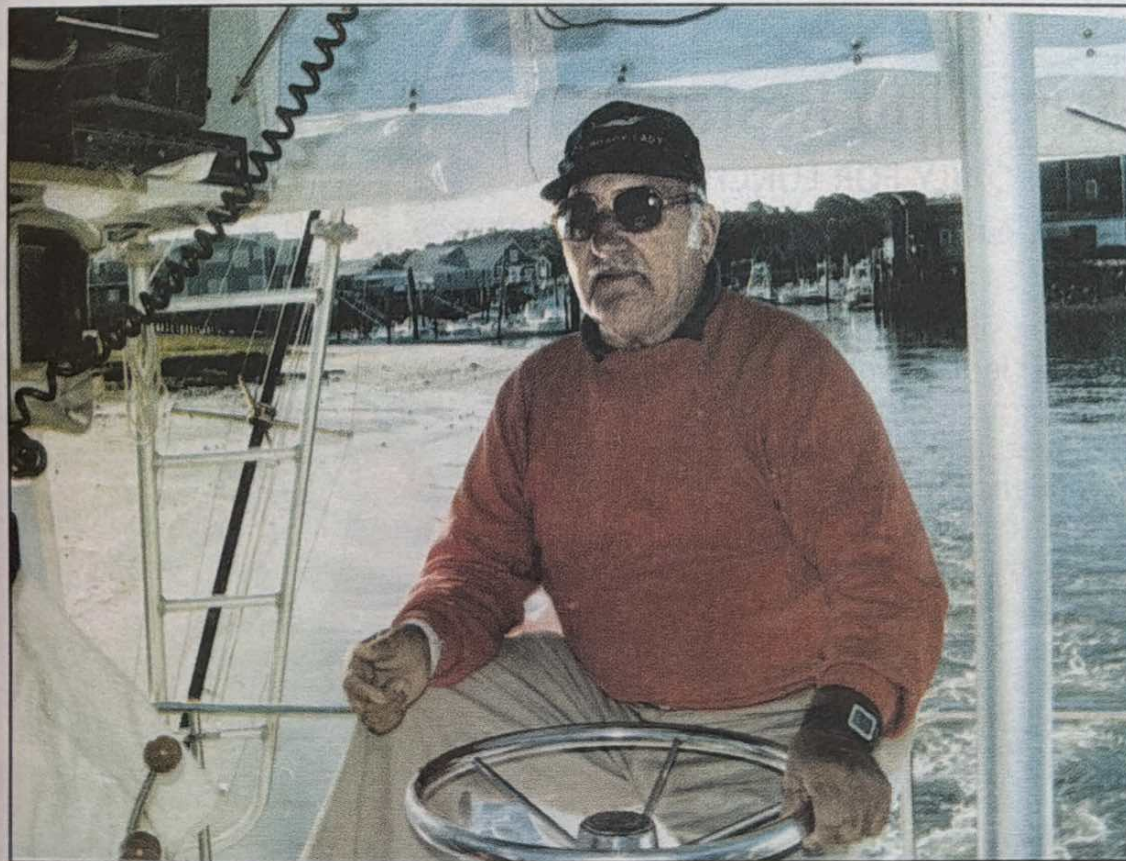
Roderick "No drinking on the boat until it was tied up. I remember having such a good time I started ripping my clothes off and my wife said, "What's this".

Coelho "I found my boat in Yarmouth Nova Scotia, I asked the guy. 'If you ever want to sell this boat, let me know.' A month later I got a call from him and then I had the Michael & Amy. I put 60 gallons of paint on the boat, looked better than the Hindu. In 77 and 78 I took over the Blessing, that was the hay day, great times. Everybody was working, making money. We were party animals. We stretched it to Thursday, a banquet. Remember the time Tony Cheroot put the compass in the oven so nobody would steal it. Yeh, and someone lit the stove and it blew up."

Coelho "Town gave us \$3,000 for "Old Home Week". I ordered 500 flags from Boston, Rainbow Flags, what are these? We didn't have Rainbow Flags back then, we used them, I still have some.

Everybody would clean and paint their boats. My wife and mother-in-law, all the wives cooked tons of food, great parties. Shortest period of good fishing was from 76 to 83 or 84. I bailed

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*In
Memory
of
Captain
Manny
Phillips*

*February 19, 1918
May 20, 2001*

■ continued from previous page

out then. It was a good move, things were going down hill. I got to enjoy my kids high school and college sports. I would have missed it all.

Maureen "I remember one year you had Blue and Gold banners, so beautiful. Do any of you still have those?"

Coelho "I think mine is in the basement".

Maureen "Would be great if we had those again. The fishing fleet is diminishing. You are the patriarchs, all 2nd generation fisherman and Coelho 3rd generation. We have to guard this heritage, if we don't we will lose it. If you were in the parade, the trolley or walking?"

"No, we will walk".

Coelho "Me, with my banner and grandson.

The excitement was there, another Blessing being planned.

Louis Cordeiro who was punctuating the conversation all the way through, burst into song, in a strong baritone voice. Louis canted in Portuguese. Maureen Joseph Hurst was open-mouthed. "Louis, I didn't know you could sing Fado." I said, "Maureen, that's "O Sole Mio", with a string of Portuguese invectives.

While sharing their memories and pride for the Blessing of the Fleet that these men represent, they could not help but include their collective experience of over 250 years of fishing during this palaver. I feel compelled to share some of these memories that they spoke of as if they happened yesterday.

Roderick "When the decks are loaded it's dangerous, scuppers blocked. Remember when Tony Menagas, JR Leonard, Barshi and me had a trip like that, but we made it.

Coelho "Yeh, the guys on The Patricia Marie can never replace those guys".

■ continued on next page

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Clem "Patricia Marie was over loaded with scallops, Billy King was captain and the Cap'n Bill, Captain Andrews winch caught in gear and the boat tipped right over. They died like rats. Joe, you're the one who found the Cap'n Bill. It got hung on the rocks and a big swell took it. It was at the whistle buoy at Peaked Hill. You snagged on the vessel, you called the Coast Guard and left your net over it so you wouldn't lose its position. Then the Coast Guard put a buoy and you got your net back".

Roderick "Yes, how many fish were given to the people of Provincetown and not 10 cents asked.

Murphy "How did you know where the fish were? Did you have a LORAN?"

Cordeiro "No, had a compass and you'd check time. We had a piece of lead 2-3 lbs with a hole in the bottom; we would put some of that yellow soap we scrub the decks with. That's to check the bottom, if it sticks, if its mud you don't want that, you want sand, that's when you are looking for the grounds, you

got marks on the line, fathoms, no LORAN.

Taves "We were up at the middle bank for whiting, Dick Burhoe was cooking, east wind. My first trip with my Uncle Joe Roderick, a Highliner. So Burhoe says, 'want to eat? Yea I ate and ate and ate. The heat from the stove was getting to me, wind is blowing east, 3 men deep in front of me and I was feeling bad to worse and then it started to come, poor guys, got them all. I filled their coffee cups. We cut 21,000 lbs of whiting that trip when I got home I couldn't open or close my hand from cutting.

Roderick My boat was too narrow for its length; it is an extended boat, from 50' to 68'. It is a good boat into the wind. But sideways it is hell. When you get caught, even on a rock, you lean right over.

Clem "The Shirley and Roland was opposite, a big bellied boat."

Coelho " And how many people went through to college on the backs of fishing? My mother didn't want me to go fishing, ■ continued on next page

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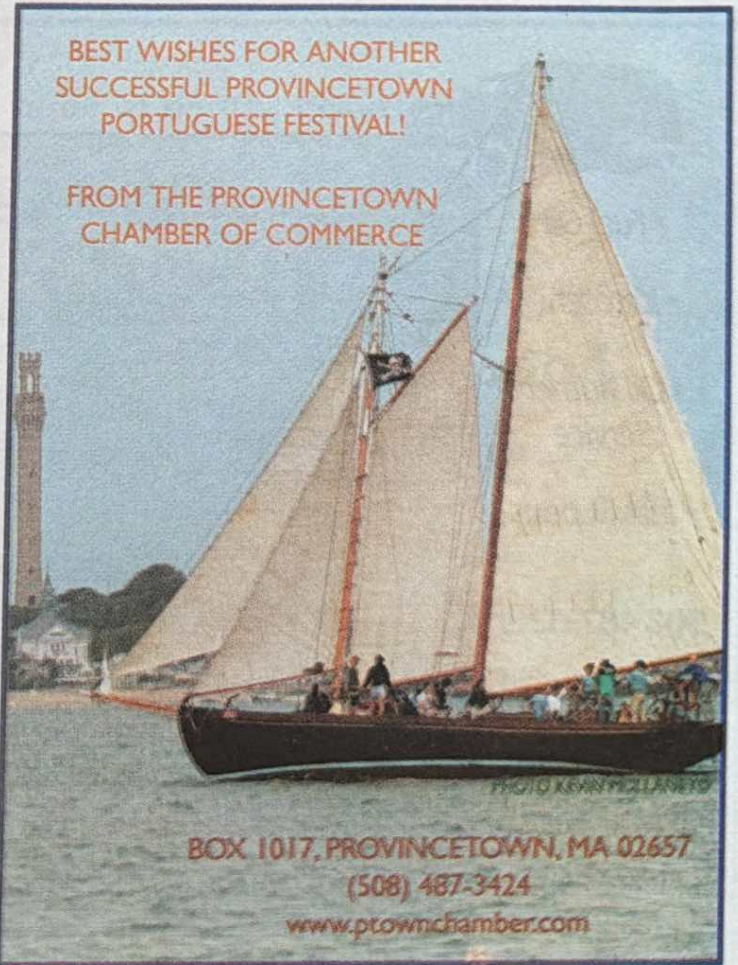
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she didn't want me to go, she lost her father at sea over No Mans Land, my grandmother had to go identify him".

Taves "We were fishing for college. I made \$7,000 a summer and my father, a letter carrier, made \$5,200 a year."

Roderick "In 1977 we had the best week fishing on the Jimmy Boy. I had 5 men of the boat and they all took home \$2700, and George Colley wrote that check."

Cordeiro "Slack line still, line heavy, like hell."

Taves "What about illegal fishing inside the limit?"

Clem "Insley got caught."

Roderick "I got caught 3 times, there is no fisherman who didn't fish it. I was near Nauset Light, southward to eastward. The state boat came out, took our names."

Cordeiro "My father was on the Rose Dora out of Boston with

a Ptown Captain. Crowley, my dad was engineer, then a cook and two men each for 12 dories, 27 men. It was 100' schooner, all sails.

They had an engine but it never had much pep, iron heavy. One trip they got 60,000 lbs of haddock. They wouldn't let me in those dories, I had to stay on the dock and cut fish, 12 years old. I was a little piashka I would lose the dories. I was trap fishing with Captain Simmons at the Race on the "ATCO", 4 boats, 15 men, Bobby as an extra. We would catch herring and whiting before they smelled it in P'Town. We would dress it at the wharf, and ship it to Gloucester, 3 and 4 cents a pound.

Coelho "Remember the Truro man you told him he put his traps in the wrong place?. He caught \$2million worth of tuna."

Cordeiro "Yeh, I was dragging 7 years with Freddie Salvador, Henry Duarte. We would go swordfishing out of Hyannis, my uncle Captain Mike Diogo on the "Fanny Parnell", and it was like yachtin! In the fall back to dragging.

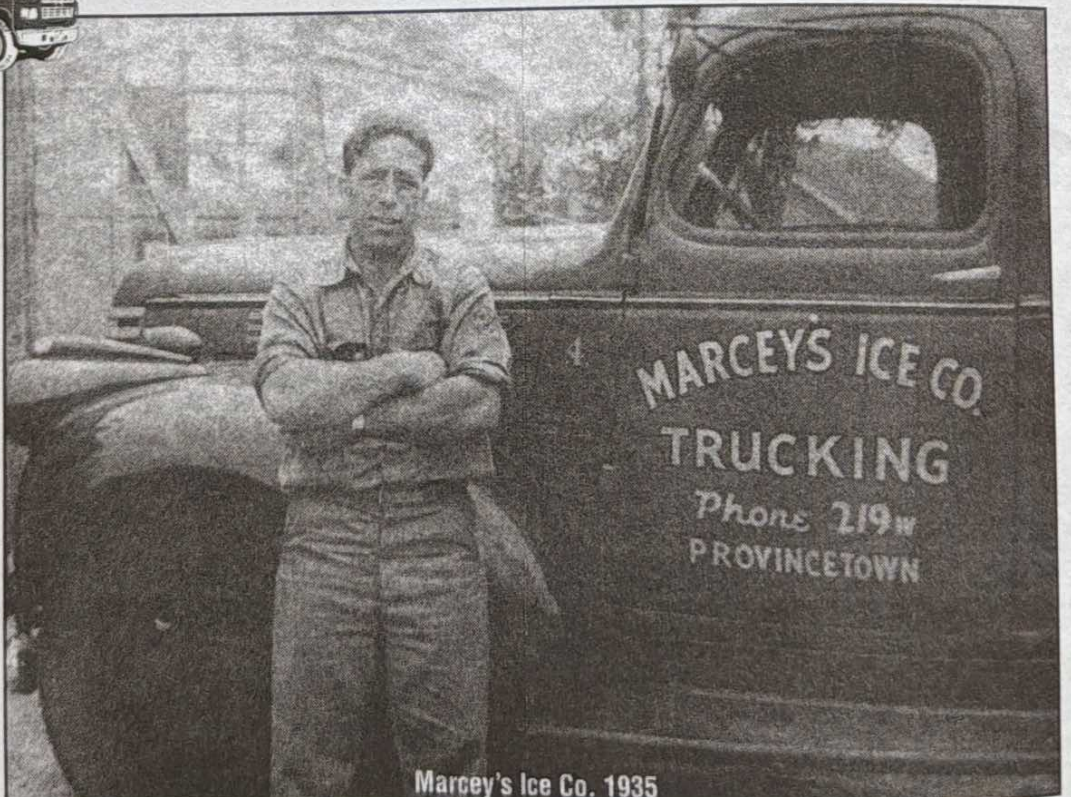
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Coelho "I went swordfishing with Kenny Silva on the "Barbara Lee" one summer, we froze. In 1975 we harpooned 45 swordfish, we had a spotter plane. I told my wife, I'd be gone 2-3 days. We were gone 11.

Roderick The Red Can in N.W. wind is a great place to fish, change the nets when it's blowing N.W.

Clem "Louis, tell us why you had a Xmas tree on your boat."

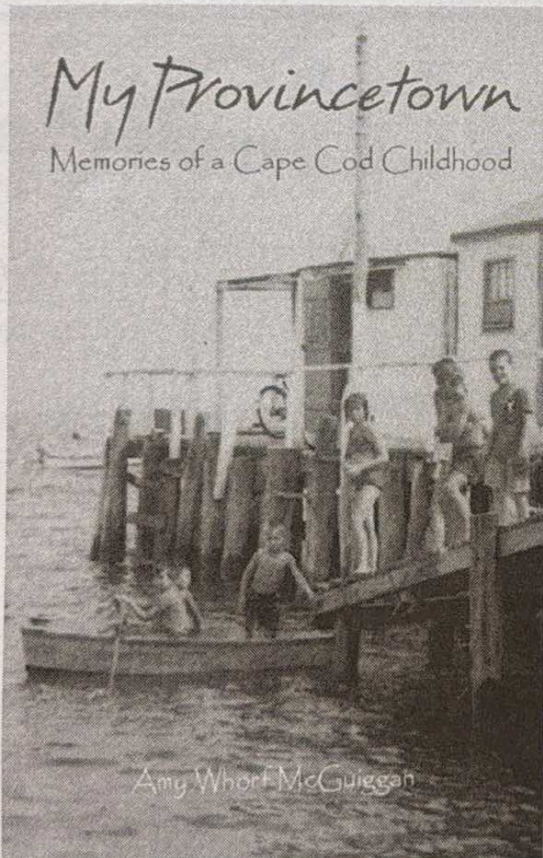
Rivers Quiet - "That was so my wife could see me coming into the harbor and then my dinner wouldn't be late."

Clem "That's one reason, and the other reason. Louis Rivers began to weep openly, we all hushed.

Clem "It was to celebrate Sandy, your beautiful daughter you lost when she was 22 years old".

Time came to leave the hospitality of the Red Inn, moving by the window Joe Roderick after more than 60 years of fishing scanned the harbor out of habit, "Birds are working out there".

This event was captured on video by Provincetown Community Television in the hopes of sharing it with the entire community in the future. □



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—Sue Harrison, *Provincetown Banner*

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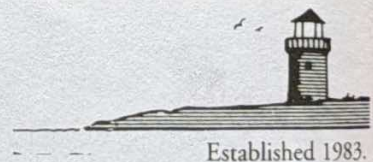
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7 - 10:30 pm **Opening Night Swing Band Concert** at Bas Relief
\$15/person • Buffet, Dancing and Raffle • (Cash Bar)

FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2003

10 am - Noon .Captain Manny Phillips **Fishing Derby** at Fisherman's Wharf.
Noon - 3 pm **Dory Bar Blues Band** at Bas Relief
Noon - 4 pm **Portuguese Soup Tasting** at Bas Relief
Noon - 5 pm Music, clowns and more at Ryder Street
3 - 6 pm **Willey and the Poor Boy's** at Ryder Street
5 - 9 pm **Homecoming Clam Feed** at the Bas Relief \$15/person.
6:30 - 8 pm .Live music by **Faith** on Ryder Street
7:30 - 9 pm .Live music by **Nelia** and Band on Ryder Street
10 pm - 1 am **Homecoming Club Night** (around town \$10/person cover)
At **THE SURF CLUB** with the Provincetown Jug Band
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Saturday, June 28, 2003

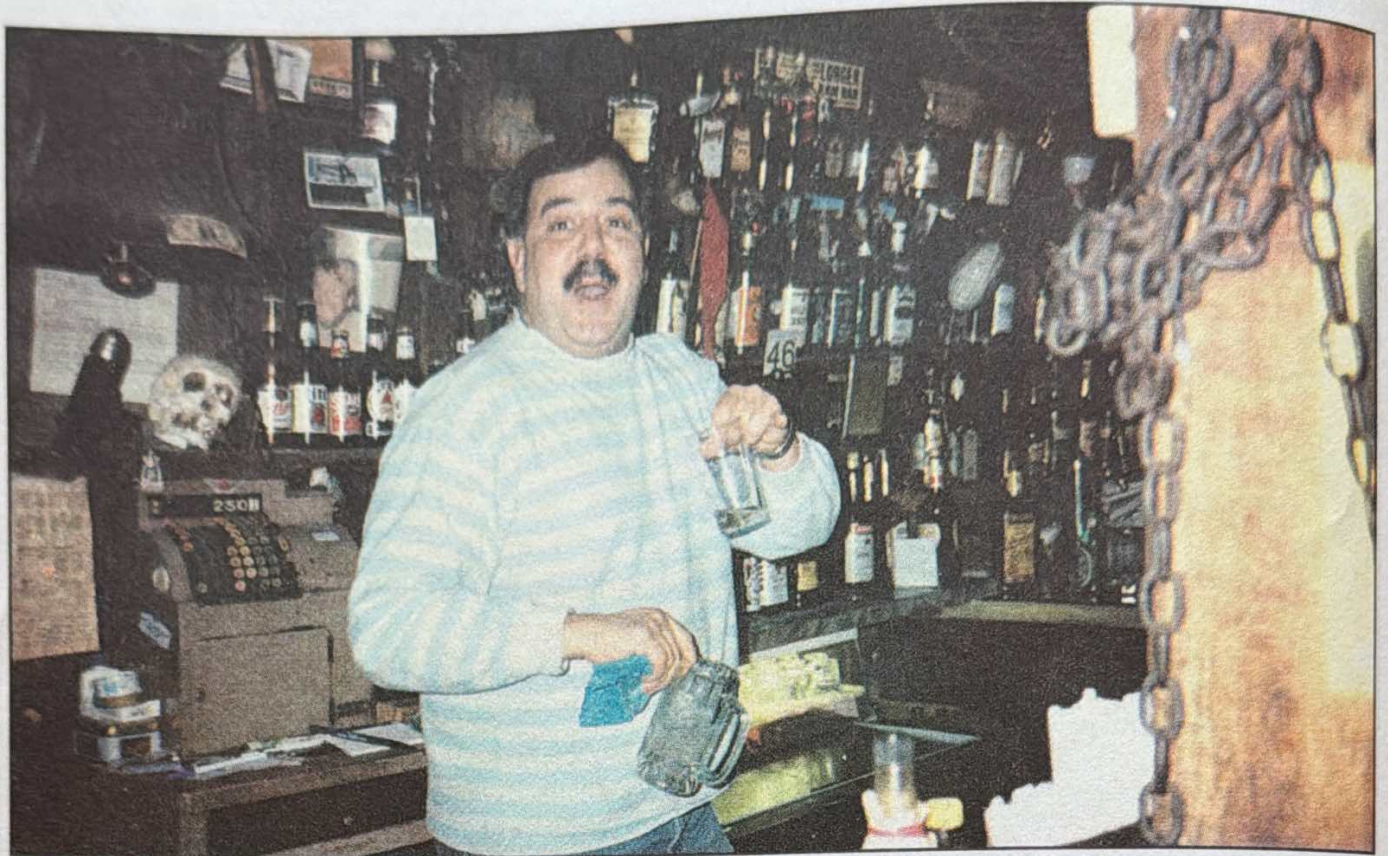
9 am - Noon .Kids' Games and **Cookout** at Motta Field.
11:30 - 7:30 pm **Food Court** at Bas Relief. Enjoy Provincetown's fine
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Noon - 1:30 .Live music to be announced
1:30 - 3:30 pm Traditional **Portuguese Dancers** Performance. At Ryder Street.
5 pm **Festival 2003 Parade**. You won't want to miss it!
6:30 - 8:30 pm FADO Concert with **Celia** at the Cape Inn
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6:00 - 7:30 **Pro Mix**
8:00 - 9:00 **Catarina**
9:00 - 12:00 **Samba Band**
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Sunday, June 29, 2003

10:30 am - 11:30 am .Mass at St. Peters Church.
Noon - 1 pm .Procession to MacMillian Pier.
1 pm **.56th Blessing of the Fleet**
1 pm .Band Concert & Portuguese Dancers



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I N M E M O R I A M

To My Friend, Mike "Moon" Henrique

*M*ontello Street...

You grew up at one end and I grew up at the other.
Scully-Joes, flippers, and vinha d'alhos,
And Linguica & Beans on Saturday Night.
We all talked about Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams
The Mick and Teddy Ballgame.
The Yankees and the Olde Towne Team.

Those streets were filled with kids...
Montello, and Conant, and Pleasant.
Most left town but we both stayed.
From Williams, through Lonborg,
From Bucky, through Buckner,
The Yankees and the Olde Towne Team.

Sure, there was Sinatra, and Rodney,
And the Farquahr, and Mussels Moon,
Sure, there were other things that came along.
But we never got too far from
The Yankees and the Olde Towne Team.

And, Thank God, we never got too far from
Montello Street.
And Linguica & Beans on Saturday Nights.

But as I write this, we are on top of the American
League!
Hey Moon, I'll see ya later -
Watch your fingers, I'm hangin' up...

- JOHN RODERICK



My Provincetown

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Author Amy Whorf McGuiggan greets respected Provincetown Artist Sal Del Deo.

■ continued on next page

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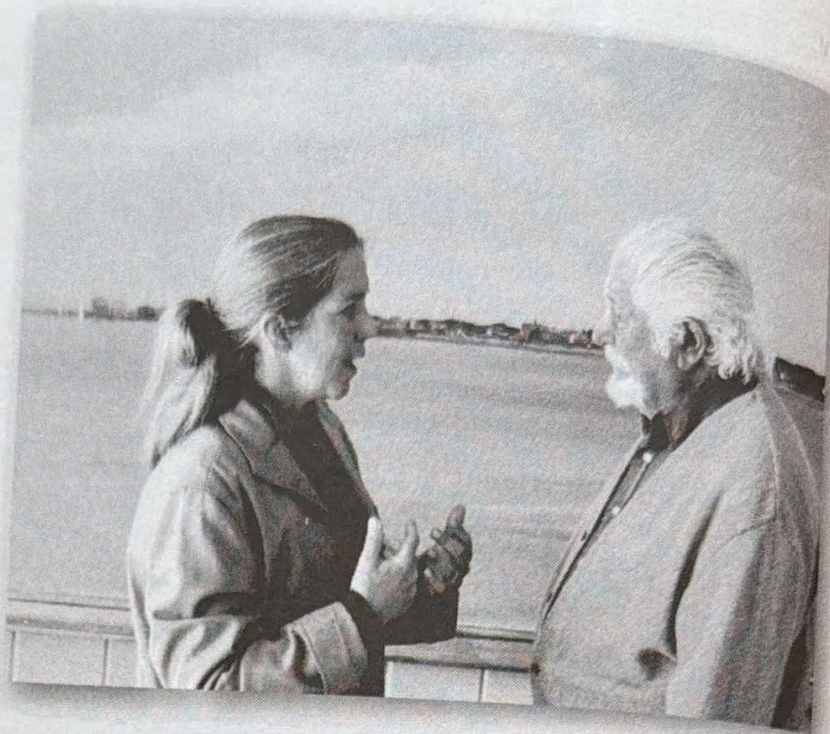
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book and have her sign their copies. Some purchased many copies of the book to send to friends and relatives around the country.

To Amy Whorf Provincetown means childhood. Every summer of the 1960s and early 1970s, her parents bundled the family into the car and headed for "A Home at Last," the P-town cottage where the unshaded deck sizzled under the sun and the railings were draped with bathing suits and orange life jackets.

By accident of birth, Amy was the granddaughter of legendary Provincetown painter John Whorf. And the author brings

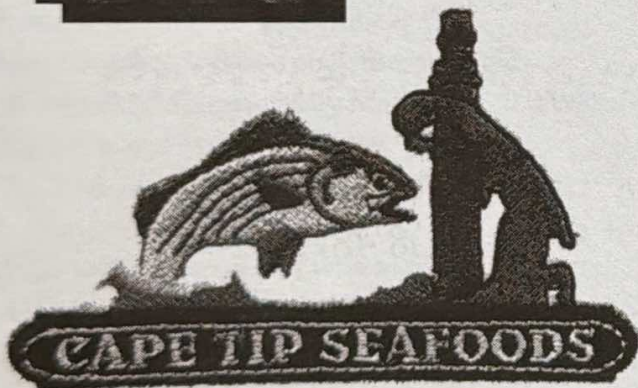


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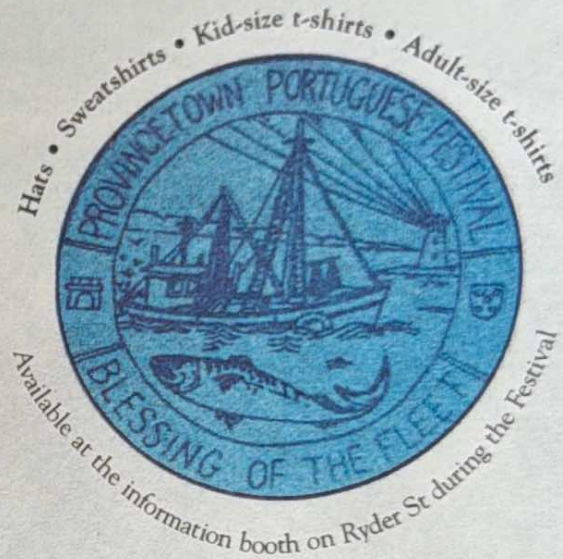
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a sharp eye to the landscape, the neighborhoods, and the people of her summer paradise. Amy was introduced to the gathering by Sal DelDeo with the same fondness that she refers to him in the book, as she lived beside and spent many hours in his West End restaurant, Sal's Place. She pointed out that not only is Sal a dear friend, "He introduced my parents"

Maureen Hurst who shared the special summers in Provincetown with Amy and a member of the Portuguese Festival Committee said "I spoke with Amy just last month and she wanted to do something for the Portuguese Festival" So we made some phone calls to the Red Inn and her Publisher. "It all came together in two days". All proceeds from the donations and book sales go to support the Portuguese

Festival. Amy will be available during the Festival to sign copies of her book which will be available at the booth on Ryder St. □



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Never A Dull Moment At The Old Colony

I've been asked to share my memories of the early days of the Old Colony Tap and some of the fisherman who patronized that venerable establishment.

By Beata Cook

I was a cocktail waitress there as was Rose Ferreira in the late forties or early fifties. The bartenders were Jesse Burr (Rose's husband) and Joe Veara and the owner was Francis Days who subsequently sold the business to Herman Janard and Lenny Blue, who was the husband of the present owner Lucia Enos.

In those days, The Old Colony was home to a cast of very colorful characters. Not only was it fun, unpredictable and informal, it was affordable. A mug or "schooner of beer cost 15 cents and a pitcher could be purchased for a whopping \$1.00 which, of course was a large part of its attraction. O.C. customers could spend an afternoon or evening drinking beer and socializing for very little money. Often the afternoons would spill over into the evening.

Our clientele back then was made up of local and mostly Portuguese fisherman, struggling artists and writers, waiters, waitresses from the neighboring Lobster Pot or Governor Bradford, a few summer boarders who found the atmosphere enchanting, and, for two hours each afternoon, passengers from the Boston Excursion boat.

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Photo: Mariana's Wharf

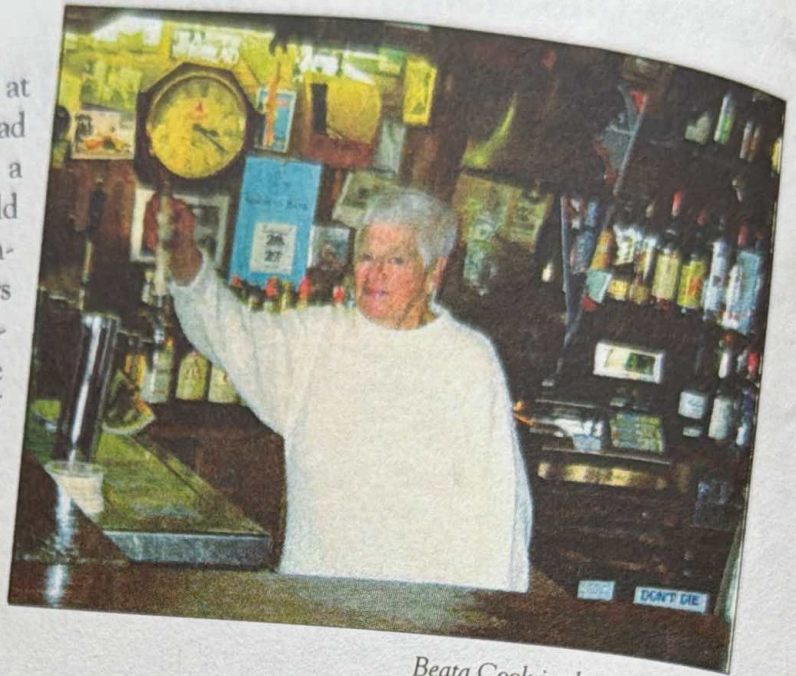
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Boas Festas!

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The fisherman would dock their boats at Railroad (now MacMillan) Wharf, unload their catch, head up the wharf and make a beeline to the Old Colony. There they could unwind after a hard days work with drinks and conversation with their co-horts or summer boarders who found them endlessly fascinating and congenial. Get to know one of them, and he would be more than happy to oblige you with a bucket of fish, and sometimes, with a lobster who was unfortunate enough to get caught in the nets of the dragger. Every now and then, one of those guys would come in lugging a huge lobster, put it on the barroom floor and get great glee from the



Beata Cook in the Old Colony.

■ continued on next page

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shrieks of the ladies from the Boston Boat as it crawled along the floor.

At any given time in those days, you could find Tony Dutra, Deeda Roderick, Tony "Cheroot" and Domingo Joseph at a table enjoying fish talk, a little gossip and lots of laughter with Domingo strumming an imaginary mandolin as they sang Portuguese songs. "Booba" Joseph most likely could be found sitting at the bar after a trip. After a number of shots and beer, he would find his way to a back table where he would fall asleep over his drink with a cigarette burning into his fingers until I would awaken him.

Booba was one of the most unforgettable characters I've ever met. He was a strong, solid man with hands like ham hocks. Though not well educated, he was a hard worker with a strong sense of loyalty to those he liked. Here is a case in point. When I got off my shift, I would offer to drive him home so that he could avoid Lopes Square where Frances "Cheeney" Marshall was often on duty. "Cheeney" was a native Provincetown man who was also the sergeant of the police force. "Booba" would often lament the fact that one day after a trip he gave "Cheeney" a nice haddock when he got to the head of the wharf. Later that day, when "Booba" left the OC

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...He would scrape together whatever loose coins he could get his hands on to buy a pitcher of beer. However, when one of the customers, captivated by his charm, offered to buy him a drink, his taste quickly changed to whiskey.

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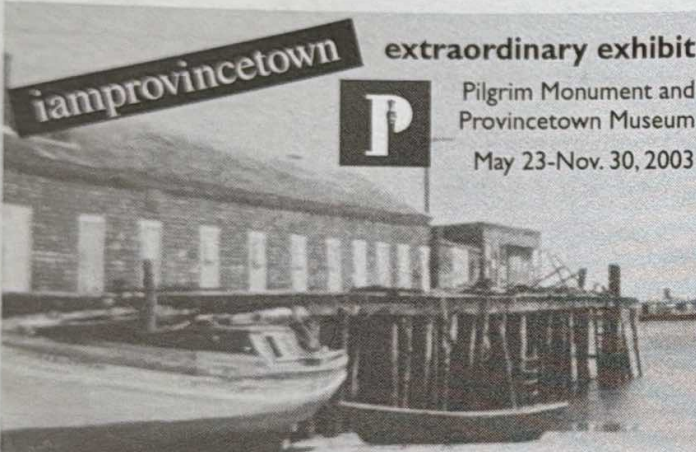
and was headed up the street to go home, "Cheeney" took him to jail until he "slept it off", meaning protective custody, of course. "Booba" felt this was a great injustice. I would often drive him home, which won me his undying gratitude. As an expression of his fondness for me, he'd proclaim in a loud voice at the bar, "you're like a daughter to me. Any S.O.B. talks dirty to you, nice girl, I'll punch him in the Fxxxking mouth because I respect you." No greater compliment was ever bestowed on me.

Among the writers who spent a lot of time at the OC was Danny Banko. He was married to Connie who ran a small eatery on Commercial Street, where she served

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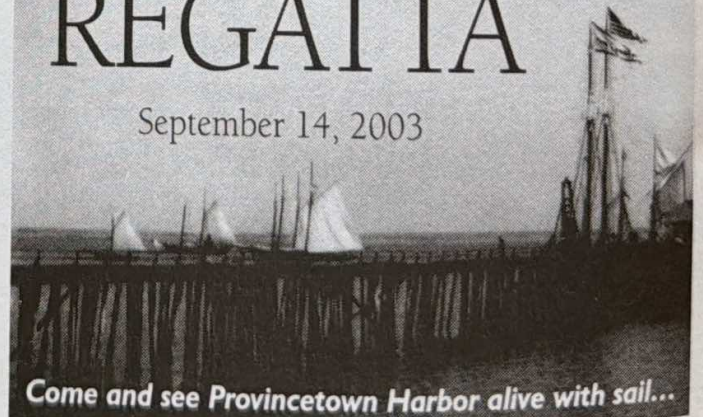
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mouth-watering lobster rolls. The lobsters were boiled and shelled on the premises, then put together in a roll that cost less the \$1.00. Needless to say this was a popular hang out in the daytime, and it was packed after the bars closed. Another writer of sorts was Graham (whose last name, I can't recall), a handsome, charming and ingratiating man. He would scrape together whatever loose coins he could get his hands on to buy a pitcher of beer. However, when one of the customers, captivated by his charm, offered to buy him a drink, his taste quickly changed to whiskey.

One of the regulars was an artist named Tony Vevers. His wife, Elspeth, worked at the Portuguese Bakery. Back then Tony and

Elspeth had a infant daughter, now an accomplished artist in her own right, who spent many an afternoon comfortably bedded down in a cardboard box placed on their table at the OC. When she awakened, a spirit of camaraderie prevailed as she was passed from one fisherman to another. They could be heard gushing, "Aint she cunnin?" which in Provincetown dialect meant, "Isn't she an adorable child?"

The town fathers during that period were quite tolerant of people who over indulged in alcohol, for the most part. It was OK to be a bit tipsy as long as you caused no disturbance. From time to time, however, they tightened the reins, mandating that bartenders

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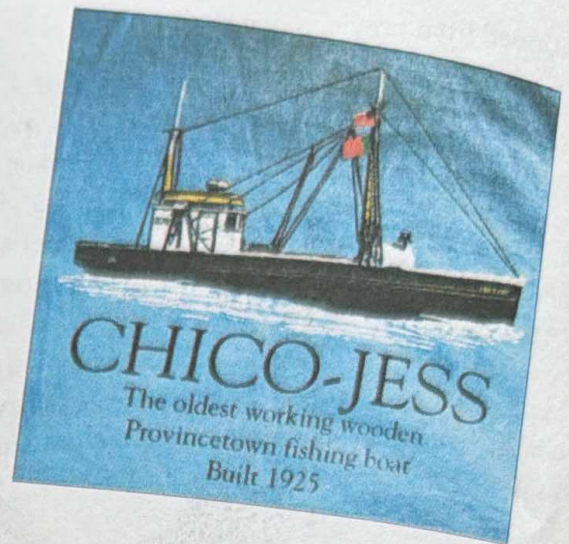
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and waitrons not serve anyone whom they considered already had too much to drink, hence servers became judge and jury. Penalties were severe for those who transgressed, and so it was that Jake Spenser, a very talented caricature artist whose sketches adorn the Mayflower Café, entered the OC at this very restrictive time. He appeared to be quite drunk and I refused to serve him, whereupon he fell on his hands and knees and crawled across the floor and out the door barking like a dog. Never a dull moment at the Old Colony.

Many of those people have passed into eternity, but will always be etched into my memory. □



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Soulful Sustenance:

Real Fado, Real Food in Lisbon

By Patricia Harris and David Lyon © 2003

LISBON — The clerk at the Casa do Fado museum shop was ringing up our stack of CDs when we asked her to recommend a good fado club.

“Parreirinha de Alfama,” she announced with absolute certainty. “Argentina Santos owns it. She’s a great singer — we have her CD here somewhere — and she

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The traditional accompaniment for fado is the Portuguese guitarra (left) and the classical guitar. The instrumentalists at Os Ferreiras are among Lisbon's best. (Photo by David Lyon)



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makes the best arroz com mariscos in Lisbon.”

Portuguese aficionados make an evening of fado performances into a big night out, and they expect to feast while they listen. As we prowled the back streets of Lisbon looking for great fado music, we also enjoyed some of our best meals in Portugal — and never had to eat bacalao, or salt cod, which seems to dominate most menus.

Folk music scholar and collector Alan Lomax used to insist that a people’s songs could tell you all about their culture. One fan explained to us that we didn’t need to speak fluent Portuguese to get the gist of the music. “The songs usually have a letter explaining why two people can never be together,” he said, only half joking. Like the blues, fado is a mournful music that turns the sorrow of love and life into paeans of endurance. Fado singers literally tremble with intensity. Their voices swoop up and down minor-key octaves, holding notes with anguished tremolos to the accompaniment of a Spanish guitar and the lute-like 12-string guitarra.

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Server ladles up a bowl of traditional Portuguese soup at Parreirinha de Alfama. (Photo by Patricia Harris)

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This emotional music was nearly swamped by the flood of European and American pop that swept into Portugal when the country opened up to the rest of the world in the 1970s. But a new generation of musicians is spearheading a revival — the Casa do Fado its most tangible sign. Some of the best live fado is played in and near the medieval Alfama neighborhood, where the music was born and the museum is located.

That doesn't mean it's easy to find authentic fado. The first time we went looking, a taxi driver refused to take us to an address in the Alfama, pronouncing it "too dangerous." He unloaded us instead in front of an entertainment district fado "nightclub," where we were the only non-Japanese speaking members of the audience. (They spoke less Portuguese than we did.) The staid singing and "folkloric" dances for this decidedly non-local audience were nothing if not surreal, but they sure weren't fado. Our only consolation about the food was that the Japanese apparently liked it even less than we did.

Connecting with the roots

We took the museum clerk's advice and found Parreirinha on the far side of the Alfama's largest square. Although it was only mid-afternoon, the door was open and two women were laboriously ironing white linens and setting up the tables for the evening show.

When we returned around 9 that night, the little space had been transformed. Gleaming linens reflected the blue and white tiles of the walls. Tables of well-dressed Portuguese were carrying on animated conversations. A few tables of more casually clad German and English tourists were trying to decipher the menus.

We were barely seated at our reserved spot when a waiter began passing from table to table, offering an artfully arrayed platter of large crimson prawns. We helped ourselves to a few and discovered that they had been steamed with lemon and garlic — crunchy and sweet to the last.

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bite. The first of the singers came on around 9:30 and we began to see a pattern emerge: two or three songs; a pause for orders, conversation and food delivery; then a few songs by another singer.

It's an unforgivable breach of fado etiquette — met by scowls and dirty looks from musicians and audience alike — to talk during the performance. But there's no prohibition on eating and drinking. We ordered the vaunted arroz com mariscos, a rice casserole studded with mussels, cockles and tiny clams. Whenever we thought our side dish of shells would overflow, a waitress would swap it for an empty one. Lisbon may face the Atlantic, but the dish was purely Mediterranean — a first cousin to Spanish paella on one side, French bouillabaisse on the other. A bright, fruity Alentejo red wine from Borba proved the perfect complement.

At one point a woman came out of the kitchen, shed her apron, and sang for the crowd. Then the bartender walked between the tables to sing one of the rare jaunty fado tunes. But we were well into our second bottle of Borba before Argentina Santos rose from her bar stool near the entrance. She pulled herself up to her full height, lifted her chin, and sang of the lover who failed to show up at a scheduled rendezvous. Her bluesy contralto raised the hair on our necks and the entire restaurant fell to dead silence as she sang.

Fado with smoke and fire

Chance led us to another great night of fado. As we were buying several powerful Douro Valley red table wines, we asked the young wine store clerk (who had

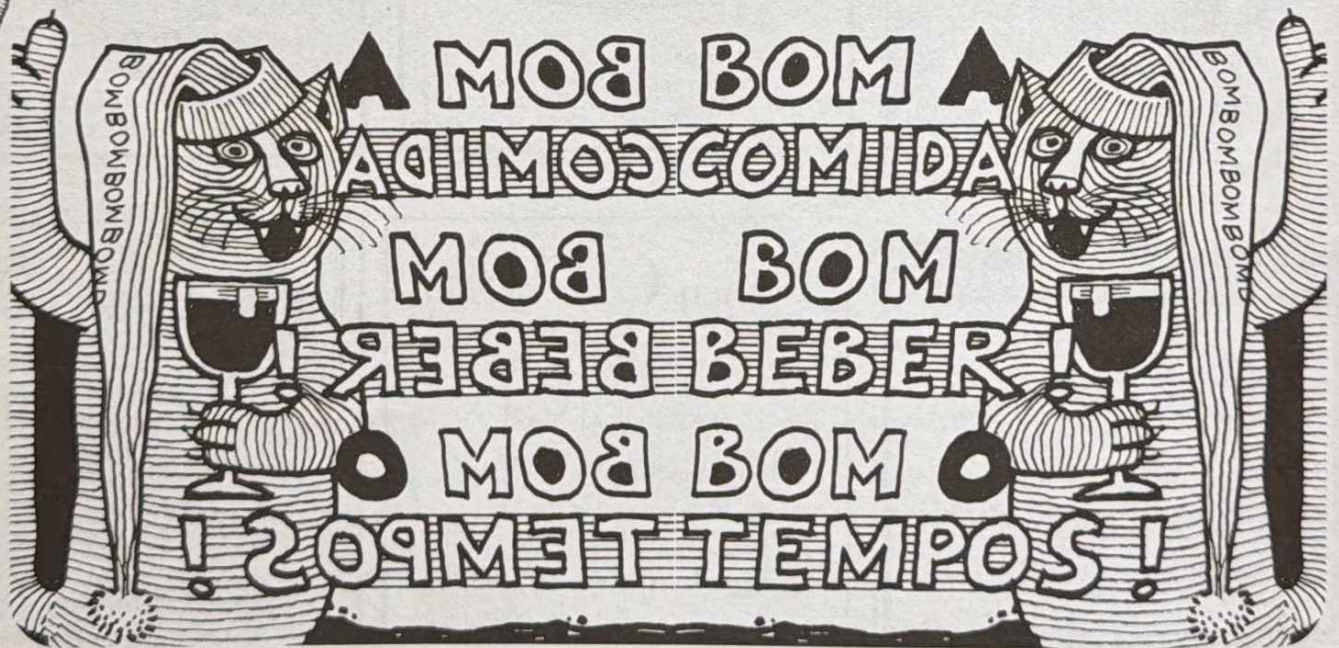
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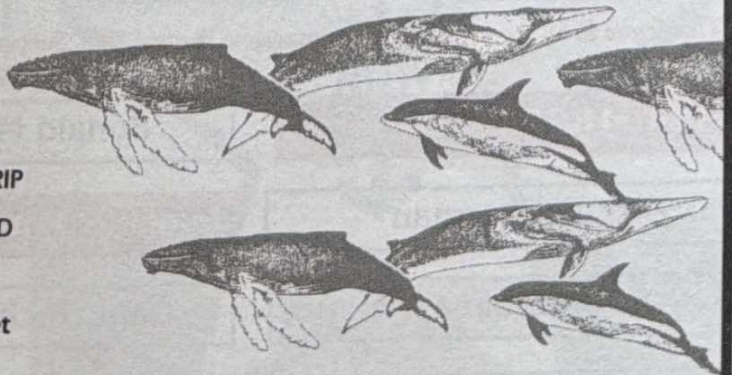


Two of the women at Os Ferreiras join in a fado duet, known as "fado desgarrado." (Photo by Patricia Harris)

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learned perfect California English from “Baywatch”) to suggest a place to eat. She thought a moment, looked at our wine choices and proposed Os Ferreiras. “It is a great churrascaria,” she said. “What you call barbecue.” Almost as an afterthought, she added, “and they have fado on Friday and Saturday.”

The Portuguese may be famous as fishermen, but they also love roasted meats. Their saying, “fish doesn’t pull a cart,” harks back to the old belief that eating meat provides strength. And generations of Portuguese workers returning home from Brazil have brought back a passion for the hot-pepper-basted, charcoal-roasted meats of Brazilian churrascarias.

Os Ferreiras is the only restaurant in its essentially residential neighborhood close to the center of town, but our noses told us we were headed the right way before we ever saw the place. Right inside the front door, the cooks were muscling around big slabs of meat on smoky charcoal braziers open to the street. When we arrived, our table was already spread with appetizers: prawns, bread, air-dried mountain ham and a small dish of olives. (As in many Latin countries, you can leave the dishes you don’t want and pay only for the ones you eat.)

The air was thick with the smell of meat and smoke. We wanted to try everything, so we settled on a huge plate of mixed grill — pieces of steak, a pork chop, a slab of liver, skewered kidneys, three kinds of

sausages — and a charcoal broiled chicken. The orders came with classic smoky roasted peppers, potatoes and piquant braised greens. The wines all hailed from the north of the country, and we found an expansive Quinto de la Rosa red table wine, made by one of the Douro Valley’s best small port producers, a perfect match.

Our table was overflowing by the time the music began. The cast of seven singers, announced in advance, were all classically trained musicians with resonant voices that boomed in the tiled room. They worked their way up to a crescendo, each of them performing an individual set, and then capped the evening with an operatic “desgarrado,” or dueling voices. The two accompanists were among the best instrumentalists we heard, but only rarely did they take well-deserved solos, preferring not to upstage the singers. After a three-hour meal and concert, we left both satiated and drained.

But sometimes you don’t have to seek out fado — it finds you. One night, as we walked from our hotel to the famous literary café, A Brasileira, for drinks, we encountered an elderly man playing a guitar held together with duct tape. Beside him stood a woman of uncertain age. She saw us and smiled. He struck a chord and she began to sing, her reedy voice of experience floating out a melancholy fado story into the night. □

Freelance writers Patricia Harris and David Lyon live in Cambridge.

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