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Pizza on Alaskan Seas

2 messages

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To: Dick Smith <execdir@mha-net.org>, Norbert Senf <norbert.senf@gmail.com>

You may recall that I started a project many years ago to install a wood-fired oven on the back of a ship in Southeast Alaska. Time had passed and then the 320 ton vessel ran aground in a storm and sunk in the winter of 2015. This was shortly after measuring for the pizza oven and a rear deck being fabricated for it, but never installed on the boat.

The Eyak is one of the hardest working, and famous, fishing tenders in Southeast Alaska. It's a wooden scow built in the U.S Naval Yard in 1943, but not for military service. There are only ten of these boats remaining in the world and at least six of them I've seen in Sitka, Alaska. Over the years it has been upgraded with a steel bow, modern engines and navionics. The Eyak works as a fishing tender and on contract for delivery of US mail to remote ports on Baranof Island. As a "tender," it supplies bulk ice, diesel fuel, gasoline, fresh water, laundry, showers and purchases fish from smaller fishing boats where it meets them on remote fishing grounds and transports the catch to a seafood processing facility. And now, it feeds fishermen pizza.

After it's grounding, the Eyak was recovered in a valiant and successful effort by the owner, David, and has been rebuilt and refurbished since "getting wet." I had joked that we would still build a pizza oven on the back but it looked like we would be starting completely from scratch. Repairs and upgrades were made with the character of the boat largely remaining intact. New navionics, electrical systems and two new Cummins 9.0 L Turbo Diesel engines were installed. A small Forno Bravo oven was also installed on the rear deck, as previously intended.

Fast forward to August 2018. I just spent a couple weeks on the boat helping out and developing a pizza program along with recipes, techniques and a method to make it all work in a fairly small space and in a timely fashion. The oven will likely be upgraded to a larger unit in the near future but the small oven is working for now. As surprising as it is, its a complex marketing environment out on the ocean. Other fishing tenders offer hot dogs or hamburgers to their client fishing boats. But the Eyak goes above and beyond, offering fresh hand-made dough and wood-fired artisan pizzas. I know from first-hand experience how surprised the fisherman are when handed a fresh wood-fired pizza after days of fishing far from civilization, in the rain and in the dark.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, "this can only happen in Alaska."

<http://sitkaharborguide.com/eyak-sinks-but-floats-again/>

<http://sitkaharborguide.com/eyaks-castle/>

11 attachments



Eyak in Rough Seas.jpg
489K



Driving Eyak.jpg
296K



Eyak 2015.JPG
333K



Rear Deck.jpg
307K



Fishing Boats.jpg
347K



Dough.jpg
294K



Dough 2.jpg
105K



Oven.jpg
323K



First Pizza.jpg
110K



Crew Meal.jpg
116K



Port Armstrong Evening.jpg
171K