

Flexibility for Success— The Fisherman's New Evolution

Victory Ventures, LLC
Gary Nielsen and Steve Spain, Owners

Gary Nielsen and Steve Spain have been around fishing boats and the fishing business; both started fishing at the age of thirteen. For Steve, who grew up in Winchester Bay Oregon and has fished in Alaska since 1980, owning a vintage wooden Alaska fishing boat is fulfilling a lifelong dream. Gary's family started in the fishing business four generations ago. Steve and Gary first met on the fishing grounds 80 miles off Kodiak in 1995 when they teamed up looking for fish and they've been good friends ever since. Steve owns the 104' *F/V Golden Fleece*, built in 1979, and Gary the 72' *F/V Alitak*, built in 1944.

Along comes the 84' *F/V Victory*, built in Tacoma in 1942. According to James A. Cole, who wrote an article about *F/V Victory* for the March 2008 edition of *Fishermen's News*, over her years of service she fished for sardines in Monterey, for herring in Alaska, for tuna out of Los Angeles and then moved her home port to Sitka—where she was eventually converted for king crab fishing.

Gary saw opportunity when he first laid eyes on the *Victory*: "A class act—that boat attracts fish ... from other fishermen!" He contacted Steve and invited him to be a partner and Victory Ventures, LLC was born. *Victory* went to work this season tendering salmon for Mitch Kilborn, General Manager of Western Alaska Fisheries in Kodiak. But there was the not-so-small matter of restoration and upgrade work that needed to come first ...



Port Townsend Washington was the port of choice for the work on the *Victory* to be accomplished. With an extensive talent pool for working on wooden vessels and a number of marine-related businesses nearby, the *Victory* did not lack for the skills and materials needed to bring her up to her new task. Sporting a new wheelhouse (among a number of other upgrades) she now has a 180,000 lb. insulated fishhold and refrigeration system from IMS.

According to Steve ... "The fishing industry is starting to move away from quantity to quality—and IMS helps make that possible. An efficient RSW system brings the temperature down fast and that means quality." The IMS dual-temperature condenser that is aboard the *Victory* is new technology. This single unit has the capacity to run the two 25-ton chillers in the fishhold now and to also support freezing equipment Steve and Gary plan to add later. When the boat is not busy tendering, she will have the capacity to blast-freeze product aboard, opening up additional markets and opportunities. "This new system provides us with flexibility for the long-term," says Steve. "Eventually, the goal is to devote part of the catch that meets quality standards direct to high-end consumers. We see flexibility—fish longer, farther, catch whatever—as the best opportunity to earn higher prices."

