



THE 9 LIVES OF THE CHARLES VAN DAMME FERRY – A UNIQUE SAUSALITO STORY

Built in 1916 as the first ferry between Marin & Pt. Richmond, the Charles Van Damme has a rich history & a compelling story to tell.

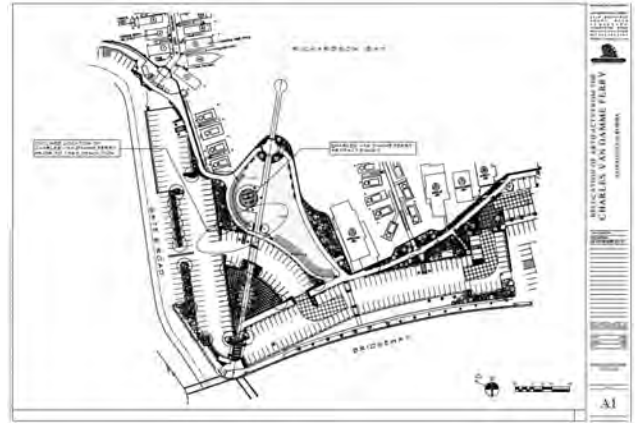
She spent 40 years as a working ferry & 25 years as the social hub of the Waldo Point waterfront. She appeared in several feature films & was a unique magnet for the rich & famous, the up & coming AND EVEN the down & out.

During her lifetime she had many incarnations, as 3 different restaurants, as an art & dance studio plus as an all night music venue & hang out for people like Carlos Santana, Janis Joplin, David Crosby & members of the Grateful Dead. The Ferry resided in the Gates Co-Op area at Gate Six Rd, Sausalito, now re-developed into the Waldo Point Park



Juanita Musson launched her legendary Juanita's restaurant there, feeding rich and poor and stirring up controversy galore. Writers, painters, poets, sculptors, dancers and musicians moved to the Sausalito waterfront houseboat community looking to live and create alongside and on the great old beached Ferry.

In 1983 the ferry was demolished leaving just the paddlewheel & smoke stack. But through the determined efforts of local citizens, the original paddle wheel, smokestack and other artifacts were saved.



Our group, the Charles Van Damme Ferry Project, a sub-committee of our non-profit sponsor, The Richardson's Bay Maritime Association (RBMA), is now embarking on the final phases of our effort to create a public home for the vessel's paddle wheel and smokestack. This permanent display will be located where the ferryboat last stood at Gate 5 Road in the new Waldo Point Harbor park in Sausalito. Surrounding the display will be signage depicting the Charles Van Damme's unique history, serving as an inspiration to a new generation of fans of maritime and artistic culture.

We have secured and stored the wheel and stack. We have an approved location, detailed architectural and structural plans approved by both the county and state plus acceptable bids from skilled builders. With the broad support of area officials, we have obtained from the County of Marin a Building Permit for construction. With these accomplishments now firmly in place, our committee, led by the architect for the project, Michael Rex, has begun a rigorous fundraising effort to fund the construction of the display.

The RBMA has pledged for 70% of the \$400k needed to complete the project. They are currently fundraising for the last 30%. Some of the pledges are contingent on receiving the additional 120K by January 31st, 2024 for the project to succeed.

Donors gifting \$10k or more have the opportunity for their names to be immortalized along with the Charles Van Damme Ferry's artifacts on the public exhibit.



The Charles Van Damme Ferry Exhibit will furnish another important piece of Sausalito's history for local residents and visitors. Reminding all of us of our unique city and surrounding area, it will pay respect to a bygone maritime era and the ongoing waterfront life surrounding the arts and creative pursuits.

The location of the landmark will be Waldo Point Harbor, one of the most famous houseboat communities in the world. Even now, with little public or tour bus parking, hundreds of people come every day to see the unique and colorful Sausalito houseboats they have heard so much about. By celebrating this hub of transport and creativity, we will encourage residents and visitors to continue the fantastic creative spirit of the Sausalito waterfront. The Charles Van Damme Ferry once again will serve as an important cultural icon.

We hope you will join us in supporting this exciting project!

Your tax deductible donation will enable the RBMA to share over 100 years of local waterfront history as a public display, inspiring generations to come.

For more information about the Ferryboat and this community restoration effort, please visit our website at: <https://www.charlesvandammeferry.org>

Sincerely,

Michael Rex, Architect
Chair of the Richardson's Bay Maritime Association