



Company Timeline

The past century in San Diego has been a spectacular ride. The beautiful, thriving city we know today has been shaped by many exciting transformations and modern innovations. And so has Flagship Cruises & Events. Flagship's history touches almost every aspect of the San Diego waterfront: shipbuilding, tug operation, salvage, shipping, sport fishing and of course ferry and cruise services. Here's the story of how the Engel family came to own and build San Diego's finest fleet:

1915: The Star Boat Company, owned by Rufus Creswell and his stepson Oakley J. Hall and operators of San Diego's first harbor excursion vessel, merges with its main competitor, Ralph Chandler's Crescent Boat Company. The new collaboration becomes the Star & Crescent Boat Company. The combined fleet includes 16 ships sailing to Roseville, Fort Rosecrans, Imperial Beach, Tijuana and the Coronado Islands in Baja Mexico, as well as harbor tours and water taxi services.

1915: Early excursions include trips to Tijuana and the Coronado Islands Old Mexico for \$1, public tours of the U.S.S. Oregon and Bay Trip Deluxe harbor tours for only 50 cents.

1916: The two-deck ferry *Roseville* offers cruises to Roseville Pier and Ballroom for an evening of dancing.

1918: Ferry service begins between Star & Crescent Boathouse and North Island. With a cost of 5 cents per ride, the ferry came to be known as a "nickel-snatcher."

1932: The Star & Crescent tug *Cuyamaca* sets a new record run from San Pedro, Calif. to San Diego. Assisted by strong ground swells, the 100-mile trip took just 13 hours and 20 minutes to deliver a gasoline barge loaded to capacity. At one point in time almost all of the petroleum shipped into the area was transported via Star & Crescent.

1935: Popular harbor attractions at the time included war ships, tuna clippers and giant log rafts known as "Benson Rafts." These enormous rafts brought tree-length logs on a two-week journey from the forests of the northwestern United States to San Diego, each one providing 5 million feet of lumber. It was a sight that could be seen nowhere else except from the Columbia River.

1935: The Star & Crescent's tug *Palomar* completes the longest tow in company history: a 1,440-mile tow of the tuna boat *Sea Tern* from Acapulco, Mexico to San Diego.

1937: "Barrage of Wisecracks Feared" as ship-to-shore radio service is added to the Star & Crescent's sport fishing boat *Sea Angler*.

1941: The new *Silvergate* is launched, engineered to help manage the increased load of passengers to the Naval Air Station. At peak hours, demand still exceeded its capacity of 350 passengers and the Star & Crescent commissioned five more vessels to be constructed.

1949: Commercial hunting of gray whales is banned. Six years later, the first water-based whale watching tours begin in San Diego, launching a worldwide industry. For \$1, passengers could take a boat trip to experience an up-close view of the whales.

1957: The *Marietta* joins the Star & Crescent fleet. One of the largest steam ships on the west coast, she is designed with enough space to comfortably carry 550 passengers on a two-hour narrated harbor tour.

1958: The first nighttime harbor tours begin, departing Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30. The city council grants the company a license for dining and dancing while cruising the bay.

1958: Glass bottom boat trips to the Coronado Islands in Mexico begin. The 23-foot boat was towed behind the *Silvergate*. It carried 23 passengers and toured the cove near South Coronado Island.

1963: The *Juanita* begins tour operations in Mission Bay, sailing out of the Catamaran Hotel. The *Juanita* eventually became the *Bahia Belle*, San Diego's original sternwheeler, which is still in operation today.

1964: The fleet expands again. The spacious *Cabrillo*, designed to carry 350 passengers, begins daily excursions around the harbor. In 1968, the hull is extended 20 feet, bringing her to 88 feet in length.

1969: The opening of the newly constructed Coronado Bridge forces the Star & Crescent Boat Company's ferry services to come to a halt after 51 years in operation. Under California law, ferry boats are banned from operating within 10 miles of a toll crossing. Automobile tolls are calculated to be nearly \$25 per month versus just \$4.40 for the pedestrian ferry.

1970s: The Engel family, originally hailing from the San Francisco Bay Area, establishes a shipyard in San Diego. The family owned and operated several shipyards in major West Coast ports.

1972: Father Tupper "the Amazon Doctor" acquires the ferryboat *Point Loma* and renames her *Esperança*, which means hope in Portuguese.

1986: The Engel brothers – Art, Herb and David – purchase The Star & Crescent Boat Company from the Hall family. With the projected growth in the region and the beauty of the natural resource of the harbor, the Engels see an opportunity to build upon the company's rich history.

1987: With construction fees paid off on the Coronado Bridge, the toll is removed and ferry service resumes. However, the ferry no longer carries cars – it carries people and bikes.

1988: *Spirit of San Diego* joins the Star & Crescent Boat Company, a 146-foot, three-deck vessel with a 2,700-square-foot observation deck, setting the new standard for harbor tours in San Diego.

1990: The Star & Crescent Boat Company changes its name to San Diego Harbor Excursion.

1999: Another state-of-the-art vessel, *California Princess*, is added to the fleet. With its culinary-grade galley, dining at sea is elevated to new levels.

2000: *Quiet Heart* joins the fleet. The sophisticated, 82-foot luxury yacht provides a more intimate venue for private parties.

2005: The fleet continues to grow with the addition of *California Spirit*, the grandest of the Flagship fleet. Popular for large events and special celebrations, the 158-foot vessel accommodates up to 600 guests and features unobstructed, 360-degree views from all three levels.

2011: The company name changes to Flagship Cruises & Events, reinforcing the Engels' commitment to operating only the finest vessels in San Diego and solidifying its emergence as a premier venue for private events.

2011: Flagship goes green and invests in shore power. Plugging into on-shore electricity saves energy, reduces air pollution and underscores Flagship's commitment to being a responsible neighbor to other businesses and residents in downtown San Diego.

2013: The *Patriot* jet boat joins the Flagship fleet. The turbo-charged *Patriot* is the only vessel of its kind in San Diego, with the ability to seat 139 passengers on high-speed thrill rides and whale watching cruises.

2014: Flagship brings farm-to-table to the sea. All dining and event cruises feature fresh, locally caught seafood and, whenever possible, sustainable California-farm-sourced ingredients. All meals are always prepared to order onboard the ship.

2015: Flagship celebrates its 100th anniversary! In 100 years, what started as a simple ferry company matured into one of San Diego's greatest forms of waterfront entertainment.

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