



Fish company's warehouse communicates quality

A fast-rising star among East Coast fish suppliers, Black Tiger Co., Inc. recently left a 1000-square-foot warehouse in Manasquan, N.J. to dedicate an attractive, versatile structure designed and built by Perley-Halladay Associates of Malvern, Pa. The move to the new facility in Egg Harbor City, N.J. not only yielded a facility 14 times larger; it was also an expression of the company's quality leadership.

"Black Tiger has the finest building and the cleanest shop," says President Ron McCartney. "Therefore, in the minds of our customers it also has the best fish - which happens to be true anyway."

From the Pacific Ocean to Atlantic City

Black Tiger has become a wholesaling powerhouse, doing strong business among New Jersey casinos and white-tablecloth restaurants in the Cape May beach resort area. The company includes a retail component, Egg Harbor Seafood, which operates a shop at the warehouse location. But this American success story really begins far across the Pacific.

"Black Tiger was founded by my wife, Hsi-hua, whose father was a Taiwanese shrimp farmer," says McCartney. "We were married in 1986. When she finished her master's degrees in international finance and computer science at the University of Wisconsin, she founded her own business" - and with her family background, it was natural that seafood would be her focus.

"The company started by exporting mullet roe from the Gulf of Mexico to Taiwan, where it's the equivalent of caviar," McCartney says. In 1990, when he left an executive position with a Fortune 500 manufacturer of health-care products to join Black

Tiger, the company was seeking new and broader seafood sales opportunities on this side of the ocean.

"We were doing well, selling to a lot of supermarkets and restaurants," McCartney says. "We introduced tilapia to the Northeast - now it's a very popular fish. We were building volume and adding offerings constantly."

Long experience in fish farming has remained a company mainstay - today, for example, 75 percent of its shrimp are farm-raised. Other farmed fish include salmon, hybrid striped bass, catfish, mussels, scallops, clams and oysters. A solid volume is also tallied each year in wild fish sales.

This deeply grounded expertise in seafood marketing, coupled with consistent quality and general business sense, has enabled Black Tiger to prosper. "When we started selling to the casinos, we were up against big Philadelphia competitors," McCartney says. "But we identified a niche, got in and got solid. And then came some competitor bankruptcies, and our opportunities just kept expanding."

The price of growth

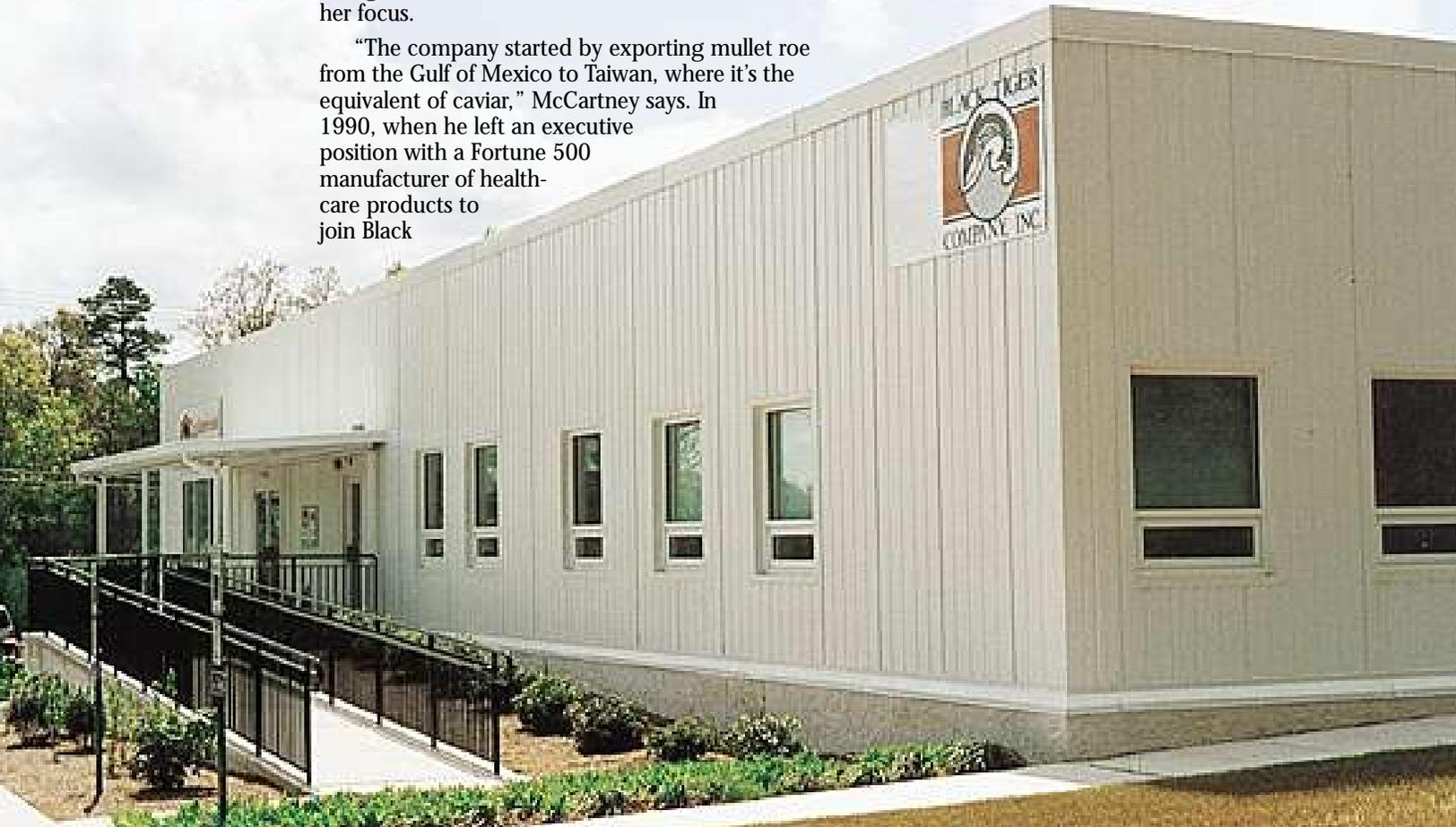
Through its early years, Black Tiger's rapid growth put more and more pressure on the Manasquan warehouse. Before long it became necessary to lease refrigerated storage space off site, an expensive and inconvenient arrangement. The company's office area

BLACK TIGER



COMPANY, INC.

*Black Tiger's
new building
from
Perley-Halladay
makes a
statement*



“The guys Perley-Halladay had on site were very good to work with...”

Ron McCartney
President, Black Tiger Co., Inc.

was not integrated with the warehouse building, and the overall workforce had grown substantially.

The situation had to change. The McCartneys were determined to leave Manasquan and acquire a showplace reflecting the quality of the company's products.

“Friends who know about these things said Bard Halladay was the man to see,” says Ron McCartney. “We called him, he came out and talked about what we needed, and got back to us with drawings and a quote. Then we took the numbers back to our friends, and they said the price was good.”

(Perley-Halladay is one of the nation's most experienced design/build firms for large refrigerated structures. The company has managed the construction of hundreds of warehouses and refrigerated processing buildings.)

The local municipality courted Black Tiger, and the seafood company became the first occupant of the new Egg Harbor Industrial Park. Initial contacts with Perley-Halladay took place in fall of 1996; construction began about two years later.

“The guys Perley-Halladay had on site were very good to work with,” says McCartney. “As first-time builders, we were naïve – we had to rely on them, and they didn't let us down. I'd recommend Perley-Halladay to anybody.”

New facilities, new capabilities

Actual construction of the warehouse and integrated related structures took about six months, with the grand opening in late December 1998. Perley-Halladay managed every aspect of building design, supply and construction.

The complex includes office, dry storage and retail spaces; a 35°F cooler and -10° to -20° freezer, each enclosing 1,575 square feet; a 960 sq.' refrigerated loading dock; packing, processing, staging and quality control rooms plus a shellfish and crab area. Each room is individually temperature controlled. The structure is assembled of urethane-insulated, metal-clad panels, which come together for a building that's efficient in operation. The modular panels also contributed to the speed with which construction was completed.

The most direct benefit of the new Black Tiger location has been simple volume increase. But other important advantages have also been realized.

For instance, the building was specifically designed to meet the demands of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. HACCP is a rigorous system for ensuring food safety, with continuing checks at every stage of food handling, preparation and storage. Plainly the wave of the future, it has already begun to revolutionize seafood wholesaling and retailing. “Temperature control is the most critical element of HACCP,”

McCartney says. “With separate rooms for various temperature requirements including refrigerated dock areas, we have that control. We also have the space to separate various products and prevent cross-contamination. That same space enables us to label all our products correctly, another important part of HACCP. Details that support food safety go right down to our Tough-Coat floors – it's easy to keep the place sanitized with powerwashing.”

The new location includes the clean, spacious shop for Egg Harbor Seafood. An executive chef directs the retail operation, which sells a range of products from salmon mousse to crabcakes. Home replacement meals are increasingly popular. Using the resources of the new warehouse/distribution center, McCartney expects to greatly increase the scope of the retail operation.



The difference a warehouse makes

If Ron McCartney regrets anything about the construction project, it's that he didn't build a still larger warehouse space. “As it is, the warehouse gives us the throughput we needed,” he says. “That applies to the whole operation – cutting and packing areas, cold storage, everything. It gives us tremendous ability to take direct shipments from manufacturers. In fact, they approach us now, wanting us to represent them.”

“The building has performed very well, but there's more to it than just having an effective plant. When people come here from the casinos – food service managers, executive chefs – they see that the building is terrific and it influences them. Because of its quality, this building actually makes sales for us.”

Put Perley-Halladay's design/build professionals to work on your next project.



Perley-Halladay
Associates, Inc.

1442 Phoenixville Pike
West Chester, PA 19380
610-296-5800
800-248-5800
FAX: 610-647-1711