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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ AUGUST 2013



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL BATHMAN

Fillmore's New Clubhouse



Inside Palmer's Tavern, Opening This Month

AFTER YEARS of darkness and months of looking ready for visitors, the corner spot at Fillmore and Clay is only days away from opening its doors as Palmer's Tavern.

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UPFRONT



Jesse Kay-Rugen from Glaze teamed up with Toni and Sheila Young of Bumzy's.

Seattle-Style Teriyaki, Fillmore-Style Cookies

WHEN THE OWNERS of Glaze — the new Seattle-style teriyaki grill on the corner of Fillmore and Pine — were planning their menu, they knew they wanted to keep things as fresh and local as possible.

Much of their planning and interviewing had been done at Fraiche, the all-natural yogurt shop down the block, which became their headquarters while the Glaze space was under renovation. And they made it a point to walk up and down Fillmore to meet their neighbors.

When Glaze opened in April, they offered dessert bars made out in the Sunset District. But they kept thinking about Bumzy's, the cookie shop down in the Fillmore Jazz District operated by the mother-daughter team of Sheila and Toni Young.

Now they've struck up a business relationship, and three kinds of Bumzy's cookies are delivered up the street every morning, making up the entire dessert menu at Glaze.

"We thought it was a good thing to support the Fillmore community," said Glaze manager Jesse Kay-Rugen. "And once we got to know Sheila and Toni, it

seemed like a no-brainer. In addition to having a great product, they're also great women who are so involved in the community."

He added: "It's a bonus we can tell people to go four blocks down the street and visit their shop."

Three kinds of Bumzy's homemade and handmade cookies were added to the menu on July 24: peanut butter, oatmeal raisin and their signature chocolate chip cookie. The next night, Sheila and Toni Young showed up in their chef's whites to offer samples on a silver platter.

"It's a mutual admiration society."

— TONI YOUNG
Bumzy's Cookies

"That was such a blast," Toni Young said a few days later. "It gave us a chance to see and meet a lot of customers who came in for dinner."

She remembered when Glaze owners Kay-Rugen and Ian Richardson first came walking in the door of her shop, just as she was taking a batch out of the oven. They brought a box of assorted cookies.

"They loved our cookies, so we started a conversation on what it would take to work together," she said. "We share the same philosophy of fresh and locally sourced ingredients, so it seemed like a great fit. It was a mutual admiration society."

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Coffee Shop and Laundry Give Way to Rag & Bone

Influx of fashion shops continues on a key corner

By CHRIS BARNETT

WHEN Royal Ground Coffeehouse and the Wash and Royal laundromat next door abruptly closed on July 7 after two decades on the corner of Fillmore and California, the rumors started flying: "Another independent merchant forced out by a greedy landlord." "Another flashy fashion boutique or cosmetics shop will be moving in." "Another chain store, probably."

By the next afternoon, the two storefronts were virtually gutted. Furnishings, fixtures, coffee and espresso machines, washers and dryers had been ripped out and hauled off. Shop owner Ibrahim Aljhat complained that his rent was being raised from \$16,500 a month to \$25,000 a month by David Kaplan, the 98-year-old real estate investor who owns a third of the block on the east side of Fillmore between California and Pine.

"I just couldn't do it," Aljhat said — and his lament sounded credible enough. The landlord had recently had a taste of the big corporate money when he replaced his longtime tenant Mrs. Devson's Hats with NARS, an internationally known makeup and skincare brand. According to a street-savvy leasing broker, shop owner Ruth Devson, who ran her folksy chapeau shop there for 38 years, was paying considerably less than market rate for the space.

More sentiment was stirred up when Aljhat put a sign in the laundromat window recommending Metro Wash on Jackson Street. "We have lost our lease," the sign said.

Regulars and locals gathering on the corner peering into the darkened stores weighed in with sympathies, regrets and remembrances over the demise of the oldest and funkier coffee shop in the neighborhood.



At Fillmore and California, Royal Ground and Wash and Royal closed on July 7. By the next day, the storefronts were virtually gutted.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONACHE BARNETT

"A wonderful asset to the community is gone. It's a great loss," mused Milton Baller, a software engineer. "I used to study here nightly with classmates," said Brian Balinas, a student at the nearby University of Pacific dental school. "The staff was always friendly."

Renowned music and food writer Arthur Bloomfield, who has lived in the neighborhood for most of his life, said he wrote one of his books, *The Gastronomical Tourist*, in the Royal Ground — and even got an introduction to his publisher from a fellow scrivener he met there over coffee.

The initial reactions among customers and neighbors echoed the sentiment that the neighborhood is losing its charm and character as mom and pop shops are being

gouged and chased out with exorbitant rent hikes by profit-hungry landlords.

But that's not the whole story. As Fillmore has morphed into a fashion-forward shopping street offering signature brands and labels, it's often longtime merchants themselves nearing the end of their leases who have the power. And many have been wielding it.

According to leasing brokers, building owners, current and former tenants on the street and retail industry advisors, it's clear the face of Fillmore is being reshaped, for better or worse, by windfalls of cash called "key money." The demand and competition for storefront space on the four main blocks — from Clay to Bush — is so intense, brokers say, that clothing and cosmetic bou-

tiques are buying their way on to the street with checks running to six figures or more.

"Key money" is basically a bribe — or a reverse signing bonus — that buys the key to the front door. The cash is offered through a broker to convince a tenant to sell a lease, give up the space and move out. If a lease is coming due and the tenant can't afford the new rent, or just wants out, the cash is offered to the landlord directly. On Fillmore today, where an empty storefront on one of those prime four blocks usually triggers multiple bids, the serious bidders will often include offers of key money, leasing brokers say. Those who want to get in the game must ante up.

Some say that dynamic was involved in the closure of the Royal Ground.

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editors@newfillmore.com

Editors | Barbara Kate Repa & Thomas R. Reynolds
Production Editor | Ginny Lindsay Copy Editor | Donna Gillespie
Marketing Manager | Alison Short

Advertising inquiries ads@newfillmore.com or 415.441.6070
Published on the first weekend of each month. Deadline: 20th of prior month
Subscriptions by mail are available for \$30 per year. Please send a check.

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CRIME WATCH

Forcible Entry Van Ness Avenue and Bush Street June 14, 1:51 a.m.

Officers received a report that a man and a woman were attempting to kick in doors in a hotel. As officers entered, a woman and man raced down the stairs toward them toward the front door. They said they had just been attacked by someone inside.

The woman who had called the police appeared at the top of the stairs and shouted, "That's them!" She told the officers she had heard loud noises outside her apartment door and opened it to find the two suspects kicking other residents' doors. She shouted, "Stop it!" at the pair. When they ran toward her, she retreated into her apartment and locked the door.

The man kicked her door until it broke, then entered her apartment. She managed to push him back into the hallway, but he punched her in the face. A male friend of the woman's then arrived and grabbed the suspect, who punched him several times, knocking him to the ground. As the man and woman ran away, the friend discovered his cell phone was missing. An officer caught the male suspect and found the stolen cell phone in his pocket. Both suspects were booked at county jail.

Driving Under the Influence Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street June 14, 11:08 p.m.

Officers in a patrol car were moving forward after a light turned green when a car approaching the intersection from their left raced through the red light. The officers pursued and stopped the car, which contained a strong smell of marijuana. When queried about the odor, the driver replied: "I don't do that. The smell must have come in from the outside." As the man fumbled for his driver's license, officers detected the odor of alcohol on his breath. He stated he had consumed four beers and one shot of whiskey. The driver stumbled several times while taking a field sobriety test, and a breath test revealed three times the legal limit of alcohol. The marijuana field test was also positive. Officers then searched his car and found a large bag of marijuana. The driver was transported to county jail.

Burglary of a Hotel Room Van Ness Avenue and Pine Street June 17, 6:55 a.m.

Arriving at work, a construction manager in charge of a hotel renovation discovered the key to his office didn't work. At the same time, a man he didn't know emerged from a room adjoining the office. The manager noted he was carrying a large duffel bag concealed beneath several trash bags. When confronted, the intruder said he was a guest and was looking for the pool.

The manager then realized the door the man had exited from wasn't closing properly. He discovered the room behind it had been ransacked and that a hotel master key was missing, along with other items. Officers were summoned, and as they were questioning the construction manager, another call came in from hotel engineers attempting to detain a man. It was the same individual the manager had encountered. The trespasser locked himself in one of the hotel rooms, refusing to open it. The officers kicked the door open and took the man into custody. When they searched his duffel bag, they found a large number of tools. He was booked at Northern Station.

Aggravated Assault Van Ness and Pacific Avenues June 22, 7:30 a.m.

A man on a Muni bus who had been behaving strangely and talking to himself suddenly struck two passengers with a glass bottle inside a paper bag. A witness called police, reporting that the assailant fled the bus and was struggling with nearby

firefighters attempting to detain him, but he broke free and climbed up a scaffolding. The firefighters believed the man had climbed onto the roof of the building, then down the rear fire escape. Witnesses reported he had dropped two large duffel bags as he fled. The suspect was tracked down several blocks away. Inside a duffel bag, the police found many items of electronics they believed to be stolen. The suspect was transported to Northern Station.

Battery, Outstanding Warrant Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street June 22, 7:10 p.m.

A man attempted to enter a movie theater without paying for a ticket. When security officers moved to detain him, he shoved them, then head-butted one of the guards. Another guard rushed to help and together they managed to handcuff the man. Then officers arrived and took custody of the suspect. A records check revealed an outstanding parole warrant for the man's arrest. He was booked at Northern Station.

Vehicle Burglary, Possession of Stolen Property Octavia and Sacramento Streets July 2, 2:50 a.m.

Officers received a call about a car burglary in progress. The witness said one suspect was wearing a gray hoodie, the other a black jacket. As officers approached, they spotted an individual standing near the intersection. They soon found him trying to conceal himself beneath a car.

Nearby they saw a black bag in front of a portable toilet. An officer tried the door and found it locked, then drew his firearm and ordered the person suspected to be inside to come out with his hands up. The second suspect came out; he had broken auto glass all over his sweatshirt and small cuts on his hands. The officers discovered several vehicles nearby with broken windows. When they found the car the witness had notified them about, they contacted the vehicle's owner. She identified the black bag, which contained an iPad, as her property. The suspects were transported to Northern Station.

Prohibited Weapons Gough and Jackson Streets July 8, 10:55 p.m.

Officers on patrol saw an '80s era Mustang circling the neighborhood. They noted numerous violations, including no license plate lamp and broken turn signals. When officers signaled the driver to pull over, he stopped his car on a steep hill and turned off the ignition. Officers told the driver he needed to move the car — it was not a safe place to stop. The man made a rude retort and refused. At that moment the car began rolling back down the hill.

The driver said he was on probation for burglary and had a search condition. Officers removed him from the car. One officer entered the car and guided it to a safe parking space; another searched the vehicle and discovered a belt buckle knife. The driver was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

Street Robbery with Force Van Ness Avenue and Post Street July 14, 3:25 p.m.

A man was having dinner in a restaurant with his girlfriend when another man walked in and tried to take his beer. The diner struggled with him and prevented the man from taking the beer, but then the suspect snatched the restaurant bill along with the \$65 the diner had laid out as payment and fled. The diner chased him, and a fight erupted. A witness called police. The suspect then ran off and jumped onto a Muni bus on Van Ness. The diner gave the police the suspect's direction of flight, and officers stopped the bus and detained him. He was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

FILM

By DAVID THOMSON

Blue Jasmine — which opens on August 2 at the Clay Theater on Fillmore — seems to me the best film Woody Allen has ever made.

On the face of it, this is more of the recent Woody, a new leg in his grand tour of chic locations — London, Barcelona, Paris and Rome — which arrives in San Francisco. But *Blue Jasmine* doesn't tick off the tourist sites. It prefers colorful seediness and hard-up situations. This is the first American city other than New York that Woody has used as a setting.

You should make special allowance for *Annie Hall*'s snippy attitude toward Los Angeles, but *Hollywood Ending* was all filmed in New York; and while *Sweet and Lowdown* claimed Chicago, it was shot at the Astoria Studios. Allen has never admitted the equal rights of another American city. And yet, while the other recent travel films dig into the look and the legend of their cities, *Blue Jasmine* could actually take place wherever people have trouble. It doesn't need San Francisco anymore than *Verigo* did. Breakdown happens anywhere.

Jasmine seldom wears blue. She prefers regal gold, white and tan. But she is a wreck. She flies into San Francisco (without a glimpse of the famous bridges) to seek refuge with her "sister," Ginger. Those names tell us how apart they are, and Jasmine is quick to assure anyone that they were both adopted from different parents.

So, at the outset, Allen is doing something he has seldom done before: He gets into class. Jasmine is a penniless socialite (who still flew first class). Ginger works as



Director Woody Allen (center) with stars Cate Blanchett and Alec Baldwin during filming.

Woody Allen's Latest Opens at the Clay

In 'Blue Jasmine,' his grand tour of chic locations comes to the neighborhood

a check-out clerk at a neighborhood market; she has two overweight sons; a loud, vulgar boyfriend and a cramped apartment. She might be a cliché blue-collar single mother, but Sally Hawkins brings all her untidy warmth and generosity to humanize the part.

And Jasmine needs kindness, as well

as a job and somewhere to live after fleeing Manhattan. She had been married to Hal, a shark made out of full-court press charm and money, until suddenly his act evaporated. He was a cheat: He slept with most women he encountered and he was the instrument of a Madoff-like commercial fraud. His crimes may not be on quite

that scale, though he ate up the precious \$200,000 Ginger and her ex-husband, Augie, won in the lottery.

Did Jasmine know about the cheating, or had she long ago perfected the habit of learning not to look? She talks to strangers without noticing whether they are listening

TO PAGE 6 ►

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Life After the Express Line

By BARBARA KATE REPA

IT'S BEEN exactly four years since James Moore retired from his post at the express line at Mollie Stone's. He seems much the same as the day he left — the same ready smile, the same bass blurt of a laugh, even the same gallant manner. "Let me buy you a coffee," he says. "I don't like to let women pay for anything."

He stops by the Starbucks outpost at the entry to the store now and then. Nearly every shopper who passes by extends a greeting, a high five or a hug — sometimes all three. And he keeps up the familiar patter he perfected with customers passing in and out of his line back in the day.

"Hi, sweetheart. How're you doing?"

"Hey, what's up with you? You feeling good?"

"I sure have missed you."

Upon a closer look, James holds himself a bit more stiffly now as his back mends from recent surgery. "I didn't really want to ask what all they did — they put something like cement in my spine," he says. "But I feel much better now. I go to physical therapy once a week, and they give me homework."

He faithfully does it. "I'm going to be around as long as I can," he says. "That's one thing you can't talk me out of."

And there's another change: He's a little more serious now, even philosophical.

"I'm 70 — that's seven-zero — and boy, did that come fast after I retired," he says. "When I used to see old people, I wondered why they walked and acted the way they did. 'Why has he got a stick?' 'Why is she on one of those scooters?' If you live long enough, those questions will be answered."

At some point, he says, the aches and pains of aging somehow start to make sense: "You feel like you're paying your debt for living. Everyone has to pay the piper."

Just after he retired, James says, "I was living like a king, not doing much," although twice a day he stopped in to see his mother, Eunice, who lived nearby in the neighborhood, to visit and bring food.

In August 2011, he got a call. His mother was making some tea when she left the kettle on the stove too long. The fire department had to rescue her from the



James Moore (center) returns to Mollie Stone's for coffee with his pals Denny Mitchell and Leonard Garrett.

"Do I miss it here? To tell you the truth: Yes. I miss the job, the work, but most of all the people."

— JAMES MOORE

smoke. The doctors diagnosed her with Alzheimer's.

"When you're close to people, you can't see it," he says. "You need someone to point it out."

Once he saw the situation clearly, he moved in to take care of her. She died six months later.

Now he's relishing retirement.

"I try not to make too many plans, and I've worked it out to have very few obligations," he says. "I'm enjoying doing nothing. And I really and truly just enjoy being by myself. The key word is 'retired.'"

ON A RECENT Saturday morning, his agenda included walking up Fillmore, going to Waldgreen's, then working his way back home, with the afternoon spent in front of the television.

"But do I miss it here?" he says, gesturing toward the express line he commanded all those years. "To tell you the truth: Yes. I miss the job, the work, but most of all the people. I miss seeing the kids grow up. It's still sort of like a family here. The people who come to the store — they're not above you; you're not above them."

James still remembers when he first came from Arkansas to California: "Octo-

ber 16, 1962. At 4 a.m. On a Greyhound bus," he says. "At that time, I thought it was a big city. It's not. But it's big enough for me. It's one of those towns where everything is easy. And living in the Fillmore, you get to see and know a lot of people. It got to be home."

But the city has changed a lot in the half-century he's lived and worked in it, mostly, he says, not for the better. "There's more temptation for the young people out there these days — too much going on," he says. "They don't have a Big Mama — no auntie, no grandmother, no great-grandmother to keep them on track."

The neighborhood streets seem a little less familiar, too. "It's a different generation walking around here now. You don't quite fit in with them; they don't quite fit in with you," he says. "But that's another good thing about retirement — being out of the loop. I can sit on the sidelines and watch."

Still, retirement wouldn't seem like a natural state for a person like James, who seems to thrive on the energy he takes in from other people, and professes he has no hobbies or beckoning bucket list.

The city's cuisine holds little allure. "I'm not a restaurant person. I used to like to cook, but with the stuff they put in food

these days, it just doesn't have much taste," he says. "So I just make simple stuff now."

He got gardening out of his system as a young boy on a farm in Arkansas tending chickens, growing cotton and corn and weeding his grandma's garden. "It was as big as the whole Mollie Stone's parking lot," he recalls.

Fewer Sunday mornings are filled with church services. "I don't go as much as I used to," he says. "The old day stuff has been translated to the new day, and I just don't get the feeling from it that I used to get. I'm a believer, but I have to believe in my own way."

He was never that interested in sports, and doesn't care much about listening or watching. "I'm a TV nut now — a flipper," he says, doing an imitation of a channel surfer. His likes old *Law & Order* episodes. "They feel like real life," he says. "Not like those reality shows — a combination of mean and stupid."

Since leaving Mollie Stone's, he's made a couple of trips: one to see his cousin in Stephens, Arkansas, where he grew up; another to visit another cousin in St. Louis. "I'm not a traveler," he says. "I like to go around in the city — not the whole thing, but the Western Addition and downtown. When I feel like I need something to do, I get my exercise in and go down to Union Square and walk around Macy's. I hardly ever get bored."

HE HAS a constant source of entertainment from the "Fillmore Four" — a group of friends that has been getting together for 20 years for coffee and companionship. "They gather weekly at 11 a.m. sharp. Through the years they've moved their setting to accommodate the changing neighborhood: from the Donut Hole to the Chestnut Cafe to the Boulange — and now, with only three of the four remaining, they meet at the Starbucks at the front of Mollie Stone's.

When James first started talking about retiring, his friends all gave him the same advice — you need to find something to do — and he took on that worry. "But after I was retired about two weeks, I was like a V8 commercial. I was tired. What was I worrying about? I'm free-e-e."

'Blue Jasmine' the Best Film Woody Allen Has Made



Last August, Woody Allen and his crew were filming in the neighborhood along the Gold Coast homes on outer Broadway.

► FROM PAGE 5

or not. She is stupid, self-centered and not kind, awash in vodka, Xanax and self-delusion.

Jasmine is played by Cate Blanchett and while the year is only half over, I cannot believe that she will not get an Oscar nomination. This passionate actress has never made so unsympathetic a character so overwhelming and human. But in the process she has prompted something the Marjorie Hemingway character asked of Woody in *M Manhattan*: Have a little faith in people. All too often, Allen has had the chronic habit of making condescending fun of his characters. Putting himself in the films with them was an insidious part of that. But here, in a whole film, he has respected the emotional life of his characters, and gone as far as tragedy.

Jasmine has panicky hopes of a new life, and she comes close, but when she meets a new man (the weakest figure in the story), she cannot help but lie to him, and he cannot deal with that. So this woman who has had Edison's medicine (electroshock treatment) and medication, and who has the good fortune to have such a "sister" as Ginger, has lost everything, because her life was founded on money, cheating and not noticing. Allen does not turn this into a socioeconomic analysis, but a subtle story, fragmented by

telling flashbacks, makes the case as clear as the imminent collapse of Russia in *Uncle Vanya* or *Three Sisters*.

There are times when Allen has seemed to cast his films by rounding up the hottest performers of the moment and pushing them in front of the camera. That is not the case here. Sally Hawkins brings the lower-class directness she has explored in Mike Leigh's films, while Blanchett's performance plainly resonates with *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Blanche DuBois, a project she played in Sydney and New York just four years ago. Bobby Cannavale, a stage actor of renown who has been unduly neglected by movies, is a shot of rowdy vitality as Chili, Ginger's boyfriend. Andrew Dice Clay, not quickly recognizable, is excellent as the ex-husband Augie, and Louis C. K. is outstanding as a brief, horny fling in Ginger's life. Alec Baldwin's Hal is exactly what you would expect; it's only a sketch, but it makes you realize how naturally Baldwin could take on some of the great frauds in American life.

What has happened? This is a film like dozens Allen has done in terms of length, scale, crew and musical accompaniment. (There is a jazz score, which might have been improved or dropped for some new music.) You sometimes feel that the other actors look at Blanchett, recognize her daring, and rise to the challenge. Equally, you could say

that Blanchett is inspired by the others. Did Blanchett invent her part? I think that is fanciful. This story is one of Allen's best, and the flashback structure is organic and poignant. The director may have worried the actress by asking for many takes, and that may have made her insecure sometimes. But Jasmine is the soul of insecurity, so I give Allen credit.

Allen has made some exceptional films in the past — *Radio Days*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Match Point*, *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan*. But too often he has ducked the very depth and simplicity of drama that he says he aspires to. In this way he has cheated on his own characters and lived up to the tired cliché that, if it's Woody Allen, it must be funny. *Blue Jasmine* has some laughs, but as the film advances, and as Jasmine herself becomes a wretched figure of stress, the audience falls quiet. They know they are seeing something out of the ordinary — a picture that, in its way, says as much about the culture of deceit, money and avoidance as any film in years.

Sooner or later a major filmmaker has to give us someone we will never forget. Jasmine is that someone.

Neighborhood resident David Thomson is a film critic for THE NEW REPUBLIC, from which this is adapted.

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But we also have to point out that if you want something like it from another store, you might have to wait years.

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FOOD & DRINK



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTA BERSON

South of the Border on Divisadero

'We're a Cabo cantina from the '70s and always will be,' says the proprietor of Tortilla Heights

By CHRIS BARNETT

BHIND THE two carved wooden doors and the leaded glass windows at the corner of Divisadero and Bush is a cantina, carnitas and crispy taco joint that looks like it belongs on a dusty backstreet in Cabo San Lucas circa 1975. Its appearance promises a trip to a Mexican hangout where locals and tourists rub shoulders, clink glasses, laugh loudly and fork down food that's fun and fattening in an airy, gritty setting that looks like it was furnished with treasures from a Baja swap meet.

Walk in and the promise is kept. Little has changed since Tortilla Heights opened seven years ago. The cement floor has been replaced and the ceiling has been opened up, revealing a maze of ducts, piping and girders. But that was done to suck up decibels rather than spiff up the decor.

Otherwise, the bar and some of the prime booths still have overhang fashioned out of dried leaves from seaside palapas. The hostess stand is still a vintage Don Julio tequila barrel. The seating is still a mishmash of scarred two-top, four-top and high-top tables and big banquette booths. And the proprietor is still a personable, chatty



Ryan McClelland presides over the bar at Tortilla Heights.

gringo named Paul Owens, although his co-partner and lady friend is long gone.

Owens, a transplant from Orange County, spent his wild years and then his vacations touring saloons in Mexico. In those days, the hot place to go for beers, booze and burritos was Carlos 'n Charlie's, touted as the brain-storm of two party guys — an American and a Mexican. Pitched as the classic local cantina with strong Mexican

beers, cheap tequila shooters and authentic homemade food, it beckoned to vacationing Californians, marlin fishermen and folks off cruise ships — and they all spread the word.

"Carlos 'n Charlie's inspired this place," Owens says. "And the name came from the book, *Tortilla Flat*, with a twist on Pacific Heights."

Ironically, Carlos 'n Charlie's is now a chain of places hawking everything from burgers to barbecue and frozen cocktails with names such as Guava Colada, Caribbean Breeze, Ticket to Fly and Blue Cancun. But Owens refuses to sell his soul to the masses. "We're still a Cabo cantina from the '70s and always will be," he says.

In the past two decades, the building at 1750 Divisadero has housed a Greek restaurant, a health food store, a Wells Fargo Bank, a sushi restaurant, a Boston Market and half a dozen more businesses. Tortilla Heights has already outlived them all.

An interesting crowd gathered on a recent Tuesday afternoon during the daily happy hour. Owens claims it's a favorite place for birthday celebrations among 25- to 35-year-old women — and, sure enough, there were eight women at the bar celebrating a friend's big day.

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Nearby on Divis, a Cabo Cantina



"We're like a mini-vacation to Mexico like it used to be," says Tortilla Heights owner Paul Owens.

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"This place is very cute," said one of them, Jodi Blasquez. "It's a little like a tiki bar. And the bartender is friendly and makes good drinks." Cathy Siler said she voted for Tortilla Heights for the gathering: "It's a fun bar and a good restaurant and we can move from the stools to the booth. You don't want to spend a birthday party sitting in one spot."

The bartender on duty, a friendly fellow named Ryan McClelland, had a warm greeting plus a bowl of chips and a smoky salsa for regulars and first-timers alike.

McClelland presides over a barroom full of bargains during the two hours of happiness every afternoon from 4:30 to 6:30 when \$3 buys a pint of the six beers on draught — including Negra Modelo, Lagunitas IPA, Dos Equis Amber, Stella Artois and Anchor Steam — and the house margarita drops from \$8 to \$6 per glass and from \$28 to \$19 for a pitcher. They're handmade with Agavales 100 percent blue agave tequila, 100 percent agave nectar, instead of triple sec, and fresh-squeezed lime juice.

Tequila shooters are \$5 all night and a margarita can be made with any one of 30 tequilas — starting with Cazadores blanco, aged less than two months, for \$7; or a Herradura reposado, aged from two months to a year in oak

barrels, for \$11; up to super smooth Tequila Ocho Anejo, aged anywhere between one to three years in small oak barrels, for \$20.

It's not a place for wine lovers. The selection is a grand total of two varietals from the same Santa Barbara County winery, Sea Glass. The pinot noir and sauvignon blanc are \$8 a glass or \$30 a bottle; neither wine is discounted during happy hour.

Owens is something of a purist in that he doesn't have a laundry list of cocktails with three to four liquors with lyrical names. Still, there are a couple of imaginative tequila cocktails that deserve their spot on the menu. Jodi Blasquez, the birthday party project manager, rhapsodized about the La Paloma: Herradura silver tequila, St. Germain elderflower, fresh-squeezed grapefruit and lime juices, garnished with fruit and served on the rocks in a salted rimmed glass, \$11 or \$40 for a pitcher. The Escalade, for the same price, is a margarita made with Corralejo reposado tequila, lime juice and agave nectar, plus a float of Grand Marnier.

Tortilla Heights will also trot out the obligatory South of the Border-style six cervazes in a tin pail for \$24 anytime. Choose from bottled beers including Pacifico, Blue Moon, Dos Equis, Anchor Porter, Bud Light for the calo-

rie counters and Beck's non-alcoholic. Customers are free to mix and match.

While you might assume that food plays second fiddle in a serious cantina, Owens begs to differ. He hired new chef Julio Gonzales direct from Cabo San Lucas. Among Gonzales' specialties: the crispy tacos, two per order filled with either carnisas, carne asada, chicken, Baja fish or vegetables, for \$10. Another is sizzling fajitas — either carne asada or chicken — served with fire-roasted red and yellow peppers, sweet onions, guacamole, sour cream and pico de gallo, \$16. For an extra \$3, it comes with sizzling shrimp straight off the grill. The new menu also has fish and vegetarian soft tacos for \$10. And there's a menu just for kids along with Crayolas to keep them occupied.

But you won't find live music here — no sombrero-topped, guitar strumming mariachis wandering from table to table, strutting and singing.

"Mariachis are trite and expensive," says Owens. "I don't want a band of them going around to tables, singing the same songs, expecting a tip and making my customers feel guilty. People come in here because we're like a mini-vacation to Mexico like it used to be — casual, fun, but with great drinks, food and service."

BOOKS

"I WAS FACING the stereotype that all women over 70 look like that picture on the See's candy box," laments local resident and author Barbara Rose Brooker.

That led Brooker to write *The Viagra Diaries*, a novel chronicling the life and times of Anny Applebaum, an older woman pursuing a writing career, financial independence and undying love — after divorcing her husband when she discovered Viagra in his pocket clearly intended for extramarital escapades.

While not every detail is strictly autobiographical, a painful number come directly from life imitating art. Brooker says men she dated would offer backhand compliments: "You look good — for your age." And some would make unsubtle age-related inquiries: "You sound like fun. How old are you?"

She was writing a column called "Boomer in the City" for *JWeekly*, a local Jewish paper and looking for fodder about finding companionship and love. Her research extended to online dating, although the first service she contacted informed her it didn't deal with people over age 50.

Eventually, her cursor landed on JDate, a site for the Jewish singles community — with a home page peppered with pictures of smiling couples trumpeting their engagements or marriages.

Through JDate, Brooker met Marv Rotstein — almost his real name — who winced and dined her on their first date at Harris' steakhouse at Van Ness and Pacific. At first blush, there was much to recommend Marv, an impeccably dressed 75-year-old diamond dealer with a beautifully coiffed head of silver hair and a honeyed voice. She felt a powerful attraction.

"He really wanted a size 2, 30-year-old who played tennis," Brooker says. Still, their relationship lasted for a year. During that time, he revealed himself as a sad stereotype, complete with a Brazilian facilitator, a Mercedes convertible with heated fur-upholstered seats and a tiny fuzzy white dog he insisted on bringing along on dates. Soon Brooker discovered Marv was back online on



Finding Love Later in Life

JDate not long after kissing her good night at her door.

Brooker was also hustling back to her computer, turning dates with Marv into grist for her column and a larger project that was beginning to percolate in her mind.

"I was sick to death of being called 'Sweetie' and being told I should just be content with my life the way it was," she says. "I wanted to write a book about the woman who was 65 to 70 who doesn't want to be age-appropriate." She struck a chord.

"I still get emails from people saying, 'I have a Marv in my life — someone who thinks I'm great for sex, but not for love,'" she says.

The Viagra Diaries was originally self-published. "Publishers told me, 'No one cares about older people. Who wants to think about a 70-year-old having sex?'" she recalls. Now they're eating her words. The book has since been published in 16 countries, most recently Bulgaria.

While working on the book, Brooker also began performing a one-woman show that recounted her dating debacles. A crowd of 200 or so attended her first performance at the city's Commonwealth Club, which turned out to be both a challenge and a deliverance. "I just got out there," she says. "It's such a shift of gears to get on stage — and such a rush. I used to lie about my age a lot. Now I say: 'I'm 76 — and I want to be a movie star.'"

The performance also sparked a confluence of activities destined to launch Anny from Harris' to Hollywood. "Producer and talent manager Marty Tudor got hold of my performance tape and said they want to take it to Broadway," she marvels.

Six months later, there was a call from a New York literary agent, who started a bidding war on the book. Simon & Schuster won the war, and Brooker's editor was understanding but urged that the main character, Anny, must be younger than 70, as originally written. "I told her, 'I can't go younger than 65. She must get Medicare.'"

The Viagra Diaries was optioned for an HBO series with Goldie Hawn slated to play Anny, repackaged as a 56-year-old interior designer. That deal fell through, but the book was recently optioned again, this time by CBS. Brooker says she'd like to see "someone offset" cast to play her doppelgänger Anny — perhaps Diane Keaton or Helen Mirren.

Brooker, who detests the term "senior," prefers to be called a "boomer hottie." While her book is filled with spot-on humor, she is also seriously dedicated to fighting what she calls "the disease of ageism."

As one example, she's the founder of the Age March.

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Local Poet Is Now a Novelist, Too

By MARK J. MITCHELL

I'VE LIVED and worked here in the Fillmore since before it was new. Old-timers might remember me as the philosopher of beer behind the counter at Bi-Rite Liquors at California and Fillmore before it closed its doors. More recent arrivals might recall me as the Champagne advisor and single malt Scotch whisky guru holding forth at D&M Wines and Spirits for 15 years.

Before moving to the neighborhood, I studied writing and medieval literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz. And even while working all those years in the spirits business, I supported a serious writing habit.



Mark Mitchell

I am primarily a poet, but every now and again poetry is interrupted by prose.

My first novel, *Knights Prisoner*, was published by Vagabondage Press last month. It's a historical adventure story set in 1470 in London relating the early criminal adventures of two masters of writing and crime imprisoned together, as told through the eyes of their servant.

A second novel, *A Book of Lost Songs* — a picturesque tale set in the Middle Ages — is forthcoming from Wild Child Publishing later this year.

And my novella, *Sire Gawain's Little Green Book*,



can be found — along with *Knights Prisoner* — on Amazon either as an e-book or in hard copy.

My chapbook of poems, *Three Visitors* — winner of the Negative Capability International Chapbook competition in 2010 — is also now between covers.

Three Visitors is animated by three different characters. Each of the people just showed up. They each had something to say. And they each had their own way of saying it. As soon as they were done, they disappeared. It makes for a mysterious little book.

Three Visitors is available at Brower Books, 2195 Fillmore Street. It's also available through Amazon, but I encourage you to support our local bookstore.

Another chapbook of my poetry, *Fishing in a Knifed Drawer*, is available free online from Fowlpox Press at fowlpoxpress.com. Yet another one, *Artifacts and Relics*, is due out soon from Folded Words.

A long period of unemployment does wonders for your ability to prepare manuscripts.

The Viagra Diaries

► FROM PAGE 11

"I came up with the idea that we have marches for everything — gay rights, free choice, peace," she says. "So why not Age Pride?" The goal was to have march participants wear their true ages around their necks in protest of ageism.

About 400 people and a great number of dogs attended the Age March in 2011 at San Francisco's Fort Mason. Most marchers wore T-shirts proudly underscoring their ages, although one shirt proclaimed simply: "I'm Older Than Mickey Mouse."

There have been three Age Marches so far — two in San Francisco and one last year in West Hollywood. Brooker hopes to orchestrate another march, but finds it tough to secure funding. "I first called AARP and they hung up on me," she says.

Brooker is also an artist, with painting as her first love and a newer yen to break into photography. Many of her paintings take on the anti-ageism theme. "Women in hats and shoes — and lots of older women in seductive dresses with high slits," she says. "The work is part of the statement that aging is okay."

Brooker recently finished two more novels her agent is currently shopping around: *Should I Sleep In His Dead Wife's Bed?* and *Love, Sometimes*, a sequel to *The Viagra Diaries*.

She has written other books, too, covering matters that have captured her heart. *God Doesn't Make Trash*, published in 2001, is a collection of stories about people with HIV and AIDS and their caregivers.

"I keep trying for that one book that will resonate," she says, "so that when I leave the planet, I will have helped people. I'm hoping that Amy might be a catalyst for that."

Brooker hasn't had contact with the real-life Marv in about four years — although she did spot him once. "He was shuffling around the aisles at Walgreen's. He got old," she says — something she is refusing to do.

She says she hasn't dated much in the post-Marv years. "After that, I went on one or two dates, but I lost my eagerness," she says.

But she quickly adds: "I still think it's very special when you have a partner." Brooker has been married twice. Her first marriage ended in divorce; her second husband died 28 years ago. "I've actually started to think about dating again — maybe even through JDate."



Barbara Rose Brooker

By FRAN MORELAND JOHNS

ONE CHILLY AFTERNOON not long ago I pulled on an anorak jacket and walked over to Laurel Village to pick up some groceries. A young woman who appeared to be about 15 or 16 years old was standing on the sidewalk in front of the Starbucks on the corner of Spruce and California. She was dressed in sandals, jeans and a short-sleeved pink T-shirt with Planned Parenthood emblem emblazoned across the front. She was holding a clipboard with a few papers on it and attempting, presumably, to enlist supporters in the fight against a congressional proposal that would have eliminated funding for the organization.

But she was too cold or too shy to be having much success. She smiled at everyone who came her way, but no one seemed to be stopping. So I did. "Good for you," I said. "I think defunding Planned Parenthood is a pretty bad idea."

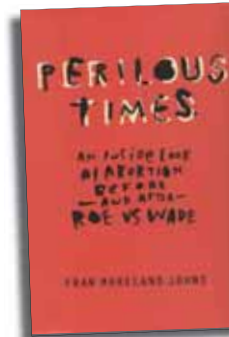
I thought that might prompt a speech, or a request to sign a petition at least. Instead she looked at me with soulful eyes and said, "Oh, thank you. Do you know, ma'am? Do you know how much women need help?" In the brief conversation that followed she revealed that she had managed to avoid pregnancy with the help of the local Planned Parenthood clinic where she'd gotten counseling and contraceptives.



Fran Moreland Johns

A half century ago, I was not so lucky. Pregnant from an episode of workplace rape, I had no Planned Parenthood clinic to turn to, my physician declined to help and I wound up with a back-alley abortionist. I survived. Countless other women did not.

Three years ago I set out to collect some of those untold stories and record them in a new book, *Perilous Times: An Inside Look at Abortion Before — and After —*



Trying to Talk About Abortion

Roe vs. Wade. My research revealed that similar dangers are facing women and girls today who, thanks to layers of restrictions and ever-diminishing access, are turning to desperate measures little different from those their mothers and grandmothers took.

The times are perilous. One hope was that this book would help encourage rational dialogue between the two camps: one shouting "Baby killers!" and the other, just as loudly, "Woman haters!" Perhaps we could start to listen to each other and somehow find ways to protect a viable fetus without taking away a woman's right to control her own body.

This idea was met with a great deal of skepticism. "Pie in the sky," were the exact words of my boomer daughter in Manhattan.

But it turns out that polite conversation is possible. My first two tries were at a book launch party in San Francisco and at a reading in Atlanta. The local book launch crowd was pretty solidly pro-choice, with one or two possibly unconvincing.

Among those in the Atlanta audience were two arch conservatives opposed to abortion under any circumstances ("A lot of people believe abortion is murder," said one); my beloved daughter-in-law, who works for an anti-abortion pregnancy crisis center; a gray-haired community college professor in a Howard Zinn T-shirt; several people with unknown religious or political leanings; a dozen or so staunchly pro-choice Democrats; and two male college students — one a visitor from France, and I would give a lot to know what he wrote home.

I told those attending both events they were welcome to comment or interrupt at any time, as long as they didn't shout obscenities or hurl anything. No one did either. Most of the comments, after everyone listened politely for about 20 minutes, were in the "How did we get to this stage?" category. Many people were surprised to learn how severely limited access to abortion is in the U.S. today. Women in several dozen states categorized by the Guttmacher Institute as "hostile to abortion" are, unless they happen to be rich, no better off than I was in 1956.

Further conversations have taken place online at franjohns.net since *Perilous Times* was published. One posted by Babu read: "I can only imagine that, from the moment she learns she is pregnant, every mother knows to a moral certainty she is carrying human life. This has nothing to do with religious belief; it is in her DNA."

My opinions strongly differ. Is there an automatic bonding gene in our DNA? I'm not sure. I'm only sure that abortion is complex and private, and that planned and wanted children are better off. I wish we could focus on ways to reduce abortion while still protecting women and improving the lives of children everywhere.

There will be a reading and discussion of PERILOUS TIMES at Books Inc. at 3515 California Street in Laurel Village on August 14 at 7 pm.

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Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts	BR	BA	PK	Sq Ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
2601 Post St #3	1	1	1	589	27	6/18/2013	420,000	427,000
2907 Octavia St	1	1	0	850	3	7/1/2013	580,000	580,000
2075 Sutter St #319	1	1	1	677	13	7/8/2013	599,000	650,000
2701 Van Ness Ave #209	1	1	1	785	40	7/3/2013	599,000	680,000
2937 Scott St #1	1	1	0	946	44	7/9/2013	679,000	715,000
1624 Filbert St #4	1	1	1	969	33	7/11/2013	775,000	885,000
2315 Divisadero St #5	2	1.5	1	1115	22	6/21/2013	879,000	918,710
1835 Franklin St #1402	2	2	1	1500	24	6/25/2013	799,000	950,000
2002 Pacific Ave #3	2	2	1	1375	12	6/26/2013	1,049,000	1,150,000
434 Laurel St	2	2	2	1	36	7/9/2013	1,225,000	1,225,000
1628 Vallejo St #1	2	2	1	1380	35	6/19/2013	1,098,000	1,277,000
2912 Fillmore St	3	2	0	1367	21	6/28/2013	1,250,000	1,280,000
432 Laurel St	2	2	1	1	36	7/9/2013	1,379,000	1,325,000
1835 Franklin St #1603	2	2	1	1400	39	6/26/2013	1,449,000	1,350,000
2050 Divisadero St #2	4	2.5	2	1691	42	6/19/2013	1,349,000	1,375,000
2200 Pacific Ave #11F	2	2	1	1896	13	7/3/2013	1,300,000	1,450,000
212 Arguello Blvd	5	2	1	2200	10	6/21/2013	1,295,000	1,475,000
2829 California St #5C	2	2	1	1692	130	6/21/2013	1,525,000	1,505,000
2782 Jackson St	3	2.5	1	1958	0	6/18/2013	1,595,000	1,595,000
2266-A Jackson St	3	2	1	1809	22	6/17/2013	1,550,000	1,625,000
1912 Broderick St	3	1.5	2	1430	35	7/11/2013	1,395,000	1,629,000
3439 Sacramento St #401	3	2	2	1942	41	7/9/2013	2,095,000	2,000,000
3018 Clay St	3	2	2	2383	17	7/3/2013	1,895,000	2,000,000
3038 Steiner St	3	2.5	1	1848	11	6/18/2013	1,795,000	2,015,000
2533 Greenwich St	3	2.5	1	1992	13	6/20/2013	1,699,000	2,200,000
1662 Union St	3	3	1	1	17	6/25/2013	1,995,000	2,400,000
2409 Scott St #5	4	2	1	0	18	6/21/2013	2,150,000	2,475,000
3271 Jackson St	3	2	1	2722	0	7/2/2013	2,695,000	2,810,000
2060 Jackson St	3	3.5	2	12	7/8/2013	3,995,000	3,995,000	
2062 Jackson St	3	2.5	2	17	7/9/2013	3,995,000	4,000,000	

Hot market may be getting overheated

Continued acceleration of a hot real estate market — especially in our neighborhood — is pushing us into what is beginning to look like an overheated market. The increase in interest rates has fueled a new burst of buyers who don't want to miss out on this window of opportunity before rates go higher still. Inventory remains low. And while there has been some increase in sales offerings, it's not enough to prevent the extreme upward pressure on prices.

NEW LISTINGS: An interesting offering is being presented at 2712 Broadway. For \$29 million, this exquisite lot on the Gold Coast includes plans for a six-bedroom, six-bath new home to be built as designed by noted architect Tom Taylor.



Alternatively, a buyer could purchase the lot with entitlements to build for \$18 million. The light and views from this pinnacle are magnificent. Overlooking the bay to the north and Alca Plaza Park to the south, the French consul general's residence (left) at 2570 Jackson Street — originally designed by noted architect Albert Farr for Lyle Ghirardelli in 1923 — is now on the market for \$9.5 million.

CONDOS, CO-OPS AND TICs: Inimitable and impeccable, 1960 Broadway No. 8, a full-floor luxurious home flooded with 360 degree light and views, returns to the market reduced by \$1 million and is now available for \$6.5 million. This stately beauty surrounded by formal gardens offers location, light, views and grandeur. The penthouse at 1628 Vallejo No. 4 has also had a little price adjustment from \$1.9 million to \$1.8 million, and provides a creative space with an impressive bay view from an inviting deck complete with a hot tub.

— Data and commentary provided by MARIA MARCHETTI at Sotheby's International Realty. Contact her at maria@mariamarchetti.com or call 415/699-8008.

FIRST PERSON

Before Coffee, Bi-Rite Was on the Corner

BY MARK J. MITCHELL

I MOVED to San Francisco in September 1978, following the woman who would become my wife, Joan Juster. She had gone ahead and found a studio apartment at California and Fillmore. The rent was a whopping \$210 per month and the Mariana bed sagged as deeply as the Mariana Trench.

I spent two weeks looking for work and began to panic because the rent was due. I saw an ad for a Waldenbooks that was opening on Market Street, circled it, put the *Chronicle* in my pocket and started downtown.

On the way I stopped at the liquor store on the southeast corner of California and Fillmore, which was similar to one I had worked at earlier in Santa Cruz. I filled out an application and was quickly interviewed by the manager, Danny Kunihara. I never made it downtown to the bookstore; within the hour I was working for Max Cologne and Dan Grove. My pay was the minimum wage: \$2.65 an hour. I stayed for 18 years.

FILLMORE STREET was different then. The Donut Hole held down the southwest corner at Fillmore and California. Uncle Vito's served pizza on the northwest corner. Where the Elite Cafe now stands was the Asia Cafe, owned by the Chinese waiters who ran a betting parlor out of the back. Down the block were Connie's, Sanchez's Mexican restaurant and Leon's Barbecue, along with Ron Hobbs' bird store. Nate Thurman's The Beginning was where Harry's holds court now and the Goodwill Store took up the center of the block, with two unfinished lofts above occupied by art students.

September 1978 marked the beginning of major lessons in city life. I met Howard Oliver, a Bi-Rite alumnus who owned a watch repair shop in the space later taken over by Mrs. Dewson's Hats at 2050 Fillmore. By November, Oliver and his wife had flown to Guyana with Congressman Leo Ryan, been shot at and learned that his children and grandchildren had drunk Flavor-Aid with Rev. Jim Jones. The next week, Dan White sneaked through a window into City Hall and murdered Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone.



Bi-Rite Liquor held down the southeast corner of Fillmore and California for many years.

Bi-Rite was open until 2 a.m. every day. Dense, involved philosophical discussions took place. More than a few beers were consumed.

Bi-Rite was very much a neighborhood store. Max and Dan, who had owned the place since 1962, seemed to know everyone. Pretty soon I did too. People would drop by to chat. You could pick up beer and wine, or a half pint of whiskey, or serious cognac. We also carried chips, sodas, a few magazines and the daily papers, and we would wait for the different editions of the *Examiner* to arrive — there were four daily editions then. At Bi-Rite we covered it all.

I studied wine with the great guru Keat Lexa and Drew Reece, but my main contribution was to expand the beer selection. I wound up managing the store and making it a destination for beers and ales. We maintained a selection of more than 200 beers in an era before micro-beers; I had to work to find that many stouts and lagers. We got some magazine coverage, a blurp or two in the *Chronicle* and the cover of a trade publication for that accomplishment.

I WAS PRIVILEGED to work with some extraordinary young men. We were almost all young men then; a few women passed through briefly, but didn't seem to stay. Many former staffers went on to bright careers as dentists, pharmacists and architects.

Bi-Rite was open until 2 a.m. every day. We often had long stretches without much to do. Dense, involved philosophical discussions took place. Customers would get pulled into them. They would stay for hours and come back the next night, backed up with new facts. Sometimes they would stay on after we closed. One Halloween, Larry

Lipsett, a hot tub technician and son of the private eye Hal Lipsett, stayed and played his recording of Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds*. As I recall, more than a few beers were consumed. Still, we never ignored the customer who wanted to pick up a bottle of bubbly.

Max and Dan also owned the laundromat next door, the Wash Palace. It served as a second agora for Fillmore Street. Barbara Conway ran the place, assisted by Gladys and Marge. They would keep tabs on the street, visit with customers doing their washing and sit and gossip and smoke cigarettes between washing, drying and folding. That was where we set up the neighborhood betting pool on who shot J.R. Marge won.

AT BI-RITE, Max was more of the public face of the store, while Dan tended to the book work in the upstairs office. The two partners fought the entire time I knew them. In spite of that, they ran a neighborhood establishment together for 30 years. By 1992, though, the tension had become unbearable, and Dan bought out Max. Last time I saw Max he was happily living in retirement. The store declined. Too much had been spent on dissolving the partnership. The neighborhood was changing. Dan wound up giving up the corner to a little coffee business called Royal Ground and shut the store. The end came shortly after that in 1995.

Bi-Rite was a special store, and my university. I am a proud alum.

Royal Ground Makes Way for More Fashion

▶ FROM PAGE 3

Royal Ground owner Ibrahim Aljhat declined to be interviewed, citing a confidentiality agreement he signed with Kaplan. Pamela Mendelsohn, a commercial retail leasing broker with the San Francisco office of Colliers International who was involved in the deal, also refused to discuss details. Kaplan, who heads a real estate investment firm based in the Tenderloin, was willing to be interviewed, but tight-lipped on specifics.

"As a landlord," Kaplan said, "you want to get the strongest credit tenant for a corner property, and get the best rent you can for yourself and your partners."

ROYAL GROUND, at the intersection of Fillmore and California, occupied one of the choicest corners in the neighborhood. And with two connected storefronts totaling 2,500 square feet and an estimated three years to go on his lease, Aljhat knew he had leverage.

Kaplan had reduced Aljhat's rent to cushion the impact of the financial meltdown. But Kaplan said it was only a temporary break, and that the rent would rebound as the economy rebounded.

So a few months ago, with his rent set to return to its original level — plus the possibility of another rent hike when he renewed his lease — Aljhat listed his two storefronts with a broker, according to several sources. He reportedly received at least two key money offers for his lease, but rejected them.

Enter David Fishbein. Fishbein, who works out of Los Angeles, has been an influential architect of upper Fillmore's transformation from small shops providing neighborhood services to today's playground of hip boutiques. He has zeroed in on merchants who may be interested in giving up their leases, or who could be tempted by a big lump sum payment of key money, and pairs them with expanding national and international brands eager to establish a presence on Fillmore Street before they have 11 stores and are therefore subject to the city's limits on chain stores.

Other brokers say Fishbein orchestrated a deal for David Kaplan — with a hefty key money outlay for Aljhat — that will turn his four funky storefronts into a sizable showplace for a fast-growing brand of men and women's wear called Rag & Bone, launched 11 years ago in New York by a couple of Brit expats. Stay tuned.

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2506 Fillmore 346-5288

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State Bird Provisions
1529 Fillmore 795-1272

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2100 Sutter 674-7515

Sweet Maple
2101 Sutter 855-9169

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1460 Fillmore 346-3222

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1890 Fillmore 922-0711

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1470 Fillmore 931-5260

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2213 Fillmore 441-5396

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Yoshi's Jazz Club
1330 Fillmore 655-5600



Not many cities can boast a vibrant section of town that is upscale but approachable, fashionable but not elitist, comfortable without being boring. San Francisco's Fillmore is all these — and, best of all, it's not striving to be original. It just is. — *Gourmet* magazine

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