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New

FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ NOVEMBER 2006



It takes a poet — or a painter

“Day’s End”
TERRY MIURA
oil on linen

“Driving down a stretch of highway at dusk, or walking along lost in thought, I sometimes find myself vulnerable to unexpected emotions,” says artist Terry Miura, whose work is on display in the neighborhood this month. “Maybe it’s the way the evening sun is catching the tip of a eucalyptus tree, or the way an archway isolates a cloud or a telephone pole. It triggers a memory of long ago. These are not clear and obvious emotions, but those subtle, nameless, in-between feelings one would have to be a poet to describe. Or a painter.”

Miura’s recent paintings are in an exhibition, “Beyond the California Sky,” this month at the Thomas Reynolds Gallery at 2291 Pine Street at Fillmore.

New Condos, Offices Near Finish Line

Zephyr takes first floor of California St. project

As workers close in on the final details of the new Tuscan-hued building under construction at 2525 California Street, near Steiner, the neighborhood’s newest commercial space has already found its tenant.

Zephyr Real Estate has signed a lease for the entire first floor.

“This is a dream come true for us,” says Randall Kostick, general manager of Zephyr. “We’ve expanded our market share on the north side of town, and many of our agents live in the neighborhood and want to work there, too.”

Upstairs in the building are three floors housing 16 condominiums — with one, two and three bedrooms. They will be rented rather than sold, at least for now. The developer, Shamrock Properties, expects to begin leasing in the new year. Inquiries are invited at 661-7940.

Zephyr expects to occupy its new office — its sixth — in March.

The building includes a two-level underground garage, which may help limit the impact of the new residences and offices on surrounding streets.



SYDNEY CANNON FRANK

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This Month

IN & OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD



ANGIE SILVY

FILLMORE SKI JUMP

Last year on the hottest day of the year, it snowed on the Fillmore hill. The Fillmore ski jump was a big hit, and the event returns for a second year, this time at AT&T Park. Sat., Nov. 4. More information: www.icerair.com



PETER MCCANDLESS

CINEMA NOTES

Two new acclaimed films on local topics are screening this month.

"The Bridge," a documentary by Eric Steel, is a head-on look at suicide and the Golden Gate Bridge. At Embarcadero Center Cinema.

"Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple," hits even closer to home. The Peoples Temple stood on Geary Street, near Fillmore, where the post office is now located. Many of those involved in the church were from the Fillmore — and many of them lost their lives when they followed Jim Jones to the jungle in Guyana and drank the Kool-Aid. Director Stanley Nelson uses archival footage and interviews with survivors to tell the story. "People found something they were looking for," says Nelson. "People go to incredible lengths to be part of a community, to be part of something that's bigger than themselves." Showing Nov. 3 to 9 at the Lumiere Theater.

THE NEW FILLMORE

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Sidelined Supervisor Cruising Toward Easy Re-Election

By DON LANGLEY

DISTRICT 2 Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier seriously injured a leg in a fall in August. Her doctor limits her public appearances only to board meetings, but she insists the incident has not hobbled her ability to carry out her official duties or her re-election campaign.

She is visible during the campaign on 23 posters on bus shelters that show the supervisor, her children and a summary of what she says are her accomplishments.

She also points to a website she hopes will be online by November 1. The site is intended to encourage conversation among community groups throughout the dis-

trict. Chat rooms and bulletin boards for residents and businesses will enable her, Alioto-Pier says, "to be more hands-on with the electorate."

Among the accomplishments she cites in her district is the landmarking of the St. Brigid's Church on Van Ness at Broadway.

She also pointed to legislation requiring the manager of the Office of Emergency Services to have disaster experience, a requirement she said is especially relevant to the Marina portion of her district.

Alioto-Pier has been a dependable ally for Mayor Gavin Newsom and her votes have generally pleased neighborhood groups and the business community. She has amassed a sizable campaign account

and drawn only limited opposition from retired restaurateur Vilma Guinto-Peoro.

Newsom will gain another ally if Alioto-Pier's former aide, Rob Black, is successful in his campaign for the District 6 seat against incumbent Chris Daly.

In a telephone interview, Alioto-Pier said she is proud of two measures she sponsored that create jobs. One grants tax exemptions to attract bio-technology companies to Mission Bay. The other rebates permit fees to filmmakers to entice TV and movie producers to San Francisco.

Alioto-Pier conceded that her efforts to set up a new office to analyze the economic impact of the city ordinances has been "a great source of frustration."

"We're going to have to implement it ourselves," she said, referring to her own office. However, she said the other half of her Proposition I measure — to develop the city's first economic plan — is proceeding, after a year of work.

Alioto-Pier said she seeks a "common sense" approach to the redevelopment of the California Pacific Medical Center.

As for the hospital's building plans, "the current proposal will not go through," she said. She said the expectation had been that moving some services to the new site at Cathedral Hill would relieve pressure on the neighborhood, but that the opposite had happened: "We're seeing three [major complexes] instead of one."

Reading Center Helps Fill Void Left by Library

In an effort to provide ongoing services while the local library branch is closed for renovation, the San Francisco Public Library will open the new Western Addition Reading Center on Nov. 7.

The center will be located on the second floor of the African American Art and Culture Complex at 762 Fulton St., near Webster.

The temporary collection will consist of materials from the recently closed Western Addition branch, including adult popular fiction and non-fiction, children's books, DVDs, CDs and periodicals.

Patrons may also pick up and return books and get library cards.

A selection of Japanese language materials were temporarily relocated from the Western Addition Branch to the new International Languages Collection housed at the Presidio Branch Library at 3150 Sacramento Street.

The Western Addition Reading Center is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and 1 to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Additional information is available at 440-0206.

The rebuilding of the Western Addition Branch Library at Post and Scott Streets is due to be completed in early 2008. A local committee is raising funds for furnishings.

The reading center is one of the temporary services provided during branch renovations taking place throughout the city. Funded by a bond measure passed in November 2000, the library campaign includes the renovation of 19 branch libraries and construction of five new libraries.

A new branch library in Mission Bay opened in July.

■ THE LOCAL SCENE | BILL SHIELDS



Japantown May Form a New District

Already a special use district, it may be a benefits district, too

BUSINESS AND residence owners in and around Japantown are considering whether they should form a Community Benefits District to finance services beyond those the city provides.

Surveys have been sent to those who would pay the costs of the proposed district and they are due back in mid-November.

The size of the district is one of the topics addressed by the survey. The consensus is that Geary, Fillmore and Bush Streets should be boundaries. The survey will determine whether the eastern boundary would be Laguna or Gough Street.

Richard Hashimoto, president of the Japantown Merchants Association and one of the 15 members of a committee seeking to determine if there is enough support to form a district, said the merchants association wants to be sure to include the Sequoias, the senior community at Geary and Laguna.

Funds generated by an assessment on business and property owners would be used to improve cleanliness, security and landscaping in the area, and potentially could include marketing to generate more business. Assessments are determined by a formula involving street frontage and property size.

Forming a district is a process with many steps. The survey will help determine whether to proceed, the boundaries of the district and how much money is to be raised each year. Those who will be assessed will vote on whether to continue, with votes weighted in proportion to the assessments they will pay. If the measure passes, it goes to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

The survey asks stakeholders how long they have owned property in Japantown and the nature of their ownership. Other questions ask whether they want to fund planning and economic development activities, marketing and promotional campaigns and special events to improve the identity of Japantown. Other questions concern the level of interest in security issues and beautification.

A similar district was formed this summer in the Fillmore Jazz Preservation District. Others are in the Tenderloin, Fisherman's Wharf, Noe Valley and the Castro.

Project Identifies Significant Neighborhood Buildings

The Pacific Heights Residents Association has launched a project to identify architecturally significant or historic properties in the neighborhood that reflect the unique character of Pacific Heights.

There are several purposes for the survey. One is to bring to the attention of the Planning Department buildings to be considered as historic resources. That designation requires the Planning Department to perform an environmental evaluation when considering permits to demolish or change the exteriors of designated buildings.

Leaders of the association hope to fund the project with a grant from the San Francisco Historic Preservation Fund Committee. The fund was created when the San

Francisco Landmarks Board was awarded \$2.5 million in its suit against the developer of the former Emporium site.

According to information distributed at the annual meeting of the residents association on Oct. 24, there can be significant financial advantages to owners who pursue landmark status. The payoff is federal tax credits for rehabilitation and a potential 50 percent property tax reduction when property is maintained and preserved in accordance with standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.

In addition to the Planning Department's list of significant buildings, which was developed in 1976, there are three principal registers of historic structures:

San Francisco Designated Landmarks, the State of California Historic Preservation list and landmarks designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

People who want to be contacted about including their property in the survey can call 922-3572 or email info@phra-sf.org.

Residents are also invited to participate by advising project leaders of significant structures on their block or assisting with digital photography, scanning or other tasks.

Tax deductible donations are welcomed. Checks with a notation that they're for the Historic Architecture Survey may be made payable to PHRA and sent to 2585 Pacific Ave., San Francisco 94115.

Fashionistas are begging for leggings

Paired with long shirts, short dresses, belted tunics and slouchy sweaters — or peeking provocatively below the hem of a long skirt — leggings are chic again. And many Fillmore shops are stocking them with kicky details that make you hope the fashion fad endures.

NOTHING NORMAL: Bless, the Berlin-based collective of interior decor and fashion design, prides itself on delivering the unexpected. Its design mantra is “nothing normal.”

The Bless footed leggings deliver on that promise. Beefy but stretchy, they feature four pockets, one on each shin and two cheekily placed on the derriere.

“They’re so bizarre, they’re great,” says Gus Harput, owner of Harput’s Market, at 1525 Fillmore, who became smitten with the whimsical leggings during a recent fashion buy in Paris. In black, red or brown for \$120.

SUPERSOFT, UP OR DOWN: Falke’s Cotton Touch leggings have a sheer matte texture that covers without making gams look padded. Everyone at Toujours, at 2484 Sacramento, owns and adores them, not only because they’re “supersoft,” but because the knit cuff makes them versatile.

“You can wear them pushed up with dresses and big sweaters or with a tunic and flats,” says boutique owner Beverly Weinkauff, who just celebrated her store’s 20th anniversary. She wears hers under pants with the cuffs pulled down low on the leg for added warmth during the San Francisco summers. In brown, black or anthracite for \$36.

DETAILS UNDER LAYERS: The Ella Moss collection, which catapulted into the public reckoning with that green and white striped dress Sarah Jessica Parker wore on “Sex and the City,” has added leggings to its fall line.

And the slim-fitting ones with ruching at the ankles offer a bit of interest that works beautifully for layering, according to Heidi Sabelhaus, owner of HeidiSays, who celebrates five years at her 2426 Fillmore location this month.

She favors leggings under short full skirts worn with close-fitting tops and round toe pumps. “It’s all about balance and proportion,” Heidi says. For \$86, in brown and black.

The Brown Bag’s Sensibility Lives On

THE BROWN BAG stationery store at the corner of Fillmore and Pine was where locals went for 30 years when they needed a vintage kaleidoscope, an eyepatch, Carmen Miranda paper dolls — or even the odd envelope or file folder.

Turns out you can still find these practical and sometimes perverted treasures just a few more blocks away at Polk-a-Dot Stationers, at 1742 Polk.

The shop is owned by Michelle Callarman, who worked at the Brown Bag for six of its final years.

“People recognize it right away,” she says of the store’s merchandising choices, which seem to channel the Brown Bag sensibility. “At first I was a little offended. But now I recognize it’s a great strength.”

Even the local hardware store makes the connection. A hand-lettered sign in the Fillmore Hardware window asks, “Miss the Brown Bag?” and directs its customers to Polk-a-Dot.

For decades, Sheila Woo and Dawn Christensen owned and operated the Brown Bag at 2000 Fillmore, stocking the shelves and loading its window displays with wacky and whimsical offerings.

Then, in December 2003, they announced the store would close.

But while conducting their liquidation sale, they were so moved by customers urging them to remain open that they found another space just around the corner at 2434 California Street.

The Brown Bag struggled at its new location and closed its doors permanently in March 2005. Christensen died a few months later of the cancer that had beleaguered



The Brown Bag was a beloved presence at Fillmore and Pine for 30 years.

her during the final years of her life.

“It was Sheila’s store, too,” says Callaran. “But Dawn created the Brown Bag as we knew it. She had sources I’ll never find. She took them to her grave.”

At first Callarman had hoped to continue the Brown Bag at its longtime home on Fillmore. But the landlord required an outlay for retrofitting she couldn’t afford, and the spot was taken over and remodeled by Paolo Shoes. So she moved to Polk Street and called her new store Polk-a-Dot.

“Dawn and I had our power struggles,” she says. “It’s nice to have my own store.”

Callarman opened Polk-a-Dot on May 1, 2004, and just recently relocated to a new

space a few blocks south on Polk Street.

“I’m still close to Fillmore,” she says. “I feel like I’m only a neighborhood away.”

Polk-a-Dot stocks some traditional office supplies. But what Callarman loves most are the weird and wonderful trinkets she trolls for at flea markets, warehouse sales and closeouts — the one-of-a-kind things that made the Brown Bag so beloved for so many years. Her current favorite is a tiny glass container that holds anise-flavored mints.

“Ooooh, I’m almost out of Really Strange Wallets,” she says when she notices a small drawer bearing that heading. “I have a reputation to keep up.”

Its Roots Forever on Fillmore, Big Pagoda Turns 10

By GARY CARR

Standing in his store near Union Square, Kurt Silver tore open a carton of ceramic candelabra that had just arrived from Italy.

Ten years ago, when his Big Pagoda Co. opened on Fillmore Street, the box more likely would have contained a pair of foo dogs. Now that the store has moved downtown, its merchandise is more diverse.

“We still stock a lot of Asian furniture and art,” Silver says, “but we’re casting our net more widely now.”

For its first six years, the Big Pagoda occupied a space at 1903 Fillmore, between Bush and Pine. He opened on November 23, 1996, pursuing the passion for Asian art and design he had developed while working as a hotel consultant in China.

Big Pagoda became a Fillmore destination, drawing people looking for Chinese antiques and modern furniture with an Asian flair.

Silver jumped into the Fillmore scene with both feet, serving as president of its merchants association for two years. In 2002, he moved the Big Pagoda to Sutter Street, midway between Chinatown and Union Square.

“I loved being in the Fillmore neighborhood,” he says. “But the opportunity came up for us to change our product mix — more accessories, more art, less furniture — and to quadruple our floor space. Plus there’s a parking garage on the same block.”

The new space had its challenges. Home of the first-ever waterbed store in

1960s San Francisco, 310 Sutter Street had morphed into a clothing outlet with arguably the ugliest storefront in the city.

“The front of the building was painted in wide bands of purple and gold, so it looked like King Tut’s sarcophagus,” Silver says. “You expected Steve Martin to come dancing by.”

Silver gutted the space and brought in Fillmore Street architect Lynn Harrison to design the interior. The expanded Big Pagoda opened on Sutter Street in 2003, and Silver says he’s happy he made the move.

“But I certainly miss the Fillmore ambience,” he acknowledged. “There’s a totally different feeling when someone buys something at your store and actually walks home with it. That’s what it means to be part of a neighborhood.”



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Fashions from Britain for a worldly clientele

Jigsaw, a British company with 50 stores in the U.K. but only four in the U.S. — three of those in Los Angeles — recently opened its newest location at 2121 Fillmore.

Store manager Ian Hodges (below left) describes the store's offerings of women's and junior girls' clothing and accessories as "sophisticated boho."

Hodges says the beauty of Jigsaw is that it offers shoppers "very authentic British styling." But he admits it can be a bit of a challenge educating customers about U.K. sizing, which roughly requires them to subtract four: an American size 6, for example, takes a size 10. And to further complicate things, Jigsaw's shoes and boots are European-sized, from 36 to 41 — or 5½ to 10 in American parlance.

Despite these potential math problems, he says, Fillmore shoppers have enthusiastically welcomed Jigsaw and its staff of eight to the neighborhood. Many are already familiar with the stores in London.

"In L.A.," he says, "they ask, 'Who are you — and where did you come from?' But here in San Francisco, the customers are more worldly and well-traveled."



It's Not Your Grandma's Stitchery

By BARBARA KATE REPA

"NEEDLEWORK these days is nothing like your grandma used to make," says Miriam Drumheller, co-owner of Stitch, a new neighborhood needlepoint, cross stitch, embroidery and crewel store.

A look at the projects offered at the shop, at 2799 Sacramento Street, backs her up. There is a diva in a purple gown slouching across the front of a velvet pillow, a simple lettered sign for "The Loo," an intricate illustration of a Halloween witch and cat.

Stitch opened in August 2005 with Drumheller and her sister, Patricia Parra, at the helm. In addition to wall hangings and pillows, it stocks kits for checkbook covers, eyeglass holders and cellphone cases. There are lacquer boxes with delicate medallion inserts, belts, bookmarks, purses — even flip flops — all to stitch and assemble.

The shop is warm and welcoming. There is good lighting, chairs with padded seats, coffee or tea in china cups, even treats for attending dogs. And it's a visual delight, with hundreds of skeins of floss — the thread used in needlework projects — festooned on racks in silk, overdyed silk and blends of wool and silk or mohair.

Despite its genteel image, needlework is not for sissies. Parra severely strained a back muscle last year while feverishly working to complete a stitching project for a trade show. Her entry, featuring a San Francisco scene with a beaded and festooned Christmas tree at Union Square, was displayed as a work in progress. It still is.

"It's up to me to decide how the piece should look in the end, not just follow a stamped design on the canvas," she says. "And that's what we encourage our customers to do — to be creative, to use their own colors and elements. We're here to help them get started and keep them going if they get stuck."

AFTER DOING needlework as a child, Drumheller started back a couple of years ago, stitching an intricate cat now on display in the shop.

"It's great therapy," she says.

Parra began stitching in earnest again about six years ago when she picked up a cross stitch kit. The sisters estimate they've logged thousands of hours at the craft. That spurred them to turn their passion into a business.

If a customer can't find the perfect project among the 1,500 or so canvasses and kits in stock, special orders and commissions are invited. One woman came in search of a magnolia — which they found after an eight-month search.

On the first Saturday of every month,



Stitch offers classes and supplies — and camaraderie — for needleworkers.

Stitch hosts a potluck from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Those who attend are urged to bring a dish to share while stitching together.

On Tuesday nights, the shop stays open until 7:30. Stitchers are encouraged to bring their ongoing projects — and "share some time with like-minded people."

Parra officiates and painstakingly leads beginners through the basics of their first projects, teaching the correct way to thread a needle and stash the floss so it doesn't tangle. And she imparts some rules of the craft, such as, "The right length for the floss is 18 to 24 inches. And, 'If you make a mistake, make it look obvious.'"

It's clear the stitchers come for camaraderie as much as for the learning.

At a recent drop-in class, a graphic designer from Australia living here for two years stitched away on a San Francisco scene complete with the Golden Gate Bridge and a cable car to take back as a memento.

"I'm not allowed to work in this country yet, so I'm so glad I found this shop," she says. "This is a way I can meet people."

At the drop-in, the needles fly — and so does the gossip. First the group discusses why some people insist on screaming while talking on cell phones. Then it's on to whether having a glass of wine every day helps a person's enzymes work better, and the reality that karma goes around and

comes around. At length, one woman makes a confession: She is fascinated by watching broadcasts of Board of Supervisors meetings. Met with blank stares all around, she finally says, "You have to get cable."

THROUGH IT ALL, Parra wheedles the needlers, gently at first, asking one struggling stitcher, "Why don't you move over a seat? You'll have better light."

But as the night wears on, she turns increasingly tough.

"Can't you get a better pair of glasses?" she asks one student.

"You're not paying attention. You're having too much fun socializing," she admonishes another. "Shape up."

And to a third: "Don't just sit there. Get your thread ready."

The stitchers all agree that needlework is not for the frugal. "This sport is way more expensive than most others," says one. "And this store has so many nice toys to buy."

"That's right," agrees another. "Toys 'R' Us has nothing on this place."

The shop also offers classes, mostly limited to five students or fewer, which allows for individual instruction.

Increasingly, the students are not just women of a certain age. Men are picking up the craft. And for the very young, there is the "Teach the Children So They Can Carry on for Us Class."

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A Magazine Is Celebrated as a Creative Connection

By JEROME TARSHIS

TODAY San Francisco and Los Angeles have strong patronage systems for the visual arts, but as recently as the early 1960s the support now provided by galleries, art schools and collectors was almost completely absent. Before 1945, New York itself was hardly better off.

In that kind of underdeveloped art world, magazines can create a sense of community among creative people otherwise unrecognized by the larger society.

What Alfred Stieglitz's magazine *Camera Work* did for the arts in New York before World War I, and *View* undertook to do in the 1940s, Wallace Berman's magazine *Semina*, published from 1955 through 1964, did on behalf of writers and artists in California. It was a time when almost nobody seemed to care about new art and, by today's standards, there was practically no money around.

The exhibition "Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and His Circle," at the Berkeley Art Museum through December 10, begins with the magazine. One couldn't buy a subscription. Instead there would come in the mail an envelope or folder containing loose sheets of paper with poems or prose or art printed on them. Berman turned out a few hundred copies of each issue and sent them, free, to people he found congenial.

Only a few examples of Berman's own work as an assemblage artist are on view. Much of the show consists of documentary photographs and artworks, beautifully installed in the museum. The true subject of "Semina Culture" is Wallace Berman's presence in the lives of others.

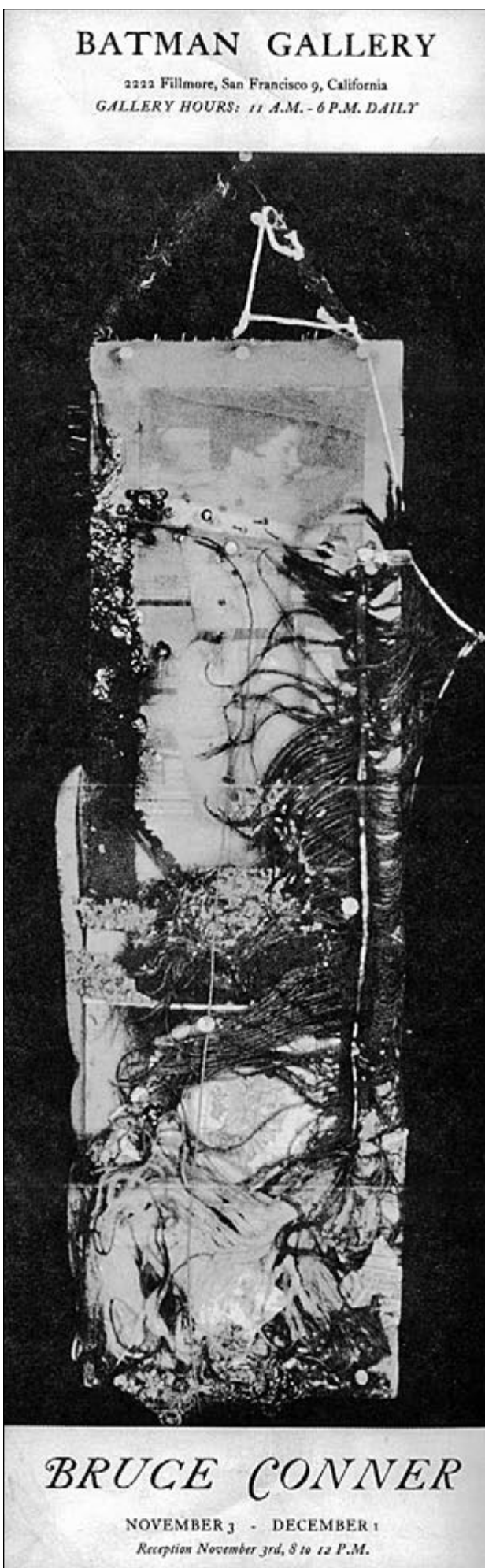
Except for three and a half years in Northern California, Berman spent most of his adult life in Los Angeles, and the exhibition, organized by the Santa Monica Museum of Art, has a strong Los Angeles flavor. Among the more celebrated L.A. figures are the painters Llyn Foulkes and John Altoon, the theater artist Rachel Rosenthal, the curator Walter Hopps and the quintessential assemblage artist George Herms. A Hollywood touch is added by the inclusion of actors who have been visual artists of greater or lesser merit: Dean Stockwell, Bobby Driscoll, Russ Tamblyn and Dennis Hopper.

The Northern California contingent, perhaps surprisingly, had links to Pacific Heights. Apart from Berman himself, whose first San Francisco apartment was on Jackson Street, there were the poets Robert Duncan and Michael McClure, the painters Joan Brown and Jay DeFeo, the filmmaker Larry Jordan, and such artists in diverse media as Bruce and Jean Conner and Duncan's companion, Jess.

Wallace Berman was a child of his time, innovative though not so eccentric as to be totally isolated; he might now be called an early adopter. In 1950s Middle America, he concerned himself with what only a few years later came to be considered the usual suspects: Hermann Hesse and Antonin Artaud, the Kabbalah, hashish, sexual freedom, black music: all in all, mysticism and private knowledge as alternatives to consensus reality and middle-class striving.

Working almost wholly without money, Berman brought people together with a recessive gentleness and grace. "Semina Culture" celebrates the possibilities of California during the now-vanished period before our museums became seriously crowded and, for good or ill, collecting new art at vertiginous prices became a sport with ever-expanding major leagues.

Jerome Tarshis has written for Artforum, Art in America and others.



For a few years, upper Fillmore was home to a circle of writers, artists

FIFTY YEARS AGO a reader of the national news media might think North Beach was San Francisco's only artistic bohemia. "Semina Culture" presents a more complicated picture: Even during the heyday of the beat poets, with their rejection of ordinary getting and spending, Pacific Heights offered not only upscale living but fertile ground for art and literature.

Wallace Berman's first apartment in San Francisco was at 2315 Jackson, between Webster and Fillmore. In those years the poets John Wieners and Philip Lamantia lived within a few blocks of Fillmore and Jackson, as did artists Bruce and Jean Conner.

A four-unit apartment building at 2322 Fillmore, between Clay and Washington, was an art-and-poetry scene in itself, its residents including Michael and Joanna McClure and such well-known painters as James Weeks, Sonia Gechtoff, Joan Brown, Wally Hedrick and Jay DeFeo.

The Batman Gallery, so named because its founder affected black clothing and looked not wholly unlike the comic book hero, was at 2222 Fillmore, between Sacramento and Clay. The King Ubu Gallery and its successor, the Six Gallery, among the most important avant-garde art showcases in the city, were at 3119 Fillmore, between Filbert and Pixley. Allen Ginsberg's reading of "Howl" at the Six Gallery in 1955 was a turning point in the history of American culture.

Hedrick and DeFeo were the last artists to leave 2322 Fillmore: in 1964 their rent went up from \$65 to \$300 a month.

A furniture store now occupies the space where Ginsberg read "Howl," and the space occupied by the Batman Gallery is now a Starbucks. But for a few years, when the neighborhood offered low-rent islands amid the general affluence, Fillmore was home to some of America's most innovative writers and artists.

—Jerome Tarshis



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Film Critic Bewitched by a Star

By MICHAEL FOX

CRITIC AND JOURNALIST — and neighborhood resident — David Thomson was born and educated in England, but he's always had a thing for Hollywood. Over the course of hundreds of articles and a dozen books — *A Biographical Dictionary of Film*, most famously — he's expounded on the beauty and the beastliness of studio filmmaking.

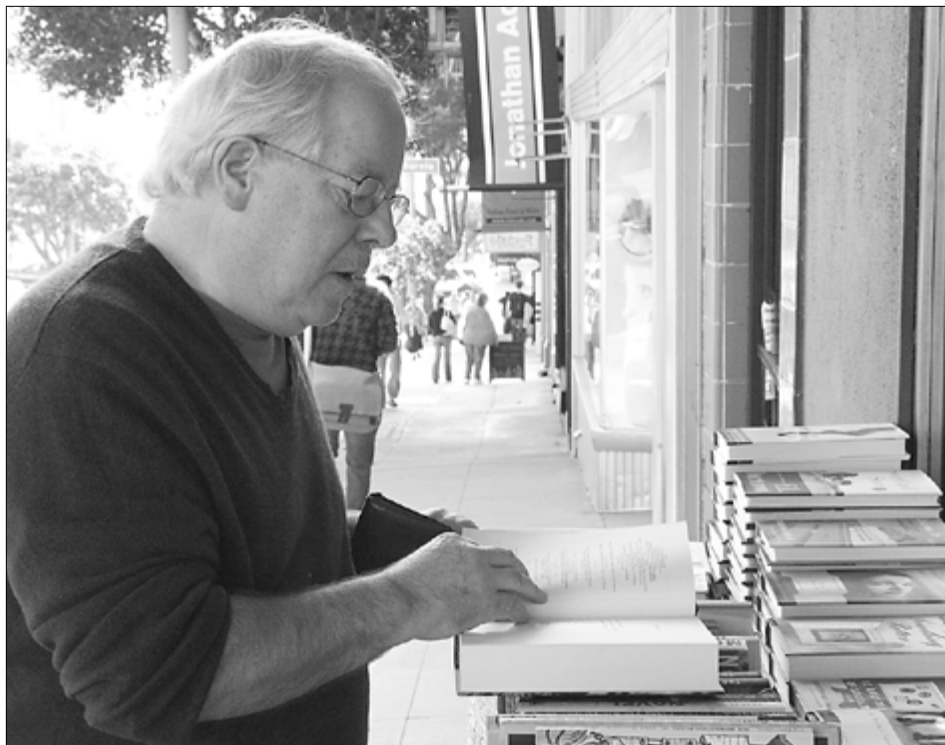
A writer of immense elegance and provocative insights, Thomson's great gift is describing how movie stars serve as templates for our dreams. *Warren Beatty and Desert Eyes: A Life and a Story* (1987) was a poetic analysis of the persona of a New Hollywood icon that presented a fresh take on Tinseltown. In his latest book, *Nicole Kidman*, the author takes an even more personal tack, blending his deep affinity for the actress with biography and an assessment of the state of movie stardom.

Thomson has made San Francisco his home for many years, and we chatted late one afternoon just off upper Fillmore Street in his unfussy garden.

You've always acknowledged the emotional effect that movies have, and the irrational effect that actors and actresses have on us. Should we view the Kidman book as a continuation of that fascination?

Film intellectuals have pulled a trick, which is to say that films should be seen as the work of directors. I've always had the belief that the great majority of people actually go to movies to see people. Much of the time, they don't know or care who the director is. They go to see people because to them the movie is, above all, a process where you can pretend to be these people.

Over the years I've done a lot of things that stand up for the personality of the actor. So for me now to do a book on Kidman is not unexpected or unusual — although I'm surprised to find that a lot of people are shocked, or pretending to be shocked. I've always been interested in actors, and there is a sort of a trashy side to it, a fantasy side, a daydreaming side, fantasizing, half in love with.



In his latest book, David Thomson blends his deep affinity for the actress Nicole Kidman with an assessment of the state of movie stardom.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCY GRAY

OK, but why Kidman? What is iconic about her?

Well, several things. Probably the most important is I find her attractive. I cannot believe that I would want to do a book about somebody I didn't find attractive.

Two, Kidman has reached — I'm not sure how long she'll stay there, and that's part of what the book's about — the level of real, old-fashioned stardom. There's an aura to her. Stardom is not nearly as common in the movies as it once was. But she's a star. And I'm interested in what that means and what that does.

Third, I like her as an actress.

Can you share some insights into Kidman's approach?

I think she would say that she has to be in love with her part and she has to be — if not in love with the director or someone on the film, she has to really feel for them in a very close way.

I don't think there's too much else in her life except the chance of doing good work. She's done some lazy, bad films. She knows it. She names them in the book. But give her a challenge and she's not just willing, but eager to transform herself in the interests of the film.

It's all getting at something she finds interesting, which is to the extent that people think they know her, they think

she's likable and nice and friendly. And she says, "I'm actually a very dark person." And this darkness is in the films that she's most excited about, I'd say.

You say movie stardom isn't what it used to be. How so?

If you use the word "stardom," people still think you mean the movies. But these days, stardom's spread. It's been caught up in the thing called celebrity, fame — and so you have stars in politics, sports, music, fashion, nonentities, even. People are famous just because they're famous, and they don't do a thing.

One of the things that's hard to credit from our distance in time is that in the Golden Age the public really loved their stars. There was a deep fondness and a loyalty. It was a much kinder age.

We're much more cynical about stars now and we know more about how they manipulate us, so we're less generous in our emotional investment with them.

Still, we recognize that there are people who've got it. Kidman's very tall. She has this extraordinary skin quality, which usually photographs but not always. People draw back from her physically. She's got an amazing aura. She's got great confidence, but she's friendly. She's not disdainful of the public in any way at all. I think the public likes her.

And yet we are fascinated by rumors and innuendo.

I think we're suspicious. Time and again, as I worked on the book, people would say to me, "Well, now, she and Tom had a deal, right?" They may have. I never found — and I searched hard — a scrap of evidence to prove that they did.

I think at first they were in love. But a lot of people believe and swear that there was a deal — she got a career, she got fame, and he got a mask so that nobody would raise too many questions about him. I knew going in that it was an issue and I worked very hard to dig something up, but you can't say it if you can't prove it. And I can't prove it. And indeed more than that, I didn't find an atom of proof for it.

You hear stories of a star putting out the word, "Don't talk to so-and-so who's writing a book about me."

On the contrary, what happened was she opened the doors for a lot of people. A lot of people would not talk to me unless they knew she was happy about it. And they did talk to me, because she put the word around that it was okay.

In 2002, when you published your revised opus, The New Biographical Dictionary of Film, you told me your next book would be a novel and that you wouldn't mind if you didn't write much about movies anymore. What changed your mind?

I did say that, and I felt it, and, in many ways, I still feel it. I can't complain that I've not had the chance to say what I think about the movies. And I'm one of those people who feels that we're simply not in a great time of moviemaking. So I would love to be able to branch out a bit more.

The novel is done in the sense that I'm on a second draft. There are subjects outside movies I'd love to write about. But the fact of the matter is — and this is a version of Nicole doing "Fur" or "Bewitched" — she's got a big overhead — much bigger overhead than I have, although my overhead is big enough for me. And I've got to sustain it. I've got a family.

I can get publishers interested if it's me on film, but if I suggest something quite different, they think, "That's going to be much harder." So I'm, to a degree, trapped in film.

Michael Fox is a film critic and journalist, as well as curator and host of the Friday night CinemaLit film series at the Mechanics Institute. A longer version of this conversation appeared at www.360.org, an online newsletter.




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■ LOCAL LANDMARK

Browser Books is now a publisher, too

Browser Books has been a leading literary bookseller in San Francisco for three decades, and it continues to be a vital neighborhood institution at a time when independent bookstores are rapidly disappearing.

Located at 2195 Fillmore, next door to Peet’s Coffee, its doors are open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. In its early years, it was located a block north at 2239 Fillmore, near the Clay Theater.

“It became Browser Books in 1976,” says owner Stephen Damon, “although it had been a very small shop since 1972 called Edge of the City Books.” Before it became a bookstore, he says, “it had been a ‘head shop’ and a recording studio for Beat poets as well as Carlos Santana,” the guitar great.

Damon started working at Browser in 1978 and bought the store in 1981. Last year he decided to start Browser Books Publishing. Already the new company has published several books, including two books of Damon’s poetry, and it has more titles in the works.

“While I hope it makes enough money to help Browser sustain itself during a time when many independent bookstores have gone out of business,” Damon says, “my main interest is to seek out and publish books that reflect a person’s serious search for meaning in his or her life — a search that has been the central focus of my entire adult life.”

BOOKS

Now a Poet, and Returning to Fillmore

IN YVONNE CANNON’s poetry, life’s difficulties are survived and ultimately transcended. She examines her personal life — and the lives of others — with perception and empathy.

When This You See, a book of Cannon’s poetry being published this month by Browser Books Publishing, includes poems she wrote during her daughter’s struggle with cancer.

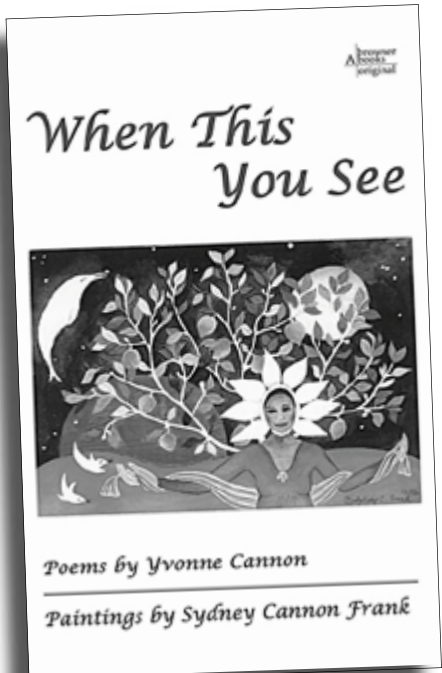
In retirement, Cannon got hooked on writing poetry. She enrolled in a poetry workshop in 1997 which continued until her daughter was diagnosed in late 2000 with a rare brain stem cancer. Her daughter, a painter, potter and elementary school teacher, died a year later at age 48.

“I knew I would want to read a poem at her memorial,” Cannon remembers, “and I began attempting to write one before she died.”

Her two younger daughters vetoed her first two poems. But they all agreed the third one, “Later, My Daughter Awakes,” was the one she should read. It is included in *When This You See*, and may well be among the poems she reads when Browser Books hosts a reading and booksigning on November 12.

The reading will mark Cannon’s return to Fillmore Street, and to Browser Books. For many years — “enjoyable, interesting, challenging years,” she says — she worked on Fillmore as the office manager for Surf Theaters.

“Our business office was in a Victorian flat above what used to be Broemmels



Pharmacy,” Cannon says. Nest now occupies the building, on the northeast corner of Clay and Fillmore across from the Clay Theater. The company managed the Clay, along with the Lumiere, the Castro and its flagship Surf Theater. Mel Novikoff owned the company.

“Mel was a marvelous showman and innovator,” Cannon says. “He loved to dash across the street to check on the Clay’s current offering and the size of the audience. He brought the Castro into its full glory, with its hydraulic platform for the restored old theater organ.”

She ran the company during Novikoff’s final illness and kept it operating until it was finally sold a year later, in 1988. She had retired from another job in the financial district by the time she discovered her interest in poetry.

Cannon found solace in poetry during her daughter’s illness and after her death. A chapbook of her poems had been a finalist in a poetry competition. A short while later, a friend brought by an ad from the Sunday Chronicle’s book section.

“It was a call for poetry manuscripts from a new publisher, Browser Books Publishing,” Cannon marvels.

She had been a patron of Browser Books during her days on Fillmore. “Its previous location near the Clay Theatre had a back room with a large, inviting table, where I spent many a lunch hour,” she recalls.

Cannon submitted a short manuscript of poems about her daughter’s death to publisher Stephen Damon at Browser and reminded him who she was.

“Within a week he contacted me to say he was interested in my poems and would like to see more,” she says. When Damon saw her daughter’s paintings, he decided to include them in the book as well. One is on the cover and four others are reproduced inside.

When This You See is a 72-page paperback available from Browser Books for \$14. Yvonne Cannon will read from her book and sign copies at the bookstore, located at 2195 Fillmore, on Sunday, November 12, from 7 to 9 p.m.

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Michelin’s Inspectors See Stars in the Neighborhood

“**A** LONG A HIGH east-west ridge between Van Ness Avenue and the Presidio sits Pacific Heights, a neighborhood synonymous with wealth,” says the new Michelin Guide to San Francisco restaurants and hotels. “Fillmore Street between Bush and Jackson Streets contains some unique shops as well as good cafes and restaurants.”

The highly anticipated Michelin Guide had good things to say about a number of restaurants in the neighborhood — and bestowed its coveted stars on two local spots.

Quince, at 1701 Octavia, and Bushi-Tei, a couple of blocks away at 1638 Post, both were awarded one star. In Michelin’s constellation, that means “a very good restaurant” that is “offering cuisine prepared to a consistently high standard.”

Only two restaurants in San Francisco received a higher ranking: Aqua and Michael Mina, both downtown, each received two stars. Ten other restaurants in the city were awarded one star.

The stars

“Unless it’s in season, you won’t find the restaurant’s namesake tart fruit on the menu” at **Quince**, says the guide. It notes that chef Michael Tusk “passionately sources only sublimely fresh seasonal products from his carefully researched network of producers.” Tusk, an alumnus of Chez Panisse and Oliveto in Berkeley, finds inspiration from “the rustic fare of southern France and Italy,” the guide says. “Venetian chandeliers light an elegant room lined with burgundy velvet banquettes” in the 1872 building that once housed the Octavia Street Apothecary.

Of **Bushi-Tei**, which opened less than a year ago in Japantown, the guide praises chef Seiji Wakabayashi’s “talent for fusing California products with French techniques and Japanese flair.” Much is made of the restaurant’s “original

decor,” which combines ancient wooden panels from Japan with a sleek modern design.

Others of note

A number of other restaurants in the immediate neighborhood are also included in the Michelin Guide.

■ **Chez Nous**, at 1911 Fillmore: “Pacific Heights residents can count themselves fortunate to have a neighborhood restaurant like Chez Nous,” the guide says, noting that “this petite bistro bustles with diners” and that the small plates “span the Mediterranean region.”

■ **Florio**, two doors north at 1915 Fillmore: “Florio’s Left Bank look will charm you with its bistro chairs, cozy banquettes, black-and-white photos and open kitchen,” says the guide. “The food at Florio is not meant to wow you,” but rather the founders “envisioned this elegant spot as a place to enjoy simple food, smiling service and good company.”

■ **Vivande**, at 2125 Fillmore: “Honest Italian cooking is the hallmark of this unpretentious Pacific Heights trattoria,” says the guide. It notes that chef-owner Carlo Middione “opened Vivande in 1981 with a commitment to producing authentic Italian dishes” that “leave little wonder as to why the Italian government recognized this restaurant for staying true to its Italian roots.”

Japantown favorites

The Michelin Guide includes three other restaurants in Japantown, where, it says, “you’ll have your choice of Japanese and Asian specialties.”

■ **Maki**, at 1825 Post: “Hidden away on the second floor of the Kinokuniya Building in Japantown, Maki is a sliver of a space, with spare decor,” says the guide. “A largely Japanese clientele favors this little place,” it says. “The real attraction is a dish rarely found in the United States:

the house specialty, *wappa meshi*, rice cooked in a bamboo steamer and topped with vegetables, seafood or meat.”

■ **Mifune**, at 1737 Post: “Oodles of noodles is what you’ll get at Mifune,” the guide says. “This popular place sports deep-red walls and specializes in noodle dishes — both hot and cold — at inexpensive prices.” If you can’t get in, the guide advises that you “go next door to its little sister, Mifune Don, on the upper level of the Miyako Mall.”

■ **Shabu-Sen**, at 1726 Buchanan: “You won’t have to make many choices at Shabu-Sen,” notes the guide. “This inexpensive Japantown establishment only offers two types of dishes, shabu-shabu and sukiyaki — two preparations that derive from the Japanese practice of families gathering around a fire to warm themselves and make a meal together.”

Neighborhood hotels

The Michelin Guide is not just about restaurants. A small section at the back also has listings — but no ratings — of places to stay, including three nearby.

■ **Hotel Drisco**, at 2901 Pacific: “Comfortably at home in tony Pacific Heights, this 1903 hotel offers elegant accommodations surrounded by beautiful residences and quiet streets,” the guide says.

■ **Laurel Inn**, at 444 Presidio: “The Laurel Inn, built in 1963, embraces its mid-century pedigree with gusto and good taste,” the guide says. “Furnishings throughout are sleek and not fussy.” The guide notes that there are 18 larger units with kitchenettes, “much in demand by guests planning extended stays.”

■ **Hotel Majestic**, at 1500 Sutter: “Already a hotel by 1906 when the earthquake struck,” the guide notes that the former private residence “survived to become San Francisco’s oldest continuously operated hotel,” with “lavish public areas” that “recall a bygone era of domestic luxury.”

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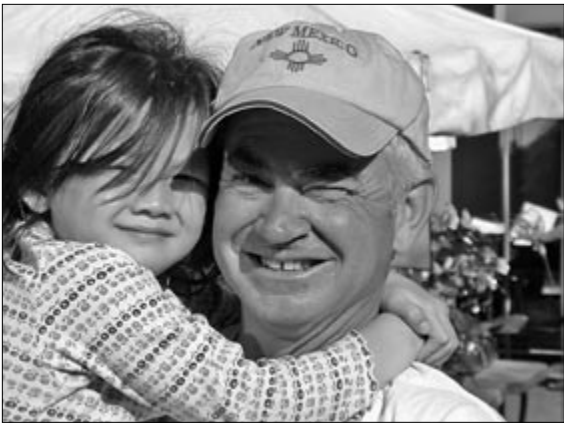
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Creating a market — and a community

Tom Nichol smiles like a Cheshire cat when surveying the scene at the Fillmore Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. And for good reason: In its fourth year, the market he manages now attracts a steady and growing crowd of buyers clamoring for seasonal fruits and vegetables.

"Part of my job here is to create a community," he says, and he seems born to the task, bouncing from stall to stall in shorts and a baseball cap, cadging a berry here, greeting a shopper there. "I've gotten to know so many people here — and I've watched some of them grow up," Nichol says, gently untangling one of the farm kids hanging around his neck.


"It may not be the busiest or the biggest market, but it's the best," he says, "because of the live jazz and consistently good products — and especially because of the people." As a bonus, he says, the prices are affordable: "We're kind of like the anti-Ferry Building Farmers Market."

The Fillmore market, on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Fillmore and O'Farrell, will end for the season on November 18.

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New Beaujolais Arrives Nov. 16

By MARK J. MITCHELL

IN ABOUT three weeks — November 16 to be exact — signs and banners will blossom in the neighborhood and all over the world to announce "*Le Beaujolais nouveau, c'est arrive!*"

By now, wine lovers know what this means: The first wine of the new vintage is legally released. French law prohibits opening any bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau until the third Thursday in November. In Paris and Lyons, they start at midnight.

Many people think celebrating the new Beaujolais is an ancient custom, but it's relatively recent. True, in Lyons, the large city closest to the Beaujolais region of Burgundy, the arrival of the first wine of the year has been eagerly awaited each November for more than 100 years. In Paris, the custom goes back to just before World War II. As an international phenomenon, it dates back only to 1985, when the third Thursday became the official date and oceans of Beaujolais Nouveau, most of it bottled by the mega-negotiant Georges DuBouef, were uncorked in London, New York, Tokyo, Chicago, Rio de Janeiro and, of course, San Francisco.

Beaujolais day is a festive occasion in the wine world. Does it hold any real meaning? Does it give any real indication of the quality of the vintage in the prestigious Burgundy region, home of sky-high priced Pinot Noir and Chardonnay? No, of course not. It's just fun, and there's nothing wrong with that.

These days, grown-up wine writers tend to disparage both the wine and the hype that surround the release of Beaujolais

Nouveau. The wine itself is written off as, at best, plonk, which much of it is, and the festive hype is seen as a kind of pandering to the hicks.

This misses the point.

First, especially in our urban world, which is so often cut off from the sources of both food and drink, it is good to mark the season of the harvest and to notice that a new crop is upon us. This should be a sufficient excuse for celebrating the release of the new Beaujolais. Second, this is a wine event that is happening simultaneously all over the world, and it is nourishing for the planet to share celebrations. Third, while the wine is generally unremarkable, it is lively, juicy and fun, packed with fresh berry fruit and haunted by the thought that it only has three or four weeks to live.

I find Beaujolais Nouveau the best wine to serve at the feast we hold on the following Thursday, Thanksgiving. It is the wine that belongs to the harvest we celebrate with that feast. It is also light and accessible to all. You don't have to explain this wine to your guests. Finally, since there really is no wine that will go with all the many dishes on the traditional Thanksgiving table, you may as well go with one that's bright and playful.

As for that third Thursday when the Beaujolais Nouveau arrives, it's good to find a place to celebrate its arrival, and a French restaurant is best. Find your way to Chouquet's or the Curbside Cafe and welcome the latest crop.

Mark J. Mitchell is a neighbor, a poet and the manager of D&M Wines and Liquors on Fillmore Street.

Rare Italian Wines Focus of Dinner

TRE BICCHIERI — "three glasses" in Italian — is the highest award given by the respected *Gambero Rosso* guide to Italian wines. Less than 2 percent of Italy's vast wine production gets the coveted three glasses.

Yet remarkably, 80 percent of the select vintages of the Rocclo Grasso winery in the Veneto region have received Tre Bicchieri awards since 2000. When Carlo and Lisa Middione, the owners of Vivande, learned that the estate's young heir and winemaker, Marco Sartori, would visit San Francisco, they seized the opportunity to plan a

dinner with him. It's scheduled for November 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Vivande, at 2125 Fillmore Street. Reserve at 346-4430.

"We've tasted these wines, and they are eye-rolling good," says Vivande's wine director, Lisa Hasen. "These estate wines are produced in extremely limited quantities. This is an unusual opportunity to taste rare wines of international importance right here in the neighborhood."

Among the wines to be sampled is the 2000 Tre Bicchieri Amarone. What will be poured at the dinner is the last of this wine left anywhere in the world.


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3035 Pierce St.	5	4	2	2,301	Sept. 15	3,900,000	3,317,000
2736 Broderick St.	4	3.5	2	3,064	Sept. 29	2,995,000	2,800,000
3025 Scott St.	4	2.5	1	2,557	Oct. 4	1,895,000	2,750,000
2780 California St.	2	1.5	1	1,352	Sept. 29	1,149,000	1,240,000
2605 Sacramento St.	2	2	1	899	Sept. 29	\$959,000	1,050,000
Condo /Coop /TIC /Lofts							
2208 Vallejo St.	4	3	1	2,400	Oct. 6	2,750,000	2,400,000
1925 Pacific Ave. #4	3	2	1	1,616	Sept. 28	1,395,000	1,370,000
3731 Divisadero St.	2	2	1	1,750	Sept. 27	1,249,000	1,350,000
2404 Washington St.	2	2	1	1,337	Sept. 18	1,195,000	1,300,000
2100 Green St. #102	2	2	1	1,819	Oct. 6	1,295,000	1,300,000
2617A Sacramento St.	2	2	2		Sept. 29	1,195,000	1,238,250
3116 Pierce St.	2	2	2		Sept. 29	1,195,000	1,139,000
1835 Franklin St. #1101	2	2	1	1,550	Sept. 28	1,050,000	1,070,000
2615 Sacramento St.	2	2	1		Sept. 29	995,000	1,020,000
2856 Scott St. #5	1	1	1	1,479	Oct. 11	899,000	965,000
1635 Lombard St.	3	2.5	1	1,350	Sept. 15	939,000	920,000
2425A Franklin St.	2	1	1		Sept. 15	799,000	799,000
2425B Franklin St.	3	1	1		Sept. 29	849,000	799,000
2539 Clay St. #1	2	1	1	1,100	Sept. 20	799,000	797,000
2921 Washington St. #3	1	1	1	1,070	Oct. 11	729,000	750,000
2990 Jackson St. #3	1	1	1	967	Sept. 21	699,950	710,000
1828 Eddy St. #103	2	2	2	950	Sept. 18	649,000	653,000
2151 Sacramento St. #2	1	1	0	812	Sept. 15	645,000	650,000
2415 Van Ness Ave. #601	0	1	1	567	Sept. 15	469,000	463,000
1350B Scott St.	1	1	1	716	Sept. 28	425,000	415,000
1401 Eddy St. #3	1	1	1	588	Sept. 28	399,000	385,700
5 Galilee Ln. #4	3	2	1	1,050	Sept. 28	360,000	357,000

Gone are the days of multiple overbids

Although sales for the past month are down somewhat from a year ago, both in volume and price, there is little long-term evidence that prices are falling or that volume is ebbing significantly. Overall, property values should remain stable through the end of this year, given that interest rates and lending terms show little sign of changing.

The past month was relatively brisk for single family home sales in the neighborhood. Although the average house was on the market for 28 days, the median was closer to 16 days. Houses sold for a slight premium, with average sale prices exceeding list prices by approximately 3 percent. Properties listed close to or below the sale price sold very quickly for at least the asking price. Homes listed above fair market value took considerably longer to sell.

Condominium sales during the last month did not fare as well. Volume trailed off, with only 19 neighborhood sales in 30 days. Condos sold at a relatively torpid rate, with an average of 56 days on the market. As with houses, condos listed above market prices took considerably longer to sell. Prices also moderated, with the average sale closing 3 percent below the asking price.

One thing is clear: In the current market, buyers refuse to pay more than fair market value. Gone, for the most part, are the days of multiple bids and properties selling for significantly over the asking price. If you are planning to sell, be sure to present your property at a fair market list price. Underpricing may bring a quick offer, most likely one at market value. Listing above fair market value will result in wasted time and effort — and, most likely, a below market sale price. The longer a property remains on the market, the less a buyer is willing to pay for it.

— Data and commentary provided by KEN BOERI, a real estate broker with Pacific Union. Contact him at ken.boeri@pacunion.com.



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“Selling ones home is a very emotional experience, and I could not endorse Jane highly enough. There is a premium for experience.” *Jeremy 2005*

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Victorian Gets a Paint Job That's 'Subtle But Rich'

THE TIME had come, as it inevitably does, to paint the Victorian home at 2678 California.

The beautiful and historic home, with leaded-glass windows and its own ballroom, was built in the late 1800s for a single family, and later divided into four units.

The owner knew she didn't want the flamboyant approach often taken on San Francisco's painted ladies.

"I like color," she says. "I have an Italian sensibility. But the colors of Italy don't work for a Victorian."

She wanted something muted, without a lot of contrast — something "subtle but still rich." So she set out on a walk around the neighborhood — one of many — and started looking at what others had done.

"I would stop and ask people, 'Are you happy with this color?'" she says.

She found it helpful to look at real houses, in the natural light of the neighborhood, rather than try to decide from a paint chip.

There was a beautiful yellow home on Steiner she liked, and another just around the corner at Scott and Sacramento she especially admired.

"I wanted to do something similar, but different," she says, so she called the painters who'd done those jobs. She hooked up with two color consultants at Modamus, the painting contractors on Fulton Street, who worked with her to find the various shades of cream she had in mind.

"They were great," she says. "We kept mixing colors, different variations on the theme — a little bit more green, a little bit more brown."

Recalls Sam Meyer, a production manager at Moda-



mus who worked with the client: "It's a very elegant house. She had ideas, and we custom mixed colors based on other houses she'd seen. She was very passionate about getting the color just right."

Meyer endorses, as a starting point, looking at other houses and finding ones that appeal. Often that leads them to his company, since Modamus does much of its work in this part of the city.

"That's our market — Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights," says Meyer. "People see our signs in the neigh-

Neighboring houses helped point the way when the historic Victorian at 2678 California needed to be painted.

borhood and figure we must know what we're doing."

Painting a Victorian is not cheap. Meyer notes that Victorians sometimes have an advantage, since they're built cheek-to-cheek. If only the front face needs to be painted, the job may cost less than \$10,000, he says. But for an entire house, the cost can run as much as \$40,000 to \$50,000.

"It depends on the condition," Meyer says. "It's a really good idea to keep them up."

A big project usually takes about a month — most of that time preparing to paint. Most jobs are scheduled three to six months before they begin.

"Don't be afraid to experiment," Meyer says he often tells clients. "Most people don't want to stick out. But when it's done right, something unusual can be nice, too."

Meyer acknowledges, though, "These houses are so beautiful, you just want to let the house speak for itself."

He has a satisfied client in the owner of 2678 California.

"I enjoyed the experience," she says. "People who walked by would stop and comment while the work was in progress. It was a group process — and it was heartwarming."

Recently she found herself in the position she'd occupied herself when someone called to admire her paint job and ask if he could use the same colors.

"There's a thread of connection for people who live close by," she says, "to find inspiration from what already exists in the neighborhood."

"I just got lucky," she says. "Sometimes it doesn't turn out the way you envisioned it."



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Taxpayers Beware!

There they go again! Here are some good reasons to vote against everything and save your money:

Prop A Another School Bond.....**No**

\$450 million with no guarantee how it will be spent? We know they spent part of the 2003 bond on schools that were later closed, and that most of this one will be spent on a disabilities lawsuit settlement. Until responsible people come up with a long range spending plan, there are better uses for property taxes.

Prop B Supervisors Stay Home.....**No**

Taxpayers deserve the opportunity to confront the people who take and spend their money. Make them go to work like everyone else.

Prop C Politicians Get a Big Raise.....**No**

The Sheriff gets \$55,000 more and the Mayor gets \$40,000 more if this passes, plus all of the trickle down raises to staffers whose salaries are tied to the elected officials – labor costs will skyrocket. There are no incentives for performance – they can do a lousy job and still get a raise.

Prop D Privacy Protection.....**No**

It's one thing for the city to be uncooperative with the federal government, but it's quite another to force city contractors to do the same. Another attack on business.

Prop E Higher Parking Taxes.....**No**

This 25% parking tax increase and 35% valet parking increase is not even going to MUNI – it's going into the General Fund for the Mayor and Supes to spend as they will. Driving a car is already too expensive—save your money for gas.

Prop F Mandatory Paid Time Off.....**No**

Forcing small businesses to provide benefits without regard to whether doing so will drive them, their customers, or the taxes they generate to other cities is foolish.

Prop G Anti-Formula Retail.....**No**

This will require a Planning Commission hearing for every new formula retail store (like Starbucks), and enable the Supes to ban them outright in more commercial districts. Just another anti-business and anti-taxpayer move.

Prop H Renter Relocation Benefits.....**No**

Property owners would be forced to pay thousands of dollars to renters for temporary relocation, even if they are repairing/improving their buildings for the renters' benefit!

Prop I Fun & Games at City Hall.....**No**

While we agree it would be fun to watch the Mayor try to answer questions from the Board of Supervisors every month, nonsense such as this belongs in a comedy routine, not on a ballot.

Prop J Impeach Bush/Cheney.....**No**

The Board of Supervisors needs to stay out of national and international debates. Ballot clutter like this costs the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars for each proposition, money better spent on police officers and gardeners.

Prop K Feel Good Housing Policy.....**No**

A policy debate that belongs in Board chambers, not on the ballot.

Taxpayers pay enough to live and work in San Francisco without having their pockets picked every Election Day.

www.sftaxpayersunion.org

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GOOD WORKS



On Saturdays, volunteers from the Sequoias clean up the neighborhood.

Graffiti Doesn't Stand a Chance

BY LAURA L. LLOYD

ON A Saturday afternoon in 1999 — and nearly every Saturday since — a group of about 10 people led by resident Marie Cleasby met in the lobby of the Sequoias, the retirement home at 1400 Geary.

They were dressed in an odd assortment of work clothes: blue jeans, sweatshirts, old khaki pants; one woman donned an ancient knitted skirt. Most wore gardening gloves. They had with them an old rake, a shovel, a hoe and some plastic bags.

The group gathered with the promise of fresh air, exercise and meeting the neighbors. They planned to clean up the grounds and sidewalks around the Sequoias every Saturday afternoon, rain or shine.

In time they discovered that it would be better to meet in the morning before the wind came up.

After their work was done — then as now — they all had lunch at a large corner table in the dining room, which had been reserved for them. Lunch turned out to be a lively meal eaten with lots of laughter and a sense of a job well done. Being outdoors and working with their hands and bending their backs had given them a real appetite. Several planned a nap as soon as they returned to their apartments.

They could hardly wait for next week.

The residents of the Sequoias began to remark on how tidy everything was and how nice the newly planted spring flowers looked around the sidewalk trees.

The next Saturday morning there were three more people in the lobby with their



work gloves and their gardening tools ready to get out there and spiff up the place. The city began to provide some of the paint and supplies needed to continue the work of the group, and they became members of the Adopt-a-Block program. As well as picking up trash, they remove graffiti, recycle cans and bottles, pull weeds and plant flowers. On one recent Saturday, some of the group painted a fire alarm a brighter shade of red. They report illegal dumping, donate found objects to resale shops and attend citywide meetings to exchange ideas.

Some of the found objects are displayed for the amusement of fellow residents. Displays have included underwear (men's and women's), wallets, children's clothes, books, good luck charms, shoes, toys and bottles. Sometimes the person who finds the flattest squashed beer can is the winner and sometimes participants have a small wager on whose find is the most unusual.

There's never a dull moment for this clean-up crew. They always have fun and the neighborhood is better for their work.

Laura Lloyd is the editor of Words, the literary magazine at the Sequoias.

■ FAVORITE SPOTS

A quiet place, with a casual dinner nearby

Two of my favorite neighborhood spots sit catty-corner from one other at Union and Steiner Streets: St. Mary's of the Virgin Church and Rose's Cafe.

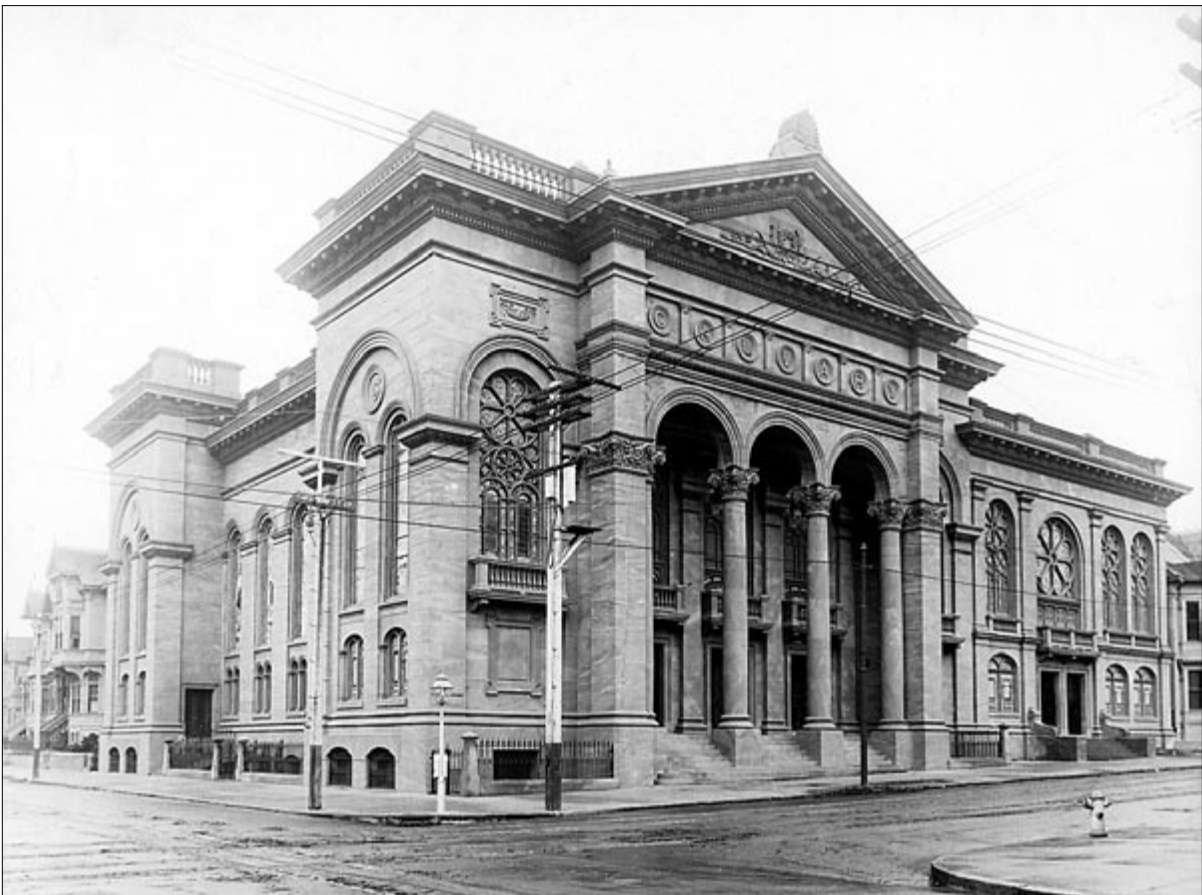
If you crave a quiet place, walk through the wooden entry gate into St. Mary's courtyard. Sit by the pond and watch the koi swim. We live nearby, and this is something our family has enjoyed for the last 25 years. Stepping stones wind through the side garden; you will come upon a jumble of climbing roses, ornamental cherry trees, rhododendrons and camellias bearing fat winter buds. The brown shingle Arts and Crafts style church is open to all who want to enter.

After a "St. Mary's Unplugged" service on Sunday at 5:30, a casual dinner across the street at Rose's Cafe of roast chicken and radicchio and baby romaine lettuce salad dressed with gorgonzola cream is the beginning of a nice evening.

— DEMI BOWLES LATHROP

GOT A favorite spot in the neighborhood? Tell us: editors@newfillmore.com

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY



Calvary Presbyterian Church moved to Fillmore Street in 1902, above, and opened with a community Thanksgiving service. The original education building stands to the right of the sanctuary. Below, the earlier Calvary Church on Union Square, much of which was moved to Fillmore and used in the new building.



Calvary celebrates its 104th Thanksgiving on Fillmore

AFTER THE 1906 earthquake and fire, Fillmore Street became the commercial center of the city. Calvary Presbyterian Church, which had relocated from Union Square to Fillmore and Jackson just three years earlier, was an especially busy place.

As one of the largest buildings to survive the quake, Calvary became a popular meeting place for many community organizations. It served as a temporary home for Temple Emanu-el, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and Old First Church. The basement under the church was turned into a courtroom for the San Francisco Superior Court.

The April 25, 1906, edition of the Chronicle reported on a large meeting of the San Francisco Real Estate Board at Calvary, during which members began planning to rebuild the city. “It was agreed,” the article reported, “the calamity should be spoken of as ‘the great fire’ and not as ‘the great earthquake.’ ”

The church opened on Fillmore Street, its third location, with a community Thanksgiving service in November 1902. Calvary’s first location, from 1854 to 1868, was downtown on Bush at Montgomery where the Mills Building stands today. In 1869, the church moved to the Post Street corner of Union Square now occupied by the St. Francis Hotel. Much of that church building, including all of the pews and over a million of the bricks, was moved and re-used in the Fillmore Street church. An education building was added on the north side. By 1980 the education building had been declared unsafe and unsalvageable, and was replaced by the current structure. Three of the large window arches from the old building were saved and mounted outside the floor-to-ceiling windows on the west wall of the new building.

In 2002, a major seismic upgrade and renovation project included the creation of a dramatic atrium in the space between the new education building and the old sanctuary, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a San Francisco City Landmark. One wall of the atrium exposes some of the original bricks from the Union Square structure as a visible marriage of the old and the new.

— JOE BEYER



When you go to the polls on June 6, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce recommends a vote of...

- NO on Prop A – Crime Prevention Planning.**
More must be done to fight the rising tide of violent crime, but Prop A ties the hands of the Mayor and Police Commission, and will not put one new police officer on the street.
- NO on Prop B – Anti-Homeownership Ordinance.**
Home buying is complicated enough without more rules from the Board of Supervisors. Uphold the Mayor’s veto.
- NO on Prop C – Transbay Terminal Power Grab.**
Do not substitute politicians for transit experts. Keep the Mayor’s staff and MUNI general manager working on the TransBay Terminal project – do not hand control to the Board of Supervisors.
- NO on Prop D – Laguna Honda Zoning Changes.**
Keep patient admissions to Laguna Honda Hospital in the hands of the Health Department, not the Planning Department. Protect hospital open space from private development.



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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

ART & ANTIQUES

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- Kuraya Japanese Antiques**
2425 California 885-3313
- Mureta's Antiques**
2418 Fillmore 922-5652
- Narumi Japanese Antiques**
1902 Fillmore 346-8629
- Thomas Reynolds Fine Art**
2291 Pine 441-4093
- Walter Adams Gallery**
2019B Fillmore 922-6811
- Winterbranch Gallery**
2119 Fillmore 673-2119

CLOTHING

- Arch Rival**
2426 California 928-3639
- Baxter Hull**
1906 Fillmore 931-8773
- Betsey Johnson**
2121 Fillmore 776-0669
- Blu**
2259 Fillmore 776-0643
- Cielo**
2225 Fillmore 776-0641
- Crosswalk Shoes**
2122 Fillmore 921-0292
- De Novo**
2413 California 563-5937
- Elisa Wen**
2512 Sacramento 931-9700
- Erica Tanov**
2408 Fillmore 674-1228
- Flicka**
1932 Fillmore 292-2315
- Gimme Shoes**
2358 Fillmore 441-3040
- Heidi Says**
2426 Fillmore 749-0655
- Her**
2053 Fillmore 923-9628
- Illuna Fashion**
1821 Steiner 673-5100
- Jim-Elle**
2237 Fillmore 567-9500
- Margaret O'Leary**
2400 Fillmore 771-9982
- Metro 200**
2116 Fillmore 776-5652
- MIO**
2035 Fillmore 931-5620
- My Boudoir**
2029 Fillmore 346-1502
- Mrs. Dewson's Hats**
2052 Fillmore 346-1600
- Paolo Shoes**
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- Starlet**
1942 Fillmore 440-3550
- sunhee moon**
1833 Fillmore 928-1800
- Toujours**
2484 Sacramento 346-3988
- Yountville**
2416 Fillmore 922-5050

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1949 Post 931-7503
- Central Builders Supply**
1637 Fillmore 673-2888
- Fillmore Hardware**
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2182 Sutter 749-1533
- Cottage Industry**
2328 Fillmore 885-0326
- Fillmore Florist**
1880 Fillmore 929-5200
- In Water**
2132 Fillmore 359-1232
- Nest**
2300 Fillmore 292-6199
- Papyrus**
2109 Fillmore 474-1171
- Paper Source**
1925 Fillmore 409-7710

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- Duxiana**
1803 Fillmore 673-7134
- Jonathan Adler**
2133 Fillmore 563-9500
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2185 Fillmore 771-3881
- Simon Pearce**
2223 Fillmore 409-3700
- Smith & Hawken**
2040 Fillmore 776-3424
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2184 Sutter 346-9694
- Timeless Treasures**
2176 Sutter 775-8366
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1905 Fillmore 776-2100

JEWELRY

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2238 Fillmore 673-4200
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2115 Fillmore 771-5099
- Linco & Co.**
1908 Fillmore 931-8228
- Surprise Party**
1900 Fillmore 771-8550
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2195 Fillmore 567-8027
- Juicy News**
2453 Fillmore 441-3051
- Marcus Books**
1712 Fillmore 346-4222

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- Aqua Forest Aquarium**
1718 Fillmore 929-8883
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1840 Fillmore 346-8899
- George**
2411 California 441-0564
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