For the first time since the 1930s, when San Francisco's cemeteries were dug up and moved to Colma, Catholics will soon have a place to inter their loved ones in the neighborhood. St. Dominic’s Church is creating a columbarium within its stately Gothic arches and flying buttresses. It will offer 320 niches behind the main altar, each big enough for the cremated remains of two parishioners. They are priced from $4,200 to $15,200, with the most costly located within the Friars Chapel. Others will be in the area around the altar known as the ambulatory.

“It doesn’t disturb the architectural integrity of the church,” said Father Xavier Lavagetto, who persuaded the archbishop of San Francisco to allow the columbarium after repeated requests from members of the church.

The Catholic church banned cremation until 1963. Now approximately half of local Catholics are cremated, but there has been no place in the city to inter their remains, as Catholic doctrine requires. “A number of people in the parish have a grandmother at home,” Father Xavier said.

One of those is Judie Doherty, a St. Dominic’s parishioner who has spearheaded the effort. She said a number of people in the neighborhood have been looking for a way to inter their loved ones nearby.

We’re awash in cookies
Something about the shorter days and longer nights of fall fuels the desire for comfort food. And chocolate chip cookies might just top the list. As good fortune would have it, in bakeries new and old, the neighborhood serves up plentiful variations of the homey treat. A recent unscientific study sampled local offerings baked on site. The results appear this month. Spoiler alert: You won’t find a bad one here.
SHE FLUFFS & FOLDS

When Sylvia Hernandez took command of the Wash and Royal at Fillmore and California four years ago, she had big shoes to fill. Her predecessor, Barbara Conway, had been the queen of fluff and fold on Fillmore Street for 40 years. She knew plants about the neighborhood’s dirty laundry — and how to spin a good yarn.

Hernandez is a QC director. Presented for a few years as a gag about her charge’s dirties and fluff towels and sheets, the word fluff began to catch on.

She did say the big load she washed and folded was in blue lights in 120 pounds every two weeks. “They have three kids and they’re a busy family,” she added. The smallest load is about a pound, which costs $1.50, the shop’s minimum charge. Anything over the minimum is a buck a pound. And that includes wash and the proper bleach.

If it’s fluff, Hernandez and her assistant, Elba Cuaparro, will wash and fold it without taking the customer to the cleaner. One regular brings in her dog bed and doesn’t tip off the $1.50 per pound wash as she says, not enough for those few minutes. “I’m sure she knows she’s giving her dog a real treat.”

She doesn’t fluff and fold on Fillmore Street; she ships a $2.50 fee per quarter to wash a load and a quarter every six minutes to dry.

Hernandez acknowledges that she left her own dirty laundry accumulation before she drove in and did it. Bonfire deplumed these 180 pounds of wash each week, she also cleans house.

“When I come home, all I want to do is take a shower, make something to eat and stretch out on the couch,” she says. “I don’t even want to think of another washing machine.”

St. Dominic’s Is Creating a Columbarium

So Doherty, a former executive at the McKesson Corp. and a refugee from the now-shuttered St. Brigids parlors, set about realizing the possibility and determined to make it a reality.

For 120 niches have been sold, more than paying for the project. The revenue from additional niches will go to an endowment to support the work of the church. The niches are 12 x 12 x 12 inches, stainless steel on the inside, faced with limestone and granite. They are being built by a firm in Texas and will be installed this fall.

Doherty refers to them as “ELCs — eternal life condos.” There are six levels, drawn from the ashes of a need, said Doherty. “It was a vision of Father Xavier’s many years ago. I knew it was something he wanted to do.”

Back on the boulevard, the new pants wear boutique at 1928 Fillmore is nearing completion. . . . Work is proceeding apace at 2201 Fillmore on Starbucks’ new juice bar concept called Stella Provisions. . . . There’s also a vision of Father Xavier’s many years ago. I knew it was something he wanted to do.”

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Officer received a call concerning an individual who appeared to be in distress or walking in and out of the roadway. They came to the scene after receiving an 8-ball warning check. A computer check revealed an outstanding warrant for burglary. When the officers informed the suspect about the warrant, he refused to coop...
Ballus had been scouting out the neighborhood for a location for her fourth Sift Cake and Dessert Bar. She found the perfect setting when Doughnuts & Buns abruptly left the cozy space at 2411 California, just around the corner from Fillmore, and opened her doors on August 23.

Ballus opened her first Sift shop in 2008. She says it is a business from frustration and necessity.

“I got married in Soma near that exact spot — and lean against the wall where the shop is now,” she says. “I knew people wanted a cup of coffee and a sugar-shy. ‘We definitely believe you should simply work hard and then treat yourself,’ Ballus says. But the shop offers gluten-free cupcakes on ‘wheat-free Wednesdays’ and Sift bakers have dabbled with some low-calorie and vegan creations.

wares: candles, journals and cookbooks, plus totes and lunchbags imbued with pastel prints. ‘A celebration — anything from getting off work at the end of a day to having a birthday,’ says Ballus. ‘And gifty items go hand in hand with desserts. Now people often give desserts as gifts.’

Ballus, who used to live around the corner from the newest Sift and worked as a nanny nearby, long had her heart on a local spot.

“I love it here. I knew it was a neighborhood I wanted to be in,” she says. “And people are professing their love already — promising to be our new best customers. That really makes work fun and exciting.”

For those who fondly remember the cheesecake served at Pauli’s, this is their lucky month. The September flavor of the month at Sift will be strawberry cheesecake. ‘It’s based on the very recipe my mom used to make for Pauli’s back in the ’70s,’ Ballus says.

NEW NEIGHBORS

CLASSICS

Ballus says her own allegiance shifted recently from the red velvet cupcake to the ‘Navy Snap,’ a sandwich made of ginger-

wedge of bread dipped in chocolate — and ‘frosting shots,’ which are just what the name implies served up in a souvenir shot glass.

‘They’re the same consistency as a milk-shake,’ Ballus says.

Nostalgic customers say they bring to mind childhood birthday parties when the ice cream used to melt into the cake on the same plate.

Ballus says her own allegiance shifted recently from the red velvet cupcake to the ‘Navy Snap,’ a sandwich made of ginger-cookies filled with lemon-gelatin.

The Fillmore shop — where Sift unveiled its new branding — Ballus describes as a “nostalgic linger,” with pink and prints and polka dots on a bark white background — will also offer Fresh-roast coffee, each cup individually brewed. And soon it will be open 7 in the morning on weekdays to offer commuters coffee, a cereal bar and supplishments.

‘I used to take the 1-California express bus from that exact spot — and lean against the wall where the shop is now,’ she says. ‘I knew people want a cup of coffee and a quick breakfast while waiting them.’

This shop’s offerings are not for the sugar-shy.

‘We definitely believe you should simply work hard and then treat yourself,’ Ballus says. But the shop offers gluten-free cupcakes on ‘wheat-free Wednesdays’ and Sift bakers have dabbled with some low-calorie and vegan creations.

It’s James Beard’s Kind of Place

Long before it won the coveted award named for the Dean of American Cooking, Swan Oyster Depot was one of his favorite places for lunch.

The venerable Swan Oyster Depot has been honored as one of America’s regional classics. The award hangs in the front window.

By John Phillip Carroll

photography by Steve Brela

The drive was in James Beard’s name at the Stanford Grant Hotel. As usual, it was within arm’s reach at his local newspaper office — the end table to the right of the sofa where he always sat — and he answered on the first ring. The phone was surrounded by, and occasionally buried under, a happy clutter: his calendar, dozens of pink message slips from the front desk, novels set to be his editor at Knopf (not for his critical opinion, but for his photographs), a bag of cauliflower gingers, a sandy lamp with a high-wattage bulb for reading and several editions of The New York Times. These days, the paper was always a day late because it was sent by mail, but James couldn’t begin the day without it.

The caller was Charles Rhoad, a long-term friend from the San Francisco Committee and Visitors Bureau. The two had a lunch date, and Charles was late. James was dressed, waiting and ready to go, wearing one of his low T-shirts with bright, broad horizontal stripes, a Chinese jacket and baggy L.L. Bean pants. It was his typical casual outfit, easy to slip on. The oil-made shoes, which he once wore for almost every engagement, now came out only in the evening, if at all, for dinner occasions.

From late 1979 until he died in January 1985, I worked closely with James Beard when he was on the West Coast. I met him through our mutual friend Marion Cunningham, who he called “the broad shoulders of the Bay Area ... American Cooking and his books, cooking classes and weekly newspaper column influenced generations of food enthusiasts.

James did not enjoy being alone, and he was always ready to meet someone, even if he wasn’t sure of the destination. He was a raconteur, a happy eater and a social butterfly. He fit into any car, bed or go. He had traveled and consulted throughout the world, and although Manhattan was his home base, he loved San Francisco and spent two or three months a year here. “This city just gets into your blood,” he told an interviewer. He was comfortable, the climate was ideal and he was very indulged. He lived as a beloved guest...
Swan Oyster Depot Is A Classic Neighborhood Spot

were fresh from the sea, not fussy and overworked. It was also a noisy, raucous place, but to me it was much like the West Coast oilfield had grown up with in Garibaldi, Oregon. With age we come to need a need and a desire for plates food. The diners of Swan were up until early each French cooking was just.

As large as James Beard was, he liked to fit his 300-plus pound frame into small spaces, like a kitten trying to curl up in a teacup. If counter seating was available, where he could watch cooks wielding knives, tossing salads and maneuvering saute pans over a high gas flame, he preferred that to a table. It gave him the chance to engage in conversation with the diners next to him. People were thinking. Perching on a high, narrow stool in the crowded Swan Oyster Depot was just the ticket for that experience.

Swan Oyster Depot Is A Classic Neighborhood Spot

FROM PAGE 7

California and New York. In short, he thought not so much about a legacy, but about making a living. In New York, he had a home to take care of, and to get him in San Francisco, life was changed from a hotel suite, when all of his needs were anticipated. He liked the city’s restaurants, too, and was interested in what chefs were doing. And he was charmed by both Millson Tower and Alice Waters.

A high, narrow stool in the crowded Swan Oyster Depot was one of James Beard's favorite spots.

Ground-breaking California cuisine pioneer, James was, by his own admission, a creature of habit when eating out. Michls oft the time he liked the places he knew, and when they knew him. "Let's go to a neighborhood joint," he say when there was a question about where to dine.

Chet's choice for their lunch that day was Swan Oyster Depot. I didn't go with them, so I can't tell you what they ate. The food at Swan was, and is, without pretension. The staff was doing what James Beard encouraged everyone to do: to cook what comes naturally, and what's comfortable for you. Let the food star, he said.

Or so it seemed. In his reminiscences, he was captivated by his conversations, and charmed by his slightly naughty behavior. And he, in turn, wanted to know what they were thinking. "What's this little turd of misery?"

He also looked forward to going to Chuck Williams' home, a jewel box of a place on Golden Court in San Francisco. Chuck had a love of sausages, and the staff was doing what James Beard encouraged everyone to do: to cook what comes naturally, and what's comfortable for you. Let the food star, he said.

In conversation, his words were colorful, and his humor often spicy. He loved "exchanging information," not gossiping, though he was rarely mean-spirited. At the grocery stores, or at a party, he would pick up some unidentified or unrecognizable little tidbit, eye it suspiciously and mutter, "What's this little turd of misery?"

The bathroom was always the "looo," saying goodbye or good night was "see you anon" and his morning shower was a "feeble ebullition." A disagreement was a "stalemate," and in his daily newspaper he would write, "ass over teapot." Drunk.

"Chuck roasts a chicken with one herb, not five or six, and it's perfect," James said.

He swooned over Marion Cunningham's fried chicken with mashed potatoes, biscuits and gravy. In conversation, his words were colorful, and his humor often spicy. He loved "exchanging information," not gossiping, though he was rarely mean-spirited. At the grocery stores, or at a party, he would pick up some unidentified or unrecognizable little tidbit, eye it suspiciously and mutter, "What's this little turd of misery?"

If someone close to him was eating something that was likely unactable, he would say, "The warm softshell crab for Christmas and oysters in July." Others, especially seniors, who were slightly bewildered or eccentric were either "pixilated" or "addlepated," or likened to "something on the end of a stick." For years, he and Marion Cunningham spoke every morning. Both were early risers. She could phone him at 5:30 a.m. California time knowing that, by 8:30 New York time, he would already have read her call. Like Marion, he loved the telephone. For years, he gave her much of the credit for her success. Though her initial boost came with his help, her own hard work and sense of what was right for the time carried her through to a remarkable career of her own.

John Phillip Carroll is a San Francisco writer and cookbook author. His most recent book, was published by Chronicle Books. At blog about his trips with James Beard at johnphilipcarroll.wordpress.com.
In the Chips
An opinionated guide to the best chocolate chip cookies in the neighborhood

By Donna Gillespie

Chocolate chip cookies abound at most of the bakeries in the Fillmore, and I’ve been long on a fix for this particular type of cookie. So I went on a sampling tour—one cookie per day—to compare and rate the chocolate chip cookies in the neighborhood. First, I must be upfront about my cookie biases. The ideal chocolate chip cookie should be warm, distinctly crumbly on the outside and melt-in-the-mouth on the inside, without any coldness or edges. I want one that is all crumb and no chip. I want it to taste as if it were just baked. I want it to melt in my mouth. I want it to be an experience. I want it to be a cookie. I want it to be delicious.

CFILLMORE BAKESHOP
1890 Fillmore Street

This chocolate chip cookie features a sprinkling of toffee. It is a cookie of chocolate—or-else grinch in me was totally silenced. These chips are that good. No nuts, but I didn’t miss them. The toffee is not heavily present; it’s a little on the crusty, dry side, but tasty enough that I would definitely recommend it. Cost: $2.75 Rating: 5 chips

Baker & Baker
700 Octavia Street (The bakery entrance is around the corner on Bush Street.)

What is described as a “brown butter chocolate chip cookie” at first glance looked a little overbrowned and I thought it might be dry. But I found it irresistible. The outer crispness served to mask the chewy crumbly interior. There are high-quality dark chocolate chunks that can be a bit intense but temper the richness of the cookie. The milk chocolate or white chip cookies were too strongly flavored. These are chips that are good enough to eat without the addition of the toffee. The toffee chips are a good balance of chocolate and sugar, but I prefer the chocolate chips on their own. Cost: $3.75 Rating: 5 chips

Baker & Baker
500 Fillmore Street

I was expecting a lot from a bakery devoted entirely to the art of the cookie—and Bumzy’s didn’t disappoint. Its chocolate chip version competes with the best in the neighborhood. The chips are big and chunky, the cookie is thick and chewy, and the overall flavor is rich and decadent. I found this cookie to be the perfect accompaniment to a cup of coffee or tea. Cost: $2.75 Rating: 5 chips

A Cookie Jar
1863 Fillmore Street

This cookie has great presence. I have to give it an extra chip just for appearance. I am not sure if it is because of the color or the texture, but it is definitely a cookie you will want to share with someone. It is soft and chewy on the inside, with a slight crunch on the outside. I found the toffee flavor to be subtle, but it is still present and adds a nice touch to the overall flavor. Cost: $2.75 Rating: 5 chips

LA BOULANGE
2325 Pine Street

This chocolate chip cookie did not have a lot of presence; it’s small and easy to miss among all the luscious pastries on display behind the counter at this French bakery. The cookie is browned and crisp around the edges. The chips are small, too, and made with dark chocolate that was, to my taste, very bittersweet. I found the cookie a little dry. Much as I love the bakery’s other offerings, I don’t think this is the place to go for chocolate chip cookies. Cost: $1.50 Rating: 4 chips

FRANCIE
1890 Fillmore Street

This is a medium-sized cookie generously supplied with large dark chocolate chunks that tend to melt into a seam of creamy chocolate in the center. This cookie is just a little on the crusty, dry side for me—but tasty enough that I would definitely recommend it. I also think that it would be great with a cup of coffee or tea. Cost: $2.75 Rating: 5 chips

I want to make sure he learns a second language.
Find the perfect school for your little one with our searchable database of 200+ schools. Search by language program, specialty, proximity and more.
zephyrsf.com
Galahad… and the Cat
A familiar face in the neighborhood goes searching for a new friend

By Barbara Kate Repa

The Old Man

“Good works”

Giving Shelter to Hard-to-Place Cats

“We podríamos estar saltando”
The San Francisco Public Library invites the community to visit a neighborhood library this fall and give us input about library operating hours. This will be an opportunity to give your ideas on library spaces and programs.

Who wouldn't want to live in San Francisco? The city is considered one of the most livable in the world, and it attracts people from all over the globe. For centuries, San Francisco has been home to artists and intellectuals, who have contributed to the city's rich cultural heritage. The city's history is filled with stories of artists and their contributions to the community. In this section, we will explore the history of one such artist, Lucien Labaudt, and the gallery he founded.

**An Important Gallery and a Labor of Love**

For decades, artists found opportunity nearby at the Lucien Labaudt Gallery. For unestablished artists doing the kind of work that is now shown in major galleries and museums, opportunity was meager. So it is worth remembering the Lucien Labaudt Gallery, which operated from 1946 to 1980 in an Art Deco-ish building at 1407 Gough Street, between Post and Polk streets.

The gallery kept businesslike hours, documented the work it exhibited and attracted reviewers. At a time when the city’s cultural offerings were far fewer than they are today, it hosted chamber concerts and major poetry readings as well as art shows. If the gallery made relatively few sales — well, that was the way things were in San Francisco.

Lucien was largely self-taught, with few mentors other than his grandfather, a noted painter. When he didn’t come back from the war, Labaudt resolved to turn the school into a gallery open especially to people who lacked opportunities to show their work.

— Data and commentary provided by MARY MANNeft of Sadleikh’s International Realty. Contact her at maria@sadleikh.com or call 415-686-0828.

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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