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Song curates a collection of rare and unusual teas

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# THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ OCTOBER 2013



DANIEL BAHAMANI

## TRANSFORMATION

Real estate broker David Fishbein is remaking Fillmore Street

SPECIAL REPORT | BY CHRIS BARNETT

**F**ILLMORE STREET LOST ITS INNOCENCE in 2008 when fashionmeister Ralph Lauren moved his signature line of classic men's and women's apparel into an elegant emporium on Fillmore that once housed a Goodwill store. The street would never be the same.

Two years later, a 23-year-old newly minted commercial real estate broker named David Fishbein packed his car, moved out of his parents' home in Lafayette, drove down to Los Angeles and struck out on his own, not knowing a soul in L.A. He started dialing his cell phone, calling anyone who might rent retail space.

Since then Fishbein has become the architect of a radical transformation of upper Fillmore Street from a jumble of locally owned and largely loved mom and pop shops to arguably the hottest neighborhood shopping street in America.

Already he has brought 10 new fashion and beauty stores to the street by targeting expanding companies eager to open here before they become subject to the city's limits on chain stores. And he has more in the works. Edgy designers, manufacturers and retailers of mostly women's fashionwear throughout the U.S. and Europe are lined up to get an address on Fillmore's four choicest blocks — from Clay Street south to Bush.

TO PAGE 8 ►

The Village Project & The Bayview 4 present: The 3rd annual

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## ICON



**Open house at Haas-Lilienthal**

You're invited to call on the neighbors on Sunday, October 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. when San Francisco Heritage welcomes visitors for its annual community day, which includes free tours of the 1886 Haas-Lilienthal House at 2007 Franklin Street. It's a living monument to the history of San Francisco and its pioneering German-Jewish families.

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**Connecting the neighborhood**

Every month, 20,000 copies of The New Fillmore are delivered to homes and businesses in the Fillmore, Pacific Heights and Japantown. We thank you for your support and encouragement and welcome your ideas and suggestions.

 [newfillmore.com](http://newfillmore.com) | updates, videos and an archive of back issues

## STREET TALK

### Marcus Books gets a vote of support



Supporters of the embattled Marcus Books store won a victory on September 18 when the city's Historic Preservation Commission voted to declare the bookstore's longtime home at 1712 Fillmore a historic landmark.

The vote initiates a process that leads eventually to the Board of Supervisors for approval — and even then may not ensure the store survives in its current location. The building's new owners have moved to evict the bookstore, which specializes in books by and about black people.

Marcus Books has occupied the lavender Victorian since 1960, when the building was moved from Post Street during redevelopment. Before the move it had housed Jimbo's Bop City, a legendary jazz club, and Japantown's Nippon Drug Co.

A Marcus Books Legacy Celebration set for Sunday afternoon, October 13, from 1 to 4 p.m., will feature authors, musicians and civic leaders. It's billed as "an afternoon devoted to passing the mic and the hat."

**THE JAPANTOWN PLAN:** A plan to preserve the unique cultural features of Japantown, while encouraging greater economic vitality, has now been endorsed by both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission. Next the Board of Supervisors will consider the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Study. Much community effort has gone into developing the plan, but the new owners of the Japantown malls have not participated, so its practical effect is uncertain.

**STATE BIRD'S EXPANSION:** "The best new restaurant in America," as *Bon Appetit* called it, will reopen this month if all goes well in its expanded home at 1529 Fillmore in the jazz district. State Bird Provisions has been closed for a few weeks while incorporating the empty space next door. They're hoping the curtain will rise on the new incarnation in mid-October.

**GOING & COMING BACK:** Fillmore lost one of its fixtures at the end of September when Pure Beauty closed at 2124 Fillmore, the end of a decade-long run by a beauty products store in that space. . . . Posh, the salon at 2444 Fillmore, near Jackson, has also closed — but only temporarily. Its stylists are camping out this month on Polk Street while expanding into the space next door on Fillmore that was formerly occupied for 60 years by Bond Cleaners. A new look and new services will be unveiled in early November.



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# UCSF Long Range Development Plan

UC San Francisco is preparing a new Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) to guide future growth and development over a 20+ year planning horizon through the year 2035. The LRDP plans for projected campus growth of approximately 2.76 million gross square feet on existing campus sites (including Mission Bay, Mount Zion, and Parnassus) to accommodate roughly 500 more students and 10,000 more employees. So far, six community workshops have been held at UCSF's campus sites.

Some important features of the LRDP include proposals to:

- accommodate growth in clinical care, research programs and student enrollment;
- address seismically compromised buildings;
- optimize the use of existing campus sites, and;
- continue to work with neighbors to address potential community concerns that may arise as result of UCSF's physical development.

**EIR Scoping Meeting**

You are invited to an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping meeting for the UCSF LRDP. This meeting provides an opportunity for the community to discuss the scope and content of the environmental information they expect to see included in the Draft EIR. This allows UCSF to learn about potential concerns early, as well as further defines the issues, feasible alternatives and potential mitigation measures that may warrant in-depth analysis in the environmental review process. This public meeting is not required by law.

When: **Monday, October 28, 2013  
7:00 PM**

Where: UCSF Parnassus Campus  
Millberry Union  
500 Parnassus Avenue

UCSF Parnassus Campus is on MUNI lines 6, 43, 66, N-Judah. If you must drive, please park in the UCSF public parking garage for \$1.75 (with validation).

**Initial Study**

An Initial Study that includes a project description is available online at [www.ucsf.edu/LRDP](http://www.ucsf.edu/LRDP). It also identifies the scope and content of the environmental information that will be included in the Draft EIR. You can obtain a paper or CD copy of the Initial Study by calling 415.476.2911.

To give written feedback on the Initial Study, please write by October 29, 2013 to Diane Wong, UCSF Campus Planning, Box 0286, San Francisco, CA 94143 or email her at [EIR@planning.ucsf.edu](mailto:EIR@planning.ucsf.edu).

The Draft EIR is expected to be published in April 2014. If you would like to be notified about the publication of the Draft EIR, or if you would like to attend the public hearing, please contact us at [community@cgr.ucsf.edu](mailto:community@cgr.ucsf.edu) or at 415.476.3206.

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Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

Reconciliation Sat 5:00 pm,  
Sun 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 am, 5:00 pm

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## CRIME WATCH

**Conspiracy, Auto Burglary**  
**Sutter and Franklin Streets**  
**August 6, 4 a.m.**

A witness reported two men breaking into a vehicle. Arriving officers saw a man standing nearby acting as a lookout. They detained him. Another suspect was still inside the car, searching through it. He then said, "Please don't take me to jail, I have a drug problem." The witness supplied the officers with video footage of the incident. The two suspects were booked at Northern Station.

**Trespassing, Conspiracy,**  
**Possession of a Switchblade Knife**  
**Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue**  
**August 6, 11:18 p.m.**

Hospital security guards saw a man climb over a chain link fence and enter a construction site, then open the door for two more individuals. The guards called the police. When officers arrived, a man came out of a doorway with his hands in his pockets. The officers ordered him to lie on the ground. They then observed that a nearby portable toilet was moving. They approached the toilet and ordered the occupant to come out with hands up. Two men emerged. All three suspects were transported to Northern Station, where officers discovered they possessed a switchblade, baggies of methamphetamine and tools commonly used in burglaries.

**Vehicle Burglary,**  
**Possession of Stolen Property**  
**Geary Boulevard and Laguna Street**  
**August 7, 4:02 p.m.**

Plainclothes officers attempting to abate a rash of auto burglaries along Geary saw a man break a car window; he then took a backpack from inside the vehicle and ran. The officers gave chase while putting out a description of the suspect and his direction of travel. They pursued him for several blocks, during which he discarded several layers of clothing. Eventually police caught him, collected the discarded clothing and stolen property as evidence and booked him at Northern Station.

**Vehicle Burglary, Possession of Narcotics**  
**Van Ness Avenue and Clay Street**  
**August 8, 5:08 a.m.**

Officers responding to a call about an auto burglary in progress found the suspect still inside the car. When the man refused to comply with their requests to get out, officers physically removed him. As they pulled him out, the property he was taking spilled onto the ground. Officers found chips of broken auto glass and crack cocaine on the suspect. As they were walking the man to the patrol car, he suddenly went limp and stuck out his tongue. The officers called for paramedics, who found nothing wrong with him. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

**Vandalism, Possession of Stolen Property**  
**Post and Pierce Streets**  
**August 28, 11:35 p.m.**

A witness reported a drunk driver attempting to flee in a stolen vehicle. The caller was using his own car to block the man so he couldn't drive away. The witness stated that he had watched while the man, who appeared intoxicated, kicked out the car window, then opened the door and got inside. While the witness was still blocking him, the suspect emerged from the car carrying CDs and began to walk away. Officers then arrived and detained him. The car's owner also arrived and identified the CDs and a pay stub in the suspect's pocket as his own. The suspect was booked.

**Street Robbery**  
**Sutter and Broderick Streets**  
**September 4, 12:34 a.m.**

A man and a woman were walking on the sidewalk when one of them was pushed from behind. They turned to see a man armed with a handgun who demanded their property. The woman handed over her purse, which contained two cell phones and a wallet. The suspect was a black male aged 20 to 25, wearing a dark hooded sweatshirt.

**Robbery**  
**Bush and Lyon Streets**  
**Possession of Narcotics**  
**September 9, 10:30 p.m.**

A man walking his dog was approached by two men, one armed with a handgun. The two demanded his valuables and the man handed over his cell phone. The suspects then fled east on Broderick. They were described as black males; one wore a black hooded sweatshirt and dreadlocks; the other was bald and wore a black shirt.

**Firearms Violations,**  
**Possession of Narcotics**  
**Sutter and Broderick Streets**  
**September 11, 10:15 p.m.**

Officers walking through the parking lot of a public housing development saw a cluster of men talking loudly and drinking alcohol. As they approached, a tenant shouted down from the window of one of the apartments, asking them to be quiet and stop drinking. The officers then announced their presence. One of men turned and sprinted away while grabbing at his waistband. Officers gave chase, tackled him and brought him to the ground. They recovered a loaded firearm from his waistband. He was also in possession of narcotics. The man was booked.

**Auto Burglary, Possession of**  
**Stolen Property, Probation Violation**  
**Pacific and Baker Streets**  
**September 12, 8:15 a.m.**

A couple was loading their car; the woman placed a diaper bag inside it and went back inside her apartment. When she returned, the diaper bag, which contained her wallet and iPhone, was missing. The apartment's surveillance video showed an individual walking up the driveway, opening the back door and taking the bag. The couple retrieved a still photo of the suspect from the video; the woman called 911 and began to track her iPhone. The man set off to find the suspect while officers responded to the route indicated by the phone. Officers located the suspect sitting inside a vehicle at Chestnut and Sansome Streets. The man arrived at the same time and showed the police the still shot of the suspect; it matched the man in the car. The police recovered the iPhone and wallet. A computer check revealed that the suspect was on probation.

**Street Robbery**  
**Divisadero and Jackson Streets**  
**September 12, 8:55 p.m.**

Officers received a report of a robbery. Dispatch advised responding officers that one of the suspects was armed with a black pistol. The police then searched for the men. Two officers saw a white vehicle run a stop sign on Broderick Street. Because the violation occurred in close proximity to the robbery, they believed there might be a connection. The officers conducted a felony traffic stop and saw a firearm in plain view. Additional units responded, and officers arrested four men. A search of the suspects revealed they were carrying narcotics.

## FOOD & DRINK



## New Izakaya at Fillmore and Geary

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DUNN

Ask Nick Yoon, the chef and owner of Izakaya Hashibiro Kou, what separates his new restaurant at Fillmore and Geary from all the other Japanese and Korean food this culinary city offers.

He hesitates — after all, his menu offers about 100 dishes — but not for long.

"Our sauces," he says, his boyish face earnest but serene.

About 60 sauces, in fact, and the South Korean-born chef makes them all from scratch.

"I try to make different sauces for all the different dishes and do it all by hand," he says.

Izakaya Hashibiro Kou sits in the prominent high-ceilinged space across from the Fillmore Auditorium that formerly housed Nan California Korean Kitchen. It opened with limited menu choices on September 17 and plans a grand opening — with a full menu — in early October. The food is mostly Japanese, with Korean influences.

Yoon, 36, is no stranger to his craft. He's been cooking for 15 years at venues including the Ritz Carlton and Namu at the W Hotel. He immigrated to the Bay Area from South Korea in 1997, a few years after first coming here to visit his uncle.

"I just fell in love with all the farmers markets," Yoon says.

He has transformed the space into what he calls a "modern Zen design." It's a cozy, reclaimed wood haven featuring a long bar where patrons are front and center with the chefs, plus table seating and four intimate tatami rooms.

The menu offers an eclectic blend of meat, vegetables, fish and noodles, along with sake-based cocktails, beer, wine and champagne.

Among Yoon's favorites are kalbi tempura, which combines boneless short ribs with vegetables and sesame ponzu; and sunomono, an organic salad with prawns, octopus and cucumber.

All dishes on the menu are designed, Yoon says, to be "refreshing."

"That's our slogan — refreshing," he says. "Our food is not that heavy, because we use less oil and a lot of greens."

Izakaya Hashibiro Kou, at 1560 Fillmore, is open from 5:30 p.m. to midnight weekdays and until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.



Nick Yoon (top right) is the chef-owner of the new Izakaya Hashibiro Kou, located at 1560 Fillmore. A long bar gives patrons a perch to be near the action in the kitchen while dining. Among the specialties (right) are skewers of shrimp, chicken, pork and asparagus wrapped in bacon.



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## LOCAL TREASURE

### Truffle sea salt, black or white

Spice Ace, located just off the neighborhood's beaten path at 1821 Steiner Street between Sutter and Bush Streets, won kudos last month when *Food & Wine* magazine proclaimed it one of the world's best spice shops.

And for those newly freed by the recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proclaiming that dietary limits on salt were wrongheaded — and those who ignored the warnings anyway — the gourmet spice shop offers two irresistible treats: black truffle and white truffle sea salt.

Both varieties originate from Italy and give off a pungent odor beckoning to truffle-lovers — although the black stuff has by far the biggest nose. Spice Ace sales associates Louise Bluestone and Susan Davis say both sell well, and neither one is "overly salty," but the vast majority of the customers gravitate to the black truffle version.

The milder and more subtle white truffle salt is heartily recommended for spicing seafood and salads. The black truffle salt perks up grilled cheese sandwiches and French fries, among other things. And both kinds transform a bowl of popcorn from ho-hum to a salivating snack.

Online, where anonymous reviewers often bare all, many mention being addicted to the stuff. Confesses one Yelper: "I have a jar of white truffle salt in my bedroom. I open it up just to sniff it from time to time. At some point, I'll eventually have to take it out and cook with it."

Writes another in a swoon over the black truffle salt: reward in itself.

And Davis says after sampling the salts, a friend simply texted "OMG" — the ultimate social media compliment.

The white truffle salt sells for \$10.49 for a quarter cup and \$19.09 for a half cup; the black truffle is slightly pricier, at \$11.19 for a quarter cup and \$19.49 for a half cup. That's more than Morton's, but Davis confirms the price is less than elsewhere — and that a little goes a long way.

For truffle lovers tempted but unsure whether to buy black or white, Spice Ace offers a solution: Shoppers are urged to inhale the aromas from tester jars and sample the wares on hygienic plastic spoons.



Jazz is part of the Fillmore Farmers Market, held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Fillmore and O'Farrell.

## Keeping Jazz Alive at the Farmers Market

SINCE IT STARTED 10 years ago in an empty parking lot that is now home to Yoshi's and the Fillmore Heritage Center, the weekly Fillmore Farmers Market has included performances by local jazz musicians.

Now the community can help keep the sounds alive at the market by contributing to a new fund.

"Our community has had the pleasure of having the only farmers market in the city — and one of the few in the country — with live jazz on Saturday mornings," said Christine Harris, who chairs the heritage center and came up with the idea of creating the Fillmore Community Jazz Fund. "The Fillmore district has a long, rich tradition of jazz, and with the support of the community we can keep it going."

Market manager Tom Nichol, who works with the

Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association, has been the muscle behind the market since it started in 2003.

"The Fillmore Farmers Market is one of my favorites," said Nichol, "because there is such an incredible sense of community here, with both the farmers and the shoppers."

At first the jazz program was supported by the city's redevelopment agency and later by the farmers market association. In recent years Nichol has continued to coordinate the music, but persuaded local musicians to play without pay.

Now he hopes that will change through a partnership between the market and a nonprofit organization called Fresh Approach, which works with farmers markets to provide education and outreach.

To contribute, visit [pcfma.com/fillmore](http://pcfma.com/fillmore).

## NEW NEIGHBOR

## A Serene Oasis for Tea

At Song on Sutter, an even taste with a long slow finish



"I wanted to do something quiet and considered."

— PETER LUONG  
Song Tea & Ceramics

PETER LUONG has created a serene oasis for those who step into his just-opened door at 2120 Sutter Street, the new home of Song Tea & Ceramics. Soft music plays. Comfortable chairs are arranged on cozy rugs near bookcases and neat white canisters line shelves along one wall, with labeled drums of teas in rows toward the back. Ceramic vases, pots and teaware are scattered strategically throughout the open space. Browsers and customers are offered water or tea while they wander about the shop.

"This is intended as a place to showcase a nice collection of tea and teaware," says Luong, "a place where people can come in and feel comfortable to learn about different teas, to understand what's special about them and to hear the story behind each one."

Luong spent from March through May of this year in China and Taiwan, curating a collection of 24 high-quality teas to offer in the shop, concentrating on many that are rare in the U.S.

He's a knowledgeable teacher, patiently and excitedly explaining the differences

vessels — is made by noted Taiwanese artisans, and now he is working with a ceramicist in Oakland to design and produce a local line.

among growing regions and cultivars. In the future, he hopes to host group lessons in the shop.

When brewing, Luong explains, the water must not be too hot and the leaves should not be steeped too long — although there is "more forgiveness" in high quality tea.

Green teas are the most misunderstood, he says. Those who dismiss them as lacking flavor likely have tasted tea gone stale from sitting in teabags on shelves, or shipped in containers kept at ruinous temperatures. Luong says he circumvents these problems by air-shipping teas or encasing them in temperature-controlled containers aboard ship.

Song's offerings naturally include some of Luong's favorites:

■ **ZHU YE QING** is a green tea harvested in Sichuan, with consistently sized leaves — a hallmark of a high-end tea. It's a bit pricey: \$50 for two ounces, which brews about 30 servings. The tea comes from a

small harvest, is hand-roasted and then carefully combed through. Fans appreciate its even taste and long slow finish.

■ **ALISHAN ZHU LU** (two ounces for \$31) is a golden-colored light oolong that settles on the palate with a long creamy aftertaste; the clustered leaves unfold beautifully in the brewing.

■ **OLD TREE YUNNAN RED** (two ounces for \$22) is what many traditionally think of as black tea; the complexity in the taste comes from a crop that has been aged — much like wines made from old vines.

COMFORT IS KEY while sipping and learning, Luong emphasizes, and he hopes to accommodate both newcomers and seasoned aficionados. He personally shuns tea strainers and shudders at the thought of adding milk or sugar, but insists: "We don't want to be snooty about our product. The more friendly and helpful our staff can be, the better."

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## The Race for Space on Fillmore

► FROM PAGE ONE

But there's no space available, which has only made the fashion houses hungrier.

The price of entry went up this summer when Fishbein and Pam Mendelsohn, a veteran leasing broker with Collier's International's San Francisco office who has been working the Fillmore for more than a decade, informally joined forces to beckon another fashion giant. They persuaded New York-based Rag & Bone, an 11-year-old clothing company known for a style it calls "effortless cool," to pony up six figures in cash to buy out the owner of the coffee shop and laundromat at Fillmore and California, which boasts 2,400 square feet and the best location on the boulevard.

A couple of weeks later, the owners of the furniture store Design Within Reach reportedly pocketed a quarter million dollars to turn over their lease at 1913 Fillmore. The winning tenant, after a battle, is Ella Moss, a self-described purveyor of "fun, flirty, whimsical apparel for women and children."

### A fashion feeding frenzy

THE RACE FOR SPACE on Fillmore Street has become a feeding frenzy for fashion brands and leasing brokers and a windfall for landlords and troubled tenants looking for an exit strategy. But for many neighborhood stalwarts, local residents and sentimentalists who prized the street's small-town feeling and folksiness, the transformation is an unfortunate loss of neighborhood-serving businesses that have made the area such an attractive place to live.

For Fishbein, the transformation of Fillmore from a street of small-time stores



*"This can be an incredible retail and fashion destination. You have sophisticated, worldly people up here. It's Soho, it's Robertson, it's Venice Boulevard, it's old town Pasadena before their discovery."*

—DAVID FISHBEIN  
real estate broker and developer

into a must-be-there destination for the hippest fashion designers has become a mission.

Son of a real estate broker dad and a fashion savvy "lifestyle brand designer" mom, Fishbein traveled widely with his family growing up and graduated from the University of Denver. "It was the only college I knew of with a real estate undergraduate degree," he says. He graduated in 2008 — "in the middle of the economic meltdown, the worst possible time to look for a job." He landed one, though, with an East Bay commercial real estate brokerage and went to work trying to lease retail space in downtown Napa. Thwarted and frustrated, he tossed in the towel after two years and

moved to Los Angeles, where he now co-owns the Runyon Group, a commercial leasing brokerage and developer. But a part of his mind stayed in the Bay Area.

"As a kid, I remember Sacramento Street and Sue Fisher King and going shopping on Fillmore with my mother and walking into Fillamento," he says. So three years ago, when he got wind that Kiehl's was moving from its classic corner space at Fillmore and Washington down to the former corner grocery at Fillmore and Pine, Fishbein immediately thought of L.A. designer and entrepreneur Nevena Borisova.

Borisova had done some urban retail pioneering in New York's soho district and is credited with helping turn L.A.'s

Robertson Blvd. on the edge of Beverly Hills into a mix of sophisticated shops and restaurants. She had also launched a collection of stylish women's boutiques called Curve that was grabbing headlines in fashion magazines and websites.

Fishbein had pitched her relentlessly to open a Curve in Napa, but she continually shot him down. He didn't give up.

"I called and said, 'I don't know if you've ever thought of expanding to San Francisco, but there is this cool corner space on Fillmore.'" She cut him off mid-spiel. "Everyone tells me San Francisco is too conservative," she said. "I'm not conservative."

But Fishbein didn't let up, walking the



PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL BAYANA

delicate line between tenacious and obnoxious. "This can be an incredible retail and fashion destination," he stressed. "I think it's risky but untapped. You have sophisticated, worldly people up there. It's Soho, it's Robertson, it's Venice Boulevard, it's old town Pasadena before their discovery. Fillmore is ready for a renaissance."

Borisova flew up, toured the street, liked what she saw and took a flyer on the 1,500 square foot space at Fillmore and Washington. And she gave Fishbein the ultimate thank you gift: a list of women's wear designers who were burning up the runways in New York, Paris, Milan and Munich. These were labels that had either branched out into retailing or wanted to shed the shackles of department store selling where they had to fight for attention from shoppers and sales clerks.

Fishbein nailed down his second lease when he cold-called New York Apothecary and sold the company on taking over 600 square feet for Le Labo, a high-end fragrance company, at 2238 Fillmore, sandwiched between Athleta and Via Veneto.

Fishbein's third deal in three months was a coup, leasing the space at 2326 Fillmore to Peruvian Connection, which sells mostly women's fashions imported from Peru.

Another big hit for Fishbein came from yet another of Borisova's suggestions when he wooed Alice + Olivia to take over the corner spot at Fillmore and Clay. "This was a hot national brand with only three or four stores," he says, "and a name someone would recognize if they were shopping at Bloomingdale's."

### The international angle

FISHBEIN HAD AN ACE up his sleeve: The city's chain store ordinance limits its companies to 11 stores operating in the U.S., but locations outside the country don't count. The young, soft-spoken broker has played this angle to perfection, lassoing international women's fashion and cosmetic brands expanding into the U.S. and selling them on Fillmore as the hot new locale.

His trophies include boutiques for Aesop, Joie, Sandro and NARS Cosmetics, among others. The French-based Coty-lac, Dutch-owned Scotch & Soda and

TO PAGE 11 ►

### ■ A MERCHANT'S VIEW

## 'It's an Absolute Feeling of Betrayal'

HEIDI SABELHAUS MYERS is an obvious fan of Fillmore Street, where she owns three women's boutiques. But lately, she's become less than thrilled about some of her new neighbors: the well-bankrolled national designer brands that have opened glossy retail stores here. She says so far they have cost her upwards of \$300,000 in revenue — and she stands to lose more if the trend continues.

In operating her three Heidi Says boutiques — one devoted to designer collections, one selling casual womenswear and the third a shoe store — Myers says she's introduced several designer labels and built up a following for the brand among San Francisco shoppers. But lately the designers have been parachuting in with an entire retail palace stocking the brand's full line and she's out in the cold.

Worse, she feels ambushed. "I don't get the courtesy of a phone call, a meeting or a lunch from the brand or its rep to give me a heads up that they're opening up on Fillmore in competition with me," she says. "It's an absolute feeling of betrayal."

A former advertising agency account executive who worked on Apple, Pixar and Nike accounts and opened her first Heidi Says boutique at 2426 Fillmore in 2001, Myers is not, by nature, a complainer; she's soft-spoken and understated — and a savvy businesswoman.

"These were baby designers — young and starting out — when I took on their lines," she recalls. "I worked really hard building their brands, helping them build their businesses," she says. "There was a sense of camaraderie: I help you, you help me. All of a sudden, they get very big and very corporate."

Her first shock came when James Perse, a casual clothing brand for both men and



HEIDI SABELHAUS MYERS

*"I grew their business and promoted them to all the people in this neighborhood."*

—HEIDI SABELHAUS MYERS  
owner of three Fillmore boutiques

women, opened in 2010 next door to Harry's Bar at 2028 Fillmore. She had been selling Perse for eight years and was doing a "huge business" with the line.

"I felt really emotional about it and said to myself, 'I can't believe they are doing this. I grew their business and promoted them to all the people in this neighborhood,'" she says. "My customers would come in, look around and say: 'I'll just go down the street to the new store and see what they have.'"

Myers took another hit when Alice + Olivia opened a stand-alone store last year at 2259 Fillmore, next to the Clay Theatre.

She had also been selling that brand in her neighborhood shops for eight years. "Another customer said to me: 'You're the person who introduced me to that brand, got me to love that brand. In fact, I went into their store and spent \$2,000.' I felt like I was stabbed," she says.

When Joie, another women's clothing brand, took over the space at 2132 Fillmore occupied by Metro 200 late last year, Heidi Says was carrying its entire large collection including their shoes.

Now New York-based Rag & Bone has signed a lease for the prime corner location at California and Fillmore and Myers is bracing herself. "I sell all their denim lines, their accessories," she says. In late September, co-founder David Neville and his local lobbyist were visiting the street and sought her support.

But the longtime local resident isn't just rolling over as the national brands roll onto the street with their stand-alone brick and mortar shops. She's added lines by new contemporary American designers to all three of her local stores.

Myers says broker David Fishbein has been trying to buy her out of her leases, but she's not budging. Offers for one shop and for all three shops, with six-figure enticements, have been dangled before her, but she has refused them all.

"I think about this street and my time on it and my strong connection with this community, the people in it and the other small businesspeople here," Myers says. "If I leave, that kind of connection will never be replaced. Instead, we all need to come together as a community to keep the neighborhood feeling alive."

—CHRIS BARNETT

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**F**ILLMORE STREET's transformation into a mecca for corporate fashion retailers has been a trauma drama for some neighborhood residents and shoppers. But for longtime landlord Alan Tan, it's been a bonanza.

Tan owns four side-by-side storefronts on the hot block between California and Sacramento. Two of them are now occupied by European-styled women's fashion boutiques that advertise in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. A third, vacated in late September by Pure Beauty, is up for lease and its 1,400 square feet is in big demand. In just four days, leasing brokers for seven local, national and foreign-owned companies bid for the space.

Tan is currently collecting rents ranging from \$11,000 and \$13,000 a month from Oskia, the Munich-based parent of the new boutique at 2130 Fillmore called 2130, and from Los Angeles-headquartered Joie at 2116 Fillmore. His fourth tenant, Crosswalk Shoes, just re-leased its space at 2122 Fillmore for another five years at an estimated 40 percent rent hike.

Tan's pioneering investment in the four stores and the apartments above them 25 years ago is a gold mine today. But the Taiwanese native who arrived in San Francisco

■ A LANDLORD'S VIEW

## 'There's No Way We Can Make Money That Way'

cisco in 1972 with just four dollars in his pocket is also paying a heavy price for his success. His previous tenants — Jet Mail, Metro 200 and Pure Beauty — were fixtures on Fillmore for decades. Some have blamed him for kicking up the rent on longtime merchants struggling to survive in a tough economy or busting their leases to re-rent the storefronts to fancy clothing lines that are clamoring for a prime Fillmore address.

Nothing could be further from the truth insists his daughter, Christina Tan, a U.C. Berkeley economics grad who manages her dad's property and lives above the stores.

She says three of the four tenants were chronically behind on their rent and that all asked to be let out of their leases early. Moreover, she says, her father had either reduced the rents or frozen them and

waived the annual increases during the economic meltdown that started in 2008.

"There's no way we can make money that way," she says. "My dad has a very rough exterior but when he hears someone is having a rough time, he becomes a real softie."

Last year, San Francisco leasing broker Duncan Wheeler contacted Jet Mail owner Ed Tinsley on behalf of Oskia, a German fashion house, asking if he would be willing to sell the remainder of his lease for cash.

"I felt it was a saving grace for everyone," says Tan. She checked the Oskia website and found it had just eight stores in the U.S., avoiding the limits on retailers with more than 11 stores.

But a closer look revealed that Oskia had signed leases for other stores and the city's Board of Appeals ruled that Oskia should

be considered a chain store. Scrambling, the retailer decided to name the store after its address, 2130, and carry fashion merchandise in addition to the Oskia brand.

Meanwhile, leasing broker David Fishbein called Metro 200 owner Eddy Izzo to say that Joie, a Paris-inspired, Los Angeles-based women's clothing and accessories chain, wanted to open on Fillmore. Tan calculates that Metro 200 had already saved more than \$25,000 thanks to her dad's generosity and took a hefty payout to leave eight months before its lease expired.

She says the parent company that owned Pure Beauty was not paying the store's rent regularly, had filed for bankruptcy twice, was rapidly closing Pure Beauty stores nationwide and had decided to end the brand entirely in 2014. So when her father had the opportunity to buy back the three years and two months remaining on the store's lease, he pounced on it. She puts the price of the buyout at between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

While brokers are now pushing her for a decision about who gets the space, she says she's in no rush. "We have to replace the store's brick foundation," she says, "and that will take us through December."

— CHRIS BARNETT



More than a dozen new fashion boutiques have opened on Fillmore in recent years, and more are on the way.

## Fillmore Street Transformed

► FROM PAGE 9

German-owned Oskia have also opened on Fillmore, although Oskia opened under another name — its address, 2130 — when locations it had leased but not yet opened were included and pushed it over the 11 store limit.

These days Fishbein and other leasing agents working the street haven't had to sell Fillmore. Everybody wants in. Just a whisper of a possible vacancy on the four choice blocks triggers multiple offers for a lease. Landlords have such a strong upper hand there is little haggling over lease terms.

For example, Maje, a Paris-based designer line and a corporate sibling to the French-based Sandro, is reportedly pushing hard to take over the space just left vacant by Pure Beauty at 2124 Fillmore. Even though there is a Maje "on virtually every other street corner in Paris," says another Fillmore merchant who recently returned from a buying trip, it has fewer than 11 retail stores in America.

Ironically, Fishbein, who brokered the recently opened Sandro store, isn't repping Maje and won't say who is. He's got another

client angling for the space, and others are lining up as well.

There are only a limited number of storefronts on the four most desirable blocks of Fillmore. Traffic is not as strong north of Clay Street. And a leasing broker who knows the territory predicts that fashion forward brands will not move south of Bush.

"When they built that full block of apartments (on the east side of Fillmore between Bush and Sutter), retailing was an afterthought. Designers want to build a store that expresses their brand and they aren't going to move into a space with low ceilings and no aesthetic or character," he says. "And forget what's on the west side of the street."

Even Fishbein, who obviously has canvassed the boulevard looking for converts, admits: "There are plenty of great tenants on Fillmore with no interest in leaving. And there are landlords who have had the opportunity to replace them when the lease is up with a tenant who might have paid more for the space — and the landlord has renewed them. It's wonderful."

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## BOOKS

# Inventing California Cuisine

An insider's account of a revolution that started here

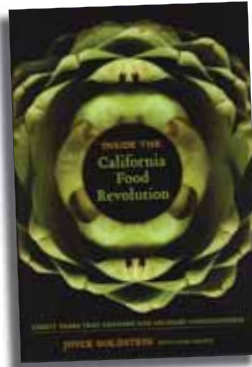
By JOYCE GOLDSTEIN

IN THE mid-1970s, a handful of innovative, mostly self-taught chefs and restaurateurs in California felt driven to create a dining experience very different from what prevailed at the time. Their new approach, featuring fresh, seasonal ingredients and creative interpretations of flavor themes from cuisines around the world, captured people's attention.

Eventually labeled "California cuisine," it engendered a revolution in Americans' relationship with food through the 1980s and into the 1990s. Styles of restaurants broadened from formal and ceremonial to more democratic and casual. Kitchens that had been hidden were opened up to become part of the dining room. Chefs who had toiled behind closed doors in anonymity became stars. Ingredients such as arugula, baby greens and goat cheese, virtually unknown previously, became household items for many.

Today, in large part because of the influence of California cuisine, both restaurant and home cooking inhabit a radically new world. People now have expectations for freshness, flavor, variety and healthfulness that are very different from those of the previous generation.

When you go to a supermarket today in many parts of the country you are not surprised to find 20 kinds of



and above all, you expect the ingredients to be fresh, seasonal and to a large extent locally grown.

To belong to the California cuisine community, chefs do not have to have an open kitchen, although many do. They do not have to use a wood-burning oven or mesquite grill, although many consider that equipment essential to their cooking. They do not have to change their menu every day; they can change one or two things or just the sides. They can choose to list all of their suppliers and farmers on their menu, or not.

California cuisine is a cuisine of options. It has wide parameters and no rigid rules. The one common element is that California cuisine uses fresh, seasonal ingredients, preferably raised nearby.

This history focuses on the years 1970 to 2000, which were the most transformative in the development of California cuisine. The movement had repercussions in agriculture, the wine industry and restaurant design. Developments during those 30 years had an enormous impact on the quality, freshness, availability and diversity of the raw materials at chefs' disposal.

The California restaurant wine list became a model for restaurants all over the country. The open kitchen allowed a more casual but still professional style of service. By the late 1990s, California cuisine had begun to influence every aspect of the food universe: home as well as restaurant cooking, what was grown, how it was grown, how fresh it had to be and where it could be purchased.

I was 47 years old when Alice Waters asked me to fill in for Steve Sullivan, the bread baker at Chez Panisse, while he took a six-week vacation. Although I had taught cooking classes for 18 years, I had never worked in a restaurant. Suddenly I found myself making 30 loaves of bread, four buckets of pizza dough and 30 pounds of pasta a day. When Steve came back, Alice asked me to stay on to cook in the Chez Panisse Café, where I later became chef.

Three years later, I left Chez Panisse to open Square

extra virgin olive oils, some made from California olives. A plethora of mustards and salsas in the condiment aisle is to be expected.

The produce section has bags of salad-ready baby lettuces and bins filled with radicchio, arugula, golden beets, haricots verts and bouquets of fresh herbs. You could get lost in the cheese department while making up your mind what to buy. You can select pastured eggs, grass-fed beef and old-fashioned pork from a Berkshire pig that bears little resemblance to the commodity-raised "other white meat."

When you go out to a restaurant, you don't consider it odd to find goat cheese or smoked salmon on a pizza that was cooked in a wood-burning oven, or to be served soft polenta with a stew of just-harvested chanterelles or a Moroccan spiced lamb tagine on a bed of couscous. You have come to expect diversity of ingredients and flavors,

One. Today it's hard to imagine that someone would enter the demanding restaurant field with so little experience. But in California, from the 1970s through the early 1990s, passionate amateurs, many of whom hadn't gone to cooking school or even worked in a restaurant, jumped eagerly into the business.

How did so many of us dare own and manage restaurants with so little practical knowledge? All I can say is that ignorance is bliss. We had no idea what we were getting into.

Women chefs hired, mentored and promoted other women. Without the efforts of so many women chefs, California cuisine would not have evolved as it did. Many of us had worked together in various kitchens, and we shared a sensibility about food based on how it nurtured our families, our community and the people we loved. We served more vegetables on the plate and didn't try to disguise the natural flavors of the food with too much technique.

The female sensibility in Northern California manifested itself in the style of the food being created and served. Most women chefs were cooking the traditional and communal food of memory — *cuisine bonne femme*, or home-style cooking.

Setting gender aside, it would be safe to say that there are two types of chefs: those who aim to nurture, and those who aspire to awe. Rather than being purely gendered divisions, I suspect that they are based on a combination of personality and philosophy. A few women, notably Elizabeth Falkner, author of *Demolition Desserts*, and Dominique Crenn, the first female chef to win two Michelin stars at her restaurant Atelier Crenn, are happiest when creating cutting-edge haute cuisine.

And many men, for their part, want to please their guests, cook unimpeachably food, and base their cuisine on communal culinary traditions. Craig Stoll at San Francisco's Delfina once teased me by saying, "Hey, Joyce, I hear you say I cook like a girl," and he smiled when he said it.

Excerpted from *Inside the California Food Revolution* by neighborhood resident Joyce Goldstein © 2013 by the University of California Press.

# Songbird in the Swedenborgian Choir

THE VERSATILE and iconic singer Linda Ronstadt has mostly kept a low profile since moving back to San Francisco from her native Arizona about eight years ago.

But all that changed recently with a huge media blitz touting her new book, *Simple Dreams: A Musical Memoir*. Her appearances these days are made more poignant by the recent revelation that Parkinson's disease has stilled Ronstadt's searing singing voice.

She now maneuvers mostly unrecognized throughout the neighborhood: buying her "sensible shoes" at Crosswalk on Fillmore, dining with friends at A-16 or taking walks through the Presidio, sometimes aided by hand canes.

That easy anonymity wasn't possible back in the day when she ruled the music world with her belting voice and siren-slay demeanor, innocent dark eyes and pouty lips, all hoop earrings and prairie skirts. "That was my '70s persona," she told a local crowd recently at a City Arts & Lectures interview. "We were all hippies then."

Ronstadt lived in Los Angeles at the time, but claims she found the place "mentally exhausting." So in 1987, she bought the four-level house at 2518 Jackson, overlooking Alta Plaza Park, with its seven bedrooms, music room and sweeping views of the bay. She promptly painted it a controversial shade of lavender and outfitted it with the Victorian decor that's close to her heart.

And she got to know some of the neighbors.

"She wandered into the Swedenborgian church one day and I asked her if she wanted to join the choir," recalls Garrett Collins, who then served as the musical director of the historic church at the corner of Lyon and



Washington. He asked Ronstadt to audition first, just as he did any other choir member.

"I found out she did not read music, so I offered to give her private lessons on how to do it," says Collins, who says their time together helped forge a friendship between them.

"She was musically very disciplined — not pompous, not at all what you'd think of as a big star," he says, fondly recalling the singer's big easy laugh and the duet of "White Christmas" they performed together for a fundraiser at the Waldorf School. "She was focusing on the two children she had adopted during those years, Mary Clementine and Carlos, and jealously guarding their privacy."

Ronstadt sold the purple Victorian in 1997 — it was listed for \$5.85 million — and moved back to Tucson to be closer to family. But she came back to San Francisco again in 2005, craving its open-minded culture.

She says she took pains to make sure *Simple Dreams* was not a "kiss and tell" book. It isn't. She makes scant mention of her past romantic involvements — including several years with Gov. Jerry Brown, who also lived in the neighborhood for a time, when she became known as the First Lady of California. She concentrates instead on the Southern California music scene during the 1960s and '70s, during which she was dubbed the Queen of Rock, a title she says now makes her cringe.

She'll likely keep San Francisco her primary residence rather than return to Tucson, where she still maintains another home. "There's too much cactus there," she says. "It can make your tires flat."

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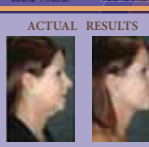


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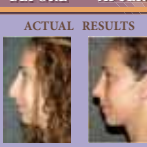
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### NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
1945 Franklin St	6	6.5	2	5255	137	8/26/2013	2,750,000	2,525,000
3016 Pine St	5	3.5	2	4437	75	9/10/2013	3,650,000	3,500,000
2374 Greenwich St	4	4.5	2	4178	77	8/27/2013	4,395,000	4,050,000
2714 Steiner St	6	4.5	2		111	8/29/2013	5,400,000	5,250,000
2827 Greenwich St	5	4.5	2		9	9/4/2013	5,495,000	5,700,000
3481 Washington St	4	4.5	1		1	9/10/2013	7,495,000	7,325,000
2500 Divisadero St	6	5.75	2	9125	56	8/23/2013	10,000,000	8,800,000

#### Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lots

1450 Post St #616	1	2	1	718	122	9/6/2013	299,000	259,000
2121 Laguna St #1	1	1	1	660	31	8/28/2013	595,000	635,000
333 Presidio Ave #1	1	1	0	715	53	9/4/2013	639,000	639,000
2701 Van Ness Ave #602	1	1	2	793	21	8/16/2013	648,000	715,000
2410 Pacific Ave #1	1	1	1	870	12	9/5/2013	649,000	730,000
1425 Baker St	2	1	1		32	9/30/2013	749,000	765,000
1633 Lombard St	2	2	1	1032	15	9/20/2013	829,000	865,000
2200 Sacramento St #701	2	2	1	952	10	9/29/2013	799,000	880,000
1824 Bush St	2	2	1	1370	34	9/11/2013	849,000	885,000
1980 Sutter St #319	2	2	1	1310	27	9/10/2013	885,000	930,000
1701 Jackson St #508	2	2	1	1072	28	8/22/2013	899,000	1,020,000
3030 Octavia St	2	2	1		55	9/20/2013	1,149,000	1,160,000
2604 Buchanan St	2	2	1	1078	13	8/28/2013	1,150,000	1,228,000
2111 Franklin St #3	2	2	1	1720	9	9/13/2013	1,195,000	1,250,000
2200 Sacramento St #1405	1	1	1	850	1	9/6/2013	1,300,000	1,340,000
436A Laurel St	3	3	1		27	8/16/2013	1,349,000	1,349,000
2268 Jackson St	3	2.5	1	1946	28	8/19/2013	1,450,000	1,368,000
3583 Sacramento St	3	2	1		81	9/30/2013	1,399,000	1,399,000
3581 Sacramento St	3	2	1		35	8/27/2013	1,399,000	1,575,000
1552 Green St #P	3	2	1	1530	42	9/12/2013	1,698,000	1,637,500
1545 Green St	3	2	1	1658	25	8/16/2013	1,495,000	1,670,000
1644 Greenwich St	3	3	2	2251	14	8/16/2013	1,895,000	2,200,000
2064 Jackson St	3	2.5	2		55	9/13/2013	5,995,000	5,710,000



The historic square sandstone house at 2622 Jackson is for sale now that its owner has moved around the corner.

#### Mrs. Doubtfire's neighbors move up

In the depths of the real estate crisis in 2011, the defaulting owners who had spent millions restoring the Ellinwood mansion at 2799 Pacific were removed and the home was put on the market as bank owned. In the same family for more than a century after it was completed in 1894 — and empty for half that time — the house has a rich and colorful history, with a basement billiard room that hosted at least one world championship and a side garden with a tree that was a gift from Queen Victoria, now replaced by a lap pool. The house sold in June of last year for \$11.5 million — not much more than the price of the restoration.

The new owner — producer-writer-director Chris Columbus ("Mrs. Doubtfire," "Home Alone," "The Help" and several Harry Potter films) — is now selling his former home overlooking Alta Plaza Park at 2622 Jackson Street. It's also a neighborhood landmark, designed in 1895 by Willis Polk in the Italian Renaissance style and constructed of sandstone, which is rare in San Francisco. For decades its classical rounded portico welcomed students and guests inside to the Music and Arts Institute. Now it's a comfortable home with bay views and a screening room—of course—listed for \$13 million.

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

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### COUNTERPOINT

## Pacific Heights Is Cheap Compared to Noe Valley

By NINA HATVANY

**S**ALE PRICES of real estate in San Francisco's southern neighborhoods have taken off dramatically in recent months. Noe Valley, Potrero Hill and South Beach are especially sought after by people who commute to the Peninsula, but still want to live in the city, or couples in which one person commutes south or to the East Bay. The south side generally offers better weather, proximity to the burgeoning restaurant scene in the Mission District, and often better access to MUNI or BART for commuters.

In contrast, the more established northern neighborhoods are still desirable, but aren't experiencing the same surge in popularity, despite the views, the bustling retail streets and easy commuting to downtown and to Marin.

Areas like Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Cow Hollow and Russian Hill will always retain their allure. They are what I consider to be "blue chip" quality in the long term. But at the moment, while attention is focused southward, the properties coming up for sale in the northern neighborhoods are often a comparatively better deal — either by dollars per square foot, or because there are fewer people bidding on them and buyers therefore don't encounter quite the same kind of bidding frenzy.

One could argue that now might be the time to buck the trend and revisit the traditionally more expensive neighborhoods, considering the southern craze.

**B**UT GUT FEELINGS on the real estate market have to be backed up with evidence, and in this case the evidence speaks volumes about how the southern neighborhoods are quickly catching up to—and in some cases surpassing

—northern values, at least in certain price ranges.

For example, consider a typical search by a younger couple interested in both Pacific Heights and Noe Valley—arguably the most expensive neighborhoods in each of their geographies. Looking at recent sales results, I found that one- and two-bedroom condominiums with parking priced under \$2 million were selling in the last three months in Noe Valley at:

- an average of 13.2 percent above asking price and
- roughly \$879.16 per square foot.

That's hundreds of dollars per square foot more than prices in these up and coming areas just a few years ago. On average, the homes were on the market from the start of marketing to closing for only 22 days, meaning there was a high percentage of all-cash and preemptive offers.

In contrast, similar Pacific Heights home sales were averaging:

- only 8.9 percent over asking price (indicating less competition) and
- \$880 per square foot.

That's a difference of only 84 cents per square foot between the neighborhoods — despite the fact that historically Pacific Heights has been San Francisco's most expensive neighborhood.

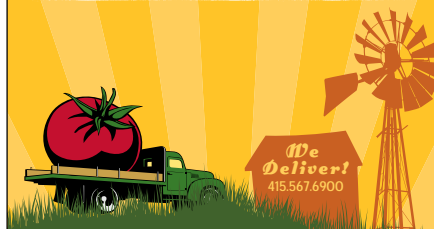
**T**HIS EVIDENCE speaks volumes. The competition for first-time or mid-range home buyers has soared in the southern neighborhoods, and there may well be some competitively priced deals to be had by turning one's gaze back toward the bay. I will be encouraging clients to join me in living on the north side of town.

Nina Hatvany is a real estate agent with Pacific Union.

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