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■ воокѕ

The Cowgirls Write a Book

Their cheese revolution arrived in the Fillmore $^{\text{PAGE 8}}$

THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ FEBRUARY 2014



Getting begin{subarray}{c} Bot

As Fillmore storefronts become ever more desirable to national and international retailers, a local shoe store faces eviction on Valentine's Day

By Chris Barnett

CIONS OF TWO San Francisco real estate dynasties are racing toward a costly collision on Valentine's Day after seven months of legal jousting. The prize: the storefront on the prime northeast corner of Fillmore and Pine occupied for the last 10 years by Paolo Shoes.

The lease there is officially up on February 14 and the landlord, Webco Group LLC, wants to give the stylish handmade Italian shoe retailer the boot. The store owner claims his lease gives him an option to extend for another five years at today's prevailing rental rate — which he is willing to pay even though a number hasn't been put on the table. Webco insists the tenant didn't exercise his lease option on time and in the proper manner.

The combatants are:

- Paolo Iantorno, 37, the tenant and sole owner of Paolo Shoes, who grew up in tony St. Francis Wood, graduated from prestigious St. Ignatius High School, a third generation member of an Italian family whose father, Sergio Iantorno, and grandfather, Clarence Dahlberg, run San Francisco-based companies that build custom homes throughout the Bay Area.
- Patrick Szeto, 39, the landlord's representative, raised in San Francisco, and

graduated from equally prestigious Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep, a second generation member of the large and powerful Szeto family, owners of Webco Group and American Realty & Construction Inc. led by Patrick's father, Kwok Szeto, also known as Richard Szeto, with major commercial real estate holdings throughout the city, including 2000 Fillmore Street, home of the shoe store.

Another major player in the drama is Pamela Mendelsohn, a commercial real estate broker with the San Francisco office of Collier's International. For years, she's been the leasing queen of Fillmore Street, a confidante of landlords and tenants alike. Mendelsohn leased the Paolo Shoes space to Iantorno a decade ago. And in 2011, she brokered the sale of the entire classic 1928 Mediterranean Revival style building — which includes Paolo Shoes, the Grove restaurant next door, 15 apartments upstairs and parking downstairs — to Webco.

Among its other holdings, Webco also owns the six-acre, 300,000-square-foot parcel encompassing more than 200 commercial and residential units surrounding the Safeway store and bordered by Webster, Geary and Fillmore.

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When the Victorians Moved

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITORS:

HANKS for the wonderful story on the moving of the Victorian houses in the 1970s ["Exodus," January 2014]. Kudos to San Francisco Heritage for making it happen — and for all the work it has

While we're passing out praise, let's also include the Victorian Alliance, a band of mostly Victorian house owners who work to preserve the remaining Victorian stock through a number of activities, including an annual house tour in October on which people can actually go inside some preserved

I think we should also give some credit for maintaining interest in Victorians to San Francisco City Guides, whose Victorian San Francisco tour every Sunday afternoon provides details and explains the differences among the various architectural styles of the Victorian era. City Guides' Japantown tour, most Saturdays, takes walkers to 1737 Webster, the home featured in the New Fillmore.

As for leaving the area, I think there are several more reasons people move. In our case, after 44 years, maintaining a large, drafty, wooden building with 12-foot ceilings became a bit overwhelming. Further, we realized that those 13 steps up to the front door, and 17 more from the first floor to the second, would be daunting in our elder years.

Don Langley RESIDENT 1964-2008

UDOS for another terrific issue of the New Fillmore. The house Had never seen them before. Lucy Gray's chronicle of selling and moving was well written, about an essentially sad event ["For Sale: Our House," January 2014]. But as a longtime residential real estate broker, the one thing that jumped out at me was Gray's decision to sell her house privately, meaning that although she used a broker, she chose to tell only a few people, then took the first offer after a few days.

Sure seems wrong-headed to me. Here we are in one of the hottest real estate markets ever, with very little inventory and lots of highly qualified buyers, with most properties selling well over asking with multiple offers, and a seller decides to sell without benefit of normal marketing exposure. Who knows what normal marketing would have done?

Even brokers who are convinced that they know what a property should sell for have been surprised in this market. Often it



Saving a Victorian by moving it in the 1970s

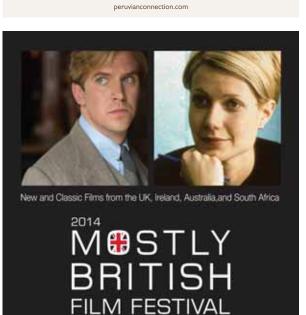
is far more than anyone expected. A wiser course of action for Gray would have been to have her broker place the property in the multiple listing service, set an offer date (and stick to it!), do several broker tours and Sunday opens, then look at offers. Still quick, a 10-day process.

In a discussion of this very topic this morning in a Real Estate Roundtable meeting, nearly every broker agreed, and many had examples of advising their sellers not to take the first immediate offer, even though it seemed good. Instead, the exposure of the tours and opens often produced even higher offers — sometimes, jawdroppingly higher. Many buyers are desperate, having lost out on other properties, and determined to get this one, no matter what. They know they are competing with a large pool of equally motivated buyers, and this is what has produced record prices. Gray had a very nice house on a dropdead block. True that the seller may have to straighten up the house and leave on two Sunday afternoons, but the price differential is often huge. Truly wealthy sellers may not really care, but most need the extra dollars.

For most sellers, their home is their principal asset, and they only get one shot at selling it. And selling privately is like shooting while blindfolded. To put it another way, selling "off market" is like holding an auction, but only telling a few. This type of sale benefits only one person: the buyer. So my heart goes out to Gray and her husband, who made what I believe was a bad business decision about the selling process. That's my take.

E: THE NEW FILLMORE: Love it and am always pleased after delivery has been made. Please carry on and continued success.

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According to the Wall Street Journal/Real Trends 2012 ranking of top real estate agents, Carrie & Lisa rank in the top 200 real estate teams in the country, and in the top 8 teams for the Northern Bay Area, and the top 1% of agents in San Francisco.*



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CRIME WATCH

Fraud Fillmore and Clay Streets December 27, 2:50 p.m.

Officers received a call from a Bank of America employee concerning a man who was attempting to cash a fraudulent check. The man claimed the check was payment for work he had completed in another city. But when contacted, the check's owner denied knowing the individual or issuing a check to anyone by his name. The man was arrested and charged with a felony.

Robbery With a Gun California and Pierce Streets December 29, 10:10 p.m.

Police responded to a call about a street robbery. They spoke with two men who said they had been approached by a male suspect who pulled out a black handgun. When the armed man demanded their phones, they handed them over. The suspect then fled west on California Street. No one was injured and the investigation is ongoing.

Burglary Sacramento and Baker Streets January 1, 10:47 p.m.

A man who had just returned from the grocery store parked his car in the garage and began unloading bags. As he entered his house with his groceries, he left the garage door open. When he returned, he discovered a man sitting inside the car. The intruder fled while clutching items taken from the vehicle. The resident called the police. When officers arrived, he got into the patrol car to help identify the individual. They spotted the man on the sidewalk not far away, carrying bags. The suspect was booked for multiple felony violations.

Burglary Filbert and Broderick Streets January 2, 9 a.m.

A man who had been on vacation returned to find his house had been ransacked. Many items had been boxed up and placed near the front door. When he checked the garage, he discovered both his cars were missing, along with the keys. He then located the building's supervisor, who was in the garage speaking with a woman. The woman took him aside, told him she was homeless and that she had come into the building the prior night and stayed in his apartment. With her was a homeless man she had just met; he was the one who was responsible for the thefts. When the police arrived, she related the same story. The man who had been robbed noted that she had several items stolen from him in her possession. She was arrested for burglary and booked at county jail.

Geary Boulevard and Broderick Street January 3, 11:30 a.m.

The tenants of a shared unit left for work around 8 a.m., leaving one roommate behind who was still asleep. They returned later that day and found three laptops and two iPads missing from the apartment. The occupant who had been asleep reported she had heard someone come into her room around 11:30 a.m., but thought it was one of her roommates and went back to sleep. Police discovered that a rear door to the apartment building had been left unlocked. There are no suspects at this time.

Burglary, Unlawful Entry Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street January 5, 4 p.m.

The owner of a store reported that a



■ DISPATCH

Rocco strikes again (and again and again)

I read about the scam in the Crime Watch column of the January issue of the New Fillmore [in which a man who identified himself as an Italian visitor named Rocco approached people seeking directions to the airport and then asked for money].

A man who called himself Rocco tried to pull the same fast one on me on

A man who called himself Rocco tried to pull the same fast one on me on the afternoon of December 18 at the bus stop at the corner of Sacramento and Fillmore. I almost fell for it.

I was about to leave to go to England to visit my daughters. I had three coats in my hand he had given me, but then he asked for money to buy his son an iPhone to take back to Italy for Christmas. I balked and threw the coats back in the car and walked away. He told me he worked for Armani in Milan.

IPhone to take back to Italy for Christmas. I balked and threw the coats back in the car and walked away. He told me he worked for Armani in Milan.

I wrote my friend Andre Straja, who works there for GAS Architects, but never heard back. I was trying to substantiate the information — telephone number and

address — on the card he gave me, but to no avail.
Thanks for the good info.

CARL G SMITH

EDITORS' NOTE: Two other neighborhood residents also reported being approached with the same story.

man had entered the premises with a large bag. He walked about the store, placing clothing in the bag, then attempted to exit through the garage door. It was locked, so he headed for the front door, making no attempt to pay.

Store employees detained the man at the door and discovered he had numerous items from the store inside his bag. When the police arrived, he told them it was all a mistake; he had forgotten to take the clothes out of the bag before leaving. The suspect was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

Burglary, Conspiracy, Resisting Arrest Gough and Ellis Streets January 7, 11 p.m.

A man called the police from an apartment building to report that two men were attempting to steal packages from the lobby. As officers entered the building, they saw two men in the lobby using a drill to try to break into the fire lockbox. These lockboxes frequently contain keys to multiple parts of

a building. When the men saw the officers, they fled. The police chased them through the workout room and the pool area before the suspects surrendered. The two were arrested and booked at Northern Station.

Unlawful Entry Masonic and O'Farrell Streets January 17, 2 a.m.

A resident of an apartment was awakened to the sound of the garage door opening. Then she heard footsteps and two people whispering. She called her roommate who lived upstairs to see if he had entered the garage. He told her he was in his room, so she called the police. The upstairs tenant looked out his front window and saw a bicycle in front of the garage. He too called 911. The suspects fled. When the officers conducted a search, the residents told them two bikes had been stolen. Police discovered the suspects had abandoned the bikes nearby. They found no signs of forced entry into the garage and had no suspects.





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FOOD & DRINK



Another problem solved by technology: Pizzeria Delfina streams an online view of its waiting list.

Why Stand in Line? Just Log On to Delfina's New WaitCast

HE POPULAR Pizzeria Delfina at 2406 California Street, just off Fillmore, is frequently mobbed by wannabe diners. To make a long wait seem longer, the restaurant adheres to the policy of seating only complete parties. And a recent clampdown on serving outside in the adjacent parklet has made it more difficult for diners to snag a seat with their pizza and wine.

But technology aimed at taking the wonder out of the wait might help ease the

Delfina recently launched WaitCast, which streams a live broadcast of the restaurant's check-in chalkboard. Hopeful diners can sign on to the restaurant's waitlist, then return home to finish the laundry or take a walk, or grab a drink elsewhere
 while monitoring the list online. Others may opt to check the broadcast to see when and whether there's a lull in the crowd before deciding whether to venture over.

A key to use informs that when a name is circled, the expectant diners' names have been called — and they should return at once to be seated. A "T" next to a name signifies a tab has been started, and names are crossed out once the diners are seated.

A look reveals it shows more than the restaurant's waitlist board. Trained on those currently in line at the restaurant, the camera gives a birds' eye view of those waiting for a table - complete with other information, such as which couples are bickering, whose roots need a touchup, who gets grumpiest as the wait goes on, who has itchy body parts and so on.

In fact, when the first WaitCast went up several months ago at the Pizzeria Delfina's Mission location, it rattled some restaurant goers, along with a few privacy experts who fretted the feature gave a whole new meaning to Too Much Information. Of particular concern: Those being filmed had no prior notice they were on camera, viewers could scroll as far back as a week to sleuth out who had been in earlier and those signing themselves in by first name could be easily identified by potential stalkers.

Delfina has taken measures to soften some of those concerns by posting an upbeat notice on the front door in large bold letters proclaiming, "Hi! You're on Camera" — then explaining how the live streaming broadcast can be of service to diners. And earlier footage is no longer easily accessible by public viewers.

As yet, there's no way to disguise the Toms, Dicks or Marys signing in to signal their prosciutto pie cravings or Photoshop out any arugula stuck in their teeth on the way out the door.

To see the local Pizzeria Delfina Wait-Cast, go to https://www.dropcam.com/p/ pizzeriapacheights. It's also available on a downloadable DropCam app.







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Winter greens are plentiful at the Fillmore



Worrying and Waiting

There's still plenty of produce at the Fillmore market — and plenty of concern

weather and enduring lack of rain have not yet affected the offerings of produce and flowers at the neighborhood's Saturday morning farmers market, but dark clouds of concern have started to form for many of the growers.

"There's no end in sight to this drought," forecasts Tom Nichol, manager of the Fillmore market, which is held every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Fillmore and O'Farrell Streets. "It would take 13 inches of rain to bring us close to what we need now. Reservoirs are at rock bot-

Nichol says many ranchers have already been hit hard. "Some of them are having to sell off as much as 60 percent

of their herds; there's just no grass for the animals to eat," he says. 'And the produce farmers are starting to fret about who will be able to plant this spring — and how and what."

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture declared a

drought disaster in many California counties, which allows farmers to apply for low-interest loans to help cope. But ranchers are excluded — and Nichol points out that many of the small organic produce farmers that populate the neighborhood farmers markets are left out as well.

"What government money there is goes to the bigger commodities like cotton and rice," he says. "And produce insurance is so expensive that very few small organic farmers can afford it. So they're just out of luck — and out of money."



"I want to do the spring planting, but I'm holding off for now."

— SERGIO JIMENEZ, Ground Stew Farms

hooks is Richard Firme, who for years has offered an array of fruits and vegetables at the Fillmore market. He owns a 40-acre farm in Gustine, just outside French Camp in the central valley. He's farmed independently for 33 years; his parents and grandparents were famers before him.

"I have only wells to irrigate, so I may have to change my whole irrigation set-up and go with a sprinkler or a drip system," Firme says - and that's an expensive prospect. 'The big concern is the water table. I'm close to the Delta, and if the river is down, salt water will come in and ruin the crops."

Sergio Jimenez, another farmer who offers organic produce at the local market,

says he is also threatened by the drought. He has been farming five acres in Gilroy this season known as Ground Stew Farms.

"Even beyond the drought, the weather has just been so tricky this year," says Jimenez. "It's been much colder at night, much hotter in the day." A recent frost harmed some crops; by day, they were nearly burned out.

"So now I'm worrying and waiting," he says. "I want to do the spring planting, to put in the summer squash, but I'm holding off

Still, Nichol predicts the growers will go on, whether there's

dry weather or not.
"There's one thing about farmers," he says. "It's just amazing

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



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Cowgirls Write the Book on Cheese

Sue Conley and Peggy Smith established their first cheese shop in San Francisco at 2413 California Street, just around the corner from Fillmore's main intersection.

But they had made their initial entry into the city after a sixmonth cross-country road trip in a baby blue Chevy van on a more auspicious date.

"We crossed the Golden Gate Bridge on July 4, 1976, through a wispy layer of fog, and worked our way up and down the city's famous hills and into the Mission District," they write in their new book, Cougirl Creamery Cooks.

They knew they weren't college dormmates waiting tables in Tennessee any more.

"We landed in Dolores Park where the Alternative Bicentennial Fourth of July Celebration was in full swing," they write. "Pete Seeger sang with Malvina Reynolds on the main stage, the Mime Troupe created political theater on the lawn and the Gay Men's Chorus led the crowd in a cheerful rendition of God Bless America."

Soon Smith was working at Chez Panisse in Berkeley. Conley helped build Bette's Oceanview Diner in Berkeley, the first retro-diner in the Bay Area. They were at the center of the California food revolution that changed the way people cook and eat, especially in Northern California, and got to know all the other key players as well.

Along with lots of recipes, instruction and advice, their book tells an engaging story of how they bought an old hay barn in Point Reyes Station in 1994 and learned to make cheese with milk from their friends at



Cowgirl Creamery established its headquarters in a reclaimed hay barn in Point Reyes Station.

the nearby Straus Family Creamery. In the process, they became a part of something much larger: They helped encourage a shift toward organic, sustainable agriculture that ultimately ensured the future of dairy farming in the

"Cowgirl Creamery was coming to represent something much bigger than making great cheese," they write of their early days. "The community was coming together around the idea . . . of centering West Marin's regional identity around dairy farming and cheese."

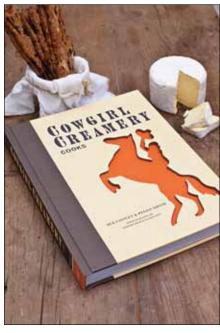
Much of their inspiration came from Ellen Straus, whose family supplied organic milk that had wild flavor swings, depending on the season. "In the spring, the milk might taste more grassy and rich,"

they write. "A batch of milk could have a distinct mustard flavor." They learned to incorporate the distinct local flavors into their cheeses.

"Ellen Straus would visit at least once a week, looking on approvingly as our sign was hung in place over each entrance," they write. "As the three of us were watching construction on the barn one day, a rider on a horse came down Fourth Street, hitched her horse to a post and went into the local Point Reyes bank. When Ellen commented, "We live in the wild, wild West, 'all three of us laughed. I guess that makes us cowgirls,' Sue said, 'and this must be the Cowgirl Creamery."

The rest is history. It makes for very good reading — and even better eating.

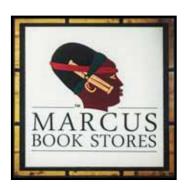
Cowgirl Creamery Cooks is available at Browser Books at 2195 Fillmore Street.



■ READING & TASTING

Back in the neighborhood

Sue Conley and Peggy Smith, owners of Cowgirl Creamery, will return to the neighborhood to talk about cheesemaking and their new book — and to offer a guided cheese tasting — on February 25 at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center at 3200 California Street. Appearing with them will be Albert Straus, president and owner of the Straus Family Creamery in Point Reyes Station, whose organic milk the cowgirls use to make many of their cheeses. For more information, go to jectsforg or call 292-1200.



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Cowgirls Got Their S.F. Start in the Fillmore

By Laura Werlin

THEN THEY created the Cowgirl Creamery in 1997, Sue Conley and Peggy Smith sold their cheeses exclusively at farmers markets and out of their barn in Point Reyes Station. But their focus at the time on making fresh cheeses with inherently short shelf lives fromage blanc, quark, crème fraîche and cottage cheese - meant they had to sell them quickly, a tricky prospect given their remote location.

They knew most chefs would not make the foray out to Point Reyes to taste cheese, and soon realized they'd have to bring the cheese to the chefs. So they decided to open a store in San Francisco - and in October 1999 they opened Artisan Cheese just off Fillmore Street at 2413 California, in what had long been the California Street

In doing so, they made a connection that would extend from West Marin and Sonoma County into San Francisco and far beyond.

"The Fillmore was such a great neighborhood," says Peggy Smith. "It was such a crossroads of people. The California Street Creamery was there, and we thought, 'Well, this could be a good place.'"

Smith and Conley had recruited



"It was the best job I ever had."

PEGGY SMITH (left, with Sue Conley) on running their Artisan Cheese shop on California Street

respected San Francisco restaurant public relations professional Eleanor Bertino and native San Francisco food writer Peggy Knickerbocker to help them search for a San Francisco location for a cheese shop. The Fillmore got their unanimous vote.

They converted the tiny 400-squarefoot space into Artisan Cheese, a wellstocked but intimate space. With enough room for just two employees and a little space for customers, buying cheese there was a personal experience. Customers were invariably offered tastes of cheeses before buying, were educated about the cheeses' provenance and gained exposure to a lot of cheeses they hadn't known. A bonus for some — and maybe a little off-putting to the uninitiated — was the comingling of cheese aromas, the inevitable byproduct of the riot of cheeses on the counter and in the case.

For Peggy Smith, it provided an invaluable education.

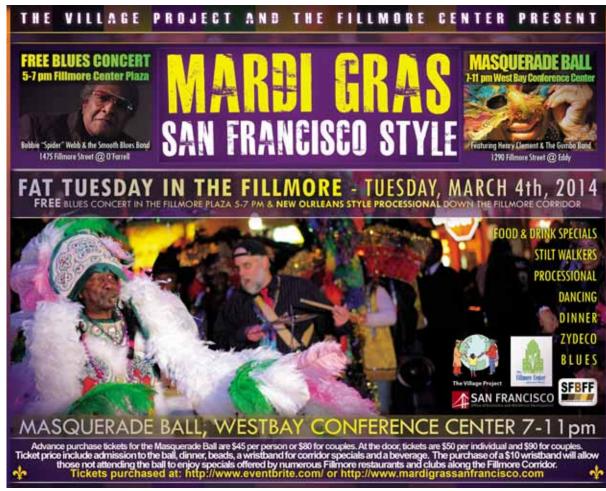
"It was the best job I ever had," she says. "It was fun talking with people, having them taste. I got really close to the cheeses we sold. It was a learning opportunity for me as well as the customers

In 2005 their California Street lease was up and a significant rent raise was in the offing. By then, the newly revamped Ferry Building was thriving, as was the Cowgirl Creamery outpost they had opened there - among the first four businesses to sign up, along with Acme Bread, Peet's Coffee and McEvoy Olive Oil. So they decided to close Artisan Cheese and concentrate on

the Ferry Building.

A visit to the Ferry Building confirms their business decision. For Fillmore turophiles, though, their departure was bittersweet. But even if the one-on-one buying experience and the cheese aromas in their tiny California Street shop are long gone, many of the Cowgirl Creamery cheeses are still available just down the block at Mollie Stone's.

Laura Werlin, a neighborhood resident, is one of the nation's foremost authorities on cheese and the author of six books on the subject, including The All American Cheese and Wine Book and Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials.



■ STREET TALK

Empty dollar store: \$16,500 per month

Hot chefs and would-be restaurateurs are sniffing around the space at 1633 Fillmore formerly occupied by the NATIONAL DOLLAR STORE, possibly hoping proximity to mondo popular STATE BIRD PROVISIONS' star power might rub off on them. So far no one has been willing to pick up the monthly rental tab, said to be \$16,500, plus extras.

'The space is very much available and we're confident we'll get a strong, interesting tenant shortly," says Jeremy Blatteis of the Blatteis Co., a commercial real estate brokerage. The price is high partly because it's a cavernous space — 4,700 square feet on the main floor and another 4,700 feet in the basement. Plus, rents for restaurants are always stiffer given the equipment, venting and permitting needed.

DINING & DISHING: Another new restaurant from friends of State Bird is said to be in the works at 1981 Sutter, the shuttered market just west of Fillmore. . . . A few doors east at 1963 Sutter, where CAFE KATI had a long run, the chicken rotisserie ROOSTERTAIL is celebrating its second anniversary by adding new daily specials and an ecofriendly bicycle delivery service — and an outdoor patio, which finally got the city's okay after months and months of waiting

COMING & GOING: Back on the boulevard in the tiny space at 1820 Fillmore, MUSE TEN, the handbag and leather goods purveyor, quietly closed its doors the last weekend in January. Its replacement will be A CITY OBSESSION, a clothing boutique from the East Bay

RETAIL REPORT

The Flame Burns Bright

Born of pain, Glassybaby now brings beauty and warmth to Sacramento Street

EOPLE PASSING by 3665 Sacramento Street stop in their tracks to ogle the window and counter displays, where hundreds of multi-colored votive holders glow with flames flickering inside

The story behind the new shop, Glassybaby, is even more arresting and warming.

Company founder and Seattle resident Lee Rhodes was battling a recurrence of a rare form of lung cancer in 1988 when her husband brought home a project from a glassblowing class: a small cup-

shaped vessel. She put it to use by inserting a votive candle, and eventually had a room-

Rhodes says she had a "visceral reaction to the color and the light" - and that gave her the hope and comfort to make it through rounds of surgery, chemo and other treatments.

Another thing that moved her at the time was seeing the patients all around her who had to face illness alone, or were forced to skip medication or treatment because they couldn't afford it.

Once she was on the mend, Rhodes began a cottage industry, selling the votives out of her garage and frequently giving them as gifts to friends - often to honor the arrival of a baby. And so was born the name for the business: Glassybaby.

In 2003, Rhodes opened her first studio and retail space in Seattle.



Glassybaby votives sell for \$44, part of which goes to charity.

Glassybaby got a huge boost two years later when Rhodes appeared on the Martha Stewart show - and not just any episode, but the widely viewed first show after Stewart served a prison sentence for conspiracy and other charges related to securities misdealings

Each Glassybaby votive sells for \$44, and a slightly larger, nonfireproof version used as a drinking glass goes for \$55 - rather pricey, even for a handcrafted item. But Rhodes also imbued the business with a charitable spirit, with 10 percent of all revenue going to organizations related to health and healing services and to dogs, which she lauds for their nonjudgmental spirit.

A ticker on the Glassybaby website tallies the amount given to date; it recently rolled past \$1.8 million. San Francisco groups currently targeted for donations include the Shanti Project, which supports people with life-threatening illnesses; cancer patients at UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay: Tipping Point, which funds nonprofits throughout the Bay Area; and the San Francisco SPCA.

The glassblowing operation is currently all based in Seattle, but Glassybaby plans to open a studio in the Presidio by the end of the year and staff it with local and Seattle-trained artisans.

"We're constantly new colors," says Molly Bosch, a recent transplant from Seattle who relocated here to manage

the Sacramento Street store. "There are 250 now available." Each color is given a whimsical name and explanation.

The votives are especially popular with restaurants that have a special ambiance, such as the neighboring Magic Flute. Glassybaby also rents out its votives for \$5 each to customers who want to light up a special event. A woman recently did just that for her birthday luncheon at Spruce, another nearby restaurant.

"It's been really fun having people come in and rent for their homes and parties, and then come back and buy 35 for gifts," says Bosch.

She says the company sought a location with an intimate neighborhood feel for its fourth store — the other three are in the Seattle area — and found a perfect fit on Sacramento Street. "We couldn't have landed in a better spot," she says.



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Landlord Seeks 'Somebody More Suitable for the Neighborhood'

► FROM PAGE ONE

Some might question why Webco would want to displace a longtime tenant and Fillmore fixture willing to match the monthly rent any new tenant would pay. It is not as if Paolo Shoes is an eyesore. Two years ago, Iantorno says he poured \$250,000 into a redesign of the store — and even hired a muralist in Italy for \$12,000 and flew him to San Francisco to re-create the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in his store.

But Webco's not talking. Patrick Szeto was called seven times before he responded and then refused an interview. Webco's lawyer, David Chiappetta, a partner in the San Francisco office of Perkins Coie, an international law firm, also declined to discuss the beef, saying he needed his client's approval to speak, then never called back.

Mendelsohn, who reportedly has been hired by Webco to locate a luxury goods tenant, also did not respond to nine calls.

ANTORNO IS convinced it's all personal. He and Patrick Szeto are around the same age, both from privileged backgrounds, with families in different sectors of the same industry — real estate—and went to rival high schools. However, Iantorno also built an Italian handmade



Paolo lanotorno (right) hired a muralist in Italy for \$12,000 and flew him to San Francisco to re-create the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in his store.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL BAHMANI

shoe importing and retailing business that he claims is the biggest venture of its kind in the U.S.

"I think he's jealous of my success," claims Iantorno. "What else could it possibly be?"

Before he changed his name to Paolo, Paul Iantorno wanted to make movies. After high school, he moved to Los Angeles to study film at Loyola Marymount University, hoping to direct. In summers and on breaks, he came home and worked for Bulo Shoes in Hayes Valley, selling handcrafted Italian shoes. "The owner had a partner in Italy who owned several shoe factories," Iantorno says. "I really fell in love with the whole handmade process — the art and the details of design that have been lost in mass manufactured shoes."

Within three years, he was practicing what he was pitching. He opened the first Paolo Shoes in 1999 in a former barbershop at 1971 Sutter Street near Fillmore known to Dirty Harry buffs as the site of a shoot-out in Clint Eastwood's *The Enforcer*. His first sale was eight pairs of shoes to a man in his late 30s.

"It was exhilarating," he recalls. "It was the Internet boom, there was a lot of money in San Francisco and people were spending on things like fashion-forward shoes handmade in Italy. I'd make 25 pairs of each style and color and then break the mold — to make them exclusive."

With business booming, he opened a second store in Hayes Valley in 2002 and two years later went bigger time, taking over the 1,000-square-foot corner space at Fillmore and Pine where the quirky and

beloved Brown Bag stationers had been ensconced for decades. Iantorno signed a 10-year lease with an option to renew for another five years with the building's owners, William and Louise Osada. Rent was reasonable: \$3 a square foot from 2004 to 2005, escalating to \$4 per foot from 2005 to 2008, \$4.50 a foot for the next three years and \$5 a foot from 2011 to the end of the lease: Valentine's Day 2014.

Iantorno claims he's always paid on time.
"I was never, ever late with a rent payment.
In fact, with Mr. Osada, I would make out
12 rent checks at the start of the year and
pay in advance."

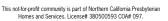
But the lease specified that to exercise the option to renew, Iantorno would have to notify Osada in writing not more than 12 months or less than 180 days before it expired. That lease was transferred to the



The Weber boys always have a good time. Son Kevin, Executive Chef at the Cliff House, regularly visits his father Ted at The Sequoias where they both enjoy the cuisine. With family all across the Bay Area, Ted also enjoys his central location, the incredible restaurants and museums nearby, and his hassle-free lifestyle. It's all here for Ted and his sons, and it can be here for you too. Call Candiece at (415) 351-7900 to learn more.



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new owners when Webco Group bought the building two years ago.

HE DRAMA STARTED last July when Iantorno says he delivered his \$5,800 rent check for the month along with a one-paragraph "notice of exercise of option." Iantorno says he heard nothing from Webco and went off to Italy on business for most of August. When he returned at the end of the month and found no response, he says he called and asked for a meeting to discuss the option.

Webco referred Iantorno to Patrick Szeto, whom he had never met. "When the Szetos bought the building from the Osadas, I had little interaction with them," he says. When he called Patrick Szeto to arrange a face-to-face meeting, Iantorno says he was told the option period had

expired on August 14, and that he was calling 15 days late. Webco, he was told, never received his written request to exercise the

"We did meet on September 12," says Iantorno, "and Patrick said, 'You went to St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart would call you cherries [rich, stuck-up kids]. You're a cherry.' And then he laughed. At that point, I presented him with my letter of intent to extend my lease for 10 years and asked him what kind of rent was he thinking about. He was friendly and said he would discuss it with his team and get back to me. He never did."

When Webco did not respond, Iantorno says he wrote Patrick Szeto three emails, called him five times and dropped into the Webco office near the Safeway twice, but Szeto wasn't in. He said that in October,

he sent Szeto a letter asking why he hadn't responded to the emails, phone calls or visits and expressed hope about working out the details of a new lease.

"I heard nothing from him," Iantorno

On November 27, Iantorno says he wrote Szeto another email asking if there was a reason he had not responded to any of his queries and urging that they determine a "fair market value" rental rate by December 16. "I prefer to make it a friendly agreement between ourselves rather than go to arbitration, as the lease specifies, to determine the fair market value," he wrote.

Iantorno's email triggered a response not from Szeto, but from David Chiappetta, Webco's lawyer, who reiterated what the landlord told his tenant: "The last day for you to exercise the option to renew was August 14, 2013. Landlord did not receive any written notice from tenant exercising the option to renew. Options to renew are strictly interpreted, and . . . must be exercised in the manner provided in the lease. The lease will expire on February 14, 2014. You should make plans to relocate your store prior to that date."

Iantorno maintains that Webco simply chose not to acknowledge his July 1 letter.

The same day he received the letter from Chiappetta — December, 2, 2013 — Iantorno says he ran into Patrick Szeto at a Christmas party. "Patrick was talking to two people when I approached him and asked him why he had his attorneys send me the letter terminating my lease," he recalls. "Szeto, a drink in his hand, turned to me and said, 'Because this is my trophy building and I have somebody more suitable for the neighborhood.'

Feeling snubbed, Iantorno says he decided to turn the situation over to his attorney, Richard Beckman of Beckman Blair LLP in San Francisco and focus his energy on selling shoes during the holiday season

N JANUARY 22, three weeks before Valentine's Day, when the lease officially expires, Webco turned up the heat. Chiappetta sent a blistering letter to Beckman, Iantorno's attorney, pointing out the name of the company had been changed without notification or consent, which would allow Webcor to terminate the lease.

Iantorno claims he simply changed the name and structure of his company from an LLC to a corporation for tax purposes and that Osada was the owner at that time. 'We did things very informally between us," he says.

The Webco attorney's letter asks Iantorno to produce written proof that the notice to exercise the option was sent by August 14, 2013, by certified mail, return receipt requested, as the lease requires.

Iantorno doesn't dispute that he did not send a certified notice with a return receipt requested. "Mr. Osada and I just handed things to each other," he says. "We had a relationship of trust."

The Paolo Shoes founder-proprietor says he cannot understand why Webco is nitpicking and arguing technicalities.

"I'll match anybody," he says. "If I'm willing to pay what the highest bidder pays and I've been an excellent tenant for 10 years, why wouldn't they leave the space in my possession? It doesn't make sense. Landlords are not that unreasonable.



Q & A | RUTHE STEIN

It's the sixth year of the Mostly British Film Festival, which you program, returning from February 13 to 20 to the Vogue Theater on Sacramento Street, So can we say it's become an institution?

In a city that boasts the oldest film festival in America, it would be hard to call us an institution. But it feels good to get to six years old — and more importantly to be a festival that people look forward to.

Why British films at the Vogue?

Brits at the Vogue came about accidentally. I am friends with Jack Bair and Alfonso Felder, who started the San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation. They single-handedly saved the Vogue and have been instrumental in keeping other neighborhood theaters going. I told them when I left the Chronicle as a full-time reporter I would come up with a festival to help them raise money. It became a British festival because that was just about the only country still available. We do have rather a lot of festivals in this town.

How did a film critic come to program her own film festival?

Unlike most critics, I have always been interested in the business end of the movie business. When I was at the Chronicle I started the Chronicle Film Series, which brought Janet Leigh, Geoffrey Rush and Ed Harris here, among others. So it was a logical move to program a festival.

How do you decide what to include?

We always look for the best films. The festival board helps to watch the films



Love Actually, with Hugh Grant and Martine McCutcheon, shows on Valentine's Day.

A Critic's Film Festival

Mostly British screenings return to the Vogue

and the members offer their opinions. We want a mix of comedy and drama, and also want to include films from the old British Empire. We're thrilled to have our first Indian film, The Lunchbox, a beautiful romance. Sometimes we can't get the films we want, with Sundance on one side and the San Francisco International Film Festival on the other. But so far, so good.

Unlike many festivals, you include films both new and old.

We like a mix of classic and new films. Audiences are very receptive to the older films they have not seen or can no longer remember. This is a fun part of programming because there are so many great films. And British Noir is back, and that's always a great evening.

You've billed this as a foreign film festival without subtitles. Still?

The Indian film does have subtitles, but that's the only one.

This year Valentine's Day arrives during the festival. What opportunities does that present?

We are showing What Richard Did, which swept the Irish Academy Awards, including winning best picture. And there's a British indie called Love Me Till Monday, which sold out at the London Film Festival. It's about love among the 20-somethings.

And the hot English import on public television, Downton Abbey, makes an

Dan Stevens, who played Matthew on Downton, was killed off last season and we're showing his first movie since his "death."

This festival is a highlight of the year for the neighborhood's historic Vogue Theater. How's the Vogue doing otherwise?

It is my understanding the Vogue is doing fine. Its financial situation is now tied with the Balboa, and since the Balboa has two screens it has an edge in terms of audiences. The Vogue has been updated to digital equipment and the sound system is much improved.

If locals can see only one or two films. what do you recommend?

Now you're asking me to choose among my children. But if I had to pick one film, it's The Lunchbox, because it is so special. And the Michael York evening. He's a great storyteller, on par with David Niven. We'll be showing one of his favorite movies, England Made Me, which is a "lost" film and almost impossible to find.

For more information and a schedule of screenings, go to mostlybritish.org.







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3965 Sacramento St	6	3.5	2	3350	66	12/18/2013	3,399,900	3,225,000
3026 Clay St	4	2.5	1	2935	9	1/7/2014	2,495,000	3,320,000
25 Normandie Terrace	3	3.5	2	3925	58	12/20/2013	5,895,000	5,510,000
2666 Broadway	4	4.5	2	4953	267	12/30/2013	10,250,000	8,650,000
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lo	ofts							
333 Cherry St #B	0	1	0	385	18	12/27/2013	389,000	406,000
2999 California St #66	0	1	0		50	12/17/2013	449,000	500,000
1626 Vallejo St #2	1	1	1		320	1/14/2014	569,000	560,000
1800 Washington St #112	1	1	1	789	73	12/31/2013	719,000	722,000
3657 Clay St	2	2	1	988	101	1/10/2014	799,000	780,000
1945 Washington St #507	2	2	1	974	8	12/19/2013	802,900	802,900
3234 Washington St #4	2		1		22	12/18/2013	829,000	835,000
1701 Jackson St #309	2	2	1	1041	22	12/17/2013	899,000	1,000,000
2100 Pacific Ave #1A	2	2	1	1750	92	12/31/2013	1,250,000	1,200,000
2137 Pine St	4	2.5	1		74	1/7/2014	1,299,000	1,290,000
2774 Jackson St	2	2	1	1738	45	1/7/2014	1,425,000	1,320,000
2135 Pine St	3	2.5	1		42	12/27/2013	1,259,000	1,400,000
2100 Green St #204	2	2	1	1841	75	1/14/2014	1,525,000	1,490,000
186 Arguello Blvd	2	2	1		53	12/19/2013	1,390,000	1,525,000
2374 Union St	3	2	1	1696	21	1/7/2014	1,399,000	1,600,000
2794 Filbert St	2	2	2	1451	0	1/8/2014	1,575,000	1,622,500
2143 Jackson St	4	4	2	2899	20	12/24/2013	2,795,000	2,950,000
2259 Clay St	3	3	1	2645	0	12/28/2013	2,695,000	3,000,000

'Hottest real estate market in the country'

If what just happened at 2820-22 Sacramento Street is any indicator, it looks like another scorcher is on the horizon for our local housing market this year.

A whopping 22 offers were submitted and, while we won't know until it closes

A winopping 22 orders were submitted and, while we won't know that it closes how much over the asking price of \$1.8 million it will go, the final tally will be something over \$2.5 million — all cash with no contingencies.

Beautiful weather set the stage for exceptional showings at the 2238 Vallejo condo with panoramic views — which is perfect for a no-car city dweller. It was offered for \$2.2 million.

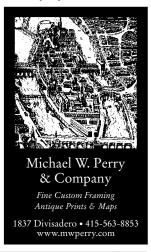
Inventory in the neighborhood is picking up, bringing out buyers. Offer dates are being set and a strong market is already underway. Likely this is just a taste of things to come, with San Francisco now on the national radar as the hottest real estate market in the country.

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

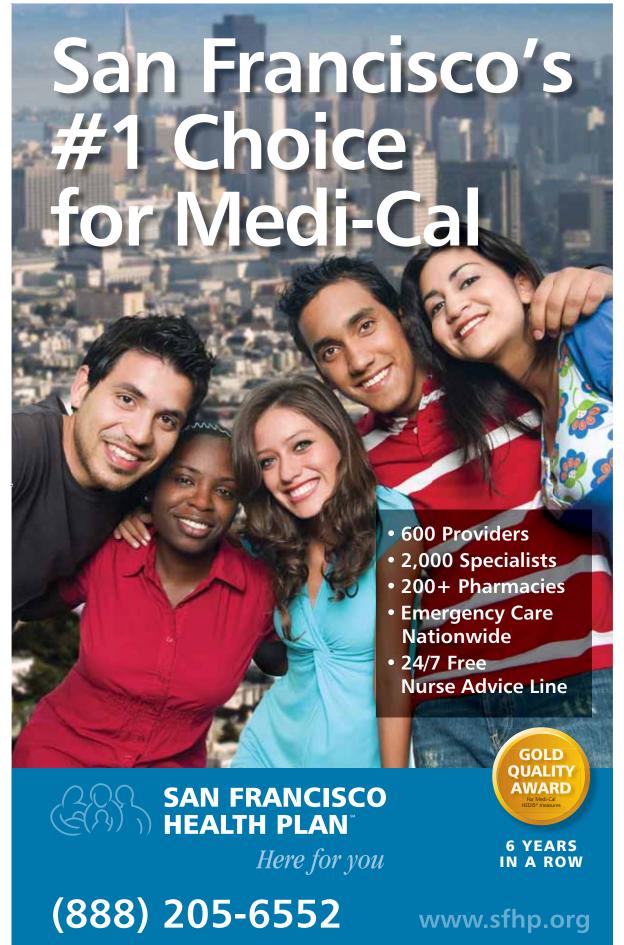


See the top 10 reasons to hire an architect @ waynemeyerworks.co









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