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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ MAY 2014



Longtime Fillmore packaging store Jet Mail joined a surge of businesses onto the block of Sutter Street between Steiner and Pierce.

PHOTOGRAPH OF JET MAIL CO-OWNER KEVIN WOLOHAN BY KATHI O'LEARY



Sutter Street Rising

Businesses Breathe New Life Into a Residential Block

By BARBARA KATE REPA

THE ONCE sleepy 2100 block of Sutter Street, stretching from Steiner to Pierce, would seem an unlikely spot for an urban renaissance.

But in recent years the area has quietly remade itself. Even as it lost a few long-standing businesses, it has attracted an eclectic assortment of independent shops — including Jet Mail, which moved down last year from a prime location on Fillmore Street, the newly relocated Iyengar Yoga Institute and gourmet destinations Song Tea and Spice Ace — that have begun to draw increased notice and foot traffic.


One of the first of the new wave to locate in the area was Olivia Dillan, who with her husband Ben Balzer opened the spice shop of their dreams in October 2012 at 1821 Steiner, two doors from Sutter, and called it Spice Ace.

"When I first looked at this space the landlord warned me away, saying there's absolutely no foot traffic here," she says. "But I just had the feeling it would work, that people would find us."


As she was recalling the conversation, right on cue, several customers filtered in at once, one searching for a specific type of smoky cumin, another looking for a gift for a friend who looks to cook, a third — a recent transplant from Chicago — hoping to find a store that would live up to the specialty spice shop she recalls fondly there. All left with their needs fulfilled.

Dillan, who lives near the shop, remains a loyal booster of the neighborhood and is proud of the Sutter Street surge. "We're bringing back the small business owners to the area," she says. "That's especially important with all the brand name, high-end stores on Fillmore."

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LETTERS



Some residents are pleased that trees have been felled on Cottage Row.

Lots to Sing About on Cottage Row

TO THE EDITORS:

I don't know who wrote "Fewer Trees on Cottage Row" [April 2014], but the word "suddenly" is inappropriate in describing the tree removal project.

It sounds like Rec & Park swooped in one night and felled the trees. Nothing could be further from the truth. The formal process took over two years and consisted of many neighborhood meetings, coordination with R&P and a public hearing at City Hall. Finally the trees were posted and remained so long after the required term, followed by a formal letter to residents within the prescribed area inviting them

to a formal meeting at Hamilton Field. About 10 to 15 people showed up. There was nothing "sudden" in the removal of the trees.

I never heard of Eve Fleishman, but her comment that there is "not much to sing about on Cottage Row right now" is BS. I've lived on Cottage Row for over 25 years and there hasn't been much to sing about on Cottage Row the past 10-plus years due to the invasive redwood trees — but there sure is now. I'm not a spokesperson for Cottage Row and neither is Ms. Fleishman, a non-resident.

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editors@newfillmore.com

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

Advertising inquiries ads@newfillmore.com or 415.441.6070
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Shell station may add a new convenience store

Plans were unveiled April 22 to demolish the Shell station at 2501 California Street and replace it with a new high-end convenience store called Loop.

"Loop is the next evolution in service station retail," said Nick Goyal, one of California's largest operators of Shell service stations, who now controls the local station and more than 100 others. During the past year he has opened six Loop stores at Shell stations in the Bay Area, with more on the way.

Loop stores offer groceries and fresh foods along with wine, espresso, smoothies, frozen yogurt, sushi and a soup and salad bar. "It will change your expectation of what you can purchase at your next fill-up," Goyal said.

Shell Auto Repair would be eliminated and the fuel pumps reconfigured and rebuilt, if the project is approved by the city.

Fillmore a Case Study on Chain Stores

FILLMORE STREET continues to remake itself into a mecca of high-end fashion labels from around the world, despite the city's professed intent to limit chain stores in neighborhood shopping districts.

Partly that is because the rules limiting "formula retail" — defined as companies with 11 or more stores — do not include stores outside the U.S.

An attempt to change the rules to include international stores and spinoffs of existing chains was put on hold last year when the Planning Department commissioned a study of the issue. Now the Berkeley consulting firm conducting the study, Strategic Economics, has produced a draft of its final report, which will be the basis of policy recommendations to be presented to the Planning Commission on May 22.

The report includes detailed case studies of three neighborhoods, including the Upper Fillmore Neighborhood Commercial District, stretching from Bush to Jackson Streets. The other neighborhoods included in the study are Ocean Avenue and a portion of outer Geary Boulevard.

"Upper Fillmore . . . is a rapidly changing district that in recent years has seen a significant shift in the types of retailers occupying local storefronts," the report says, including "a growing number of new high-end formula clothing stores and other chain retail establishments."

The report notes: "As the mix of retail in the district has changed, residents have raised concerns about a loss of neighborhood-serving businesses, while some independent retailers have expressed unease over competition from national brands."

More than half of the stores now operating in the neighborhood sell apparel and jewelry or other accessories, the report



The Kooples, now under construction at 2241 Fillmore, has more than 300 clothing boutiques worldwide but only six free-standing stores in the U.S. and therefore is not considered a chain.

finds, and many are formula retail.

"Compared to citywide averages, Upper Fillmore has a high concentration of formula retail establishments," the report says. "Brokers and local stakeholders report that international companies, formula retail subsidiaries and other fast-growing brands are 'racing' to open locations in Upper Fillmore before they meet the definition of formula retail."

It includes these additional findings about Fillmore:

- Local residents and merchants have noticed a decline in the number of businesses in the district that serve residents' daily needs.

- The decline in daily needs-serving retailers and service providers reflects the fact that these businesses tend to have lower profit margins than stores that sell what are called "comparison goods" sold in many stores.

- Some community members have raised concerns that formula retailers are less engaged with the community than independent retailers.

- Rents are increasing rapidly and there are few if any long-term vacancies in the district.

- High rents and the need to pay "key money" to secure space make it challenging for new daily needs-serving businesses to locate in the district.

The study finds that the formula retail ordinance has been successful in discouraging chain stores from locating in many of the city's neighborhood shopping districts, and that the ordinance may help reduce rents for independent retailers in some areas. But it notes that has not been true on Fillmore, where the demographics are more desirable, and where international brands have been able to avoid the rules.

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CRIME WATCH

Attempted Burglary Jackson and Divisadero Streets March 31, 9:40 p.m.

A woman who lives in an upstairs apartment heard a loud noise and left her unit to investigate. As she approached a lower level apartment, she saw its front door was not secured. The tenant occupying that unit was out of town. When she shouted that tenant's name, the apartment door burst open and three men came running out. They wore hooded sweatshirts that covered their faces. Investigating officers determined that the front door had been kicked in. The witness reported the suspects did not appear to be carrying anything in their hands. The matter is still under investigation.

Theft Pine and Divisadero Streets March 31, 11:30 p.m.

An unknown individual entered an easement area on the side of a building and stole a bicycle. The easement has a locked gate, but there were no signs of forced entry. The police have no suspects at this time.

Stabbing, Conspiracy Broderick and Post Streets April 1, 7:30 p.m.

A woman was walking home when she was confronted by three women calling her offensive names. One had a knife in her hand. As the woman tried to open her front door, the three grabbed her arms and prevented her from getting inside. Two held her down and punched her while the third cut her on the side of her head with the knife. All three then fled. The injured woman called the police. Officers searched the area and found one of the suspects, a 25-year-old woman, who was charged with conspiracy and aggravated assault.

Vandalism, Burglary Divisadero and California Streets April 2, 11:56 p.m.

Officers received a call concerning an individual who was attempting to break into an apartment. A second caller from the same location reported hearing glass breaking. When officers arrived, they observed that every unit's door knob and door bell was smeared with blood. They also found a broken window in the back of the building opening onto the back stairs. They located the intruder on the third floor landing. He was brandishing a fire extinguisher over his head and was covered in blood. The police ordered him to put the fire extinguisher down; he eventually complied.

One tenant stated he had heard the fire alarm go off. When he went out to investigate he saw the suspect in the hallway shouting that he had been shot. Because the man was holding the fire extinguisher, the tenant assumed he intended to put out a fire. He then realized the man did not live in the building. Officers detained the intruder and charged him with burglary, vandalism and violation of parole.

Narcotics Pacific Avenue and Baker Street April 3, 6:55 p.m.

Officers responding to a house alarm call found the garage door partially open; it appeared to be damaged. They investigated and found no one inside, then walked through the front yard and saw pieces of broken concrete scattered about. They discovered a birdbath had been damaged, along with the control panel for the sprinkler system. One officer then observed a man approaching on an exterior walkway. When the officer asked the man if this was his residence, he said no, then pointed to

his car and said, "I drove here." He said he had picked up a hitchhiker who had given him methamphetamine and that he did not know why he was at this location. Officers then asked for the man's identification. After they discovered methamphetamine in the cup holder of his vehicle, the man was charged with a narcotics violation. Police do not believe he broke into the home.

Assault Pine and Steiner Streets April 4, 11:30 p.m.

A woman was walking on the sidewalk when a man leapt from the bushes and punched her in the face. He then grabbed her buttocks. When she screamed, he fled south down Steiner Street. She described her attacker as a black male who was very thin, about 35 to 40 years old. He wore a black baseball cap and a black hooded sweatshirt. The woman also reported that suspect "smelled bad." The matter is still under investigation.

Burglary Washington and Baker Streets April 6, 12:45 a.m.

An unknown individual smashed open the glass door of a business. The suspect took coins from the cash box, then exited and forced open the lock box affixed to the front gate of a nearby home. The burglar removed the house key and entered the residence, taking a flat screen television, a DVD player, a ukulele and a laptop. The matter is still under investigation.

Burglary Sutter and Broderick Streets April 9, 7:30 p.m.

Someone entered a residence and took a Kindle, a laptop and a camera. Police saw

no signs forced entry; they believe the front door may have been unlocked. Another resident was in the building at the time, but heard nothing. Police currently have no suspects.

Possession of Stolen Property Lyon and Jackson Streets April 14, 12:30 a.m.

Officers received a report that a man was peering into cars with a flashlight. After the witness gave police a description and told them the individual's direction of travel, they located the man walking west on Jackson Street.

The suspect gave the officers a false name. Police soon established his true identity, however, and noted two warrants for his arrest: one for burglary, the other for narcotics violations. He was also carrying credit cards with various names on them. Each card had been reported stolen by its owner, and each had been taken in auto burglaries. The suspect was charged with possession of stolen property and violation of probation.

Burglary Broderick and Post Streets April 17, between 12 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

An unknown individual entered an apartment by breaking a window. The intruder took jewelry and a television. The matter is still under investigation.

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Ella Meets the Bard

African-American Shakespeare Troupe Pairs 'Much Ado' With the First Lady of Swing

By GARY CARR

PROVING ITSELF AGAIN to be a Bay Area theatrical gem, the neighborhood's African-American Shakespeare Company, housed just off Fillmore Street at Webster, picks up a major kudo on May 5 when the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle presents the company with the Paine Knickerbocker Award for continuing contributions to Bay Area theater.

Theatergoers will have an opportunity to judge for themselves as the troupe presents Shakespeare's comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*, on Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. from May 3 to May 25.

Director L. Peter Callender is also the artistic director of the award-winning company. He sets Shakespeare's witty take on love delayed in post-World War II America and features the music of the great jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald.

Celebrating the joy of love and the power of redemption, the play chronicles the clever banter and sincere affection of two pairs of lovers, Benedick and Beatrice, and Claudio and Hero.

Benedick and Beatrice are engaged in a "merry war" in which they both proclaim their disdain of love. In contrast, Claudio and Hero are a sweet young couple rendered practically speechless by their love for one another. While Benedick and Beatrice are tricked into confessing



■ MUCH ADO

William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, starring Leontyne Mbele-Mbong and Ryan Vincent Anderson (left), plays this month at the Buriel Clay Theater at 762 Fulton Street (at Webster). For tickets and more information, call 800-838-3006 or visit african-americanshakes.org.

their love, Claudio is tricked into rejecting Hero at the altar. Despite the villainy and betrayal, all ends well, proving that love does indeed conquer all.

Leontyne Mbele-Mbong drops the violence and passion she brought to the title role of Euripides' *Medea* two months ago at the African-American Shakespeare Company's last production and becomes all sultry sweetness as Beatrice. Ryan Vincent Anderson is her on-again, off-again wooer, Benedick.

Two other *Medea* stalwarts, Dwight Dean Mahabir and Danielle Doyle, also return, leaving behind Greek tragedy for some of the Bard's wittiest lines.

Twon Marcel and Monica Cappuccini, seen in the

company's December children's show, *Cinderella*, return as well. Marcel trades his Evil Stepsister drag attire for a military uniform as Hero's lover, Claudio. Monica Cappuccini, *Cinderella*'s Fairy Godmother, takes on two roles in *Much Ado* as a waiting-woman and as a cop.

According to executive director Sherri Young, part of the troupe's mission is to bring classic theater to a diverse audience and provide an opportunity for actors of color to hone their skills in some of the world's greatest roles.

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Move to Sutter From Fillmore Cost Jet Mail

By JUDY GODDESS

A FIXTURE ON Fillmore Street since 1990, the packing and shipping service Jet Mail relocated to 2184 Sutter Street last February.

Along with the move, founder Ed Tinsley made Kevin Wolohan a partner in the business. Wolohan initially worked part time at Jet Mail when the Fillmore location first opened, and has worked there ever since.

"It took me five months to ready this space," Wolohan says. "We tried to retain the look of the old space: mailboxes lining one wall, a front area where customers can work; but we've made the packaging options more visible and added a computer workspace."

He adds: "While the space is maybe 100 square feet smaller than the Fillmore location, the lower ceiling and track lighting give it a cozier feel."

Wolohan says the packing and shipping business was hit hard by the recession of 2008. Before that, he estimates Jet Mail served about 100 customers a day, and even more during the holidays. With the economic downturn, Jet Mail lost a sizable portion of its business. By the time it moved last year, customers had dwindled to about 65 a day.

The new, less visible space also took a toll on business.



"We're getting them back slowly," says co-owner Kevin Wolohan. "People need us when they need us."

"We lost lots of customers when we first moved here — and found out that five blocks is a big deal. Some people just don't want to go the extra distance," says Wolohan. "But we're getting them back slowly. People need us when they need us."

Today, Jet Mail serves an average of 30 to 40 customers a day, he says, and the numbers have increased in the last few months.

"It helps that the rent is lower, and we have some really diehard customers — both merchants and people in the neighborhood," Wolohan says. "We're also bringing in new business, and the condos

and big apartment buildings in the neighborhood help."

Private mailboxes are the core of Jet Mail's business, and that aspect is growing. Along with an address to receive mail, customers can request that Jet Mail open, scan and forward mail, as well as deposit checks received there.

Lorraine Lannes, a massage therapist at Kabuki Springs and Spa, recently came in to mail a key.

"I could mail things in Marin where I live, but I choose to go to Jet Mail, to specifically spend my money at a small business," she says. "And I really like these guys. They pay attention, they listen and remember me. I appreciate personalized service."

Patricia Tai, another longtime customer, echoed the sentiment. "My mother died recently, and my sister wanted some of her things mailed to her. We brought them to Jet Mail, Kevin packed them at a really reasonable price, and everything arrived in perfect shape. It's so nice to have them here," she says.

"Part of the pleasure of retail is you make friends," Wolohan says. "We get to know our customers and what they need. Our thing is building relationships. People need that more than ever."

He adds: "We try to run this place like an old-fashioned store. We know our customers; we know their names, where they usually send packages. People feel relaxed when they come in. We pride ourselves on that."

The customers reciprocate with gratitude — and sometimes odd requests.

"We're the general dish and bottlewasher of the neighborhood," Wolohan says. "It's wacky how people depend on us for esoteric things. One customer asked for one of those little jeweler's screwdrivers. I happened to have that. Or they ask for special services — like dismantling a bike and packing it all into a box of a specific size, or shipping a relative's ashes from here to Minnesota. We always try to meet their needs."

Businesses Blooming on Sutter

► FROM PAGE ONE

Other recent newcomers to the area include:

■ **SONG TEA AND CERAMICS.** Located at 2120 Sutter, Song Tea founder Peter Luong makes it his personal mission to educate browsers about the curated selection of fine teas and teaware offered in the shop.

■ **IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE OF SAN FRANCISCO.** At 2201 Sutter, this is one of three Iyengar yoga institutes in the U.S. It recently relocated from the Sunset, seeking a spot with a strong "community feel."

■ **REGARD INTERIORS.** At 2182 Sutter, this atelier is owned by interior design consultant Isabelle McGee, whose credits include hotel interiors and a luxury private residence she created for a Saudi Prince in Munich, Germany.

■ **ATTENTION TO DETAIL BARBER GALLERY.** At 2180 Sutter, this upscale barbershop — which opened three years ago — has quickly made its mark with the personalized services offered by owner Anton Cura, who also hosts a barber reality show, "Making the Cut."

■ **VELVETY NAILS & BEAUTY SPA.** At 2183

Sutter, this new salon offers a menu of preening and pampering that includes sugaring hair removal and eyelash extensions, perms and tinting in addition to manicures and pedicures.

Spice Ace's Dillan says there's been a noticeable uptick in foot traffic in the area in the last six months, especially after Song Tea opened just around the corner on Sutter. She keeps a ready supply of business cards for Song Tea and other local merchants at the spice shop's register, eager to point shoppers their way.

Sales associates at Song Tea in turn applaud the off-Fillmore locale. They note that the doctors and therapists ministering to patients out of the street's Victorians are among their biggest customers, and that the yogis and yoginis frequenting the recently opened Iyengar studio provide "a natural fit of like-minded spirits" for tea tasting.

The newly beaten path doesn't lack for eateries, either. The corner of Sutter and Pierce is held down by two sweet ones: Sweet Lime, a Thai restaurant where Neecha long stood that touts gluten-free options; and Sweet Maple, the breakfast



Since Song Tea opened last fall, merchants have seen a noticeable uptick in foot traffic.

and lunch spot that boasts the sugared and peppered Millionaire Bacon, made famous by an appearance on the Discovery Network's "United States of Bacon." And Cafe Murano, nearby at 1777 Steiner and now under new ownership, continues to woo the cafe crowd with free WiFi, outdoor seating, caramel macchiatos and relaxed service.

Soon there will be two more new busi-

nesses on the increasingly bustling 2100 block of Sutter Street. Longtime tenants Timeless Treasures and Sidney for Hair moved out last year so their building could be renovated, and won't be returning. Signs on the doors of the newly remodeled shops announce the availability of more than 775 square feet at 2174 Sutter and more than 1,000 square feet at 2176 Sutter.

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Displaced Tenants Find New Homes — and a New Start

By BARBARA KATE REPA

THE INFLUX of new businesses onto Sutter Street has not come without pain for two longtime tenants. "For Lease" signs now hang on the newly renovated storefronts occupied for decades by Timeless Treasures and the Sidney for Hair salon.

For 14 years, Joan O'Connor owned and operated Timeless Treasures at 2176 Sutter, offering vintage letters, quirky home furnishings and unique gifts.

O'Connor says that in March of 2012 the landlord informed her of plans to expand the residences above her shop. To do that, it was necessary also to expand the street level, nearly doubling the footprint of the building. O'Connor says she was told she had to move out to make way for the excavation and renovation. She was able to buy a little time, staying in place until the permits were final, but was asked again to vacate last August.

"I had asked for a month's notice, but we were given only about three weeks to move out," O'Connor says. "They told me the sooner I got out, the sooner I could come back."

She was initially promised a move-back-in date of last November — enough time to get her gift business up and running again before the holiday season. To hedge her bets in the meantime, O'Connor searched for both temporary and permanent space, both in the neighborhood, where she lives, and in other parts of the city.

"Just by chance, I happened to hear that Zonal on Hayes Street was looking for a pop-up for the holidays," she says. "Zonal's business is largely furniture, so gifts were a good fit there." The pop-up space, about one-sixth the size of her former shop, presented challenges — and an unexpected new beginning.

"The change was so amazing because I had limited inventory in a smaller space," she says. "It was like going away for the weekend: You focus on what you'll be doing and take your key favorites."

O'Connor finally got word that she could make the move back into the Sutter Street space on March 15.

"I went down and saw that they did a clean design, but the place was devoid of the charm and uniqueness of the prior space, with its nooks and crannies and reclaimed wood floor," she says. "Now there were sheetrock walls and a cement floor — and it would be my responsibility to create a new interior."

And there were more bombshells, O'Connor says: "If I had come back, my rent would have almost doubled. The landlord also wanted a deposit of \$5,000, even though I had been there 14 years. And the new lease also contained an early rent increase. There's no way I could make the numbers make sense."

In retrospect, she says, it was a blessing in disguise.

"Now I drive down Fillmore and there's still a wistful part of me that feels the tug of home," she says. "But it's a truism of life that change will happen. You have to find a way to go with that — or be really miserable. I have to be



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHI O'LEARY

Timeless Treasures and Sidney for Hair lost their longtime homes on Sutter Street when the building was renovated. Betty Jean Macklin, known as Sidney, moved two blocks east and teamed up with fellow salon owner Winfred Cook.



truthful and say that in the end, the whole series of events led to a marvelous outcome and forced me to make some decisions I had to make in view of the economy."

Betty Jean Macklin, who's known as Sidney, operated Sidney for Hair next door at 2174 Sutter Street for 28 years. She was also surprised — and ultimately displaced — by the building renovation. She eventually moved two blocks east, to 1967 Sutter, and joined forces with Winfred Cook at Winfred's Hair Salon.

For her, too, the move has been a boon for her business: "It turned out to be the best move that could happen for me," she says.

But the process that forced the change still rankles.

"The landlord called and said: 'My mother and I have decided that we no longer want you as a tenant.' It was shocking to me at first because I thought we were coming back," she says. "I felt kind of slapped in the face. It was like there was no appreciation or compassion for someone who had been there for 28 years without once requesting assistance of any kind."

She adds: "The mother and father allowed me to stay

in the space and in all that time they never raised my rent. I raised my own rent twice; you've got to let people know you appreciate them. But the new generation of kids just want to see how much they can rent these spaces for. They don't believe in doing business with a handshake."

Macklin says she was eventually told she could move back in, but there were new conditions: The rent was increased, the space was reduced quite a bit, and a room was added onto the back that she was told she could rent out.

"At 69, I don't want to take on another business," she says. "I don't know if she truthfully ever intended for us to come back."

Macklin is now pleased with her move two blocks down Sutter. "I now have two rooms that accommodate all my needs," she says, "and Winfred is a household word in the community."

Best of all, she says, all of her clients have followed her to the new location. "I hope to have a violin reception for my new space soon," she says. "But for now, I have to go. The one and the only Belva Davis [the beloved veteran broadcast journalist] is waiting for me to give her a haircut — and I don't want to keep her."

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Iyengar Yoga Institute Now in the Neighborhood

By BARBARA KATE REPA

THE IYENGAR Yoga Institute of San Francisco, a venerable organization with an imposing moniker, moved to the neighborhood recently in search of an updated space, better access to the community — and a new image.

Iyengar yoga, a style developed by Indian yogi, teacher and author B.K.S. Iyengar, now 95, emphasizes precision and alignment. But the nuances that distinguish it from other forms of yoga are largely lost on much of the public, and sometimes puzzling even to practitioners.

The students in Iyengar classes generally skew older, less outfitted, less frenetic, less apt to text while on their mats awaiting class.

"To be frank, that is a difficulty we face," says John Hayden, executive director of the institute and a longtime certified instructor. "This culture says to everyone: 'Give me a quick fix, an operation, a pill. Make me feel better and don't make me work for it.' People are looking for a happening, an event — for hot stones on a sternum," he says. "But the philosophy of yoga is a practice — continued without interruption for a long period. It's contrary to what the culture now demands. And we're up against that."

While Hayden knows firsthand the physical benefits of doing yoga, he says Iyengar runs deeper. "About 95 percent

come to yoga from the standpoint of the physical body," he says. "But those who stay at it 10 to 30 years do it because they know it is a spiritual, transformational practice."

The local Iyengar Yoga Institute, now located at 2201 Sutter Street at Pierce, is one of three in the country; the others are in Los Angeles and New York. All focus on teacher training, yoga workshops and public classes.

"The rub I also get is that Iyengar Yoga in particular is too cerebral, too serious," Hayden acknowledges. "We have some tendency to act as if we're the only ones who know how."

The arrogance comes honestly. Iyengar Yoga Institute instructors endure a rigorous training process of daily practice combined with a year of study of poses, anatomy, physiology and philosophy — and that's only the first level teachers. They are judged in a series of evaluations in which others observe them teaching and in practice. Most other types of yoga instructors are given the green light to teach after only 200 hours or less of classroom instruction.

"It's a brilliant system because it puts you in the position of a pressure cooker: Who you are and what you know has to come out," Hayden says. "Our organization had the first yoga teacher training in the United States. There is no question of the value and integrity of who we are and what we do."



Yogis celebrate the opening of the Iyengar Yoga Institute on Sutter Street.

Patty Dinner, a longtime neighborhood resident and a certified instructor at the institute who has been teaching yoga for 12 years, admits she found the teacher training much tougher than the mental gymnastics required to get through the Haas Business School at UC Berkeley.

But she says the rigorous training is what differentiates Iyengar from other styles of yoga — that, and the common use of props such as belts, blocks and blankets that help emphasize proper alignment.

"A lot of people don't like Iyengar as much initially because of the emphasis on

alignment. And a lot of people call it Nazi yoga because it's a real discipline. But the discipline is imposed to help prevent you from hurting yourself while doing yoga," Dinner says.

She also agrees that those attracted to Iyengar usually crave more than a toned physique. "It takes a bit of maturity to embrace a yoga that's not in a gym and offers a spiritual practice," she says. "But fairly immediately, the newer students I teach are okay with the quiet nature of lying over a bolster for 10 minutes."

Years ago, in a former life, John Hayden

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was a building contractor specializing in constructing custom homes in Big Sur. His last big project took two and a half years — and a toll on his psyche.

To recoup, he took time off to tour the country and pursue his love of rock climbing. It was then that he was introduced to yoga, and in the most prosaic way: by a magazine article that touted its ability to build strength and balance.

He dabbled in various forms of yoga, but eventually became a certified Iyengar instructor. He opened a studio in Carmel, but traveled to the Iyengar Yoga Institute of San Francisco, then located in the Outer Sunset, to teach and take classes.

“The reason I’ve been willing to donate time, commuting to San Francisco from Carmel twice a week, is because Iyengar Yoga changed my life,” he says. “No — it *saved* my life.”

Hayden went on the institute’s board and took a seat as vice president in 2007. “I took charge of an organization that was in a serious declining state,” he says. “It was after the dot-com bust, and there was also suddenly all kinds of competition — a yoga studio on every corner.”

■
The studio at 27th and Taraval was in a declining state, too.

“It was located on the corner, and the streetcar went by, which was its worst quality,” recalls Dinner, who taught there for years. “It was also dimly lit, with a leaky acoustical ceiling and a noisy mounted heater. There was nothing attractive about it — not a pleasant place to do yoga.”

The governing body hoped a move to a new space would also help reinvigorate Iyengar’s elitist image.

“We needed to reimagine what the Iyengar Yoga Institute of San Francisco could be,” Hayden says. “Relocating was

an opportunity for us to practice yoga on ourselves — to find a way we could be less exclusive and more inclusive.”

At length, they set their sights on the Sutter Street space, in the heart of a residential neighborhood and close to the medical community starting to embrace yoga’s therapeutic value.

After six months of negotiations, the lease was signed in May 2012, revealing another type of challenge: The space was filled with construction materials, plywood and insulation. The 120-year-old Douglas fir floor was buried under moldering carpet and three layers of linoleum.

But Hayden, the former contractor, was undeterred as he relocated from Carmel to San Francisco to manage the buildout and structural upgrades. “I walked in and was able to see what it was. I drove a lot of nails in this place,” he says, surveying the spacious, light-filled rooms at the new Sutter Street studio.

■
The move is already reaping rewards, with classes and workshops attracting both newbies and seasoned practitioners. “Being here in this neighborhood is a huge bonus,” Hayden says. “The other day I was here for two hours for a meeting and I saw 15 people walk in off the street during that time. That didn’t happen in two years on Taraval.”

There is also pride of place, with pristine new equipment and gleaming resurfaced floors. “I want people to come in and say, ‘I didn’t know Iyengar Yoga could be this cool.’”

Then a tiny imperfection in the threshold of the doorway catches his eye. “It bothers me that the edge of this concrete is not completely smooth,” he says, turning a little sheepish. “I guess that’s why the Iyengar method appeals to me so much.”

■ FIRST PERSON



DANIEL BAHMAN

Spice Ace makes the neighborhood tastier

Roaming the neighborhood as a boy in the 1940s, I searched for small critters to join the ranks of the quacking, barking and croaking things my mother barely tolerated in her home.

Today my nose leads the way as I wander about gathering things for our evening meal. My wife marvels at her good fortune to have a husband who cooks — who actually loves to cook. Even the postal carrier has been spotted at the door slot, enjoying an olfactory break.

Before **SPICE ACE** moved in around the corner at 1821 Steiner Street (above), I was more of a beans and weenies guy, but always wanting a tastier meal. (I did manage to get my wife’s attention with my mother’s salmon croquettes, however.) An enticing sign finally led me in the direction of the new neighborhood spice shop.

The go-to guy there, Ed, loves Mexican flavors; I want the oxtail dishes of my childhood. Out of that discussion came the idea of oxtail chili. My first attempt was too salty. Ed suggested I throw in a potato. Bingo — it worked.

I’ve gone into the shop several times to ask technical cooking questions. Spice Ace owner Olivia has explained how to use canola oil safely. Aces Louise and Susan seem to read my mind as I enter the store, handing me just the spices I need.

Dinnertime is the best time of the day in our home. My wife is a sucker for salmon, and I am still a sucker for oxtail chili. Do we still have beans and weenies? You bet. But these days, I add a neighborhood touch: Spice Ace’s barbecue seasoning.

— ARTHUR STONE

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The Lawyer and His Client on Death Row

BY CHARLES BUSH

IMUST BE RESTLESS. During a 40-year career as a lawyer, I practiced in a wide scattering of areas. I began at the Legal Aid Society of Marin County, handling evictions, welfare issues and discrimination cases. This led me to the center of the battles over illegal houseboats that erupted in Richardson Bay in the 1970s, representing three houseboat communities and dozens of individual



Charles Bush

boat owners. I worked with low-income housing sponsors and did the real estate legal work for numerous affordable housing projects.

And while all this was going on, I was also handling criminal appeals, representing men — and a tiny number of women — who had been convicted of felonies and were now exercising their right under the U.S. constitution to a free appeal.

The most fascinating was handling death penalty appeals. I handled the state-court portion of two such cases and found both experiences intense and unforgettable.

From a purely intellectual standpoint, death penalty work is interesting because the legal issues fall mainly into the area of constitutional law, and constitutional law is — for me at least — the most interesting part of the law.

Death penalty work is much more than parsing legal

issues. Mostly it's dealing with people. And most of all, it's about dealing with your client, someone who by definition has led a life *in extremis* — someone who was once in the front-page headlines, notorious for his crimes, but now is simply another human being sitting across from you, someone you are obligated to help.

And beyond your client are all the people who intersected his life at some point or another — his family, his crime partners, his accusers, his previous attorneys, doctors who may have treated him, friends he may have had. You must contact all these people, try to persuade them to help you, try to squeeze all available drops of information out of them. You never know what to expect, and what you encounter is often pretty bizarre.

There were, however, things that bothered me about the world of death penalty litigation. Its secrecy. Its insularity.

Because of client confidentiality rules, attorneys han-

dling death penalty cases are not supposed to talk about their cases with anyone not actually working on the case, even with their spouses.

And more generally, death penalty cases proceed beneath the public radar, with the average citizen knowing little or nothing about why a small percentage of convicted murderers are given death sentences while the vast majority of convicted murderers receive prison sentences of varying length. Sister Helen Prejean, the author of the book that became the movie *Dead Man Walking*, has often lamented that most Americans don't know enough about the death penalty and how it is administered in this country even to have an informed opinion on the subject.

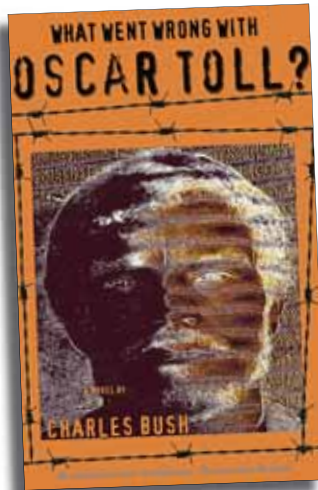
I finally decided to write a book about the death penalty in California. But it wouldn't be a true crime or creative nonfiction book. I couldn't do that because of client confidentiality rules. Instead, I would conjure an imaginary case, with an imaginary death row inmate and an imaginary lawyer. My book would be a novel.

But I quickly realized there was much more to writing a novel than simply an idealistic vision. I needed to master the craft of writing: how to pace, how to write dialogue, how to create atmosphere, how to integrate details, how to build a narrative arc.

Fortunately, northern California is rich in resources for budding writers, and I benefitted from two summers at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers and a superb year-round writing group. After 10 years and dozens of rewrites, the result is *What Went Wrong With Oscar Toll?*

It tells the story of San Francisco attorney Eric Lawson and San Quentin inmate Oscar Toll, who has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Lawson has been appointed Toll's attorney on appeal. Despite many obstacles — a key witness is killed, Toll's family won't talk — Lawson manages to turn tiny shreds of evidence into a new narrative of Oscar Toll's life.

Neighborhood resident Charles Bush's novel What Went Wrong With Oscar Toll? is available at Books Inc. at Laurel Village. For more information about the book and the author, visit charlesbush-author.com.



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Later-in-Life Poet Returns to the Fillmore

YVONNE CANNON is returning to Fillmore Street — again.

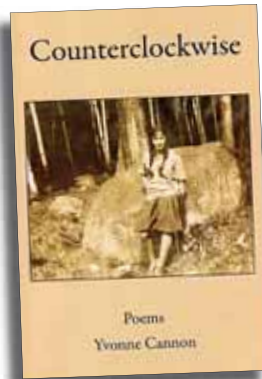
For many years Cannon worked in the neighborhood as the office manager for Surf Theaters, which managed a group of movie theaters in San Francisco, including the Castro Theater and Fillmore's own Clay Theater.

"Our business office was in a Victorian flat above what used to be Brommel's Pharmacy," Cannon says. The gift shop Nest now occupies the building, on the northeast corner of Fillmore and Clay across from the Clay Theater. Mel Novikoff owned the company.

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

In retirement, Cannon found solace in poetry during a daughter's illness and death. She got hooked on writing poetry, and her first book of poems, *When This You See*, was published in 2006 by Browser Books Publishing, an arm of the Fillmore Street bookstore.

Cannon had been a patron of Browser Books during her days on Fillmore. "Its previous location near the Clay Theatre



■ READING

Browser Books is sponsoring a reading and book signing event for Yvonne Cannon's new book of poems, *Counterclockwise*, on Sunday, May 11, at 7 p.m. at Sri Ko Kai Christ Church, 2140 Pierce, at the corner of Clay Street.

had a back room with a large, inviting table, where I spent many a lunch hour," she says.

Now Browser is publishing a new volume of Cannon's poems called *Counterclockwise*, which has been described as a "haunting, autobiographical collection written in a distinctive voice."

"I write of my quirky, errant family members," she says, "including the Hungarian immigrants on my father's side and my resulting experience as a first-generation American child — and my mother's first-generation German-American parents, who retained some Victorian values of their Bavarian ancestry."

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SF Forward is comprised of local business owners and residents who support sound economic policy and exceptional quality of life in San Francisco. The PAC is dedicated to insuring that political reforms strengthen the local economy, improve the business climate, and streamline the operation of government.

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2211 California St #403	0	1	0		14	4/1/14	349,000	407,500
1450 Post St #808	1	2	1	1116	221	4/10/14	450,000	425,000
2025 Broderick St #2	1	1	1		11	3/28/14	619,000	650,000
44 Orben Pl	2	2	0		164	4/15/14	799,000	875,000
2299 Sacramento St #7	2	1	1	1421	46	3/24/14	995,000	995,000
1701 Jackson St #409	2	2	1	1041	1	4/1/14	1,038,000	1,038,000
1770 Pacific Ave #302	2	2	1	1500	27	4/10/14	875,000	1,080,000
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3132 Scott St	3	3.5	2	2360	23	3/24/14	1,475,000	1,600,000
2351 Green St	2	2.5	1	1768	23	3/18/14	1,595,000	1,845,000
1999 Broadway #62	3	3	2	2200	20	4/15/14	1,795,000	1,975,000
3480 Clay St	3	2	1	1638	5	4/1/14	1,495,000	2,010,514
3997 Washington St	4	2	1	2070	26	4/4/14	2,250,000	2,125,000
3042 Jackson St #1	3	2	1	2265	17	4/15/14	1,995,000	2,150,000
3025 Broderick St	3	2.5	1	1730	4	4/8/14	1,595,000	2,200,000
3318 California St #4	4	3	1	2140	19	3/23/14	1,895,000	2,200,018
2769 Union St	3	2	2	2800	23	4/15/14	2,175,000	2,320,000
3467 Jackson St	4	2	0	2295	9	4/11/14	2,095,000	2,325,000
3284 Jackson St	4	2.5	0	3100	19	4/11/14	2,295,000	2,350,000
2302 Divisadero St	4	2.5	2	2280	42	4/9/14	2,350,000	2,400,000
2708 Greenwich St	3	2.5	1		7	3/21/14	1,950,000	2,610,000
2139 Green St #F	2	2	1		7	4/4/14	1,795,000	2,900,000
2044 Green St	3	3.5	1	2877	10	3/19/14	2,999,000	3,329,000
1960 Broadway #8	3	3	2		55	4/8/14	4,995,000	4,995,000
2000 Washington St #3	3	4.5	3	5360	189	4/4/14	9,500,000	9,400,000




Prices continue to climb, with no end in sight

Limited inventory has resulted in steep price increases in all segments of the market during the first quarter of this year. Small two to four unit buildings are in huge demand, with some properties receiving more than 35 offers. The highest rents in the country are obviously fueling investor interest. Cash remains king, with lenders reducing the time necessary to fund a loan to increase their opportunity for business. Prices continue to climb, with no end in sight.

ON THE MARKET: For the home with at least two of everything, 2118 Vallejo is a sprawling mansion offering every imaginable finish and architectural detail from Corinthian columns to leaded glass windows. But the true beauty lies in the framing of the bay views and magnificent gardens from outdoor decks on every level of the home. Expansive vistas (above) floating over the mature English garden are simultaneously inspiring and grounding. It's pretty special, and is available for \$8.85 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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A Showcase With Gardens and a Library

This year's design affair
is in historic Sutro home

By LISA ROSENBERG

BUILT IN 1908 for prominent attorney Alfred Sutro and his wife, the former Rose Newmark, at a cost of \$21,238, the handsome Classical Revival structure at 3660 Jackson Street — home to this year's Decorator Showcase — sits on a third of an acre overlooking the Presidio and San Francisco Bay.

Much of the structure's exterior is embraced by climbing ficus, and the property's natural setting is further enhanced by a small front garden and Mediterranean-style gardens to the rear of the house, plus the sweeping landscape of the Presidio beyond.

Inside the 8,820-square-foot home, an enclosed vestibule opens to a spacious foyer and graceful staircase ascending to a large, coffered third floor skylight. Original details, including six fireplaces, custom woodwork and decorative windows, blend with a later, more contemporary remodel.

On the second floor, the library, with its decorative ceiling, dark wood shelves and family crest, reflects the central importance of the room to the Sutro family, whose



■ DECORATOR SHOWCASE

The annual San Francisco Decorator Showcase is being held this month at 3660 Jackson Street. The home and its formal rear gardens overlook the Presidio and the bay. For tickets and more information, visit decoratorshowcase.org.

immense book collection included many fine books. Also on this floor, the generous master suite features southern light and a dressing room and bath. The third floor holds four bedrooms and a guest suite with a sitting room and bath.

The architectural team of Walter Danforth Bliss and William Baker Faville designed the house. They met while studying architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduating, they joined the prestigious New York architectural firm McKim, Mead & White, where they were influenced by the design philosophy of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which looked to Greek and Roman architecture as models for creating structures of lasting beauty on the

order of the great buildings of Europe.

In 1898 they formed the firm of Bliss & Faville in San Francisco. It became among the most respected partnerships in San Francisco architectural history, designing the St. Francis Hotel, the Flood Mansion (now Convent of the Sacred Heart School), the Geary Theatre, the Southern Pacific Building and many other significant public buildings and homes.

Owner Alfred Sutro was born in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1869, and attended Harvard University and Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. In 1904 he became a founding partner with his brother Oscar of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro, which became one of the most respected law firms in California. He was general counsel and a director of Pacific

Telephone & Telegraph and a director of Pacific Lighting Corp.

Sutro pursued a landmark case following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake in defense of the California Wine Association. In the wake of devastating losses, some insurance companies refused to pay or offered only "six bits or bust" settlements. In an era when earthquake damage was uninsured, Sutro's successful arguments enabled thousands of property owners to recover losses and directly contributed to the rapid rebirth of the city.

Sutro read Latin and Greek and befriended many prominent people in the literary world. He was a member of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, an organization of serious bibliophiles modeled after the original club in England, and a long-time president of the Book Club of California, established in 1912 to promote fine letterpress books. His support helped keep alive the letterpress industry, including such historically important book designers and printers as the Grubbs brothers and John Henry Nash. The Sutro Room at Hastings College of the Law is named for him and contains legal biographies and literary works connected to law.

During the Sutros' tenure in the home, they completed a number of significant modifications to the original structure, dividing the third floor into rooms in 1914, adding a garage in 1915, enlarging the home in 1928, rearranging the rear stairs and breakfast room to add a servants' dining room in 1938 and remodeling the dumbwaiter and installing a private elevator in 1966. Subsequent owners made further upgrades and improvements.



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415.321.4261



Cow Hollow
Offered at \$2,350,000
Two, 2-level 3BD/2BA Vacant Units. UPPER: Hardwood floors, wood-burning fireplace, dining area, sunny front and rear decks with Golden Gate, City and Palace view. Large 2+ car garage. LOWER: Includes dining room plus large social room leading to small rear garden and garage. Piano City views and very sunny.
2276-78Greenwich.com
Richard Weil
415.321.4254



Ashbury Heights
Offered at \$1,650,000
Remodeled 3BD/3BA Condo on 2 Levels. Living room with fireplace and views of Golden Gate Park & the ocean. Remodeled kitchen opens to dining room. Master bedroom with en suite bath. Family room with sliding doors to deeded garden. 1-car parking and storage.
201UpperTerrace.com
Sandra Bagnatori
415.518.4865
Scott Brittain
415.385.6657



Russian Hill
Offered at \$1,395,000
Hidden Architectural Gem. Ideally located contemporary 2BD/2BA 2 level home. Cutting edge design featuring a steel spiral staircase. Dark hardwood floors throughout with an abundance of light from all 3 exterior walls. Private garden, with 1-car private garage.
975Union.com
Lowrie MacLean
415.305.3326



Inner Lake District
Offered at \$799,000
Charming Sun-drenched Top Unit Lake Street Flat. This 2BD/1BA TIC flat is situated in an elegant Edwardian 3-unit building. There are two bedrooms in the back overlooking a south-facing and serene backyard and there is one split bath. There's also a formal dining room, updated kitchen and separate laundry room off the kitchen.
1021LakeStreet.com
Elle Ghandi
415.321.4287



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DINING

1300 on Fillmore
1300 Fillmore 771-7100

BaySubs & Deli
2486 Sacramento 346-3888

Bun Mee
2015 Fillmore 814-3104

Chouquet's
2500 Washington 359-0075

Curbside Cafe
2417 California 929-9030

Dosa
1700 Fillmore 441-3672

Elite Cafe
2049 Fillmore 673-5483

Evolution Fresh
2201 Fillmore 922-1751

Fat Angel
1740 O'Farrell 525-3013

Florio
1915 Fillmore 775-4300

Fresca Peruvian Cuisine
2114 Fillmore 447-2668

Glaze Teriyaki Grill
1946 Fillmore 590-2199

The Grove
2016 Fillmore 474-1419

Harry's Bar
2020 Fillmore 921-1000

India Palace
1740 Fillmore 567-7789

Izakaya Hashibiro Kou
1560 Fillmore 441-9294

Jackson Fillmore Trattoria
2506 Fillmore 346-5288

La Boulange
2043 Fillmore 928-1300

La Mediterranee
2210 Fillmore 921-2956

Mehfil Indian Cuisine
2301 Fillmore 614-1010

OTD
2232 Bush 923-9575

Pa'ina
1865 Post 829-2642

Palmer's Tavern
2298 Fillmore 732-7777

Pride of the Mediterranean
1761 Fillmore 567-1150

Roam Burgers
1923 Fillmore 440-7626

Roostertail
1963 Sutter 776-6783

SPQR
1911 Fillmore 771-7779

State Bird Provisions
1529 Fillmore 795-1272

Sweet Lime
2100 Sutter 674-7515

Sweet Maple
2101 Sutter 855-9169

Tacobar
2401 California 674-7745

Ten-ichi
2235 Fillmore 346-3477

Thai Stick
2001 Fillmore 885-6100

Troya
2125 Fillmore 563-1000

Via Veneto
2244 Fillmore 346-9211

Woodhouse Fish Co.
1914 Fillmore 437-2722

Yoshi's Japanese Restaurant
1330 Fillmore 655-5600

PIZZA

Bruno's
1375 Fillmore 563-6300

Delfina Pizzeria
2406 California 440-1189

Dino's Pizza
2101 Fillmore 922-4700

Extreme Pizza
1730 Fillmore 929-9900

Pizza Inferno
1800 Fillmore 775-1800

BAKERY & DESSERTS

Boulangerie Bay Bread
2325 Pine 440-0356

Bumzy's Chocolate Chip Cookies
1460 Fillmore 346-3222

Fillmore Bakeshop
1890 Fillmore 923-0711

Fraiche Yogurt
1910 Fillmore 674-6876

Jane
2123 Fillmore 931-5263

Miyako Old-Fashioned Ice Cream
1470 Fillmore 931-5260

Noah's New York Bagels
2213 Fillmore 441-5396

Sift Cupcake & Dessert Bar
2411 California 580-3030

Yoppi Yogurt
2208 Fillmore 345-0018

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WINE & SPIRITS

Ales Unlimited
2398 Webster 346-6849

D&M Wine and Liquor
2200 Fillmore 346-1325

Vino
2425 California 674-8466

Wine Jar
1870 Fillmore 931-2924

MARKETS

Friends
1758 Fillmore 346-3226

Gino's Grocery
2500 Fillmore 775-1908

Mayflower Market
2498 Fillmore 346-1700

Mollie Stone's
2435 California 567-4902

Pacific Food Mart
2199 Sutter 614-2385

Spice Ace
1821 Steiner 885-3038

ENTERTAINMENT

Boom Boom Room
1601 Fillmore 673-8000

Clay Theater
2261 Fillmore 561-9921

The Fillmore Auditorium
1805 Geary 346-1600

Sheba Piano Lounge
1419 Fillmore 440-7414

Sundance Kabuki Theaters
1881 Post 346-3243

Yoshi's Jazz Club
1330 Fillmore 655-5600



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



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