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Local food star tells how it all began PAGE 7



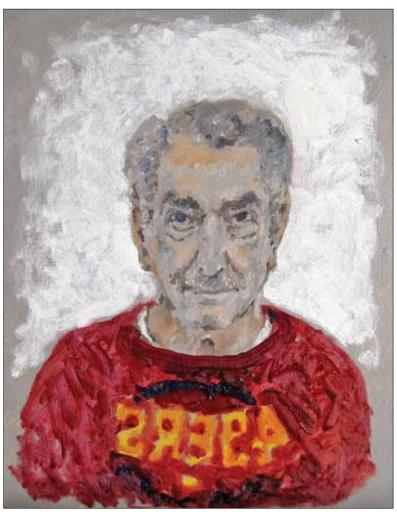
■ LANDMARKS

High Victorian Has a New Life

Grand home on Sutter now a boutique hotel

THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ DECEMBER 2015



As he has for more than two decades, neighborhood artist Jim Scott painted a self-portrait on Thanksgiving Day 2015.

Home FOR HOLIDAYS

After three years in exile, Jim Scott is back where he wants to be

By Thomas Reynolds

E'D LIVED IN THE FLAT ON California Street near Steiner for 37 years. Suddenly late one afternoon Jim Scott realized something was wrong. He called 911 and tried to answer all the dispatcher's

He called 911 and tried to answer all the dispatcher's questions. Finally he told her: "Look, I have to get out of here. My room is full of black smoke."

Sparks from a welder working next door had started a fire. The squadrons of firefighters soon on the scene

flooded the blaze before it reached Scott's apartment but only after they had bashed in his ceiling and windows, leaving his home a soggy and sooty mess. In his new book, *The All Tarik*, Scott, now 93, gently

In his new book, *The Al Tarik*, Scott, now 93, gently unfolds the story of the three years that followed and landed him in a residential hotel on Sutter Street he describes as "a century-old San Francisco pile" that is "a refuge for those like myself who in their last years have been roughed up and tossed on the rocks and shoals."

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Uncle Nick Takes Charge at Dino's

Famed restaurateur will run his nephew's Fillmore pizza palace

By Chris Barnett

ICK NICKOLAS could be the poster boy for a happy retirement. A tanned 78-year-old who looks and sounds 20 years younger, he built and ran a fine dining empire of 30 restaurants that stretched from Honolulu to Miami, is madly in love with his new fiancee and has all his hair and his buttons.

But he simply can't stop working.

For the last four years, Nickolas has been managing, maitre'd-ing, setting and bussing tables at Dino & Santino's at Fillmore and California, spelling his nephew, Dino Stavrakikis, on Thursdays and Saturdays so the single-dad owner could have time with his young son, Santino.

Now, with Santino turning 5 and heading to kindergarten, Dino might be expected to spend more time at his pizza palace, with his Uncle Nick backing off to take a cruise for two and play couples golf. But Nickolas isn't one to

sit on the sidelines.

In fact, he is taking the reins of the 28-year-old restaurant and ramping up to five days a week. Stavrakikis has given him



Dino's Uncle Nick Nickolas

carte blanche to change the menu, with some exceptions: Uncle Nick can't touch "Mama's meatballs or her spinach pie," he says, or a few other house signature items.

Meantime, Stavrakikis is willingly taking a backseat, but he's not hanging up his apron. While recently cooking his own dinner of penne, spinach and mushrooms with a marinara sauce, Stavrakikis claimed: "Im trying to pull back from six days, 50 hours a week to spend more time with Santino. Hey, I'm one of the few restaurant owners on the street who even works in his place. Me and Massimo of Via Veneto and maybe one or two others. Yet nobody's got an Uncle Nick with his experience and talent. I'm giving him the keys, but I'll still be around."



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UPFRONT

Sundance Sells Kabuki Cinemas

Georgia-based chain takes over; no changes expected

CTOR-DIRECTOR-PRODUCER Robert Redford and his investors have sold their five Sundance movie houses - including the eight-screen Kabuki cinemas at Fillmore and Post.

The new owner, Carmike Cinemas, based in Columbus, Ga., is the fourthlargest theater chain in the U.S., now with 274 theaters in 41 states and ambitions to expand further. A Carmike official said no immediate changes are planned in the operation of the Kabuki cinemas.

Sundance revamped the Kabuki complex when it took over in 2007, upgrading the decor, seating and sound and adding expanded food and beverage options.

'We have no intention of eliminating the popular beer, wine, cocktail and food programs offered at Sundance Kabuki,' said Brian Dobson, director of restaurant operations for Carmike. "The current arrangement works."

Dobson said his company will continue Sundance's reserved seating program, which allows tickets to be purchased online in advance, and will continue to show no ads before screenings. Sundance's "custom content" messages projected before films begin will remain, said Dobson.

Ticket prices won't change, Dobson said, but there may be more "alternative programming" — ballet, theater, opera and small indie films of the type that first put Redford's Sundance Film Festival on the cinematic map.

Carmike bought all five Sundance theaters - the others are in West Hollywood,



Sundance founder Robert Redford at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas in 2012.

Seattle, Houston and Madison, Wisconsin - for \$36 million in cash. Carmike will continue to operate the five theaters under the Sundance name, but may not expand the Sundance brand, according to statements both firms issued announcing the

Neither local Sundance spokesperson Nancy Gribler nor Kabuki general manager Michael Spring responded to repeated requests for information about any effects of the sale on the Kabuki's operations. Spring was said to be on a long conference call with his new bosses in Georgia.





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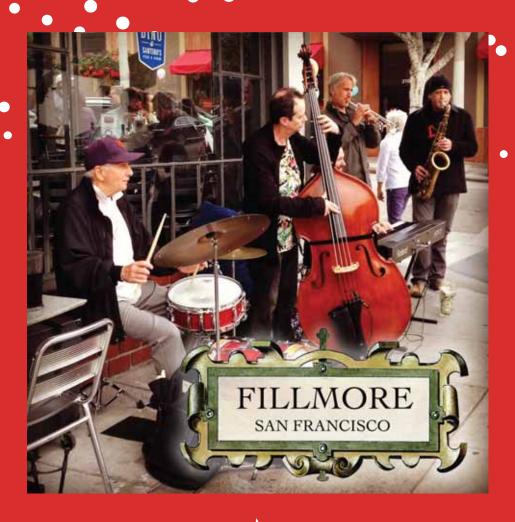
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CRIME WATCH

Robbery of a Commercial Establishment With a Gun

Sutter and Broderick Streets October 23, 7:50 p.m.

Two men entered a store. One walked toward the back, where he grabbed and held an employee. The second man approached the cash register brandishing a handgun, demanding "all the cash." The employee handed it over. The two suspects then fled. One is a black male from 25 to 30 years old, about six feet tall and weighing 150 lbs. The second suspect is a black male from 18 to 25 years old, about five feet six inches tall and weighing 130 lbs. The matter is still under investigation.

Shoplifting, Stolen Vehicle Geary Boulevard and Masonic Avenue October 25, 9:25 p.m.

Officers responded to a Target store regarding a theft. A woman had picked up several hundred dollars' worth of merchandise and attempted to leave the store. As the officers were speaking with her, she said she needed to check on her kids, who were in her car. The officers took her keys and followed her; they soon discovered her car was empty. A records check proved it had been stolen. The woman was booked on multiple charges, including vehicle theft.

Misuse of a Disabled Parking Placard **Bush and Divisadero Streets** October 29, 5:26 p.m.

Officers saw a driver park in a space designated for disabled people. The driver then got out and trotted to a nearby business, displaying no mobility problems. The officers asked him if the disabled placard hanging from the mirror of the car belonged to him. He admitted it had been issued to his brother-in-law, who was in Mongolia.

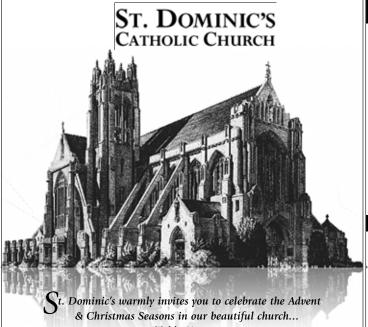
The driver was cited for the violation.

Burglary of Vehicles, Stolen Property Van Ness Avenue and Austin Street November 1, 9:30 p.m.

Officers received a 911 call about a man who was breaking into cars. The caller described the suspect as a black male wearing a black jacket and a black backpack. The officers immediately located a man who matched the description. When they searched him they found a screwdriver, a pry tool and drug paraphernalia in his front pocket. The officers then found two vehicles that had been damaged; items were scattered about on the passenger seats and the center consoles had been left open. A third vehicle had pry marks on the window. A computer check revealed an outstanding warrant for the suspect's arrest. Officers searched his backpack and discovered property that belonged to the owners of the two damaged cars. They were unable to contact the owners of the two vehicles, which were not secured, so the cars were towed. The suspect was booked at county jail.

Franklin and Eddy Streets November 2, 8:39 p.m.

Officers on patrol received a call about a group of men fighting on the sidewalk in front of an apartment building. One of those involved was throwing objects at people; another man was extremely agitated and shouting profanities. Officers arrived and broke up the fight. The argument started when one of the men rang all the doorbells of the apartment building in an attempt to get inside. He does not live there and a resident told him to leave. The man attempting to enter then threw a plastic cup, hitting one of the residents.



Weekday Masses: 6:30 & 8:00 am; 5:30 pm

Morning Prayer: 7:15 am (weekdays); 8:00 am (Saturday) Evening Prayer: 5:00 pm (daily)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: First Fridays: 2:00 & 9:00 pm (Sign-up required)

Sunday Masses:

Saturday evening: 5:30 pm (Vigil), 7:30 am (Quiet), 9:30 am (Family), 11:30 am (Solemn) 1:30 pm (St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish), 5:30 pm (Contemporary music), 9:00 pm (Candlelight)



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Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration Sunday, December 6

1:30 pm Mass (en español), Church Nave Reception follows in the Parish Hall

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

(A Holy Day of Obligation) Tuesday, December 8 Masses: 6:30 am, 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm Vigil Mass on Monday, December 7, 5:30 pm

Family Pageant & Las Posadas Sunday, December 13, 3:00 pm, Church Nave

Our Lady of Guadalupe Speaker Thursday, December 10, 7:00 pm, Church Nave

Annual Christmas Concert

Monday, December 14, 7:30 pm, Church Nave St. Dominic's Schola Cantorum with The Festival Orchestra

Advent Reconciliation Service

Friday, December 18
12:00 am – 1:00 pm & 7:30 – 8:30 pm, Church Nave
(Individual Confessions Available)

Come Join Our Christmas 2015 Celebrations!

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24 Advent Mass: 8:00 am Christmas Eve Vigil Masses: Family Masses 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm, 11:15 pm Carol Service, 12:00 am Midnight Mass (Solemn Mass with choral Music, Strings & Brass) No confessions today

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25

Masses at 8:30 am (Parish Mass with Carols), 11:00 am (Solemn Mass with Choral Music) No confessions today and no Masses at 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm or 9:00 pm

Solemnity of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Sunday, December 27 Our regular weekend schedule

New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil Thursday, December 31, 10:30 pm, Church Nave

Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God Friday, January 1, 2016 (A Holy Day of Obligation) Parish Mass at 9:30 am Vigil Mass on Thursday, December 31, 5:30 pm

Solemnity of the Epiphany

Sunday, January 3, 2016 Our regular weekend schedule

Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord

Sunday, January 10, 2016 Our regular weekend schedule

www.stdominics.org

The man who had been assaulted signed a citizen's arrest form. He was later cited and released.

Shoplifting Geary Boulevard and Masonic Avenue November 6, 8:24 p.m.

A security guard at Target watched a man steal more than \$400 worth of razor blades. When the suspect walked past the registers without paying, the security guard detained him and called the police. The suspect was cited for shoplifting.

Robbery Post and Lyon Streets November 8, 11:54 p.m.

A woman was smoking on her front steps when she was approached by a man and a woman. The woman asked her for a cigarette. After the woman gave her one, they asked her for the time. She took out her phone to check and the male suspect slapped the phone from her hand. As the woman reached down to pick up her phone, the man ran off with her purse. She took off after him, but tripped and fell. A third suspect approached and snatched up her phone as she lay on the ground.

One suspect is a black female from 17 to 21 years old, 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing about 160 lbs. with a tattoo on her right hand. The second suspect was an Asian male from 17 to 21 years old, about 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighing about 110 lbs.; he had a tattoo on his left hand. The third suspect was an Asian male from 20 to 25 years old, about 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing about 160 lbs.

Malicious Mischief, Vandalism to Property Pine and Gough Streets November 13, 4:25 a.m.

A caller reported that a man sprayed a fire extinguisher in the hallway of his apartment building, setting off the fire alarm. When officers arrived, the witness said the man was a former friend who had stayed with him in the past. The suspect had pounded on his door, demanding to be let in. The caller refused; he has a stay-away order against this individual because of altercations between them. Then the witness saw smoke coming inside his apartment from beneath the front door and heard the fire alarm. He opened the door and the suspect ran.

Officers found the man standing in the building stairwell. When they repeatedly ordered him to get on the ground, he refused and put his hands in his pockets. A struggle ensued between the officers and the suspect, who bit one of the officer's hands, though additional officers succeeded in putting handcuffs on him. The suspect was cited for the violations and, because of his altered mental status, transported to San Francisco General Hospital.

Shoplifting, False ID Geary Boulevard and Masonic Avenue November 19, 1:53 p.m.

A woman shopping in Target concealed purse, a wristwatch and a clock in her bag. She then selected several items of clothing and went through to the register to pay for the clothes. Her transaction was declined because of insufficient funds, so she left the store, taking the stolen items in her bag with her. A security guard who had been watching her called the police. When they arrived, the woman presented the offi-cers with a false ID; the person whose ID she used had outstanding warrants for her arrest. When the suspect realized this, she volunteered her true name, and it turned out that she had warrants for her arrest as well. Officers searched her purse and found the stolen items. The suspect was placed under arrest.





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Service of Lessons & Carols December 20 at 5:00 pm

Christmas Eve Choral Service 5:00 pm, Mass at 5:30 pm

Christmas Day Mass 10:00 am

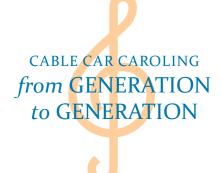
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FOOD & WINE

Uncle Nick Takes Over at Dino's

► FROM PAGE ONE

Nickolas, sitting in the sunshine at a sidewalk table and flashing his killer smile to passersby who wave hello, claims that after 60-plus years, the restaurant business is in his blood. He says: "I love it when someone comes up to me and asks, 'Don't I know you from somewhere?'"

But the Oakland-born Greek, who launched his six-decade career picking pineapples in the fields of Hawaii, isn't just out to feed his ego.

"I have the time and desire to work more — to continue a 28-year-old tradition of a family-owned restaurant, but turn it up a little bit. I'm not here to make another Nick's Fishmarket," he says of the high-end seafood restaurant that put him on the map.

He has already taken his first steps. He's moved from the East Bay to an apartment just up California Street from the restaurant. "I'm selling one of our cars and we're going to be Mr. and Mrs. Uber," Nickolas says. "I've cut my commute down from an hour and a half to 10 minutes straight downhill in the morning."

Menu tweaking is farther down on his priority list. "Dino and I are on the same



Says Nick Nickolas (center): "We're old school restaurateurs. Show me any other small joint with 20 guys taking care of the guests."

page there. We're old school restaurateurs with an emphasis on our employees. Show me any other small joint with 20 guys taking care of the guests," he says. "Instead, we're going to concentrate more on hospitality. Hospitality is how you welcome your guests, how you look them in the eye, how you treat them once they're in the door, how you seat them, how attentive you are in anticipating their needs, how you put down the check, how you thank them when they leave."

Insists Nickolas: "In 60 years, I've never lost a guest who left because we thanked them too much."

He is somewhat tightlipped about menu changes he's been pondering. "We should have some fish here once in a while, but it's not going to be a five pound lobster like I did at Nick's. We're a pizza joint, but let's get some fish folks in here by serving some salmon, cod and an elegant fish and chips," he says. "But keep it priced right."

He won't be trotting out USDA choice New York strips or filet mignons. "Too expensive," he says. "We had a great pork chop on the menu for a while and we sold one in four months."

Nickolas maintains the best way to rework a menu is to listen to the guests. "Just talk to them, listen to them and they will tell you what dishes they're looking for," he says. "Lots of people have been coming here regularly for years, but their tastes change."

And he acknowledges new younger guests, the millennials, who are well traveled and have their own tastes. "I want to accommodate them with a series of new Uncle Nick Specials, at both a new affordable lunch as well as at dinner," he says, unwilling to be more specific.

The seasoned restauranteur does not hesitate, though, about promoting a 4 to 6 p.m. happy hour that will include some "creative bar foods." Just do not expect to find martinis and margaritas to wash down Mama's marinara or the fresh mozzarella. "\$100,000 for a booze license? We don't need it," says Nickolas. "Our food lends tiself to beer and wine. I see our happy hour spilling over to the outside. There's always



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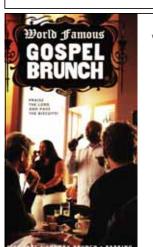
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a beautiful parade of people on Fillmore. I see it as a gathering place, like a Greek taverna.

But Nickolas doesn't envision Dino & Santino's adding breakfast to its culinary repertoire. "We don't have the equipment or the space," he says. "We're sticking to 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week. Our big day is Sunday, when everyone comes in to watch the games - and eat."

Nor is he planning to unfurl a laundry list of tasty new desserts. "We do just one dessert loukoumades, a Greek donut that is deep fried and served with honey, cinnamon and walnuts. You find them at Greek festivals," he says. "If someone wants another dessert, we send them around the corner to Smitten for their fresh ice cream or across the street to Sift. We love our neighbors.'

And Nickolas makes it clear he will not be tethered to the restaurant dawn to dark. "I'm going to walk the streets and hustle for new customers," he says. "I did it 65 years ago. I haven't forgotten how and I like doing it."

Still, he's quick to add he's not looking backward for business. "There are all the young kids today," he says. "You can't just do delicious food. They want vegan and gluten-free. We now have gluten-free pizza dough."

Dino & Santino's also has a little-known but prosperous corporate catering divi-

sion, often in collaboration with another San Francisco caterer called Zesty, which Nickolas is now supervising. Some new dishes have already been created for the catering venture that could show up in the

He's also hatching a plan to round up the Fillmore's restaurant owners for a regular meeting. "In every city where I had a Nick's Fishmarket, I created an association



"I'm giving him the keys, but I'll still be around."

— DINO STAVRAKIKIS, who remodeled in 2013 and added son Santino's name

of fine dining restaurants and invited everyone to be part of it," he says. "In Chicago, I had the top 25 restaurants in the Loop as members. We all had a drink, talked about our mutual problems and opportunities and no one was jealous. We were all supportive of each other. We can do that here in the Fillmore.

It All Started With Her Mom's Tomato Sandwich

By Joanne Weir

HEN I WAS 6 years old, a feisty little thing with a mop of red hair spiraling every which way, my mom made me a simple sandwich for lunch. Not peanut butter and jelly or tuna fish salad, mind you; my mom was a professional chef, after all. Mom's version

of simple was her tomato

BOOKS sandwich: homemade white bread, homemade mayonnaise and a ripe sweet red tomato plucked fresh from her garden.

As Mom arranged tomato slices, still warm from the sun, atop a generous slathering of mayonnaise, she looked me in the eyes and said: "Whenever you eat or cook tomatoes, they need a sprinkle of salt. Salt brings out the sweetness and acidity." I watched closely, tummy grumbling, as she liberally dusted the sliced tomato with kosher salt.

I didn't think much of it at the time. I was a kid; I just wanted to eat my lunch. But looking back, I think my lifelong love affair with food may have begun in that precise moment. Little did I know how right my mom was, or how often I'd think of her sage advice while cooking or teaching. But I swear it comes up in almost every single class I teach, and I tell the tale and pass her wisdom along.

My entire childhood, I was surrounded by a family that loved and appreciated good, quality food. Both my maternal



and paternal grandparents ran farms in New England, where they lived off the land - preparing seasonal, homemade, homegrown, organic, artisanal food. Of course, at the time no one used those terms. It was just what they did.

I'll never forget eating my Grandpa Sears' incredible chicken salad sandwiches in the shade of his maple tree. Chicken from his own coop, silky homemade mayonnaise, baking powder biscuits warm from the oven and just-fried hand-cut potato chips.

Growing up like that, I was practically destined to follow a culinary path. After a slight detour through college and a few precarious years as a middle school art teacher, I found my way back to

TO PAGE 8



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Destined to Follow a Culinary Path

► FROM PAGE 7

food. Studying under famed French chef Madeleine Kamman to earn a master chef degree, I spent a rigorous year learning to love food on a whole new level, by understanding it inside and out: the origin, history and science behind a dish; how to taste, recognize and balance nuances of flavor.

I took my newfound knowledge and moved to San Francisco. Cities don't get much more food-oriented than this one. Wandering Fillmore Street, I immediately felt at home, despite the 3,000 miles that separated me from my family in New England. The beautiful painted lady I've called home for the past 25 years beckoned with its architecture, which mimicked the Victorian style of Grandpa's farm.

I got my first cooking job at Alice Waters' Chez Panisse in Berkeley based in large part on the passion for food I'd experienced on my grandparents' farms. Sure, I had a culinary degree from one of the most prestigious programs in the world, but it was when I spoke of lunch under Grandpa's majestic maple that Alice's eyes really lit up.

Chez Panisse was leading a movement to return to the food of my grandparents' era. Committed to serving seasonal, local, organic and sustainable food, the restaurant was at the forefront of the



A tomato sandwich sparked cooking teacher and television chef Joanne Weir's career.

California food revolution. It was a thrill and an honor to experience the new food movement firsthand, especially since my personal food philosophy mirrored the restaurant's.

Many people — including me — thought I was a little crazy to leave after five years. But I was at a time in my life where I didn't want to be tied down in one place. I could easily see myself spending my entire career at Chez Panisse — truly the perfect working environment — but I

just couldn't settle my wandering spirit.

Teaching cooking classes afforded flexibility and eventually led to incredible travel opportunities: Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Morocco, South America, Mexico and all over the U.S. My father once called me his "wandering gypsy," and I've certainly lived up to the moniker.

While traveling the world, I continue to reaffirm my passion for quality ingredients. Most of my favorite travel memories include trips to the local markets. Whether shopping the Rialto in Venice, the souk in Marrakech, or a farmers market in San Francisco, the market is my happy place. Surrounded by beautiful, fresh, seasonal ingredients, I am inspired.

But as much as I enjoy wandering, I also love coming home. Some of the cooking classes I teach in my home studio kitchen near Fillmore Street are among my favorites. Students gather from all around the country, sometimes the world, to cook with me. Watching first-time visitors discover and fall in love with San Francisco makes me fall in love all over again. Pointing out neighborhood gems such as Dosa, Out the Door, SPQR, Delfina and Spice Ace, I remember how lucky I am to call this area home.

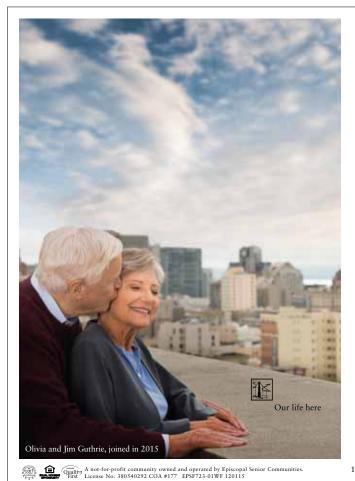
It was here in the neighborhood that I wrote my new cookbook-memoir, Kitchen Gypsy, while developing and testing all the recipes in my home kitchen, popping into Mollie Stone's countless times a day for last-minute, must-have ingredients. In the midst of writing, I realized how clearly my life's path was influenced by my experiences in childhood.

I guess it just goes to show how formative the childhood years can be. I may not have been paying close attention at the time, but my mom's passion for food and my grandparents' farm-to-table practice clearly imprinted on me.

You hear that, 6-year-olds? Pay

You hear that, 6-year-olds? Pay attention to the grownups. They just may know what they're talking about.

Joanne Weir is maestra de cocina at Copita Tequileria y Comida in Sausalito. Her newest book, Kitchen Gypsy, is available at Browser Books at 2195 Fillmore.



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A Three-Year Odyssey Into Madness — Then Home Again

At first his landlord assured Scott he would be back in his apartment in a couple of months. So he moved in temporarily with a neighbor across the alley. But as the renovation of the building languished, he needed another place to stay, and found no good options. So he moved back into his charred apartment.

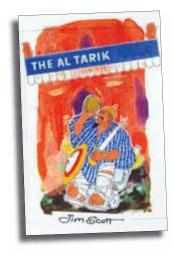
"There was no heat or light, but the water was still running," he writes. "It was much better than the Tenderloin cesspool I had fled. On my first night in what had been my old bedroom, I looked up through the blackened rafters to the shingles of the roof, which roared with a great downpour and thunder while lightning lit the plastic sheets stretched over the window spaces. Oddly, it all felt elemental and reassuring and that something positive could now happen."

That unfailing sense of optimism runs throughout his sad story. A neighbor tipped city inspectors that Scott had returned to his damaged apartment. After a week, a caseworker arrived to say he had arranged five free nights at a hotel Scott calls the Al Tarik, but which an observant local might recognize as the Granada.

He would remain there for more than two years, paying for the privilege himself, plus the rent on a storage locker for his belongings. Yet he kept his attitude positive.

"The madness of the Al Tarik is proving restorative," he writes. "In general, the people in our gang of around 250 are estimable in that, though coming from all strata of city life, having often grievous mental, emotional and physical problems - and in a lot of cases having been dust-binned by fate or relatives — they have tolerance, understanding and are often helpful to one another. There are exceptions some shocking."

He decided he would get through it by writing a book. "That I liked the place immediately has a lot to do with our great array of noble discards — their look, their stories, interaction with one another and with the individualistic though understanding staff," he writes. "Observing, conversing and recording are going to help me through a period of harried homelessness, poor health and my 88th year."



"Two old strangers living together in a small room is a grim idea, but I don't have a choice."

Despite it all, he counted his blessings.

"Yes, it's been more than a year since that July 30th event," he writes. "A rough year with displacement, storing, relocation, leg and health problems, while listening to the ound of a bank account getting sucked down the drain."

But: "The woeful truth is that this is all trivial compared to what others are enduring here on the Raft of the Medusa.'

At first he had a room of his own.

"It has been a foolish extravagance," he writes, "although with its erratic heating, howling neighbor, reek from the laundry, bed bugs and cockroaches, it is far from posh.'

As the months passed, the need to conserve his meager resources made it necessary to take a roommate.

"I've made the transition from private to shared room status," he writes, "and along with feelings of life spiraling downward, it, the room share, has been, as was predicted a year ago, a failure. The fates had fun listing then randomizing the parlous roommate possibilities offered by the hotel, a list that includes the ex-con, the addict, the thief, the woefully disabled and all manner of demented, then

assigned me one I hadn't thought of — the drunk."

He adds: "Two old strangers living together in a small room is a grim idea, but I don't have a choice, and the savings are big and necessary. It will slow the drain on funds, postpone the auctioning of my belongings and delay the chances of life on the street."

Through it all, he continued his tradition of creating a self-portrait on Thanksgiving. Art supplies were limited, so he worked in pencil.

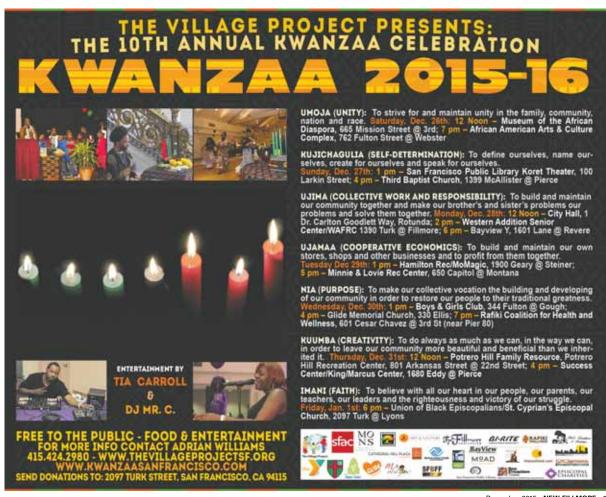
"In doing my annual Thanksgiving self-portrait, I'm saying I'm glad to be in fair health and in at least better shape than some of the other guests," he writes. "Though facing 90, I'm able to be of some help to my shipmates. Also, as a project, I have been doing pencil portraits of the guests, giving the models the originals after getting copies in the office.'

Construction on his flat on California Street dragged on into a third year. But he was determined to stick it out and get back home, with no encouragement from his landlord.

"Trying to get the keys for the move-in, there was an ugly scene with the landlord, who is deeply resentful of my paying way under market value for the place, as well as having sued him," he writes. "He offered to buy me out. It may be senile bravado, but I'm moving in."

And he did. This year on Thanksgiving he painted his self-portrait at home.

Iim Scott's newest book. The Al Tarik, and his earlier book. Art Student, are both available at blurb.com



MUSIC

By Sally Swope

N A RECENT Saturday afternoon, I set out to shop at Athleta and Eileen Fisher. I chose to take the 22-Fillmore bus rather than dodging cyclists, stopping for jaywalkers and finding a place to park within five blocks of Fillmore Street. Next to me sat a woman with an odd shaped black box.

"What's that?" I asked.

She explained there was a ukulele inside and that ■ FIRST PERSON she was going

to play at a jam. "Come to the jam," she said. "I'm getting off at the next stop.

I was open to this chance meeting and curious enough to tag along. The jam was at Pa'ina, the lounge and restaurant on Post Street next to the Kabuki Theatres.

As I stepped through the open door, there was an amazing sight: About 50 women and men of all ages playing ukuleles in a huge dimly lit room. A wonderful energy almost like an aroma wafted out the door. Many musicians were also munching on Hawaiian food and others were tuning their ukuleles with an electronic digital gadget that made it easy to harmonize.

I wanted to know how to play. "No matter what your skills, you can play along," one musician assured me.

With her easy smile and a white plumeria flower in her long dark hair, Cynthia Lin had everyone's attention when she came to center stage. Then they began playing "It's Been a Hard Day's Night." It was not what I expected.



Cynthia Lin now helps others learn to play the ukulele, "It's easy to catch on," she says,

Romancing the Ukulele

Cynthia Lin has a new love she loves sharing

A few weeks later, I took the introductory class for an hour and a half.

Lin is a huge force expanding the audience for ukulele music, long associated with Hawaii and marginalized from the mainstream. On stage at a jam and in person teaching classes, she has an enthusiasm for ukuleles that's palpable. Every month she offers a free jam session that draws ukulele players from around the Bay Area. And she believes anyone can learn to play the ukulele by practicing just five minutes a day

"Even if you've never played a musical instrument, it's easy to catch on. It sounds better if it's played in a group and it's more fun," she says enthusiastically. "And the ukulele is adaptable to other music: rock, pop, jazz, folk."

From "Somewhere Over the Rainbow to "It's Been a Hard Day's Night," she adapts favorite songs she has scored and adds her own songs with original lyrics. She also posts video lessons and has a monthly online jam.

"I have learned so much about

recording, arranging, song selection - and have really seen growth in my ukulele skills," she says. "It's also helped me build a bigger following online, and it's so great to have fans encouraging me each time I post a video."

Lin picked up the ukulele two years ago when she moved to San Francisco from New York, switching from guitar because she liked the sound and found the ukulele easier to carry. Now a performer, singer, songwriter, vocal coach and teacher, she has also produced four albums and performs regularly with her band, Cynthia Lin and the Blue Moon All Stars.

Though most people associate ukuleles with Hawaii, Lin has no Hawaiian roots. But she was drawn to island culture and music, and Hawaii has become her adopted home.

"I've come to fully embrace the culture of aloha spirit, which is the sharing of peace, love and compassion without any expectation in return," she says. "Teaching ukulele gives me an opportunity to share aloha through the joy of music.

Lin has visited Hawaii twice in the last two years and has also performed there.

"Hawaii feels like my cultural home," she says, "and I'm looking forward to visiting more often - and maybe living there one day.'

Cynthia Lin offers a 90-minute introductory class at Aloha Warehouse at 1731 Buchanan Street in Japantown. The cost is \$30. For more information, email hello@cynthialin. com or visit cynthialin.com. The next ukulele jam at Pa'ina, at 1865 Post Street, is scheduled for December 19.



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LANDMARKS

GRAND IN A VERY VICTORIAN WAY

The Payne Mansion becomes a hotel

By Bridget Maley

HE PAYNE MANSION stands on the south side of Sutter Street between Franklin and Gough, a distinctly visual reminder of the city's Victorian past. Recently renovated to accommodate the boutique Payne Mansion Hotel, the building was constructed in 1881 and survived the 1906 earthquake and fire. It was designed by the architectural collaboration of two brothers-in-law, William F. Curlett and Theodore Eisen.

Mary Pauline O'Brien was the niece of the Comstock "Silver King" William S. O'Brien, who made a fortune in the Great Bonanza as an investor in the Consolidated-Virginia Mine in Virginia City, Nevada. When he died in 1878 at age 53, Pauline O'Brien Payne inherited a chunk of her uncle's estate. Married in New York City by Cardinal McCloskey on July 21, 1880, Mary Pauline and Theodore F. Payne quickly set about planning for a lavish San



Sept.

The Payne Mansion at 1409 Sutter was designed by architect William F. Curlett (above) and his brother-in-law, Theodore Eisen, and built in 1881.

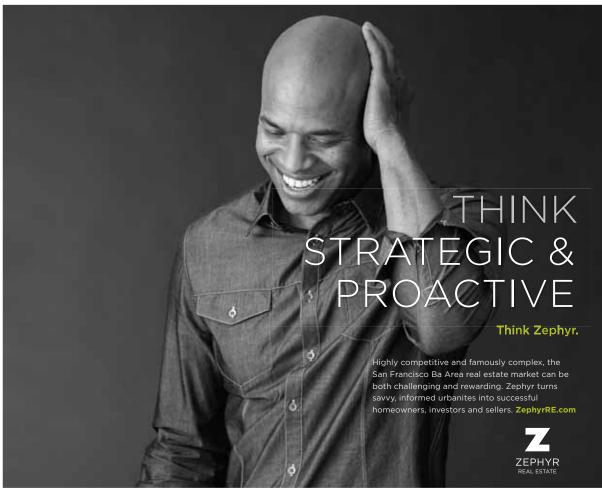
PHOTOS: SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Francisco house. The March 1882 edition of the California Architect and Building News noted that a two-story plus basement frame house was being designed by architects Curlett and Eisen, and constructed by contractor Creighton, at a cost of \$16,500.

Interestingly, the building contract for the Sutter Street home was listed under Mrs. Payne's name, indicating that indeed it was her money financing its construction. Her name was also listed as the owner of the lot on which the house stands. It is rumored that Pauline O'Brien's generous inheritance carried a stipulation that it never be under the control of a future husband — although Theodore Payne, a successful manufacturer of nuts and bolts, was not at a loss for his own money.

Architect William Curlett was born in Warrenpoint, Ireland, in 1845 and trained in architecture in Ireland and England prior to immigrating to the United States.

He came to San Francisco for a short time in 1871 and then moved to Los Angeles, where he played a role in the design of St. James Park. Returning to San Francisco, Curlett went on to design a number of extravagant residences, including both Crocker mansions on Nob Hill and James Phelan's summer estate, Montalvo. He also designed courthouses in both Los Angeles and Fresno counties and numerous San







Now 1409 Sutter houses the boutique Payne Mansion Hotel, with 10 guest

Francisco commercial buildings, including the Shreve Building at Post and Grant.

The September 1883 edition of the California Architect and Building News announced another project by Curlett, this time with architect partner Walter Culbertson. The house, an incredibly elaborate three-story mansion, stood at the corner of Van Ness and Washington and was constructed for Porter Ashe at the astounding cost of \$100,000. Unlike the Payne Mansion, the Ashe mansion did not survive when the U.S. Army dynamited Van Ness Avenue in 1906 to create a firebreak.

In addition to Culbertson and Eisen, Curlett had several other design partners during his career, including William McCaw, an old friend from Belfast; Aleck Curlett, his son; and Augustus Laver. Curlett was a Bohemian Club member, as well as a Mason. His peers selected him chairman of the advisory board for San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915.

The Paynes engaged Curlett on a number of occasions, including the design of several commercial buildings. Finally, in 1906, after seeing the ravages of the earthquake and fire, they relied on Curlett to design an extensive Italian villa as their country estate on 40 acres in the popular Fair Oaks section of Menlo Park, Theodore Payne died in 1907 and never saw his completed villa. Today, the home is part of the Menlo School.

The Paynes' Sutter Street mansion was grand in a very Victorian way. It was an easy mix of Stick Style with the more modern, at the time, Oueen Anne Style, It

included an elaborate side elevation portecochere, an octagonal turret with an open air porch, multiple street-facing bay windows, wood shingles and siding of varying sizes and shapes, as well as chimneys with decorative brickwork. Pictured in Artistic Houses of California circa 1888, the house had modern plumbing and heating as well as elaborate interior finishes

While the porte-cochere has been lost and some of the interior was remodeled for a 1980s jewelry store, the building is remarkably intact. Highly detailed oak paneled walls, inlaid floors and ceilings of what appear to be Lincrusta, a deeply embossed wall covering, still adorn the front reception rooms.

Mary Pauline O'Brien Payne gave up the Sutter Street house sometime around 1909 and spent a number of years at the Menlo Park estate, which she sold just eight months before her death. She spent her final days in New York, the city of her birth, near two of her children, and died there in 1922.

After the Paynes, Edgar and Ida Anderson and their daughter Marion lived at 1409 Sutter Street. By 1933, the building was occupied by the Japanese YMCA. Karl Lengfeld, an antique dealer and interior decorator, used the house for commercial purposes from about 1940 into the late 1960s. For many years it was the headquarters of the San Francisco Medical Society.

The building's new use as the Payne Mansion Hotel, with 10 guest rooms and public spaces on the ground floor that can be rented for events, will enable visitors to experience a Victorian-era landmark first-



Holiday Schedule:

December 25th, Christmas Day - No Collection Service January 1st, New Year's Day - No Collection Service

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NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

	Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days Date	Asking	Sale
	1988 Bush St	3	3	0	3,024	18 10/19/2015	1,895,000	2,300,000
	2317 Webster St	4	2	3	2,127	40 10/16/2015	3,250,000	2,825,000
	1523 Baker St	5	4	2	3,528	12 10/23/2015	2,850,000	3,500,000
	318 Walnut St	4	2	2	2,707	15 10/20/2015	3,200,000	3,750,000
	1641 Green St	4	3	1	2,442	51 11/10/2015	3,995,000	4,150,000
	3808 Clay St	4	2	2	3,100	22 10/16/2015	4,500,000	4,200,000
	135 Locust St	4	3	1	n/a	12 11/4/2015	4,995,000	5,410,000
	2730 Broadway	4	3	1	n/a	49 10/20/2015	5,850,000	5,500,000
	1533 Sutter St	6	7	3	n/a	157 11/12/2015	6,595,000	5,530,000
	2727 Union St	4	3	2	3,675	6 10/29/2015	6,250,000	6,800,000
	2209 Pacific Ave	4	4	2	1,482	52 11/5/2015	9,495,000	9,950,000
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts								
	2040 Franklin St #506	0	1	1	791	23 10/30/2015	575,000	540,000
	2234 California St #A	1	1	0	n/a	39 11/6/2015	749,000	779,000
	1998 Pacific Ave #203	2	2	1	n/a	55 10/19/2015	998,000	1,105,000
	1805 Fillmore St #305	2	2	1	1,129	45 11/2/2015	1,095,000	1,125,000
	3177 California St	3	2	1	n/a	38 11/4/2015	1,050,000	1,175,000
	2286 Filbert St	2	1	1	1,160	25 11/3/2015	1,200,000	1,225,000
	1950 Gough St #304	1	1	1	1,050	19 11/3/2015	998,000	1,227,000
	2921 Washington St #6	1	1	1	1,070	4 10/23/2015	995,000	1,250,000
	2409 Scott St #2	1	1	1	1,135	32 11/9/2015	1,225,000	1,320,000
	1982 Scott St	2	2	1	1,386	21 11/10/2015	1,395,000	1,461,000
	1770 Pacific Ave #402	2	2	1	1,500	17 10/21/2015	1,249,000	1,775,000
	1901 California St #8	3	2	1	n/a	10 11/2/2015	1,695,000	1,800,000
	2201 Sacramento St #601	2	2	1	1,498	4 10/22/2015	1,650,000	2,000,000
	2186 Vallejo St #1	2	2	1	n/a	21 10/21/2015	2,290,000	2,300,000
	3991 Washington St	3	3	1	1,980	19 10/22/2015	2,100,000	2,327,500
	2327 Bush St	3	3	1	2,082	10 11/4/2015	1,795,000	2,410,000
	3025 Broderick St	2	2	1	2,145	56 10/27/2015	2,550,000	2,500,000
	1844 Greenwich St	4	3	2	n/a	16 11/4/2015	2,295,000	2,682,000
	2689 Broderick St	4	3	2	2,670	34 11/3/2015	3,500,000	3,300,000

Average condo: \$1.1 million

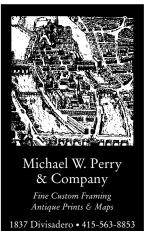
Condominium buyers in San Francisco have become as accustomed to sevendigit price tags as those shopping for single-family homes. October's median sales price for a San Francisco condo was \$1.1 million, and that figure has not dipped below \$1 million since January.

A look at condo sales in San Francisco's most desirable central neighbor-

A look at condo sales in San Francisco's most desirable central neighborhoods underscores this trend. Of the 19 units that changed hands in Pacific Heights, Lower Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow and Presidio Heights in the last month, only two sold for less than \$1 million.

— Data and commentary provided by PATRICK BARBER, president of Pacific Union. Contact him at patrick.barber@pacunion.com or call 415-345-3001.





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