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■ NEW NEIGHBOR

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Wise Sons include a slice of history, too
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■ FOOD & WINE

Going Strong After 30 Years
Only the owners are new at this local spot
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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ MARCH 2016



"We're the last block on Fillmore where every store is individually owned," says Elena Basegio, who with her dad owns the Fillmore Bakeshop on the corner of Bush Street.

The Dividing Line

The neighborhood shops under the condos between Bush and Sutter bridge upper and lower Fillmore

By CHRIS BARNETT

LONGTIME LOCAL LANDLORD John "Jack" Molinari — whose family partnership owns the commercial storefronts tucked underneath the 36-unit Amelia condominium complex on Fillmore between Bush and Sutter Streets — says he has no plans to change the character of the block. Or the types of tenants he rents to: small businesses with an owner on the premises, waiting on customers.

Shopkeepers have returned the favor by showing extreme loyalty to the veteran politico and property owner. Several stores have been writing rent checks to the Molinari family for 30 years, with others staying put for 10 and 20 years. Virtually all of the current tenants, and even some who've moved away, say Molinari treats them fairly and looks out for their interests, not just his own.

Still, Molinari, a former president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in the 1970s who was a close

runner-up to Art Agnos in the mayoral race of 1988, is a landlord and a second generation real estate investor. He has seen commercial property owners a few blocks north hike rents to \$10 a square foot or higher and watched fashion and cosmetics chains willingly pay double-digit prices for Fillmore Street addresses north of Bush Street.

So it's hardly surprising that prominent San Francisco real estate broker Jeremy Blatteis, representing the Molinari family, last year tried to raise the rent of the Fillmore Bakeshop a whopping 90 percent when its lease came up for renewal.

"There was no way we could pay 90 percent more rent, even if we doubled our prices," says Elena Basegio, who with her father Doug Basegio owns the bakery and works there alongside him five days a week starting at 4 a.m. "We wouldn't be able to stay in business. In fact, we haven't raised our prices on any item in the bakery in five years, not even a dime. We're basically a nonprofit paying rent."

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UPFRONT



A tour of carvings and statues

St. Dominic's Church at Bush and Steiner Streets is offering a free Spring Equinox Tour of carvings and statues in the historic church on Saturday, March 19, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Trained docents will discuss the church's many woodcarvings, created early in the 20th century in the studio of acclaimed carver Edmund Schmidt in Oberammergau, Germany. Sculpted of white oak from the Black Forest, the images portray many saints and biblical stories.

For more information, email docents@stdominics.org.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT MOYER



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■ STREET TALK

Blue Bottle still coming to Fillmore

After construction started and then stopped, neighbors began to wonder if BLUE BOTTLE COFFEE was backing out of its plans for a new outpost on the shuttered Tully's corner at Fillmore and Jackson.

Not so. It's still on.

The new coffee shop started before Blue Bottle announced it was merging with Tartine Bakery. A combination of the two in the pair of storefronts at the top of Fillmore seemed like a terrific addition to the neighborhood.

The merger was later called off, but Blue Bottle applied on January 27 for a building permit for "tenant improvements for new coffee cafe in existing coffee cafe space" valued at \$200,000. They got permission earlier to combine the former Tully's and Juicy News storefronts.

"Blue Bottle Coffee is still forging ahead to open at this location and the cafe is progressing nicely," says Defne Crow, a rep for Blue Bottle. "We are very excited to open our doors later this year."

■ **ON THE FASHION FRONT:** New York designer RACHEL COMEY will pop up soon at 2000 Fillmore, former home of Paolo Shoes. Comey claims a "grassroots following among New York's creative elite" and designs for both men and women. The line is in department stores in 19 countries and in her own boutique in Soho. . . . The pop-up will be a placeholder while the London-based cosmetics company SPACE NK — which promises a "one-of-a-kind lifestyle beauty experience" — gets its permits in order.

Brooks Brothers has pulled the plug on BLACK FLEECE, its line with "abbreviated proportions and a modish look" by designer Thom Browne, and closed the handsome shop at 2223 Fillmore. . . . In the wings is the Gap's newest brand, INTERMIX, a group of 43 women's clothing stores offering a mix of designers.

And another shoe store is closing. Soon after Paolo Shoes and Gimme Shoes shut their shops on Fillmore, CROSSWALK SHOES at 2122 Fillmore began selling off its comfort footwear, and will close later this month.

■ **FILMFEST FAREWELL:** After decades in the neighborhood, the San Francisco International Film Festival is moving from the KABUKI THEATRES at Fillmore and Post. This year — its 59th — organizers announced the festival will move to the Mission: "With a new home in one of the city's most lively, artistically rich and public transit-friendly neighborhoods, the Film Society's signature annual event will have a bold new look and feel."

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Murals in the St. John Coltrane Church at 1286 Fillmore celebrate Coltrane's music.

St. John Coltrane Gets a Reprieve

Musical church needs a home as jazz center seeks a buyer

A TUG OF WAR between two Fillmore nonprofits — with the West Bay Conference Center on the verge of evicting the St. John Coltrane African Orthodox Church — came to an uneasy truce on March 1.

The church now has 60 days to find, fund and relocate to a new home.

The threat that sheriff's deputies would evict the church's belongings from its longtime home in the conference center was seen by church supporters as further oppression of black culture in the Fillmore. But on the center's five-person governing

board are two black pastors, including Rev. Amos Brown, a prominent city leader.

At the same time the church has been fighting to keep its home, the city has put the Jazz Heritage Center across the street at 1330 Fillmore up for sale. Potential buyers interested in reviving the former home of Yoshi's jazz club and restaurant must maintain a cultural hub that respects the Fillmore's musical legacy, city officials say.

The Fillmore's London Breed, now president of the Board of Supervisors, has broached the idea of finding a new home for the church in the ex-Yoshi's building.

Dog Mauling Conviction Is Affirmed Again

Ex-neighborhood resident serving 15 years in prison

By BARBARA KATE REPA

A FEDERAL APPELLATE COURT has denied the latest challenge to a second-degree murder conviction in a case that rocked the neighborhood 15 years ago when a horrific attack by two large dogs in a Pacific Avenue apartment building left one local resident dead and landed two others in prison.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit on February 3 affirmed a lower federal court's denial of habeas corpus relief for Marjorie Knoller, a former neighborhood resident.

Knoller and her husband, Robert Noel, both lawyers, were originally convicted in 2002, a year after their dogs fatally mauled their neighbor, Diane Whipple, as she attempted to enter her apartment at 2398 Pacific Avenue. Whipple, 33, who worked as a college lacrosse coach, was returning from a shopping trip, her arms laden with two bags of groceries. Knoller had just walked the two Presa Canario dogs, 140-pound Bane and 100-pound Hera, and was in the process of leading them unmuzzled back into her 6th floor apartment when Bane broke free of his leash and attacked Whipple. Hera apparently joined in.

The dog owners were convicted of the killing amid a media frenzy after a sensational trial that established a new legal standard — and shocked the sensibilities of many locals as they learned the lurid details behind the tragedy.

Noel, who was not present during the attack, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and of owning a mischievous animal that caused death; Knoller was found guilty of those two counts plus the more serious offense of second-degree murder. She was reportedly the first Californian to be convicted of murder for a dog's actions.

The original trial before now-retired Superior Court Judge James Warren became a local cause célèbre — not only because of the novel legal theory it advanced, but because of the many bizarre facts and actions underlying it.

During closing arguments, Warren threatened to jail Knoller's lawyer, Nedra Ruiz, if she made another objection.

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CRIME WATCH

Theft Masonic and Geary January 26, 6:30 p.m.

A woman turned her back on her purse for a moment while shopping at Trader Joe's. Later she discovered her wallet was missing, and that the thief had charged more than \$2,000 on her credit cards. The store does not use security cameras, so police have no video evidence of the crime. The matter is still under investigation.

Unlawful Entry Bush and Gough February 1, 2:06 a.m.

A man working in his basement heard loud banging sounds coming from the front of his residence. He looked outside and saw a suitcase sitting in front of his garage, and also noticed the garage door was open. When a man emerged from inside the garage, the resident called 911. When the police arrived, the caller pointed toward the garage, then closed the garage door, trapping the suspect inside.

Officers took custody of the intruder without incident and learned he was on probation. After a search, they found a glass pipe used to smoke methamphetamine. He was transported to Northern Station.

Theft Eddy and Polk February 1, 5:15 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a theft. The caller stated he had met a friend in a hotel to have sex. When he arrived in the hotel room, they took off their clothes to engage in sex acts. The caller left his clothes and wallet on the floor.

The men then got into an argument about whether or not to use a condom. The altercation continued as the caller started to get dressed; when he checked his wallet, he discovered \$160 was missing. When he confronted his friend about the missing money, the other man denied taking it. The caller told the officers the room was dark and his friend was the only other person in the room. He said the friend told him he was keeping the money to compensate for "wasted time."

The officers interviewed the suspect, who denied stealing the \$160. They were ultimately unable to determine whether or not a theft had occurred, but the caller insisted on pressing charges. Police cited and released the caller's friend for theft.

Burglary Van Ness and Pine February 7, 3:13 a.m.

Officers received a call from a security guard who was detaining a man. When police arrived, the guard told them he had seen two men chasing a man who had evidently robbed them of their backpacks.

They said the suspect broke into their cars to steal the backpacks. One said he had just locked his car when he heard glass breaking and his car alarm going off. The security guard joined in the pursuit and helped them detain the suspect.

Officers pulled the men off the suspect and placed him under arrest. The two men identified the items that had been stolen from them. The suspect was breathing heavily and sweating from running fast while carrying two backpacks. When they searched him, they found a window-breaking tool in his possession, along with a small flashlight. Officers transported the suspect to Northern Station.

Medical Assistance Baker and Sutter February 7, 6:15 p.m.

A father called 911 for help with his 16-year-old son, who was running into the street, taking off his pants and talking very rapidly about wanting to meet God. Arriving officers suspected that he was under the influence of LSD. The young man confirmed that he was indeed having an acid trip. Paramedics took him to the hospital.

Robbery Laguna and Sacramento February 8, 10:50 a.m.

Officers received a call from Lafayette Park. There they met with a woman who said someone had stolen her purse. As she was putting a seatbelt on a child she was babysitting, she felt someone pushing on her thigh and realized a man was pulling at her purse. She struggled for the purse, but gave it up, fearing the suspect might harm her and the child. The man's hat fell off during the incident. He jumped into an unknown gray sedan and fled. The woman called 911. She told investigating officers she probably would not recognize the suspect if she saw him again. They seized the hat as evidence and notified the station's investigation team.

Theft Geary and Masonic February 21, 10:58 a.m.

A woman shopping at Trader Joe's saw an individual pacing in the produce section. She found the behavior suspicious and zipped up her purse. She briefly left her cart and returned to find her purse unzipped, with her wallet — and the suspect — gone. A short time later she began receiving alerts from her credit card companies; someone was trying to charge purchases to her cards at the nearby Target store.

Although Trader Joe's does not have security cameras, Target does, and officers retrieved pictures of the suspect attempting to use the stolen credit cards. The matter is still under investigation.



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 24
Maundy Thursday, 6 p.m.

March 25
Good Friday, Noon to 3 p.m.

March 27
Easter Sunday Mass
8 a.m. & 10 a.m. (Choral)

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At Wise Sons, bagels with a side of history

Mural by
AMOS GOLDBAUM

Wise Sons Bagel & Bakery opened its doors at 1520 Fillmore on March 25 and enthusiastic crowds were waiting. Again there is an authentic Jewish bakery in a neighborhood where many were located a century ago when the Fillmore was home to a large Jewish community. San Francisco muralist Amos Goldbaum captured the era in a mural on the north wall after Wise Sons co-owner Evan Bloom told him about the neighborhood's Jewish heritage. Says Goldbaum: "I researched historic photos and found some that included street cars and the iconic metal arches over each intersection, which were erected by the Fillmore merchants,

many of them Jewish, to promote business. They were eventually removed to use as scrap metal for World War II. I wanted to add more to the street scene, so I also looked at historic photos of the Lower East Side, Jewish mecca and birthplace of my late grandfather. I was happy to find pictures of pushcart vendors selling challa, pickles and, of course, bagels. The resulting scene is *Lower East Side on Fillmore*, an amalgam of New York street life and San Francisco streetscape."



newfillmore.com | A walking tour of Jewish Fillmore

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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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LENT 2016

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HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday, March 20

5:30 pm Vigil Mass (Saturday, March 28)

7:30 am Quiet Mass

9:15 am Family Mass, procession with donkey,
meet at Grotto

11:30 am Solemn Choral Mass

1:30 pm St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish

5:30 pm Mass with Contemporary music

9:00 pm Mass by candlelight

THE SACRED TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday, March 24

7:30 am Tenebrae

7:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, March 25

7:30 am Tenebrae

12:00 pm Seven Last Words of Christ

1:45 pm The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

(A simple version with read Passion Gospel)

3:00 - 4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Stations of the Cross

(especially suited for Families/led by Youth Ministry)

7:30 pm The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

(A solemn version with chanted Passion Gospel)

Holy Saturday, March 26

8:00 am Tenebrae; 8:00 pm The Easter Vigil

No confessions this day

Easter Sunday, March 27

7:30 am Mass with Easter Hymns

9:30 am Family Mass

11:30 am Solemn Choral Mass

1:30 pm St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish

5:30 pm Mass with Contemporary music

No Mass at 9:00 pm today. No confessions this day.

www.stdominics.org

By FAITH WHEELER

RARE IS THE restaurant in San Francisco still going strong after 30 years. But Jackson Fillmore — the beloved, quintessential neighborhood Italian spot at 2506 Fillmore, now under new ownership — remains noticeably unchanged. That's thanks to the brother-sister duo Kelly and Casey Sullivan, lifelong family friends of original owner Jack Kreitzman. Kelly Sullivan remembers coming to the restaurant the year it opened when she was a 4-year-old and eating cold zabaglione.

How did Jack come up with this concept?

Jack is from New Jersey, but he traveled a lot and gravitated toward cooking Italian and Spanish cuisine. He can still make a mean paella. When he moved here from the East Coast in the '70s, he initially worked at MacArthur Park and then at the famous Vanessi's. I don't know how he found this location, but the opening was pretty turn-key. We still have a sushi counter from a previous owner. That is part of the charm of this place. We're old school. We take what's available and re-purpose it.

After leaving Vanessi's, Jack was ready to bring some of the great Italian dishes from there over here. He then brought his pasta chef from La Fiammetta [at Bush and Octavia] in 1989, who makes our gnocchi, mezzaluna and tartelli. He hoped to name the spot Jack's on Fillmore, but got some pushback from the then-renowned Jack's on Sacramento. So a neighbor who's one of our regulars said, "Why don't you take out the apostrophe and name it Jackson Fillmore?" And the rest is history.



Owners Casey and Kelly Sullivan have eaten at Jackson Fillmore since they were kids.

'We're Old School'

Jackson Fillmore unchanging, even with new owners

How did you and your brother end up owning the restaurant?

Our dad had a retail tennis store, the Tennis Shack, originally on Taraval and then on Sacramento between Pacific and Walnut. Jack would come in, and soon enough Dad and Jack became tennis buddies — they still play together. We would come into the restaurant with our parents as kids. Jack would tuck us up by the win-

dow, give us pencils to draw, and ensure we were well behaved. We still keep pencils so the kids can play and we save the collection of drawings. No iPads here.

I had been working in the restaurant business in Sonoma, at Cyrus, and then at Harry's Bar. My brother was at Cucina in San Anselmo. About four years ago I walked into the restaurant and Jack was at the door. I said to Jack: "Someday when

you're ready, if you ever think of selling this place, don't. Don't ever sell it. Don't close it even for a day. My brother and I want it."

And so, six months later, I got a call that Jack was ready to give Casey and me a chance.

I knew I had found my home. We formulated a three year plan: First year, the three of us would do everything together. Second year, mostly Casey and I would run the floor, with Jack overseeing here and there. And then the third year, we were on our own. Now we are in year four.

What is the magic recipe that keeps a restaurant around for 30 years?

Restaurants are successful for different reasons. Each one has its own recipe. For us, we are who our neighborhood is.

The people who sit at the bar have been coming for generations and they become the stewards of the next generation. I've been coming here my whole life. I've seen entire families grow up, get older and get married, and now they bring their kids.

Who we are and who our neighbors are is what makes us strong. People are coming to our house. We welcome you like friends and family. Our guests are our family, the people who understand our vibe. They want to come and hang out with us.

How about your staff members — have they been here a long time?

Absolutely. Our newest guy has been here five years; the entire kitchen staff has been here for at least 10 years and one waiter for 23. I guess she's not staff exactly, but our mom does a lot of our pastries — cheesecakes, biscotti and ice cream

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"It's all about consistency. Our staff ensures that you will have the same experience time and time again."

— KELLY SULLIVAN
co-owner of Jackson Fillmore

sandwiches made with lemon sugar cookies. Our busser, who started at 17, is now married, and about half of our guests bring gifts to his son.

It's all about consistency. Our staff ensures that you will have the same experience time and time again.

What about the food?

We really don't change the core of the menu that much, but we might change some items every couple of months just to introduce people to new things.

Our signatures will always be there. I grew up eating the *zucchini carpaccio*, a favorite of thinly sliced grilled zucchini, pecorino cheese and toasted almonds with a little bit of olive oil. Some people ask me what's the best thing on the menu and it's impossible for me to pick. People tend to have their favorites and it's all over the map.

Some people must have the *spaghetti carbonara* or the *pesce fra diavolo*. Others crave the *bombolotti sugo de carne*, a rigatoni in a rich spicy meat sauce with ground beef, sausage, mushrooms and mascarpone. We are willing to make people what they want,

even if it's not on the menu. That has always been our philosophy: If you don't see it, just ask. Our pasta guy will make it for you. We are here to take care of people with comfort food, good wine and a smile.

How about the bruschetta — do you still have that?

Absolutely. The bruschetta is complimentary. Heaven forbid I forget somebody's bruschetta. I hear about it!

What about the wine list? It's primarily Italian?

Yep. Only eight bottles of domestic red and maybe six South American. But our servers are very good with customization. My brother is a bit of a wine geek, so there's lots of staff education. Sometimes a guest says, "We love wine, but we're not familiar with any of these." That's when we're there to help with some options. I often say, "Let me pick you out something. If you don't like it, I'll drink it." We try to listen to what our guests like in different varietals and match them to what we offer. Wine is an adventure.

Our guests are very helpful as well.

Our regulars have no problem jumping in, guiding new guests through the menu. It's a team effort.

How regular are your regulars?

We have one guy who comes in three nights a week at 5:30 p.m. sharp and a couple of families once a week like clockwork at 5:30. We have every-week regulars, once-a-month regulars, some every six months. I joke that I recognize 70 percent of the people who walk in.

We have a little girl who is 13 who has come in so often, always ordering the breaded chicken with lemon wedges, that we've named it Chicken Virginia after her.

And you still use the old fashioned ticket system — no computer?

Yes we do. My brother and I don't really like change. We run tickets the old fashioned way, by hand. And it saves a lot of time. We don't need to hover over a computer waiting to input the order. There's no particular formula; every waiter writes every ticket differently.

You still don't take reservations for

parties of two?

No, we run a wait list unless you are a party of three or more. But you are welcome to call a little bit ahead and we'll put your name on the list. We are always busy. People are always standing and waiting, and that's part of the fun. We train our guests to enjoy the experience, start them off with some wine to get them going, and no one seems to mind.

Would you ever consider opening for lunch?

No. We're open Wednesday to Sunday, dinner only, and the reason we do that is to guarantee our staff has 40-hour shifts. This way they are all full-time workers and all have full benefits.

What do you wish for the future?

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It's Still a Village

The Last Block Where the Owners Work in the Store

► FROM PAGE ONE

Elena Basegio claims she was shocked by the proposed rent hike. "We're the last block on Fillmore where every store is individually owned," she says, "where the owners work in the store and where Jack, who for a guy with a lot of money, has been extremely fair over the years. But maybe the fairness ran out."

Apparently not. Molinari was reportedly "furious" to learn the bakery was threatened with such a huge rent boost. So when Doug Basegio called him to say he was "flabbergasted" and that the increase "would put us out of business even though we love this area," Molinari listened. He dropped it to a 50 percent increase, with a 3 percent annual hike over the new 10-year lease. The rent went from around \$5,000 to \$8,000 a month.

"Even though it's frustrating, I don't begrudge him the higher rent," says Basegio. "Now, if my spouse was making a gazillion dollars in high tech, I wouldn't mind. Right now, we're looking at our labor and material costs, weighing price increases and just trying to find a way to keep the doors open."

SINCE THAT EPISODE, Molinari has done some major restructuring of his own. He has retired, hired a new leasing agent, W.J. Britton, and stepped back, but not out, of the picture.

Before EZ Brow and Beauty Co. — a salon that opened on the block last month — was allowed to lease the 400-foot-space at 1820 Fillmore, Molinari asked Tina Troung and Jacklyn Li, co-owners of JT Nails a few doors away, if they had any objection to another personal care shop as a neighbor. Troung and Li, who have been tenants for 28 years, say Molinari's courtesy was common for him, and appreciated. They had no objections, since the treatment services did not overlap.

While JT Nails charges only \$12 for a manicure, it also has to live with rent increases, but the owners declined to discuss numbers. "Jack is strictly business, but he is a reasonable landlord," says Troung. "That's why we've been here nearly 30 years."

Meanwhile, Molinari grilled Mamta Gautam, EZ Brow's owner, on why he should rent his storefront to her. "Jack interviewed me on what I was going to offer the neighborhood and on my confidence level for success," says Gautam, "even though I have a smaller, successful shop downtown."

Gautam convinced him her new shop would be a destination in the city for people seeking threading, an ancient hair removal technique that has only a few qualified practitioners in San Francisco. At that moment, Sophie Chang, a transplanted New Yorker, walked in her store and asked about threading. "It's not easy to find threading in San Francisco, so it's very nice to have it in our neighborhood," she said.

MOLINARI'S TENANT FAN CLUB is surprisingly vocal. "I've had a great relationship with him for 16 years," says Fred Tabar, owner of Fillmore Florist at 1880 Fillmore. "He's a good man — inside and out."

However, Tabar has some issues with his landlord and is not afraid to speak up. Most of the shops have setbacks from the sidewalk, making it difficult for motorists to see what's going on inside. Signage is confined to a hard-to-read line on an awning, hardly an attention grabber.

The city required the setbacks when the shops were developed in the



Elena and Doug Basegio at Fillmore Bakeshop: "We love this area."

DICKIE SPATZ/REX



"The challenge for retailers is creating a high impact identity — if only they could 'pop out' the storefronts for more visibility," says a realtor.

ERIK ANDERSON



Mamta Gautam at EZ Brow: "I have a smaller, successful shop downtown."

ERIK ANDERSON



Fillmore Florist has been at 1880 Fillmore for 16 years.

ERIK ANDERSON



ERIK ANDERSON

"I'm paying for the sidewalk, which is wasted money for me," says one tenant.



ERIK ANDERSON

Tricia and Ron (and Harlow) Benitez at Asmbly Hall: "We know our customers by name."



MARC CAMBOIA

Nicholas Pallone is the new chef masterminding Academy Bar and Kitchen.



SF REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

In the 1960s, the block between Bush and Sutter was leveled by city redevelopment.

1970s, before the property was acquired by Jack Molinari's late father, John B. Molinari, who became a presiding justice on the California Court of Appeal in San Francisco. "I'm paying for part of the sidewalk in my rent, which is wasted money for me," says Tabar, "but if we could expand out and have more selling and display space, it would be worth it."

Pam Mendelsohn, a commercial real estate broker who has been helping fill retail vacancies on the street for decades, maintains that the Bush to Sutter shops are "a fantastic alternative" for stores that want a Fillmore Street address. "The challenge for retailers is creating a high impact identity which could be solved if they could 'pop out' the storefronts and get more visibility," she says.

Mendelsohn says the retailers on the Molinari family's block are benefiting from more foot traffic these days. With a rash of hot new restaurants opening on Fillmore south of Geary — State Bird Provisions, The Progress, Black Bark and Wise Sons among them — people shopping or strolling the high-end fashion and cosmetics boutiques on Upper Fillmore will be drawn to the southern end of the street. "It's getting vibrant," says Mendelsohn.

Hair stylist Lotte Kim has seen major changes on the street in the 20 years she's had her shop, Lotte Beauty Salon, at 1860 Fillmore. "We used to have a homeless problem outside our door," she says. "Now we have young tech boys coming in to get their hair styled."

Next door at 1870 Fillmore, the Wine Jar recently changed hands. New owner Brian Cassanego could not be reached to discuss changes planned for his cozy bistro. A bartender, however, says money is being poured into the place to make it more Victorian, more intimate, more of a retreat.

On the corner of Sutter, the block's food and drink emporium, known as Pizza Inferno for 22 years, recently re-emerged as the Academy Bar and Kitchen after a top-to-bottom makeover that included installing a new pizza oven and luring a creative new chef, Nicholas Pallone, away from Florio up the street. With stylish wooden paneling and an uber congenial new bartender, Alex Shonkoff, tapping 24 craft beers, longtime owner Peter Fogel feels he could well have a recipe for success.

"Over the years, Jack has been very supportive — a great landlord," Fogel says. "I started with his father, but all the family members are very nice people."

The restaurateur thinks Bush to Sutter is finally developing a bit of cachet. "Before, we were in a no-man's zone — between upper Fillmore and the jazz district," he says. "Now we're in transition."

TRICIA AND RON BENITEZ are relative newcomers to the block. The husband and wife team, who were previously in management at the Gap, opened Asmbly Hall five years ago as an apparel shop aimed at "sophisticated preppers."

As first-time entrepreneurs with their own capital invested in a notoriously fickle industry, fashion retailing, the Benitezes were taking a huge risk. "What's really great about Jack is that he actually gave us a chance — and at our first meeting with him," recalls Tricia. "He believed in my husband and me. If we had been on upper Fillmore, that wouldn't have happened. Plus, we haven't had any issues or conflicts with our landlord like we hear about elsewhere on the street."

Benitez says her store has a major advantage being on a block where one landlord owns all the storefronts. "We come from the corporate world, which is competitive. Here all of us are non-competitive small businesses with little shops and we all support each other," she says. "We know our customers by name."

Says former tenant Nellie Muganda, who relocated her cosmetics salon, Neja, to Union Street after a decade on Molinari's block: "I had a 10-year business relationship with Jack and never had any problem with him. I left because I wanted to expand into haircuts and coloring and that would have competed with other shops on the block."

Jeremy Blatteis, the real estate broker who previously worked with the Molinari family as a leasing agent, says: "There are a lot of landlords out there who care about getting every penny they can. This ownership wants a symbiotic relationship with the tenant. Jack understands that for the landlord to make money, the tenant has to make money. So he really watches out for his tenant."

The partnership — Molinari, his wife Sue, sister Vicki Berezin and brother-in-law Steve Berezin — is now on the lookout for a new tenant for a 705-square-foot store occupied for decades by Barry's for Pets. The asking price, according to a Craigslist ad, is \$3,707, or just over \$5 per square foot for a minimum three-year lease.

Just a few blocks north, a similar chunk of real estate would be twice the price.

"We used to have a homeless problem outside our door. Now we have young tech boys coming in to get their hair styled."

— LOTTE KIM
owner of Lotte Beauty Salon

► FROM PAGE 3

Ruiz, who spent a year performing with the American Conservatory Theater after graduating from college, theatrically defended Knoller, crying in court and at one point thrashing about on the courtroom floor to demonstrate how her client allegedly attempted to protect Whipple during the attack. But Ruiz sat silently, as directed, when the prosecutor asked jurors to imagine themselves in Whipple's shoes, an argument forbidden under California law as too prejudicial.

Warren, who had earlier slapped a gag order on the attorneys in the case, prohibiting them from publicly commenting on a potential witness's credibility, had fined Ruiz \$750 for doing just that on Greta Van Susteren's *On the Record* television show. He got progressively more exasperated with Ruiz's litigation style as the five-week trial wore on. At sentencing, he did, however, drop the second-degree murder charge, stating he "could not say that Knoller subjectively knew a human being was about to die" when the dogs attacked.

After numerous appeals, the conviction for second-degree murder was reinstated, and Knoller was sentenced to 15 years to life, a term she is currently serving at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla. Noel was sentenced to four years in prison. He was paroled after serving nearly three years and lives in Fairfield.

In the most recent appeal, the panel of judges said Warren went too far at trial.

"Undoubtedly, the trial judge's threat of incarceration for further objection, coupled with the prosecutor's inappropriate argument, rose to the level of constitutional error," they wrote, but it was harmless



The attack occurred on the 6th floor of the apartment building at Fillmore and Pacific.

Dog Mauling Conviction Affirmed

error because Knoller was not "completely deprived of counsel," as previous cases required for reversal.

Among the curious twists in the case, the neighborhood lawyer couple had left behind their life filled with friends and symphony concerts around 1997, devoting more time to pro bono legal work at Pelican Bay State Prison, which houses many of California's most serious offenders.

There they met a charismatic inmate, Paul "Cornfed" Schneider. A member of the Aryan Brotherhood, a white supremacist prison gang, Schneider is now serving three life sentences for various crimes, including attempted murder of his lawyer,

whom he stabbed several times in a Sacramento courthouse with a home-made shiv. After his interest was piqued by an article in *Dog Fancy* magazine, Schneider had set up a website, Dog-O-War, through which he and other members of the Aryan Brotherhood purportedly managed the breeding and sale of Presa Canarios.

In April 2000, Knoller and Noel took legal action to gain ownership of two of them, Bane and Hera, after Schneider complained the breeder was allowing them to turn into "wussy dogs."

Noel, then 59 years old, and Knoller, then 45, adopted the 38-year-old inmate as their son three days after the fatal mauling. Naked photos of Knoller were later found

in a search of his cell. But neither the pictures nor the couple's association with Schneider was introduced at their trial.

However, more than 30 witnesses — many of them neighborhood residents familiar with Bane and Hera and their owners because of walks around the neighborhood or through Alta Plaza Park — testified that the dogs had a propensity to bite or attack and seemed at times to be out of control. One of the dogs had nipped Whipple previously as Noel walked them, but he did not offer help or an apology.

What may have been the most damning evidence against Knoller and Noel were their own words. Noel repeatedly seemed to blame Whipple for triggering the dogs to fatally attack her — claiming she might have worn a "pheromone-based perfume" or used "some type of steroids."

Less than two weeks after the mauling, the couple was interviewed by Elizabeth Vargas on "Good Morning America," in a segment that included the following exchange.

Vargas: "Do you think you bear any responsibility at all for this attack?"

Knoller: "Responsibility? No, not at all."

Vargas: "You couldn't stop the dog from attacking Diane Whipple."

Knoller: "I wouldn't say that it was an attack. Ms. Whipple had ample opportunity to move into her apartment. She could have just slammed the door shut. I would have."

Prosecutors introduced a tape of the broadcast at trial, and jurors watched it several times. After rendering the guilty verdicts, several mentioned it proved decisive.

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Telling Tales His Gangster Uncle Told

By BRUCE FARRELL ROSEN

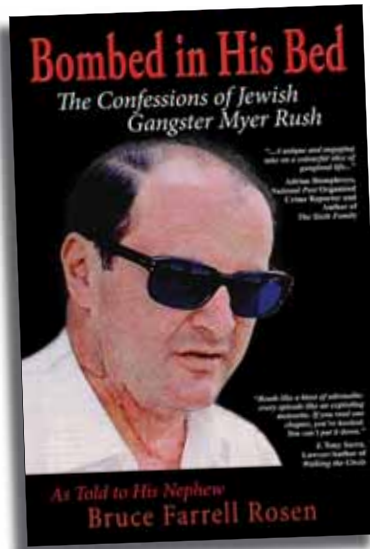
THE SUMMER OF 1980 was quite momentous for me. The year before, I had moved here to attend graduate school at S.F. State. A friend from high school had been accepted to do graduate work in music at the San Francisco Conservatory and, after turning down an opportunity to work on an advanced degree in frigid Boston, I listened to the clarion call of San Francisco and moved with my buddy, settling into a tiny one-bedroom apartment with two bunk beds just off Fillmore on Washington Street.



Bruce Farrell Rosen

The New Wave music scene was in full form then, and the two of us would venture out on Friday or Saturday nights to the Mabuhay Gardens in North Beach or to my favorite place, the Palms Café on Polk, where we heard a number of bands that later became trendsetters in the New Age of New Wave.

Before going out for the evening, we would often have a glass or two of wine bought from the Mayflower Market at the corner of Fillmore and Jackson. Little did we know it then, but that wine would become one of the classics: Beaulieu Vineyard 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon. All we knew is that the deep ruby red stuff was delicious —



and delivered a wonderful buzz. We went through many bottles.

I had just returned from visiting my mom in Los Angeles in 1980 when the phone rang. It was a wrong number, but the woman's voice on the other end was incredibly sweet. The wrong number turned into the right number when we married a few years later, eventually having a family. Our boys went to Town School on Jackson Street, while we lived nearby on Washington — just down the street from that one-bedroom apartment my friend and I had occupied.

Also in 1980, I had the opportunity to interview my uncle, Myer Rush, a notorious anti-hero. His exploits had frequently been reported in Canadian newspapers in

the 1960s and '70s, but my mom — Myer's sister — had asked him to give me the inside story many Canadian and foreign journalists had been seeking. Myer had refused interviews because he didn't trust many people — especially the journalists who wrote about him in the Canadian press.

During several sessions, Myer told me his tales at the Top of the Mark on Nob Hill, providing fodder for his autobiography I now have written, *Bombed in His Bed: The Confessions of Jewish Gangster Myer Rush*. We spent a lot of time at the Mark. He would say: "Them were the times. I was a product of the times. Look kid, don't sit here and make judgments, just sit back and listen to the story."

One afternoon, after a bit of contentious interviewing, we took a walk to this neighborhood so I could show him part of my San Francisco life. He knew the neighborhood from the 1940s, including some of the really good jazz clubs in the Fillmore, and recollected what it was like back then.

After the walk, we sat down on a bench in Alta Plaza Park, looking south over the city on a crisp wintry day. His voice husky, but softened by a slight lisp, he told me the story of the baseball bat beating. On the verge of testifying in a trial that many thought was the "crime of the century" in Canada, men broke into Myer's home wielding baseball bats, trying to silence him. They left him with cuts on his head that looked like zippers and broken bones throughout his body. A couple of weeks later he hobbled into the police department — a rare time when the cops were working for him, rather than against him — to see if he could identify any of the perpetrators. He walked up the line and back down again, finally stopping in front of a man, olive in complexion, who stood a few inches taller than him. Without saying a word, Myer unleashed a vicious punch to the man's face, blood splattering, and knocked him on his back.

"Is this a positive identification?" the police asked.

"I don't tell no tales," he answered, as he walked out of the room and into the streets of Toronto.

But he told me tales, some while sitting on a park bench in the neighborhood.

I needed a place to unwind.



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Victorian House Returning to Its Residential Roots



Today 2018 Webster sits empty, one lot south of its original location.

By BRIDGET MALEY

LONG OWNED BY the California Pacific Medical Center, the house at 2018 Webster Street has remained vacant for almost 25 years. It was recently sold and will be returned to residential use, after a rear addition and interior upgrades, as three housing units.

The history of this Victorian house is intertwined with its two large institutional neighbors. Temple Sherith Israel, built in 1905, is on one side at the northeast corner of California and Webster. On the other, the Health Sciences Library, at the southeast corner of Sacramento and Webster, was constructed in 1912

as Lane Medical Library, a part of Stanford University. Both buildings are designated city landmarks and both were designed by noted San Francisco architect Albert Pissis.

In between sits the empty dwelling at 2018 Webster, constructed around 1889 with a mix of



A photograph taken just after the 1906 earthquake shows the damage to the new Temple Sherith Israel. Both 2014 and 2018 Webster are visible behind the temple. In the background is Cooper Medical College.

Victorian influences, including Queen Anne and Stick styles. Its hybrid features are typical of San Francisco's Victorian residential architecture.

Early maps show two almost identical houses on the east side of Webster between California and Sacramento. The house at 2018 Webster had a three-sided, slanted-front bay window; its immediate neighbor to the south at 2014 Webster had a square-front bay window. Water service was initiated at the two lots in 1883 by Edward Hunting Miller Jr. After a failed attempt at striking gold in 1849, Miller entered into a partnership with California pioneer Mark Hopkins that lasted many

years, including serving as the secretary of the Central Pacific Railroad.

In December 1890, Miller transferred the northernmost of the two lots to Isidor Jacobs. A successful San Francisco businessman, Jacobs served as president of A. Lusk & Co., a large canning outfit founded by his father, William Jacobs. The company was one of the most extensive handlers of canned and dried fruits in the United States.

In May 1885, Isidor Jacobs became engaged to Mira Straus. The couple was married two years

TO PAGE 14 ►



My life here

Sara Zumwalt, joined in 2012

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Still Standing After It Moved One Lot South

► FROM PAGE 12

later, and by 1889 they were residing at 2018 Webster and had four children. Their next-door neighbors were Gustav and Ella Wormser and their three children, who rented the house at 2014 Webster.

The two houses sat immediately adjacent to each other in the middle of the block. They were the only buildings on the east side of the 2000 block of Webster before the construction of the temple in 1905. A photograph of the temple taken just after the 1906 earthquake shows the damage sustained by the newly constructed synagogue. Both the Jacobs and Wormser residences are visible in the 1906 photograph. In the background is the ornate brick and stone Cooper Medical College on the northeast corner of Webster and Sacramento.

The Wormser residence at 2014 Webster narrowly escaped the chimney stones that fell from the temple during the earthquake. Ella Wormser's younger brother, Laurance M. Klauber, a Stanford University student at the time, made his way after the earthquake to San Francisco to check on his sister and her family. He recorded this initial reaction to the scene:

From this side of the Synagogue it appeared all right but when I got around on Webster Street I found about half the house missing and the door swinging open as if every one had left. I went in and found every one OK. ... Gus was downtown watching the store burn. The spare room, dining room, and Elsie and Dorothy's rooms were the only ones smashed. ... I uncovered two of the chimney stones; they measure roughly 5' x 3' x 2'; so you can see what a narrow escape they had.

After the earthquake, the Wormsers gave up their damaged residence — which was apparently torn down



SHAYNE WATSON

The history of 2018 Webster is intertwined with its two neighbors, Temple Sherith Israel on the right and the Health Sciences Library on the left.


— and bought a house on Lake Street. However, the Jacobs' house appears to have been relatively undamaged.

Mira Jacobs died in 1915. A building permit issued to Isidor Jacobs in January 1917 indicates that Jacobs moved his longtime family residence one lot south to the former location of the Wormser house. The house initially was set back a few feet and included an ornate front porch, which gave it a more formal facade. The porch was lost when the house was moved to its current location. The 1919 Sanborn map confirms the move. By then Isidor Jacobs lived at 1811 California Street, near Franklin.

It is not clear when the hospital acquired the property, but on the 1950 Sanborn map the house is labeled a

"nurses' home." The area's intensified medical uses found the house a "doctor's laboratory" in the late 1950s. By the mid-1960s, the former dwelling was used as a medical eye center. In the early 1970s, the house became the Victorian House Thrift Shop, benefiting what had become the Presbyterian Medical Center.

The thrift shop moved to Fillmore Street in the early 1990s and the building has been vacant since. New owners are currently designing its transformation into three residential units with improvements to the front that will highlight the building's Victorian past. Soon the two landmark Albert Pissis buildings on Webster Street will again have residential neighbors.


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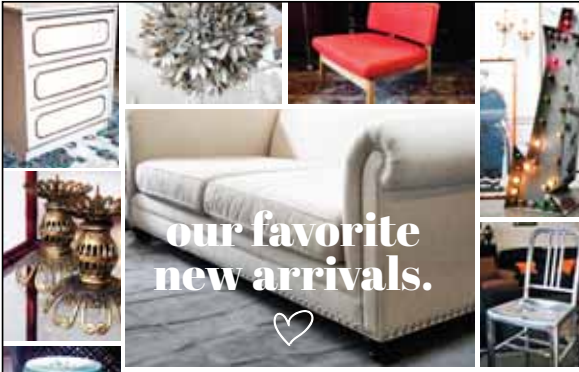

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2077 Jackson St #301	2	2	1	2,000	21	1/27/2016	995,000	1,220,000
1940 Buchanan St	3	1	1		109	2/2/2016	1,195,000	1,250,000
1835 Franklin St #201	2	2	1		86	1/19/2016	1,250,000	1,240,000
2919 Pacific Ave #106	2	2	0	1,125	8	2/10/2016	1,249,000	1,457,000
2105 Buchanan St #6	3	2	1	1,700	5	2/5/2016	1,685,000	1,770,000
325 Locust St	3	2	2	1,950	13	2/8/2016	1,950,000	1,925,000
2243 Franklin St	2	2	1	1,463	11	2/5/2016	1,899,000	1,950,000
2017 Buchanan St	4	4	2	2,850	112	2/5/2016	2,595,000	2,800,000
2002 Pacific Ave #4	3	3	3		38	1/22/2016	4,288,000	4,200,000



In a rare departure, the **DECORATOR SHOWCASE** this year will not be held in Pacific Heights but — for the first time in its history — on Telegraph Hill at 298 Chestnut Street (left). It's scheduled from April 30 to May 30.

A typically slow start

Home sales in the neighborhood have gotten off to a decidedly and typically slow start this year — although, as in years past, we expect activity to pick up with the arrival of spring, encouraged by the recent drop in interest rates.

There were no single-family home sales between mid-January and mid-February in Pacific Heights, Lower Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow or Presidio Heights. This aligns with sales during the same time last year, when only one single-family home changed hands. Condominium sales were also sluggish, with 10 properties selling this year compared to 13 sales during the same period in 2015.

Although there was a slightly less competitive environment in the fourth quarter of 2015 throughout San Francisco, demand for real estate remains strong, and we expect to see an uptick in the number of transactions over the coming months. Between mid-February and mid-May of last year, there were a total of 89 single-family home and condominium sales. And if the milder than expected weather persists, that could provide an extra boost to the spring buying season.

— 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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415.846.8896



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LightHouseOnDolores.com
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Spacious and Elegant Condominium. Located just steps from the shops and restaurants of Fillmore, Union & Chestnut Streets, this 1BD/1BA condo has charming period details and hardwood floors. Shared, enclosed roof deck with sweeping views.
2240Green3.com
Robert Vernon
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Travis Hale
415.321.4284



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Sparkling Spacious 2BD/2BA Condominium. Open living space is perfect for entertaining. Kitchen has granite counters and stainless steel appliances. Washer and dryer in unit. 1 car parking and storage.
bit.ly/1XCDPwf
Sandra Bagnatori
415.518.4865
Scott P. Brittain
415.385.6657



Haight Ashbury
Offered at \$1,050,000
Remodeled 2BD/1BA Condo. Remodeled condo combines lovely Victorian features with updates for modern living. Combination living/dining room and remodeled kitchen have sliding glass doors to deck and large rear garden and patio. Side by side garage parking.
bit.ly/1KwaAJG
Thomas Cooke
415.823.1624

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Mureta's Antiques
2418 Fillmore 415-922-5652

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Walter Adams Framing
2019B Fillmore 415-922-6811

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2226 Fillmore 415-345-8501

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2408 Fillmore 877-457-2464

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2400 Fillmore 415-771-9982

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Prana
1928 Fillmore 415-590-3970

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2060 Fillmore 415-416-3978

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2040 Fillmore 415-440-6536

Roberta Roller Rabbit
2055 Fillmore 415-563-8595

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2119 Fillmore 415-441-4412

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2033 Fillmore 415-292-4841

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2031 Fillmore 415-580-7443

Steven Alan
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2326 Fillmore 415-614-9903

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2130 Fillmore 415-563-1717

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2326 Fillmore 415-885-0326

Fillmore Florist
1880 Fillmore 415-929-5200

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2300 Fillmore 415-292-6199

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