

NIGHT+DAY SAN FRANCISCO



Ins and Outs

Noteworthy Additions, Changes and Closures
from publication date through December 31, 2008

Key to Night+Day Symbols

Restaurants


Singles-friendly

-  Communal table
-  Food served at bar

(G) Gourmet destination




Nightlife

Includes bars, clubs, and entertainment

-  Cover or ticket charge
- (otherwise, entry is free)*

Restaurants + Nightlife

Prime-time noise levels

-  Quiet
-  A buzz, but still conversational
-  Loud

Venues followed by an asterisk (*) are those we recommend as both a restaurant and a destination bar.

Key to Pricing

Hotels

Best deluxe room

- \$ \$100–\$199
- \$ \$200–\$299
- \$ \$300–\$399
- \$ \$400 and up

Restaurants

Main course

- \$– less than \$10
- \$ \$10–\$19
- \$ \$20–\$29
- \$ \$30–\$39
- \$ \$40 and up

Attractions

Entry or service

- \$– less than \$10
- \$ \$10–\$19
- \$ \$20–\$29
- \$ \$30–\$39
- \$ \$40 and up

The Night+Day promise

Night+Day writers and editors use the same high standards in selecting and researching venues to be included in our Ins and Outs updates as we do for our books. Our local correspondents determine which new hot spots are the real deal and which are simply hype—just as you'd expect from **Night+Day**—to provide the kind of reliable information you need to make the best possible choices.

NightandDayGuides.com

TOC

Hot & Cool Hotels

Cavallo Point4
 Hotel Abri4
 InterContinental San Francisco4

Hot & Cool Restaurants

Beretta*5
 Bin 38*5
 Chez Papa Resto5
 Circa*6
 Coi6
Dosa on Fillmore6
 Ducca7
 Epic Roasthouse7
 Fifth Floor7
Gitane8
 La Mar Cebicheria8
 Le Club*8
 Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant*9
 Nihon*9
 Nopa*9
 Pizzeria Delfina10
 Salt House10
 SPQR10
 Spruce10
 1300 Fillmore11
 Umami11
 Uva Enoteca*11
Waterbar12

Hot & Cool Nightlife

The Ambassador12
 Bar 88812
 Beretta*13
 Bin 38*13
 Circa*13
 District Wine Bar13

accessories. You'll find everything from cute frocks for a night out on the town to colorful vintage sweaters for men, and the ultra-helpful staff is more than happy to help you put together a full look. And the best part? It's all highly affordable. Those looking for something a bit off the beaten path (translation: unique and stylish) should skip the department stores and head directly to Shotwell. *Mon-Sat 11am-8pm, Sun 12pm-7pm. 36 Geary St. (Kearny St.), 415-399-9898, shotwellsf.com*

Closures (Please make note in your Black Book.)

Hotels:

Commodore Hotel, p. 95

Restaurants:

Butterfly, p. 64
 Frisson, p. 66
 Hawthorne Lane, p. 138
 Julius' Castle, p. 139
 Manka's (Pt. Reyes), p. 203
 The Public, p. 103
 Restaurant Budo (Napa Valley), p. 197
 Tablespoon, p. 105
 Tallula, p. 105
 Trader Vic's, p. 145

Nightlife:

Blue Cube, p. 109
 Dolce, p. 74
 Frisson, p. 75
 G Bar, p. 148
 Harveys, p. 30
 Julius' Castle, p. 149
 La Suite, p. 76
 Loft, p. 11
 Luna Lounge, p. 112
 Oxygen Bar, p. 113
 The Public, p. 114
 Rx Gallery, p. 114
 Sake Lab, p. 79
 Sneaky Tiki, p. 115
 Trader Vic's, p. 151
 The Velvet Lounge, p. 151
 Venetian Room (at the Fairmont Hotel), p. 129
 Zebra Lounge, p. 81

Attractions:

Commodore Hotel, p. 154
 Vino Venue, p. 87

Underline indicates entry made in most recent calendar quarter.

TOC (cont.)

Hot & Cool Nightlife (cont.)

Harlot14
 Le Club*14
 Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant*14
 Nihon*14
 Nopa*14
 Slide14
 Taverna Aventine15
 Truck15
 Uva Enoteca*15

Hot & Cool Attractions

The Beverage Academy15
 Bliss16
 Cellar 36016
 Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates16
 Contemporary Jewish Museum17
 Gucci17
 Westfield San Francisco Centre17

Hip Hotels

Orchard Garden Hotel17
 Hotel Tomo18

Hip Restaurants

Bar Jules18
 Bar Norcini18
 Conduit18
 Fish & Farm19
 Monk's Kettle*19
 The Sentinel20
 Serpentine20

Hip Nightlife

Bourbon & Branch20
 Candy Bar21
 Icon Ultra Lounge21
 McTeague's Saloon21
 Monk's Kettle*21

the likes of Belgium, Germany and, of course, the great state of California. The friendly bartenders will even let you sample the beers on tap, which rotate frequently, in mini beer steins. On any given night of the week, the bar is lined with a jovial crowd pairing their beers with all-American cuisine prepared with a twist. *Daily noon–2am.* ☎ 3141 16th St. (Albion St.), 415-865-9523, monkskettle.com

Hip San Francisco Attractions

Flora Grubb Gardens • Bayview • Gardens

Like a mirage in the desert, Flora Grubb is a lush oasis smack in the middle of Bayview—a sort of urban no-man’s-land. The hood may feel a tad sketchy, but take our word for it: This is a hip, peaceful spot to spend a Sunday afternoon. When you first arrive, head to the coffee bar, where local fave Ritual Roasters serves a full complement of espresso drinks and a few vegan snacks. Since San Francisco is often chilly, you’ll appreciate the warm drink as you make your way through the jungle of towering palms, exotic succulents, and hanging orchids so bizarre that you might think you’ve landed on the set of a sci-fi film. Shoppers will also find all manner of earthy and organic goods—from hemp sun hats, T’s, and crafty jewelry to Columbian terra-cotta pots, rusty-cool garden furniture, and wicked spiky “air plants” that require only an occasional spritz of water. Getting there: Hop on the T–Third Street Muni, the light rail line that opened in 2007 and traverses the Third Street neighborhoods, from the 49ers’ stadium at Candlestick Point all the way to City Hall. *Mon–Sat 8am–6pm, Sun 10am–6pm.* 1634 Jerrold Ave. (Third St.), 415-648-2670, floragrubb.com

Loló! Muebles • Potrero Hill • Store

In San Francisco, mix-n-match is the name of the game. Restaurants fuse unexpected international flavors, one neighborhood is dramatically different from the next, and personal style is defined by a devil-may-care sense of ease that draws inspiration from a hodgepodge of cultural, political, and popular sources. Upping the ante on originality, Mexico native Lorena Zertuche (aka Loló) is bringing *la vida loca* into local living rooms. Loló! Muebles con Jiribilla (“furniture with a twist”) is a jaw-dropping collection of home goodies in rainbow-bright hues and a patchwork of graphic patterns. Colored by Zertuche’s Mexican heritage and her love of funky found objects, each smile-inducing sofa, armchair, dresser, and accessory is crafted in Mexico from a slew of wacky materials—think plastic shopping bags, sunny oilcloth, faux fur, and vintage cowboy boots. Seeing is believing, so make an appointment at Loló’s Dogpatch showroom. *By appointment only.* 2325 Third St. #218 (20th St.), 415-531-1141, lolomuebles.com

Shotwell • Downtown • Store

Just off the hustle and bustle that is Union Square (and its countless department and flagship stores) is where you’ll find up-and-coming Shotwell, a well-edited boutique of indie fashion. The store stocks all the clothing and accessories you need to be a hipster—or just to look like one. Racks of new and vintage clothing for men and women from the likes of Minnie Wilde, Cheap Monday, and B. Son are complemented by a selection of funky eyewear an

Hip Attractions

Flora Grubb Gardens22
 Loló! Muebles22
 Shotwell22

Closures23

San Francisco Neighborhoods Map24

Hot & Cool San Francisco Hotels

Cavallo Point • Out-of-City • Trendy (142 rms)

Fort Baker, located just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, has been transformed into a Shangri-La of sorts in its new incarnation, the gorgeous, luxurious Cavallo Point hotel. The former army post is now home to both historic and contemporary guest rooms, all of which feature comfy beds dressed with organic linens and original art and photography—and some even sport gas fireplaces for a homey touch. The historic residences were once officers’ residences, while the contemporary rooms reside in a newly constructed hillside property. All offer amazing views of the bridge and the city—and they’re all within walking distance of the property’s acclaimed restaurant, Murray Circle. \$\$\$\$ 601 Murray Circle (Bunker Rd.), Sausalito, 415-339-4700 / 888-651-2003, cavallopoint.com

Hotel Abri • Downtown • Modern (90 rms)

What used to be the Monticello Inn has gotten a brand-new look from the Larkspur Hotel Group, which is making a name for itself by renovating and modernizing boutique hotels in the city. Along with sleek new modern furniture, each guest room features a FeatherBorn bed, stylish robes, and a well-stocked mini-bar. Tech-savvy travelers will relish in the hotel’s free wireless, iPod docking stations, and 42-inch LCD flat-screen TVs. There are 62 guest rooms and 28 suites total. For those who need a little extra room, the four corner “Oasis Suites” have king-size beds and spacious living areas, to boot. \$\$ 127 Ellis St. (Powell St.), 415-392-8800 / 866-823-4669, hotel-abri.com

InterContinental San Francisco • SoMa • Modern (550 rms)

Said to be the largest hotel built in SF since the early 1980s, the InterContinental San Francisco is, in fact, a behemoth. At 32 stories tall, the 43,000-square-foot blue-glass structure houses 550 guest rooms and suites. Needless to say, the SoMa monster was designed with the business traveler in mind, and it’s no wonder—the hotel is within walking distance of Moscone Center, Union Square, and the Financial District. Convention-goers with a little downtime can hit the lap pool in the hotel’s 24-hour fitness facility or book a massage at I-Spa. The hotel restaurant, Luce, serves pricey Italian fare, though it does not come highly recommended by the locals. Across the lobby, Bar 888 specializes in vintage grappas and grappa-based drinks. Have a few before hitting the hay. While there’s not much to say about the rooms in terms of style (contemporary, new), they are appointed with all the amenities for tech geeks: iPod docking stations, WiFi, and flat-screen TVs. \$\$\$ 888 Howard St. (Fifth St.), 415-616-6500 / 888-811-4273, intercontinentalsanfrancisco.com

Mora’s spectacular squid-like chandelier. With its extra-low light and high-backed booths, this is the perfect spot for secret lovers. Enjoy a small complimentary sip while perusing the massive menu of culinary libations. (Hipsters here prefer gin.) Place your order, and then be patient: Perfection takes time. ☰ *Mon–Sat 6pm–2am.* 501 Jones St. (O’Farrell St.), 415-346-1735, bourbonandbranch.com

CandyBar • Haight • Lounge

Just like those tiny Krackels and Mr. Goodbars you used to get on Halloween, this is one tasty bite-size dessert bar that will leave you wanting more. On a once-gritty corner in Nopa, San Francisco’s newly fashionable hood, CandyBar is the city’s first dessert lounge. With a creamy minimalist palette splashed with cherry hues, local art, and indie tunes on the playlist, this petite spot puts big emphasis on sweets. Order the chef’s four-course tasting menu of organic two-bite wonders—think mini chocolate brioche with balsamic caramel ice cream, or blood-orange baked Alaska with honeycomb and candied fennel. Noncommittals can sample from à la carte indulgences such as ice cream sandwiches and bourbon coke floats. Open from 4pm, this a cheerful spot for an afternoon pick-me-up paired with a Blue Bottle coffee or microbrew. In the evenings, settle in on one of the low sofas for a glass of wine, a board game, and even a few savory snacks. After 10pm, expect an influx of neighborhood trendy types fresh from dinner at Nopa around the corner. *Sun–Thu 4–10pm, Fri–Sat 4pm–midnight.* ☰ 1335 Fulton St., Ste. 101 (Divisadero St.), 415-673-7078, candybarsf.com

Icon Ultra Lounge • SoMa • Ultralounge

This SoMa corner seems to have a mild curse on it. Sure, the masses come, they party, but eventually the doors close. This time the promoters may have it beat, thanks to a slick remodel by the Bay Area’s favorite club designer, Charles Doell (Blupointe, Backflip at the Phoenix Hotel, and several other colorfully glam and campy hot spots). While inspiring, the syncopating illuminated disks overhead, sleek white seating, and artful use of mirrors can’t make the puny space bigger. If a hot DJ packs the two little dance floors, you’ll be toe to toe, which is what makes it rather nice on Wednesday and Thursday nights, when the local club crew gathers to dance and drink. Here, as elsewhere around town, “ultra” has come to mean, “If you plan to sit down, you’d better ante up and reserve a VIP zone with bottle service.” This is particularly true on weekends. *Wed–Fri 10pm–2am, Sat 10pm–3am.* 1192 Folsom St. (Eighth St.), 415-626-4800, iconloungesf.com

McTeague’s Saloon • Downtown • Bar

The owners of O’Reilly’s in North Beach have the magic touch when it comes to Irish pubs, and their latest venture, McTeague’s Saloon on Lower Polk, continues the legacy. The long narrow bar, done up in dark wood, offers not only pool and darts for those who want to play games while enjoying a brew, but also has several high-backed, cushy booths for bigger parties looking to chill with a pint of Guinness. Be forewarned, though: Much like many other Irish pubs, it can get a bit boisterous on weekend nights. *Daily noon–2am (opens at 9:30am Sat–Sun during football season).* ☰ 1237 Polk St. (Bush St.), 415-776-1237

Monk’s Kettle* • Neighborhood • Pub

Wine may still reign supreme in San Francisco, but a small number of bars and restaurants, such as Monk’s Kettle, are trying to change that. At this happening Mission spot, beer lovers can pick from a list of superlative craft beers from

Hot & Cool San Francisco Restaurants

accompany your meal, the owners offer up beer-and-food pairings to make sure you have the perfect gustatory experience. *Daily noon–2am (kitchen open until 1am)*. \$\$\$ 📍 = 3141 16th St. (Albion St.), 415-865-9523, monkskettle.com

The Sentinel • SoMa • American

With reservations for the city's top restaurants sometimes hard to come by, it can be tough to sample the cuisine of well-known local chefs such as Dennis Leary of the teeny-tiny Canteen. Luckily for all of us, he's opened this new downtown, no-frills sandwich counter where hungry midday office workers fuel up on artisanal sandwiches and the like. This isn't your average ham and cheese on sourdough, though: Think more along the lines of pork loin with fig jam and manchego, or smoked trout with fennel, horseradish, and apple. *Mon–Fri 7:30am–2:30pm*. \$ 📍 = 37 New Montgomery St. (Market St.), 415-284-9960, thesentinelssf.com

Serpentine • Dogpatch • American

Serpentine is to Dogpatch residents what its sibling restaurant, the cult classic Slow Club, is to the kids of Media Gulch: a hip neighborhood haunt with satisfying fare, a well-rounded drink list, and a host of laid-back regulars—mostly creative types in skinny jeans and haircuts à la Beck. The lofty bare-bones space has exposed brick walls and concrete columns and, considering the lack of anything soft like carpet, drapes, or upholstery, the pleasant acoustics are practically a miracle. In the spacious bar, neighborhood friends drink beers on aluminum stools at tall tables. The dining room is strictly industrial diner, with only a few modern hanging light fixtures and votive candles to illuminate the black vinyl booths. There's no other décor to speak of. The food is also unpretentious. A huge portion of savory bread pudding with nettles, Swiss cheese, and onions comes with mixed greens and roasted carrots for only \$11.50; the Prather Ranch burger boasts its own healthy heap of crispy, seasoned fries. While the desserts may not be particularly memorable, the list of dessert wines and digestifs is: Choose a nutty nocchino or herbaceous Amaro Nonino to wash down your dinner, and hang out as long as you like. Weekdays are pretty mellow, while weekends brings the Mission-dwelling set. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm, Tue–Sat 6–10pm*. \$\$\$ 📍 = 2495 Third St. (22nd St.), 415-252-2000, serpentinesf.com

Hip San Francisco Nightlife

Bourbon & Branch • Downtown • Lounge

Ring the bell at the unmarked door, whisper the secret password, and enjoy the VIP rush as you're ushered inside what's been called one of San Francisco's best-kept secrets. Or at least it used to be. When Bourbon & Branch opened in mid-2006, a reservations-only policy, unlisted phone, and a list of "house rules" conjured a Prohibition-era speakeasy. In fact, B & B sits on the former site of one such hush-hush establishment—there are hidden exits and bullet holes in the basement to prove it. But these days, the word is out. Local scenesters worth their Scotch keep track of the bar's ever-changing digits, and those in the know forgo the coveted reservation and say "books" at the door: The bar's hidden library, with hundreds of vintage tomes and pressed tin ceilings, is open sans reservation. For the full glam factor, book a narrow, mirrored table at the front, beneath local glass artist Ivan Lee

Beretta* • Mission • Italian

If the words "I could use a cocktail" have recently sputtered from your liquor-parched lips, then get over to Beretta, and make it snappy. Be warned: This is "one of those" trendy places that serves \$9 cocktails in sometimes shockingly small glasses. Give it a shot anyway—at Beretta, even the most Lilliputian libation gets the job done. Hints of absinthe and maraschino make for an "Improved Whiskey Cocktail," and with gin, apple, lemon, basil, and honey, the Lonsdale is like a sublime boozy cough drop. The food is also up to par and is served until 1am. Pull up a stool at the buzzing communal table—ideal for sharing among friends—and order from an array of antipasti, salumi, and specialty pizzas (bianca with sea salt and lardo is a must). Couples and foursomes with hearty appetites should request a table near the tiny open kitchen and dig into risottos and daily specials such as cioppino and lamb ossobucco. Given the pedigree of the place—bar master Thad Vogler is credited with many a cosmic concoction at Slanted Door and Bourbon & Branch—you can expect a mixed crowd of followers. You might even spot a few Marina types who've crossed town for a little rare late-night revelry with a roomful of Mission dwellers. *Mon–Fri 5:30pm–1am, Sat–Sun noon–1am*. \$ 📍 = 1199 Valencia St. (23rd St.), 415-695-1199, berettasf.com

Bin 38* • Marina • Californian

It's a whole new world for happy hour in the Marina: Bin38, the wine bar and restaurant with a focus on New World wines and quirky beers, has two, count 'em, two outdoor seating areas, making this spot the hottest newcomer in the hood. Get toasty by the fire pit on the backyard patio, and start with a glass of Australian Innocent Bystander pink moscato. Dinner, prepared by Delfina and Nopa vet Glenn Christiansen, is worth staying for: Cal-style dishes ranging from charcuterie and artisan cheeses to warm chanterelle bruschetta and semolina-fried quail pair perfectly with the restaurant's unique beer and wine selection. Sidewalk seats are particularly popular on sunny weekends, while the indoor community table is well-suited to casual dinners with the after-work crowd. On date nights, couples may prefer to cozy up on the L-shape couch. *Mon–Wed 3pm–midnight, Thu–Fri 3pm–1am, Sat 2pm–1am, Sun 2pm–midnight*. \$ 📍 = 3232 Scott St. (Lombard St.), 415-567-3838, bin38.com

Chez Papa Resto • Downtown • French

At Chez Papa Resto—the French-owned, French-staffed, French-style bistro in Mint Plaza—it's pastis, cigarette, Champagne and oysters, foie gras, cigarette, monkfish bouillabaisse, lavender crème brûlée, cigarette ... in that order. If it sounds smoky (outside only), it is—but that's because actual French people (dressed casual-chic in skinny jeans and blazers) dine here, and the musk of their Gitanes mingling with the scent of black truffles is actually seductive. Besides having a spacious patio (for both smoking and dining) on the European-style plaza facing the historic Old Mint, Chez Papa has a sumptuous interior that's part Hotel Costes and part Casablanca. Rattan dining chairs are an odd but comfortable contrast to gothic black draperies and chandeliers, and a high mirrored communal table is a gorgeous nod to French Deco design. For conversation, the acoustics are perfect; the music is Paris lounge (think Hotel Costes' DJ beats and sultry tunes by Bittersweet). A Euro-chic haunt in downtown SF,

Chez Papa is ideal for both romantic dinners and gregarious gatherings. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm and 5:30–11pm, Sat 10:30am–4pm and 5:30–11pm, Sun 10:30am–4pm and 5:30–10pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 414 Jessie St. (Fifth St.), 415-546-4134, chezpapasf.com

Circa* • Marina • American

Marina-phobes and families with kids need not apply at this neighborhood restaurant-cum-lounge, where preppies, jocks, and pretty gals in babydoll dresses rule. At home in their natural habitat, local regulars run wild from Happy Hour to late night, making merry with specialty cocktails, such as the Circa Lemonade, and indulgent small plates: lobster and white truffle mac 'n' cheese? Yes, please! After work, young couples and groups of friends come for a quick drink or a full-blown meal. Later, polished singles turn out for DJ beats and adult fun inside the elegant lounge. Polka-dot banquettes and dripping crystal light fixtures are evocative of Champagne bubbles, and large-scale images of backlit flora bloom throughout. On Sundays, a decadent brunch is much more tame, as the natives nurse their hangovers and linger over Benedict samplers. *Mon–Wed 5:30pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 5:30pm–2am, Sun 11am–midnight.* \$\$\$ 📍 2001 Chestnut St. (Fillmore St.), 415-351-0175, circaf.com

Coi • North Beach • Californian (G)

In the interest of good feng shui, Coi (say *quoi* en français) takes its name from the ancient French word for “tranquil.” Located in the bosom of a bustling adult-nightlife corridor (next door to Centerfolds), this chic North Beach restaurant is surprisingly serene. Arrive early, and pull up a chair in the quiet, pared-down lounge, where grass-cloth wallpaper and natural hues are evocative of Kyoto. Order a \$6 “hydrosol”—house-filtered water flavored with essential oil—and breathe: The next three hours bring a breathtaking culinary adventure. The minimalist dining room seats only 29 international foodies and affluent types, and serves an 11-course prix-fixe menu. The price tag is weighty (\$115) but worth it: This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The first course, a salad of sorts, is served with a drop of Coi Perfume—an essential oil crafted seasonally by a local perfumer. Dab it on your wrist and take a big whiff. The aroma intensifies the flavors in the food. Service is impeccable, portions are perfectly petite, and the creative California fare is expertly crafted. The menu changes often, but expect variations on signature dishes such as Osetra caviar with slow-cooked egg yolk and crème fraîche, and poached and seared guinea fowl. *Tue–Sat 6–10pm, lounge Tue–Sat 5:30pm–midnight.* \$\$\$\$ 📍 373 Broadway (Montgomery St.), 415-393-9000, coirestaurant.com

Dosa on Fillmore • Pacific Heights • Indian

The owners of the Mission’s popular Dosa (so popular, in fact, that there’s often a wait for a table) have taken their successful formula of Southern Indian cuisine, combined with California elegance and a hefty dose of ambience, to Lower Pacific Heights. The owners, the very photogenic Anjan and Emily Mitra, transformed a former Goodwill into quite the stylish space, complete with tangerine walls and wispy chandeliers. Much as in the original location, the must-tries on the menu include the restaurant’s namesake dosas, crepe-like pancakes made with lentils and filled with a variety of spiced potatoes and other ingredients. The chutney masala dosa features eggplant and a nice amount of spice, while the peas and paneer version stars creamy farmers cheese. There are also plen-

coppery-coated pipes crisscross the black walls and ceiling to create a striking geometric pattern that’s anything but cold. Gorgeous ambient light casts a flattering glow over the 110-seat space, and a fireplace at front turns up the heat. Though the large dining room is nearly always full of hipsters from all over town, Conduit offers a sincere and civilized dinner experience—noise is kept to an acceptable buzz, and room between tables allows for intimate conversation, making this a sweet spot for dates. Happily, Conduit takes its architecture and food equally seriously: Start with something fresh and green (little gems, maybe, or asparagus with Meyer lemon and ricotta), or opt for a heartier first bite in the form of quail or duck confit apps. Entrées from the stainless-steel open kitchen are all tempting (game hen *sous vide*, pork belly with crescenza grits), but do not miss the perfect pastas: When truffles are in season, the fettuccine, topped with an organic poached egg and delicate shaved black truffle is to die for. Cocktails and desserts rely on seasonal produce and are also carefully crafted. Scotch-lovers should order the peaty Heart of Islay. *Sun–Thu 5:30–10:30pm, Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 280 Valencia St. (14th St.), 415-552-5200, conduitrestaurant.com

Fish & Farm • Downtown • American

Drawing inspiration from the natural beauty and locally tended produce in the 100 or so miles surrounding San Francisco, Fish & Farm—whose motto could be summed up as “local, seasonal, sustainable”—isn’t exactly a new concept in Northern California. Still, there’s something about the diminutive Tenderloin eatery that feels fresh. Robin’s-egg-blue walls are a dreamy backdrop for tufted leather banquettes and white marble tabletops. Rustic accents including vintage oars, and antlers bring the theme home. The cozy dining room is conducive to dates (if you don’t mind the noise), and dinners—loaded with farm-fresh ingredients that feel almost homey—are totally approachable and perfectly prepared. Start with grilled Monterey Bay sardines, and save room for inventive seafood entrées—the pan-seared corvina with sweetbread and mushroom ravioli is already causing a stir. If fish isn’t your thing, there are a few barnyard animals on offer too: The grilled Berkshire pork chop with cavatelli and smoked bacon is sure to please. Mouthwatering culinary cocktails are served in the bar and lounge. Order the SF martini, with rosemary-infused gin, or a Fish & Farm julep with a dash of tarragon. *Sun and Tue–Wed, 5–10pm, Thu–Sat 5–11pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 339 Taylor Street (Ellis St.), 415-474-3474, fishandfarmsf.com

Monk’s Kettle* • Mission • American

Monk’s Kettle is a beer lover’s Mecca: At this cozy Mission spot, with a classic dark-wood bar lined with rows and rows of glasses, beer connoisseurs can sample countless craft beers from Belgium, Germany, and, of course, the great state of California. To soak up the IPAs, pilsners, and stouts on the beer list, the kitchen serves up a menu of all-American classics with a twist, such as a tender lamb burger with a cucumber-mint tzatziki sauce. There are a few more sophisticated options, such as a brined pork chop with stone-ground mustard cheese sauce, as well as a few simple salads and charcuterie plates. Perhaps the most addictive item on the menu, though, is a giant pretzel, served piping hot with the aforementioned mustard and a truly decadent house-made cheddar-cheese ale sauce. And just in case you aren’t sure what beer would best

restaurant serves locally sourced organic fare with Mediterranean flavor. A small rooftop garden is a serene spot to take in city views. \$\$ 466 Bush St. (Grant Ave.), 415-393-9917 / 888-717-2881, theorchardgardenhotel.com

Hotel Tomo • Pacific Heights • Trendy (125 rms)

Where in San Francisco can you rent a room for hot action by the hour? At Japantown's trendy new Hotel Tomo. But get your mind out of the gutter ... Tomo is game on for comics lovers, J-pop fans, and Nintendo fanatics with the cash flow to rent a gaming suite at \$150 for two hours or \$500 for the night. Equipped with PlayStation 3, Nintendo Wii, DVD players, and six-foot LCD projection screens, these are seriously stylized game rooms. Plop down on a woolly gray beanbag or candy-colored couch, and get in the game. For added inspiration, anime-inspired murals by Japanese artist Heisuke Kitazawa bring the rooms to life. If all that action makes you hungry, head to Mums—on the second floor—for all-you-can-eat shabu-shabu. Or, if you can tear yourself away, the Michelin-ranked restaurant Bushi-Tei is just around the corner. \$ 1800 Sutter St. (Buchanan St.), 415-921-4000, jdvhotels.com/tomo/

Hip San Francisco Restaurants

Bar Jules • Hayes Valley • Californian

In three words: Less is more. An extra-cozy (and extra small!) cafe in Hayes Valley, Bar Jules gets back to basics with a keenly edited menu and an equally minimalist space where votive candles and brightly hued walls serve as the only real décor. This lack of distractions highlights the food—or rather the ingredients, which are sourced daily from local, sustainable suppliers and then transformed into simply delightful dishes in the warm open kitchen. With an extreme focus on fresh, the menu, which changes daily on two big chalkboards, is refreshingly short. Expect one or two options each for soup, salad, meat, fish, and dessert, each thoughtfully prepared by chef/owner Jessica Boncutter (formerly of Zuni and Hog Island Café). Truly hip locals looking for tasty food and a friendly atmosphere sans pomp and fuss are heading to Bar Jules for exactly that. Brunch, featuring the most sublime scrambled eggs, is also a winner. *Tue–Sat 5:30–10pm, Sun 11am–4pm.* \$\$ 609 Hayes St. (Laguna St.), 415-621-5482, barjules.com

Bar Norcini • Downtown • Italian

Union Square, though stocked to the brim with designer retail stores, isn't exactly known for its cuisine (tourist traps, anyone?). But Bar Norcini, housed within the new Villa Florence hotel, offers a respite from the hustle and bustle on the streets. Swing in for a civilized lunch of panini, pizzettas, and fresh salads. It's also a great place to start the day with a pre-shopping cappuccino and the morning paper. Big windows overlooking Powell Street provide all the entertainment you'll need. *Daily 7am–11pm.* \$ 225 Villa Florence, 225 Powell St. (Geary St.), 415-397-3621, barnorcini.com

Conduit • Mission • American

Technically speaking, a conduit is a narrow pipe that protects electrical wires. In foodie lingo, Conduit is the architect-designed restaurant on Valencia that stands out for its chic interior use of the industrial-grade stuff. Grids of steel and

ty of salads (including a unique mung-sprout salad), starters (North-and-South samosas are a standout), and some curries, which pack plenty of flavor without being too heavy. As a final plus, this new location has a full bar, with signature cocktails. *Sun–Tue 11:30am–3:30pm and 5:30–11pm, Wed–Sat 11:30am–3:30pm and 5:30pm–midnight.* \$\$ 1700 Fillmore St. (Post St.), 415-441-3672, dosasf.com

Ducca • Downtown • Italian


Ducca, named for the emperor (duca) of Venice, is a refined interior with Venetian-glass chandeliers, caramel-leather banquettes, and faux-textured walls in the nouveau Italian style. Packed nightly with convivial out-of-towners and even a few native Italians, the restaurant serves traditional fare inspired by the Queen of the Adriatic. Diners should bring an appetite: The authentically Italian menu starts with *chicheti* (small appetizers such as arancini and olive fritte) and antipasti; the *primi* course might include ricotta gnocchi or papardelle al sugo, while *secondi* brings entrees such as chicken arrosto and veal-chop Milanese. Don't forget *contorni* and *dolci*! The real feast, however, is the buffet of eye candy on the patio—hands down one of the city's best. Settle into a big wicker armchair beneath the heaters, and order from the outside bar. On weekends, the scene is young and restless—and hoppin'. *Daily 6:30–10:30 am, 11:30am–2pm, and 5:30–10:30pm; lounge 11:30am–midnight.* \$\$ 50 Third St. (Mission St.), 415-977-0271, duccasf.com

Epic Roasthouse • Embarcadero • Steak House (G)


Worshippers at the altar of steak, rejoice: This sweeping restaurant on the Embarcadero can fulfill just about all of your desires. The brainchild of famed restaurateur Pat Kuleto and acclaimed chef Jan Birnbaum, Epic Roasthouse is a feast for the eyes and the palate. Mixing elements both industrial and homey—think exposed steel pipes mixed with rich fabrics and a massive fireplace—the interior feels at once grand and comfortable. As for the food, well, the meat is where it's at. Dry-aged steaks are available in several cuts, such as a wood oven-roasted rib eye for two or a classic New York strip. There's also prime rib, on the menu every night until 8pm, and a few pork, lamb, and veal options as well. Sides focus on steak house classics with a twist, such as a superlative mac 'n' cheese, sautéed spinach with garlic confit, and caramelized Brussels sprouts with shallots and sieved eggs. The motto here seems to be “go big or go home,” so the faint of appetite might want to consider other options. *Mon–Thu 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm (bar until midnight), Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm (bar until 1am), Sat 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm (bar until 1am), Sun 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm (bar until midnight).* \$\$\$\$ 369 The Embarcadero South (Folsom St.), 415-369-9955, epicroasthousesf.com

Fifth Floor • SoMa • French


Despite the Art Moderne flourishes of its chic little lobby, you might miss the Hotel Palomar—its narrow footprint can pass you by in the blink of an eye. Up five stories, the Palomar's restaurant is totally hidden. But no matter—Fifth Floor makes up for what it lacks in curb appeal with a decadent experience few restaurants can match. The décor reflects the Gascony roots of its newest celebrated chef, Laurent Manrique (Aqua, Café de la Presse). A palette of ocean blue, wine red, and sand (also evocative of the Bay Area) is a calm

antithesis to the restaurant's wilder early years—Fifth Floor is remembered for its frequently revolving kitchen door and animal-print carpet. But this is still the place to indulge as though it were the last night for chic luxury. The food is high-French executed with precision (be prepared to splurge), and the vibe is grown-up sexy and intimate. A no-reservations cafe adjacent to the formal dining room is prime territory for more casual meals. *Mon–Fri 7–10am and 5:30–10pm, Sat 8–11am and 5:30–11pm, Sun 8–11am.* \$\$\$  12 Fourth St. (Market St.), 415-348-1555, fifthfloorrestaurant.com

Gitane • Downtown • French

Much like its menu of Basque cuisine, Gitane combines different elements for a whole package that's uniquely alluring. A happening bar scene downstairs, where downtown denizens enjoy signature cocktails crafted with sherry, mixes with couples and larger groups dining upstairs, and a few tables set out on Claude Lane. The food successfully melds influences from France, Spain, and Northern Africa, making for a full-flavored experience. Bastillas share the menu with Dungeness crab croquetas, Monterey squid stuffed with meaty portobello mushrooms, and tabbouleh salad with tiger prawns. Sherry shows up again in a demi-glace paired with the grilled Australian rack of lamb, while seafood lovers can dig into a Portuguese fish stew. While some restaurants that fall under the “fusion” umbrella may just seem confused, Gitane combines all of its elements in a sleek, sophisticated, and delicious way. *Tue–Sat 5:30pm–midnight (bar until 1am).* \$\$  6 Claude Ln. (Sutter St.), 415-788-6686, gitanerestaurant.com

La Mar Cebicheria • The Embarcadero • South American

The United States has Emeril Lagasse and Bobby Flay; Peru has superstar Chef Gaston Acurio. Acurio is famous in South America not only a celebrity television chef, but also as a talented restaurateur who's elevating his native cuisine to new heights. At La Mar, his first restaurant in the US, diners can sample the likes of punchy ceviches, *tiraditos* (Peruvian sashimi), and other traditional dishes with a modern twist, all while overlooking the bay. And did we mention there's a pisco bar serving pisco sours and pisco punches (created right here in, you guessed it, San Francisco)? *Sun–Wed 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm, Thu–Sat 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm.* \$\$  Pier 1½ (The Embarcadero), 415-397-8880, lamarcebicheria.com

Le Club* • Nob Hill • American

Urbane cocktailing over a game of chess in the drawing room is a thing of the past. Step back in time at Le Club, the posh reservations-only restaurant and lounge inside the residential high-rise at 1250 Jones St., atop Nob Hill. Owned by Gina Milano, the entrepreneur behind Bambuddha Lounge, and Todd Traina, of SF social royalty (Danielle Steel's son), Le Club takes its cue from the gentlemen's clubs of yore—think pre-war crown molding, leather wing chairs, and a billiards room. The palette and design flourishes, though, are feminine: Orange-silk balloon shades on street-facing windows offset French-blue walls in the dining room; the billiards room is glam with a crystal chandelier and rich wine hues; and the bar features onyx-topped tables for happy hour snacks, including escargot and green salad with fresh chevre crostini. Le Club has some things old and some things new: Dinner brings such classics as lobster pot pie and chocolate gâteau, while dishes such as scallops au poivre riff on the traditional. The dinner crowd is also diverse: A graying Republican oil tycoon might

Contemporary Jewish Museum • SoMa • Art Museum

Strolling through the Yerba Buena Arts District, you'll notice a new landmark on Jessie Street: an angular, blue steel structure that seems to cut right through the side of a historic brick building and then literally jabs at the skyline. Designed by architect Daniel Libeskind (famous for having won the commission to rebuild the World Trade Center site in New York), there is no question, even for a layperson, that the new Contemporary Jewish Museum is an architectural triumph—and it is unhindered by any permanent collection. Thus, with an ever-evolving repertoire of international exhibitions (ranging from the art of Andy Warhol to *Shrek* illustrator William Steig), the museum is a must-see for all lovers of culture and art. *Mon–Tue 11am–5:30pm, Thu 1–8:30pm, Fri–Sun 11am–5:30pm.* \$ 736 Mission St. (Fourth St.), 415-655-7800, thecjm.org

Gucci • Downtown • Store

Shopping just doesn't get more luxe than the experience at the new Union Square location of style behemoth Gucci. Everything about the three-level store simply screams fashion, most literally in the television screens showing scenes from Gucci's latest runway shows. Accessories, ranging from the brand's coveted handbags to wallets and jewelry, hold court on the ground level. Ultra-sexy women's and men's footwear tempts shoe lovers on the second floor, while fashionistas can get their fix of the label's not-so-subtly-sexy clothing on the top level. *Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, Sun noon–5pm.* 200 Stockton St. (Geary St.), 415-392-2808, gucci.com

Westfield San Francisco Centre • Downtown • Shopping Center

It's tempting to call the Westfield Centre a euphemism for the new Bloomingdale's, a glorious new outpost of the New York legend. But that wouldn't be entirely fair. Wrapped around the existing Nordstrom complex, the sparkling mega-mall, unveiled in late 2006, offers more than 400 stores (and the obligatory multiplex), including everything from H&M to Oilily to Tommy Bahama. The Bloomies is top-notch, with impressive housewares and lingerie departments. If you shop 'til you drop from hunger, ascend to the fourth floor to lounge over cocktails and fusion snacks at Straits, fight your way to the bar at Lark Creek Steak, or watch your own private guacamole get whipped up at Zazil. *Mon–Sat 9:30am–9pm, Sun 10am–7pm.* 865 Market St. (Fifth St.), 415-512-6776, westfield.com/sanfrancisco

Hip San Francisco Hotels

Orchard Garden Hotel • Downtown • Trendy (86 rms)

If green is chic in San Francisco, then Orchard Garden—one of only five hotels worldwide to garner LEED certification—is the little black dress of the hospitality industry. Opened in early 2007, the boutique hotel proves that a social conscience is the most stylish accessory. The vibe is lighthearted and sunny, with cool greens and crisp white throughout, and furnishings are minimalist without sacrificing comfort. Bronze balconies were handcrafted by a local artist, and plush beds are covered in Egyptian cotton linens. Organic Aveda products in the bathrooms promise guilt-free pampering. Just steps from Union Square and the Chinatown gate, Orchard Garden is a stone's throw from the best of downtown shopping, nightlife, and dining. The hotel's own eatery, Roots, is worth checking out too. Helmed by Chef Russell Rummer, formerly of Absinthe and Acme Chophouse, the low-key

bartenders at Bourbon & Branch. In the tavern's sultry-smart library, up to 16 neophytes can get schooled in everything from the history of gin ("From bathtubs and back alleys to the upper class") to the different processes of distilling booze and the accoutrements that work well with each spirit. It is a lesson in history and, admittedly, sounds a tad nerdy—there may be a PowerPoint presentation involved. But, don't forget these two-hour study sessions are "hands-on," meaning each student will make at least a couple of cocktails for firsthand "learning." At the end of the day, you'll know the difference between *resposado* and *añejo* and, for only \$95, you're practically guaranteed to be the life of any home party. *Class days and times vary.* \$\$\$\$ 501 Jones St. (O'Farrell St.), 415-931-7292, thebeverageacademy.com

Bliss • Downtown • Spa

Like something out of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Bliss is white-on-white austere luxury set on the fourth floor of the fabulous W Hotel. Bliss spas have been popping up around the country offering their signature brownie buffets, manicures avec TV, and wide array of delicious-smelling products. In addition to the convenient location (next to SFMOMA), its key virtues are its accommodating long hours, extremely private treatment rooms (important if the word "Brazilian" connotes pain, not pleasure, in your vocabulary), and the bevy of lovely spots to lounge, including a same-sex outdoor space. It's also a place where guys can get their pedicure on without feeling like they're crashing a slumber party. *Daily 9am–9pm.* \$\$\$\$ 181 Third St. (Howard St.), 415-281-0990, blissworld.com

Cellar 360 • Fisherman's Wharf • Store

Is it a store? A wine bar? A tasting room? Why, yes, it is! Cellar 360, housed in a sunny 6,000-square-foot space in Ghirardelli Square, is a one-stop wine shop for out-of-towners who lack the time to hit the wineries up north. Stocked with more than 250 varietals, including favorite local producers Stags Leap, St. Soverain, and Meridian, Cellar 360 offers tastings, flights, and culinary pairings. The patio is a prime location for oenophiles who prefer to take their taste with a crust of bread and cheese, while VIPs and wine-club members can enjoy private wine dinners inside. Sophisticated gifts—think box sets, corkscrews, and luxe picnic baskets—as well as wine-education classes, are also available. Check the website for a free tasting pass. Sun and *Mon–Thu 11am–7pm, Fri–Sat 11am–9pm.* 900 N. Point St. (Larkin St.), 415-440-0772, cellar360.com

Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates • Hayes Valley • Store/Lounge

These days, San Francisco is a cocktail town, where nearly every corner has a gourmet bar that serves drinks worth writing home about. A typical weekend getaway here may leave you more parched than Death Valley. Before heading south for Betty Ford, make a rehabilitating journey to a different kind of bar—at Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates. Stop scratching your head, and envision this: an airy white space that's more gallery than store, where a delicious sprinkling of exotic truffles grace sparse glass cases, and a modern cocoa-hued lounge serves piping-hot china cups of yummy drinking chocolate in 14 different varieties. Hel-lo! Kick back on the banquette with a good book, then take some sweets to go: Flavors include bourbon pecan, caramel fleur de sel, Vietnamese cinnamon, Persian-spiced marzipan, and bananas Foster—to name a few. *Mon–Thu 11am–8pm, Fri–Sat 11am–10pm, Sun noon–6pm.* 401 Hayes St. (Gough St.), 415-355-1105, elbowchocolates.com

just find himself next to a raucous group of 30-something arty types. The dining room is loud and the vibe energetic—not at all stuffy as its name (pronounced "le cloob") might suggest. *Mon–Thu 5:30–10pm, Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm.* \$\$ ☒ 1250 Jones St. (Clay St.), 415-922-2582, leclubsf.com

Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant* • SoMa • Californian

Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant is true to its name. Sort of. With a very SoMa vibe—stark white walls, lofty ceiling, polished industrial accents, and minimal art—it fits with the style and personality of the neighborhood. A mix of arty folk and dolled-up scenesters from surrounding blocks mingle in the airy space, which holds a long communal table, an open kitchen with sushi bar–style seating, and a small wine bar with a few stools at back. (The community atmosphere makes the restaurant ideal for small groups of friends.) Always packed, the word on Local's wood-oven pizzas and truffled frites has spread, bringing a bevy of Marina and Pac Heights types to shake things up. At front, a small wine boutique offers a selection of bottles and local artisan foods for retail purchase, and upstairs, Cocoon Urban Day Spa has teamed with Local management (also the owners of Oola) to promote good health (read: yoga) combined with the good life (read: wine and chocolate). Say "Om." *Mon–Fri 8am–2pm and 5:30–10pm, Sat–Sun 9am–3pm and 5:30–10pm.* \$ ☒ 330 First St. (Folsom St.), 415-777-4200, sf-local.com




Nihon* • Mission • Bar

The work-hard, play-harder guys—the investment, M&A, partner-track, Stanford MBA crew—love Nihon. They like their sushi pretty, their whiskey neat, and their ambience a manly mix of natural textures. Nihon—Japan in English—brings to mind those dimly lit Tokyo whiskey clubs where for a few hundred bucks you can keep one of 250 or so special bottles behind the bar, and use the private room for your private moves. The same rules apply here. The sushi is not perfect, but it is quite good, and the ambience more than makes up for any shortcomings. A white river-stone floor and plenty of dark wood create a richly intimate atmosphere. A DJ spins Thursday through Saturday in the bar, where gorgeous slabs of wood and a backlit sliver of golden stone combine to striking effect. Urban girls with just the right amount of attitude mix drinks. Upstairs, the small dining room offers intimacy and a tantalizing glimpse of the private room. One expects a breathtaking geisha to part the shoji screens at any moment. *Mon–Sat 6pm–midnight; bar until 2am.* ☒ 1779 Folsom St. (14th St.), 415-552-4400, dajaniagroup.net




Nopa* • Haight • Mediterranean

North of the Panhandle—a tiny, quiet stretch near Golden Gate Park, bordered by Divisadero and Masonic, Turk and Fell streets—has hardly even garnered the notice of multigeneration natives—until now. Nopa, the new local restaurant that coined an entire neighborhood, is generating buzz among urbanites citywide. Like any great neighborhood spot, Nopa feels inviting and warm. A large communal table up front is ideal for solos looking to make friends. Tables in the upstairs mezzanine are best for somewhat quieter conversation. Do as the locals do, and don your comfy jeans and order an elderflower gimlet. Choose from hearty Mediterranean fare such as wood-roasted sardines and juicy rotisserie chicken. The vibe is funky urban rustic, and invites you to stay awhile—even after dessert. *Daily 6pm–1am.* \$ ☒ 560 Divisadero St. (Hayes St.), 415-864-8643, nopasf.com




Pizzeria Delfina • Pacific Heights • Italian

It used to be that the Mission housed the city's favorite gourmet collective, but Pacific Heights might be catching up now that the second location of Pizzeria Delfina has opened its doors. Sporting a modern interior and several seats along a marble bar, the place has been completely packed since opening in fall 2008. Chef Craig Stoll's thin-crust pizzas are a dream, topped with everything from a fried egg to cherrystone clams to house-made fennel sausage. There's also an all-Italian wine list to wash it all down. *Mon 11:30am–10pm, Tue 5:30–10pm, Wed–Thu 11:30am–10pm, Fri 11:30am–11pm, Sat noon–11pm, Sun noon–10pm.* \$    2406 California St. (Fillmore St.), 415-440-1189, pizzeriadelfina.com

Salt House • Financial District • American


The same trio responsible for the now-venerable Town Hall opened Salt House in late 2006 to immediate success. They've got the formula nailed down: Serve great food with good wine and plenty of cocktails (and a menu of salty snacks to go with them). Stay open late. Find a location with urban post-industrial charm, meaning plank floors, exposed brick, and rusty girders. Add signature lighting and a boisterous crowd. Like Town Hall, Salt House exudes an easy confidence and innate hipness that makes you want to stay. Expect house-made charcuterie, a raw bar, and a seasonal menu loaded with favorites (sautéed scallops, roast chicken, steak) and fresh twists (caramelized winter fruit and chicory salad). *Mon–Thu 11:30am–11pm, Fri 11:30am–midnight, Sat 5:30pm–midnight, Sun 4–9pm.* \$\$    545 Mission St. (First St.), 415-543-8900, salthousesf.com

SPQR • Pacific Heights • Italian


When in San Francisco, do as the Romans do at SPQR, the Roman-style osteria from the folks behind A16. Opened in fall 2007, this Fillmore neighborhood joint barely had time to fire up the stove before locals began lining up. And with a no-reservations policy, the wait on weekends is already legendary. Hold your horses, and head to Harry's Bar across the street—good things come to those who wait. The narrow eatery—sparsely decorated with antique sconces and vintage Italian posters—is alive with friends chatting, laughing, and gesturing energetically like true Italians. An open kitchen lends to the bustling vibe, and the friendly servers feel like family. Really the only drawback to SPQR is deciding what to order: The antipasti menu alone has more than 20 mouthwatering options. Don't miss the *stracciatella* (traditional Roman egg drop soup) and *suppli al telefono* (fried mozzarella—yum)! Fans of the Italian delicacy *guanciale*, or pig's jowl, should order the rigatoni carbonara. Unless you are a connoisseur of Italian vino, don't even bother with the extensive wine list. Flag down owner Shelley Lindgren, your gracious and tireless host, whose pairings are always primo. Espresso granita for dessert is a must. *Daily 5:30–11pm, Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm, Sat–Sun 9:30am–2:30pm.* \$    1911 Fillmore St. (Bush St.), 415-771-7779, spqrsf.com

Spruce • Pacific Heights • American


Spruced up Williams-Sonoma Home-style, this hot spot is bringing buzz to sleepy Laurel Heights. In an affluent residential neighborhood sprinkled with upscale boutiques, Spruce is home base for social-page regulars and fashion-forward Pac Heights locals. Housed in a former 1930s auto barn, the spacious venue is appropriate to food worship. A soaring limestone archway and French doors make the entrance imposing, while inside, cathedral ceilings provide high drama for the see-

of noteworthy local DJs (Morse Code, Frenchy Le Freak), Slide draws a hot young crowd that loves to dance. Wednesday nights are particularly packed as singer-songwriter Chris Clouse mixes it up on the guitar with DJ Solomon. With pricey cocktails and no seats at the bar, bottle service reigns here. Expect a line at the door after 10pm. *Wed–Sun 9pm–2am.*  430 Mason St. (Geary St.), 415-421-1916, slidesf.com


Taverna Aventine • Financial District • Restaurant Bar

Local restaurant and nightlife impresarios Vintage 415 are known about town for opening spots that quickly become a scene, and their latest venture, Taverna Aventine, is no exception to the rule: It's already become the spot for rollicking happy hour block parties. Taking its inspiration from the Barbary Coast, the two-level watering hole and eatery sports two full bars and a downstairs "Parlor" with 150-year-old brick walls. Die-hards can join the Aventine Club, which allows them to purchase space in a row of handcrafted lockers to store their own personal spirits. *Mon–Fri 10am–2am, Sat 5pm–2am.*  582 Washington St. (Montgomery St.), 415-981-1500, aventinesf.com

Truck • Mission • Bar

Despite its motif, this tricked-out pit stop is more Tonka than 10-wheeler, and more Mack-daddy than Mack truck. Hence its appeal to SF's wildly gorgeous gay male crowd and a gaggle of their pretty gal pals. Despite the city's reputation as an LGBT Mecca, SF has lacked truly hip gay bars in the past. Truck, which opened in mid-2007, is like a chrome beacon on a deserted highway. Enter beneath massive girlie mud flaps to a long, narrow space. The bar serves up solid drinks, while a few tables opposite see party boys scarfing shockingly tasty pub grub, including seriously wicked fries with spicy dipping sauces. At Happy Hour, blow off steam shooting pool. Late night, avoid the bathroom if possible—unless you seek a true truck-stop vibe. The bar's a little off the beaten path, and getting a cab home can be a trick. But these drawbacks may actually be a good thing: If you bump up against the next guy, he'll know it's by choice. And as they like to say at Truck, "It's more fun than playing in the dirt." *Daily 4pm–2am.*  1900 Folsom St. (15th St.), 415-252-0306, trucksf.com

Uva Enoteca* • Haight • Wine Bar

A stylish lower Haight set has made Uva Enoteca one of the favorite spots in the city to try lesser-known Italian wines: Ever heard of Carignano, Biferno Bianco, or Marzemino? No? then perhaps it's time to educate yourself with a little help from the friendly owner/host, Boris Nemchenok. Another bonus of hanging out here? Swirling a glass of wine in the restaurant's exposed brick interior, with soft lighting, everyone looks good at Uva. *Daily 5pm–midnight.* \$  568 Haight St. (Steiner St.), 415-829-2024, uvaenoteca.com

Hot & Cool San Francisco Attractions

The Beverage Academy • Downtown • Cocktail Class

Anyone can slap together a decent G&T. Mastering more complex cocktails, though, is a honed skill, an art even, that requires equal parts patience and the right ingredients. To shake up your maverick mix-master within, get schooled at the Beverage Academy, a bona fide cocktail college served up by the acclaimed

Harlot • SoMa • Lounge

According to legend, Minna Street was named for a beautiful neighborhood prostitute of some notoriety during SF's wild Barbary Coast days. True to her namesake's reputation, Harlot, a brand-new temptress on the SoMa lounge circuit, seduces passersby with a coy glance and the promise of indulgences to come. A black rock façade opens to a lofty nightclub where a black-on-black palette lends itself to intimacy. Opulent design flourishes—embossed leather banquettes and framed wall coverings—recall the embellishments of SF's Victorian era, while the black quartz bar and a DJ “altar,” bathed in ever-changing digital light, are fully modern touches. Original paintings and tabletop imagery are actually quite remarkable. The experience can be rich: Small wine pairings are on offer, and the ubiquitous table service is a must in the all-white VIP lounge. Weekend nights, however, bring the masses. Next door to Salt House, Harlot is ideal for a pre- or post-dinner libation for those seeking a sexy spot for a tête-à-tête. After 10:30pm, put on your dancing shoes. The volume rises, and a line forms out front, as the well-heeled and wannabes alike pray for access beyond the velvet rope. ☹️ *Wed–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 9pm–2am.* 46 Minna St. (First St.), 415-777-1077, harlotsf.com

Le Club* • Nob Hill • Lounge

Step back in time at Le Club, the posh reservations-only restaurant and lounge inside the residential high-rise at 1250 Jones St., atop Nob Hill. *Mon–Sat 4:30pm–2am.* 1250 Jones St. (Clay St.), 415-922-2582, leclubsf.com

Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant* • SoMa • Wine Bar

At the back of this gem of a restaurant is an inviting wine bar with a few stools. *Mon–Fri 8am–2pm and 5:30–10pm, Sat–Sun 9am–3pm and 5:30–10pm.* ☹️ 330 First St. (Folsom St.), 415-777-4200, sf-local.com

Nihon* • Mission • Restaurant Bar

Nihon, Japanese for Japan, brings to mind those dimly lit Tokyo whiskey clubs where for a few hundred bucks you can keep one of 250 or so special bottles behind the bar and use the private room for your private moves. The same rules apply here. A DJ spins Thursday through Saturday in the bar. *Mon–Sat 6pm–midnight (bar until 2am).* ☹️ 1779 Folsom St. (14th St.), 415-552-4400, dajainigroup.net

Nopa* • Haight • Mediterranean

This instantly popular restaurant has a lively bar scene that goes late into the night. *Daily 6pm–1am.* \$ ☹️ 560 Divisadero St. (Hayes St.), 415-864-8643, nopasf.com

Slide • Downtown • Ultralounge

Calling all gangsters, flappers, and bootleggers: Slide, SF's second “speakeasy” to open in recent years, may be the greatest thing since bathtub gin. In a historic building next door to sibling venue Ruby Skye, Slide is a highly stylized subterranean lounge with raucous roots: During the 1920s, the space (then called Café Dans) could only be accessed by the most savvy imbibers via a hidden playground slide. Today, the fully legit adult playing field still calls for a slick entrée down a custom-made mahogany slide—gals in skirts can take the stairs. Downstairs, a chocolate and blue color palette, leather banquettes, and silk chandeliers lend sophistication to an otherwise rowdy scene. With a rotation

and-be-seen crowd. Reservations are a must but don't preclude a wait. Make the most of it at the bar—a gorgeous slab of white Carrara marble lined with faux ostrich chairs—and order the Bee's Knees, a cocktail made with lavender and honey. When you finally take a seat in the lofty dining room, beneath mohair walls and Parisian art, you'll know you've arrived. House-made charcuterie and a bottle of German Riesling is a winning start. But save your appetite for more hearty fare—think caramelized asparagus with sweetbreads and mousseline sauce, and bavette steak with duck-fat potatoes. For dessert, the brandied cherry-soda float is tops. Coffee and gourmet takeout are available all day in the adjacent cafe. The “library”—an enclosed outdoor lounge with a fireplace—invites loungers to peruse the day's paper over tasty bar snacks. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–10pm, Sat–Sun 5–10pm.* \$\$\$ ☹️ 3640 Sacramento St. (Spruce St.), 415-931-5100, sprucesf.com

1300 Fillmore • Pacific Heights • American

California cuisine was once the ubiquitous flavor of SF restaurants. These days, family-style comfort fare is taking the cake, with soul-food kitchens cropping up all over town. In the heart of the city's jazz district, 1300 on Fillmore is luring a diverse cross section of hungry locals with the scent of fried (organic) chicken and melt-in-your-mouth maple-braised short ribs. White-cheddar mac 'n' cheese, truffled mashers, honey corn biscuits, and creamy grits sing backup for the meaty headliners. But while the food may remind you of Grandma, the ambience is more likely to evoke images of iconic jazz cats in fedoras and three-piece suits. The chocolate and walnut walls are covered with photographic memories of the neighborhood's jazzy heyday, and strategically placed spotlights maintain a dusky, sexy vibe. This is an ideal dinner spot for those catching a show next door at Yoshi's or down the street at Fillmore Auditorium. Alternatively, sticking around for martinis and live jazz in the lounge is a great bet for a casual date. *Daily 5–11pm; lounge 5pm–1am.* \$\$ ☹️ 1300 Fillmore St. (Eddy St.), 415-771-7100, 1300fillmore.com

Umami • Marina District • Asian Fusion

You want a scene? This modern minimalist take on the traditional Japanese sake bar packs in well-groomed 20-somethings almost every night of the week. Don't plan on deep conversation unless you bring your horn. Dress for success, or risk being sequestered to a tiny table by the kitchen or downwind from the icy door draft. And order sushi only if you're in the mood for a few more sake-based Hello Kitties, because it could take a while. All that said, the pan-Asian food is terrific, especially the shaking beef. For better or worse, the upstairs scene after dinner does a nice job of channeling an LA hot spot. *Tue–Sun 5:30–10:30pm.* \$\$ ☹️ 2909 Webster St. (Union St.), 415-346-3431, umamisf.com

Uva Enoteca* • Haight • Italian

Uva Enoteca is not one of San Francisco's ubiquitous wine bars. Yes, it is a “wine bar,” but you won't find any throng of halter-topped scenesters, no wine list categorized by clever descriptors, and no magnum-size bouncer at the door. Instead, Uva follows in Italy's fashionable footsteps: The Lower Haight hangout serves a carefully considered list of all-Italian vinos (created by a Mario Batali vet) alongside an equally well-crafted menu of antipasti, carne, and *formaggi* (thanks to a Ritz-Carlton alum in the kitchen) in an atmosphere that's more about family and friends than trendy décor. (Note: Aside from the sleek glass

case filled with magically rustic salumi and cheese, there is no design to speak of). The diminutive, mostly bare-walled venue is packed with neighborhood locals of the 20- and 30-something varietal. Classic rock rolls throughout the space as small groups share small plates—don't miss the chef's signature Himalayan red-salt crudo. But Uva is really all about relaxing and chatting over a quartino of wine: a very civilized pour in a small decanter that holds about one-third of a bottle. *Daily 5pm–midnight.* \$ 📍 568 Haight St. (Steiner St.), 415-829-2024, uvaenoteca.com

Waterbar • Embarcadero • Seafood

Restaurateur Pat Kuleto knows a thing or two about high drama: Many of his restaurants are just as well known for their spectacular interiors as they are for their food (Boulevard and Farallon spring to mind). Waterbar is no different. In an homage to all things under the sea, two floor-to-ceiling aquariums, full of fish, draw “oohs” and “aaahs” from diners, a mix of well-heeled locals and visitors. An incredible view of the Bay Bridge doesn't hurt matters, either. As for the menu, chef Parke Ulrich has the touch when it comes to dressing seafood in both delicate and hearty preparations, such as a restrained sashimi of sea scallops with sweet potato, smoked salt, and paprika oil, or a much meatier entrée of petrale sole with potato-onion hash, chunks of smoked bacon, and brown butter. If you're in the mood for something a bit more casual than the white-tablecloth dining room, check out the raw bar up front, which has become quite the scene for cocktails or a glass of bubbly and some oysters. *Daily 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 399 The Embarcadero (Harrison St.), 415-284-9922, waterbarsf.com

Hot & Cool San Francisco Nightlife

The Ambassador • Downtown • Lounge

From SF nightlife ambassadors Vintage 415, this slick lounge in the Tenderloin redefines artful revelry. Thirty-one crystal chandeliers twinkle against large wall mirrors and a Carrara marble bar, where backlit bottle niches are couched in button-tufted black leather. Matching leather u-shape booths, mainly reserved for pricey bottle service, are plugged into private telephones for ordering more booze or buzzing the hottie two tables over. The buzzing scene can feel more LA than SF, catering to the next generation of social mavens in the season's latest fashions. But with a roster of world-renowned DJs and a sexy little mezzanine ideal for dates and private parties, the bar does manage to lure the locals. A menu of well-executed bar bites (giant bruschetta, mac 'n' chorizo, steak au poivre) provides ample dinner if you can find a seat. If eating sans reservation is in the game plan, arrive before 8pm. After 10pm, the place gets packed, especially on Thursday nights, and competition at the door can be fierce. Groups of six to eight should reserve a booth: That bottle of Cristal may not be cheap. But skipping the line and having everything your way? Priceless. 📍 *Mon–Sat 6pm–2am.* 673 Geary St. (Leavenworth St.), 415-563-8192, ambassador415.com

Bar 888 • SoMa • Bar

Next time you're in town for Macworld Expo, round the corner from Moscone Center, and head for Bar 888, the materialization of a salute to grappa inside the new InterContinental San Francisco—at 32 stories tall, you can't miss this

blue-glass behemoth. A large open space just off the street-level lobby, 888 feels distinctly like a hotel bar (or as some Yelpers have noted, a waiting room): Chocolate brown and charcoal gray make for a catalog-ready palette, but velvet couches big enough for four, heavy silk drapes, and ambient lighting keep the place cozy. Proximity to the convention center, Westfield Centre, and the Financial District guarantees that the crowd here is heavily suited and largely out-of-town. That said, it might be a good spot for traveling singles to meet and greet. Order a specialty Italian cocktail or a top-shelf grappa (it's what they're known for), and see where the night takes you. Maybe you'll need a room. *Sun–Thurs 11am–midnight, Fri–Sat 11am–1am.* 📍 888 Howard St. (Fifth St.), 415-616-6565, grappabar888.com

Beretta* • Mission • Bar

Mission locals and hipsters—which, often, can be the same thing—flock to the bar and communal table here for Beretta's superlative cocktails, sometimes sipping them on their own or sharing them over a slice of thin-crust pizza. The Airmail, for instance, packs a punch of Prosecco with rum, honey, and lime, while the elegant Nuestra Paloma combines tequila, elderflower, Cointreau, grapefruit, and bitters. With combinations like those, who needs snacks? *Mon–Fri 5:30pm–1am, Sat–Sun noon–1am.* \$ 📍 1199 Valencia St. (23rd St.), 415-695-1199, berettasf.com

Bin 38* • Marina • Wine Bar

This new wine bar and restaurant serves New World wines and quirky beers, and has two popular outdoor seating areas, making this spot a hot newcomer in the hood. *Mon–Wed 3pm–midnight, Thu–Fri 3pm–1am, Sat 2pm–1am, Sun 2pm–midnight.* 📍 3232 Scott St. (Lombard St.), 415-567-3838, bin38.com

Circa* • Marina • Lounge

Local regulars run wild from happy hour to late night, making merry with specialty cocktails, such as the Circa Lemonade, and indulgent small plates. *Mon–Wed 5:30pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 5:30pm–2am, Sun 11am–midnight.* 📍 2001 Chestnut St. (Fillmore St.), 415-351-0175, circasf.com

District Wine Bar • SoMa • Wine Bar

Set in a converted (and spacious) SoMa warehouse near the ballpark, District is a gorgeous new spot for a good glass, some salty snacks (aka globally inspired small plates), and some prime people-watching. The décor is rustic loft meets plush chandelier sophistication. So far the place is pulling in a lively, fashionable crowd from happy hour onward. As with all good wine bars, the menu includes some eclectic choices available by the glass and a host of whimsically named flights drawing on selections from a variety of continents. The food tends to cured meats of one stripe or another, paired with the tangy, savory, and cheesy, plus a few choice desserts. Considering that a heavy meal isn't much of an aphrodisiac, this could be an ideal date spot. *Tue–Sun 4pm–late; open early for Giants home games.* \$ 📍 216 Townsend St. (Third St.), 415-896-2120, districtsf.com