

NIGHT+DAY SAN FRANCISCO



Ins and Outs

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

Key to Night+Day Symbols

Restaurants

Singles-friendly


-  Communal table
-  Food served at bar

(G) Gourmet destination

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




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

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.

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TOC

Hot & Cool Restaurants

Bin 38*	3
Bong Su*	4
<u>Chez Papa Resto</u>	4
Circa	4
Coi	5
District Wine Bar	5
<u>Ducca</u>	5
<u>Le Club*</u>	6
Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant*	6
Nopa	6
Salt House	7
SPQR	7
Spruce	7
1300 on Fillmore	8
Umami	8

Hot & Cool Nightlife

The Ambassador	8
<u>The Beverage Academy</u>	9
Bin 38*	9
Bong Su*	9
Bourbon & Branch	9
Circa	10
Crash Nightclub	10
Harlot	10
<u>Le Club*</u>	11
Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant*	11
Nihon	11
Slide	11
Truck	11

Hot & Cool Attractions

Bliss	12
Cellar 360	12
<u>Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates</u>	12
Westfield San Francisco Centre	13

Underline indicates entry made in most recent calendar quarter.

TOC (cont.)

Hip Hotels
 Orchard Garden Hotel13
 Hotel Tomo13

Hip Restaurants
 Bar Jules14
 Conduit14
 Fish & Farm14
 Serpentine15

Hip Nightlife
 Candy Bar15
 Icon Ultra Lounge16

Hip Attractions
 Flora Grubb Gardens16
 Loló! Muebles16

Closures18

San Francisco Neighborhoods Map20

Hot & Cool San Francisco Restaurants

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 firepit 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-shaped 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

Bong Su* • SoMa • Vietnamese

In a city that's home to upscale Vietnamese favorites like Slanted Door and Le Colonial, a newcomer from the region hardly seemed necessary. But when Bong Su opened in 2006, need gave way to desire and the SoMa resto became the gathering place (second only to Sushi Groove South) for locals who like a dose of nightlife with their dinner. With sheer silk draperies and a lounge up front, the space is alluring and sensual. The hostesses, in couture attire by designer Calvin Tran, are perhaps the prettiest in town. Though Americanized, the cuisine is satisfying and flavorful. Go with a group and order lots of starters—choosing from offerings like shrimp cupcakes, duck mustard wraps, and salt and pepper calamari is a mission impossible. For dessert, brave the Honey Mango. Served atop sherbet infused with the absurdly pungent Vietnamese fruit called durian, this is a love-it or hate-it but kudos-for-trying-it dish. *Mon-Fri 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10pm, Sat 5:30-10pm, Sun 5-9pm.* \$\$ 311 Third St. (Folsom St.), 415-536-5800, bongsu.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 (both for 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 both for 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. (5th 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 preps, 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, like 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, circasf.com

Coi • North Beach • Californian

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 (and 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 like 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

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-close (varies), open early for Giants home games.* \$ 📍 216 Townsend St. (Third St.), 415-896-2120, districtsf.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 like arancini and olive fritte) and antipasti; the primi course might include ricotta gnocchi or pappardelle al sugo, while secondi brings entrees such as chicken arrosto and veal chop Milanese. Don’t forget contorni and dolce! 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

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 Street, atop Nob Hill. Owned by Gina Milano, the entrepreneur behind Bambuddha Lounge, and Todd Traina, of SF social royalty, 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 escar-got 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 like scallops au poivre riff on the traditional. The dinner crowd is also diverse: A graying Republican oil tycoon might 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 “clob”) might suggest. *Mon-Thu 5:30-10pm, Fri-Sat 5:30-11pm (bar hours Mon-Sat 4:30pm-2am).* \$\$ 📍 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.) Recently opened and already 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

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 city-wide. 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 like 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, nopsf.com

Salt House • Financial District • New 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 brand-new 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 to choose from. 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 hostess, 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, spqrfs.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-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. When you finally take a seat in the lofty dining room, beneath mohair walls and Parisian art, you'll know that 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 café.

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 on 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 the 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

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-shaped 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 L.A. 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. \$0 ☒ *Mon-Sat 6pm-2am. 673 Geary St. (Leavenworth St.), 415-563-8192, ambassador415.com*

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 barmen 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 that these two-hour study sessions are "hands-on"—i.e. each student will make at least a couple of cocktails for first-hand "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

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 the hottest newcomer in the 'hood. *See Hot & Cool Restaurants, p.3, for details. Mon-Wed 3pm-midnight, Thu-Fri 3pm-1am, Sat 2pm-1am, Sun 2pm-midnight..* ☒ 3232 Scott St. (Lombard St.), 415-567-3838, bin38.com

Bong Su* • SoMa • Restaurant Bar

With proximity to the Financial District as well as Folsom Street's late-night haunts, Bong Su draws a mixed crowd: one part scantily clad pre-dance club-goers, another part successful neighborhood nine-to-fivers seeking a nosh and nightcap before heading home. *See Hot & Cool Restaurants, p.4, for details. Mon-Fri 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10pm, Sat 5:30-10pm, Sun 5-9pm.* ☒ 311 Third St. (Folsom St.), 415-536-5800, bongsu.com

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 Mora's spectacular squid-like chandelier. Obscured by 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. \$0 ☒ *Mon-Sat 6pm-2am. 501 Jones St. (O'Farrell St.), 415-346-1735, bourbonandbranch.com*

Circa* • Marina • Lounge

Local regulars run wild from happy hour to late-night, making merry with specialty cocktails, like the Circa Lemonade, and indulgent small plates. *See Hot & Cool Restaurants, p.4, for details. Mon-Wed 5:30pm-midnight, Thu-Sat 5:30pm-2am, Sun 11am-midnight.* \$0 ☒ 2001 Chestnut St. (Fillmore St.), 415-351-0175, circasf.com

Crash Nightclub • Downtown • Dance Club

What do San Francisco, Tommy Lee, Vegas, and hot girl-on-girl go-go dancing action have in common? In a word, nothing—until Crash arrived. Now the City by the Bay has its very own slice of the hard rockin' super-sexualized good life. Crash is serious fun for those with the stamina to endure a red-rope flogging, surging crowds, no-fly VIP zones, and 'tude galore—from the sexy bartenders to the crush of patrons to the stone-faced bouncers. If you survive, you get to enjoy the A-list DJs (including Tommy Lee himself on occasion), the swank rooftop and indoor smoking lounges, and a triple layer of action-packed dance floors (the first evokes the French Quarter, others are future-chic white on white). For best success, get your shots and your implants and/or Goth tattoos, fill your pockets with cash and antibac wipes, and be young, hot, well-dressed, and ready to party. If you can take the heat, try a Saturday night. *Thu-Sat 6pm-4am.* ☒ 34 Mason St. (Turk St.), 877-342-7274, crashnightclub.com

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 passers-by with a coy glance and the promise of indulgences to come. A black rock facade 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. Check the website for a schedule of DJs and parties. \$0 ☒ *Wed-Fri 5pm-2am, Sat 9pm-2am. 46 Minna St. (First St.), 415-777-1077, harlotsf.com*

Le Club* • Nob Hill • Lounge

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 Street, atop Nob Hill. See *Hot & Cool Restaurants*, p.6, for details. Mon-Thu 5:30-10pm, Fri-Sat 5:30-11pm (bar hours 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. See *Hot & Cool Restaurants*, p.6, for details. 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 • Japanese Restaurant 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, 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. 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 any moment. Mon-Sat 6pm-midnight (bar until 2am). ☒ 1779 Folsom St. (14th St.), 415-552-4400, dajanigroup.net

Slide • Downtown • Ultra Lounge

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 sister venue Ruby Skye, Slide is a highly stylized subterranean lounge with raucous roots: During the 1920s, the space (then called Cafe 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 entree down a custom-made mahogany slide—gals in skirts must 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 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. \$0 ☒ 430 Mason St. (Geary St.), 415-421-1916, slidesf.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 for 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 mudflaps 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. \$0 ☒ 1900 Folsom St. (15th St.), 415-252-0306, trucksf.com

Hot & Cool San Francisco Attractions

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 • Shop

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 Meridians, 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. Mon-Thu, Sun 11am-7pm, Fri-Sat 11am-9pm. ☒ 900 N. Point St. (Larkin St.), 415-440-0772, cellar360.com

Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates • Hayes Valley • Boutique/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 rehabilitative 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 and 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

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 new mega-mall, unveiled in late 2006, offers more than 400 stores (and the obligatory multiplex), including everything from H&M to Otilily to Tommy Bahama. This is the kind of slam-glam shopping extravaganza that vaporizes time and money like so much dust in the wind—and banishes rainy-day blues in a jiffy. 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

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 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, theorchardgardenhotel.com

Hotel Tomo • Pacific Heights • Trendy

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 sec-

ond 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!) café 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

Conduit • Mission • New 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 copper-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 gracious 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

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 vin-

tage ears 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 entrees—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. *Tue-Wed, Sun 5-10pm, Thu-Sat 5-11pm.* \$\$ 🍷🍸 339 Taylor Street (Ellis St.), 415-474-3474, fishandfarmsf.com

Serpentine • Dogpatch • New American

Serpentine is to Dogpatch residents what its sister resto, 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 decor 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 3rd St. (22nd St.), 415-252-2000, serpentesf.com

Hip San Francisco Nightlife

CandyBar • Haight • Dessert 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 newly minted 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. Non-committals 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, the popular resto that's just 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 • Lounge

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

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, tees, 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 Monster Park (home of the 49ers) on Candlestick Point all the way to City Hall. *Mon-Sat 8am-6pm, Sun 10am-6pm.* 1634 Jerrold Ave. (3rd St.), 415-648-2670, floragrubb.com

Loló! Muebles • Potrero Hill • Shop

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 spin) 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

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