

Savoring San Francisco

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If you didn't leave your heart in San Francisco in 1995, the last time the AAO visited for its annual meeting, you'll have another chance May 20-24. Here is JCO's guide to dining, culture, shopping, and recreation in the City by the Bay.

Travel Information

Expect mild days and chilly nights in late May. Fog, wind, and rain are always possible, especially near the ocean, so raincoats and sweaters are required equipment. Farther inland, on the other hand, it could be quite warm.

San Francisco International Airport operates a free, convenient AirTrain monorail that services the terminals, parking garages, and rental-car facility. Taxi fares to downtown run about \$37 each way; cabs can be found on the arrival level of each terminal. Shared-ride vans cost about \$13-15 one way, \$20-24 round trip, to the downtown hotels, and pick up passengers on the departure level of each terminal.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, long the butt of jokes in Northern California, is finally connected to the airport (in the International Terminal), with a \$5 fare to downtown. Beyond downtown San Francisco, BART extends as far as Berkeley, Oakland, Martinez, and Fremont. The famous cable cars are now mostly for tourists—and you can visit the historic **Cable Car Barn & Powerhouse**—but the cars do still operate on three lines within the downtown area, at \$3 each way.

Dining

San Francisco is one of the great culinary capitals of the world, making dinner plans during the AAO meeting more a process of elimination than a quandary. The hottest table in town is at **Michael Mina** in the Westin St. Francis, where the former Aqua chef has now set up shop after a stint in Las Vegas. **Aqua** is still reputed to offer the city's best seafood under new chef Laurent Manrique. At **Quince**, in Pacific Heights, chef Michael Tusk is wowing patrons with the metic-



Hopping a San Francisco cable car.

SFCVB photo by Phil Coblentz.

ulous attention to freshness he learned at Chez Panisse. Traci Des Jardins applies the same philosophy to a more California-style cuisine at **Jardinière**. **Frisson** offers Daniel Patterson's Asian-scented creativity. And **Gary Danko**, whose eponymous restaurant is on Fisherman's Wharf, is still at or near the top of anyone's list of San Francisco chefs.

Visitors are agog over the spectacularly renovated Ferry Building Marketplace, at the end of Market Street. There's a large farmer's market every Saturday and smaller markets on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. You may want to buy your own wine at the Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant and take it to one of the many cafes along the waterfront (paying a corkage fee), or to help down oysters at the **Hog Island Oyster Co.** For more sophisticated dining, the Ferry Plaza is also the new home of the contemporary Vietnamese

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favorite, **The Slanted Door**.

Other noteworthy Asian restaurants include the modern Vietnamese **Ana Mandara** (Ghirardelli Square); the seafood-oriented **House** (North Beach); Japanese standouts **Café Kati**, **Chaya Brasserie**, and **Kyo-Ya**; **Manora's Thai Cuisine** (SoMa); and the Chinese dim-sum outpost **Ton Kiang** (Outer Richmond).

"Small plates" are all the rage these days, and San Francisco offers various ethnic flavors, most combined with extensive wine-by-the-glass selections: **A 16** (southern Italian), **Bocadillos** and **Iluna Basque** (Spanish), **Cortez** (Mediterranean), **Eos Restaurant & Wine Bar** (Asian), and **Tartare** (Pacific).

If you're looking for heartier bistro fare, there are a number of options, including the trendy new **Oola**, as well as **Chapeau!** and **Clémentine** (Inner Richmond), **Chez Spencer** (Mission District), and **Fringale** (SoMa). More sophisticated French cuisine abounds, led by Laurent Gras's **Fifth Floor**, Hubert Keller's Alsatian-style **Fleur de Lys** (Nob Hill), and the elegant, Provençal-inspired **Campton Place**. Further options include **Boulevard**, **La Folie**, **La Suite** (Embarcadero), **Masa's**, and the **Ritz-Carlton Dining Room**.

Italian food is concentrated among the trattorias of North Beach, but for a step above in that neighborhood, try the Ligurian cuisine of **Rose Pistola**. Other notable Italian eateries are the venerable **Acquerello** and Russian Hill's **Frascati**. **Town Hall** is gaining a reputation for its Cajun-Californian menu; for Greek fare, try **Kokkari Estiatorio**, and for Latino food, **Alma** in the up-and-coming Mission District.

Many other outstanding establishments can be found in the Bay Area, but every food lover should make a pilgrimage to Berkeley's **Chez Panisse**, where Alice Waters fired the first shots of the American food revolution. You can still

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taste how her innovative incorporation of local ingredients changed the way we eat.

Civic and Cultural Attractions

The Go San Francisco Card, available for one-, two-, three-, or five-day periods at \$49 or less per day for adults, provides free admission to more than 30 San Francisco attractions; savings on tours, shops, and restaurants; and a personal guidebook. The CityPass, \$42 for adults, includes admission to five of the top attractions and a San Francisco Bay cruise, plus unlimited cable-car and municipal public transportation for a week. Both are available online at www.sfvisitor.org.

Anyone new to San Francisco should start at **Fisherman's Wharf**, where you can book bay cruises such as a trip to **Alcatraz Island**, the former federal prison that is now a national recreation area. Other highlights in the wharf area are the **Aquarium of the Bay**, the **Maritime Museum**, and the **USS Pampanito** submarine museum. For a different scenic seafaring experience, catch a **Golden Gate Ferry** from the Ferry Building to picturesque Sausalito or Larkspur in Marin County.



Pierside crowd at Fisherman's Wharf.

SFCVB photo by Phil Coblenz.



Exploratorium rotunda at night.

© 2004 Exploratorium.

You can actually walk across the **Golden Gate Bridge** (1.7 miles), but be sure to wear warm, comfortable clothes. Another great vantage point is the historic **Coit Tower** on Telegraph Hill, just east of North Beach.

Near the bridge, the Palace of Fine Arts, built for the 1915 Panama-Pacific exposition, houses the **Exploratorium**, one of the world's most techno-savvy and kid-friendly museums. It's open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and features a "wave organ", sculpted on a jetty over the bay, with pipes that play with the rise and fall of the surf. Also nearby is the city's primary fine-arts museum, the **Legion of Honor**, which houses a conventional, built-in Skinner pipe organ, a large collection of Rodin, and a temporary exhibit on "Artwear: Fashion and Anti-Fashion."

Golden Gate Park was begun in 1871 on 1,000 acres of open dunes. Now the marvelously landscaped park comprises the **Conservatory of Flowers**, the **Japanese Tea Garden**, and **Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Garden**. **Morrison Planetarium** and **Steinhart Aquarium** are no longer in the park, but at the California Academy of Sciences downtown. The **San Fran-**

cisco Zoo, near Ocean Beach, is Northern California's largest, now focusing on the conservation and preservation of wildlife. **Chinatown**, centered on Grant Avenue between Bush Street and Columbus Avenue, is one of the largest such communities outside China itself.

The **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**, open daily except Wednesdays, is worth a visit just to see Mario Botta's unique building. Within a stone's throw of the Convention Center, it currently features a retrospective of the photo-realist painter Robert Bechtle. The **Contemporary Jewish Museum** now has an exhibition of spice boxes called "Scents of Purpose," and the **Asian Art Museum** offers a comprehensive permanent collection. The **Cartoon Art Museum** is the only one of its kind in the United States.

Performances

The **San Francisco Symphony**, under its dynamic music director, Michael Tilson Thomas, presents a program of music by Richard Strauss May 18-22 at Davies Symphony Hall. Pianist André Watts is showcased in a solo recital of music by Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 21, in the **War Memorial Performing Arts Center**.

The **New Century Chamber Orchestra** offers an evening of Strauss and W.A. Mozart at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 26, at the Legion of Honor. Also at the Legion of Honor is a varied concert for flute, harp, and strings in the **Avedis Chamber Music Series**, at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 22. The **Earplay Ensemble** presents a program of new chamber music, including three world premieres, at 8 p.m. Monday, May 23, at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. A free organ recital will be performed at the majestic **Grace Cathedral** by its director of music, Jeffrey Smith, at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 22.

Modern dance aficionados should not miss the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, May 19-22 at the **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts**.

The **American Conservatory Theater** presents Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Mis-*

begotten through May 29. The **Magic Theatre** offers three world premieres in rotating repertory: John Belluso's *The Rules of Charity* (through May 19), Betty Shamieh's *The Black Eyed* (through June 19), and Victor Lodato's *3F 4F* (through June 19). The **Theatre of Yugen**, based on classic Japanese dramatic forms, has adapted Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, through May 21 at Noh Space. A **Traveling Jewish Theatre** offers a provocative new play, David Gow's *Cherry Docs*, through June 19.

Shopping

The Fisherman's Wharf area provides a number of shops and arcades, including **The Anchorage**, **The Cannery**, **Ghirardelli Square**, and **Pier 39**. For upscale shopping, visit Union Square at Geary and Stockton streets, Post Street between Kearny and Powell streets (including the renowned **Gump's** department store), or the **Embarcadero Center** on Sacramento Street between Battery and Drumm streets.

The younger set may want to check out the trendy shops in North Beach (on upper Grant Avenue) or on Hayes Street between Laguna Street and the Civic Center.

Prominent San Francisco art galleries include the **Meyerovich**, **Hackett-Freedman**, **John Pence**, and **Stephen Wirtz** galleries, all specializing in contemporary and modern American art; the **Takada Gallery**, featuring minimalist and abstract art from Japan and the West Coast; and **111 Minna**, a SoMa gallery-cum-nightclub.

Sports and Recreation

The **San Francisco Giants** are at home in the beautiful new SBC Park against their cross-town interleague rivals, the Oakland A's, May 21-23, and against their longtime adversaries, the Los Angeles Dodgers, May 25-27.

The most notable public golf course within the city of San Francisco is the **Presidio Golf Course** on the former Army post. True believers, of course, will flock to **Pebble Beach**, the most



Seaside holes at Pebble Beach.

Courtesy of Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

hallowed name in American golf. It's open to the public, but the greens fee will set you back about \$350 unless you are staying at the resort. For about \$100 less, you can play the nearby Robert Trent Jones Sr. course, **Spyglass Hill**, which is almost as highly rated. The other legendary public layouts along the 17-Mile Drive are **Poppy Hills** and **Spanish Bay**.

Monterey Peninsula

If you are attending the preconference program in Carmel, one of the best restaurants in the area is right at the headquarters hotel: **Pacific's Edge** in the Park Hyatt Highlands Inn. Other notable Carmel dining spots are **Anton & Michel**, **Bouchée**, **Flying Fish Grill**, the **Grill on Ocean Avenue**, and **Marinus**, at the charming Bernardus Winery.

The 17-Mile Drive, circumnavigating the Monterey Peninsula from the intersection of U.S. highways 1 and 68, is worth taking for the spectacular scenery, even if you don't play golf. May is the beginning of whale-watching season, and expeditions are available from **Monterey Bay Whale Watch**. While you're in the wharf area,



White shark in action at Monterey Bay Aquarium.
© 2004 Monterey Bay Aquarium. Photo by Randy Wilder.

the **Monterey Bay Aquarium** is one of the world's finest, featuring the only white shark on display today. The aquarium hosts a culinary event on sustainable seafood, "Cooking for Solutions," May 19-21.

The **Monterey Museum of Art**, focusing on Californian and Asian artists, has two facilities: **Pacific Street**, in the Civic Center, and **La Mirada**, in an old, elegant mansion. The new **National Steinbeck Center**, filled with exhibits and educational material, is in Historic Old Town in nearby Salinas. **San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo**, known as the Carmel Mission, has been authentically restored and is now considered one of the most lovely missions in the state. For horse lovers, the **Pebble Beach Equestrian Challenge** runs May 18-22.

Napa Valley

Those who travel to the Napa Valley for the post-conference program will find the food nearly as memorable as the wine. Yountville's **French Laundry** is a once-in-a-lifetime dining experience; if you haven't made a reservation two months ahead of your target date, try calling exactly one month ahead to see if there have been any cancellations. Chef Thomas Keller also operates the nearby bistro **Bouchon**, and other reliable Yountville choices include **Bistro Jeanty**, **Brix**, and **Mustards Grill**. Farther north on Highway 29, you'll find **La Toque** in Rutherford and **Martini House**, **Terra**, and **Tra Vigne** in St.



Merryvale Estate Vineyard in Napa Valley.
Courtesy of Merryvale Vineyards.

Helena. Farther south, in the city of Napa, are **Bistro Don Giovanni** and **Julia's Kitchen**; the latter, named for Julia Child, anchors the fascinating **Copia: American Center for Wine, Food, and the Arts** (closed Tuesdays), which is worth a trip in itself.

Winery visits are mandatory, whether you are a novice or a connoisseur. You will find many hospitable and informative tasting rooms simply by driving up and down Highway 29 and the Silverado Trail between Yountville and St. Helena. If you're looking for a tour or a more personalized guide to a particular winery, it's a good idea to call at least a day in advance. You might also learn about special tastings or open houses, which are common in May—a relatively slow month for vineyard managers. Many tasting rooms charge a small fee to sample their wines, but they'll usually waive it (and often bring out their more exclusive bottlings for you to try) if you make a purchase. In fact, etiquette dictates that if you like the wine, you should buy a bottle or two to take with you, or have some shipped home if your state law allows. In California, it's permissible to bring your own bottle into a restaurant, but you should call ahead to let the establishment know and to determine its corkage fee.

Large, well-known wineries with extensive tasting rooms and gift shops include **Robert Mondavi**, **Niebaum-Coppola**, and **Domaine Chandon**; the latter features a good introduction to sparkling-winemaking and an excellent restaurant for lunch or dinner. Smaller wineries with friendly staffs and outstanding products include **Caymus**, **Heitz**, **Merryvale**, **Miner Family**, and **Whitehall Lane**. For both good wine and stunning views, it's worth a little longer drive to the **Hess Collection** (with its intriguing modern-art museum), **Joseph Phelps**, or **Reverie**.

DIRECTORY

Restaurants	Address*	Phone
A 16	2355 Chestnut St.	(415) 771-2216
Acquerello	1722 Sacramento St.	(415) 567-5432
Alma	1101 Valencia St.	(415) 401-8959
Aqua	252 California St.	(415) 956-9662
Bocadillos	710 Montgomery St.	(415) 982-2622
Boulevard	1 Mission St.	(415) 543-6084
Café Kati	1963 Sutter St.	(415) 775-7313
Campton Place	340 Stockton St.	(415) 955-5555
Chapeau!	1408 Clement St.	(415) 750-9787
Chaya Brasserie	132 The Embarcadero	(415) 777-8688
Chez Panisse	1517 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley	(510) 548-5525
Chez Spencer	82 14th St.	(415) 864-2191
Clémentine	126 Clement St.	(415) 387-0408
Cortez	550 Geary St.	(415) 292-6360
Gary Danko	800 North Point	(415) 749-2060
Eos Restaurant & Wine Bar	901 Cole St.	(415) 566-3063
Fifth Floor	12 Fourth St.	(415) 348-1555
Fleur de Lys	777 Sutter St.	(415) 673-7779
Frascati	1901 Hyde St.	(415) 928-1406
Fringale	570 Fourth St.	(415) 543-0573
Frisson	244 Jackson St.	(415) 956-3004
Jardinière	300 Grove St.	(415) 861-5555
Hog Island Oyster Co.	1 Ferry Building	(415) 391-7117
House	1230 Grant Ave.	(415) 986-8612
Iluna Basque	701 Union St.	(415) 402-0011
Kokkari Estiatorio	200 Jackson St.	(415) 981-0983
Kyo-Ya	2 New Montgomery St.	(415) 546-5090
La Folie	2316 Polk St.	(415) 776-5577
La Suite	100 Brannan St.	(415) 593-5900
Ana Mandara	891 Beach St.	(415) 771-6800
Manora's Thai Cuisine	1600 Folsom St.	(415) 861-6224
Masa's	648 Bush St.	(415) 989-7154
Michael Mina	335 Powell St.	(415) 397-9222
Oola	860 Folsom St.	(415) 995-2061
Quince	1701 Octavia St.	(415) 775-8500
Ritz-Carlton Dining Room	600 Stockton St.	(415) 773-6198
Rose Pistola	532 Columbus Ave.	(415) 399-0499
The Slanted Door	1 Ferry Building	(415) 861-8032
Tartare	550 Washington St.	(415) 434-3100
Ton Kiang	5821 Geary Blvd.	(415) 387-8273
Town Hall	342 Howard St.	(415) 908-3900

*San Francisco unless otherwise specified.

DIRECTORY (cont.)

Attractions	Address*	Phone
Alcatraz Island	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	(415) 705-5444
Aquarium of the Bay	Pier 39	(415) 623-5300
Asian Art Museum	200 Larkin St.	(415) 581-3500
Cable Car Barn & Powerhouse	1201 Mason St.	(415) 673-6864
Cartoon Art Museum	655 Mission St.	(415) 227-8666
Coit Tower	Telegraph Hill	(415) 362-0808
Conservatory of Flowers	Golden Gate Park	(415) 666-7001
Contemporary Jewish Museum	282 Second St.	(415) 344-8800
Exploratorium	3601 Lyon St.	(415) 561-0321
Fisherman's Wharf	The Embarcadero & Taylor St.	(415) 674-7503
Golden Gate Bridge	U.S. Highway 101	(415) 923-2000
Golden Gate Ferry	Ferry Building	(415) 923-2000
Japanese Tea Garden	Golden Gate Park	(415) 750-5105
Legion of Honor	34th Ave. & Clement St.	(415) 863-3330
Maritime Museum	Polk & Beach Sts.	(415) 556-3002
Morrison Planetarium	875 Howard St.	(415) 321-3800
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	151 Third St.	(415) 357-4000
San Francisco Zoo	1 Zoo Road	(415) 753-7080
Steinhart Aquarium	875 Howard St.	(415) 321-3800
Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Garden	Golden Gate Park	(415) 661-1316
USS Pampanito	Pier 45	(415) 561-6662
Performances		
American Conservatory Theater	415 Geary St.	(415) 749-2228
Avedis Chamber Music Series	34th Ave. & Clement St.	(415) 392-4400
Earplay	701 Mission St.	(415) 978-2787
Grace Cathedral	1100 California St.	(415) 749-6300
Magic Theatre	Fort Mason Center	(415) 441-8001
New Century Chamber Orchestra	34th Ave. & Clement St.	(415) 392-4400
San Francisco Symphony	201 Van Ness Ave.	(415) 864-6000
Theatre of Yugen	2840 Mariposa St.	(415) 621-7978
A Traveling Jewish Theatre	470 Florida St.	(415) 285-8080
War Memorial Performing Arts Center	301 Van Ness Ave.	(415) 398-6449
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts	701 Mission St.	(415) 392-2545
Shopping		
The Anchorage	Leavenworth St.	(415) 775-6000
The Cannery	2801 Leavenworth St.	(415) 771-3112
Embarcadero Center	Sacramento St.	(415) 772-0550
Ghirardelli Square	Fisherman's Wharf	(415) 775-5500
Gump's	135 Post St.	(415) 982-1616
Hackett-Freedman Gallery	250 Sutter St.	(415) 362-7152
Meyerovich Gallery	251 Post St.	(415) 421-7171
111 Minna	111 Minna	(415) 974-1719
John Pence Gallery	750 Post St.	(415) 441-1138
Pier 39	Beach St. & The Embarcadero	(415) 705-5500
Takada Gallery	251 Post St.	(415) 956-5288
Stephen Wirtz Gallery	49 Geary St.	(415) 433-6879

DIRECTORY (cont.)

Sports and Recreation	Address*	Phone
Pebble Beach	1700 17-Mile Drive, Pebble Beach	(800) 654-9300
Poppy Hills	3200 Lopez Road, Pebble Beach	(831) 625-1513
Presidio Golf Course	300 Finley Road	(415) 561-4653
San Francisco Giants	SBC Park	(510) 762-2277
Spanish Bay	2700 17-Mile Drive, Pebble Beach	(800) 654-9300
Spyglass Hill	Spyglass Hill Road, Pebble Beach	(800) 654-9300
Monterey Peninsula		
Anton & Michel	Mission St., Carmel	(831) 624-2406
Bouchée	Mission St., Carmel	(831) 626-7880
Flying Fish Grill	Mission St., Carmel	(831) 625-1962
Grill on Ocean Avenue	Ocean Ave., Carmel	(831) 624-2569
Marinus	415 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel	(831) 658-3500
Monterey Bay Aquarium	886 Cannery Row, Monterey	(831) 648-4888
Monterey Bay Whale Watch	84 Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey	(831) 375-4658
Monterey Museum of Art:		
La Mirada	720 Via Mirada, Monterey	(831) 372-3689
Pacific Street	559 Pacific St., Monterey	(831) 372-5477
National Steinbeck Center	1 Main St., Salinas	(831) 796-3833
Pacific's Edge	120 Highlands Drive	(831) 620-1234
Pebble Beach Equestrian Challenge	Portola Road & Alva Lane, Pebble Beach	(831) 624-2756
San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo	Junipero Ave., Carmel	(831) 624-1271
Napa Valley		
Bistro Don Giovanni	4110 Howard Lane, Napa	(707) 224-3300
Bistro Jeanty	6510 Washington St., Yountville	(707) 944-0103
Bouchon	6534 Washington St., Yountville	(707) 944-8037
Brix	7377 Highway 29, Yountville	(707) 944-2749
Caymus Vineyards	8700 Conn Creek Road, Rutherford	(707) 963-4204
Copia: American Center for Wine, Food, and the Arts	500 First St., Napa	(707) 259-1600
Domaine Chandon	1 California Drive, Yountville	(707) 944-2280
French Laundry	6640 Washington St., Yountville	(707) 944-2380
Heitz Cellars	500 Taplin Road, St. Helena	(707) 963-3542
Hess Collection	4411 Redwood Road, Napa	(877) 707-HESS
Julia's Kitchen	500 First St., Napa	(707) 265-5700
La Toque	1140 Rutherford Road, Rutherford	(707) 963-9770
Martini House	1245 Spring St., St. Helena	(707) 963-2233
Merryvale Vineyards	1000 Main St., St. Helena	(707) 963-7777
Miner Family Vineyards	7850 Silverado Trail, Oakville	(800) 366-WINE
Robert Mondavi Winery	Highway 29, Oakville	(888) RMONDAVI
Mustards Grill	7399 Highway 29, Yountville	(707) 944-2424
Niebaum-Coppola Estate	1991 Highway 29, Oakville	(800) RUBICON
Joseph Phelps Vineyards	200 Taplin Road, St. Helena	(707) 963-2745
Reverie Winery & Vineyard	1520 Diamond Mountain Road, Calistoga	(800) REVERIE
Terra	1345 Railroad Ave., St. Helena	(707) 963-8931
Tra Vigne	1050 Charter Oak Ave., St. Helena	(707) 963-4444
Whitehall Lane Winery	1563 Highway 29, St. Helena	(800) 963-9454

*San Francisco unless otherwise specified.