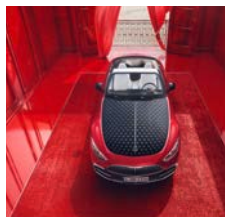
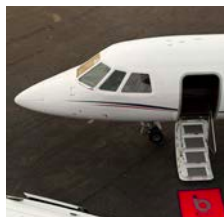


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A Room with a View at the **FAIRMONT SAN FRANCISCO**

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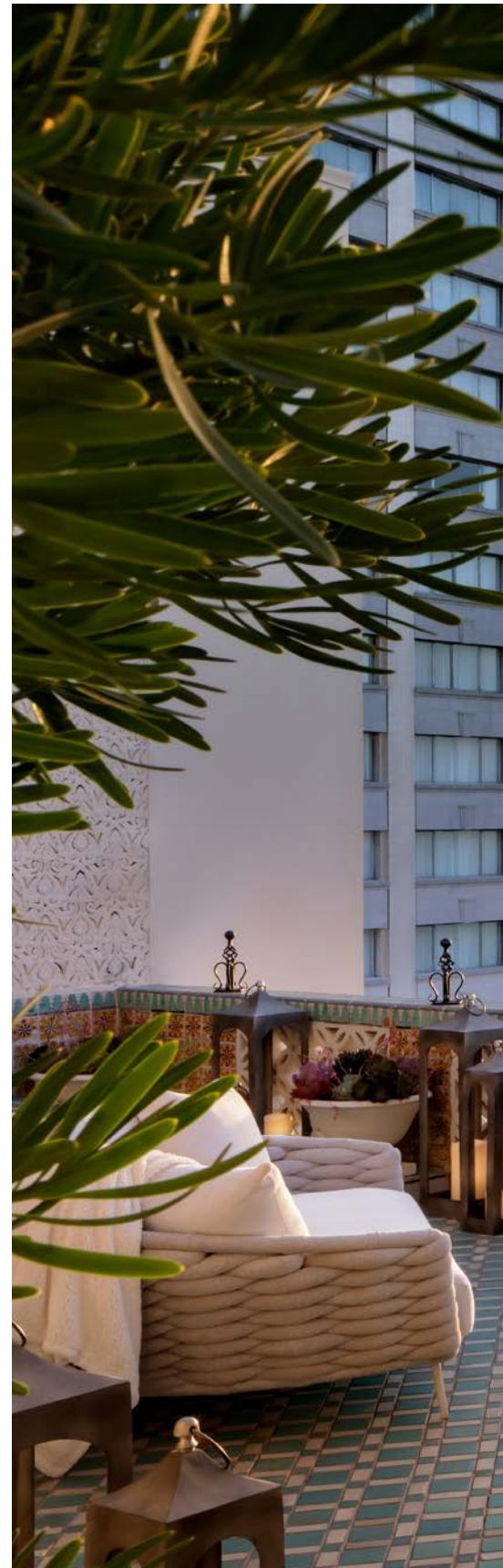
Fairmont San Francisco, a five-star luxury hotel known for its grandeur and elegance for more than 100 years, overlooks the city at the top of Nob Hill. This neighborhood, once home to the Big Four railroad barons, maintains an ambiance of wealth and privilege. Some of the city's most stylish hotels reside here, along with Gothic-style Grace Cathedral and Huntington Park. The 606 rooms and suites at Fairmont San Francisco offer guests unequaled service, lavish comfort, breathtaking views of the city and bay, unforgettable dining, and a peek into the iconic history of the city.

Hotel History

James Graham Fair, an Irish immigrant, arrived in California with thousands of others in hopes of finding gold in the 1800s. He did not find gold but made his fortune in the silver mines of Nevada. With his wealth and eventual political influence, he purchased land on top of Nob Hill, home to railroad tycoons Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and other wealthy individuals. He planned to build his dream estate but died in 1894, leaving his wealth to his two daughters, Tessie and Virginia. In 1903, the sisters decided to fulfill their father's vision. They began construction on the magnificent hotel and used the family name (Fair) in combination with (Mont) representing the hill on which it was to be built to create the iconic flagship Fairmont San Francisco hotel.

The hotel's opening, scheduled for April 18, 1906, was disrupted by the massive 7.9 earthquake that struck the city of San Francisco. The Great Quake toppled thousands of buildings, and yet the Fairmont San Francisco miraculously survived only to have the interior brutally burned by fires 24 hours later.

Never wavering, the sisters quickly hired Julia Morgan, California's first female licensed architect, to restore the hotel and "re-open" it within one year. Fairmont San Francisco became the city's first significant business to open following the quake. Due to time constraints, all but one of the stunning imported marble columns in the lobby, which were original to the hotel, were replaced with wooden columns with faux sheeting resembling marble. Over 25,000





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barrels of gold and cement were used to rebuild the hotel, which opened exactly one year later on April 18, 1907.

Rooms and Suites

The 606 well-appointed rooms and suites offer first-rate amenities, including plush linens, current technology, and spectacular marble bathrooms. Many rooms and suites boast panoramic views of the city or the bay. During my recent visit, my husband Steve and I stayed in a Tower Suite on the 15th floor and savored our morning coffee each day while gazing out at the boats in the bay and watching the early morning stirrings of city life below.

The First United Nations Conference

For more than a century, Fairmont San Francisco has served as a gathering place for influential individuals, world leaders, and celebrities. The Penthouse is known as the place where the United Nations charter was drafted. Although the charter was signed at the War Memorial Opera House, the participants gathered in the Penthouse in 1945 to draft it. The United Nations Flags in the front of the hotel tie into this bit of history.

The Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar

The plunge pool, built in 1929, was the first indoor swimming pool in the United States and was the original Tonga Room. Famous Olympians, Ronald Reagan, and other celebrities were some of the first to swim in the pool. In 1945, MGM was hired to restore the space and created the Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar. Visitors are continuously enthralled by the thatched hut and towering ship masts that decorate the restaurant/bar, which surrounds a glowing lagoon that features scheduled indoor thunder and rainstorms around its perimeter.

During our stay, Steve and I enjoyed a delicious Asian-inspired dinner representative of the tiki culture. We began our dinner with a delightful pu pu platter comprised of tasty appetizers while sipping on fruity cocktails and listening to the band that plays several nights a week on the boat floating in the lagoon.

The Venetian Room

From the 1940s to the 1970s, Fairmont San Francisco's dazzling Venetian Room was the place to see and be seen. The in-house orchestra, impeccably dressed staff, and romantic ambiance regularly brought in the Who's Who of that time period. In 1961, Tony Bennett debuted his newest song, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Since that night, Mr. Bennett and Fairmont San





Francisco formed a special bond. In 2016, the hotel management hosted Bennett's 90th birthday. During the celebration, the staff unveiled an 8-foot-tall bronze replica of the singer, which stands in front of the hotel. Because Bennett frequented the hotel regularly during his years of fame, a suite is named in his honor, which guests can enjoy today.

Laurel Court Restaurant & Bar

In the 1940s, visitors to Fairmont San Francisco sipped on cocktails while riding the carousel located in the Laurel Court Restaurant & Bar. Although the carousel is no longer in the restaurant, diners can enjoy breakfast, lunch, and dinner in this upscale restaurant that serves an abundant array of ingredients available in the Bay Area. The room, decorated with a stunning domed ceiling, marble columns, and striking murals, is all reminiscent of the Gilded Age. The tunes played on the grand piano elevate the dining experience.

Other Fabulous Spaces at Fairmont San Francisco

The Cirque Bar coffee shop opened in 2024 but

was originally a bar. It was the first bar to open west of Mississippi after prohibition. Today, it is an excellent place to pick up a pastry and coffee if you plan to be out and about in the city for the day.

Steve and I thoroughly enjoyed spending time on the rooftop garden, where we sipped wine and discussed the day's adventures. The bee garden is part of the hotel's sustainability project, and the culinary team uses the honey in the hotel restaurants and at catered events.

Things to Do in the Area

The steep streets in this part of the city will give guests a great workout, and there are several places to stop for a drink or a bite to eat. The Top of the Mark lounge is an exciting nightspot with a 360-degree view, and the Cable Car Museum showcases antique cars alongside live machinery and a plethora of history. The Ferry Building and Palace of Fine Arts are close, and Chinatown is a reasonable walk from the hotel, making it a tasty destination to stop for lunch.

Other exciting places to visit include the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which is one of the largest museums of modern and contem-

porary art in the United States and not only discovers artists from around the world but houses many new and sensational collections throughout the year. Steve and I viewed a new exhibit by Creative Growth. This exhibition celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first organization in the US dedicated to supporting artists with developmental disabilities. The artwork was astounding, and meeting many of the artists and hearing their stories was a pleasure.

A visit to the de Young/Legion of Honor Museums, which houses an array of collections, including American and African art, and a walk across the iconic Golden Gate Bridge are both worthwhile activities.

Fairmont San Francisco is part of the San Francisco story and the perfect place to lay your head at night. Must-see stops are within walking distance or a quick cable car, Uber, Lift, or cab ride away. To make sure you do not miss any fabulous things to see, do, or taste in the city, contact San Francisco Travel @onlyinsf.❖