

# NOB HILL NOTABLES

*Come to the fabled  
Venetian Room  
of the  
Fairmont Hotel  
for*

**A TASTE OF NOB HILL**

*Thursday, September 9, 2010  
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.*



For information or tickets call  
415/346-8720.

Tickets: \$125 per person  
\$100 for NHA members

## *A Taste of Nob Hill*

*Return to the elegant days of supper clubs to the Venetian Room where Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole, Marlene Dietrich, Joel Grey, Bobby Short, Vic Damone and many, many more performed: the place in which Tony Bennett first sang 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco.'*

Two of Nob Hill's most storied institutions—the Fairmont Hotel (1907) and the Nob Hill Association (1928) are pleased to announce a gourmet joint venture -- A TASTE OF NOB HILL — Thursday, September 9, 2010 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Venetian Room for Nob Hill Association members and guests.

The evening, co-chaired by Nob Hill Association President David Lefkowitz and Thomas A. Klein, RVP and General Manager, The Fairmont San Francisco, will feature:

- A delectable buffet prepared by new Executive Chef jW Foster, known for his focus on local produce.
- An escorted exclusive tour of the newly renovated Fairmont Penthouse  
For more about the Penthouse see pages 5 and 6
- The launch of "Membership Privileges", a discount program for NHA members
- Music by six piece band Lodestar
- Complimentary wine and a signature cocktail

The evening will benefit the Nob Hill Foundation for the preservation of Huntington Park and is in fond memory of Dame Bella Farrow for whom Huntington Park was a signature cause.

## *Isabella "Bella" Farrow — The Queen of Nob Hill*

Longtime Nob Hill Association board member, former Association President and Special Events Chair Bella Farrow, 86, passed away from congestive heart failure June 19. She was known as the honorary Queen of Nob Hill because of her festive parties that benefitted Huntington Park through donations to the Nob Hill Foundation. Her Putting on the Ritz fundraisers were a signature event on the hill for years featuring fine cuisine, serious cocktails and reserve wines from the many donors who supported her events.

Nob Hill Association President David Lefkowitz says, "Most of us on the Hill saw Bella as a single-minded, one-dimensional fundraiser, devoted to extracting as much money as she could from the "haves" so that the "have-nots" would be better off. How could we be angry with Bella's methods? Although she's no longer here to force us to look at the "needy" in our neighborhood, her spirit drives us to emulate her selfless and caring generosity. Her absence is felt throughout Nob Hill".

Her charitable commitments reached many organizations including the Breast Cancer Emergency Fund, Saint Francis Hospital, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Children's Garden, Girl's Town of Italy, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Meals on Wheels, the Children's Garden of California and the San Francisco Sheriff's Department Women's Reentry and Restorative Justice Center.

In addition to the Nob Hill Association, Bella was a member of the boards of directors of Saint Francis Foundation and the Merola Opera Program. She was a mayoral appointee to the Recreation and Park Commission, the San Francisco War Memorial Board of Trustees, and the Golden Gate Park Concourse Authority. In 2008 she was inducted into the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitalier.



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# Sunshine and Wines for California Mille

The 2010 California Mille opened, as always, on the top of Nob Hill at the landmark Fairmont Hotel. It was a sunny day which brought out hundreds of Association members and neighbors to look at the vintage automobiles, spotless and shined, ready to participate in the famed Mille Miglia the following day. Unfortunately, the sunshine was to go away and the rains return again as the race began. But the



miserable weather was kept at bay for Sunday's crowd to have a festive time. While event chair Martin Swig gave interviews to the press and described the unique characteristics of many of the cars, guests mingled among the cars and talked car talk.

Inside the Fairmont were gathered many loyal supporters of the Nob Hill Association's mission to promote Nob Hill and maintain and improve Huntington Park. Presiding, was the late Bella Farrow, who imposed the discipline of a drill sergeant on the crowd as she selected the winners of the raffle. At her side was the General Manager of the Fairmont, Tom Klein, who provided, along with his efficient and courteous staff, a fantastic Italian buffet appropriate for the occasion. Also serving as a co-chair of this year's event was Lois Lehrman.



This year's Mille featured the wines of Jessie's Grove Winery, founded in the 1860s. Personally serving the guests was Suzanne Burns, wife of Greg Burns, the winemaker for Jessie's Grove, and a fifth generation member of the ownership family. Suzanne served many bottles of their famed 2006 Zinfandel and 2007 Chardonnay, both estate grown.

While we regret that the car owners were forced to drive the Mille the next



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - DAVID LEFKOWITZ



There are not a lot of heroes on Nob Hill. Most of us go about our daily business of business, philanthropy, socializing, creating the next doo-dad, or simply living our quiet lives. This spring, we lost a hero: Bella Farrow. She was known simply as Bella, and for her diminutive stature she was a giant, who left her mark on Nob Hill, and San Francisco. She was the person who could demand that you give another thousand to St. Francis Hospital, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, or another of the important organizations that benefit the community and/or the less well-off. There was never a choice about the giving; once she cornered you, it was just a matter of how much. "No" did not exist in her vocabulary. We gave, and we grumbled about her methods of monetary extraction, and we always felt good about writing that check. She felt no remorse about asking for help in support of her causes; they all do important work, and make San Francisco a better place to live. Her memorial service at Grace Cathedral was well attended by the neighborhood, and beyond. I wish to recognize the generous and gracious tribute that Thomas Klein, and the Fairmont, prepared for the Nob Hill neighbors, and friends of Bella. Stories were told, photos were brought out, and we learned more about her in death than we ever thought we knew during her lifetime. I'm curious though: who will follow her lead, and pick up the collection box? The neighborhood waits, and watches. Come forward, mystery person; we are waiting for her work to continue.

As a tribute to Bella's legacy, Philip Alford, with support of the Neighborhood hotels and businesses, is launching a fundraiser on September 9, at the Fairmont, to benefit Huntington Park, the centerpiece of our neighborhood. Showcasing the event will be live music, an exciting menu created by Executive Chef jW Foster, wine and spirits, tours of the Fairmont Penthouse, and both live and silent auction. I look forward to seeing you at the event; bring your appetite, your thirst, and look great for the camera.

Last quarter I mentioned a couple of significant matters that had previously rankled the community, and have now fallen in visibility: The Masonic/Live Nation legal challenge is slowly grinding its way through the court, the "off-leash dogs in the Park" issue is stalled. Supervisor Chiu's office has offered to mediate the matter by bringing a 3-person group from each side of the issue, to hopefully work out a solution that will satisfy everyone. There are currently 2 volunteers (myself and John Doremus), and I seek a 3rd, hopefully a dog-owner, who can assist in speaking to those who do not follow the posted regulations at Huntington Park. We have the chance to improve the safety in our park, the cornerstone of our neighborhood, and I am keen to re-start these discussions, before the voting season gets wrapped up in non-local issues. Don't expect the Park Rangers to secure your Park (they are grossly underfunded), it's up to the neighbors to get this dog-safety issue resolved.

As we near Summer's end (haven't seen much Summer this year, with the fog lingering into the afternoon most days), let's get re-energized about making Nob Hill the best it can be. I look forward to seeing you all the Fairmont's Venetian Room September 9.

The Nob Hill Association invites any individual or business that shares our mission to preserve and improve the Nob Hill neighborhood and Huntington Park to join.

Please fill out the information, and mail to:

The Nob Hill Association, 235 Montgomery Street, Ste. 930, San Francisco, CA 94109

I am paying by check

For Dues please make your check payable to the Nob Hill Association

For Life Membership or Donations please make your check payable to the Nob Hill Foundation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am paying by credit card. Please complete the following information:

Card Type:

Visa

Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Signature \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!

Annual Dues \$60

Business \$80

Life Membership \$1000

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For more information visit: [www.nobhillassociation.org](http://www.nobhillassociation.org)

# The Fairmont Penthouse — a little backstory

By Alma Carroll

One sees only the finished product, the ultimate creation of many minds and talents after it has all come together. As fascinating as the mystery and mystique of the recently renovated Fairmont Penthouse is a glimpse at the backstory of its splendid restoration.

In 1926, John S. Drum, president of the American Trust Company, persuaded the owner of the Fairmont to construct a grand residence atop the hotel which Drum could lease, and where he lived until 1938. Arthur Upham Pope, America's foremost scholar on Persian art and architecture, created the eighth floor Penthouse, and his exotic influence is especially vivid in the suite's billiard room.

Like a tale from *Arabian Nights*, the Moorish inspired room is a story unto itself. Its walls are covered in mosaic and hand-painted Persian tile from floor to vaulted ceiling. During the almost 30-year residency of Maude Flood, the mining fortune heiress who next occupied the suite, the room served as sleeping quarters for her caregiver. For obscure reason known only to herself, Flood had its walls covered with plasterboard, which Benjamin Swig removed when he bought the hotel in 1966.

During its current renovation, carpeting covering the room's concrete floor was removed, revealing remnants of a hole indicating prior existence of a fountain in the area now occupied by the billiard table. The cement floor was cleaned and faux painted to match the Moorish walls. Rumors have it that the room was also once used as a prayer chamber, and if one listens quietly, muffled murmurs of veneration can sometimes still be heard, if only in the imagination.



The billiard room

The billiard room's exquisite glass dome, rich in jewel tones of ruby, turquoise, emerald and amber, had not been cleaned since 1926. Artisan Sue Kanke, a native San Francisco whose company, C-Lite, specializes in the design and restoration of crystal and glass, was retained to restore the 1,800 pieces of etched glass of various shapes and sizes, sections ranging from one and a half to three inches and starbursts of 12 inches. All segments were backed by a second piece of opaque glass, a total of 3,600 pieces requiring cleaning.

From atop a 25-foot-high scaffold, Kanke removed each section (of glass), placed it in a specially designed padded box which she rappelled below to her husband, Harry, by a pulley system they designed. He, in turn, handwashed each piece in a mixture of soap and water and ammonia.

"We had to carry buckets of water up from the seventh floor through the hidden staircase leading to the kitchen because water was cut off from the eighth floor during the restoration," Kanke said. This staircase now serves as an accommodation to hotel guests staying on the seventh floor of the hotel who wish to attend social functions in the Penthouse and prefer not to use the elevator, as well as to accommodate tradesman making deliveries to the renovated, state-of-the-art kitchen on the eighth floor.

Kanke represents the fourth generation of her family to work on The Fairmont. Edmund McDonnell, her great uncle's father, founded California Electrical Supply in the late 1880s and installed the lighting for the hotel when it first opened in 1907, and her father has since installed and repaired many of its chandeliers.

"It was terribly arduous work," Kanke continued. "We started at 5:30 in the morning and worked until sundown, and I came home each night black with dirt." Perched on the unsteady scaffold, Kanke said she was always fearful of falling and "constantly aware of my precariousness. Fortunately, everything went smoothly, but it took 11 days to finish."



The library

Craig Mitchell, a senior designer with Champalimaud, the New York architectural and interior design firm commissioned by owners Maritz Wolff, was responsible for approving all renovation with final approval by owner Phillip Maritz. Mitchell said working on the project was very satisfying.

That he is originally from San Diego, “but I lived in San Francisco years ago and knew the Swigs personally, so it was a joy being back in The City. I understand its culture, which is quite different from New York.”

“We also restored the library,” Mitchell continued. “We added new paint for depth, cleaned the mural, put in track lighting, and included additional art work.” The Penthouse mystique is further enhanced by another hidden staircase leading to the balcony floor of the circular library. Its opening is concealed among the tomes of literature, some of which are first editions collected by Benjamin Swig during his lifetime. The staircase also leads to the Penthouse roof. A fitting crown to the library is the rotunda’s celestial map rendered in gold leaf against a sapphire sky, suggesting a link to the infinity of the cosmos.

An incredible view of San Francisco’s skyline is seen from the terrace just off the library. Tunisian tiles were used to restore and refinish the terrace’s fountain, awnings were installed over the library windows, heaters were hidden beneath the awnings to dispel the chilly fog that occasionally shrouds the city, and the outside walls of the library were completely refinished.

In 1996, the Penthouse drew attention from Hollywood. Jerry Bruckheimer Films and producer Don Simpson filmed “The Rock,” a movie set in San Francisco starring Sean Connery as the lead, John Mason. Mistakenly incarcerated on Alcatraz, Mason negotiates with the FBI, using his knowledge of the prison as a barter for his freedom, and as a part of the deal, Mason insists that he be ensconced in the Fairmont’s Penthouse. During this pivotal scene, he and the FBI agent have a violent disagreement during which Mason physically threatens to throw the agent over the edge of the terrace to the garden far below.

Ghosts of the world’s elite still inhabit the Penthouse, among them are President John F. Kennedy, Prince Charles of Wales, Mikhail Gorbachev, King Hussein of Jordan, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands as well as Mick Jagger, Elton John, Tony Bennett, Nat King Cole and Marlene Dietrich, among others. In 1945, the Penthouse was the setting for the drafting of the United Nations Charter.

If only the walls could talk, “ says Regional Vice President and General Manager Thomas Klein.

*(A member of the Nob Hill Association and an award-winning, quasi-retired journalist, Alma Carroll is a past staff writer for PBS and a former special assignment feature writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. Her work has also appeared in other publications too numerous to mention.)*



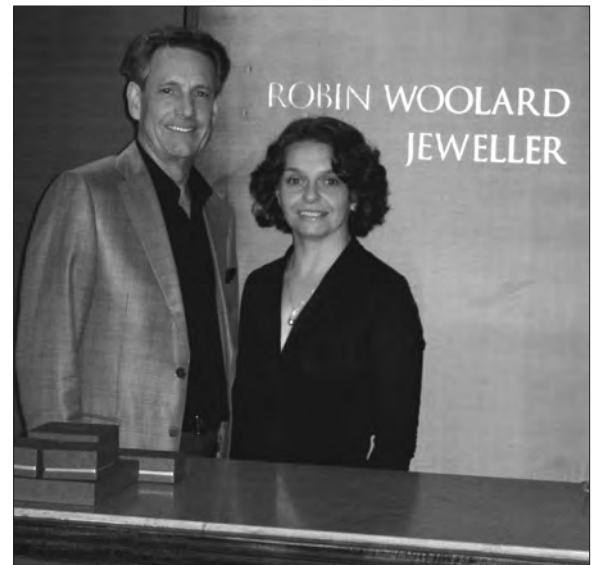
*City view from the Penthouse Terrace*

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## *Champagne and Caviar on the Hill*

Robin Woodard Precious Jewelry at the Fairmont Hotel welcomed Nob Hill Association members with a festive open house on July 23 and 24th. Woodard’s exquisite boutique is a very special addition to the Hill and in the next issue we will feature this special business as you think about your holiday shopping and consider their 15% discount for Nob Hill Association members.

***Welcome to the Hill,  
Robin Woolard Precious Jewelry!!***



### **The Nob Hill Association**

*Founded in 1928, the mission of the Nob Hill Association is to preserve the beauty and history of Nob Hill and Huntington Park*

- *President David Lefkowitz* • *Vice President James Fotenos* • *Treasurer Lori Lefkowitz* • *Secretary Joan Moon*
- *Director of Communications Fran Hildebrand* • *Publication Contributor Alma Carroll and Tom Horn*
- *Photographers Carmen Gillis and Tom Horn*

## THE FAIRMONT HOTEL

*The Fairmont is offering the community a way to give back as well as deep discounts this season.*

### BLOOD DRIVE

August 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Come to the Fairmont and participate in a neighborhood blood drive. The Fairmont is inviting the local community to participate.

### DISCOUNT OFFERS IN SAN FRANCISCO:

#### GOLDEN GETAWAY

#### THE FAIRMONT SAN FRANCISCO

~ From \$199 ~

Package includes:

- Luxurious room accommodations
- Two complimentary beverages at Laurel Court Bar or Tonga Room Hurricane Bar (up to \$25 USD per night, gratuity extra)

#### SUITE'N YOUR SUMMER

#### THE FAIRMONT SAN FRANCISCO

~ From \$399 ~

Package includes:

- A one-night stay in a luxurious suite
- Overnight valet parking (for one vehicle)
  - A bottle of sparkling wine
  - \$50 USD gas card

### DISCOUNT OFFERS IN SONOMA:

#### GOLDEN GATEWAY

#### THE FAIRMONT SONOMA MISSION INN & SPA

~ From \$199 on weekdays and \$269 on weekends ~

Package includes:

- Charming accommodations
- Complimentary access for two people to hotel spa bathhouse including European style bathing ritual

#### SUITE'N YOUR SUMMER

#### THE FAIRMONT SONOMA MISSION INN & SPA

~ From \$399 on weekdays and \$549 USD on weekends ~

Package includes:

- Suite accommodations
- Welcome bottle of Gloria Ferrer champagne and tasting at Gloria Ferrer Champagne Caves
  - Breakfast for two

*For reservations or information, please call 1 (888) 480-6161.*

*Contact your travel professional or visit [www.fairmont.com](http://www.fairmont.com)*

*\*Offer is valid for stays until December 30, 2010 based on availability. Taxes extra.*

# Summer on the Hill .....

## GRACE CATHEDRAL

*Sunday, August 15, 2010 at 3:00 p.m.*

**Hector Olivera:**

**In Concert on the Rodgers Masterpiece Organ**

He is considered by many of the most sophisticated and demanding organ aficionados to be "one of the greatest organists in the world today".

*Every Tuesday night 6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.*

**Yoga on the Labyrinth**

Join yoga teacher and author Darren Main for this gentle and nurturing yoga practice. You don't need to be flexible or have prior experience with yoga to benefit. In fact, people of all ages and abilities are welcome and invited to attend.

*Contact (415) 749-6300 to confirm.*

# Save the Dates!

**A Taste of Nob Hill  
September 9**

**2010 Annual Meeting  
November 18 ~ 6:00pm - 8:30pm**

**Dorothy Fritz Cope  
Annual Tree Lighting  
in Huntington Park  
November 29 ~ 5:30pm  
No host cocktails ~ 4:30pm at the Big Four**

.....and more

## HUNTINGTON HOTEL

\$185 special hotel rate for Nob Hill Association members, with an upgrade to a Deluxe Room (based on availability). Includes complimentary access to the Nob Hill Spa's indoor pool, Jacuzzi, outdoor patio, steam and sauna rooms, fitness room and fireside lounge area. Call (415) 474-5400 and mention the Nob Hill Association rate.

[www.huntingtonhotel.com](http://www.huntingtonhotel.com)

## NOB HILL SPA

The Nob Hill Spa welcomes Nob Hill Association members to enjoy 20% off spa services at Nob Hill Spa Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Please mention the Nob Hill Association offer when booking. Not valid for nail services, spa packages, or purchasing gift certificates; not for use with SpaFinder gift certificates; cannot be combined with other offers.

(415) 345-2888  
[www.nobhillspa.com](http://www.nobhillspa.com)

## BIG 4 RESTAURANT

Book the Big 4 Restaurant at the Huntington Hotel for your party of 15 or more people and receive a complimentary one-night stay in a Luxury guest room (\$540 value), based on availability. Call Simon Harrington at 415.345.2839 to book your party and mention the Nob Hill Association offer.



## THE STANFORD COURT

### VINA-VERSITY

Thursdays 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.

Reservations required. (Up to 12 can enjoy.) Vina-Versity is a casual but directed wine tasting featuring local wines and stylistic differences; sometimes a noted staff member from a winery hosts the event. The evening may feature a look at California or Stanford history, sustainable farming, food and wine pairing, or how winemaking has developed over the last century.

Reservations call (415) 989-3500

## RITZ-CARLTON

### “GOES CASUAL FOR SUMMER”

#### BURGERS AND BEER

Every Tuesday in The Lobby Lounge, 5 to 7 p.m.

#### DIM SUM

Every Friday in The Lobby Lounge, 5 to 7 p.m.

(415) 296-7465



## THE MARK HOPKINS'

### TOP OF THE MARK,

#### A TASTE OF ELEGANCE IN SUMMER

#### HIGH TEA

Beginning August 7 Monday through Saturday 2:30 to 5 p.m.

The Mark brings back a three tiered presentation of freshly baked English scones with Devonshire cream and fruit preserves, elegant French pastries, fresh made finger sandwiches and a selection of loose leaf teas and infusions (the return of the silver tea strainer). \$24 a person.

#### CALIFORNIA CHEESE AND WINE PAIRING

Beginning August 9 Monday through Thursday 5:00 to 7p.m.

Featuring a selection of three or five local cheeses paired with red, white and port wine. And, if you like, you can sample just the cheese on its own. Starting from \$26 a person.

For reservations call (415) 616-6916  
[www.intercontinentalmarkhopkins.com](http://www.intercontinentalmarkhopkins.com)

#### WINE RECEPTION IN AUREA

Fridays 5 to 6:00 p.m

Featuring local wineries typically offered on the restaurant wine list.

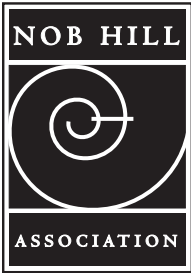
#### BAY AREA GUITARIST JUSTIN PURTILL

#### WILL PERFORM IN AUREA

Fridays at 7:00 pm through August 20

#### AUREA OFFERING THEIR SEASONAL DINNER MENU

Featuring a 10% discount for Nob Hill Association members on the food portion of their bill when they dine at Aurea for dinner (Alcohol not included).



Nob Hill Association  
235 Montgomery Street, Ste. 930  
San Francisco, CA 94104

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# NOB HILL NOTABLE MEMBERS

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

American Concrete  
Asseman Sky Travel  
Brownies Hardware  
Brugger & McCormick Int.  
Club One at the Fairmont  
Crest Royal Apartments  
DeRose Travel LLC  
Eduardo P. Dolhun, M.D.  
Ellis-Brooks  
Falcon Associates, Inc.  
Joel Goodrich  
Jubilee Hair Studio  
LeBeau Nob Hill Market  
Lefkowitz & Co. CPA  
Lewetzow Real Estate Group\*  
Mark Hopkins Rental Condos  
Muratore General Contractors  
Nob Hill Florist  
Nob Hill Gazette  
Nob Hill Masonic Center, Inc.  
Recharge Spa of Nob Hill  
Robin Woolard Precious Jewels\*  
Russian Hill Dog Grooming  
S. F. Community Music Center  
San Francisco Residence Club Inc.  
Saint Francis Hospital Foundation  
Sproule Lane Property Group  
Swan Oyster Depot  
The Comstock Apartments  
The Nob Hill Condominium Assoc.  
Twins Hill  
University Club  
Vendetta Men's Apparel &  
Vintage Cuban Cigars  
Wells Fargo Insurance Services\*  
Whole Foods\*  
Xavier & Hahn, CPAs

\* Denotes New Member

## HOTELS

The Fairmont  
The Huntington Hotel  
Inter-Continental Mark Hopkins  
Renaissance Stanford Court  
The Ritz-Carlton

## SPECIAL MEMBERS

Pacific Union Club  
Saint Francis Memorial Hospital

## NEW MEMBERS

Kitty Burns • Vivian Brzustowicz  
Linda Chapman • Kay Evans  
Greta Lodder • Chris & Dede Masters

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Ray Brown  
Richard Horrigan • Dr. David Jolliff

*We appreciate the support of the mentioned business members  
and are delighted to list our new individual members.*

*For any membership questions please contact our  
Membership Director: Mary Kay McNulty at (415) 771-1787.*