

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

THE HA-RA CLUB

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-006
Business Name: The Ha-Ra Club
Business Address: 875 Geary Street
District: District 6
Applicant: Tom Whalen, Owner/Partner/Member
Nomination Date: August 15, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Ha-Ra Club was opened on February 1, 1956, by Henry "Hank" Hanestad (1917-1975), a wrestler, AND Ralph Figari (1921-1989), a boxer. The name comes from a combination of Hank and Ralph, Ha-Ra. The bar is located at 875 Geary Street in the Tenderloin neighborhood. Hank and Ralph opened the club after purchasing the Sarong Club, a bar which had operated at this address since 1943. It was thought that The Ha-Ra Club opened on February 1, 1947 (this date is stamped into the concrete entryway), but records indicate that the Sarong Club remained at this location until 1956. Ralph Figari was affiliated with another bar, The Valley Club, located only two blocks north at Sutter and Larkin Streets until 1956.

Sometime in the 1960s, Hanestad left the partnership, and The Ha-Ra Club was owned solely by Ralph Figari until 1987 when he passed the bar on to his son, Rick Figari. Rick owned the business until 2015 when it was sold to a new ownership group consisting of Richard Wentworth, Tom Whalen and Scott Broccoli. Since its opening in the 1950s, the Ha-Ra has served the Tenderloin as a local bar. Its neon sign is now a recognized feature of the neighborhood and its interior has been restored to reflect the business's long history. With the closure of the Gangway at 841 Larkin Street in 2018, The Ha-Ra Club has become the neighborhood's longest running bar.

The business is located on the south side of Geary Street between Larkin and Hyde streets in the Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood.

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, The Ha-Ra Club has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

875 Geary Street from 1956 to Present (63 years)





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, The Ha-Ra Club has contributed to the history and identity of the Tenderloin neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of its location within, and contribution to, the National-Register-listed Uptown Tenderloin Historic District. The Ha-Ra Club is located within a storefront of a 1922 Spanish Colonial Revival building designed by Sylvain Schnaittacher. The building's stucco facade features ground floor commercial spaces, a row of paneled-glass windows (since painted), and highly decorative sculptural stucco with shields, cartouches, and finials in a Spanish Baroque style, rising to a simple parapet. Curved brick walls trimmed with neon have replaced 875 Geary's original glass storefront. These curved walls are a signature element of the Ha-Ra Club, along with its neon blade sign topped with a flashing neon martini glass and a backlit "Cocktails" sign over the entryway.
- The Ha-Ra Club is among the 100 businesses listed by San Francisco Heritage in its online guide "Legacy Bars and Restaurants." The Ha-Ra Club and its signature neon sign were featured in the book San Francisco Neon, Survivors and Lost Icons, by Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan. Barna and Homan, joined by Tom Downs and Eric Lynxwiler, have established "San Francisco Neon," an advocacy organization for the preservation of neon signs. The Ha-Ra Club is also a favorite stop for Eddie Muller, the "Czar of Noir," who is the President of the Film Noir Foundation, runs the San Francisco Noir Film Festival, and hosts a noir series on Turner Classic Movies. The bar has also been featured in a number of guides to dining and drinking in San Francisco and is often among the top contenders for lists of "the best dive bars in San Francisco." A longtime bartender, Carl Kickery, helped make the Ha-Ra notorious among tourists and locals for the ornery, no-nonsense service that some bars and restaurants curate.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, The Ha-Ra Club is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that The Ha-Ra Club qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Geary façade with curved brick walls.
- Neon sign.
- Original wood floors, brick back bar, wooden bar, and reproduction red flocked wall paper.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Bar.





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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include The Ha-Ra Club currently located at 875 Geary Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

THE HA-RA CLUB

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-006
Business Name: The Ha-Ra Club
Business Address: 875 Geary Street
District: District 6
Applicant: Tom Whalen, Owner/Partner/Member
Nomination Date: August 15, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR THE HA-RA CLUB, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 875 GEARY STREET.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 23, 2019, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Ha-Ra Club in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at The Ha-Ra Club:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Geary façade with curved brick walls.
Neon sign.
Original wood floors, brick back bar, wooden bar, and reproduction red flocked wall paper.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain The Ha-Ra Club on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Bar.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 23, 2019.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

- Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





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OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-006
Business Name: The Ha-Ra Club
Business Address: 875 Geary Street
District: District 6
Applicant: Tom Whalen, Owner/Partner/Member
Nomination Date: August 15, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? Yes No

875 Geary Street from 1956 to Present (63 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: August 19, 2019

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 6



City and County of San Francisco

MATT HANEY

August 15, 2019

Regina Dick-Endrizzi, Director
San Francisco Small Business Commission
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I am honored to have the privilege of nominating the Ha-Ra Club, located at 875 Geary Street in the Tenderloin, for San Francisco's Legacy Business Program.

The Ha-Ra Club was opened on February 1, 1956, by Ralph Figari (1921-1989), a boxer, and Henry "Hank" Hanestad (1917-1975), a wrestler. The name comes from a combination of Hank and Ralph, Ha-Ra. With the closure of the Gangway at 841 Larkin Street in 2018, the Ha-Ra Club has become the neighborhood's longest running bar. Its founding by a boxer and a wrestler also emphasizes the historical identity of the Tenderloin as the location of the city's alternative, or "gritty," places located away from the polite society of adjacent Nob Hill.

Since 2015, the Ha-Ra Club has been run by a new management group that has fully embraced the historical significance of the bar and has restored much of the interior. The Ha-Ra Club was established as a bar for the immediate community and continues to serve locals who live in the Tenderloin. The crowd continues to be eclectic, drawing construction workers from nearby projects; musicians from the Great American Music Hall; nearby bar and restaurant workers; and lawyers, students, and workers on their way home from Civic Center and the Financial District.

Please contact Tom Whalen, (415) 673-3148 haraclubsf@gmail.com, to inform them of their nomination.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matt Haney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Haney", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
The Ha-Ra Club		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Tom Whalen, Richard Wentworth, Scott Broccoli		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
875 Geary Street San Francisco, CA 94109		(415) 673-3148
		EMAIL:
		haraclubsf@gmail.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
harasf.com	Ha-Ra Club	Ha-Ra Club

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Ha-Ra Club - Tom Whalen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Owner/Partner/Member	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
875 Geary Street San Francisco, CA 94109	([REDACTED])
	EMAIL:
	haraclubsf@gmail.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
1017344	47-4532464

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
875 Geary Street	94109	2/1/1956
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	2/1/1956-present (63 years)	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

business registration, and income, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Tom Whalen 2/3/19 Tom Whalen
Name (Print): Date: Signature:

THE HA-RA CLUB

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

The Ha-Ra Club (the “Ha-Ra”) was opened on February 1, 1956, by Ralph Figari (1921-1989), a boxer, and Henry “Hank” Hanestad (1917-1975), a wrestler. The name comes from a combination of Hank and Ralph, Ha-Ra.

The bar is located at 875 Geary Street in the Tenderloin neighborhood. Hank and Ralph opened the club after purchasing the Sarong Club, a bar which had operated at this address since 1943. For a long time it was thought that the Ha-Ra Club opened on February 1, 1947 (this date is stamped into the concrete entryway), but records indicate that the Sarong Club remained at this location until 1956, and Ralph Figari was affiliated with another bar, The Valley Club, located only two blocks north at Sutter and Larkin Streets until 1956.

Sometime in the 1960s, Hank left the partnership, and the Ha-Ra Club was owned solely by Ralph Figari until 1987 when he passed the bar on to his son, Rick Figari. Rick owned the business until 2015 when it was sold to a new ownership group consisting of Richard Wentworth, Tom Whalen, and Scott Broccoli. Since its opening in the 1950s, the Ha-Ra has served the Tenderloin as a local bar. Its neon sign is now a recognized feature of the neighborhood and its interior has been restored to reflect the business’s long history. With the closure of the Gangway at 841 Larkin Street in 2018, the Ha-Ra Club has become the neighborhood’s longest running bar.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

The Ha-Ra Club has not ceased operations for any significant amount of time since it opened in 1956.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

The business is not technically a “family-owned business,” defined here as any business in which two or more family members are involved and the majority of ownership or control lies within a family. However, ownership of the Ha-Ra Club passed from one of the founders, Ralph Figari, to his son, Rick Figari.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Since 2015, the business has been run by a management team consisting of Richard Wentworth, Tom Whalen, and Scott Broccoli. The new ownership group recognizes the historical significance of the bar and has restored much of the interior.

The ownership history of the Ha-Ra Club is as follows:

1956 to 1960s:	Henry “Hank” Hanestad and Ralph Figari
1960s to 1987:	Ralph Figari
1987 to 2015:	Rick Figari
2015 to Present:	Ownership group consisting of Richard Wentworth, Tom Whalen, and Scott Broccoli

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Ha-Ra Club is located within a storefront of a 1922 Spanish Colonial Revival building designed by Sylvain Schnaittacher. This building, which stretches from 869-883 Geary Street, is a contributing building in the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places (id# 08001407) and on the California Register of Historical Resources. The circa 1984 survey by the Foundation for San Francisco Architectural Heritage (today, San Francisco Heritage) finds that the building has ‘Contextual Importance.’

The building’s stucco facade features ground floor commercial spaces, a row of paneled-glass windows (since painted), and highly decorative sculptural stucco with shields, cartouches, and finials in a Spanish Baroque style, rising to a simple parapet. Curved brick walls trimmed with neon have replaced 875 Geary’s original glass storefront. These curved walls are a signature element of the Ha-Ra Club, along with its neon blade sign topped with a flashing neon martini glass and a backlit “Cocktails” sign over the entryway.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

In its over 60 years of business, the Ha-Ra Club has been a local bar that serves the surrounding community. When the Ha-Ra was first established, the Tenderloin was at the center of San Francisco nightlife, offering a variety of entertainment with its clubs, bars, illegal gambling houses, and bordellos. The Ha-Ra Club's neon blade sign is a lasting reminder of what would have been common throughout the Tenderloin, attracting visitors to the area's dense collection of restaurants, bars, and clubs. In the years before the city shut-down the illegal gambling rooms in the Tenderloin, a number of bars like the Ha-Ra Club offered such a service in back rooms. While the Ha-Ra's back room and buzzer system to discreetly allow customers entry has been removed, its presence demonstrated the reality of illegal gambling commonly found in the bars of the Tenderloin into the 1950s. The city's crackdown on "vice" in the 1940s and 1950s severely affected bars in the area, many of which closed after continual raids.

The founding of the bar by a boxer and a wrestler also emphasizes the historical identity of the Tenderloin as the location of the city's alternative, or "gritty," places located away from the polite society of adjacent Nob Hill. Hank and Ralph's personal history in boxing and wrestling was a draw to others involved in these sports, and this clientele provided a number of the bar's early regulars.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

The Ha-Ra Club is a stop on Del Seymour's Tenderloin tour, where he relates the history of the bar. It is also a stop on Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan's San Francisco Neon tour. In 2005, the bar hosted an event for the sixth annual LitQuake festival that featured readings from the anthology San Francisco Noir.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

The Ha-Ra Club is among the 100 businesses listed by San Francisco Heritage in its online guide "Legacy Bars and Restaurants," and the accompanying interactive map; this list was created as a tool to recognize and safeguard the intangible heritage of San Francisco. The "Legacy Bars and Restaurants" project inspired the creation of the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry in 2015.

The Ha-Ra Club and its signature neon sign were featured in the book *San Francisco Neon, Survivors and Lost Icons*, by Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan. Barna and Homan, joined by Tom Downs and Eric Lynxwiler, have established "San Francisco Neon," an advocacy organization for

the preservation of neon signs, and the Ha-Ra Club sign is featured on their website (<https://sfneon.org/projects.html>).

The Ha-Ra Club is also a favorite stop for Eddie Muller, the "Czar of Noir," who is the President of the Film Noir Foundation, runs the San Francisco Noir Film Festival, and hosts a noir series on Turner Classic Movies. Eddie Muller was introduced to the bar through his father, of the same name, who was a sportswriter for the San Francisco Examiner and "the dean of West Coast boxing writers." Eddie Muller Sr. likely became a regular at the Ha-Ra Club due to the boxing background of Ralph Figari.

The bar has also been featured in a number of guides to dining and drinking in San Francisco and is often among the top contenders for lists of "the best dive bars in San Francisco." A long-time bartender, Carl Kickery, helped make the Ha-Ra notorious among tourists and locals for the ornery, no-nonsense service that some bars and restaurants curate.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Not applicable.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

The new management has invested in the bar to serve the community and to extend its long-time presence in the neighborhood. Awareness of the bar's history and its reflection of the neighborhood's history and residents is important to the current ownership. The bar's staff have all been taken on Del Seymour's Tenderloin Walking Tour to help instill that connection. Some changes to the bar have included better lighting along the street and installing security cameras. This was done after speaking with local law enforcement about best practices for increased safety and minimizing noise levels. These changes were done in part to make the street more inviting, to increase foot traffic, and to retain regulars from the community, making the Ha-Ra Club an appealing community bar that draws locals and tourists and is inviting to passing pedestrians. The Ha-Ra's management also tries to support other local businesses in the Tenderloin when parties and events require catering or additional services.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

The Ha-Ra Club was established as a bar for the immediate community and continues to serve locals who live in the Tenderloin. The crowd continues to be eclectic, drawing construction workers from nearby projects; musicians from the Great American Music Hall; nearby bar and restaurant workers; and lawyers, students, and workers on their way home from Civic Center and the Financial District. The Gangway's regular clientele have also begun to relocate to the Ha-Ra Club following the Gangway's closure in January 2018.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

The building that houses the Ha-Ra Club is a contributing building in the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places and on the California Register of Historical Resources. The neon blade sign over the entryway is a significant object associated with the business.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If the Ha-Ra Club were to close, the Tenderloin would lose an increasingly rare visible and tangible connection to its past. The Tenderloin's difficult history with the anti-vice crusades of the 1950s and the subsequent disinvestment in urban areas of the 1970s and 1980s makes the survival of the Ha-Ra Club even more surprising. The current management has ensured that the Ha-Ra Club is attracting and retaining a new group of regulars that live and work in the Tenderloin, making this neighborhood bar an asset and a meeting-place for the community of the Tenderloin.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

The Ha-Ra Club's Geary facade, with its original neon blade-sign and curved brick walls, has remained largely unchanged over the decades and welcomes guests today just as it did in the bar's earliest years. When entering the bar, patrons step over a concrete slab that bears what was believed to be the opening date of the Ha-Ra Club: "February 1, 1947;" however it is unknown when this panel was added and records indicate that the Sarong Club remained at this location until 1956.

The interior has a number of original elements from original wood floors, reproduction red flocked wall paper, a brick back bar, and an original wooden bar made by Brunswick-Balke-Collender (likely dating from the late 1880s, and installed in this location in the 1940s when it was the Sarong Club). Many of the bar's objects date from its early days as the Ha-Ra: a historic phone booth has been creatively made into a photo booth, a vintage refrigerator (from when city laws required bars to serve food) has been made into a media cabinet, vintage lamps found in the basement sit on the bar, and original wall sconces that can be spotted in the black and white photos of the Ha-Ra's one-year anniversary still grace the walls, along with a zenith tube TV from the 50s, an oil painting by artist Larry "Vincent" Garrison, and the original front door, which has been reinstalled in the rear of the bar as a service door. The interior has been decorated with photos from the bar's 1-year anniversary, as well as contemporary issues of the Tenderloin Times. A pistol that was found loaded behind the bar during renovations, has been framed and mounted behind the bar as a reminder of the bar's and the neighborhood's more dangerous days.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Ha-Ra Club has always been a bar for the community. It's a clean, no frills bar that aims to attract and retain its regulars and invite new visitors. The bar's ownership knows its history and has demonstrated a commitment to retaining the historic features not only of the facade, but also of the interior.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

As a contributing building within the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District, the building that houses Ha-Ra Club, 869-883 Geary Street, is contextual in its massing, design, and use, and adds to the significance of the Tenderloin's history.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a bar for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

Ha-Ra Club Legacy Business Application
Section 5: Supplemental Historical Documents

February 1, 1957
1-year Anniversary Party of the Ha-Ra Club



1957

Polk's San Francisco City Directory

Figari Anita M Mrs cash First Calif r21 Neptune
" Antonio A r78 Kempton av
" Caesar (Dorothy) (California Evergreen Nurseries) r
Millbrae
" David J (Evelyn D) (California Evergreen Nurseries)
h78 Kempton av
" Gary nurserymn California Evergreen Nurseries r
Barlingame
" Jas B (Margt F) h2849 SanBruno av
" Marshall B (Della M) ins broker 444 California R514
r Mill Valley
" Ralph (H A-R A Club) h1140 Sutter apt 207
" Steven P (Anita M) meat ctr Muscat Bros Mkt h21
Neptune
" Wm (May C) master mariner United Towing Co h561
Staples av
" Wai V (Rita T) towboat pilot Red Stack Towboat Co
h462 Urbano dr

1958

Polk's San Francisco City Directory

GEARY—Contd
401 Vacant
402 Emcken Carl C Δ TU 56741
403 May Lois Δ PR 56309
404 Outhet Dorothy
405 Pullar Cath Mrs
406 Duncan A Don Δ PR 58009
407 Azalde Rebecca Mrs Δ PR 62627
408 Plenick David
501 Catch Violet
502 Niederer Anita
503 McMurtrie John
504 Hibberd Geo
505 Gilliam John
506 Vacant
507 Anderson Carl
508 Stonebocker Lucille Δ TU 51822
600 Clark Donald
Street continued
868 Cashway Market gro Δ GR 49841
Cashway Meat Mkt Δ OR 31306
Cashway Prod
869 Romero's Tamale Cafe
Δ GR 48836
871 Duchesa Beauty Salon
Δ TU 59882
875 Ha-Ra Club Δ OR 33148
Fargari Ralph Δ OR 35882
876 Vacant
882 Livesay Theron F Δ OR 31122
Oeskowski Eddie Δ PR 57669
881 I C Sales Co men's clo mfrs
Δ GR 49565
886 Eppler's Bakery Δ OR 38700
887 Ideal Creamery restr Δ TU 59588
889 Anglo Swedish Massage
Δ TU 52746
889 Jones Kenneth R Δ PR 64594
Miller Lyle Δ PR 66058

c. 1984

**Tenderloin Survey by the Foundation for San Francisco Heritage
(today, San Francisco Heritage)**



Courtesy of the SF Heritage Archive

c. 1987 – 2015

Memorabilia from Rick Figari's ownership of the Ha-Ra Club



Both images, see: inflectionbylight.blogspot.com

<https://sf.eater.com/2010/12/15/6707155/a-bourbon-at-ha-ra-club>

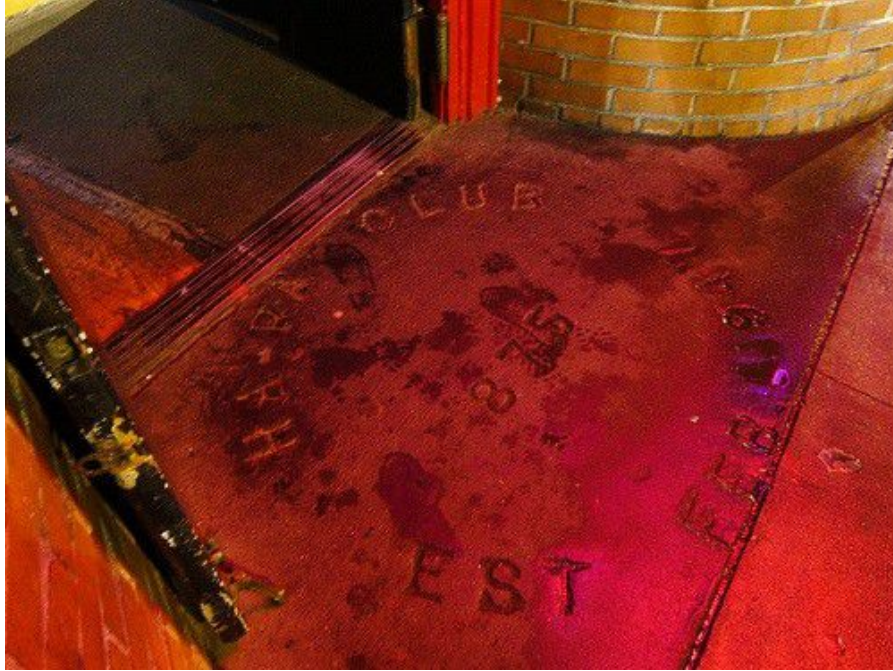
EATER

A Bourbon At...Ha-Ra Club

by [Carolyn Alburger](#) / [@CarolynAlburger](#) / Dec 15, 2010, 4:30am PST



<https://sf.eater.com/2010/12/15/6707155/a-bourbon-at-ha-ra-club>



[Photo: [Jennifer Yin](#)]

Nestled on the corner of a pretty tough Tenderloin block — on Geary between Hyde and Larkin — Ha-Ra is a well kept, yet homely...ready to serve you up a long bourbon pour to help wash down the bite of over-salted and over-cooked Tenderloin you just took to get there.

<https://sf.eater.com/2010/12/15/6707155/a-bourbon-at-ha-ra-club>

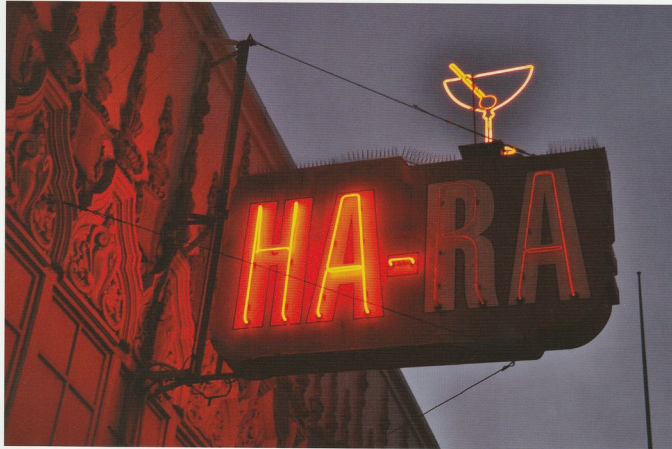
A Bourbon At?is sponsored by our friends at [Basil Hayden's Bourbon](#). Basil Hayden's is handcrafted, light-bodied and aged longer with twice as much rye to produce an incredibly approachable, sophisticated and luxurious bourbon. It's spicy. Unexpected. And full of potential. Just like your plans tonight.

Ha-Ra was opened in 1947 by the same family that owns the bar today. And along these lines, the place feels like it's a home — better yet, the basement of a home. With a little imagination you can see it as one of those vintage late 70's/early 80's game room basements with low ceilings, a pool table, sports photos all over the walls (in this case, boxing photos), TVs playing sports, a loaded juke, and a wooden cabinet full of bourbon in the corner. The only thing the place is missing is shag carpet and a generous stash of stogies and Chex Mix. Cheap thrills and no frills, that's Ha-Ra for you. Have no fear of the Tenderloin. Even the dive bars can be clean, safe and friendly.

-Eddy El Espia

2014

San Francisco Neon: Survivors and Lost Icons



875 Geary Street

2014 AB

Foreword

Until I saw this book for the first time, I had always thought of the Ha-Ra as a cold, cranky sort of place run by Carl, a barman (now retired) well known for his grumpiness. Somehow I had failed to appreciate what a good name Ha-Ra is for a bar. It's something better than hurrah, and easier to spell. All it took for me to finally get it was Al Barna seeing it, clicking his camera's shutter, and coming back a bit later to shoot it again from the other side. This thorough flip-side effect also captures the interesting fact that, due to some faulty wiring, the sign's choked neon halfheartedly laughs at you ("Ha") if you're approaching from one direction, and waits until you have passed the place before it kicks in with the cheer ("Ra").

The photos in this book express all of the reasons why neon belongs not in museums (and certainly not in scrap metal yards) but on the roofs of buildings, above doorways, in windows, on signs extending out over sidewalks. Neon is best in context. It enhances a cityscape, keeps a city's spirits up in the wee small hours and in all kinds of weather, casts color on drab pavements, bounces crazy reflections off dark windows, draws the eye upward to where you might not otherwise be looking.

Turning the pages is like rounding corners, each new street view leading the eye towards colorful and irresistible neon. It's a book of photos of signs - but we get much more than the signs. With keen observation comes realization and a deepening appreciation.

Diving in at random, we are confronted with neon beauties we may never have noticed or duly appreciated. On one spread, two pure beauties face one another: The Balboa Cafe sign, an astonishing study of electric color tones crisscrossed by power lines and telephone poles; and its complement, the blue-hued "D's". The latter is a detail from a sign above David's Delicatessen on Geary, which is actually hidden by a low-slung awning. It up nevertheless as a reward for the neon connoisseur leaving no stone unturned. This book will teach you to peer around or beneath every accessory slapped onto a building in recent years, where finer accoutrements may lurk.

Photos can be studied at length for the clues they contain about our city's past and present. The shot of Pop's, on 24th Street, reminds me of some of my dad's old Kodachrome slides taken in San Francisco in the 1950s. The light, the muted colors, the neon martini, the bay windows, and the mesh of electrical wires in the background tell us this corner hasn't changed much in 50 or 60 years.

I'm also partial to the careful study of upper level Chinatown, a neighborhood that rewards the astute observer who frequently casts an eye towards the second and third floor of buildings, where old signs from defunct businesses hang onto brick walls like tattoos of shapely women on an old sailor's arm. Many of these signs are no longer working.

vii



875 Geary Street

2011 AB

San Francisco Neon: Historic Sign Network

SAN FRANCISCO NEON
HISTORIC SIGN NETWORK



HOME PROJECTS ABOUT TOURS EVENTS BOOKS PRESS VIDEOS

PROJECTS

San Francisco Neon consults and supports on neon restoration projects and designs new neon signs in a vintage style. [Contact us](#) for neon sign design or restoration consultation. We are proud to be associated with the neon projects below. Click on a photo or project name below to find out more.



Visit San Francisco Neon, for more information: <https://sfneon.org/projects.html>



HARA



H
O
T
E
L

HA-RA

*Q Beauty
Salon*

(415) 921-7375

Breakfast Cafe
est. 1978

WEINER'S
CIGARS
LIQUORS

TOW-AWAY
NO STOPPING

4 P.M. TO 6 P.M.

NO PARKING

6 A.M. TO 8 A.M.

TUES THUR SUN

STREET CLEANING

2014

SF Heritage's Legacy Bars and Restaurants



LEGACY PROJECT EVENTS HAAS-LILIENTHAL HOUSE CARDS RESOURCES

Ha-Ra Club

875 Geary Street
Type: Bar
Established: 1947

The Ha-Ra Club, located at Geary and Larkin streets, is a Tenderloin neighborhood anchor. Established on February 1, 1947, the Ha-Ra is a no-fuss dive bar. Pro-heavyweight boxer Ralph Figari and pro-wrestler Hank Hanastead first opened the joint, and Ralph's son continues to own and operate it today. Boxing memorabilia on display reminds patrons of the bar's origins. Legendary San Francisco bartender Carl, a fixture at Ha-Ra's, will assure visitors that there are no fancy drinks to be had here. As Carl puts it, the Ha-Ra attracts a blend of regulars, rookies and wiseguys. As one would expect from this beloved dive, the Ha-Ra houses the essentials: liquor, a television, a jukebox, a pool table, and nothing more.

San Francisco's Legacy Bars and Restaurants

Learn More About the Legacy Project

Restaurant Restaurant & Bar Brewery Confectionery Bakery

see: <https://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/#>

2015

Coverage of the reopening of the Ha-Ra Club

The Lush > September 15, 2015 > Ha-Ra Club Reopens in the Tenderloin, All Nice and Freshened Up

Ha-Ra Club Reopens in the Tenderloin, All Nice and Freshened Up

Fellow fans of dive bars, we have a happy story for you (for once). Back in May, we reported on the **~HA-RA CLUB~** getting new owners: Scott Broccoli (Ace's, The Pub at Ghirardelli Square, Dobbs Ferry), Tommy Whalen (Ace's), and Wizz Wentworth (formerly Amante). Considering the sorry state the bar was in (empty taps, barely any booze on the shelves, odd hours), it was great to hear how the new ownership cared deeply about restoring the bar with some TLC while honoring its history and soul.

I have been checking in with partner Scott Broccoli over the past few months on progress, and we are happy to report the bar has reopened as of last Friday, and it's looking fine! Broccoli says restoration was like "peeling back an onion," as they discovered layers of the bar dating back to the 1940s. It opened in 1947 as the Ha-Ra (short for Hank and Ralph—the owners were pro wrestler Hank Hanastead and heavyweight boxer Ralph Figari), but prior to that, it was the Sarong Club (1943-1947), which was also a bordello (you'll notice the staircase leading up to the office and storage area now, but previously that's where the brothel was). The hooker history also ties in well with the red velvet brocade wallpaper, a replica of what the bar was originally outfitted in. Broccoli says they looked at many old pictures of the bar for design reference, and installed



*The new Ha-Ra. Photo by Michael David Rose
Photography courtesy of UrbanDaddy.*



*The bar at the Ha-Ra. Photo by Michael David Rose
Photography courtesy of UrbanDaddy.*

see: <http://www.tablehopper.com/lush/ha-ra-club-reopens-in-the-tenderloin-all-nice-and-freshened-up/>

<http://www.tablehopper.com/lush/ha-ra-club-reopens-in-the-tenderloin-all-nice-and-freshened-up/>



Ha-Ra Club Reopens in the Tenderloin, All Nice and Freshened Up

Sep 15, 2015



The new Ha-Ra. Photo by Michael David Rose Photography courtesy of UrbanDaddy.



The bar at the Ha-Ra. Photo by Michael David Rose Photography courtesy of UrbanDaddy.

<http://www.tablehopper.com/lush/ha-ra-club-reopens-in-the-tenderloin-all-nice-and-freshened-up/>



The sign at the Ha-Ra (one of my faves). Photo: © tablehopper.com.

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The pool table is still there (did you know Joe Lewis played pool on that very table in the 1950s?), and you'll notice the vintage lights are still there, too, plus the brick back bar, and the original floor (dating back to 1922) got a good staining and buffing. Some updates include the old phone booth, which is now a mobile phone charging station, and the sound system is hiding inside the vintage refrigerator. There are four TVs, and there will be two keg tables installed, where you can have a five-gallon keg for you and your friends at your own table. One area has room for 10 and another for 15.

<http://www.tablehopper.com/lush/ha-ra-club-reopens-in-the-tenderloin-all-nice-and-freshened-up/>

Some more fun OG facts for you: you'll notice there's a lot more room adjacent to the end of the bar in the back—it ends up there was a (non-original) sheetrock wall installed, creating a room used for liquor storage. Broccoli didn't think it made much sense since there was already plenty of storage. It turns out there were a bunch of buzzers in there, and it was previously a gambling room!

Okay, one more! Behind the bar, you'll see an old Ortgies pistol dating back to 1924 displayed on the wall—Broccoli found it (loaded!) hidden under a cabinet under the register, and now it has a safer spot on the wall.

As for what's being served and poured, look for a good selection of beers (including a fair number of IPAs, as well as beers covering all budgets). Cocktails will be simple but not labor intensive—a cocktail list will be coming soon, and tequila will be a highlight on the shelves.

Broccoli says there's a lot going on in the neighborhood (Huxley, Tender, the gallery scene), and they are all excited to be a part of it. Hours for now are looking like Mon-Fri 3pm-2am and Sat-Sun 10am-2pm. Hurrah for the Ha-Ra! I hope Carl is smiling, wherever he is. 875 Geary St. at Larkin, 415-673-3148.

2016

SFWeekly, "Top 50 Dive Bars in San Francisco"

TOP 50 DIVE BARS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Aunt Charlie's

1331 Divisadero St.

Tuesday

One of only two gardens left in the neighborhood, Aunt Charlie's is a place where neighborhood gardeners gather daily to drink powerful drinks as they work on the neighborhood garden. That the five tables are sometimes covered in plants or soiled, but a hostess in a blue uniform, John's long-sleeved, Thursday night party full of blueberries and 90-MPH observations. The Tobacco Connection, in a room, they give photos to your pet, says, but you should be there before the blue glow. On the only way back of Truck Street, a general discussion.

The Ave Bar

1027 Ocean Ave.

Monday

The Ave is a dive bar with good views and a much-needed landing spot for locals. Doughnuts from the station down Ocean Avenue frequent the place, or do special light-side nachos. A stack of the local paper, The Independent Weekly, is often found on the counter of the bar. But the Ave has more than just good local views. It's also got a cool beer menu that's constantly changing. From Big Dog to East Terrace, Laughing Monk and more, its selection lists from up and down the coast. That's how The Ave makes sure it keeps up with the times, since if you're coming from a neighborhood full of long-time San Franciscoans.

El Die

2222 Mission St.

Wednesday

"How Die" means the gold standard for the drinking in the Mission — or anywhere, really. It's a dive bar that makes it the ultimate place to see and be seen while drinking your rum and coke and watching live music on 11th steps. Yes, you know the singer from South, but a Tucson and later under the hammer game of Carmen Miranda in the best way (mostly at David French, David French, or Morgan). And El Die's General Hotel and Casino (which opened single one, now gone) especially before that was on the national radio. We have them on such a regular basis, and we're not talking behind a big group of people only waiting to be seen.

Oliver & Charlie Cocktail Lounge

1445 Divisadero St.

Monday

When Carol Davis, the original owner, came to the bar after being hit by a car, she died in 1993, everyone knew where to go to have the best shot of her twenty good hours — Oliver & Charlie. An early good neighborhood dive should be the bar to go to and has a great food menu since a handful of history. The bar

about Davis, but about all the coverage and getting of Carol's former home. The walls are lined with Carol's own photos and photos of larger than life people, like Tony Danza. To make back whiskey was at Oliver & Charlie, then, it is because part of that (divided) history.

Gold Dust Lounge

201 Jefferson St.

Wednesday

Gold Dust has faced the displacement struggle and survived. San Francisco has consumed countless stories of Gold Dust since 1933, but in 2012 the Union Square location gave it the best for a blood-splattered story. It was not lost, however, as an appeal of — what? — public support helped the long-time dive find a new home in Fisherman's Wharf. On the grounds, it was Gold Dust now means leaving the tourists. On the upside, everything is still loved about it remains in tact. The gently competing, the soft water seats, the comfortable but mostly dependable barstool, and that iconic Chapel-like ceiling pouring light with rain on top below. And the 12 happy-hour drinks include a bloody Mary, Irish coffee, margarita, and Champagne. Gold Dust may have lost its original digs, but not its old dive soul.



Ho Ho Club

679 Geary St.

Tuesday

Owned by a boxer and a former model, Jerry and Jay, this bar is the new long-running and well-loved neighborhood bar at Fisherman's Wharf. (For the Walker San Francisco edition) One of their old-timey, and their name. On the same block of Geary that's also home to Charlie's Club and Whiskey Thomas — says The Chronicle right across the street — the Ho Ho stands alone by name by its own right, possibly the best neighborhood in 2016 of any

20-year-old bar around. It's back to its original, and it's got a great island on top.

Hi Dive

1017 Divisadero St.

Thursday

We applaud every bar, no matter how small, that has a sense of place and a special glass. Fortunately, the neighborhood neighborhood for watching the Giants from a spot where you can probably find them is qualified for the bar. No, you can get into a crowded 150-seat bar, but that's also a good thing. The Hi Dive is a hidden gem, but with plenty of good things to offer. It's a 1940s-style, and the bar's own and-coming drinks come with a kick, a chaser, and a choice of meat. If you take a typical long drive through the traffic of the Bay, you're pretty sure any one of these things will cause all headaches.

High Tide

400 Geary St.

Tuesday

Hi Tide might be a bit out of the loop — it's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar. It's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar. It's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.

Happy Kar

1541 Divisadero St.

Monday

If you can't think of a good spot for a first date, consider Happy Kar — a "dive bar" that's been there for a long time and has a great atmosphere. It's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.

Last Call

1445 Divisadero St.

Monday

The Castro got some love plenty of support, but the neighborhood dive bar, last call, is a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.



neighborhood. Anyway, the place is inviting, it's dog friendly, and on some days, the beer selection is always worth a long drive. But if you want to, it's probably that because Mr. Bing's only, or something like that, is on the TV.

McKenzie's Bar

1027 Geary St.

Wednesday

Walking down the Mission in some of the best bars in the city, McKenzie's is a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar. It's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.

Melrose's

232 Hayes St.

Monday

Melrose's is a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar. It's a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.

Mr. Bing's

217 Columbus Ave.

Monday

Going going, gone, gone, it's time to say goodbye to Mr. Bing's. The neighborhood dive bar, Mr. Bing's, is a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.



Red Hot

2277 Geary St.

Monday

Through the Castro, the neighborhood dive bar, Red Hot, is a dive bar, but the drinks are cheap — about \$7 for a cocktail — plus there are pool tables and a regular standing pool table behind the bar of a typical bar.

SF WEEKLY

Top 50 Dive Bars in San Francisco

SF Weekly / Wed Sep 14th, 2016 5:35pm



(Dylan Goldberger)

In our vision of Hell, every surface is sticky and every table needs a shim.

Funny how that applies to more than a few dive bars, which we also consider to be the next best thing to paradise.

In spite of the massive changes the 21st century has wrought on San Francisco, there remains a bright constellation of grimy, crusty joints with inches-thick layers of character, like the tree rings of a sequoia that survived one fire after another. As with the Supreme Court's you-know-it-when-you-see-it definition of pornography, the exact parameters of what constitutes a dive are contingent and fuzzy. Some are like de facto

<http://www.sfweekly.com/dining/feature-dining/top-50-dive-bars-san-francisco/>

private clubs, while others serve \$12 craft cocktails to keep the lights on. But many are barely known outside their immediate neighborhoods.

If you want standardization, predictability, and good lighting, go to Starbucks. If you want random adventure, affably cantankerous service, and (mostly) cheap beer, wade into S.F.'s glorious ecosystem of dives. To help you — and, maybe, to help them — we offer the 50 that feel the truest to the spirit of this city, and whose loss we would feel the hardest.

Aunt Charlie's
The Ave Bar
El Rio
Gino & Carlo Cocktail Lounge
Gold Dust Lounge

Ha-Ra Club
875 Geary St.
Tenderloin

Opened by a boxer and a fireman named Harry and Ray, this haute dive was long run by a well-read curmudgeon named Carl Kickery. (Eddie Muller, San Francisco's own Czar of Noir, called him a "crusty f**k.") Well, that was then, and this is now. On the same block of Geary that's also home to Castle Club and Whiskey Thieves — with The Outsider right across the street — Ha-Ra stands above its peers for executing possibly the best renovation (in 2015) of any 70-year-old bar around. It's louche, it's spacious, and it's got Goose Island on tap.

Hi Dive
High Tide
Kozy Kar
Last Call
McKenzie's Bar
Molotov's
Mr. Bing's
Noc Noc
Randy's Place
The Sea Star
Specs' Twelve Adler Museum Cafe
Vesuvio
Trad'r Sam
Tunnel Top

<http://www.sfweekly.com/dining/feature-dining/top-50-dive-bars-san-francisco/>

Wild Side West

Would You Believe??

Philosophers Club

Horseshoe Tavern

Columbus Cafe

O'Keeffe's

Li Po Lounge

The Stud

Zeitgeist

Bender's

The Cinch

Delirium

The Phone Booth

The Uptown

500 Club

Elixir

Casanova Lounge

Bow Bow Lounge

Kilowatt

Pissed-Off Pete's

The Saloon

The Knockout

Toronado

Shotwell's

St. Mary's Pub

The Peaks

Doc's Clock

Broken Record

Lucky 13

Elbo Room

10 Surprising Restaurants and Bars to Try in San Francisco

By Vox Creative

San Francisco is home to hundreds if not thousands of amazing restaurants. From Michelin-rated high-end dining to delicious fast-casual options, the city is jam-packed full of wonderful places to eat and drink. That said, not all of San Francisco's best eateries have huge signs and menus outside to lure you in — some are even hidden inside of other restaurants and destinations or hidden in plain sight. Here are a few under-the-radar restaurants in SF that are worth a taste.

1. Hara Club

875 Geary St

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 673-3148

This neighborhood favorite is one of San Francisco's oldest dive bars. Originally opened in 1947, Ha-Ra Club got its name from its original owners Hank and Ralph, a wrestler and a boxer, respectively. Inside, you can order an Elysian Space Dust IPA or a stiff drink and catch the game on one of the Tenderloin watering hole's 4K TVs. Don't miss keepsakes from the original 1940s bar, including a set of boxing gloves and a loaded pistol that was found under the register.

2. Nickies

466 Haight St

San Francisco, CA 94117

(415) 255-0300

If you're looking to catch a game in the Haight, Nickies can be a great place to grab a table and some drinks without dropping a ton of cash in the process. The roomy neighborhood bar offers

www.voxmedia.com/ad/maps/san-francisco-surprising-restaurants

a brunch menu on weekends and standard bar fare during the week with offerings like jalapeño poppers and chicken wings. It also has a decent cocktail and wine list, as well as some beer options like Elysian Brewing Company that are guaranteed to please even the toughest in your group.

3. Mad Dog in the Fog

530 Haight St

San Francisco, CA 94117

(415) 626-7279

This pub in the Lower Haight has a solid beer list and pub fare of nachos, quesadillas, and chicken wings. Known for its trivia night, Mad Dog in the Fog is also a popular hangout for catching sporting events like football, the World Cup, and the NBA playoffs.

4. Holy Mountain

1126, 680 Valencia St

San Francisco, CA 94110

(415) 400-5699

Holy Mountain is located in the back (and up the stairs) of Hawker Fare, a Lao Isaan eatery in SF's Mission. The bar offers a rotating menu of unique and unusual tiki drinks that pair perfectly with the Thai street food — such as papaya salad, homemade panang tofu curry, and tamarind egg drop curry noodles — being sold below.

5. Mission Banh Mi

Duc Loi Market, 2200 Mission St

San Francisco, CA 94110

(415) 551-1773

If you're looking for banh mi, some of the best in the city can be purchased inside the Duc Loi supermarket on Mission Street. Mission Bahn Mi takes up a small portion of the store's deli

www.voxmedia.com/ad/maps/san-francisco-surprising-restaurants

counter and serves 12 different sandwiches as well as other Vietnamese specialties like spring rolls and pickled veggies. Since it's located in a grocery store, you can also pick up snacks and drinks to round out your meal for a picnic at nearby Dolores Park.

6. Counter Offer

800 S Van Ness Ave

San Francisco, CA 94110

Tucked in the back of Bender's Bar in the Mission is Counter Offer, a permanent pop-up that serves everything from tater tots to tacos. While it might look like simple bar food given its location, the restaurant's rotating menu has previously included a foie gras burger, hand-dipped corn dogs, and a pizza burger that uses pepperoni pizza for the bun, all expertly prepared on the grill in front of you. Beyond its weekly Instagram-advertised specials, it also regularly offers a delicious mac-and-cheese bar and the best "tot-chos" in town.

7. Mission Rock Resort

817 Terry A Francois Blvd

San Francisco, CA 94158

(415) 701-7625

Located right on the water, the views are as much a draw for Mission Rock Resort as the food. Food options include favorites like crab mac and cheese, braised chicken leg, and an out-of-this-world, soft-shell crab BLT. The restaurant's happy hour features \$1 oysters, and its weekend brunch regularly attracts hungry crowds.

8. Gotham Club

24 Willie Mays Plaza

San Francisco, CA 94107

Behind the scoreboard at AT&T Park is the Gotham Club, a private bar and restaurant for former and current Giants players and anyone else who wants to pony up for one of the limited memberships. The exclusive space offers diners a members-only entrance to the game, a menu

www.voxmedia.com/ad/maps/san-francisco-surprising-restaurants

with items like lobster dogs and steaks, and cocktails with cubes of ice that resemble baseballs. The space opens well before each game and stays open afterward where members can have a post-game cocktail or try their luck at the restaurant's built-in bowling alley.

9. Little Skillet

360 Ritch St

San Francisco, CA 94107

(415) 777-2777

Some of the best fried chicken in San Francisco can be found inside Victory Hall & Parlor, the home of Little Skillet. An offshoot of the popular restaurant Farmer Brown, customers can get chicken and waffles, Cajun crab cakes, BBQ ribs, and more during lunch and dinner hours. Those who don't have time to sit down can also order food to-go from the restaurant's street window.

10. Local Tap

600 3rd St

San Francisco, CA 94107

(415) 814-2257

While everyone else is piling into 21st Amendment on game day, Local Tap can be a nice alternative to the crowds. The small bar features an assortment of regional breweries, like Elysian Brewing Company, as well as pub fare like chili cheese fries, fried cheese curds, and bowls of chili. When you're done with your pre-game, AT&T Park is just a short stroll away.

Current Photos





RCA
isine
- 1011

HARBARA

Cocktails

Q Beauty
Salon

Beauty Salon
MEN • MEN • CHILDREN
Tel: (415)

OPEN

883 Geary

883





A LA TURCA
RESTAURANT
turkish cuisine

A LA TURCA
turkish cuisine
345-1011

A LA TURCA

Q Beauty Salon
WOMEN • MEN • CHILDREN
Tel: (415) 921-7375

MOULIN
Cafe
BREAKFAST
LUNCH DINNER

Cocktails

875

WAT
210



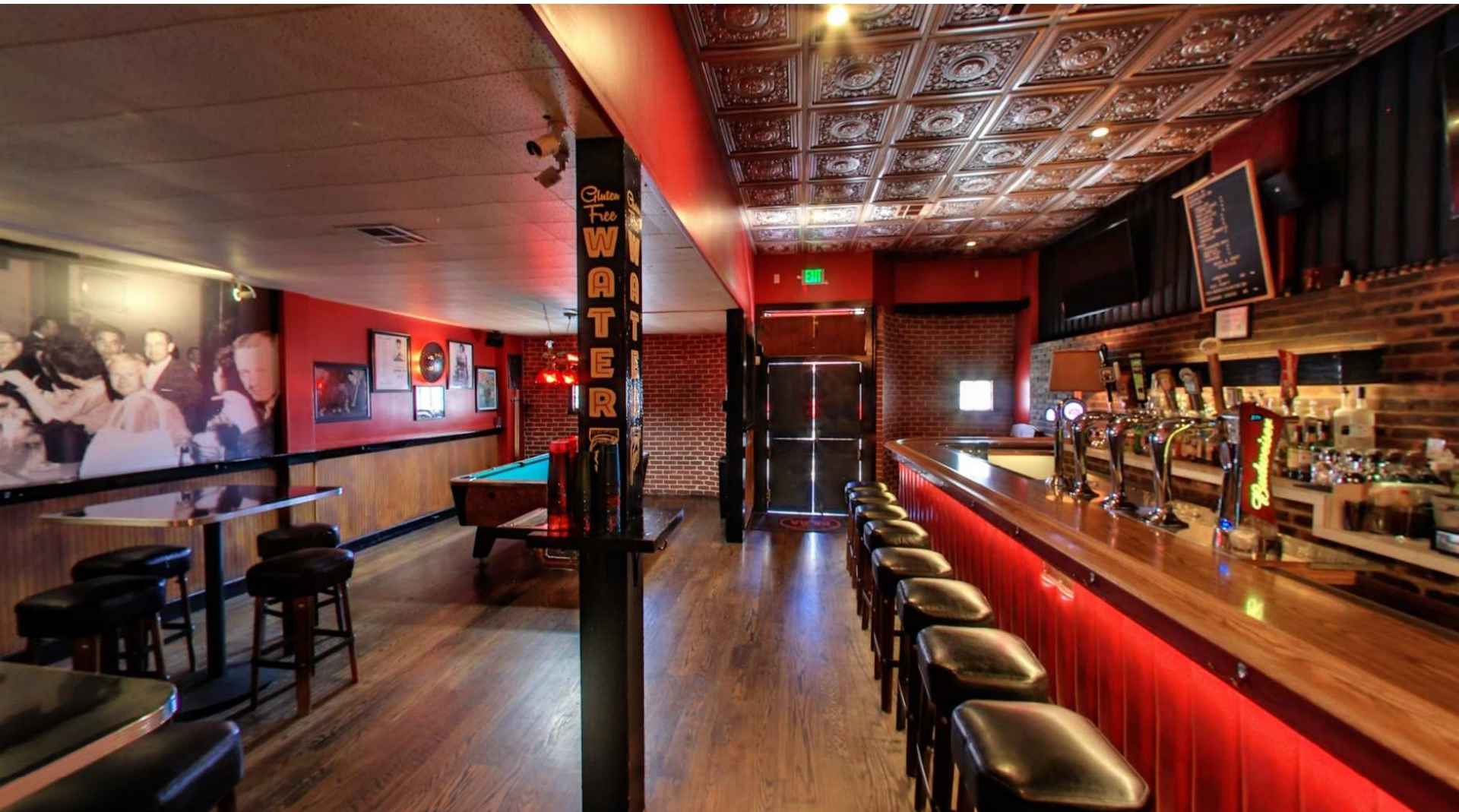
Current Photos (cont.)















Original
Wallpaper

Pre 1946

No Confirmation Available

Filing Date: August 19, 2019
Case No.: 2019-015652LBR
Business Name: The Ha-Ra Club
Business Address: 875 Geary Street
Zoning: RC-4 (Residential-Commercial, High Density) Zoning District
80-T Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0320/018A
Applicant: Tom Whalen, Owner/Partner/Member
875 Geary Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Located In: District 6
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Ha-Ra Club was opened on February 1, 1956, by Ralph Figari (1921-1989), a boxer, and Henry “Hank” Hanestad (1917-1975), a wrestler. The name comes from a combination of Hank and Ralph, Ha-Ra. The bar is located at 875 Geary Street in the Tenderloin neighborhood. Hank and Ralph opened the club after purchasing the Sarong Club, a bar which had operated at this address since 1943. It was thought that the Ha-Ra Club opened on February 1, 1947 (this date is stamped into the concrete entryway), but records indicate that the Sarong Club remained at this location until 1956, and Ralph Figari was affiliated with another bar, The Valley Club, located only two blocks north at Sutter and Larkin Streets until 1956.

Sometime in the 1960s, Hanestad left the partnership, and the Ha-Ra Club was owned solely by Ralph Figari until 1987 when he passed the bar on to his son, Rick Figari. Rick owned the business until 2015 when it was sold to a new ownership group consisting of Richard Wentworth, Tom Whalen, and Scott Broccoli. Since its opening in the 1950s, the Ha-Ra has served the Tenderloin as a local bar. Its neon sign is now a recognized feature of the neighborhood and its interior has been restored to reflect the business’s long history. With the closure of the Gangway at 841 Larkin Street in 2018, the Ha-Ra Club has become the neighborhood’s longest running bar.

The business is located on the south side of Geary Street between Larkin and Hyde streets in the Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood. It is within a RC-4 (Residential-Commercial, High Density) Zoning District and an 80-T Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1956.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. The Ha-Ra Club qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. The Ha-Ra Club has operated continuously in San Francisco for 63 years.
- ii. The Ha-Ra Club has contributed to the history and identity of the Tenderloin neighborhood and San Francisco.
- iii. The Ha-Ra Club is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

No.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. The property is a contributor to the National-Register-listed Uptown Tenderloin Historic District. The Ha-Ra Club is located within a storefront of a 1922 Spanish Colonial Revival building designed by Sylvain Schnaittacher. The building's stucco facade features ground floor commercial spaces, a row of paneled-glass windows (since painted), and highly decorative sculptural stucco with shields, cartouches, and finials in a Spanish Baroque style, rising to a simple parapet. Curved brick walls trimmed with neon have replaced 875 Geary's original glass storefront. These curved walls are a signature element of the Ha-Ra Club, along with its neon blade sign topped with a flashing neon martini glass and a backlit "Cocktails" sign over the entryway.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

Yes. The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of its location within the National-Register-listed Uptown Tenderloin Historic District.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. The Ha-Ra Club is among the 100 businesses listed by San Francisco Heritage in its online guide "Legacy Bars and Restaurants." The Ha-Ra Club and its signature neon sign were featured in the book *San Francisco Neon, Survivors and Lost Icons*, by Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan. Barna and Homan, joined by Tom Downs and Eric Lynxwiler, have established "San Francisco Neon," an advocacy organization for the preservation of neon signs. The Ha-Ra Club is also a favorite stop for Eddie Muller, the "Czar of Noir," who is the President of the Film Noir Foundation, runs the San Francisco Noir Film Festival, and hosts a noir series on Turner Classic Movies. The bar has also been featured in a number of guides to dining and drinking in San Francisco and is often among the top contenders for lists of "the best dive bars in San Francisco." A longtime bartender, Carl Kickery, helped make the Ha-Ra notorious among tourists and locals for the ornery, no-nonsense service that some bars and restaurants curate.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 875 Geary Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Geary façade with curved brick walls
- Neon sign
- Original wood floors, brick back bar, wooden bar, and reproduction red flocked wall paper

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No.

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

Filing Date: August 19, 2019
Case No.: 2019-015652LBR
Business Name: The Ha-Ra Club
Business Address: 875 Geary Street
Zoning: RC-4 (Residential-Commercial, High Density) Zoning District
80-T Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0320/018A
Applicant: Tom Whalen, Owner/Partner/Member
875 Geary Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Located In: District 6
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE HA-RA CLUB CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 875 GEARY STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0320/018A.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 18, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that The Ha-Ra Club qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for The Ha-Ra Club.

Location(s):

- *875 Geary Street*

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- *Geary façade with curved brick walls*
- *Neon sign*
- *Original wood floors, brick back bar, wooden bar, and reproduction red flocked wall paper*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2019-015652LBR to the Office of Small Business September 18, 2019.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: