



# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE DECEMBER 12, 2016

## ZAM ZAM

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-006  
*Business Name:* Zam Zam  
*Business Address:* 1633 Haight Street  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Robert Clarke, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* August 15, 2016  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor London Breed  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Opened in 1941 by Assyrian-born Samson Mooshei as the Persian Aub Zam Zam (now known as Zam Zam), the long-standing Haight Street cocktail lounge is known for its classic cocktails and distinctive 1940s-era Persian Art Deco interior. Its name, the "Persian Aub Zam Zam," is a reference to a holy well or oasis of the same name in Saudi Arabia. Mooshei's brother-in-law, Malek, co-founded the business and together they hired Assyrian architect and designer, Jon Oshanna, to design an exotic and otherworldly Persian-inspired interior for their new cocktail lounge. Oshanna was known for his designed public spaces, including hotel lobbies, theaters, and bars, that could be found throughout California and Hawaii. The end product resulted in an exquisitely designed interior of Assyrian Art Deco influences with wood and plaster making up the detailing in framing, and a prominent curved bar set in front of a mural. Painted by Oshanna, the oil painted mural depicts a famous Persian love story, the encounter of Khosru and Shireen. Other decorative elements are found throughout the interior, including decorative objects like cases and pitchers. Sam's son, Bruno, took leadership of the business upon his father's death in 1960; Bruno had worked at the bar since the late 1940s. Over the years, the lounge came to be known for its classic cocktails such as martinis, old-fashions, and manhattans, as well as its adherence to strict standards of bar etiquette. Right before Bruno passed away in 2000, longtime patron and family friend, Bob Clarke and his wife, Diane Epping, purchased the business. The current owners have not made any major changes to the space and intend to carry on the establishment's legacy as a destination bar in the Haight known for its classic cocktails and unique original interior design.

### 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 applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1633 Haight Street from 1941-2016 (75 years)

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



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity.

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:

- Zam Zam is associated with the art of craft cocktails, unique interior architecture, and the tradition of operating a cocktail lounge.
- Zam Zam has contributed to the identity of the Haight and the Bay Area's nightlife culture by providing locals and visitors a unique cocktail lounge experience featuring classic cocktails and an architecturally exquisite and exotic interior since the World War II-era.
- The building is associated with significant architecture. It has been previously evaluated for historical significance by the Planning Department and is considered a "Category A" property and has been identified as a potential contributor to the California Register-eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District. Its characteristically Persian-influenced interior design created by Jon Oshanna is one of the most significant parts of the business.
- The business was also featured in Anthony Bourdain's hit television series, No Reservations; earned its own chapter in High Spirits: The Legacy Bars of San Francisco by J.K. Dineen; and was listed on SF Heritage's certified list of San Francisco Legacy Bars & Restaurants.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
  - SF Gate, 12/3/2000, "Bruno Mooshei, Legendary Haight St Bar Owner Dies," by Tyche Hendrix.
  - SF Examiner, 2/16/2014, "Behold the glory of Aub Zam Zam while sipping martinis with bartender Tei Gondolfi," by Brendan P. Bartholomew.

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

Yes, Zam Zam is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its craft of serving old-fashioned cocktails and its tradition of functioning as a neighborhood gathering spot in an architecturally unique setting.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Zam Zam 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:

- Interior design featuring 1940s-era Persian Art Deco influences, designed by Assyrian architect, Jon Oshanna.
- Rounded bar.
- Large framed oil canvas mural painting by Jon Oshanna that depicts a famous Persian love story, "The Encounter of Khosru and Shireen."
- Wooden and plaster Persian Art Deco archways leading into the dimly lit bar area and back seating room.



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER / SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION  
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- Classic cocktails, including the martini, Manhattan, old-fashioned, and gin and tonics.
- Exterior façade features including its projecting sign, Persian-influenced entryway, and mosaic tiles imbedded in the front façade.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Zam Zam currently located at 1633 Haight Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager  
Legacy Business Program



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# Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE DECEMBER 12, 2016

ZAM ZAM

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-006  
*Business Name:* Zam Zam  
*Business Address:* 1633 Haight Street  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Robert Clarke, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* August 15, 2016  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor London Breed  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

**ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR ZAM ZAM, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1633 HAIGHT 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 December 12, 2016, 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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SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

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REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



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**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Zam Zam 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 Zam Zam:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Interior design featuring 1940s-era Persian Art Deco influences, designed by Assyrian architect, Jon Oshanna.
- Rounded bar.
- Large framed oil canvas mural painting by Jon Oshanna that depicts a famous Persian love story, "The Encounter of Khosru and Shireen."
- Wooden and plaster Persian Art Deco archways leading into the dimly lit bar area and back seating room.
- Classic cocktails, including the martini, Manhattan, old-fashioned, and gin and tonics.
- Exterior façade features including its projecting sign, Persian-influenced entryway, and mosaic tiles imbedded in the front façade.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on December 12, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes –  
Nays –  
Abstained –  
Absent –



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**Legacy  
Business  
Registry**

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-006  
*Business Name:* Zam Zam  
*Business Address:* 1633 Haight Street  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Robert Clarke, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* August 15, 2016  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor London Breed

**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?  X  Yes   No

1633 Haight Street from 1941-2016 (75 years)

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

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** October 17, 2016

Richard Kurylo  
Manager, Legacy Business Program



President, Board of Supervisor  
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

## LONDON N. BREED

Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Rick Kurylo  
Legacy Business Program Manager  
Office of Small Business  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Suite 110  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing to proudly nominate Zam Zam at 1633 Haight Street for the Legacy Business Registry Program. Founded in 1941, this bar is a gem within the Haight Ashbury neighborhood.

Zam Zam is known for its timelessness. Herb Caen, a columnist for San Francisco Chronicle, wrote the famous article about the bar in 1991 that noted Zam Zam is "a place that time forgot. It's a like a movie palace of yesteryore, its curving bar filled with worshipers sitting in silent contemplation of the silver bullet in its graceful stem glass."

Even more famous is Mr. Bruno Mooshei, whose father opened the bar after he and his family emigrated from northern Iran in 1920. Although Mr. Mooshei has passed away in 2000, his personality is widely known to this day. He would infamously kick people out if they order a vodka martini, or if they didn't behave with what he deems the appropriate bar manners: sit at a stool, put money on the bar, and order your drink.

Despite the many changes that has come to the Haight Ashbury through the 1960s, 70s, and today, Zam Zam remains a local hotspot for neighbors to gather and relax after a long day. It is now owned by Mr. Robert Clarke, a frequent Zam Zam customer and a close friend of Mr. Mooshei. When he and his partner, Diane Epping, bought the bar from Mr. Mooshei, they made sure to maintain the Middle Eastern ambience and original décor. It's hard to find any place like it nowadays.

Zam Zam is a perfect candidate for the Legacy Business Registry Program. Feel free to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "London Breed".

President London Breed  
Board of Supervisors  
City & County of San Francisco

# 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.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
ZAM ZAM		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
ROBERT F. CLARKE DIANE SPING		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
1633 HAIGHT ST SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94117		(415) 861-2545
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		ROBERTFCLARKE@YAHOO.COM
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
ZAMZAMBAR.COM		

<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>	
ROBERT CLARKE	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>	
OWNER	
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>	
2255 LAKE ST APT 8 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94121	
<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	
(415) 726-8940	
<b>EMAIL:</b>	
ROBERTFCLARKE@YAHOO.COM	

<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
0339653	

<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>	
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>	<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>



## 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.

<b>ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>START DATE OF BUSINESS</b>
1633 HAIGHT ST	94117	12/18/41
<b>IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1941 — 2016	

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

<b>OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):</b>	<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	<b>DATES OF OPERATION</b>
		Start:
		End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, 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.

ROBERT F. CLARKE 10/5/16

Name (Print):

Date:

Robert F. Clarke

Signature:

## **Zam Zam 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.*

Zam Zam (then known as the Persian Aub Zam Zam) opened for business on December 18, 1941 shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Haight Street was much different in those days – a quiet shopping district that provided goods and services for the surrounding, largely blue-collar neighborhood.

Having emigrated from his native village near Baghdad in what was then called Mesopotamia, Samson Mooshei, an Assyrian gentleman, arrived in the Bay Area around 1920 with his wife and infant son named Bruno. After several years, the family moved into the Haight neighborhood to be closer to some relatives who lived on Page Street. Shortly thereafter, the Moosheis opened a small lunch counter in the front of a Haight Street bar called the Pall Mall Club. This small business was a family affair. The mother and father cooked and waited on customers, while young Bruno did chores and helped out in the larger bar while attending Polytechnic High School. Over time, the Mooshei family became integrated into the Haight Street community, impressing their predominantly German and Irish neighbors with their dedication to hard work and reliable service.

Samson was ambitious for further improvements in his life's fortunes, so when a space that housed a small coffee shop at 1633 Haight Street became available, he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law Malek and decided to open his own cocktail lounge. Samson and Malek wanted a place that would be a unique reminder of the country and culture that they had left behind so many years ago. It was to be a dream of Persia – exotic, otherworldly, and totally unlike anything else on Haight Street. They hired an Assyrian architect and designer named Jon Oshanna who was well known for his skills in creating various public spaces both in California and Hawaii including various hotel lobbies, bars, and theaters. Oshanna's idea for Samson's bar was for a space designed according to principals of Art Deco curvature and incorporating elements of Persian culture. Everything from matchbooks to napkins to ornamentation and decorative objects like vases and pitchers (some of which Samson had brought from Persia) would partake of the central concept. The napkins and matchbooks held a quotation from the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam " a famous Persian poem, and behind the curving bar would be an oil painted mural depicting a famous Persian love story, the encounter of Khosru and Shireen. These were the subject of many stories, legends and poems, and as such were central figures in Persian culture and history. The bar was to be called the Persian Aub Zam Zam, a reference to the holy well of the same name located in Saudi Arabia – in other words, a Persian holy well or oasis.

After much hard work, opening day approached. Neighborhood residents were curious about the new addition to the Haight Street milieu and no doubt eager to see what the new place would have to offer. Then, disaster struck. Pearl Harbor was attacked and the country was at war. In later years, Bruno recalled that he heard of the attack as he was passing out leaflets along Haight Street announcing the impending opening of the bar.

Despite the turmoil, fear, outrage and excitement that swept the city, Samson proceeded with his plans and, on the 18th of December, 1941, the doors opened, and the Persian Aub Zam Zam was ready for business.

Regardless of the upheaval and dislocation of life in San Francisco in those years, the little bar did well. Bruno and his younger brother joined the Navy and shipped out to the Pacific while Samson, familiarly known to his customers as Sam, and his wife ran the bar and tried not to worry too much about their sons. They adapted as well as they could to the exigencies of wartime life in San Francisco. A blackout curtain was installed (the curtain support still remains as a reminder), and Sam was happy to serve the many service men who found their way out to Haight Street, except once, when he found a sailor and his date carrying on in the bar's phone booth and had the phone removed permanently as a consequence. Samson was known for his friendliness and, no doubt with Bruno in mind, special regard for the Navy.

The war ended, and Samson's sons both survived. Upon his discharge, Bruno worked for a short time in the city's pension office, but, before long, family ties called, and he went to work with his father behind the plank and stayed there for the rest of his life. As the years passed, Samson, Bruno and the Persian Aub Zam Zam became fixtures of Haight Street life and gradually gained renown beyond the neighborhood for their adherence to a set of "old school" values and standards of bar etiquette as well as for the exotic beauty of their bar.

Samson died in 1960 and the bar became Bruno's. Following his sense of the bar as both a family project and an embodiment of his family's commitment to certain standards of what was acceptable and what was not in the matter of bar culture, Bruno carried on. Gradually, the neighborhood changed. Plans were afoot to extend the freeway system through the heart of the district. Residents, fearful of falling property values, began to unload their old Victorians and head for the suburbs. Meanwhile, rents in North Beach were rising and members of the bohemian "beatnik" culture were being forced to look elsewhere to live. Suddenly, the confluence of vacant apartments, emerging baby boom restlessness, nearby Golden Gate Park, and most importantly the advent of LSD, combined to overwhelm the Haight neighborhood.

For Bruno, it was a disaster. The street was filled with what, in his eyes, were "barbarians" – dirty, spaced-out, aimless kids who seemed to be the very rejection of the style of life he had learned from Samson and his mother as they had struggled to establish themselves in a new country. The bar's business fell off as Bruno's customers, fearful of the new Haight Street scene, avoided the neighborhood. But still, he persevered. He cut costs by laying off his other bartenders and working the extra hours himself, all the while trying to adhere to the standards he had learned from his father.

And then gradually, slowly, once again things began to change. After several grim years when Haight Street was a sad, desolate strip of boarded up storefronts, broken glass and burned out derelicts, a new sense of possibility and renewal started to emerge. With new prosperity and new attitudes, Bruno's business began to improve. Martinis became fashionable, and Bruno, perhaps because of his stubborn adherence to what some saw as an archaic set of values, became regarded as a master of the martini art. His fame spread. Herb Caen and others, discovered Bruno and his meticulously preserved gem of a bar and wrote rapturously about it.

Having discovered Bruno myself one long ago afternoon, stunned by the unexpected beauty and improbable civility of the experience, I grew to appreciate what a remarkable thing

the Zam Zam is. Through Bruno, I came to know a different San Francisco than the one that is usually available. Bruno has passed on now, and the Zam Zam torch has been passed to me, owner Robert Clarke. I am grateful and honored to be able to help write the next chapter of a remarkable story.

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

The business has been in continual operation since 1941 except for a brief period during the ownership change.

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

The business is currently owned as a partnership by my wife, Diane Epping, and myself, Robert Clarke. However, Zam Zam has been a family-owned business since its inception in 1941. The original owner, Samson Mooshei, was an Assyrian immigrant who opened the bar after managing the Pall Mall Club, a small lunch counter in the front of the storefront where currently sits an Irish pub. After a few years, Samson realized that opening a bar could potentially expand his business and bring in more revenue and decided to open Persian Aub Zam Zam, also on Haight Street. In the late-1940s, Samson's son Bruno Mooshei began working at the bar and eventually took over managing the bar. Bruno worked at the bar until he eventually took over and managed the bar as a one-man show from the late 1960s until he died in 2000. Just before his death, the bar was bought by long-time patron Bob Clarke and his wife Diane Epping, who currently own the space now.

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

The bar was owned by the Mooshei family from its opening in 1941 until Bruno's death in 2000. The bar was passed on to Bruno by his father Samson as he was the oldest child, and Bruno's other siblings themselves had interests other than working at the bar. As Bruno aged, his health was in decline and eventually reached a point where he was not able to work at the bar anymore. Bob Clarke and Bruno had developed a deep friendship over the years and once Bruno became too ill, Bob offered to buy the bar from Bruno and preserve the largely unchanged bar. Bob; understanding the history of the bar, the Mooshei family, and the neighborhood; has carried on the tradition of the bar since he purchased it in 2000 and has not made any major changes to the space.

*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.*

See attached documents.

*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 business has been at the same location for almost 75 years. The building itself dates back to construction in 1910, however, the true historical significance of the bar is the interior architecture, which dates back to the opening in 1941. The design is heavily Persian and Assyrian influenced, with wood and plaster making up the detail in the framing, and was designed by the Assyrian architect named Jon Oshanna, a prominent designer who had designed several other hotels and bars across the City and Hawaii. The design gives the bar an authentic feel that is largely unchanged from its opening.

## **Criterion 2**

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

The business has provided a meeting place and social opportunity for several generations of San Franciscans. The bar mostly drew its clientele from working-class people that lived within a 3 to 4 block radius. The Haight-Ashbury neighborhood was largely a working-class neighborhood in the early days of the bar and while other more dive-type bars existed on Haight Street, Zam Zam gave off more of an element of class due to the strong detail of its construction and the strong detail of its martinis and specialty cocktails. As the businesses renown grew, it became a noted tourist destination and attracted attention from across the nation, spurred by its mention in a variety of travel guides and other publications.

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

The business has witnessed the many changes that have occurred in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood from the days of World War II until the present. The Haight-Ashbury neighborhood is also the epicenter of the hippy counterculture that exploded in the late-1960s and with this came a number of challenges facing the bar. Plans for a freeway going through the neighborhood led to a decline in property values and left many spaces vacant in the neighborhood. The rising rents in North Beach brought many of the newly relocated hippies into the Haight searching for a cheaper place to live. This led to a large decline in Zam Zam's business, causing Bruno to lay off staff to cut costs and run the bar himself. Eventually, the neighborhood changed again, with prices again on the rise, and Zam Zam's business began to recover and thrive once again.

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

The business was often described by Herb Caen who appreciated its timeless character and unique qualities. Bruno and Herb had a quite cozy relationship as Herb was a frequent visitor to the bar and admired it for its reminiscence of "old San Francisco". Aside from Herb Caen, the bar has numerous mentions in the San Francisco Chronicle by other writes as well as Zagat, Legacy Bars of San Francisco, SF Gate, the San Francisco Examiner, was featured on Lonely Planet, as well as Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations*. The bar also served as a filming location for Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine*. August Kleinzahler, a well-known poet that lives in the neighborhood also dedicated an essay in his collection of essays titled *Cutty, One Rock to Bruno*.

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

Over the years, many significant and well-known people have patronized Zam Zam. Some local notables include Herb Caen, August Kleinzahler, Daniel Handler (more recognizable by his pen name Lemony Snicket) all of whom were regulars at the bar, as well as other notable figures such as Anthony Bourdain, Woody Allen, Matt Dillon, and the cast of the popular television show Dexter, Dave Chapelle, and others.

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

The business demonstrates its commitment to the community by providing a unique and well run location for social interaction as well as preserving an historic facet of the neighborhood. The current owners, Bob Clarke and Diane Epping, also have demonstrated their commitment to preserving the neighborhood character by purchasing the bar from Bruno and keeping the original architecture, interior design, and drink menu the same as it has been since 1941.

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

Haight-Ashbury has gone through many changes over the life of Zam Zam. When the bar first opened, it was largely a working-class German-American neighborhood, however, by the 1960s the neighborhood was largely overrun by the hippy counterculture. However, locals still chose to go to Zam Zam's as it remained as a reminder of Old San Francisco. The bar also catered to poets, writers and musicians. Today, the neighborhood still has its share of hippy travelers, however, the bar largely caters to a healthy mixture of local residents and tourists visiting Haight Street. The bar is very much a destination bar in San Francisco as well and it draws many people from outside the neighborhood as well.

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

The interior of the business is essentially unchanged since 1941. It was designed by Assyrian architect Jon Oshanna and is modeled to give one the feeling that they are in an art deco Persian bar during the 1930s and 40s. Behind the rounded bar, there is a large framed oil on canvas mural painted by Jon Oshanna himself, depicting a famous Persian love story, The Encounter of Khosru and Shireen. It was restored in 2000 upon Bob's purchasing the bar. The interior of the bar features wooden and plaster Persian art deco archways that lead into the dimly lit bar area and back seating room. The front doors are also set back and were originally covered with a "blackout curtain" due to the mandatory blackouts of the City during World War II. Currently, the ledge where the curtain once hung is now decorated with original imported Persian vases and decorative items.

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

The community would lose a unique and long standing element of Haight Street life should it ever be closed. Over the years, many bars, bookstores, and vintage clothing stores have rotated in and out of the surrounding storefronts, however Zam Zam's is one of the few bars that has remained essentially unchanged. The architecture and paint on the interior are all original and have been restored to bring out their warm, dark colors. The bar is a long-standing institution on Haight Street and is irreplaceable as far as its style and history are concerned.

### Criterion 3

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

Zam Zam has a very unique style as it was originally designed in the Persian art deco style and has remained that way since 1941. The bar is dimly lit and reminiscent of Old San Francisco, as is largely rooted in tradition. During the years Bruno managed the bar, he held his customers to a very high standard. He did not allow people in the bar who were vagrants or seemed “spaced-out” as he would note. He also did not have patience for people to come in and float about without ordering a drink. He was a strict bartender. However, he had a trusting side amongst his long-term patrons and this ended up being a very valuable part of his legacy, as one of those patrons is now the current owner, Bob Clarke.

*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)*

The interior design of the business is unique and an integral part of the customers' experience. Were it ever to change, the loss would be profound. Though it has been modified over the years to adjust to contemporary tastes, the focus of the bar menu remains on classic cocktails such as the martini, Manhattan, old-fashioned, and gin and tonics. Many of the spirits involved are from local distilleries such as 209 Gin, Junipero Gin, St. George Spirits, and a number of locally produced beers such as Anchor Steam, Racer 5, Trumer Pils, and Scrimshaw. The bar remains as an old San Francisco-style cocktail bar even as new cocktail bars have sprung up throughout the City. Zam Zam is unique in that the architectural style of bar cannot be found anywhere else in the City, and the cocktails are as classic as the bar itself.

*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.). Does the building occupied by the business relate to the immediate neighborhood?*

The larger building that houses the business was built in 1910 in the Victorian-style, and houses several other businesses including a lingerie shop (Dollhouse Bettie), a Tibetan gift shop, and a hat shop. The façade around Zam Zam echoes the interior design of the bar, with two Persian minarets above the awning, painted red and green. The interior physical attributes are unchanged from the bar's inception as well, with very detailed wood and plaster architecture in a Persian art deco style. The space relates to the greater Haight-Ashbury neighborhood in that as the neighborhood has changed drastically over the years, the bar has remained the same and has served the local community throughout this time. Also, due to the wide variety of shops and stores along Haight Street, the bar fits in with the unique character of the commercial corridor and the larger neighborhood.



**ERTS  
WARE**

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**Do it  
Best**

**Benjamin  
Moore**

**Lam Lam  
COCKTAILS**  
EST. 1941



**OPEN**



1535  
657  
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1539  
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Fam Fam  
EST. 1941  
COCKTAILS

CITY  
ATM

ROBERTS  
HARDWARE

Best

Dr. Marten

362  
10210

Handwritten text on a chalkboard sign, including the words "Happier in the City" and "the park through the city".

ELECTRIC  
**Do it Best**

*Zam Zam* EST. 1941  
**COCKTAILS**

*Dollhouse*  
**Bettie**  
Vintage & Modern  
Lingerie

ATM

*ZAM ZAM*  
EST. 1941  
Cocktails & More  
100% Natural  
Flavors



























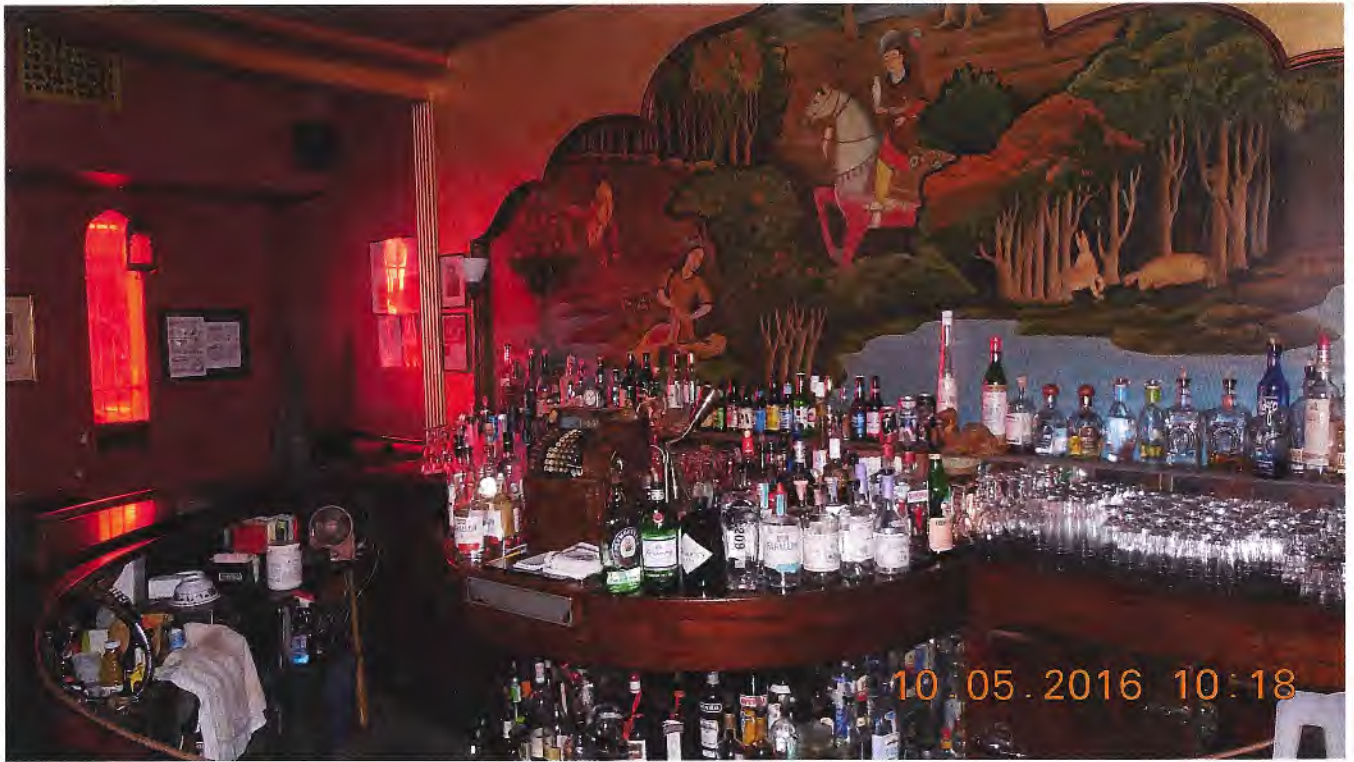
LUCKY STRIKE GREEN  
Circa 1944

10.05.2016 10:20



10.05.2016 10:23





Club Zam Zam  
High Spirits: The Legacy Bars of San Francisco by J.R. Dineen

10.05.2016 10:19







# SFGATE

## Bruno Mooshei, Legendary Haight St. Bar Owner Dies

Tyche Hendricks, Chronicle Staff Writer

Published 4:00 am, Sunday, December 3, 2000

A little bit of San Francisco history has passed away with the death of Bruno Mooshei, for almost 50 years the proprietor of the Persian Aub **Zam Zam**, a Haight Street watering hole immortalized by Chronicle columnist **Herb Caen** as the Holy Shrine of the Dry Martini. Mr. Mooshei, 80, died of prostate cancer on Nov. 25.

Mr. Mooshei was known for his martinis. He mixed Boord's gin and Boissiere vermouth -- in a ratio, he said, of 1000 to 1 -- and served ice cold in 3- ounce glasses, the same ones his father used when he opened the Zam Zam in 1941.

Equally legendary was Mr. Mooshei's cantankerous personality. If he didn't like the looks or attitude of a potential patron, he would brusquely send the person away.

"Bruno always served people if they did three basic things: come sit at a stool, put your money on the bar and give him your order," longtime patron **David Gutekunst**, 50, said yesterday. "But people that came in, fooled around, went to the bathroom, laughed with their friends, said 'What would you recommend?' when he asked for their order -- to them, he'd say, 'I recommend the corner bar.' He expected people to have bar manners."

"Bruno had kind of a crusty reputation," agreed **Robert Clarke**, another Zam Zam habitue and friend of Mr. Mooshei. "He had definite ideas about the way a bar should be run. He had, as he said, 'old school' ways. Ladies got napkins and gentlemen didn't. He ran a very strict bar. He had the freedom to do that because he wasn't working for anybody else."

Clarke and his partner, **Diane Epping**, loved the Zam Zam so much that they couldn't bear to see it close when Mr. Mooshei retired for health reasons in January. They bought the bar, gave it a new coat of paint and reopened it this weekend.

Behind the unassuming door at 1633 Haight St., the room is small and dimly lit, with a Middle Eastern ambience. There are Moorish arches over the doors, and a mural behind the semicircular bar depicts a prince and princess from a Persian fairy tale. The place was designed by Assyrian architect **Jon Oshanna** for Mooshei's father, also Assyrian.

Clarke and Epping plan to keep the original decor. The price of the martinis will go up, however, to \$4.50 from Mr. Mooshei's \$2.50. The size will increase as well, said Clarke.

In a 1991 column, Caen called the Zam Zam "a place that time forgot. It's like a movie palace of yesteryore, its curving bar filled with worshipers sitting in silent contemplation of the silver bullet in its graceful stem glass. You expect . . . perhaps **Charles Boyer** whispering to **Hedy Lamarr**, "Take me to zuh Cazbah."

"The plan is to keep it essentially as it was," said Clarke. "I think it's important to maintain the tradition established over many years of a quiet place where people can have a drink, listen to vintage music and have a civilized time."

Mr. Mooshei's parents emigrated to the United States from what is now northern Iran. Mr. Mooshei was born April 25, 1920, in Baghdad as his parents were leaving the Middle East, according to **Norma Jean Mooshei**, his sister-in-law for 57 years.

The Moosheis lived at the corner of Haight and Ashbury and ran a tiny restaurant with five stools called the Pall Mall, Norma Mooshei recalled. When Mr. Mooshei's parents realized they could make more money doing less grueling work by running a bar, they opened the Persian Aub Zam Zam room. The name, according to a Herb Caen column, means fountain of youth.

Mr. Mooshei graduated from San Francisco's old **Polytechnic High School** and served in World War II as a Navy medic assigned to the Marines at Guadalcanal. On his return, he

worked for the city of San Francisco in the pension department for a couple of years before joining his father's business. He took over the Zam Zam in 1951.

Customers and friends describe Mr. Mooshei as a fiercely nostalgic man for whom San Francisco's heyday was in the '40s and '50s.

"Haight Street back then was like a little village," said Norma Mooshei. "There were streetcars. You knew the people who owned the stores, you knew everybody. You'd see people and stop and talk."

Things started to go downhill for Mr. Mooshei when Haight Street was overrun by hippies in the 1960s, but he doggedly kept his business going and adhered to his old ways, working the bar in a vest and tie.

"Bruno was always a gentleman," said Gutekunst. "He was very Old San Francisco. He would say there were only two great cities in the world and they're both gone: San Francisco and Shanghai. They had intrigue and class. They were international, and everybody dressed right."

Though the close-knit neighborhood feeling of the Haight, and indeed, San Francisco, began to fray over time, Mr. Mooshei created his own community of loyal patrons who became his friends. The clientele ranged from cab drivers and construction workers to poets and bankers.

"The bar was his life and the people that hung around with him outside the bar, but most of us knew him from the bar," said Gutekunst, who lived nearby on Fell Street and works in commercial **real estate**. "In the end, the bar was our living room."

Mr. Mooshei loved to eat out, and he had a regular circle of friends, including Gutekunst and Clarke, who joined him on jaunts to old-fashioned restaurants such as the Gold Mirror on Taraval Street or the Three Flames in San Jose.

Several times a year he would take a few days off for a vacation in Reno. He used to brag that he had never traveled east of Nevada.

"He'd go for three days and that was it," said Norma Mooshei. "He'd play keno, a little bit of slot machine. He'd never win and never lose. It was just for fun.

"We kept saying, why don't you just retire and enjoy yourself," she added. "But he wouldn't quit. He hated to give it up."

Mr. Mooshei is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Allen and Norma Jean Mooshei of Ceres; two nieces and a nephew; four grand nieces and nephews, and a great-grand nephew.

Plans for a memorial service are pending.



Features » Food & Drink

February 16, 2014

## Behold the glory of Aub Zam Zam while sipping martinis with bartender Tei Gundolfi

By Brendan P. Bartholomew



click to enlarge

JUAN PARDO/SPECIAL TO THE S.F. EXAMINER

Tei Gundolfi, a former actress, has been a bartender at Aub Zam Zam for eight years.

With its twin minarets, the facade of Aub Zam Zam evokes the mythologized Middle East of classic Hollywood films. Part the double doors under its Moorish arches, let your eyes adjust to the darkness, then take a glance at the stunning king-and-princess mural behind the circular bar. The restored oil painting seems less Hollywood kitsch and more a genuine tribute to Persian culture.

In bygone decades, before the word Persian disappeared from the name of the San Francisco bar Persian Aub Zam Zam, getting kicked out by longtime owner Bruno Mooshei was a rite of passage, the type of quintessential San Francisco experience treasured by old-school thrill-seekers. Mooshei died in 2000, but current owner Bob Clarke preserves the Haight-Ashbury bar with slavish respect for its history.

Bartender Tei Gundolfi is obsessed with education. She holds five degrees and certifications, and originally moved to The City so she could train as a Waldorf-method kindergarten teacher. A thespian in high school, Gundolfi has been a theater owner in Tampa, Fla., and an actress in New York City. Her screen credits include bit parts in "Sex and the City," "Law and Order" and "The Sopranos."

### People rave about Aub Zam Zam's martinis. What else should we know about your drink selection?

We definitely do a lot of classic cocktails, and we've got a fair selection of local offerings, such as No. 209 Gin, which is made in San Francisco, and Botanica Gin from Richmond. We've got several things from St. George's Spirits in Alameda, including Hangar One Vodka, Breaking & Entering Bourbon and Dry Rye Gin. And of course we also have Junipero Gin from the Anchor Distilling Company.

### What is it that makes somebody with your credentials and qualifications want to tend bar at Aub Zam Zam?

I was working here and teaching kindergarten, and I realized being at Zam Zam was the high

point of my week. Bob Clarke is amazing—when I was pregnant, he gave me four months of maternity leave. Working here allows me to be at home with my daughter all day.

**How did you get into bartending?** I moved to New York at the age of 28 to be an actress, and I realized I liked the stability of bartending.

**Was your goal to be on stage, do commercials, work in film or be on TV?** My preference was for the theater. And certainly my preference is not going out on the job hunt every day.

**How did New York treat you?** At first, it was impossible to find a place to live. I lived out of a duffel bag for six months. There were times when my dog and I would sleep on the pool table of the bar I worked at. But I had a great time in New York. I loved being there. It was a magical time.

**What do people notice about Aub Zam Zam besides the decor?** Our jukebox is stellar. It's got the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, Billie Holiday and Miles Davis. I've been here eight years and I'm still not sick of the jukebox. That tells you something.

**Does being on Haight Street mean you have a lot of crazy experiences?** I tend to block these things out, but yeah, I've had some. There's a constant gauging of who's walking through the door. This is the common element between kindergarten and bartending — it's the same job, but a different language.

[More Food & Drink »](#)

Tags: [Food & Drink](#), [Aub Zam Zam](#), [Bruno Mooshei](#), [Bob Clarke](#), [Tei Gundolfi](#), [Haight-Ashbury](#)



**BRENDAN P. BARTHOLOMEW**

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# HERB CAEN



## Labor Day Lollygags

CAN'T LET summer '86 fade away without saluting the courageous tourists who left their hearts, suntans and wallets here the past couple of months. I watched them daily with growing admiration as they uncomplainingly stood in line at the Powell-Market turntable, bugged by panhandlers, deafened by bongo players, reviled by sidewalk preachers, laughed at by the locals for their funny clothes (or lack of them), overwhelmed by the smell of cheap pizza and franchised burgers. An admirable group, honked at by rude drivers as they slowed down at intersections, wondering which way to go; turning their street maps this way and that and even upside down before deciding they can't get there from here; spending hours to drive down the Lombard curlycue or trying to get up to Coit Tower; venturing into unknown little restaurants to find themselves the only customers. I hope they found the sourdough sour, the martinis dry and the chop suey properly chopped. And on a sizzling day back home in Indiana, or wherever, may they remember the cool gray city by the bay — and long to return.

★ ★ ★

**SPINOFF:** So many crotchety locals get annoyed when visitors call the cable cars "trolleys" that at the Cable Car Museum, mgr. Ross Kleinschmidt has been handing out buttons reading "Don't Call Them Trolleys!" Apparently "Frisco" is now acceptable. No buttons about that.

★ ★ ★

**HOT S.F. one-liner in the 1920s:** "Is your sister married or does she live on Bush street?" That comes to mind occasionally when I drive down that splendid thoroughfare — one of our first one-way streets — past aging apartment houses that once were, yes, Houses, as in "A house is not a home," Madam Sally Stanford's great if not original line. Bush has changed little through the years, except for the double-parked trucks and the mad pace of the traffic. The scale is still small and human, even though the "sacred" view corridor has been blocked in a typically brilliant move by our city planners. When Bush and Pine were first made one-way, we occasionally got our directions mixed up. I use my mnemonic to this day: "A bush is DOWN on the ground, a pine tree grows UP."

★ ★ ★

**BY THE WAY,** I note that the Bay Bridge, which turns 50 in November, is not only having trouble raising funds for a party, it is also being put down as "the other bridge." Outrageous! Those of us who've lived on Telegraph or Russian Hills will take the Bay Bridge over the Gate any time; its graceful main span, arching across our living room windows at night, was and is mesmerizing. Besides, the Bay is part of the real city, plunging headlong into the downtown morass, whereas its more famous rival is aloof and faraway, a dream in the hazy distance. The Gate is a work of art (and Joe Strauss) and an engineering marvel, but so is the old gray workhorse. Not only that, you get more miles for less money, and Oakland at the other end. For six-bits you were expecting maybe Paris?

★ ★ ★

**TO MY SLIGHT** surprise, I found myself on the Bay Bridge last Thurs. night. Only a nut would make the 70-mile round trip to the Concord Pavilion to hear Fats Domino and Jerry Lee Lewis, and I was one of those nuts. Fats was OK, his pudgy little hands covered with diamonds, but even with "Shake Rattle and Roll" he has become a lounge act. Jerry Lee Lewis, however, is the real article — weird, skinny, redolent of roadhouses, one-night stands, cigaret burns on battered uprights, waking up alone with a bad taste in your heart (it's catching). He's cruel to pianos, playing top notes with his booted feet and banging the lid in rhythm, but he has hands that go all the way to his elbows and a flailing style that never quits. Jerry Lee, married six times, minus most of his stomach, singing slightly off-key about losers ("You Win Again"), guys getting old ("39 And Holding"), burning burned-out memories ("Me and Bobby McGee," which Janis Joplin did better), and "Great Balls of Fire," a title that covers it all. Fats wasn't worth the 70 miles but J.L. Lewis pumped you up for the drive home.

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★ ★ ★

**IT'S A YEAR** for anniversaries. Twenty years since the Beatles made their last public appearance (at Candlestick), almost 20 years since "The Summer of Love" and the greening and graying of the Hashbury. I remember walking down Haight in '67, staring at the wacked-out kids, and bandleader Maury Woloohan saying, "If you think they're bad now, wait till they discover martinis."

If they did, one hopes it was at the Art Moderne bar called Persian Aub Zam Zam, which, amazingly, has been on Haight since 1941 and seems to have changed not at all. Through wars and the hippies, the Zam Zam has stood there untouched, jukebox playing Tommy Dorsey, owner Bruno Mooshei behind the bar, making perfect martinis. His father opened the place in '41, Bruno took it over in '51, and he still takes pride in his \$2.25 beauties.

Feeling nostalgia amid the neuralgia, I hobbled in there the other night to find the bar filled. As I called out my order to Bruno, a kid with long hair and an earring in one ear arose and said, "Here, take my stool — I've had enough." "How many?" I asked. "Four," he said. "All gin and straight up." Twenty years later, a post-hippie had discovered martinis, and I was not surprised to see him walk over to the jukebox and select a Carmen Cavallaro record.

# ZIPPY The PINHEAD "REAR EXIT" BILL GRIFFIN

IN AN ATTEMPT TO GAIN ENTRY TO "BRUNO'S BLUE ROOM", CLAUDE BRINGS ALONG A FRIEND-- SURELY, BRUNO WILL BE WON OVER BY ZIPPY'S FLIPPANT PHRASINGS.

HE CAN TALK FOR SECONDS ON ANY SUBJECT!!

I'LL BRING A SMILE TO YOUR EYE & A TEAR TO YOUR LIPS!!

BRUNO, I'VE BEEN TO TH' NOTHINGNESS AT TH' CENTER OF TH' UNIVERSE-- AND THE OWNER IS WILLING TO SELL!!

I'M GONNA HAVE TO ASK YOU FOR SOME I.D.--

THIS IS MY MEMBERSHIP CARD IN TH' "BARNEY RUBBLE FAN CLUB"!!

HE'S CONGENIAL. HUH, BRUNO? NOW HOW 'BOUT THAT MARTINI? YOU CAN LEAVE OFF TH' 3 OLIVES!!

HMMM...

CLAUDE, AS WE WERE FLYING THROUGH TH' DOOR, DID YOU NOTICE A SIGN THAT SAID "DRESS CODE ENFORCED AT ALL TIMES"?

NOW HE TELLS ME.

I'M SERIOUS!!

Happy Hour 5:15-5:20

# ZIPPY The PINHEAD "ADD TWO EGGS, BAKE FOUR BILLION YEARS" BILL GRIFFIN

AS A LAST, DESPERATE MEASURE, CLAUDE & ZIPPY DON 100% ACRYLIC LEISURE SUITS IN ORDER TO PLEASE THE "DEMON OF THE BLUE ROOM", BIG BRUNO.

I EVEN SHINED UP MY 6-INCH PLATFORMS!!

NO WE BREAK TH' DRESS CODE YET?

CAN I GET THAT MARTINI NOW, BRUNO? NO OLIVES, NO NAPKIN, HOLD TH' DORITOS!

WE ALSO ADMIT TH' EXISTENCE OF A GREAT NOTHINGNESS RIGHT OUTSIDE MIAMI!

HE'S CRYING!!

SWE.

9:12

HERE ARE YOUR DRINKS, BOYS.. IT'S THOSE OUTFITS.. THEY REMIND ME OF MY FIRST WIFE-- IT WAS BACK IN '74, SHE WORE HER POLYESTER PANTSUIT EVERYWHERE

THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL STORY, BRUNO-- THANKS.

MARTINIS WERE HER DRINK-- & ALWAYS WITH TWO NAPKINS..

HOW MANY SIPS DID YOU GET BEFORE HE THREW US OUT, ZIP??

THREE & A THIRD..

DID YOU HAVE TO TELL HIM TH' UNIVERSE WAS CREATED IN 3 HOURS BY JULIA CHILD?

I'M SERIOUS!!

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*Filing Date:* October 17, 2016  
*Case No.:* 2016-013922LBR  
*Business Name:* Zam Zam  
*Business Address:* 1633 Haight Street  
*Zoning:* NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial)  
40-X Height & Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 1246/023  
*Applicant:* Robert F. Clarke  
1633 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor London Breed, District 5  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

## BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Opened in 1941 by Assyrian-born Samson Mooshei as the Persian Aub Zam Zam (now known as Zam Zam), the long-standing Haight Street cocktail lounge is known for its classic cocktails and distinctive 1940s-era Persian Art Deco interior. Its name, the “Persian Aub Zam Zam,” is a reference to a holy well or oasis of the same name in Saudi Arabia. Mooshei’s brother-in-law, Malek, co-founded the business and together they hired Assyrian architect and designer, Jon Oshanna, to design an exotic and otherworldly Persian-inspired interior for their new cocktail lounge. Oshanna was known for his designed public spaces, including hotel lobbies, theaters, and bars, that could be found throughout California and Hawaii. The end product resulted in an exquisitely designed interior of Assyrian Art Deco influences with wood and plaster making up the detailing in framing, and a prominent curved bar set in front of a mural. Painted by Oshanna, the oil painted mural depicts a famous Persian love story, the encounter of Khosru and Shireen. Other decorative elements are found throughout the interior, including decorative objects like cases and pitchers. Sam’s son, Bruno, took leadership of the business upon his father’s death in 1960; Bruno had worked at the bar since the late 1940s. Over the years, the lounge came to be known for its classic cocktails such as martinis, old-fashions, and manhattans, as well as its adherence to strict standards of bar etiquette. Right before Bruno passed away in 2000, longtime patron and family friend, Bob Clarke and his wife, Diane Epping, had purchased the business. The current owners have not made any major changes to the space and intend to carry on the establishment’s legacy as a destination bar in the Haight known for its classic cocktails and unique original interior design.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### *Review Criteria*

1. *When was business founded?*

1941

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

Yes, Zam Zam qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Zam Zam has operated for 75 years.
- ii. Zam Zam has contributed to the identity of the Haight and the Bay Area's nightlife culture by providing locals and visitors a unique cocktail lounge experience featuring classic cocktails and an architecturally exquisite and exotic interior since the World War II-era.
- iii. Zam Zam is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its craft of serving old-fashioned cocktails and its tradition of functioning as a neighborhood gathering spot in an architecturally unique setting.

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

Yes. The business is associated with the art of craft cocktails, unique interior architecture, and the tradition of operating a cocktail lounge.

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

Yes. The building is associated with significant architecture. It has been previously evaluated for historical significance by the Planning Department and is considered a "Category A" property and has been identified as a potential contributor to the California Register-eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District. Its characteristically Persian-influenced interior design created by Jon Oshanna is one of the most significant parts of the business.

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

No, however the property has been identified as a potential contributor to the California Register-eligible Haight Ashbury 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. Zam Zam has been cited in numerous publications, including but not limited to: SF Gate, 12/3/2000, "Bruno Mooshei, Legendary Haight St Bar Owner Dies," by Tyche Hendrix; SF Examiner, 2/16/2014, "Behold the glory of Aub Zam Zam while sipping martinis with bartender Tei Gondolfi," by Brendan P. Bartholomew.

The business was also featured in Anthony Bourdain's hit television series, *No Reservations*; earned its own chapter in *High Spirits: The Legacy Bars of San Francisco* by J.K. Dineen; and was listed on SF Heritage's certified list of San Francisco Legacy Bars & Restaurants.

### ***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business***

**Location(s) associated with the business:**

- 1633 Haight Street

**Recommended by Applicant**

- Interior design featuring 1940s-era Persian Art Deco influences, designed by Assyrian architect, Jon Oshanna
- Rounded bar
- Large framed oil canvas mural painting by Jon Oshanna that depicts a famous Persian love story, "The Encounter of Khosru and Shireen"
- Wooden and plaster Persian Art Deco archways leading into the dimly lit bar area and back seating room
- Classic cocktails, including the martini, Manhattan, old-fashioned, and gin and tonics

**Additional Recommended by Staff**

- Exterior façade features including its projecting sign, Persian-influenced entryway, and mosaic tiles imbedded in the front façade.



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE NOVEMBER 16, 2016

*Case No.:* 2016-013922LBR  
*Business Name:* Zam Zam  
*Business Address:* 1633 Haight Street  
*Zoning:* NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial)  
40-X Height & Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 1246/023  
*Applicant:* Robert F. Clarke  
1633 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor London Breed, District 5  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
Desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

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**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ZAM ZAM, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1633 HAIGHT STREET (BLOCK/LOT 1246/023).**

**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 Haight-Ashbury 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 November 16, 2016, 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 Zam Zam 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 Zam Zam.

*Location (if applicable)*

- 1633 Haight Street

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

- Interior design featuring 1940s-era Persian Art Deco influences, designed by Assyrian architect, Jon Oshanna
- Rounded bar
- Large framed oil canvas mural painting by Jon Oshanna that depicts a famous Persian love story, "The Encounter of Khosru and Shireen"
- Wooden and plaster Persian Art Deco archways leading into the dimly lit bar area and back seating room
- Classic cocktails, including the martini, Manhattan, old-fashioned, and gin and tonics
- Exterior façade features including its projecting sign, Persian-influenced entryway, and mosaic tiles imbedded in the front façade.

**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 2016-013922LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on November 16, 2016.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: