



By Phil Faroudja

LOCAL NEWS: While it is true some empty storefronts remain on Union street, a few new eateries and businesses have been kind enough to move in recently, in a clear effort to increase activity in the area ... First, there is Dento at 1849 Union. An upscale wine and sake bar, it offers elevated small bites such as sashimi, caviar, artisanal fromage and charcuterie and has a great look ... At 2136 Union, near Brixton, now is restaurant Il Casaro Osteria. Featuring Italian cuisine and nice decor, this has been an instant hit and is packed on weekends. Calibrian owners Francesco Covucci and Peter Fazio say, "We fell in love with the location and the street... We welcome everybody no matter their budget." Both expensive and low-priced dishes are featured ... If you are into boxing and fitness, "Skrapp Pack" at 2068 Union may be the place. The athletic club opened last year and is billed as a premiere training facility in mixed martial arts. Classes in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Muay Thai, and Wrestling are taught ... I was eating by the former Metro Theater the other day, when a man wearing a Texas Longhorn sweatshirt asked where the box office is. I had to tell him the cinema closed, but it's great there still is interest!

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ABOUT TOWN: North Beach has been experiencing something of a revival lately. For example: Tosca Cafe, at Broadway and Columbus, has been expensively remodeled by noted designer Ken Fulk and opened last year. It has a very classy appearance which retains the original character ... The legendary City Lights bookstore is still popular, and now has author appearances Thursday nights that gets a good turnout. Plus there is the always amazing selection of books ... The reopened Condor Club was recently approved as a legacy establishment ... There is

a new Luke's Local grocery at Columbus and Green. That's a great location, right at the heart of North Beach. It is still being completed and outdoor awnings and signs are not yet in place. Customers seemed glad to have a food market when I went by ... Somebody should do something about the hungry i. The comedy club is still there but shuttered. If you brought in famous modern-day comics like Jimmy Kimmel or whoever, it could probably come back to life.

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"I'm tired of Chanel No. 5. When are they going to come out with Chanel No. 6?"

ALL THAT JAZZ: If you want to hear a great jazz band, try Nick Rossi at the Top of the Mark. His Swing Six performs the first Saturday of every month and is booked solid. People show up in forties garb to take in the tunes ... Mr. Tipple's Jazz Studio, at 39 Fell near the Civic Center, features blues music every night, mainly by locals. You can dine on dim sum and enjoy craft cocktails while absorbing the melodies ... And the SF Jazz Center has turned into a powerhouse, with at least two performances a day and many on weekends. A visit is recommended ... And that is a wrap for this issue. We hope to see you at our next meeting. Continue in good health, everybody!

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