



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: February 26, 2024

LIGURIA BAKERY

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-031
Business Name: Liguria Bakery
Business Address: 1700 Stockton St.
District: District 3
Applicant: Molly Soracco, Daughter/Granddaughter to Owners
Nomination Date: September 30, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Liguria Bakery is a family-owned and family-operated business specializing in fresh focaccia, an Italian flat bread. Opened in 1911, Liguria Bakery has been an essential component of North Beach's cultural fabric. The business is a local favorite as well as an attraction for tourists looking to sample Italian baked goods and cuisine in North Beach.

Liguria Bakery was founded by Ambrosio Soracco, who had recently emigrated from the Liguria region of Italy. Soon after, his two brothers – Giuseppe and Giovanni – immigrated to the United States to run the business with him. Over the years, numerous Soracco family members owned and/or worked in the bakery. Today, it is owned and operated by Michael Soracco and Josephine Soracco. Many family members help with the business, including Sharon Soracco, Leslie Soracco Mitchell, and Molly Soracco.

Liguria Bakery is one of the last remaining businesses of its kind. The dough is mixed in an antique stainless-steel machine and baked in the original brick oven from 1911. The family still uses Ambrosio's original recipe from Liguria to bake their signature focaccia. To this day, many generations of families continue to come to the corner of Stockton and Filbert streets to purchase this nostalgic focaccia. It is truly a one-of-a-kind business.

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

1700 Stockton St. from 1911 to Present (113 years)

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, Liguria Bakery has contributed to the history and identity of the North Beach 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:

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
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- The business is associated with Italian cuisine, specifically baked goods originating from the Liguria region of Italy.
- Liguria Bakery is associated with North Beach's identity as an Italian and Italian American cultural enclave in San Francisco. Open since 1911, Liguria Bakery is now one of the longest-running businesses in North Beach and one of the last remaining of its kind.

The building at 1700-1704 Stockton Street was designed by Charles Fantoni, a notable local architect and builder. Fantoni designed many flat buildings in North Beach, as well as the prominent Saints Peter and Paul Church on Filbert Street. The 1700-1704 Stockton Street building is a contributor to the California Register-eligible Washington Square Historic District. The building is notable as it retains its original display windows and clerestory with glazed ceramic tile base. In the 1976 Department of City Planning Survey, the property was listed as "Y"; this rating suggests the building has architectural merit.

Liguria Bakery and the building at 1700-1704 Stockton Street are mentioned in the North Beach Historic Context Statement.

- Liguria Bakery has been mentioned multiple times in the media, including articles in Eater San Francisco, SFGATE, the San Francisco Chronicle, and Hoodline. On its 100th anniversary, Mayor Lee proclaimed July 28, 2011, as "Liguria Bakery Day." It was also honored at the San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade for its 100th anniversary.
- With regard to racial and social equity, Liguria Bakery is a family-owned and family-operated business that was founded by Italian immigrant Ambrosio Soracco in 1911. Since then, Liguria Bakery has greatly contributed to the cultural fabric of North Beach. Liguria Bakery also gives back to their community, including donating to Food Runners San Francisco, Toys for Tots with San Francisco Fire Station 28, the San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade, and the Salesian Boys & Girls Club.

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, Liguria Bakery is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Liguria Bakery 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:

- Bakery featuring focaccia.
- Signature wrapping of white parchment paper with white string.
- Custom-built brick oven from 1911.
- Stainless steel dough mixer.
- Mural on the exterior of the building.

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.

- Bakery.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Liguria Bakery currently located at 1700 Stockton St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

February 26, 2024

LIGURIA BAKERY

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-031
Business Name: Liguria Bakery
Business Address: 1700 Stockton St.
District: District 3
Applicant: Molly Soracco, Daughter/Granddaughter to Owners
Nomination Date: September 30, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Liguria Bakery, currently located at 1700 Stockton St.

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 on 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 February 26, 2024, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Liguria Bakery 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 Liguria Bakery.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Bakery featuring focaccia.
- Signature wrapping of white parchment paper with white string.
- Custom-built brick oven from 1911.
- Stainless steel dough mixer.
- Mural on the exterior of the building.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Liguria Bakery on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Bakery.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on February 26, 2024.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-031
Business Name: Liguria Bakery
Business Address: 1700 Stockton St.
District: District 3
Applicant: Molly Soracco, Daughter/Granddaughter to Owners
Nomination Date: September 30, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

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

1700 Stockton St. from 1911 to Present (113 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: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: January 24, 2024

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

AARON PESKIN
佩斯金 市參事

September 30, 2016

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi:

It is my honor and privilege to nominate Liguria Bakery for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Founded in 1911 by a Genovese baker named Ambrogio Soracco, Liguria Bakery has promoted Italian culture and tradition in North Beach for over a century and remains one of San Francisco's most unique establishments. Located on the north-east side of historic Washington Square Park, Liguria Bakery is a fascinating and distinctive attraction for residents and tourists alike. For over a century Liguria Bakery has stayed in the family, and their Focaccia has given many San Franciscans an authentic taste of Italy.

Liguria Bakery is an essential piece of the fabric of North Beach's rich Italian Heritage, and I hope for its continued success and growth as part of the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aaron P. L." in a cursive style.

Aaron Peskin



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Liguria Bakery

Business owner name(s): Michael Soracco and Josephine Soracco

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 1700 Stockton Street, San Francisco, CA 94133

Telephone: (415) 421 - 3786 **Email:** rocco997@aol.com

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: N/A

Facebook: N/A **Twitter:** N/A

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 0 0 1 7 0 2 7

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by Person with a Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ+-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Business* | <input type="checkbox"/> Woman-Owned Business |

**Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Molly Soracco

Contact person title: Daughter/granddaughter to owners

Contact telephone: () - **Contact email:**

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.

Original San Francisco address: **Zip Code:**

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other Address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Applicant Disclosures

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. A business deemed not current 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 grants through the Legacy Business Program.

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.

Name: Michael Soracco

Signature:



Date: 8/15/2023

LIGURIA BAKERY

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

“Stepping into the famed Liguria Bakery in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood is like taking a tantalizing journey back in time, where the smell of freshly-baked focaccia lingers in the air and the warm, solicitous presence of the Soracco family makes you feel right at home. With a centennial legacy spanning generations and a secret focaccia recipe that has locals lining up, this historic family-owned bakery has become an irreplaceable part of the city's culinary landscape.”¹

b. Describe whom the business serves.

Liguria Bakery is a family owned and operated business specializing in baking fresh, hand-made focaccia bread, an Italian flat bread. The business serves customers from all over the world! Located in the heart of North Beach, Liguria Bakery is a local favorite, as well as a tourist hot-spot.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

“Focaccia, our specialty!”

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Liguria Bakery was founded in 1911 by Ambrosio Soracco at 1700 Stockton Street, its present location, on a site previously occupied by a church. Ambrosio had immigrated to San Francisco in 1907 from Chiavari, near Genoa in Italy in the Liguria region. Known as the Italian Riviera or Ligurian Riviera, Liguria is a crescent-shaped region in northwest Italy between the sea and the mountains featuring pastel-colored houses and breathtaking views. After working at another San Francisco bakery, Ambrosio founded Liguria Bakery at its present location. After a year, he

¹ Nina Singh-Hudson, Hoodline, "Explore the Iconic Focaccia of Liguria Bakery in San Francisco that Has Locals Lining Up", July 10, 2023, <https://hoodline.com/2023/07/explore-the-iconic-focaccia-of-liguria-bakery-in-san-francisco/>.

sent for his two brothers, Giuseppe and Giovanni, to come and work with him, helping them immigrate from Italy.^{2 3 4}

On Ambrosio Soracco's passing in 1938, Giovanni and Giuseppe sold their shares in the bakery and opened their own business. Ambrosio's wife Mary and her new partners ran the business with hired bakers for eight years until her son, George Soracco, was old enough to become a baker himself in 1946. In 2000, the Soracco family had repurchased the other two shares.⁵

In 2013, George Soracco passed away. Liguria Bakery is currently owned and operated by George's son Michael Soracco and George's wife Josephine Soracco. Several Soracco family members help with the business, including Michael's wife Sharon Soracco and their daughters Leslie (Soracco) Mitchell and Molly Soracco. Leslie is a full-time employee, while Sharon and Molly provide occasional help when needed during busy times and holidays.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1911 to 1912:	Ambrosio Soracco
1912 to 1938:	Ambrosio Soracco; Giovanni Soracco; Giuseppe Soracco
1938 to 1946:	Mary Soracco; (First name unknown) Cassassa; (First name unknown) Puemonte
1946 to 2000:	George Soracco; Gene Dimattei; Eddie Demartini; August Azzolini; Attalio Aste
2000 to 2013:	George Soracco; Michael Soracco
2013 to Present:	Michael Soracco; Josephine Soracco

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

Liguria Bakery sustained a small kitchen fire in August 2023 and remained closed while repairs were made. It reopened in December of 2023.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

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

² GraceAnn Walden, Northside San Francisco, "Cook's Chat: Michael Soracco of Liguria Bakery," January 9, 2008, https://www.northsidesf.com/jan09/fw_cookschat.html.

³ Jonathan Kauffman, San Francisco Chronicle, "At North Beach's Liguria Bakery, the Soracco family knows focaccia — and San Francisco", January 12, 2018, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/article/At-North-Beach-s-Liguria-Bakery-the-Soracco-12493858.php>.

⁴ Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liguria_Bakery.

⁵ Ibid.

Liguria Bakery has been providing baked goods and focaccia bread to North Beach and the whole of San Francisco since its founding in 1911.

When it first opened, “the shop was just another corner bakery in a crowded Italian neighborhood.”⁶ Business founder Ambrosio Soracco and his brothers “baked crusty loaves and spindly breadsticks, fruited panettone and focaccia. The bakery was open 7 days a week, the bakers’ hours every day well into the double digits. Even at a time when loaves cost 5 cents, the family would deliver them to homes around the neighborhood.”⁷ Commercial bakeries in San Francisco that got big first elbowed Liguria out of the market. What was left, then, was focaccia.⁸

Today, Liguria Bakery is a family-owned operation specializing in focaccia.⁹ “The dough is mixed in an antique machine, the bread is baked in a brick oven, the product is sold in 8-by-10-inch sheets and wrapped in plain white paper and tied up with string. They use no preservatives, ... and when they run out of stuff to sell, they close down for the day. See ya, come back tomorrow. The focaccia is made from a secret recipe brought over from Genoa by Ambrosio Soracco, the founding father, and the family has been baking and selling it in North Beach since 1911.... Liguria's focaccia, which now comes with 10 different toppings, is wildly popular. There are lines most mornings, and during the holidays, the line stretches up the block and around the corner.”¹⁰

Liguria Bakery truly is one of the “last remaining” businesses of its kind!

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

Not applicable.

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

Liguria Bakery frequently participates in several charity events and donation opportunities within the North Beach area. Donations have been provided to Food Runners San Francisco, Toys for Tots with San Francisco Fire Station 28, the San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade, and the Salesian Boys & Girls Club.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

⁶ Jonathan Kauffman, San Francisco Chronicle, "At North Beach's Liguria Bakery, the Soracco family knows focaccia — and San Francisco", January 12, 2018, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/article/At-North-Beach-s-Liguria-Bakery-the-Soracco-12493858.php>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carl Nolte, SFGATE, "Liguria Bakery in North Beach makes focaccia", June 12, 2011, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/nativeson/article/liguria-bakery-in-north-beach-makes-focaccia-2368406.php>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Liguria Bakery has been featured extensively in the media, including the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Time, numerous food magazines, books, etc. It has also been highlighted in several television programs such as Sesame Street, Julia Childs cooking show, and most recently guest-starred with Chef Paul Hollywood. Following are key media references:

- *"16 Essential Bakeries in San Francisco"*
Eater San Francisco
October 13, 2023
<https://sf.eater.com/maps/best-san-francisco-bakeries>
- *"Explore the Iconic Focaccia of Liguria Bakery in San Francisco that Has Locals Lining Up"*
Hoodline
July 10, 2023
https://hoodline.com/2023/07/explore-the-iconic-focaccia-of-liguria-bakery-in-san-francisco/#google_vignette
- *"At North Beach's Liguria Bakery, the Soracco family knows focaccia — and San Francisco"*
San Francisco Chronicle
January 12, 2018
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/article/At-North-Beach-s-Liguria-Bakery-the-Soracco-12493858.php>
- *"Liguria Bakery in North Beach makes focaccia"*
SFGATE
June 12, 2011
<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/nativeson/article/liguria-bakery-in-north-beach-makes-focaccia-2368406.php>
- Liguria Bakery was featured on season 2, episode 7 of the Reef Television series "City Bakes" hosted by Paul Hollywood.¹¹

Watch on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCu3dQj4dl0>. Liguria Bakery is featured at 18:50 into the video.

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

Liguria Bakery has received the following awards and recognition:

- "Liguria Bakery Day" proclamation on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, Mayor Edwin Lee, City and County of San Francisco, July 28, 2011
- 100-year anniversary award, San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade, 2011

¹¹ Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liguria_Bakery

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

If Liguria Bakery were to close, the greatest loss would be that of familial sentiments and historical attributes to the city of San Francisco. The bakery has been in the same spot since 1911, and many generations of families continue to come to the corner of Stockton and Filbert filled with the nostalgia of their own familial memories related to this establishment and their “famous” focaccia bread. San Francisco would lose a one-of-a-kind business.

In addition, four to five generations of the Soracco family would be significantly impacted and suffer tremendously if the business were to close. Not only would they lose their business, they would be out of work and have their livelihood impacted. Liguria Bakery was built on family, love, and tradition. It has been of the utmost importance that the family has continued to build on what Ambrosio Soracco created not only for the Soracco family, but San Franciscans as a whole.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

The building at 1700 Stockton Street was rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake and purchased by Ambrosio Soracco in 1911 when he opened Liguria Bakery. The custom-built brick oven is the original oven from 1911, along with the stainless-steel dough mixer. Both are utilized daily to continue creating fresh product. The mural on the outside of the bakery depicts the brick oven and is frequently used in photos highlighting customers stops to San Francisco/North Beach.

The white parchment wrapping with white string has become Liguria Bakery’s “signature” identifier, and they often hear customers say, “I knew it was Liguria just by the wrapping!”

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

Liguria Bakery is committed to maintaining the baking of focaccia, their specialty.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

Liguria Bakery is a family-owned business, and it has always been their intention to keep the business within the family and maintain operation/ownership through the next generations.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

It is hard for small businesses to compete with bigger places these days. Inflation, cost of living, etc., have all had minor impacts on business.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Bakery featuring focaccia.

b. 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.

Planning Department Historic Resource Status is "A - Historic Resource Present." The property is associated with Charles Fantoni as the builder and architect of merit. In addition, the property is a contributor to the eligible Washington Square Historic District.



LIGURIA BAKERY

SORACCO & CO.

FOCACCIA OUR SPECIALTY

SINCE 1911

TEL. GARFIELD 13786





A decorative blue pillar stands in the foreground, featuring a horizontal stripe of red, white, and green. The pillar is positioned in front of a large glass display window.

The left side of the display window shows a vintage coffee machine and other items. A sign in the window reads "OPEN".

The right side of the display window shows a vintage coffee machine and other items. A sign in the window reads "OPEN".

A brick wall on the right side of the building features a blue mural or graffiti. The mural depicts a building facade.





FOCACCIA	
PLAIN	\$4.00
ONION	\$4.50
PIZZA	\$5.00
RAISIN	\$5.00
GARLIC	\$5.00
ROSEMARY	\$5.00
MUSHROOM	\$5.00
BLACK OLIVE	\$5.00
ROSEMARY GARLIC	\$5.00
JALAPENOS CHEESE	\$5.00
CASH ONLY	
FROZEN FOCACCIA	\$3.00

CASH ONLY
NO CHECKS
OR BANKCARDS
ACCEPTED



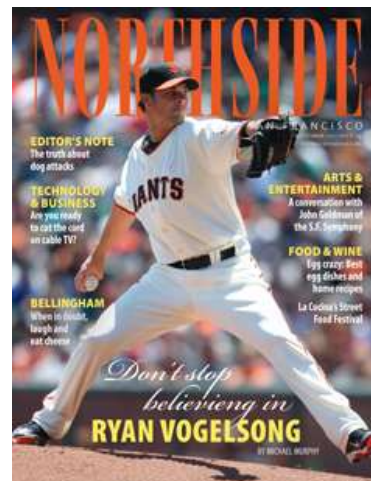








HOME FEATURES OPINION ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR **FOOD & WINE** SPORTS TRAVEL PETS ADVERTISE ARCHIVES



Cook's Chat: Michael Soracco of Liguria Bakery
By GraceAnn Walden



Michael Soracco has a secret: it's almost a hundred years old, and he's not telling. Soracco, with his father, George, brother, Danny, and the occasional helper, create the best focaccia in the Bay Area, bar none. Other bakeries take a fly at it, some restaurants also make an attempt, but they needn't bother.

Liguria Bakery is in a class by itself. It's approaching its 100-year anniversary in three years. Talking to Michael, you can tell it has always been a labor of love and dedication to the product. But don't ask him for the exact recipe. That's a family secret and it's staying in the family.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW CURRENT VIRTUAL ISSUE](#)

The baking process is accomplished in an oven as old as the business, heated with a giant gas flamethrower to 800 degrees. The mixed, soft dough is hand-stretched into metal trays, dimples installed with fingers, toppings added, and then baked in a flash.

All that artisan effort would not work without George's wife, Josephine, and his sister Mary running the retail side. They take the phone orders, cut the slabs of focaccia for customers, wrap them in paper, and tie the precious bundles with string. It is the very essence of "appropriate technology."

The beginnings of the Liguria Bakery are as interesting as today's business. After the 1906 earthquake, when Soracco's grandfather, Ambrosio, emigrated from Genoa, he worked in a neighborhood bakery. In 1911, he founded Liguria Bakery at its present location, 1700 Stockton Street. After a year, he sent for his two brothers, Giuseppe and Giovanni, to come and work with him. At that time, they made bread, hardtack, panettone, and breadsticks for North Beach's population, which was primarily immigrants from Liguria, Lucca, Calabria, and Sicily.

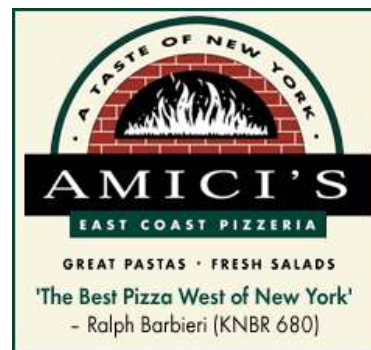
Ambrosio died prematurely in 1938, and his two brothers didn't stick around very long. But Ambrosio's widow, Mary, hired bakers to keep the business going. In this decade of the Depression, they delivered to stores and private homes via horse and wagon. Later, their son, George, born in North Beach in 1928, joined the business right out of high school. Over the years, there has been a collection of partners, both in the business and in the ownership of the building where the bakery is located.

I ask Michael how the bakery came to specialize in one product, focaccia. "When the big bread companies like Parisian got into the stores, they pushed the smaller bakeries like ours out by underselling us and giving the stores free bread for a month," he says.

"My father used to say, we're not gonna make it to give it away. We'll leave the flour in the sack." So, Liguria began to make a product that no one else did: focaccia. The name itself comes from the Latin word for focus, meaning hearth. While related to pizza, it differs in texture and thickness.

When I began buying focaccia at Liguria, they made pizza (tomato topped with green onion), plain and green onion. Once in a blue moon, you'd see olive or mushroom. In the last few years now that Soracco, 52, is more involved in the bakery's direction, it's not uncommon to see six or seven different flavors offered. By far, pizza remains the most popular. I like to tell my North Beach tour-goers, with a frozen pizza focaccia from Liguria in the freezer, you are always ready for unexpected, hungry guests.

Soracco's entry into the business came in his late 20s. He's been there for 25 years. "Looking back, we have it easy now," says Michael, who lives with his wife and two daughters, Leslie and Molly, in Belmont. "I go to bed at 7 p.m., I get there at 3 a.m. and the bread [focaccia] is ready to bake at 4 a.m. Some days, we're finished by 10 a.m.; around the holidays, we're there late to keep up production." But now we close down for a week at Christmas – something my wife wanted." (The bakery's current hours are 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., or until the focaccia is gone.)



"In my dad's time, they worked around the clock. I don't remember him having a hobby," he says. "His whole life has been dedicated to this place."

I have known the Soracco family for more than 30 years and have broken bread with them at their annual Columbus Day celebration in recent years. What a treat to be invited! At the parade, guests have front-row seats at tables and chairs set up on the corner outside the bakery. Inside, Michael and his friend, Giovanni, cook whole fish, pasta and other dishes in the bakery's ancient ovens. For our cook's chat, Michael had chosen an Italian restaurant in the Mission, Bella Venezia. The owner, Salvadorian Eduardo Reina, began his restaurant career as a busboy at Caffe Sport in North Beach. "As the other guys left, he eventually became a waiter there," Michael explains.

Bella Venezia is located in a broad storefront with views of busy Mission Street through the large plate glass windows that remind you that you are in San Francisco, but the cooking smells draw you to the memory of many a North Beach dinner. Despite its name, the food isn't particularly Venetian, but it's good solid Italian food found all over Italy.

For our lunch we chose from both the lunch and dinner menus. I know present and future diners will cringe when I report that I told Reina that some of his prices were too low. "After all," I said, "you're not selling burritos!" Eduardo agreed and remarked that customers don't realize all the costs associated with a white-tablecloth restaurant.

We started by splitting a generous order of fried calamari, which were tender and grease-free (\$7). We also divvied up an order of penne puttanesca, a Neapolitan dish. It was beautifully prepared with just the right amount of zip from the traditional anchovies, capers, garlic, and black olives (\$6.75). Other pastas on the lunch menu are gently priced from \$6 to \$9.50; the latter features a boatload of seafood in a linguini frutti di mare. At dinner the seafood pasta is \$14.

For our main course, we split a saltimbocca alla Romana, thin-pounded veal scallops topped with sage, mushrooms and prosciutto napped in a Marsala sauce (\$13).

Al dente vegetables and a scattering of boiled potatoes completed the plate. With all the food, we drank a nice Umbrian wine. The wine list is already user friendly, so I'd pass on the generic house wine available in half and whole carafes.

Over our tasty lunch, it was interesting to hear the history of Liguria Bakery and heart-warming to see that Michael Soracco, from a long-established family business, was supporting someone much like his grandfather, an immigrant working to make his way in San Francisco.

Liguria Bakery: 1700 Stockton Street (at Filbert), 415-421-3786
Bella Venezia Ristorante Italiano: 3215 Mission Street (near Valencia), 415-642-4896

GraceAnn Walden's heart will always be in North Beach, where she conducts walking tours (visit graceannwalden.net for more information); look for her North Beach cover story in the March issue of Northside San Francisco. E-mail: graceann@northsidesf.com

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<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/nativeson/article/liguria-bakery-in-north-beach-makes-focaccia-2368406.php>

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Liguria Bakery in North Beach makes focaccia

By [Carl Nolte](#), Chronicle Columnist

June 12, 2011

Forget all that stuff the foodies hand you about celebrity chefs and trendy restaurants. The real taste of San Francisco is at the Liguria Bakery at the corner of Stockton and Filbert streets in North Beach.

This is a family-owned operation with a single product - an Italian flat bread called focaccia. The dough is mixed in an antique machine, the bread is baked in a brick oven, the product is sold in 8-by-10-inch sheets and wrapped in plain white paper and tied up with string. They use no preservatives, take no credit cards, don't believe in websites or advertising, and when they run out of stuff to sell, they close down for the day. See ya, come back tomorrow.

The focaccia is made from a secret recipe brought over from Genoa by Ambrogio Soracco, the founding father, and the family has been baking and selling it in North Beach since 1911, exactly 100 years.

"You can't find a more old-school place than this," says [Michael Soracco](#), one of the five family members who own Liguria.



Mary Sorracco prepares to wrap up a piece of raisin focaccia for a customer at Liguria Bakery in San Francisco Calif. on Thursday, June 9, 2011. Sorracco and her brothers are part of the third generation to work and run the bakery, which is celebrating 100 years of bread-making this year.
Audrey Whitmeyer-Weathers/The Chronicle

There must be something to the old school, though, because Liguria's focaccia, which now comes with 10 different toppings, is wildly popular. There are lines most mornings, and during the holidays, the line stretches up the block and around the corner.

Focaccia is a special treat at Christmastime, and expatriate San Franciscans come back to the old neighborhood to get it. Last Christmas Eve, the wait was five hours long.

The Sailor Girl, my guide to Italian family traditions, was directed last winter to supply focaccia for the holiday dinner. So she stood in line outside Liguria from 6 to 11 a.m. She said it was like a block party - people from all over, mostly Italian, but all kinds of people, telling old stories, showing pictures of relatives.

"There's plenty of places to get that stuff," I said. "Why didn't you go someplace else?" A withering look. "There is no place else," she said.

Focaccia is a soft, flat bread, made with water, yeast, flour, some olive oil and spices. It's a bit like pizza, only different. The difference is the taste. "Try ours, you'll see," said Michael Soracco.

"You heat it up, what a treat," said [Al Baccari](#), who is 83 and has known the Soracco family all his life. "You can make it into a sandwich," he said. "A little provolone, a little prosciutto, a little of this, some of that, holy Christ, what a sandwich."



Marybelle Lukins of Santa Cruz watches as Mary Soracco of Liguria Bakery wraps her a piece of raisin focaccia bread in San Francisco, Calif. on Thursday, June 9, 2011. Lukins said she never visits her friend without coming to Liguria Bakery to get a piece of their handmade focaccia. The bakery is celebrating 100 years of bread-making excellence this year.

Audrey Whitmeyer-Weathers/The Chronicle

Some patrons buy a bit of focaccia and take it to Washington Square for lunch, listening to the bells of SS Peter and Paul's Church strike the hour, watching the Chinese ladies of a certain age run through their tai chi exercises.

And the focaccia? "It's damn good, it really is," said [Ernie Beyl](#), an old North Beach hand.

You don't have to be an old hand to like this stuff: check it out on Yelp, where there are 351 reviews, almost all raves.

The trick is easy: The Soraccos keep it simple and keep it in the family. George, who is 83 now, is the patriarch. He comes in every morning. Michael and Danny, the two sons, are the bakers. Josephine, the mother of the family, and Mary, the daughter, run the retail operation.



Josephine Sorracco (left) visits with a frequent customer, Patricia McCormick, at her family's San Francisco bakery, Liguria Bakery, that is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Sorracco's husband George Sorracco, is 83 years old and still gets to the bakery at 5 a.m. to help his sons make fresh focaccia bread. Photographed on June 9, 2011.

Audrey Whitmeyer-Weathers/The Chronicle



Eric Luse/SFC

It's a family operation, and the women at the counter treat the customers like family. You ever had an Italian aunt or mother? Then you know they don't take any guff.

One wide-eyed Yelper reported he asked how the onion focaccia was that day. "It's onion," the lady snapped. What else is there to say?

Liguria is a slice of the old San Francisco, but now North Beach is multicultural, though the Italian flavor still lingers.

One of the customers last week was [Jane Low](#), who was buying 10 sheets of focaccia bread for her daughter's graduation from [Hamlin School](#). "It's really easy to fix," she said. "You cut it up in small pieces, and it's the perfect appetizer. The kids love it."

No wonder. It is the San Francisco treat.

[Carl Nolte](#)'s Native Son column appears every Sunday. E-mail him at cnolte@sfchronicle.com.

By [Carl Nolte](#)

Carl Nolte is a fourth generation San Franciscan who has been with The Chronicle since 1961. He stepped back from daily journalism in 2019 after a long career as an editor and reporter including service as a war correspondent. He now writes a Sunday column, "Native Son." He won several awards, including a distinguished career award from the Society of Professional Journalists, a maritime heritage award from the San Francisco Maritime Park Association, and holds honorary degrees from the University of San Francisco and the California State University Maritime Academy.



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Filing Date: January 24, 2024
Case No.: 2024-000781LBR
Business Name: Liguria Bakery
Business Address: 1700 Stockton Street
Zoning: NCD (NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
 40-X Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 0088/016
Applicant: Molly Soracco
 1700 Stockton Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Elena Moore – 628.652.7322
 Elena.Moore@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Liguria Bakery is a family-owned and family-operated business specializing in fresh focaccia, an Italian flat bread. Opened in 1911, Liguria Bakery has been an essential piece of North Beach’s cultural fabric for 113 years. The business is a local favorite as well as an attraction for tourists looking to sample Italian baked goods and cuisine in North Beach.

Liguria Bakery was opened in 1911 by Ambrosio Soracco, who had recently immigrated from the Liguria region of Italy. Soon after, his two brothers, Giuseppe and Giovanni, immigrated to run the business with him. Over the years, numerous Soracco family members owned and/or worked in the bakery. Today, it is owned and operated by Michael Soracco and Josephine Soracco; many family members help with the business, including Sharon Soracco, Leslie Soracco Mitchell, and Molly Soracco.

Liguria Bakery is one of the last remaining businesses of its kind. The dough is mixed in an antique stainless-steel machine and baked in the original brick oven from 1911. The family still uses Ambrosio's original recipe from Liguria to bake their signature focaccia. To this day, many generations of families continue to come to the corner of Stockton and Filbert Streets to purchase this nostalgic focaccia. It is truly a one-of-a-kind business.

The business's primary location at 1700 Stockton Street is a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the northeast corner of Stockton and Filbert Streets in the North Beach neighborhood. It is within the North Beach NCD (Neighborhood Commercial District) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District. It is within the boundaries of the North Beach Special Use District, the Telegraph Hill-North Beach Residential Special Use District, the North Beach Limited Financial Special Use District, and the North Beach Mayor's Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative area. It is also a contributor to the California Register-eligible Washington Square Historic District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1911.

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

Yes. Liguria Bakery qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Liguria Bakery has operated continuously in San Francisco for 113 years.
- b. Liguria Bakery has contributed to the history and identity of the North Beach neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Liguria Bakery 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?*

Yes. The business is associated with Italian cuisine, specifically, baked goods from the Liguria region of Italy.

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

Yes. Liguria Bakery is associated with North Beach's identity as an Italian and Italian American cultural enclave in San Francisco. Open since 1911, Liguria Bakery is now one of the longest-running businesses in North Beach and one of the last remaining of its kind.

Additionally, the building was designed by Charles Fantoni, a local Architect and Builder of Merit. Fantoni designed many flat buildings in North Beach, as well as the prominent Saints Peter and Paul Church on Filbert Street. The building is also a contributor to the California Register-eligible Washington Square Historic District. The building is notable as it retains its original display windows and clerestory with glazed ceramic tile base.

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

Yes. The subject property is a contributor to the California Register-eligible Washington Square Historic District. Additionally, in the 1976 Department of City Planning Survey, the subject property was listed as “Y”; this rating suggests the building has architectural merit.

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

Yes. Liguria Bakery and the building at 1700-1704 Stockton Street are mentioned in the North Beach Historic Context Statement.

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

Yes. Liguria Bakery has been mentioned multiple times in the media, including articles in *Eater San Francisco*, *SF Gate*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Hoodline*. On its 100th anniversary, Mayor Lee proclaimed July 28, 2011, as “Liguria Bakery Day.” It was also honored at the San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade for its 100th anniversary.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15th, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department’s Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor’s Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco’s cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Liguria Bakery is a family-owned and family-operated business that was founded by Italian immigrant Ambrosio Soracco in 1911. Since then, Liguria Bakery has greatly contributed to the cultural fabric of North Beach. Liguria Bakery also gives back to their community, including donating to Food Runners San Francisco, Toys for Tots with San Francisco Fire Station 28, the San Francisco Italian Heritage Festival & Parade, and the Salesian Boys & Girls Club.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1700 Stockton Street (1911-present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Bakery featuring focaccia
- Signature wrapping of white parchment paper with white string
- Custom-built brick oven from 1911
- Stainless steel dough mixer
- Mural on the exterior of the building

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1380

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Case No.: 2024-000781LBR
Business Name: Liguria Bakery
Business Address: 1700 Stockton Street
Zoning: NCD (NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
 40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0088/016
Applicant: Molly Soracco
 1700 Stockton Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Elena Moore – 628.652.7322
 Elena.Moore@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR LIGURIA BAKERY CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1700 STOCKTON ST, BLOCK/LOT 0088/016.

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 February 21, 2024, 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 Liguria Bakery 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 Liguria Bakery.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

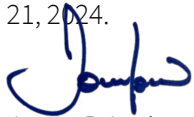
- 1700 Stockton Street (1911 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Bakery featuring focaccia
- Signature wrapping of white parchment paper with white string
- Custom-built brick oven from 1911
- Stainless steel dough mixer
- Mural on the exterior of the building

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 to the Office of Small Business on February 21, 2024.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Vergara, Wright, Foley, Nageswaran, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: Baldauf, Campbell

ADOPTED: February 21, 2024