



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: September 23, 2024

SAVOY TIVOLI

Application No.: LBR-2024-25-004
Business Name: Savoy Tivoli
Business Address: 1434 Grant Ave.
District: District 3
Applicant: Tito Avila, CEO
Nomination Date: July 16, 2024
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Savoy Tivoli is a historic bar in North Beach that features cocktails, live music, and events. With its storied history and its deep connection to the art community, the Savoy has drawn people from down the block to people from across the globe.

Savoy Tivoli was founded at 1434 Grant Avenue – its current location – by Nick Finocchio in 1907 as “New Tivoli,” an Italian restaurant that served traditional, seven-course Italian meals to the masses. Having opened after the 1906 Earthquake, it operated as a restaurant and boarding house, serving the Italian immigrants and working-class community who were helping to rebuild the city. At 40 cents for a “regular meal,” which included soup, salad, pasta, veal, and fried potatoes, it offered what founder Finocchio desired – a great meal at a fair price. When Finocchio could no longer provide meals at prices working-class people could afford, he sold the business to Fred Kuh in 1967.

Kuh renamed it the Savoy Tivoli and used one bocce court inside the restaurant for screening experimental films and turning the other two courts into a theater. He also installed a silver fountain in the center of the dining room, painted the support columns with faux bark, and topped the posts with aluminum palm fronds. His connections to Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Bob Kaufman, and Ken Kesey brought the Beatnik crowd to the Savoy.

In 1974, Steve Silver approached Kuh to launch what would later become the longest running play in the history of the United States – Beach Blanket Babylon. Though this show moved to a larger club later, it would become a distinctly San Francisco phenomenon that would span the globe, 45 years, and even play for the Queen of England.

The counterculture vibe of the Savoy made it a natural place for subversive bands to play to rowdy crowds. From early antiestablishment bands like Jefferson Airplane to headlining punk legends like the Ramones; the Savoy became one of the clubs hosting San Francisco’s emerging punk scenes. And just as impactfully, blues and jazz were featured at the Savoy.

In 1983, Kuh sold the Savoy to partners Louis Magliulo and Agnes Claire Kozel. This era would start with the go-go 80s, which brought in coffee-obsessed Gen Xers and a stylish European crowd. In the 1990s, noise complaints plagued the Savoy, and their liquor license was briefly revoked. It took grassroots efforts by patrons, including then-San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, to get the Savoy open again.

In 2022, the Savoy, renewed with a stronger foundation, came roaring back to life as the famed and favorite North Beach establishment where art, music, drinks, and good times come to life.

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





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

1434 Grant Ave. from 1907 to Present (

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, Savoy Tivoli 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:

- The business is associated with its bar use though it features live music and events.
- Few bars in San Francisco have been folded into the ever-changing fabric of a city like the Savoy Tivoli. In essence, for every wave of North Beach citizens, every morph of its culture, every new take on creativity adopted by this neighborhood, the Savoy has been present and played an integral part in creating North Beach's history. From settlers and immigrants sipping coffee, to poets and musicians, to actors and artists, the Savoy has been home to inspiration and performance. It's kept the beat of San Francisco's boom and bust lifestyle and welcomed both its outcasts and its movers and shakers.
- The business was the location in which the longest running play, Beach Blanket Babylon, had originated.
- The property at 1434 Grant Street is located within the California Register-eligible Upper Grant Avenue Historic District. It is rated as an "A" – Historic Resource Present" by the Planning Department. The property was also included in the Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco (Donna Graves and Shayne Watson – 2015) as the residential dwellings above the Savoy Tivoli had once been the home to many lesbians from the 1930s to the 1960s.
- Savoy Tivoli has been featured in numerous newspapers and journals including but not limited to:
 - "Savoy Tivoli," Rock and Roll Road Maps.
 - "A Taste of San Francisco," New York Times (July 15, 1984).
 - "The City that Was: The Savoy Tivoli," Broke-Ass Stuart (September 25, 2014).
 - "This 117-year Old Classic North Beach Restaurant is Finally Reopening," Eater San Francisco (November 9, 2022).
 - "117-year-old SF North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli to finally reopen," SF Gate (November 11, 2022).
 - "The most famous North Beach club you've never been to is poised to reopen," San Francisco Standard (December 6, 2022).
 - "Legendary, 117-year-old North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli celebrates grant re-opening," Hoodline (December 15, 2022).
 - "This 115-year-old S.F. bar is roaring back to life," San Francisco Chronicle (December 16, 2022).
 - "Remembering when a group of SF punks took a city landmark on a cross-country road trip," SFGATE (June 23, 2023).

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CRITERION 3

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

Yes, Savoy Tivoli is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Savoy Tivoli 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:

- Savoy Tivoli's creative lemur-based sign.
- Exotic peacock murals.
- Art Deco lights.
- Integration with the artist community of North Beach.
- Great cocktails at fair prices.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

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

- Bar.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Savoy Tivoli currently located at 1434 Grant Ave. 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. _____

September 23, 2024

SAVOY TIVOLI

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Business Name: Savoy Tivoli
Business Address: 1434 Grant Ave.
District: District 3
Applicant: Tito Avila, CEO
Nomination Date: July 16, 2024
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Savoy Tivoli, currently located at 1434 Grant Ave.

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 September 23, 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 Savoy Tivoli 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 Savoy Tivoli.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Savoy Tivoli's creative lemur-based sign.
- Exotic peacock murals.
- Art Deco lights.
- Integration with the artist community of North Beach.
- Great cocktails at fair prices.

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

- Bar.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 23, 2024.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2024-25-004
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Nomination Date: July 16, 2024
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

1434 Grant Ave. from 1907 to Present (

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: July 24, 2024

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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**City and County of
San Francisco**



**President, Board of
Supervisors**

AARON PESKIN

July 16, 2024

Director Katy Tang *via email* <Katy.Tang@sfgov.org>
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlet Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Tang,

I am writing to nominate Savoy Tivoli, located at 1434 Grant Avenue in North Beach, for inclusion in the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry. Savoy Tivoli, originally established in 1907 as a coffee house, restaurant and boarding house for Italian seafarers, has a rich history that is deeply woven into the cultural fabric of San Francisco. The building was finished just after the great quake of 1906 and was called the "Savoy Hotel." It was a popular spot for Italian immigrants who were working in the city's fishing and shipping industries.

In 1967, the Savoy Tivoli was purchased by Fred Kuh, a local businessman passionate about music and theater, who renamed it and reimagined it as a bustling nightclub. He brought in new bands and performers, and the Savoy Tivoli quickly became a popular spot for the city's counterculture scene, including the Beatniks. In that era, the Savoy hosted influential figures such as Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Ken Kesey and soon after, the "hippies" that brought The Summer of Love.

In 1974, the iconic Beach Blanket Babylon show premiered at Savoy Tivoli, produced by acclaimed San Francisco artist and playwright, Steve Silver. In 1987, Savoy Tivoli was purchased by Agnes Claire Kozel, a longtime patron of the bar who is dedicated to preserving its history for future generations. Today, any number of entertainment events take place around the classic horseshoe bar and up on the nightclub's stage, from drag performances to open mics to community fundraisers and live music of all kinds. Agnes Claire Kozel ran the bar for over thirty years, and it is now operated by her son, Paul Kozel and his business partner, Tito Avila. It is known for its funky artistic interior, vintage bars, and antique light fixtures depicting the historic character of the neighborhood.

Savoy Tivoli would greatly benefit from being added to the Legacy Business Registry, and it is my pleasure to nominate it for inclusion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Peskin".

Aaron Peskin



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Savoy Tivoli

Business owner name(s): Agnes Claire Kozel Irrevocable Trust (Kozel Famiy); Tito Avila

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

Current business address: 1434 Grant Ave.

Telephone: (415) 970 – 6901

Email: thesavoytivoli@gmail.com

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: www.savoytivoli.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100093098533678

Twitter: Instagram: @savoytivolisf

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

1

1

3

3

1

6

6

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.

☐ Immigrant-Owned Business

☐ Owned by Person with a Disability

☐ LGBTQ+-Owned Business

☐ Veteran-Owned Business

☐ Minority-Owned Business*

☐ 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: Tito Avila

Contact person title: CEO

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: 1434 Grant Ave. Zip Code: 94133

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

Dates at this location: From: 1907 To: Present

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: Tito Avila

Signature: *Tito Avila*

Date: 3/12/24

SAVOY TIVOLI

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

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

Savoy Tivoli is a historic landmark bar in North Beach featuring amazing cocktails, live music, and events. Since 1907, they have been serving up delicious drinks and good times to locals and visitors alike. Come visit Savoy Tivoli and experience the charm and history of San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood. They look forward to serving you!

b. Describe whom the business serves.

The Savoy serves the denizens of San Francisco, its tourists, the locals of North Beach, and all people that find themselves in San Francisco. With its storied history and its deep connection to the art community, the Savoy has drawn people from down the block to across the globe. Anyone looking for a great cocktail and a little inspiration is welcome at the Savoy.

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

A favorite of hippies and Beats, punks and preps, ladies and gents.

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.

Savoy Tivoli was founded at 1434 Grant Avenue – its current location – by Nick Finocchio in 1907 as “New Tivoli,” an Italian restaurant that served traditional, seven-course Italian meals to the masses. Its back rooms were divided into three bocce ball courts.¹ Finocchio had pledged to continue to run the Savoy so long as he could provide fine dining at affordable prices.

“When Finocchio could no longer provide meals at prices working-class people could afford, he sold the business to Fred Kuh in 1967. Kuh renamed it the Savoy Tivoli and used one bocce court for screening experimental films and turning the other two courts into a theater, setting the stage as it were for what was to come.”² He also jazzed up the restaurant by installing a silver fountain in

¹ “The most famous North Beach club you’ve never been to is poised to reopen,” by Julie Zigoris, San Francisco Standard, December 06, 2022, <https://sfstandard.com/2022/12/06/the-most-famous-north-beach-club-youve-never-been-to-is-poised-to-reopen/>

² Id.

the center of the dining room, painting the support columns with faux bark, and topping the posts with aluminum palm fronds.³

Kuh was raised in Chicago, attended the University of Illinois and graduated from Lake Forest College. He served in the Army in North Africa. Although he couldn't ride a horse and didn't know how to drive, he was put in the mechanized cavalry division until he ran over his lieutenant and broke his arm - which landed him in the infantry. After the war, he studied the arts in Paris and made lifelong friendships with Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Noel Coward, Gore Vidal, Christopher Isherwood, Janet Flanner and Alice B. Toklas.⁴

In 1983, Kuh sold the Savoy to partners Louis Magliulo and Agnes Claire Kozel. After Magliulo returned from service in the South Pacific during WWII, he and his brother opened the wildly popular Lou and Dom's Crow's Nest on the Embarcadero, which was eventually lost to eminent domain to make way to what is now known as Pier 39. Kozel, a retired nurse, was a dynamic and charismatic larger than life person.

It was Kozel that drove the initial purchase from Kuh. She had long loved the Savoy and would often sit at the bar and tell patrons, "One day I'm going to buy this place." Together, Magliulo and Kozel hoped to bring new energy and excitement to the Savoy. They updated the space, closing the kitchen and installing a recreation room with pool tables.⁵ Sadly, Magliulo passed away in 1987, and Kozel became the sole owner.

In the 1990s, noise complaints plagued the Savoy. At one point, the noise complaints reached such a boiling point that the liquor license of the business was briefly revoked, and it took grassroots efforts by patrons, including then-San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, to get the Savoy open again. From the reopening in 2002, Kozel ran the Savoy as "the destination" for night life in North Beach.

In 2018, the building that houses Savoy Tivoli underwent a mandatory earthquake retrofit. Due to placement of the new support beams, the Savoy was forced to close during the retrofit.

Claire Kozel passed away in July 2021 while the business was closed, and her son Paul Kozel took over. Paul, living in Miami, reached out to his Bay Area friend Tito Avila, with whom he had collaborated on other business projects, to help bring the Savoy back to life. Avila agreed and joined the ownership team.^{6 7}

In 2022, the Savoy, renewed with a stronger foundation, came roaring back to life as the famed and favorite North Beach establishment where art, music, drinks, and good times come to life. Few bars in San Francisco, or anywhere for that matter, have been folded into the ever-changing fabric

³ NoeHill in San Francisco, San Francisco Landmarks, <https://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf127.asp>

⁴ Id.

⁵ 'The Beach' in S.F. Hit by Upscale Transition, by Imbert Matthee, Los Angeles Times, July 14, 1987, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-07-14-mn-3981-story.html>

⁶ "Legendary, 117-year-old North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli celebrates grant re-opening," by Dorothy O'Donnell, Hoodline, December 15, 2022, <https://hoodline.com/2022/12/legendary-north-beach-bar-savoy-tivoli-celebrates-grand-re-opening/>

⁷ "117-year-old SF North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli to finally reopen," by Madeline Wells, SFGATE, November 11, 2022, <https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/savoy-tivoli-north-beach-reopening-17575659.php>

of a city like the Savoy Tivoli has in San Francisco. From settlers and immigrants sipping coffee, to poets and musicians, to actors and artists, the Savoy has been home to inspiration and performance. It's kept the beat of San Francisco's boom and bust lifestyle and welcomed both its outcasts and its movers and shakers.

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

1907 to 1967:	Nick Finocchio
1967 to 1983:	Frederick Walter Kuh
1983 to 1987:	Louis A. Magliulo; Agnes Claire Kozel
1987 to 2021:	Agnes Claire Kozel
2021 to Present:	Agnes Claire Kozel Irrevocable Trust (Kozel Family); Tito Avila

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

Savoy Tivoli closed from 2018 through 2022 due to a seismic retrofit project.

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.

Savoy Tivoli is the oldest cafe in North Beach, and maybe in the city of San Francisco. It opened in 1907, a year after the Great Earthquake leveled North Beach and half of the city.⁸ It operated as a restaurant and boarding house.⁹ At the time it was known as the New Tivoli. Like many Italian restaurants created by an influx of Italian immigrants in the early 1900s, it contributed to North Beach becoming an "eating paradise,"¹⁰ a reputation the neighborhood maintains today.

The New Tivoli also served as a boarding house to the Italian immigrants arriving every day and who helped rebuild San Francisco after the earthquake. Meals were designed to be affordable to the everyday family. At 40 cents for a "regular meal," which included soup, salad, pasta, veal, and fried potatoes,¹¹ it offered what founder Finocchio desired – a great meal at a fair price.

As North Beach evolved in the coming years, the New Tivoli morphed into a café. Later it became a bistro. The word "Savoy" was added to the name in 1967 by Kuh, a man who had converted an old

⁸ The Coffeehouses of North Beach, by Elaine Sosa, <https://www.roadsage.com/bio/nbbeat.html>

⁹ Rock & Roll Roadmaps, <https://rockandrollroadmap.com/places/where-they-played/san-francisco-area-venues/savoy-tivoli/>

¹⁰ Provincial Italian Cuisines: San Francisco Conserves Italian Heritage, by Deanna Paoli Gumina, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Provincial_Italian_Cuisines:_San_Francisco_Conserves_Italian_Heritage

¹¹ <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/first-edition/NEW-TIVOLI-RESTAURANT-1434-Grant-Avenue/22877963693/bd>

pasta factory into a café, cabaret, and restaurant called the “Old Spaghetti Factory” and whom was well imbedded in the San Francisco “Beatnik” culture.¹²

After purchasing the Tivoli, Kuh installed a giant fountain in the middle of the patio and decorated the structural posts with fake palm leaves, leaving the Savoy with a Middle Eastern feel.¹³ His connections to Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Bob Kaufman, and Ken Kesey brought the Beatnik crowd to the Savoy. Suddenly, San Francisco’s bumming, hitchhiking, ragged, beatific, beautiful youth, had a place to call home; and maybe catch a glimpse of the pseudo intellectuals like Ginsberg or Kerouac who were defining the Beatnik movement. There is even a photo of Ginsberg and Kaufman sitting on the Savoy’s patio in the NY MoMA Beatnik collection.¹⁴

In 1974, Steve Silver approached Kuh to launch what would later become the longest running play in the history of the United States – Beach Blanket Babylon at the Savoy. Though this show moved to a larger club later, it would become a distinctly San Francisco phenomenon that would span the globe, 45 years, and even play for the Queen of England.¹⁵

The counterculture vibe of the Savoy made it a natural place for subversive bands to play to rowdy crowds. From early anti-establishment bands like Jefferson Airplane to headlining punk legends like the Ramones; the Savoy became one of the clubs hosting San Francisco’s emerging punk scene.¹⁶ And just as impactfully, blues and jazz became manna lapped up by patrons wishing to lose themselves in the moment on its magnificent terrace, with acts like Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters.¹⁷ In fact, the last performance of Jimmy Reed’s life was at the Savoy in 1976.¹⁸ He would die the day after his last performance at the Savoy.

In 1983, Fred sold the Savoy to partners Lou Magliulo and Agnes Claire Kozel. After Magliulo returned from service in the South Pacific during WWII, he and his brother opened the wildly popular Lou and Dom’s Crow’s nest on the Embarcadero, which was eventually lost to eminent domain to make way to what is now known as Pier 39¹⁹. Kozel, a retired nurse, was a dynamic and charismatic larger than life person. Together they hoped to bring new energy and excitement to the Savoy, which, they did. Though, shortly after they purchased the Savoy, Magliulo passed away.

The new ownership era ushered in yet another crowd of revelers. This era would start with the go-go 80s, which brought in coffee-obsessed Gen Xers and a stylish European crowd,²⁰ and continued through several cycles of tech boom denizens later.

¹² San Francisco Landmarks, San Francisco Landmark #127, <https://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf127.asp>

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/57791>

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beach_Blanket_Babylon

¹⁶ Rock & Roll Roadmaps, <https://rockandrollroadmap.com/places/where-they-played/san-francisco-area-venues/savoy-tivoli/>

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Rock and Roll Explorer Guide to San Francisco and the Bay Area, Katz, Kott, 2021 Roman & Littlefield Publishing, page 32.

¹⁹ Personal interview between Tito Avila (drafter) and Paul Kozel.

²⁰ Famed S.F. bar reopens after mayor hears of noisy tiff, SFGATE, May 3, 2002, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Famed-S-F-bar-reopens-after-mayor-hears-of-noisy-2841681.php>

In essence, for every wave of North Beach citizens, every morph of its culture, every new take on creativity adopted by this neighborhood, the Savoy has been present and played an integral part in creating North Beach's history. The Savoy exists because San Francisco exists. And so long as San Francisco hosts the dreams, the trials, tribulations, hardships, joy, and the fate of its people, those people are welcome to let their creative expression and self-indulgence run wild at the Savoy.

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

Savoy Tivoli was the original home of Beach Blanket Babylon from early 1974 until 1975 when it moved to Club Fugazi because they needed more space.

In the back room of Savoy Tivoli, many great or soon-to-be-great performers played including, but not limited to, The Ramones, Graham Parker, Robert Palmer, Southside Johnny, Jimmy Reed, and Muddy Waters. Notable concerts played here include the following:²¹

- Country Joe McDonald, 12/27/1975
- Canned Heat, 1/4/1976
- Sylvester, 1/25/1976
- The Sons of Champlin, 2/22/1976
- [Robert Palmer](#), 4/7/1976
- Kingfish 5/16/1976
- [Man](#), 8/5/1976
- The Ramones, 8/22/1976
- Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes, 11/6/1976
- Graham Parker and the Rumour, 11/7/1976
- Greg Kihn Band, 12/18/1976
- Voice Farm, 9/2/1979
- Sheila E, 12/28/1979
- Romeo Void, 9/7/1980
- Wall of Voodoo, 10/30/1980
- Tony Lindsay, 5/29/2023
- Tom Constanten, 8/5/2024
- Mike Marshal and San Quinten, 4/19/2024
- Mal Sharpes' Big Money Band (Saturday evening Jazz on the patio for over a decade)

And many, many others.

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

Savoy Tivoli has always been closely tied to the community in North Beach, but its closest ties are with the creative community. The Savoy has served as a launching pad for theater productions; a gallery space for artists; a meeting place for creatives; and a stage where bands, singers, comedians,

²¹ Rock & Roll Roadmaps, <https://rockandrollroadmap.com/places/where-they-played/san-francisco-area-venues/savoy-tivoli/>

etc. can craft and hone their skills. By supporting local artists to create, improve, or display their crafts, the Savoy has continued to foster the creative community in North Beach.

To this day, the Savoy still provides a stage for creatives, opens its space for artists to display their work, and works with local organizations to continue to promote art in North Beach. For example, recently the Savoy has partnered with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers Association and a few other local businesses for [Films with Friends](#), which promotes cinema within North Beach. The Savoy also often serves as a place where local groups can meet and plan events in North Beach including benefit events. For example, many a business or organization that wanted to plan a charitable event to raise money for their cause have found a space to do so at the Savoy.

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

Savoy Tivoli has been referenced extensively in the media over the years. Following are some key media references, listed from most recent to oldest:

- ***Remembering when a group of SF punks took a city landmark on a cross-country road trip***
SFGATE
June 23, 2023
<https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/head-trip-savoy-tivoli-north-beach-doggie-diner-18165868.php>
- ***This 115-year-old S.F. bar is roaring back to life***
San Francisco Chronicle
December 16, 2022
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/wine/article/savoy-tivoli-bar-open-17657663.php>
- ***Legendary, 117-year-old North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli celebrates grand re-opening***
Hoodline
December 15, 2022
<https://hoodline.com/2022/12/legendary-north-beach-bar-savoy-tivoli-celebrates-grand-re-opening/>
- ***The most famous North Beach club you've never been to is poised to reopen***
San Francisco Standard
December 6, 2022
<https://sfstandard.com/2022/12/06/the-most-famous-north-beach-club-youve-never-been-to-is-poised-to-reopen/>

“The original location for the most hat-filled of San Francisco spectacles, Beach Blanket Babylon, it also shows up in Armistead Maupin’s *Tales of the City*. When Mrs. Madrigal orchestrates a friendship with Mona, she does so with a basket of Alice B. Toklas pot brownies at the Savoy Tivoli.”

- **117-year-old SF North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli to finally reopen**
SFGATE
November 11, 2022
<https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/savoy-tivoli-north-beach-reopening-17575659.php>
- **This 117-Year-Old Classic North Beach Restaurant Is Finally Reopening**
Eater San Francisco
November 9, 2022
<https://sf.eater.com/2022/11/9/23449561/savoy-tivoli-north-beach-reopening>
- **The City That Was: The Savoy Tivoli**
Broke-Ass Stuart
September 25, 2014
<https://brokeassstuart.com/sf/2014/09/25/the-city-that-was-the-savoy-tivoli/>
- **A Taste of San Francisco**
New York Times
July 15, 1984
<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/07/15/travel/a-taste-of-san-francisco.html>
- **Savoy-Tivoli**
Rock and Roll Roadmaps
<https://rockandrollroadmap.com/places/where-they-played/san-francisco-area-venues/savoy-tivoli/>

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

Over the years the Savoy has been included in many “best of” and “recommended” lists. For example:

- **17 Excellent North Beach Restaurants and Bars**
Eater San Francisco
As of March 27, 2024
<https://sf.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-bars-north-beach-san-francisco>
- **11 Beloved SF Restaurants + Bars As You've Never Seen Them Before**
7x7
February 10, 2023
<https://www.7x7.com/recently-revamped-restaurants-san-francisco-2659396389.html>
- **The Savoy Tivoli**
Punch
<https://punchdrink.com/venues/the-savoy-tivoli/>

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

If the Savoy were to close, San Francisco would lose a living piece of art that has grown with San Francisco since 1907. In reality, that is what the Savoy is. It's not just a bar; it wasn't just a restaurant. This has been a place where art has been created within its walls and beyond, from its murals painted in different eras dating back to the 1900s, to the bands that not only made their world famous music at the Savoy but defined entire genres within its walls; to the writers and poets that used the Savoy as their muse to create generational defining works within its walls; to plays written and launched on its stage; to the many pieces of art created in, about, and with the Savoy. It's not so much place where art occurs, it's more of an active participant in the creation of San Francisco's art scene.

It goes without mentioning that people are a big part of Savoy Tivoli and should it shudder its doors at least 10 people currently employed by the Savoy would lose their jobs. But one of the unique pieces of its operations is that many 2nd and 3rd generation San Franciscans work at the Savoy because they care just as much about the Savoy's legacy as its ownership group does.

The Savoy also acts as an "anchor storefront" on upper Grant Avenue. There many shops, stores, and restaurants located between Green and Union streets on Grant Avenue. Many of them benefit from the people, tourists and locals alike, that wonder up Grant in search their next adventure at the Savoy. Losing the Savoy would most likely reduce the foot traffic along that stretch of Grant.

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?

Since introduced by Fred Kuh in the early 1960s, the Savoy Tivoli's creative lemur-based sign has been a welcome beacon on the upper end of Grant Avenue. It's been included in countless media, including in the background of several films, most recently in Venom 2. Artist renditions of this sign show up at art fairs, and many tourists leave San Francisco with an image of this sign in tow. It would be a sad day if that sign no longer hung above 1434 Grant Avenue.

As well, the Savoy's murals, including the exotic peacock murals, have graced its walls since the 1960s. The murals now bask in the colorful glow of jewel-like Art Deco lights, which are original pieces from the 1930s and have delighted locals and tourists for decades. The lights originally sat

on a shelf above the bar but now dangle from the ceiling.²² The murals and the Art Deco lights would be sorely missed if Savoy Tivoli were to close.

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

Since 1907, Savoy Tivoli has been integrated into the artist community of North Beach, and they aim to continue that tradition while providing great cocktails at fair prices.

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

One of unique aspects of the Savoy's history is that even though it has been in operation since 1907, only 3 owners have kept it running and relevant for all that time. It's incredible! Nick Finocchio ran the New Tivoli until after celebrating its 50th anniversary at its helm. Freddy Kuh ran the Savoy Tivoli from the mid-1960s until the 1980s. Since then, the Kozel family has kept the Savoy as part of the fabric of North Beach. As an ownership group, they don't believe that they own the Savoy so much as they own the obligation as the current stewards to pass it on to the next custodians that will ensure it will survive for another 100 years.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

The challenges that Savoy Tivoli faces are as follows:

1. The ever-evolving obligations that the City and County of San Francisco requires to allow businesses to operate. Their building is an old building – it was built over a century ago. When the City launches new regulations as requirements to stay open, the burden on the complying is substantially greater for older structures than new structures. While Savoy Tivoli understands that change is the only constant, they would welcome collaborative discourse with legacy businesses to ensure they can adapt.
2. The trend toward shut ins. Since COVID, San Franciscans became very comfortable getting everything delivered and learned to forgo public spaces. These habits have proven hard to shake. If the public continues to prefer the shut-in lifestyle, Savoy Tivoli and many others will suffer.
3. The power of one person to usurp the will of the neighborhood has created an imbalance between nightlife businesses and the “not on my block” crowd. While Savoy Tivoli appreciates that the city must create a balance between people who prefer to have peace and quiet and the hustle and bustle of vibrant bars, they believe that bars provide a valuable and amazing function to the city, which also needs to be preserved. In some cases, like the Savoy, those businesses have been around for longer than any nearby resident, meaning the resident came to the nuisance. They moved in knowing it was a place with noise, yet they create complaint campaigns in an effort to bend the will of the neighborhood to their design. The current rules are such that one resident, through

²² Legendary, 117-year-old North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli celebrates grand re-opening, Hoodline, December 15, 2022, <https://hoodline.com/2022/12/legendary-north-beach-bar-savoy-tivoli-celebrates-grand-re-opening/>

systematic complaining, can threaten the viability of Savoy Tivoli or any other legacy business that is a place of entertainment. The Savoy believes that this imbalance in power is a risk for business of its kind.

4. The cost of insurance. This is becoming an epidemic.

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.

Bar.

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.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 1434-1438 Grant Avenue is "A - Historic Resource Present." The building was determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register through a 1984 survey.



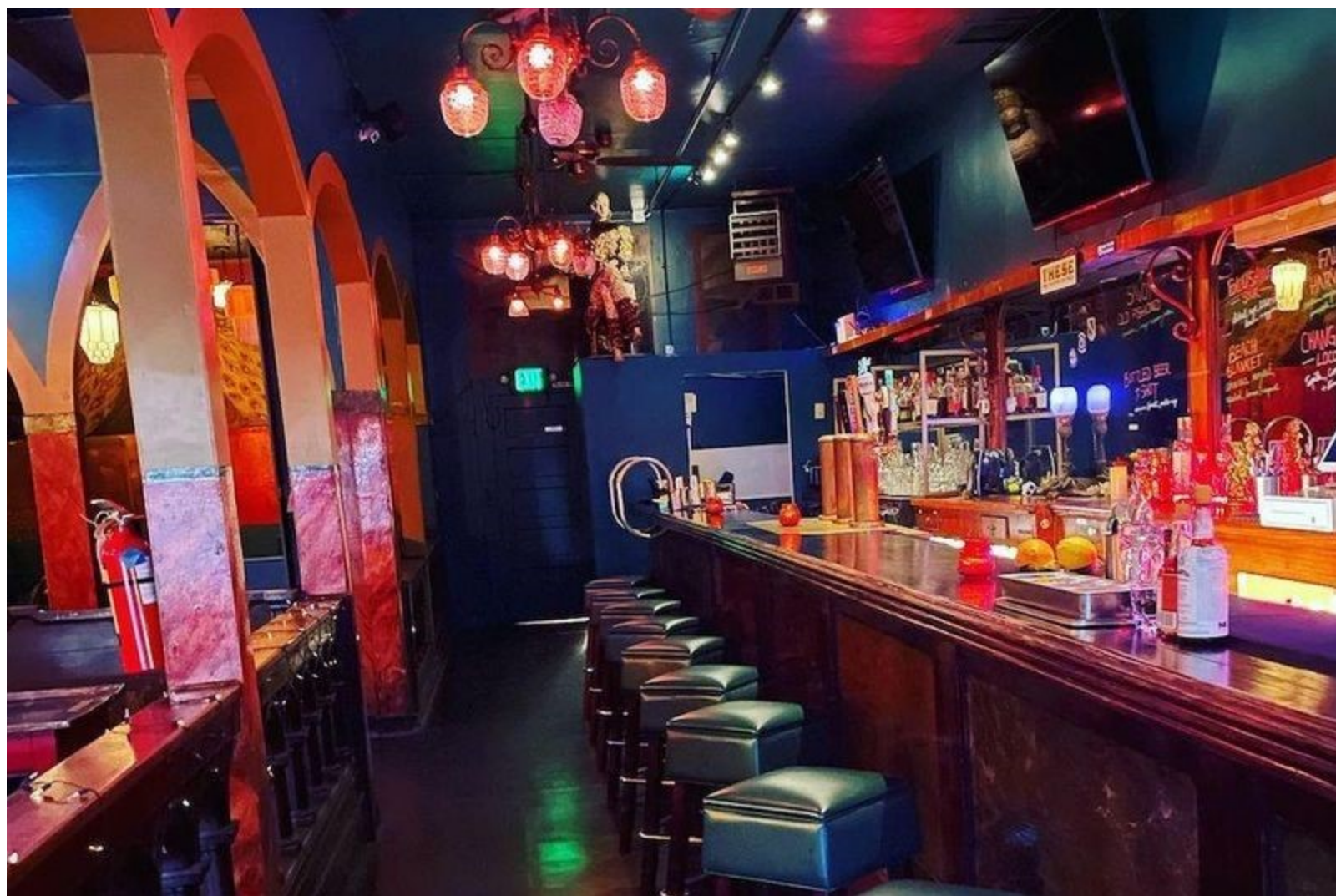
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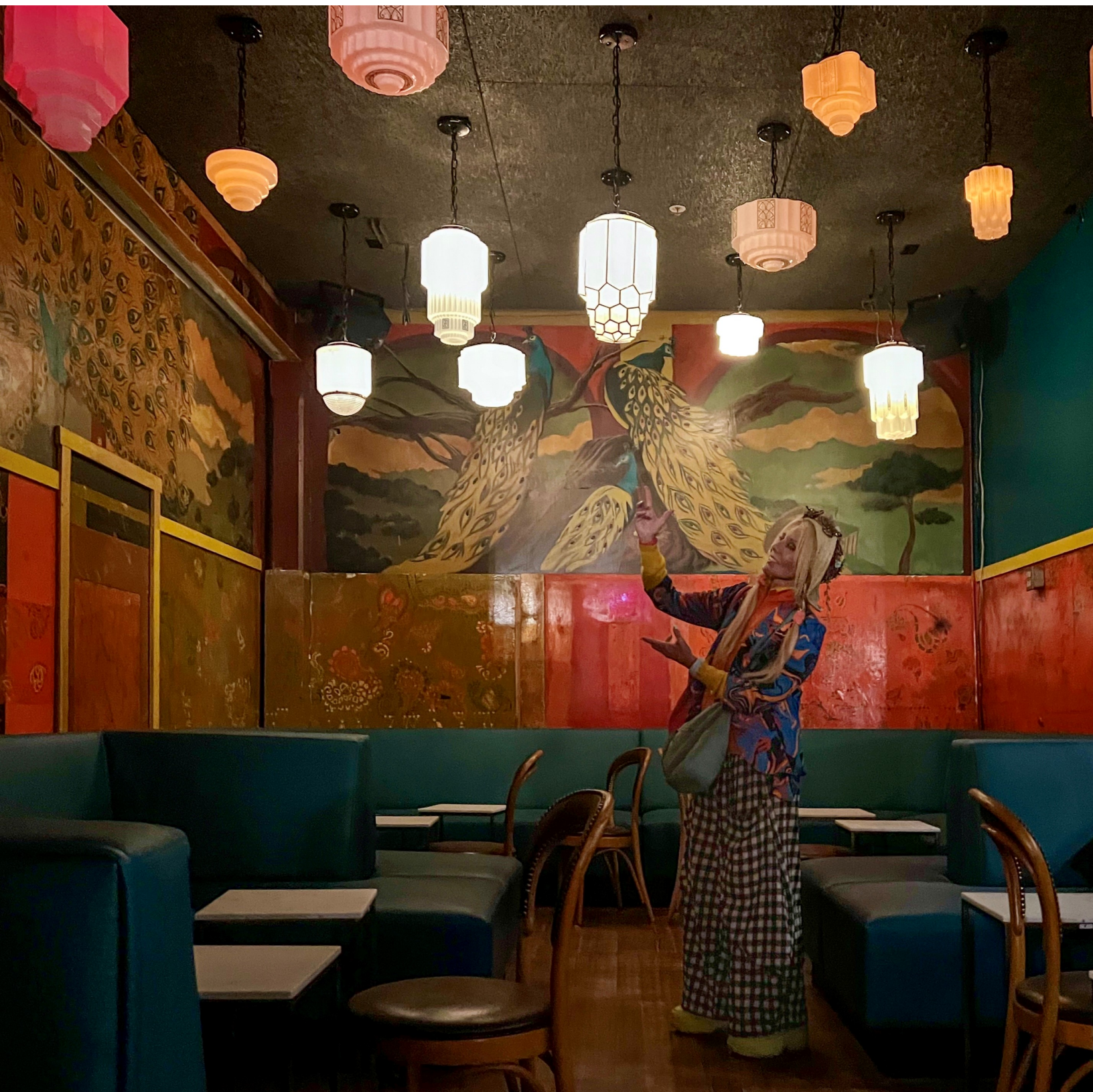
SAVOY TIVOLI BAR EST. 1907
SAVOY TIVOLI BAR EST. 1907
SAVOY TIVOLI BAR EST. 1907



















<https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/wine/article/savoy-tivoli-bar-open-17657663.php>

San Francisco Chronicle

[FOOD//WINE, BEER & SPIRITS](#)

This 115-year-old S.F. bar is roaring back to life

By [Mario Cortez](#), Food Reporter
Dec 16, 2022 9:14 p.m.



The popular Savoy Tivoli Caffè, 1434 Grant Avenue, as seen in 2002.
Chris Stewart / The Chronicle
CHRIS STEWART/SFC

It fostered the Beat Generation's thinkers and its stage welcomed legendary acts like Jefferson Airplane and the Ramones. Its home survived the great earthquake. Now, the lights are back on at this watering hole that is more neighborhood institution than bar.

North Beach's Savoy Tivoli reopened Thursday night, keeping the 115-year old establishment alive. The bar closed in 2018 for seismic retrofitting work on the building, but the pandemic and the passing of longtime owner Agnes Claire Kozel in 2020 delayed the reopening.

The business is now in son Paul Kozel's hands, along with friend and business partner Tito Avila. They're the latest in a string of Bay Area business owners setting out to [reboot and preserve](#) longstanding bars and restaurants. And there's plenty of history to preserve: The Savoy Tivoli first opened in 1907 as a boarding house and restaurant for Italian seafarers; Beach Blanket Babylon, the wild musical revue, even [originated at this stage](#).



A live band plays at North Beach's Savoy Tivoli.
The Savoy Tivoli

As part of the reopening, the Savoy Tivoli's interior got a facelift to enhance — not replace — its existing character, owners said. The original “old bar” area still bears the same murals dating back to the 1960s, but now includes art deco lamps and some new artwork to complement existing pieces. The “new bar” area, which actually dates to the 1950s, was decked out with a new sound system from local business JK Sound to accommodate live music. It's also decorated with artwork from the contemporary North Beach artist Jeremy Fish.

Both bars will be pouring beers from a combined eighteen taps, and an evolving selection of cocktails and a wine list is also in the plans. The space won't just be for late-night revelry; Morning coffee service is set to resume starting in January.

Savoy Tivoli. 5 p.m.-12 a.m. Wednesday-Thursday. 5 p.m.-1 a.m. Friday-Saturday. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday. Hours to change starting 2023. 1434 Grant Ave., San Francisco. 415-362-7023

*Mario Cortez (He/Him) is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer.
Email: mario.cortez@sfchronicle.com*

Arts & Entertainment

The most famous North Beach club you've never been to is poised to reopen



Savoy Tivoli—located on Grant Avenue and pictured on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022—is a historic North Beach bar that has recently undergone renovations. | Benjamin Fanjoy/The Standard

By **Julie Zigoris**

Published Dec. 06, 2022 • 7:00am

The famed Savoy Tivoli club in North Beach has been many things to many people over the years—as its tagline goes, “a favorite of hippies and Beats, punks and preps, ladies and gents.”

These chameleon-like capabilities are perhaps the key to ensuring the club’s enduring survival through so many eras. Opened shortly after the 1906 earthquake as a place to play bocce and eat homestyle Italian food, it morphed into a Beat hangout and, later, a punk mecca.

The original location for the most hat-filled of San Francisco spectacles, *Beach Blanket Babylon*, it also shows up in Armistead Maupin’s *Tales of the City*. When Mrs. Madrigal orchestrates a friendship with Mona, she does so with a basket of Alice B. Toklas pot brownies at the Savoy Tivoli.

As Tablehopper [revealed last month](#), Tito Avila, a member of the new ownership group taking over the Savoy Tivoli, wants to keep its history alive. The Standard has reached out for comment, but all we know so far is what Avila revealed in a very brief interview: that

he wants to revive the venue's ability to elicit creativity and rebellion, without making radical changes to the interior.

Given its 115-year history, looking back at the stages of the Savoy Tivoli becomes a timeline of San Francisco itself.



Savoy Tivoli opened as New Tivoli 115 years ago and, over the years, welcomed everyone from Beats and punks to millionaires. | Benjamin Fanjoy/The Standard

Bocce and Bucatini

When Nick Finocchio opened the New Tivoli—the business' original name—at 1434 Grant Ave. as an Italian restaurant in 1907, its back rooms were divided into three bocce ball courts. The restaurant served traditional, seven-course Italian meals to the masses. (Nick Finocchio is not the same person as Joe Finocchio, who opened the world-famous drag club of the same name.)

One frequent New Tivoli customer remembered the restaurant fondly, citing its mouse-shaped petit fours with cloves for eyes and Finocchio's overall friendliness. He would have coffee with the adults while the kids tossed around bocce balls as if they were shot put.

When Finocchio could no longer provide meals at prices working-class people could afford, he sold the business to Fred Kuh in 1967. Kuh renamed it the Savoy Tivoli and used one bocce court for screening experimental films and turning the other two courts into a theater, setting the stage as it were for what was to come.

Nourishing the Beats

"Great things are not accomplished by those who yield to trends and fads and popular opinion," Jack Kerouac once said.

This quote, which hangs in the front window of the Savoy Tivoli, is a nod not only to the spirit of the place but also to some of its more famous customers, like Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

“It’s the only palace in the city where a passerby could see Allen Ginsberg sitting at one table, and next to him some millionaire sips champagne while some punk star is strolling by,” The San Francisco Chronicle wrote on Sept. 18, 1979.



The Ramones perform live in 1978 in San Francisco. | Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images

Original Home to Beach Blanket Babylon

When Steve Silver moved his beloved variety show—which was his M.F.A. project— from the streets to one of the bocce courts of the Savoy Tivoli in 1974, *Beach Blanket Babylon* as we knew it was born.

He covered the floors with real sand and strung the room with lights made from Folgers cans, ushering in an era that eventually became iconic in San Francisco, with the musical revue moving to Club Fugazi and performing an unprecedented 45 years, as much a part of the city as cable cars and the Golden Gate Bridge.

Birth of the Bay Area Punk Movement

When the Ramones played at the Savoy on Aug. 22, 1976, it birthed the punk scene in the Bay Area.

“In the back room of the Savoy Tivoli on Upper Grant Avenue about 30 people had their ears blasted and their lives altered by the leather-jacketed boys from the East,” muses [one recollection](#).

That performance was followed by a show in December of the same year at famed punk mecca Mabuhay Gardens that included the Nuns and the Dils alongside the Ramones. By that point, punk rock was already an established subculture, and the Savoy Tivoli became the stomping ground for yet another rebellious movement.

And Now...?

During a mid-November visit to the famed watering hole—still under renovation—a representative conducting job interviews estimated the business would reopen in December, promising a new sound system so as to avoid the noise complaints that once stymied the spot back in 2002.

Savoy Tivoli

📍 [1434 Grant Ave., North Beach](#)

Correction, Dec. 13, 2022: A previous version of this article incorrectly referred to Tito Avila as a “longtime owner.” The Kozel family, longtime owners of the Savoy Tivoli, brought on Avila to relaunch the business.

Filed Under

[Arts & Entertainment](#) [Food & Drink](#) [Life](#) [North Beach](#)



SF RESTAURANT NEWS BRIEF

This 117-Year-Old Classic North Beach Restaurant Is Finally Reopening

Plus a new grocery store in San Jose and more food news

by [Paolo Bicchieri](#) | Nov 9, 2022, 10:02am PST



[Google Maps](#)

Paolo Bicchieri is a former reporter at Eater SF writing about Bay Area restaurant and bar trends, coffee and cafes, and pop-ups.

The Savoy Tivoli, originally opened in 1906 at 1434 Grant Avenue, is set to reopen after closing during the pandemic. The 117-year-old restaurant and bar is a veritable San Francisco institution: the Ramones played at the bar in 1976; it was the original home of the city's holiday special "Beach Blanket Babylon;" and it's situated a block from the original publishing location of City Lights. According to **Tablehopper**, the restaurant and bar will reopen after finishing up final inspections by the health department.

The current owners, Tito Avila and Paul Kozel, took over from Kozel's mother who passed away in 2021. Designer Craige Walters, who is responsible for the swanky luxurious decor of the Tenderloin's Black Cat and Civic Center's now-closed **August 1 Five**, took on the redesign for the space. David Sabo is the new general manager who worked with the team to launch 13 cocktails, three low-ABV options, and three nonalcoholic drinks. Opening hours and an official reopening date are still in the works.

Outer Sunset cocktail bar celebrates five years

A new-ish neighborhood favorite, White Cap on Taraval Street is turning five years old. In honor of its birthday, the bar announced on **Instagram** a new cocktail menu is on deck.

San Jose to receive new grocery store

Smart & Final Extra! is opening a new Bay Area location, its fifth in the region, at 430 Blossom Hill Road on December 14. **SFGATE** reports the store's offerings, a combination of produce and bulk items, have made it a hit since its initial launch in the 1870s.

Comedy show launches in Castro restaurant

Market Street's **Copas** opened in 2021 with Spanish- and Mexican-inspired **fare**. Now, the restaurant is bringing in local comic **Xander Beltran** as host for "Chistes a Copas," a bi-weekly comedy show. Tickets are \$15 and one item purchase is required.

Food stewardship gala in San Francisco

The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM), which puts on a great many of the Bay Area's farmer's markets, is hosting its annual Gather for the Planet gala from 5 to 8:30 p.m. on December 3. The **Marin Independent Journal** reports the event will take place at the Swedish American Hall and feature a three-course meal prepared by four Bay Area chefs, including Tanya Holland and Brandon Jew. Tickets start at \$200 and can be purchased **online**.





LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 21, 2024

Filing Date: July 24, 2024
Case No.: 2024-006771LBR
Business Name: Savoy Tivoli
Business Address: 1434 Grant Avenue
Zoning: North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD)
North Beach Special Use District (SUD)
Telegraph Hill – North Beach Residential SUD
North Beach Financial Service, Limited Financial Service, and Business or Professional Service Subdistrict
Priority Equity Geographies SUD
40-X Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 0115/020
Applicant: Tito Avila
1434 Grant Ave.
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Heather Samuels - 628-652-7545
Heather.Samuels@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Savoy Tivoli is a historic bar in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco which features cocktails, live music, and events. Since 1907, they have been serving up delicious drinks and good times to locals and visitors alike. Savoy Tivoli serves the denizens of San Francisco, its tourists, the locals of North Beach, and all people that find themselves in San Francisco. With its storied history and its deep connection to the art community, the Savoy has drawn people from down the block to people from across the globe. Anyone looking for a great cocktail and a little inspiration is welcome at the Savoy.

Savoy Tivoli was founded at 1434 Grant Avenue – its current location – by Nick Finocchio in 1907 as “New Tivoli,” an Italian restaurant that served traditional, seven-course Italian meals to the masses. Having opened after the 1906 Earthquake, it operated as a restaurant and boarding house, serving the Italian immigrants and working-class community who were helping to rebuild the city. At 40 cents for a “regular meal,” which included soup, salad, pasta, veal, and fried potatoes, it offered what founder Finocchio desired – a great meal at a fair price. When Finocchio could no longer provide meals at prices working-class people could afford, he sold the business to Fred Kuh in 1967.

Kuh renamed it the Savoy Tivoli and used one bocce court for screening experimental films and turning the other two courts into a theater, setting the stage as it were for what was to come. He also jazzed up the restaurant by installing a silver fountain in the center of the dining room, painting the support columns with faux bark, and topping the posts with aluminum palm fronds. His connections to Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Bob Kaufman, and Ken Kesey brought the Beatnik crowd to the Savoy. Suddenly, San Francisco’s bumming, hitchhiking, ragged, beatific, beautiful youth, had a place to call home; and maybe catch a glimpse of the pseudo intellectuals like Ginsberg or Kerouac who were defining the Beatnik movement. There is even a photo of Ginsberg and Kaufman sitting on the Savoy’s patio in the NY MoMA Beatnik collection. In 1974, Steve Silver approached Kuh to launch what would later become the longest running play in the history of the United States – Beach Blanket Babylon at the Savoy. Though this show moved to a larger club later, it would become a distinctly San Francisco phenomenon that would span the globe, 45 years, and even play for the Queen of England. The counterculture vibe of the Savoy made it a natural place for subversive bands to play to rowdy crowds. From early anti-establishment bands like Jefferson Airplane to headlining punk legends like the Ramones; the Savoy became one of the clubs hosting San Francisco’s emerging punk scenes. And just as impactfully, blues and jazz became manna lapped up by patrons wishing to lose themselves in the moment on its magnificent terrace, with acts like Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters. In fact, the last performance of Jimmy Reed’s life was at the Savoy in 1976. He would die the day after his last performance at the Savoy.

In 1983, Kuh sold the Savoy to partners Louis Magliulo and Agnes Claire Kozel. In the 1990s, noise complaints plagued the Savoy. At one point, the noise complaints reached such a boiling point that the liquor license of the business was briefly revoked, and it took grassroots efforts by patrons, including then-San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, to get the Savoy open again. This era would start with the go-go 80s, which brought in coffee-obsessed Gen Xers and a stylish European crowd. In 2022, the Savoy, renewed with a stronger foundation, came roaring back to life as the famed and favorite North Beach establishment where art, music, drinks, and good times come to life.

Few bars in San Francisco, or anywhere for that matter, have been folded into the ever-changing fabric of a city like the Savoy Tivoli has in San Francisco. In essence, for every wave of North Beach citizens, every morph of its culture, every new take on creativity adopted by this neighborhood, the Savoy has been present and played an integral part in creating North Beach’s history. From settlers and immigrants sipping coffee, to poets and musicians, to actors and artists, the Savoy has been home to inspiration and performance. It’s kept the beat of San Francisco’s boom and bust lifestyle and welcomed both its outcasts and its movers and shakers.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1907.

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

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

- a. Savoy Tivoli has operated continuously in San Francisco for 117 years.
- b. Savoy Tivoli has contributed to the history and identity of the North Beach neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Savoy Tivoli 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 its bar use though it features live music and events. Historically, this business was the location in which the longest running play, Beach Blanket Babylon, had originated.

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

Yes. Introduced by Fred Kuh in the early 1960s, the Savoy Tivoli's creative lemur-based sign has been a welcome beacon on the upper end of Grant Avenue. It's been included in countless media, including in the background of several films. Savoy Tivoli features murals inside, including exotic peacock murals which have graced its walls since the 1960s. The murals now bask in the colorful glow of jewel-like Art Deco lights, which are original pieces from the 1930s and have delighted locals and tourists for decades. The lights originally sat on a shelf above the bar but now dangle from the ceiling

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

Yes. 1434 Grant Street is located within the California Register-eligible Upper Grant Avenue Historic District. The property is rated as an "A" – Historic Resource Present.

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

Yes. This property was also included in the Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco (Donna Graves and Shayne Watson – 2015) as the residential dwellings above the Savoy Tivoli had once been the home to many lesbians from the 1930s to the 1960s.

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

Yes. Savoy Tivoli has been featured in numerous newspapers and journals including but not limited to: "Savoy Tivoli" Rock and Roll Road Maps; "A Taste of San Francisco" New York Times (July 15, 1984); "The City that Was: The Savoy Tivoli" Broke-Ass Stuart (September 25, 2014); "This 117-year Old Classic North Beach Restaurant is Finally Reopening" Eater San Francisco (November 9, 2022); "117-year-old SF North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli to finally reopen" SF Gate (November 11, 2022); "The most famous North Beach club you've never been to is

poised to reopen” San Francisco Standard (December 6, 2022); “Legendary, 117-year-old North Beach bar Savoy Tivoli celebrates grant re-opening” Hoodline (December 15, 2022); “This 115-year-old S.F. bar is roaring back to life” San Francisco Chronicle (December 16, 2022); and “Remembering when a group of SF punks took a city landmark on a cross-country road trip” SF Gate (June 23, 2023).

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.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1434 Grant Avenue (1907 – Current)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- Not Applicable

Recommended by Applicant

- Savoy Tivoli’s creative lemur-based sign
- Exotic peacock murals
- Art Deco lights
- Integration with the artist community of North Beach
- Great cocktails at fair prices

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

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: August 21, 2024

Case No.: 2024-006771LBR
Business Name: Savoy Tivoli
Business Address: 1434 Grant Avenue
Zoning: North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD)
North Beach Special Use District (SUD)
Telegraph Hill – North Beach Residential SUD
North Beach Financial Service, Limited Financial Service, and Business or Professional Service Subdistrict
Priority Equity Geographies SUD
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0115/020
Applicant: Tito Avila
1434 Grant Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94133
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Heather Samuels - 628-652-7545
Heather.Samuels@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR SAVOY TIVOLI CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1434 GRANT AVENUE, BLOCK/LOT 0115/020.

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 August 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 Savoy Tivoli 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 Savoy Tivoli.

Locations

Current Locations:

- 1434 Grant Avenue

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- Not Applicable

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Savoy Tivoli's creative lemur-based sign
- Exotic peacock murals
- Art Deco lights
- Integration with the artist community of North Beach
- Great cocktails at fair prices

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 August 21, 2024.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: August 21, 2024