

FAIRMONT SAN FRANCISCO MOMENTS IN HISTORY

- Early 1890s James Graham Fair, known as “Bonanza Jim” for discovering one of the world’s largest silver strikes in Nevada, buys real estate at the crest of Nob Hill. He plans to build a spectacular family estate but dies in 1894 before he can realize his dream.
- 1903 Fair’s daughters, Tessie and Virginia, inherit the property and begin to construct the first hotel atop exclusive Nob Hill as a monument to their father.
- April 18, 1906 Scheduled to open that day, The Fairmont survives the Great Earthquake but is ravaged by the resulting citywide inferno the next day. Although the interior of the hotel is destroyed, the exterior remains standing.
- April 18, 1907 The Fairmont Hotel, with its \$5 million price tag, opens exactly one year after the Great Earthquake and provides cause for unbounded civic celebration as the new hotel signifies the rebirth of San Francisco. That evening, guests feast on 600 pounds of turtle, 13,000 oysters, and \$5,000 worth of California and French wines. The hotel’s architect is Julia Morgan, the first female graduate of Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.
- May 7, 1908 The Fairmont hosts Theodore Roosevelt’s Great White Fleet.
- October 5, 1909 President William Howard Taft is honored at a dinner in The Gold Room.
- 1917 Room rates are \$2 per day for the European plan and \$5 for the American plan.
- December 18, 1918 The legendary Paul Whiteman Orchestra begins a two-year engagement at The Fairmont and gives San Francisco its first exposure to the “big band” sound. The Orchestra will soon introduce Bing Crosby and Tommy Dorsey to rapt audiences.
- 1926 The 6,000-square foot Penthouse Suite is constructed as a residence for John S. Drum, president of the American Trust Company. Mr. Drum leases the Penthouse for \$1,000 per month. The fabled suite remains a private residence until 1981 and today commands \$18,000 per night.
- 1929 The Terrace Plunge opens with actress Helen Hayes taking the first dive into the 75-foot pool. The Plunge attracts local swimmers training for the Olympics as well as celebrity swimmers, including Esther Williams and athletic actor and future U.S. President, Ronald Reagan.

Fairmont

- December 5, 1933 To celebrate the end of Prohibition, Fairmont opens The Cirque Room, an Art Deco cocktail lounge by noted architect Tim Pflueger. Brilliant gold murals depicting "A Day at The Circus" define this dramatic space.
- May 1941 Orson Welles directs the movie, *Citizen Kane*, based on the life of publishing tycoon William Randolph Hearst. Hearst is so offended by the portrayal of his fictional counterpart, Charles Foster Kane that he vows to destroy both the movie and Welles. While staying at The Fairmont, Welles encounters Hearst in the elevator and invites him to attend the San Francisco premiere of *Citizen Kane*. When Hearst remains stone-faced and silent, Welles bellows, "Charles Foster Kane would have accepted the invitation!"
- April-June 1945 The U.N. Charter is drafted in the hotel's Garden Room. The Penthouse Suite is used by U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius as his headquarters during the United Nations Convention.
- 1945 The Plunge is renovated to become Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar, one of the nation's first Polynesian-themed restaurants. The bartender who created the Mai Tai serves the signature cocktail to hotel patrons for the next two decades.
- 1946 Interior designer Dorothy Draper refurbishes the hotel's lobby and public areas. Bold design elements include black and red carpets, red velvet furnishings, and gold and black lacquer accents.
- 1947 The Venetian Room opens as an elegant supper club synonymous with world-class entertainment.
- June 12, 1948 President Harry S. Truman checks into The Fairmont during a tour of Northern California.
- 1958 Alfred Hitchcock films scenes for his classic thriller *Vertigo*, starring Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak, at Fairmont San Francisco.
- 1961 The Fairmont San Francisco Tower opens. Designed by Mario Gaidano, the 24-story Tower adds 226 rooms with unparalleled views of the San Francisco Bay Area.
- December 1961 Tony Bennett sings "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" for the first time in The Venetian Room.
- May 20, 1963 President John F. Kennedy checks into the Penthouse Suite.
- 1974 With his extensive experience at Europe's finest hotels, Tom Wolfe joins Fairmont to become America's first concierge.
- Sept. 21, 1983 Filmed at Fairmont San Francisco, the television pilot of Aaron Spelling's "Hotel" premieres. A replica of the hotel is built at Warner Bros. Studio and The Fairmont, known to television audiences as the luxurious St. Gregory Hotel, commands a starring role in the popular series throughout its five-year run.



- 1986 The Fairmont Hotel is designated San Francisco Landmark No. 185, excluding the more recent Fairmont Tower.
- Dec. 31, 1989 The Venetian Room closes after entertaining guests for 42 years. During its reign as the West Coast's premier supper club, The Venetian Room featured legendary performers such as Tony Bennett, Nat King Cole, Marlene Dietrich, Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald, Tina Turner and Count Basie.
- June 1990 The Fairmont is designated a "foreign mission" to thaw Cold War tensions during a visit by U.S. President Ronald Reagan, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and South Korean President Roh Tae Woo.
- October 22, 1994 President Bill Clinton checks into The Fairmont during a campaign tour. The President and First Lady Hillary Clinton will return to the hotel several times during his two terms in office.
- April 18, 1997 The Fairmont celebrates 90 illustrious years of operation with a gala luncheon for survivors of the 1906 Great Earthquake.
- 2001 The Fairmont completes an \$85 million restoration program to recapture the original splendor of the turn-of-the-century landmark.
- April 17, 2006 In honor of the San Francisco Fire Department's heroic efforts to protect the city during 1906 Great Earthquake and Fire, The Fairmont hosts a luncheon for firefighters on the eve of the Earthquake Centennial.
- April 18, 2007 Fairmont San Francisco commemorates its centennial with a gala to benefit San Francisco Opera.
- 2010 After being "dark" for 21 years, Bay Area Cabaret is proud to call the Venetian Room "home" as the sole presenters of live entertainment in this glorious venue.
- February 14, 2012 Tony Bennett returns to Fairmont San Francisco to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his debut of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." San Francisco's Mayor pronounces it "Tony Bennett Day" at City Hall and Bennett performs that evening in the Venetian Room to benefit UCSF's Division of Cardiology.
- August 19, 2016 San Francisco honors Tony Bennett and unveils an 8-foot-tall bronze statue of the legendary performer in celebration of his 90th birthday. The statue becomes a new landmark for the city and resides in front of Fairmont San Francisco.

About Fairmont San Francisco

Since 1907, The Fairmont has served as the San Francisco residence for U.S. presidents, world leaders and entertainment stars. The landmark hotel offers 606 recently-renovated guest rooms and suites, three distinctive restaurants, a health club and easy access to the city's most popular attractions. Fairmont San Francisco is located atop Nob Hill at 950 Mason Street. For reservations, please call [1-800-441-1414](tel:1-800-441-1414) or visit www.fairmont.com/san-francisco



About Fairmont

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