

Tour #2: North Beach

This tour starts at Powell and Broadway at the east end of the Broadway Tunnel. If taking a cable car from Market and Power, take either the Powell-Hyde or the Powell-Mason cable cars. Step off the cable car on Powell just before it turns left onto Jackson Street. Generally, the cable car gripman and/or conductor call out this stop as the last stop for Chinatown. Don't be afraid to ask either of them to call out the stop for you.

Minimum time: 1 ½ hours

Google Map for this tour: [Tour #2: North Beach](#)

After stepping off the cable car, continue north/downhill on Powell two blocks to Broadway. At the corner of Power and Broadway, look to your left and you'll see the...

Broadway Tunnel



In *More Tales of the City*, Beauchamp bit the Big One in the Broadway Tunnel as he drove toward his rendezvous with Bruno Koski at the Doggy Diner on Van Ness (see *Tour #10 :Civic Center, the Other Edge of the Tenderloin, and Polk Street*). Because Beauchamp failed to pay Bruno for the planned assault on DeDe by the 12-year old girl nicknamed Douchebag, the assault was called off.

The Broadway Tunnel almost made it to the Further Tales of the City miniseries. One of the last scenes shot in San Francisco is of Prue Giroux (Mary Kay Place) and Faddy Paddy (Bruce McCulloch) driving west bound out of the tunnel. Father Paddy is pressing Prue for an update on Luke (aka, “Nature Boy”). The scene never made it to the final cut.

Cross Broadway and continue north on Powell one block to Vallejo. Cross to the northeast corner of Powell and Vallejo. Turn right on Vallejo and walk a few steps to the Vallejo Street parking garage/San Francisco Police Department Central Station.



Vallejo Street Parking Garage/San Francisco Police Department Central Station, 766 Vallejo (at Emery)

The set for the “pentshack” was built on the roof of this garage for the “Tales of the City” miniseries. For the subsequent two miniseries (“More Tales of the City” and “Further Tales of the City”), the “pentshack” was built

inside a sound stage in Canada. The set for 28 Barbary Lane for the 2019 Netflix series was built inside a sound stage in New York.

Just inside and to the right of the garage entrance is an elevator. Take it to the roof (level 5). Exit, make two right turns, and face east (toward the Bay Bridge).



The pentshack was constructed along the eastern edge of the roof of the parking garage (along the wall seen in this photo). The back stairwell and elevator (left edge of the photo) were disguised as another pentshack on an adjacent building. You can see some of the city's landmarks (e.g., the Transamerica Pyramid to the southeast and Sts Peter and Paul directly to the north) as they were seen in the "Tales of the City" miniseries.

Return to the street and backtrack on Vallejo to Powell. Turn right and continue north on Powell one block to Green/Beach Blanket Babylon. Turn right on Green/Beach Blanket Babylon. Midway along the left (north) side of this block of Green is Club Fugazi.

Club Fugazi, 678 Beach Blanket Babylon/Green Street

This was the longtime home for the even longer running musical review and world famous San Francisco icon, Beach Blanket Babylon (BBB).

BBB appeared twice in *Tales of the City*.

Due to Beauchamp's sneaking around, he and DeDe missed the Telfair's party at BBB.

To celebrate Mona's third anniversary of taking up residence at 28 Barbary Lane, Anna Madrigal purchased tickets to Beach Blanket Babylon for Mona and herself. "...*C'mon, Calamity Jane, get your coat. I've got two tickets to Beach Blanket Babylon*". (*Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane* p.128)



The Beach Blanket Babylon scene in the "Tales of the City" miniseries was shot inside Club Fugazi. Actual cast members of BBB performed the show's Finale, "San Francisco". Several members of the cast seen in the video continued to perform in BBB well into the 2010s.

Armistead Maupin had a personal connection with BBB. He was a friend of the late Steve Silver, the creator of BBB. At one time Armistead wrote for the review; he was also a doorman and assistant stage manager.

Sadly, Beach Blanket Babylon's last performance was New Year's Eve 2019.

Here's the link to [BBB's finale of its final performance](#).

Backtrack to Powell and turn right continuing downhill/north (toward the Bay) one block to Union. Turn left on Union and walk one block uphill to Mason.

Trattoria Contadina, 1800 Mason (northeast corner of Union and Mason)

After being rebuffed first by a female resident and then by security while trying to gain entry into the "Superman Building" (*More Tales of the City/See Tour #1: In the Beginning... (Aquatic Park and Russian Hill)*), Brian beat a hasty retreat down Russian Hill and stopped at La Contadina for a glass of wine. There he bumped into Mrs Madrigal. While they talked, she shared that she was concerned about the reason for Mona's absence and begins to reveal to him that Mona is her daughter. In the "More Tales of the City" miniseries, Mrs. Madrigal makes this revelation to Brian in her apartment on Barbary Lane.



Two weeks after meeting Steve Berry at Harvey Milk's memorial service, Armistead Maupin ran into Steve again here at La Contadina. They ended the day at Armistead's apartment on Telegraph Hill (see *Tour #4: Telegraph Hill and Back to Fisherman's Wharf*).

[Trattoria Contadina's website](#).

Return to Union and Powell. At Powell, turn left.

1707 Powell Street (west side of Powell between Union and Columbus)

This is the former location of the Washington Square Bar and Grill. The front of the restaurant no longer looks like it did when The Washington Square Bar and Grill operated here.



Anna and Edgar had their first date at the Washington Square Bar and Grill: "Everybody's trying to be so godawful literary. For the price of a hamburger, you can look like you've just completed a slim volume of verse". After they ate, they drove to the beach at Point Bonita. (*Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane pp.58-59*)

Later in *Tales of the City*, after meeting Brian while he was working at Perry's, D'orothea agreed to meet him here for drinks after he finished his shift. During

drinks, Brian learned about D'orothea, her career, and ultimately about her return to San Francisco to reconcile with her former lover...a woman.

In the “Tales of the City” miniseries, Mary Ann and Beauchamp are seen walking up to the entrance of the Washington Square Bar and Grill to have lunch. DeDe and Binky are having lunch in a restaurant across the street. Because DeDe’s back is to the window, she doesn’t see Mary Ann and Beauchamp; however, Binky, who sits facing the window, does. The reflection of a passing cable car can be seen in the window of their restaurant. Although the façade of the Washington Square Bar and Grill was used in the movie, there *is* no restaurant across the street from it. Across the street from the restaurant is a small triangular extension of Washington Square Park. Furthermore, the closest cable car line to this location is actually one block away on Mason. It is during this lunch that Beauchamp proposes that he and Mary Ann get away the coming weekend to Mendocino.

In the book *Tales of the City*, DeDe and her friend Binky were in a different part of town when they saw Beauchamp and Mary Ann out together for lunch. They were shopping at La Remise de Soleil (in Jackson Square) when DeDe caught sight of Beauchamp and Mary Ann. However, the restaurant where Mary Ann and Beauchamp ate lunch was not mentioned by name. In addition, it was at a later lunch date and at a *different* restaurant (see MacArthur Park in *Tour #3: Jackson Square*) when Beauchamp proposed the weekend tryst in Mendocino to Mary Ann. The movie combines these two separate events in the book into a single one.

In *More Tales of the City*, Mary Ann and Burk ate dinner here one evening. Once back at home, Mary Any proposed that they go to the San Francisco Flower Mart hoping that exposing Burk to so many roses would “short circuit” whatever it was that was freaking him about roses.

In *Further Tales of the City*, Jon unexpectedly appeared at Barbary Lane and found Mrs. Madrigal with cuts on her back (which she acquired from her tussle with Bambi Kanetaka). After Jon dressed her wounds, Mrs. Madrigal hustled Jon out of the apartment building and down the hill to the Washington Square Bar and Grill for dinner. They dined at a window seat.



While Michael packed for his trip to England (*Babycakes*), Mary Anne stopped by his apartment to give him a bon voyage package from Ned. Mary Anne noticed a second suitcase in Michael’s apartment. It was Simon Bardill’s. Simon dropped it off in anticipation of his apartment exchange with Michael before coming down the hill to the Washington Square for dinner.

The Washington Square Bar and Grill was a San Francisco institution. It was long a hangout for the City’s politicians,

writers/authors, and musicians. It closed in August 2010. Coincidentally on the same day it closed its doors, one of its two original owners passed away. In late 2011, it was replaced by the Bottle Cap, which has, in turn, been replaced by The Square, followed by Lillie Coits, which has been replaced by nothing. The building is once again vacant.

Follow Union east across Columbus Avenue to southwest corner of Washington Square.

Washington Square (bordered by Columbus, Filbert, Stockton, and Union streets)

He sat down on a bench in Washington Square. Next to him was a woman who was roughly his age. She was wearing wool slacks and a paisley smock. She was reading the Bhagavad-Gita.



She smiled.

'Is that the answer?' asked Edgar, nodding at the book.

'What's the question?' asked the woman.

Edgar grinned. 'Gertrude Stein.'

'I don't think she said it, do you? No one's that clever on a deathbed.'

There it was again.

He felt a surge of recklessness. 'What would you say?'

'About what?'

'The end. Your last words. If you could choose.'

The woman studied his face for a moment. Then she said: 'How about... "Oh, shit!"'

His laughter was cathartic, an animal yelp that brought tears to his eyes. The woman watched him benignly, detached yet somehow gentle.

It was almost as if she knew.

'Would you like a sandwich?' she asked when he stopped laughing. *'It's made from focaccia bread.'*

Edgar said yes, delighting in her charity. It was nice to have someone taking care of him for once. 'I'm Edgar Halcyon,' he said.

'That's nice,' she said. 'I'm Anna Madrigal.' (*Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane pp.50-51*)

In the "Tales of the City" miniseries, Edgar and Anna do not meet here at Washington Square; rather, their chance meeting happens on a bench in Alamo Square with a view of downtown to the northeast over the "Painted Ladies" on Steiner Street. This same view of Downtown and the Painted Ladies from Alamo Square is found on several different postcards of San Francisco.

In *More Tales of the City*, Brian spent a morning in Washington Square sunning himself for the benefit of the "Lady on Eleven". While he was returning to Barbary Lane, he suddenly decided to try to meet the Lady on Eleven and attempted to enter her secured apartment building. He was rebuffed by both the building's security guard and a female resident (see the notes about the Trattoria Contadina above in this tour).

Also, in *More Tales of the City*, Mona was ticked off because she thought Brian was seeing someone (little did *she* know) the night following her dinner with him. Calming down after talking to Anna, she and Anna went to Molinari's (see below in this tour) to purchase food for a picnic in Washington Square. While watching Chinese grandmothers performing *Tai Chi*, Mona informed Anna that Betty Ramsey was coming to town to meet with Mona.

In the "More Tales of the City" miniseries, Mona and Mrs. Madrigal are walking down the Vallejo Steps between Taylor and Mason when Mona informs Mrs. Madrigal of Betty's impending visit (see *Tour #1: In the Beginning... (Aquatic Park and Russian Hill)*).

In *Further Tales of the City*, after planning Mary Ann's birthday party and previewing "Miss Stanwyck" (one of her many pot plants), Mrs. Madrigal and Brian wandered down Russian Hill to Washington Square where they continued to talk about Brian's and Mary Ann's relationship. Brian was uncertain about the future of his relationship with Mary Ann. He wanted nothing else as bad as having the relationship work out. Anna assured him that he shall have it. "My children always get what they want." In the "Further Tales of the City" miniseries, this discussion between Brian and Mrs. Madrigal occurred in Golden Gate Park at the edge of the fern trees on John F Kennedy Drive (see *Tour #12: Golden Gate Park*).

Thirty years later, in *Michael Tolliver Lives*, after a dinner rendezvous at Caffe Sport (below in this tour), Mrs. Madrigal and Michael shared a doobie in Washington Square.

In the middle of Washington Square is a statue not of George Washington but rather Ben Franklin. A time capsule was buried at the base of the statue in 1879; it was opened in 1979. This was replaced with new capsule to be opened in 2079. The current time capsule contains a copy of *Tales of the City* along with a pair of Levi's and a bottle of cabernet.



Towering over the Square on the north side of Filbert Street is Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church. During the time of *Babycakes*, Mary Ann attended an aerobics class at SS Peter and Paul.

Exit the Park at its northeast corner (Filbert and Stockton) and look cross Filbert.

Mama's on Washington Square, 1701 Stockton (northwest corner of Filbert and Stockton)



One morning (*Tales of the City*), Mary Ann went downstairs to Mona's and Michael's apartment to see if they wanted to join her for brunch. They declined. Mary Ann headed five blocks downhill on Filbert to Mama's. The line for Mama's was long and she considered eating elsewhere when Norman, already in line with Lexy, spotted Mary Ann. She joined them. After brunch, Mary Ann, Norman, and Lexy crossed over to Washington Square where Lexy chased pigeons. Norman also asked Mary Ann if she would accompany him to see a movie (see Eureka Theater, *Tour #3: Jackson Square*).

In the "Tales of the City" miniseries, this chance meeting of Mary Ann and Norman is shot near the intersection of 24th Street and Sanchez in Noe Valley (see *Tour #8: The Castro, Noe Valley, and Dubose Triangle*).

Years later (*Babycakes*), Mary Ann and Simon Bardill ate dinner at Mama's as the end of Simon's stay in San Francisco approached. Brain had driven down the Peninsula to attend a weekend bash at Theresa Cross' home. During dinner, Mary Ann suggested they take advantage of Brian's absence spend the night together.



There generally *is* a substantial line at [Mama's](#) on weekend.

By the way, Mama's only takes cash and debit cards...no credit cards.

Turn around and head south on Stockton one block back to Union. Looking across Stockton on the northeast corner is:

Acquolina, 1600 Stockton (northeast corner of Stockton and Union streets)

Acquolina was the location of *Malvina's* which figured twice in *Tales of the City*.

The morning after she was canned at Halcyon's, Mona had a leisurely cup of cappuccino at Malvina's.



Several weeks later, she returned to Malvina's with D'orothea. They sipped cappuccinos while they caught each other up on their lives since Mona's departure from New York three years earlier. D'or told Mona that she was finished with New York and she was back in San Francisco to stay. Mona drew upon the song, *San Francisco*, for her reply, "*Comin' home to go roamin' no more, huh?*" (*Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane* pp.178-179). In the "Tales of the City" miniseries, this scene was played out at D'or's home in Pacific Heights.

Malvina's was also mentioned in *More Tales of the City*. While eating lunch in Truckee, CA, with Mother Mucca, Mona learned that Mother Mucca was returning to Nevada from a COYOTE (that is, a hookers' union) meeting in San Francisco. Mona recalled frequently seeing Margo St James, the founder of COYOTE, breakfasting on coffee and croissants at Malvina's.

Margo St James is a very real person and so is COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), the organization she founded.

The photo shows Café Devine which was located here between the closure of Malvina's and the opening of Acquolina. [Acquolina's website](#).

Cross Union to the southeast corner of the intersection.

Original Joe's, 601 Union (at Stockton)



This is the former location of Joe DiMaggio's Italian Chophouse. In *Michael Tolliver Lives*, Michael and his brother, Irwin, ate dinner here before Michael treated Irwin to an evening with Cressida at the Lusty Lady. While working on his first scotch, a pianist was playing "I Wanna Be Loved by You", Marilyn Monroe's big

number from the movie *Some Like It Hot*. The cleverness of the pianist playing this song in Joe DiMaggio's wasn't lost on Michael.

Until 2002, *Fior d'Italia*, an Italian restaurant – and at that time, the *oldest* Italian restaurant in San Francisco – occupied this location. While dining with Irwin at Joe DiMaggio's, Michael recalled that *Fior d'Italia* was located here when he was living at 28 Barbary Lane up on Russian Hill. (*Fior d'Italia* relocated about 4 blocks away on Mason on the northern edge of North Beach.)

Joe DiMaggio's closed in October 2010. In 2012, [Original Joe's](#), a long time popular restaurant that was previously located in the Tenderloin, reopened at this location.

Now cross Stockton and walk one block east on Union (away from Washington Square and Columbus) to Grant. Cross Grant, turn right and walk a few steps to...

Savoy-Tivoli, 1434 Grant (between Green and Union)

After reading about Mona in a trade publication and suspecting that Mona was her daughter, Anna “engineered it” so that she and Mona would meet each other for the first time at the Savoy-Tivoli and launch their friendship. (*Tales of the City*)



Later, in *More Tales of the City*, after her confrontation with Betty Ramsey, Anna met up with Mona at the Savoy-Tivoli to try to sort out (with the help of wine) the relationship between Betty and the mysterious Norman Neal Williams.

Mary Ann and Burke rendezvoused here during *More Tours of the Tales* and ate dinner on the terrace, which reminded them of Mexico. Mary Anne informed Burke that she learned that the “transplant man” they had seen a few days earlier at the Flower Mart worked in the flower shop at St Sebastian's Hospital. Burke then shared with her the four line verse that he has repeatedly “heard” in his dreams.

The Savoy-Tivoli doesn't have its own website. It *does* have a page on [Facebook](#).

Continue south on Grant to Green. Turn right, cross Grant, and walk ½ east on Green.

Sport Café/Caffè Sport, 574 Green between Stockton/Columbus and Grant.

After watching Beach Blanket Babylon (*Tales of the City*) – see above in this tour – Mona and Mrs. Madrigal walked the short block and a half down Green to the Caffè Sport. They sat in the back of the restaurant at a table next to the bas-relief

of a Roman ruin. Mrs. Madrigal revealed to Mona that that particular evening was the third anniversary of Mona’s living at 28 Barbary Lane. She went on to inform Mona that Mona didn’t choose Barbary Lane, but rather Barbary Lane chose *her*. In the “Tales of the City” miniseries, this revelation takes place at Club Fugazi just prior to the finale, “San Francisco!”



Thirty years later, in *Michael Tolliver Lives*, Mrs. Madrigal and Michael met here for dinner. While eating, Michael caught sight of a younger man whose photo he recognized in the personals section of an online gay website. This was Ben McKenna, who later became Michael’s love interest and, eventually, his husband. After exchanging phone numbers with Ben, Michael rejoined Mrs. Madrigal. After dinner, they walked to Washington Square and shared a joint (see above in this tour).

[Caffé Sport’s website.](#)

Continue the short walk west on Green to the intersection of Green, Stockton, and Columbus. Cross Stockton, Columbus, and then Green until you are in front of the Bank of America.

Bank of America, 1455 North Stockton

This was Mary Ann’s bank in *Further Tales of the City*. One of the reasons she chose this bank was that this was the bank where Woody Allen executed his bungled bank robbery in the movie “Take the Money and Run”.



At one time, this was also Armistead Maupin’s bank.

Now head south on Columbus (toward the Transamerica Pyramid) by crossing Stockton. Continue one block to Vallejo. Cross Vallejo.

Molinari’s Deli, 373 Columbus Ave at Vallejo.



Anna Madrigal and Mona stopped here to purchase picnic foodstuffs (salami, cheese, and pickled mushrooms) for a picnic at Washington Square (see above in this tour) in *More Tales of the City*.

The opening of *Further Tales of the City* finds Anna Madrigal returning home with a bag of groceries, including three cheeses which she purchased at

Molinari's.

In *Babycakes*, Mary Ann invited Simon Bardill to accompany her as she did some shopping in North Beach. All she had to show for her effort was a pint carton of pickled mushrooms she purchased at Molinari's. It became clear to Simon that shopping wasn't on Mary Ann's mind. He suggested they go for a walk. They walked up Union to Telegraph Hill (see *Tour #4: Telegraph Hill and Back for Fisherman's Wharf*).

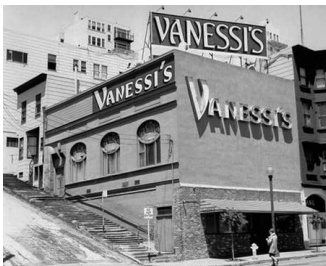
After she returned from her month long trip to Lesbos, Greece (*Sure of You*), Anna Madrigal invited Brian, Thack, and Michael over for a visit. She shared with them photos of her trip. She served them a sherry she purchased here at Molinari's.

[Molinari's website.](#)

Continue south on Columbus to Broadway. Cross Columbus to the northeast corner of Columbus and Broadway. Walk east along Broadway one block to Kearny.

Beer Pong / Score!, 498 Broadway (northeast corner of Broadway and Kearny)

This is where Vanessi's was located in the time period covered by the *Tales* books. In 1986, the owners moved it to 1177 California Avenue on Nob Hill. Eventually, Vanessi's closed its doors



at that second location 11 years later in 1997. In the "Tales of the City" miniseries, Beauchamp asks Mary Ann to make lunch reservations for him and D'orothea at Vanessi's.

Only four blocks away from the Days' apartment on Telegraph Hill, this is where DeDe met and became friends with D'orothea in *More Tales of the City*.



Cross Broadway to the southeast corner of Kearny and Broadway. Turn left and walk east one-half block.

Fame, 443 Broadway (southeast corner of Broadway and Rowland/Dirk Dirksen Place)

This was the former location of Mabuhay Gardens – a Philippine night club which later became, by the time of *More Tales of the City*, San Francisco's only punk rock showplace. This is where Bruno Koski connected with the gum chewing, Hefty bag clad punkette named



Douchebag. Bruno hired Douchebag to “trash” DeDe. (See Tour #10: *Civic Center, the Other Edge of the Tenderloin, and Polk Street.*)

Bruno offered Douchebag \$300 to seal the deal. Douchebag was pumped that she would truly earn her punk credentials. Furthermore, she couldn’t wait until she turned thirteen!

In 2008, Rowland Street was renamed Dirk Dirksen Place. Dirk Dirksen was the music promoter and emcee at the Mubahay Gardens and On Broadway in the later 1970s and early 1980s. He was nicknamed the “Pope of Punk”. He was also the nephew of US Senator Everett Dirksen.



Backtrack to Kearny. Cross to the other side and turn left. Midway down the block is the Lusty Lady.

1033 Kearney



This was the former location of Lusty Lady.

In his fifties and when Brian’s daughter, Shawna, is a young adult, Michael went to see a live strip show at the Lusty Lady... performed by Shawna. She was doing research for her edgy blog “Grrrl on the Loose” (*Michael Tolliver Lives*).

Several weeks later, Michael’s brother, Irwin, came to San Francisco to visit Michael. Michael treated Irwin to a private show by Cressida here at the Lusty Lady after the two ate dinner at Joe DiMaggio’s Italian Chophouse (see above in this tour).



The Lusty Lady has an interesting history. It was established in the 1970s by two businessmen from Seattle. In 1997, it was unionized – the first peep show in the US to do so. Shawna’s blog wasn’t the first time someone who worked at the Lusty Lady published her experiences of working there. In 2001, Lily Burana published a book about her experience working here and at other strip clubs, *Strip City: A Stripper’s Farewell Journey Across America*. Two years later, Carol Queen, another former performer at the Lusty Lady published her book, *Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of a Sex-Positive Culture*.

The Lusty Lady closed in September 2013. Here is a history of The Lusty Lady and its sister establishment in Seattle in [Wikipedia](#).

This is the end of Tour #2.

By walking about 2 ½ blocks you can pick up the start of Tour #3: Jackson Square. Continue walking south on Kearny. Cross Kearny and then Pacific to Columbus. Then continue walking south on Columbus until you reach the Transamerica Pyramid.

If you wish to return to Market, backtrack to Broadway, turn left. Walk to and cross Columbus. You can pick up the # 41-Union MUNI bus in front of the City Lights bookstore which will take to you Market and Davis at the Embarcadero MUNI/BART station.

Updated: 18 May 2020