

Tour #9: SOMA (South of Market)

In this tour, you will frequently see the phrase “This is the former location of...” and for a good reason: many of the restaurants, bars, and dance clubs mentioned in the Tales books have closed and/or relocated over the years.

A few words about SOMA and its role in the lesbian, gay, bi, and transgendered (LGBT) culture and history of San Francisco: South of Market has long been one of the major LGBT neighborhoods in San Francisco. Early on, most of the LGBT activity was concentrated at the eastern end of SOMA at and near the waterfront. For a number of reasons starting in the 1960s, businesses that catered to (or at least tolerated) the GLBT community began to move west in the SOMA along Folsom Street as well as into Polk Gulch (that is, along Polk Street). Gay and Lesbian bars began to appear in the Castro in the early 1970s. Eventually SOMA became the “leather scene” with most of the leather bars concentrated along Folsom. Part of the leather heritage of this neighborhood is the annual [Folsom Street Fair](#). Other interesting websites regarding SOMA and the LGBT community are a brief history of the LGBT community and SOMA that appeared in [the San Francisco Chronicle](#) as well as the [Colors of Leather](#), a website that explores and shares the leather scene in the LGBT community. (The information in the Colors of Leather is not limited only to San Francisco; check out the list of former and current bars and baths in San Francisco.)

Unfortunately, there is a lot of walking on this tour. There are a few places where you can take a MUNI bus from one point to the next point in the tour, however, the wait between buses may be longer than the time required for you to simply walk to the next point.

And now, a few words about the “compass points” used in this tour: Although the streets south of Market form a grid, they are not oriented to the four cardinal compass points (i.e., North, South, East, and West). These streets follow the diagonal orientation of Market; they are either perpendicular or parallel to Market until they essentially pass under the US-101/Central Freeway viaduct where they finally run true north-south or east-west. For the purpose of this tour, North is toward Market and East is toward the Bay.

The Google Map for this tour: [Tour #9: SOMA \(South of Market\)](#).

Travel time for this tour is about 2½ - 3 hours.

To start the tour, take the MUNI T-Third Street Metro line from any of the Downtown MUNI Metro stations. Exit the T-Third Street MUNI Metro at Mission Rock. Cross 3rd and walk one block on Mission Rock to Pier 50.

Pier 50, China Basin – south of Mission Creek / near Mission Rock and 3rd

On a rainy morning in 1983, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip concluded their royal visit to San Francisco. Mary Ann covered the departure of their royal yacht, the *Britannia*. Although the Royals flew to Yosemite, the *Britannia* sailed from Pier 50 to Seattle. As the yacht's send-off wrapped up, a blonde wearing wet, limp marabou feathers tried to get past security to access the press platform. It was Prue Giroux "*looking like Big Bird in a monsoon.*" (*Babycakes/Back to Barbary Lane*, page 36)



Immediately north of the entrance to the pier...

Atwater Tavern, 295 China Basin/295 Terry A Francois Drive @ Pier 50 (near Mission Rock and 3rd)

This is the former location of Olive Oyl's. Actually, this is *also* the former location of Jelly's Dance Café. Jelly's is now closed and the building was vacant at the time of the updating of this tour.

After the send off of the *Britannia*, Mary Ann slipped away to Olive Oyl's for a stiff drink. As she watched the *Britannia* weigh anchor and cruise toward the Golden Gate, the man on the stool next to her raised his glass toward the ship and said, "*Good riddance, old girl.*" It was Simon Bardill, a handsome Englishman who resembled Brian Hawkins and who *was* a lieutenant on the departing royal yacht.

In *Babycakes*, Olive Oyl's is spelled Olive Oil's.

Retrace your steps back to the MUNI Metro Mission Rock stop. Board an inbound MUNI T-Third Street Metro and take it one stop to the Fourth and King station. Exit the MUNI Metro and walk north on 4th Street three blocks to Brannon. Cross to the northwest corner of the intersection, turn left, and then walk two long blocks to Brannon and 6th. Turn right, walk about 20 yards and the entrance to the San Francisco Flower Mart is on your right.

San Francisco Flower Mart, 640 Brannon (6th and Brannon)

During the first week after Burke Andrew returned to San Francisco with Mary Ann (*More Tales of the City*), they went to dinner at the Washington Square Bar and Grill (see Tour #2, *North Beach*). After a red rose



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caused a nasty barfing incident for Burke at the restaurant, they returned to Mary Ann's apartment and crawled into bed. That's when Mary Ann proposed that they try to short-circuit his reaction to roses by engulfing him with roses that night...at the San Francisco Flower Mart...at three 3:00 in the morning.

Burke leaped out of bed and started to head to his apartment to change when Mary Ann stopped him saying,

"Come back here."

"Why?"

"Because," she grinned, "if I'm going to deflower you, you can at least return the favor."

(More Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane, page 394)

At the Flower Mart, Mary Ann and Burke were directed to where roses were sold wholesale. As Burke began to turn white around the roses, they noticed that the man closest to them was in his early forties, he wore a pale blue leisure suite, and his scalp was covered by neat rows of scabs. Suddenly, Burke barfed. After the barfing, Burke told Mary Ann he thought the man in the blue leisure suite and hair transplant acted like he recognized Burke.

Continue north on 6th two blocks (passing under the freeway) to Harrison.

The End Up, 401 6th (southeast corner of 6th and Harrison)



In *Tales of the City*, Michael launched his desperate quick cash scheme by participating in the Mr. End Up dance contest. He won the contest only to temporarily lose Jon.

The End Up opened on November 15, 1973, and its style and clientele has repeatedly "morphed" since. When it opened in the 1970s, it was the hangout of the clean college type, much to the derision of the leather crowd that patronized the more numerous leather bars in the area. It was also nearly exclusively gay at that time. Upstairs was the Harrison House where rooms could be rented for about \$25 per week.

Continue north on 6th three short blocks to Folsom. Turn left and cross over to the southwest corner then continue west on Folsom a few feet to 1015 Folsom.

1015 Folsom, 1015 Folsom (southeast corner of Folsom and Harriet Streets)

This was the final location of the Sutro Baths. In the late 1970s, it moved here from Valencia Street – where it was located during the time of *Tales of the City*. This location has been included in the tour to validate the memory of those folks who fondly remember the Sutro Baths when it was located here but may be a bit hazy about its previous incarnation on Valencia Street. The Sutro Baths at its Valencia Street location will be included in a future tour that is now in the planning stages.



Continue west on Folsom to the 7th Street. Cross both Folsom and 7th until you've reached the northwest corner of the intersection, then walk a few feet north on 7th.

Club Hide, 280 7th Street (near Folsom)

This is the former location of Rawhide II, a popular gay country/western bar.



One morning at the nursery (*Sure of You*), Polly and Brian had just finished waiting on a seductive redhead and were having a friendly debate wither or not the redhead was lesbian or straight. This led to Brian good naturedly teasing Polly about meeting her “main woman” the previous month here at the Rawhide.

Later in *Sure of You*, Michael and Thack decided to go out for the evening. Michael suggested the Rawhide II. They had never been there and had been meaning to go but their previous plans to do so fell through. As they arrived at the Rawhide II, Randy Travis was singing “Love you forever and ever...” for patrons participating in a dance lesson. They soon met Larry De Treaux and his 70–something mother, Eula. Eula moved to San Francisco from Havasu City, Arizona after Larry first become sick from HIV. And she stayed. Since moving to San Francisco, she developed a very full social calendar. While talking to her, Michael realized that he had met her once before at the Castro Theater for the Bow-Wow Beauty Pageant. Eula entered a Chihuahua dressed like Carmen Miranda.

Rawhide II closed in 2008 and was replaced by the Club Hide which, in turn, closed. The [Sundance Saloon](#) (located elsewhere in the City) is now the place to go in San Francisco for country/western dancing.

If you've never been to Rawhide II, there is still one way to (sorta) see what it was like. The Rawhide II was used for the interior scene of the Stetson Bar in the movie *Basic Instinct*.

Backtrack to Folsom, turn right, and continue walking west two blocks to Rausch. Directly across the street, at the corner of Folsom and Hallam is:

The Bloodhound, 1145 - 1147 Folsom (southwest corner of Folsom and Hallam)

This is the former location of The Barracks. The Barracks was mentioned in both *Tales of the City* and in the “Tales of the City” miniseries with essentially the same content.

In *Tales*: After Mona lost her job at Halcyon, Michael tried to lift her spirits by tempting her into going to a movie or do something else with him. She declined. Michael then decided to go out here and there anyway – Mona labeled the activity “*trashing*”. Michael considered taking MDA before he left, but then quickly changed his mind. He had heard rumors that someone on MDA dropped dead at The Barracks the week before. Michael then struck out for the Castro eventually ending up at the Twin Peaks where he soon met Chuck (see Tour #8, *The Castro, Noe Valley, and Dubose Triangle*).



In the movie, the scene is nearly identical to the book: Mona has just lost her job and unable to cajole Mona into going out with him, Michael decides to go out alone. He and a friend are walking along a street when the friend mentions hearing that someone on MDA had died at The Barracks. Michael’s responds that he never liked The Barracks...but he *loves* MDA! Michael and his friend part ways in front of a bar. Michael entered the bar where he eventually met Chuck – however, in the movie, the bar is The End Up, not the Twin Peaks.

Turn right at Rausch and walk one long block to Howard. Turn left on Howard and continue to the southeast corner of Howard and 8th.

The Sanctuary (Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco), 201 8th (at Howard)

This is the former location of the Club Baths.



One night during intermission at the Opera (*Tales of the City*), Peter Cipriani and Beauchamp Day repaired to the restrooms for a little coke. Peter suggested that the two of them escape the Opera and come here to the Club Baths. Peter was tired of the “pseudo-patricians” at the opera and had a hankering for the “pseudo-lumberjacks” at the Club Baths.

Sometime later, Jon Fielding and his friend Collier Lane were at dinner at the Hampton-Giddes home at Sea Cliff. Smirking, Richard Evan Hampton asked Jon about the

“twink”. Jon drew a blank as to what Richard was asking. Richard clarified, “*The twink in the jockey shorts. At The Endup.*” Pissed at the insult to Michael, Jon rose to leave. Collier offered to drive Jon. They then came to the Club Baths. Prowling around the baths, Jon joined a dark haired man who had his own room. After they had finished, they chatted. Jon introduced himself.

“My name’s Jon,” he said.

“Hi. I’m Beauchamp.”

(Tales of the City, page 221)

Club Baths was part of a national chain of gay bathhouses across the United States. This bathhouse was the “Flagship” of the chain.

The Sanctuary provides emergency shelter to homeless adults who register through the City of San Francisco.

Turn left at 8th and walk south one block to Folsom. At Folsom, turn left and walk a few steps to 1188-1190 Folsom.

The Cat Club and Inn on Folsom, 1188-1190 Folsom (near the corner of Folsom and 8th)

This is the former location of The Baybrick Inn.

After a dinner at Le Trou, a French restaurant on the other side of Mission, DeDe and D’or got loaded on wine spritzers at the Baybrick Inn (*Significant Others*). D’or arranged for a female stripper in a cop uniform to do a lap dance on DeDe. The show was a fund raiser for AIDS. DeDe gave the cop a \$20 tip; the cop stuck her tongue in DeDe’s ear.

The Baybrick Inn (also known as Clementina’s) was a haven for San Francisco’s lesbian community in the early to mid 1980s. It was a dance club, restaurant, and hotel complex. It also provided a cabaret style venue for emerging as well as seasoned entertainers (both musicians and comedians). The Baybrick Inn itself replaced a leather bar called Headquarters.



Retrace your steps back to the corner of Folsom and 8th. Cross Folsom and walk south on 8th ½ block to 385 8th.

Mr S Leather, 385 8th Street (@ Heron)

Through her blog, *Grrrl on the Loose*, there wasn't much that Brian didn't know about Shawna's sexual relationships, about working at a peep show (see *Lusty Lady Theater*, Tour #2: *North Beach*), or even about her selling dildos here at Mr S Leather (*Days of Anne Madrigal*).



Continue walking south on 8th to Harrison. Turn right and cross 8th. Walk south on 8th to 9th.

The Stud, 399 9th Street (corner of 9th and Harrison)

This is the current home of The Stud. When Brian and Michael went cruising together (*Tales of the City*), The Stud was located at the corner of Folsom and Norfolk Streets (see below in this tour for the rest of the story).



Cross Harrison and then cross 9th. Continue walking along 9th to Dore Alley. Directly across Harrison is the Lone Star Saloon.



The Lone Star Saloon, 1354 Harrison (north side of Harrison – across from Dore Alley)

Four or five years before Michael updated us about his life (*Michael Tolliver Lives*), he met Jake Greenleaf sitting alone, nursing a beer at the bar here at the Lone Star Saloon. The year before meeting Michael, Jake moved to San Francisco from Tulsa, OK. Michael soon learned that Jake was transgender. By the end of the evening, they had become friends. A few weeks later, Jake started working for Michael at the nursery.

Circle Community Acupuncture, 1351 Harrison (southwest corner of Harrison and Dore Alley – across the street from The Lone Star Saloon)

This is the former location of The Ambush.

During his month long stay in London (*Babycakes*), Mouse caught a shocking glimpse of the long elusive Mona shopping at Harrods. He eventually tracked her down to Easley House, the estate of a Lord Roughton. Michael learned that Mona was in England to participate in an arranged marriage to Lord Roughton. Michael also learned that Lord Roughton – Teddy to his friends – was gay. Roughton arranged to marry (and pay) Mona in order to secure a



visa that would allow him to move to and stay in San Francisco. Lord Roughton was excited about his imminent return to San Francisco. He regaled Michael about his previous sojourn to the City. Lord Roughton then showed Michael the gold ring on each of his nipples. Lord Roughton revealed that it required three Scotches for him to build up enough courage to get the nipple rings. The man who added the ornamentation to Teddy's tits was a shop assistant in the little emporium above The Ambush.

Continue walking west on Harrison crossing first 10th and then 11th streets. Then cross Harrison. Turn left and continue walking along Harrison a very short distance to Norfolk Street. Turn right and walk down Norfolk to #42 (on the left).

Norfolk Street and Sterling Art Services, 42 Norfolk

Sterling Art Services provided custom framing to Armistead Maupin. Maupin repeatedly visited the shop here on Norfolk. Armistead once said that after visiting the shop several times, he decided to situate Ben McKenna's (Michael's husband's) furniture workshop here on Norfolk. (*Michael Tolliver Lives* and *Mary Ann in Autumn*)



I literally sniffed out this place. While researching the locales for this tour, I turned down Norfolk from Folsom. As I walked along this narrow street, I suddenly smelled the woods, glues, and stains that are used by furniture makers – such as Ben. I approached the door to knock on it when it suddenly flew open. An employee was leaving the shop. I asked to speak to the owner. That's how I met Chris, one of Sterling's two owners who helped me make the connection between Norfolk Street, Sterling Art Services, and Ben's shop.

Sterling Art Services provides extremely high quality custom framing for collectors, artists, curators, and galleries. [Sterling Art Services website.](#)

Continue north on Norfolk to Folsom.

The Holy Cow, 1535 Folsom (at Norfolk between 11th and 12th streets)

This is the original location of The Stud, the bar where Michael and Brian came cruising one night after getting stoned together. (*Tales of the City*)

Brian's evening proved interesting. He met and then abandoned



the “Coppola chick” who wore the “bitch” t-shirt. He also learned about cockrings from Michael.

Meanwhile that same evening, less than a ½ mile away, Jon was meeting Beauchamp at the Club Baths.

When the bar first opened in the mid-60s, it was a biker hangout. By 1970, it became a dance bar for hippies. It later morphed into a leather bar. In 1987, it moved to its current location at 339 9th Street at Harrison – which you passed a short time ago in this tour.

Turn left on Folsom and walk the short distance to 12th Street. Across Folsom at the northeast corner is Mercury Lounge.

The Willows, 1582-1590 Folsom (at 12th)



This was the former location of Hamburger Mary’s – the original Hamburger Mary’s – which eventually became a chain of excellent hamburger joints in California. ¹

Shortly after moving in with Mona (*Tales of the City*), Michael entertained her with a story about what happened while he ate at Hamburger Mary’s the previous night. He saw this straight

couple – she, radical chic – he, nervous as hell – come into the restaurant and take a seat amidst a group of heavy bikers. After leaving Hamburger Mary’s, Michael went to the baths where he was picked up by Nigel Huxtable, the conductor... who, it turned out, was skipping out, at that very moment, of a party for him and his wife at the Halcyon’s.

Hamburger Mary’s closed in 2001. It was replaced by a restaurant called Harvey’s which, in turn, later closed. Then 12th and Folsom Restaurant & Bar, opened in this location...and it too, closed. Mercury Lounge was the fourth and business to occupy this location in the past 10 years. It closed its doors on March 1, 2012. For more on the Hamburger Mary’s story, visit [MisterSF’s](#) tribute.

Continue to follow Folsom as it curves to 13th Street and the US-101/Central Freeway viaduct. Cross 13th street.

Rainbow Grocery Cooperative, 1745 Folsom (just south 13th Street and the US 101/Central Freeway viaduct)

This is where Shawna purchased her bulk food (*Mary Ann in Autumn*).



¹ Yet *another* “former location”.

Backtrack to 13th Street, turn right and walk along 13th (under the freeway viaduct) two long blocks to Bryant. Cross Bryant, turn right, and walk to Alameda. Cross Alameda.

U-Haul, 1525 Bryant (corner of Bryant and Alameda – one block south of the Central Expressway/13th Street)

For 75 years, this large brown brick building was the location of San Francisco's Wonder Bread/Hostess Bakery.



A few nights before Christmas in 1976, Mona – frustrated that D'or had been keeping Mona in the dark about her past and family – decided to invite D'or's parents to a Christmas Eve dinner in hopes of reuniting D'or and her parents. She learned that D'or's father made Twinkies at this plant. As a ruse to keep D'or from learning about her plans to visit D'or's father at the bakery, Mona casually informed D'or that she and Michael

were going to see a late night movie at the Lumiere Theater.

She rang a buzzer at the information desk. Several minutes later, a man who appeared to be a baker asked if he could help her.

"Do you know Leroy Wilson?" she asked.

"Sure...wanna talk to him?"

"Please."

The man disappeared into the back, and another ten minutes passed before Leroy Wilson presented himself to a mystified Mona Ramsey.

The baker was dusted with a fine coating of powdered sugar.

And his skin was white as the sugar.

(Tales of the City/28 Barbary Lane, pp. 231-2)

In the mini-series ("Tales of the City"), D'orothea's father works at Dingle Doughnuts in San Francisco.

This is the temporary end of this tour. This tour will be extended in the future with at least two more locales added.

Until then, there are several options to return to Downtown San Francisco from this point in the tour. Continue south on Bryant to 16th Street. Turn left on 16th in a short distance down the street is the stop for the #22-Fillmore and #33 MUNI busses. Both

will take you to Mission and 16th Streets where you can catch the BART back to Downtown or other parts of the Bay Area. The #22-Fillmore will also take you the Market and Church MUNI Metro station where you can catch a MUNI Metro car or the Market/F-Line Historic Street Car.

Update: 2 June 2016