



Catherine Wargo

Web Contributor • San Francisco

January 19, 2006

It's It - It's It Ice Cream Co

868 Burlway Rd, Burlingame, CA • 650-347-2122 • www.itsiticecream.com



photo: Catherine Wargo

This elementary, yet decadent, treat is one of the quiet wonders of San Francisco—a city in which there are not too many quiet wonders. Since very few people actually grew up here (ask a room full of 20-30-somethings where they are from, and you're lucky to get one native), few remember the It's It as a landmark in history. This tasty treat dates back to 1928, when a man named George Whitney slapped some ice cream between two oatmeal cookies and dunked the whole thing in dark chocolate. The best ice cream sandwich ever concocted was born and sold only at San Francisco's "Playland-at-the-Beach" for more than forty years. Enter the heart-wrenching story of Playland being demolished and the It's It disappearing. The ice cream sandwich's adoring public clamored for more and the It's It came back in 1974. Fast forward to the present, where you can see the factory from 101 just South of the San Francisco Airport, and the It's It (\$1.25) back on shelves (in vanilla, chocolate, mint, or cappuccino flavors) in certain corner store freezer cases. They're relatively difficult to find—not every convenience store carries them. But it's worth the hunt. And, according to their website, the company will deliver a minimum of 8 cases of It's Its to your door for a mere \$85 delivery fee. Dangerous.

Museum of the African Diaspora

685 Mission St • 415-358-7200 • www.moadsf.com
 Cost: Adults \$8, students & seniors \$5, children under 12 free
 Hours: Open daily (except Tue) 10 am-6 pm; Thu until 8 pm



photo: Catherine Wargo

The newest museum to grace culture-filled Yerba Buena Gardens is the only major museum of its kind. MoAD's mission is, "to connect all people through the art, culture, and history of the African Diaspora, to promote the universal connection of humankind to Africa and explore the impact that people of African descent have had on contemporary life the world over." With a striking photo collage of a young African child's face (made up of 2000 smaller images conveying the continuing diaspora) welcoming visitors, the museum is a strong presence in the cultural downtown area. A journey through the exhibits starts with the reminder that every human being on earth was descended from the first people who inhabited Africa's Rift Valley, which has a powerful way of making each visitor feel, regardless of heritage or race, that the diaspora's history is their history. Exhibit foci are comprehensive including slavery, the history of decorative body adornment, worldwide African musical influences, and contemporary African art. A highlight of the museum is the display of the oldest objects owned by the renowned British Museum, on loan to MoAD, including handaxes from 1.8 million years ago.

Bar Crudo

603 Bush St • 415-956-0396 • www.barcru.com

Don't skip over this small, warmly-lit storefront restaurant in your rush to get next door to the ever-popular Tunnel Top bar. Walking into Crudo on a rainy Wednesday night, I was surprised to be asked if we had a reservation—such is the popularity of San Francisco's newest raw bar. The small restaurant is lined with glass and most of the seating is upstairs, since the sushi and raw seafood bar takes up most of the downstairs. The menu includes chilled crustacean and raw fish, as well as hot food such as connoisseur-worthy Seafood Chowder and Roasted Pear with arugula, St. Augur blue cheese, treviso, and hazelnuts. The Crudo Plate for Two (\$18) includes a sample of all the crudo on the menu. If you're looking for lean protein, you're in the right place—just don't expect to go home stuffed. Bar Crudo has a wonderful wine selection by the glass and the bottle, as well as an extensive beer list. It's great for dates or small group dining, but you probably want to leave the kids and the bachelorette parties at home (or at the Cheesecake Factory).

Buena Vista Park

Bordered by Haight St, Buena Vista East, & Buena Vista West



photo: Catherine Wargo

With Golden Gate Park so close by, Buena Vista often gets overlooked in favor of its much larger and well-known sister down the hill. According to the history books, residents gathered here to view the fires and destruction after the 1906 earthquake. During the "Summer of Love," hippies used the park for eating, drinking, living, and free love.

Today, Buena Vista features an intimate geography of pathways, staircases, lookouts, dog runs, and sports facilities. The best vantage point is a steep ten-minute climb from Haight Street; you can see the Golden Gate Bridge, Bay and Marin County, Sausalito, Tiburon, Coit Tower, the Bank of America Building, and the Bay Bridge. It's a great place to take dogs if you have them or nuzzle other people's dogs if you don't. Neighbors greet each other and their animal companions as they stride up and down the steep paths and staircases. Next time you are about to habitually head for Golden Gate Park, go the few extra blocks and check out Buena Vista.

Good Vibrations

603 Valencia St • 415-522-5460 • www.goodvibrations.com

Hours: Sun-Wed 11 am-7 pm; Thu-Sat 11 am-8 pm
 (Check website for other SF and Berkeley locations)

This veteran sex store, truly a San Francisco institution, has been educating city residents about sexual health and pleasure since 1977. They consider sex serious business. Good Vibes is a classy place, worker-owned (and women-owned) and operated, that believes that "sexual pleasure is everyone's birthright, and that access to sexual materials and accurate sex information promotes health and happiness." Can't argue with them there. Founder Joani Blank, a sex therapist and educator, wanted to make the store a "clean, well-lighted" experience, unlike most "adult" bookstores that existed at the time. Ms. Blank sold the business to her employees in 1992 and it is now an exemplary worker-owned cooperative. The staff does outreach and education presentations at schools and other institutions. An experience at Good Vibrations is always comfortable and educational—you get attention from the knowledgeable and caring staff if you want it, and not if you don't, while you shop for toys, games, gifts, books, videos, clothing, and accessories. They also have a mail-order catalogue and a rent-by-mail video/DVD service.



Catherine Wargo is a freelance writer, editor, and translator who resides in fabulous San Francisco. She is most at home while traveling, and has done so extensively on every continent except Antarctica. You can also find her writing in the Newspaper for the Expo for the Artist and Musician. She is working on her first novel, "Uncommon Ground," forthcoming from anyone who wants to publish it.