

GUARDIANS OF THE GATE: SAN FRANCISCO STAYS

AMANDA SAVAGE SEPTEMBER 25, 2013 0

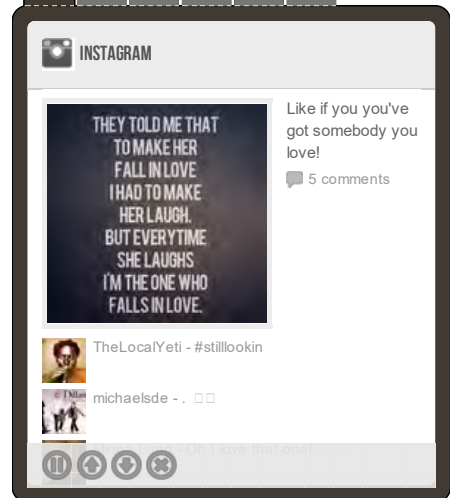
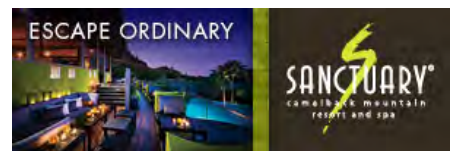
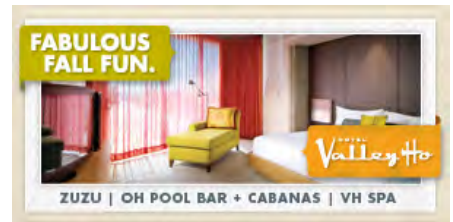


by: [David M. Brown](#)

Next visit to [San Francisco](#), billet yourself and your company at the [Inn](#) at the Presidio. At the southern, or San Francisco, approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, the Inn debuted in April 2012, and it's a memorable experience for those who want at least some of their travels, business and pleasure, to be meshed with history and culture. The Tourism Marketing Council, in fact, recently noted in its 2013 Cultural & Heritage Traveler Study that 60 percent of travelers say they are likely to take a cultural/heritage trip — up from 51 percent in 2009. A member of the Historic Hotels of America and a selection of Fodor's Top 100 Hotels in its first year, the Inn magnificently fulfills those culture-tourism needs in a rural environment of superb [accommodations](#) and amenities.

Formerly Pershing Hall, for the great general who once lived at the fort, the building opened in 1903 as bachelors quarters for officers stationed at the Army base. Magnificently renovated, the Classic Revival-style Inn includes 22 rooms on three levels: 16 king suites; one queen suite; two bay-view king bedrooms on the top floor; and three forest-view bedrooms, a king and two queens. In tune with its setting, interior colors and fabrics are in a neutral palate with contemporary touches and finishes and historic photographs and memorabilia such as the bugles once used at the Presidio that have been mounted on the entry wall. Recently opened across from the Inn is the beautifully renovated Funston House, a Greek Revival-style home dating from 1889, adding a king and two queen rooms and one queen suite with a sitting area to the campus inventory. Each of the rooms has a private bath and amenities such as Wi-Fi and flat screen televisions, and guests share a living room, dining room and a service kitchen with refrigerator and porch.

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"Funston House is a wonderful addition that introduces more privacy and a residential style floor plan that is ideal for families, bridal parties, [weekend getaways](#) with friends and even corporate offsite trips," the Inn's general manager, Terry Haney, says. He is assisted by an experienced, gracious staff, including Assistant General Manager Armando Pardo.

Both Funston House and The Inn at the Presidio are owned by The Presidio Trust, created by Congress in 1996 to rehabilitate and repurpose historic buildings and environmental resources in the Presidio of San Francisco, a national historic landmark and [national park](#) at one of the world's great bridges. The Inn at the Presidio is the first hotel to open in the park.



The almost 1,500-acre Presidio is the country's largest preservation project. Of the 870 structures, 470 are considered of historic importance; these include brick and wood barracks, such as the Inn, and Victorians. To date, 300 buildings have been variously repurposed, landfills have been removed and natural areas restored.

"The overall unique aspect of staying at IAP is that guests are staying inside a National [Park site](#) that has tremendous history and heritage that covers occupation by two countries previous to the U.S.," Haney explains. The Presidio is, in fact, older than the country. [Native Americans](#) of the Ohlone tribe, were here even before Sept. 17, 1776, when the Spanish established a fort, or presidio, as the Empire's northernmost military outpost, maintaining it until 1821. Mexico assumed control in 1822 until the United States claimed it in 1846 at the beginning of the Mexican-American War, just four years before California became a state. The U.S. Army occupied the site as a base until 1994, when it was decommissioned. During the 150 years under Army control, troops from the infantry, cavalry, artillery and the Army Air Corps were stationed here. Just outside the doors to the Inn, soldiers provided aid to the residents of San Francisco in the weeks following the devastating 1906 earthquake. The famed Buffalo Soldiers of African-American descent trained on site, some serving as park rangers before [the National Park Service](#) was established, and, a generation later, Nisei, native-born Japanese-Americans, also served their country here during World War II.

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Staying at the elegant Inn, then, is almost museumlike, in the best sense, amidst one of world's iconic land- and seascapes. Everywhere at The Presidio is this drama of two and a half centuries of history: in the names of buildings and streets — Moraga, Sheridan, Arguello, Hardie, Gorgas; the magnificently renovated brick and wood buildings; coastal defense structures Forts Scott and Point; the Chapel of our Lady at the San Francisco National Cemetery; and Crissy Field, the only Army airfield continually active in the western U.S., 1919–1936. My very comfortable third-floor suite looking out to Funston House, the parade grounds and toward San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate is in Keyes Hall, remembering Erasmus D. Keyes, a general and businessman, who became president of a Mexican gold mining company.



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The Presidio, in fact, seems self-sufficient, with its own administration and spirit — an excellent hospitality alternative to the many fine but decidedly urban hotels elsewhere in San Francisco. Approximately, 8,000 people live, work and go to school here; that it's still home for many intensifies the appeal, the charm, the history. Outside of the Inn are groves of eucalyptus and cypress trees, the park includes 145 acres of native plant communities and, for rock fans of the geological variety, serpentinite and other subduction rocks reveal the area's geological volatility. A combined 25 miles of hiking and biking trails are outside the door, and six scenic overlooks are memorable stops on the way. Both the Inn and Funston House are pet friendly, so daily strolls with them are popular. For Inn guests, the nearby SenSpa provides massage treatments by appointment and a cross-training gym work-out opportunities, and in-room massage and private dining can be arranged.

A new Sunday Picnic in the Park on the Main Post is produced by local event impresario, Off The Grid; it's very festive, with vendors and residents enjoying the Presidio with their families. Haney notes that a restaurant inside The Officers Club a block away from the Inn is opening soon as well as another restaurant in Building 101 that will be serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Just minutes from the Presidio by highway or city streets are the city's great shopping and cultural resources in North Beach, Union Square, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf the Ferry Building and Golden Gate Park. And, of course, just north of the Golden Gate is Marin County, with its beaches and walkable small towns, such as Sausalito, Muir Woods and the Wine Country of Napa and Sonoma. Another repurposed fort, Cavallo Point, is also an excellent Golden Gatearea boutique hotel, with great views of the bridge (see sidebar).



"Hotels like the Inn at the Presidio and Cavallo Point really illustrate how unique San Francisco is as a city," says Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Travel Association. Both properties are adjacent to the breathtaking Golden Gate Bridge and sit on National Park Service land.

"One could spend their entire stay gazing at the beautiful ocean, coastline and hillsides. Yet the vibrancy and excitement of the city are just a car, bicycle, ferry or bus ride away, with world-class dining, shopping, museums, performances and events, offering 49 square miles of unique neighborhoods to explore."

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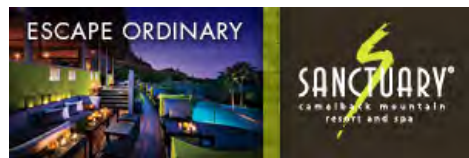
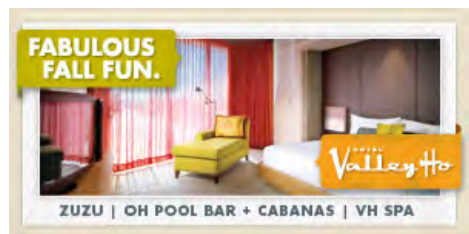
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CAVALLO POINT — THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GATE



Cavallo Point Lodge is the other hospitality guardian of the Golden Gate — at the northern end of the great bridge. Opened in summer 2008, Cavallo Point Lodge is the former Fort Baker, built between 1901 and 1915 for Army troops standing vigil below the Marin County headlands.

Today, its 68 historic [rooms and suites](#), once officers' quarters, have been beautifully restored along the parade grounds, and 74 Contemporary accommodations, on the hillside above the parade grounds, offer spectacular views of the Golden Gate Bridge through floor-to-ceiling windows. All include flat-panel [televisions](#), concierge services and Wi-Fi, and pets are welcome on select first-floor rooms. The restored landmark brick buildings feature foyers and staircases, authentic tin ceilings, fireplaces, panoramic windows and front porches, and the new rooms feature sustainable-design features such as solar power, renewable materials and organic bedding and linens. Accordingly, Cavallo Point has been awarded LEED Gold certification for its environmental standards by the United States Green Building Council, Chicago.



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Under Executive Chef Justin Everett, Murray Circle [restaurant](#) serves Marin-inspired Northern Californian cuisine, and in the adjacent Farley Bar guests enjoy a more casual menu inside or on the terrace. The 11,000-square-foot Cavallo Point Lodge Spa includes 11 treatment rooms. Children enjoy the next-door Bay Area Discovery Museum, and canine guests get doggie beds. The lodge is in [walking distance](#) of the Golden Gate Bridge, always a great experience for pedestrians or bikers, and the 118-square-mile Golden Gate [National Recreation Area](#) (GNRA) includes National Park sites, famous forts, redwood forests and miles of coastline trails.



“Cavallo Point is all about discovery, says Euan [Taylor](#), general manager of Cavallo Point Lodge. “The lodge offers the recreational resources of a national park with a location just across from one of the world’s greatest cities. This interplay creates an absolutely unique setting that is reflected in this world-class rating. To be ranked No. 5 in the United States by Travel and Leisure after just five years in business is an enormous accomplishment. Our staff has worked very hard to provide an exceptional guest experience year after year.”

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