

Luxurious new(ish) stays in the City by the Bay

By [Andrew Sessa](#)

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A view of San Francisco from the Fairmont. Photo: Fairmont Hotels & Resorts

Writer Mark Twain supposedly once quipped “the coldest winter I ever spent was summer in San Francisco.” Luckily, the Fog City’s weather is actually far more temperate, making it a great place to visit throughout the year — particularly during New York’s winter chill. And, now, after several years without much in the way of hotel news, this autumn will see some of San Francisco’s top grand dame stays showing off recent facelifts.



Palace's sky-lit indoor pool. Photo: The Luxury Collection®

Just south of Market Street, near Union Square, the city's first luxury hotel, the **Palace** (from \$375), a member of Starwood's Luxury Collection, recently completed a year-long multi-million-dollar redo of its landmarked 1909 Parisian Beaux Arts-inspired building. Despite its more than 550 rooms and suites — all of them newly redone by Italy-born, L.A.-based Beatrice Girelli in platinum hues plus deep, rich, moody tones inspired by the San Francisco Bay, with custom furniture and accents inspired by the Golden Age of travel and historic details like crown moldings, solid-oak doors and wrought-iron doorknobs — the hotel retains an uncrowded, intimate feel. This proves true from the sky-lit indoor pool to the clubby, wood-paneled bar, which features a restored Maxfield Parish mural of the Pied Piper to the Garden Court, where guests and locals alike gather under original Austrian crystal chandeliers and a soaring, domed, stained-glass ceiling throughout the day, from breakfast through high tea and, now, into the evening, too, for cocktails at the newly launched GC Lounge, which has been created in the front part of the court.



The

Ritz-Carlton's stylist lobby. Photo: The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco

Up on Nob Hill, meanwhile, the **Ritz-Carlton's** (from \$399) top-to-bottom renovation wrapped up this spring, seeing the nearly 350 rooms and suites of its columned and pedimented neoclassical 1909 bank building getting a complete overhaul. Hospitality-design go-to Hirsch Bedner Associates handled the remastering, incorporating tailored furnishings and decor inspired by consummate high-fashion San Francisco haberdasher Wilkes Bashford, all in a palette once again taken from the shades of the Bay. The biggest news here may well be the classic-with-a-twist cocktails and snacks at the light-filled antique-mirror-lined lobby lounge, as well as the ever-changing menus at the local, seasonal New American restaurant, Parallel 37, helmed by a trio of Charlie Trotter alums, and the vintages at the just-opened tasting room, which offers wines from the vineyards in Burgundy, Napa and Sonoma of beloved winemaker Jean-Charles Boisset.



A spacious guest room at the Fairmont. Photo: Fairmont Hotels & Resorts

Nearby, the **Fairmont** (from \$399) has just spent \$2 million on the redesign of just five of its top suites. (The redo of its nearly 600 accommodations debuted in spring of last year.) With Carrera marble baths, hardwood floors and original fireplaces, each of these so-called Signature Suites celebrates the city and the legacy of the 108-year-old hotel in different but equally luxe ways, the Buckingham Balcony Suite, say, boasting a glass-enclosed terrace with skyline views and a secret bar hidden behind a bookshelf, or the 22nd-floor Diplomat Tony Bennett Suite, which incorporates paintings by the iconic crooner, who first performed his hit “I Left My Heart in San Francisco” in 1961 at this very hotel.

Next up for the city’s hotel scene? The notable forthcoming overhaul of Nob Hill’s **InterContinental Mark Hopkins**, and the not-to-be-missed arrival of the **San Francisco Proper Hotel**, in Mid-Market, from designer Kelly Wearstler and her developer-hotelier husband, Brad Korzen’s brand-new hotel brand.

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