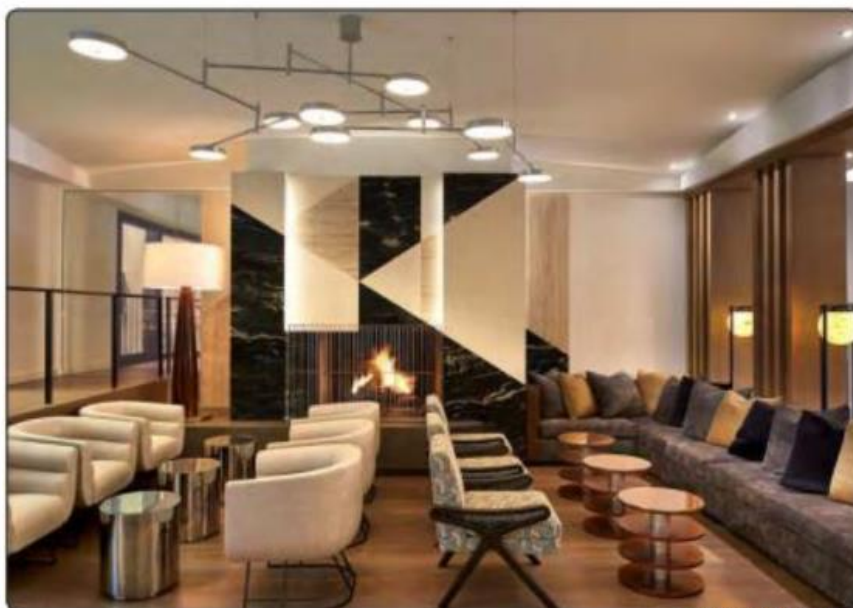


Life is a warm staycation



Both photos: Courtesy HZFW

Left: Ruth Asawa sculptures in the Hotel Zoe Fisherman's Wharf lobby: Kids, don't swing on 'em, please. **Right:** Moe of the lobby, the Hotel Zoe Fisherman's Wharf.

by **Roberto Friedman**

As part of our ongoing quest to sample every cute little new boutique hotel that opens in San Francisco, Out There recently decamped to a two-night stay at the **Hotel Zoe Fisherman's Wharf**, ground zero in SF's primo tourist zone. It turned out to be a warm, hospitable refuge for our urban-weary selves.

The Zoe reopened following a complete renovation in July 2017, reinvented as a small hotel (221 rooms) with gracious service and pleasing amenities. In the lobby, enticing with its fireplace hearth, we found "welcome beverages" and organic coffee in its **Bar Zoe**. Also available to us were iPads, bike rentals, and access to the **24-Hour Fitness** across the street.

We took a site tour with the hotel's Director of Rooms **Sandi Riemer**, duly noting the property's 3,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, complete with a conference room open to natural lighting, what a concept. From Riemer we learned that the hotel was given a feminine name, Zoe, in the tradition of the dubbing of yachts. The décor, too, is yacht-inspired, with its streamlined design in neutral colors. No anchors, no seashore themes!

A small courtyard boasts fire pits for outdoor gatherings and a "Zoe" mascot statue. Inside the lobby, three genuine **Ruth Asawa** wire-mesh sculptures hang close by the elevators.

You can find the great 20th-century Japanese-American artist's newly restored "Andrea" mermaid fountain not far away, in **Ghirardelli Square**. HZFW has a social consciousness, too, striving for energy-efficiency, and sponsoring a donation program to its philanthropic partner, **UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital**.

Our 4th-floor room, though smallish, was stylish and comfortable, with a good firm bed. The shower had a feature we'd never seen before, an aperture in the glass door to reach through for a bath towel so you don't wind up flooding the bathroom floor. Clever! The WiFi was fast and dependable,

the better for us to edit these Arts pages for you, Dear Reader.

We had dinner at **Pescatore**, the hotel's warm, intimate trattoria: Caesar salad, crab cakes for **Pepi**, pizza Blanca, chicken parm, blackened tuna for P., pear bread pudding and gelato. Every table was full on a Friday night, but the staff was calm, cool and collected. Two glasses of good California wine took the editorial edge off.

OK, you're saying, but: two days in Fisherman's Wharf? Every SF sophisticate's "no-man's-land?" Truth is, there are some worthy places tucked away amidst all the tourist infrastructure. We had fun playing with the antique penny-arcade games in the **Musee Mecanique**, an attraction with no admission fee but plenty of change machines. The



Maritime Museum in Aquatic Park is also free to visit, and boasts interesting exhibits on San Francisco sailing and mercantile history. The museum building itself is a small gem in streamlined-moderne Art Deco. In the morning the neighborhood smells of sourdough rising at the **Boudin Bakery**, heavenly scent that surely triggers most San Franciscans, even the gluten-free.

Great thing about a staycation is that you get out of your usual routine, let hospitality professionals take good care of you, then have only to step onto the F Market to get back to work, to home, or to your usual scene. Staycation recommended hotelzoesf.com.