



Gold Rush-era Jackson Square becomes hot again with retailers

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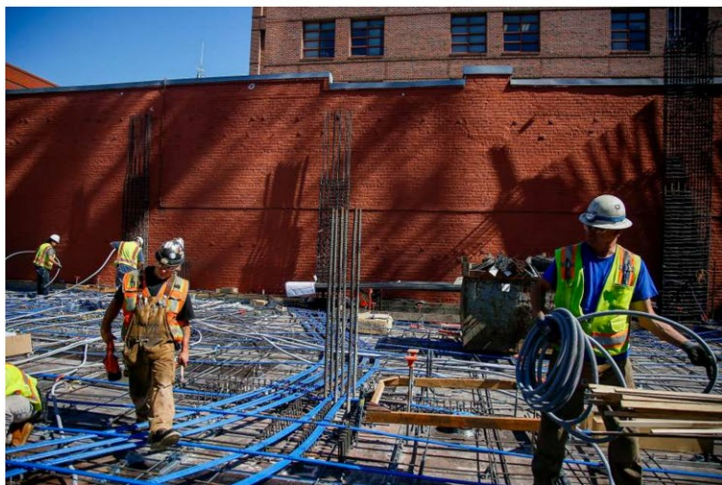


Photo: Nicole Bollaux, The Chronicle

Construction workers at the site for a condominium complex developed by Grosvenor Americas Inc. at 288 Pacific Ave., in the Jackson Square area of San Francisco. It's the first residential development in the neighborhood in a decade.

A new retail cluster has sprung up in the city's oldest commercial district: Gold Rush-era Jackson Square, with its red brick buildings and skinny alleyways.

Over its 165-year history Jackson Square has housed warehouses, artists' studios, interior design wholesalers, antique and rare map dealers, and dot-coms. Beneath its streets lie the hulls of junked ships, and the windows along the north side of Jackson Street are adorned with cast iron shutters to protect against the next big fire.

But during the past 18 months, the neighborhood has been discovered by a collection of stores looking not only for more affordable rents than can be found in Union Square or the trendy neighborhood retail districts around Chestnut, Fillmore and Hayes streets, but also for a community of like-minded shops with a chance to redefine a historic area.

There is the French designer Isabel Marant at 455 Jackson, Guideboat (marine-themed apparel) at 441 Jackson St., Aesop (skin care products) at 445 Jackson and A.P.C. (clothing) at 407 Jackson. The fashion brand Theory opened at 412 Jackson, and a new North Face store, aimed at the "city explorer," recently arrived at 701 Sansome St.

Shinola, the high-end Detroit maker of everything from watches to notebooks and bicycles, has set up shop on Hotaling Place, where it shares a space with the Seattle outdoorwear company Filson. Next door is Allbirds, which makes shoes out of New Zealand merino wool.

The influx of businesses has injected new bustle into the quiet tree-lined enclave, a neighborhood of 82 parcels and eight blocks that sits north and east of the Financial District in an area bounded by Broadway, Columbus Avenue, Washington Street and Battery Street.

The new retail stores complement restaurants like Quince and Cotogna, which have joined older dining destinations like Bix and Kokkari, said William Stout, who owns William Stout Architectural books at 804 Montgomery St.

"There are more people on the street than there used to be, especially between 4 and 8, which is good for us," said Stout.

Alan Mark, who owns an eponymous condo marketing and sales business at 724 Battery St., said new stores seem to materialize overnight.

"It's filling in quietly, all these stores that are very design-driven," he said. "You go away for a week, or pick a new block to walk down, and there is a new store. It's a quiet renaissance that a lot of people don't know about."

Other things are changing Jackson Square as well. The Battery, a members-only club at 717 Battery St. that opened in late 2013, draws heavily from the world of tech and finance. Since that time tech firms that have located in Jackson Square include Mattermark, Minted, Boku and Yola, while investment companies like Bay Grove Capital and Iconiq Capital have also moved in.

And across the street from the Battery at 288 Pacific, the developer Grosvenor Americas Inc. is building 33 condos in an eight-story building that wraps around the historic Old Ship Saloon. The housing will be the first to open in Jackson Square in a decade.



Photo: Nicole Bollaux, The Chronicle

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The Transamerica Pyramid can be seen from Jackson Square.

