



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report

HEARING DATE: MARCH 7, 2018

Filing Date: February 8, 2018
Case No.: 2018-002342LBR
Business Name: Kabuki Springs and Spa
Business Address: 1750 Geary Blvd.
Zoning: NCD (Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District)
65-A Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0701/001
Applicant: Kathy Nelsen, Spa Director
1750 Geary Blvd.
San Francisco, CA 94115
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed, District 5
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

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BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Kabuki Springs & Spa is the largest urban Japanese bathhouse and spa in the United States. It is known for its communal bathing facility, massage, skincare, and a variety of therapeutic Pan Asian body treatments. In 1968, Kabuki Hot Springs was developed by the Japanese corporation National Braemar, doing business as Dream Entertainment, as an essential part of the redevelopment of the Japan Cultural and Trade Center. The "Kabuki building" was a separate development from the Japan Center malls which were built by the Kintetsu Corporation. The Kabuki building featured a dinner theatre, sushi bar and bath house. Kabuki Hot Springs was seen as a new and uncommon business, and it became popular with young Americans looking for a unique experience.

Originally the traditional men's bath house offered Shiatsu massage and the sento (communal bathhouse) experience adjacent to the dinner theatre and small sushi restaurant. There was also a Shiatsu School, known as the Amma Institute, on the upper level. In 1976, AMC Theatre Corporation purchased the entire building and remodeled it, creating an 8-screen movie theatre and leaving the bathhouse intact. In 1998, Chip Conley, founder of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, leased the spa. Mr. Conley partnered with Kathy Nelsen to create the evolved Kabuki Springs & Spa.

Kabuki Springs & Spa underwent a major renovation in late 1998 under the management of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, and it reopened in February 1999 keeping the footprint of the bathhouse and bringing the ethos of the Japanese sento into the 21st century. The 1999 renovation added spa services to the traditional Shiatsu but still honors the tradition of Shiatsu and other Asian body treatments. The nine original Furo tubs in the massage rooms were retained. The "Satori Room," an open room for massage was also retained.

The business is located on the north side of Geary Blvd. between Fillmore and Webster streets in the Japantown neighborhood. It is within the NCD (Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District) Zoning District and in a 65-A Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1968.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Kabuki Springs and Spa qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Kabuki Springs and Spa has operated continuously in San Francisco for 50 years.
- ii. Kabuki Springs and Spa has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood by serving as a Japanese bathhouse and spa.
- iii. Kabuki Springs and Spa is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

The business is associated with Shiatsu massage, therapeutic pan-Asian body treatments, and the Japanese communal bathhouse tradition.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

The business is associated with the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, established in 1968, and generally with the redevelopment of Japantown undertaken by the Redevelopment Agency in the 1960s and 70s.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No, the property is not listed on any registers.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, the Kabuki Springs and Spa is not mentioned. However, the Japantown Historic Context Statement notes the presence of several Japanese bathhouses in the neighborhood in the 1940s.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

The business has been cited in American Spa magazine (2005) and in numerous travel books and guides.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 1750 Geary Blvd.

Recommended by Applicant

- Communal bathing facilities
- Massage services, specifically Shiatsu
- Furo tubs
- Open communal massage room
- Traditional sit down showers
- Steam room and sauna

Additional Recommended by Staff

- No additional recommendations



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2018

Case No.: 2018-002342LBR
Business Name: Kabuki Springs and Spa
Business Address: 1750 Geary Blvd.
Zoning: NCD (Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District)
65-A Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0701/001
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR KABUKI SPRINGS AND SPA CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1750 GEARY BLVD., (BLOCK/LOT 0701/001).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the Japantown neighborhood's and City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 7, 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends that Kabuki Springs and Spa qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Kabuki Springs and Spa.

Location (if applicable)

- 1750 Geary Blvd.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Communal bathing facilities
- Massage services, specifically Shiatsu
- Furo tubs
- Open communal massage room
- Traditional sit down showers
- Steam room and sauna

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2018-002342LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on March 7, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:



SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
MARK FARRELL, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2017-18-032
Business Name: Kabuki Springs & Spa
Business Address: 1750 Geary Blvd.
District: District 5
Applicant: Kathy Nelsen, Spa Director
Nomination Date: January 25, 2018
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

1750 Geary Blvd. from 1968 to Present (50 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: February 7, 2018

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



President, Board of Supervisors
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

LONDON N. BREED

January 25th, 2018

Dear Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi:

It is my honor to nominate Kabuki Springs & Spa, located on 1750 Geary Boulevard, to the Legacy Business Registry.

The Kabuki Springs & Spa is renowned for its communal bathing facilities, various massages and Pan-Asian body treatments. Offering services that are both physically and emotionally beneficial, the spa is highly recommended by frequent patrons as a quintessential spot for tourists and locals alike that are looking for relaxation and wellness.

Current director of Kabuki Springs & Spa, Kathy Nelsen is a vital member of the Japantown community, serving on the Japan Center Parking Corporation for 15 years and currently serving on the Board of San Francisco Japantown Foundation and the Community Benefit District for Japantown. Since 1986 Kabuki Springs & Spa has served as a cornerstone of Japantown, and Kathy Nelsen is committed to maintaining the strong relationship between the spa and the community.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is a valued and productive asset to the District 5 community and would benefit significantly from inclusion in the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "London Breed".

President London Breed
Board of Supervisors
City & County of San Francisco

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
Kabuki Springs & Spa		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Stephen Conley, Jr. (Chip)		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:	
1750 Geary Blvd San Francisco, CA 94115	(415) 922-6000	
	EMAIL:	
	info@kabukisprings.com	
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
www.kabukisprings.com	Kabuki Springs & Spa	

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Kathy Nelsen	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Spa Director	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
1750 Geary Blvd San Francisco, CA 94115	(415) 922-0229
	EMAIL:
	knelsen@kabukisprings.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0327198	

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1750 Geary Blvd	94115	1968
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
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		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- ☒ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- ☒ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- ☒ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Kathy Nelsen

12/19/17



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

KABUKI SPRINGS AND SPA

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquarterd location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is an oasis of serenity in heart of San Francisco in Japantown on the very urban corner of Geary and Fillmore. It is the largest urban Japanese bathhouse and spa in the United States. We are known for our memorable communal bathing facility, and we also provide world-class massage, skincare, and a variety of therapeutic Pan Asian body treatments, such as the Lulur from Bali, the Abhyanga from India, a Thai herbal poultice treatment, and the rejuvenating fresh ginger wrap. San Franciscans have visited us religiously for decades, and tourists are happy to discover something truly unique.

In 1968, Kabuki Hot Springs was developed by the Japanese corporation National Braemar, doing business as Dream Entertainment as an essential part of the redevelopment of the Japan Cultural and Trade Center. The “Kabuki building” was a separate development from the Japan Center malls which were built by the Kintetsu Corporation. The Kabuki building featured a dinner theatre, sushi bar and bath house. Kabuki Hot Springs was seen as a new and uncommon business, and it became popular with young Americans looking for a unique experience.

Originally the traditional men’s bath house offered Shiatsu massage and the sento experience adjacent to the dinner theatre and small sushi restaurant. There was also a Shiatsu School, known as the Amma Institute, on the upper level.

In 1976, AMC Theatre Corporation purchased the entire building and remodeled it, creating an 8-screen movie theatre and leaving the bathhouse intact. The sushi restaurant was closed and became the staff lounge area for both businesses.

From a 1989 employee handbook for The Kabuki Hot Springs:

“The Kabuki Hot Spring provides traditional Japanese massage (AMMA/Shiatsu- a health maintenance form of massage) for relaxation and rejuvenation in a Japanese-style setting to San Francisco Bay Area residents and visitors.” “There is no facility like the Kabuki Hot Spring anywhere else in the United States. We are very unique and enjoy the patronage of people from all over the world.”

In 1998, Chip Conley, founder of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, leased the spa from the operator, AMC Theatre Corporation. He was a personal fan of Kabuki Hot Springs and, with his business

acumen, chose to add a spa to his growing hotel company. Mr. Conley partnered with Kathy Nelsen to create the evolved Kabuki Springs & Spa. Ms. Nelsen had previously owned Miracle Baths on Fillmore Street from 1977-1987, which is how they were introduced.

Kabuki Springs & Spa underwent a major renovation in late 1998 under the management of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, and it reopened in February 1999 keeping the footprint of the bathhouse and bringing the ethos of the Japanese sento (communal bathhouse) into the 21st century. The 1999 renovation added spa services to the traditional Shiatsu but still very much honors the tradition of Shiatsu and other Asian body treatments.

As part of the 1999 renovation, we kept all of the character of Kabuki Hot Springs with attention on making the space calming and pacifying to the nervous system. The logos and feel of the business evolved from the sumo wrestler pounding his client into submission to a lotus flower. A neon sign at the entrance was replaced with bamboo and an emblematic noren curtain, separating the entrance from the traffic of Geary Boulevard. The wild Tokyo jazzy tile in the communal baths was replaced with wood, slate and a calming color scheme. It is incredibly fortunate that we have been able to keep the nine original Furo tubs in the massage rooms and create treatments around them. The steam boxes are a thing of the past, but the wood and warmth of the massage rooms invites our guest into relaxation. Originally, the "Satori Room" was lighted by fluorescent bulbs and the Shiatsu practitioners worked in the open room with clients in provided boxer shorts. This, too, remains, but with soft lighting and curtains for privacy encouraging deeper relaxation.

The building has experienced a series of landlords since AMC Theatre Corporation. Currently locals Darla and Pat Flanagan own the property.

In 2015, after the sale and merger of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, Kabuki Springs & Spa became an independent, self-managed business. We are here to educate the public on the necessity of sensuality, warmth, cleansing, touch and general stress reduction. We are not a beauty spa; we are a true oasis for many people.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

Joie de Vivre Hospitality signed the lease with AMC Theatre Corporation in September 1998. We closed for renovation in October 1998 and remodeled and rehired and hired new staff to open on February 13, 1999. Kathy Nelsen oversaw the renovation which was led by the local design firm, Your Space. Every year since the reopening, we have celebrated our anniversary with our clients and staff on or around February 13.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is not a family-owned business.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

1968-1985	National Braemar, dba Dream Entertainment
1985-1998	AMC Theatre Corporation
1998-2015	Joie de Vivre Kabuki, LLC (as an ownership group)
2015-Present	Joie de Vivre Kabuki, LLC (same ownership group, but no longer under Joie de Vivre Hotel management)

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

While some collateral exists from Kabuki Hot Springs, the original equipment blueprints dated June 3, 1965, for the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center are delicately residing in the Kabuki Springs & Spa office. The original design firm was:

Minoru Yamaski and Associates; Van Bourg Nakamura and Associates, Berkeley, California.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is not registered with any other historic registry.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

The Japan Center is known for its anchor businesses: The Hotel Kabuki, the movie theatre, Benkyodo, Kinokuniya Bookstore, Paper Tree, and the Kabuki Springs & Spa. We are on the boundary of Japantown and are very much identified as an essential part of the community, both as a service to the neighborhood and as an icon of Japanese culture.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

From 1999 until 2015 (and previously under other management), Kabuki Springs & Spa closed for 3-4 hours during the Cherry Blossom Parade in April to allow the 100+ men and approximately 20 women who carry the Sakura Mikoshi shrine at the end of the parade to shower and change from their *rokushaku fundoshi* into street clothes to wear to dinner. When the event became too stressful on our staff and clients, we assisted the Sakura Mikoshi carriers

in finding a new space to shower and loaned our towels for that purpose. We have continued to donate to the organization.

Early in our tenure, Nash Bridges filmed a short segment here with Don Johnson.

A couple of years ago, the Myth Busters came to find out if losing weight in a sauna is fact or fiction.

Whenever he is in town, Laurence Fishburn is known for his love of bathing and has introduced his friend Keanu Reeves during the filming of the Matrix. He recently visited us using the pseudonym Warren Peace.

We are often a place of healing for the visiting actors and singers from ACT and the theatres of Union Square, such as John Glover, Rita Moreno, MaryAnn Faithful, Mariette Hartley, and Faith Prince.

Like all public places, and especially due to the intimate nature of our business, we try to honor the privacy of the guests and have confidentiality policies in place.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Urban bathhouses once were extremely scarce. We have been acknowledged within the spa industry as one of the original bathhouses in the USA. In an article in American Spa magazine in 2005, Mary Bemis cites the health benefits of communal bathing, using Kabuki Springs as the example.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is featured in numerous travel books including Fodor's, Frommer's, Lonely Planet, Off Track Planet, DK Eyewitness Travel Guide and the Virago Woman's Travel Guide. Following is an excerpt from Lonely Planet online:

“This favorite urban retreat recreates communal, clothing-optional Japanese baths. Salt-scrub in the steam room, soak in the hot pool, then cold-plunge and reheat in the sauna. Rinse and repeat. Silence is mandatory, fostering a meditative mood – if you hear the gong, it means Shhhh! Men and women alternate days, except on co-ed Tuesdays (bathing suits required Tuesdays).

The look befits the location – slightly dated Japanese modern, with vaulted lacquered-wood ceilings, tile mosaics and low lighting. Plan on two hours minimum, plus a 30- to 60-minute wait at peak times (add your name to the waiting list, then go next door to slurp noodles or shop; they'll text you when your key is ready). Communal bathing is discounted with massage appointments; book ahead and come on the gender-appropriate day.”

Florian Peterson has written a beautiful little book titled *111 Places in San Francisco That You Must Not Miss*. Kabuki Springs & Spa is number 56. “Wet, naked, and hot” is how she describes the eclectic types of bathers in harmony with one another:

“Distinct from other ‘spas,’ Kabuki retains a special communal vibe, which is reflected by the wide cross section of San Francisco residents who patronize the spa. On any given Friday the hot pool at Kabuki is likely to hold elaborately tattooed rock-star artists; Japanese women of all ages; mothers with their teenage daughters; and the waitress from next door, all soaking together – wet, naked, hot, and very quiet.”

Laura Haertling created a lovely 24 hour tour of San Francisco in *Cool Places to Warm Up*, where one would go from the Conservatory of Flowers to Kabuki Springs to the labyrinth at Grace Cathedral.

One of the best articles written about the spa was by Philo Hagen for the Datebook “pink pages” in 2006. He was a regular guest who deeply understood the emotional, physical and spiritual benefits of bathing at Kabuki. There was even a cover photo where “Datebook” was photo shopped in the tiles of the steam room.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

We are not associated with an historical person, but an historical neighborhood. In almost all of the articles, the writer often refers to what to do in Japantown, e.g., slurp noodles, after a good soak.

How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

We are dedicated to being a good neighbor in Japantown. Kathy Nelsen served on the Board of Directors for the Japan Center Parking Corporation for 15 years. She currently serves on the Board of the San Francisco Japantown Foundation. She has been an active participant on the Japantown Economic and Development Marketing Committee, a subgroup of the Japantown Task Force. She also participates in the Lower Fillmore Merchants Association. Kabuki Springs & Spa is a member of the Fillmore Merchants Association, the Japantown Merchants Association, and the Lower Fillmore Merchants Association.

Ms. Nelsen was recently asked to serve on the Community Benefit District for Japantown.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

Our guests range from elders who have been visiting us as part of their health routine for 40 years, to younger people just discovering the joys of celebrating the body and self-healing.

The gender usage of the baths has slowly evolved from all male, to 3 days for women under AMC in the 1970s.

Currently Kabuki Springs is open seven days a week, with every other day in the baths available to men or to women, and the very popular co-gender Tuesday.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center is celebrating its 50 year anniversary in 2018. While the building itself has some aging issues, and the exterior is not a significant design, the interior speaks to the heritage and the beauty of the Japanese baths. The original mosaic tile exists in a few places in the baths, and the footprint has not changed in 50 years.

The Furo tubs in the individual massage rooms are definitely culturally significant and unique to us. Each Japanese style tub is seemingly too small to accommodate most Americans – a mere 2 feet wide by 3 feet long by 2 feet deep. However, it is surprisingly comfortable and the depth of the water soothes up to the shoulders.

Our Bliss Bath is a version of the traditional bathing ritual. The guest is seated on a stool, the attendant pours bowls of warm water over her shoulders to first cleanse the body before bathing. After the initial rinse, the guest steps into the deep tub and soaks in a mixture of organic green tea and sea salt. Tea is served, and cares float away.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

San Francisco needs businesses like Kabuki Springs & Spa. While there are new bath houses in San Francisco, e. g., Korean, Russian, and now a new Onsen, there is no replacing the energy of our 50 year old bath house and spa. Guests often tell us how loyal they have been for the past 20/30/40 years. We are a place of celebration, as well as weekly and monthly health maintenance. I cannot begin to repeat how many times I have heard someone in their 60s who has told me about how the “little Japanese lady walked on their back” during their law school/business training/fill in the blank/youth. Those stories alone contribute to the aura of history and Kabuki Springs & Spa’s place in San Francisco history.

There is a social importance in public bathing. Not only is there the “skinship” of being vulnerable in our nakedness, there is the healing of tuning out and shutting down electronics for an hour or two. There is the restart of the nervous system when one doesn’t talk or read or listen, but just feels the pleasure of hot and cold water, sipping cucumber water, deeply cleansing the major organ of the body, and just breathing. Massage and body treatments are an essential regime in health and healing. The Mayo Clinic sites one of the benefits of massage as reducing anxiety. Given the state of the world today, Kabuki Springs cannot claim to alleviate urban angst, but, it is definitely helping all who walk through the door.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

While the sigh of “gokuraku, gokuraku” is rarely heard, we still acknowledge the importance of the divine feeling. The current definitive feel of this urban bathhouse is that of serenity. We are dedicated to welcoming all peoples. Our mission statement is: “Kabuki Springs & Spa is a peaceful urban oasis, where all people can experience a balance of harmony and relaxation through healing waters and therapeutic touch.”

Our core values are:

- Work Together.
- Nourish the body, Nourish the
- Soul
- Share Joy
- Listen with Empathy, Respond
- with Compassion
- Embrace Diversity
- Show Gratitude
- Care for your Home, your
- Neighbor and your Earth.

The heart and soul of Kabuki are the baths. Kabuki Springs & Spa is the largest urban Japanese bathhouse and spa in the United States.

While the baths are what the business is known for, we also support over 60 people performing world class massage. For years this was the one place to receive authentic Shiatsu, which is still offered at Kabuki Springs & Spa today. In the Japanese language, shiatsu means "finger pressure." Shiatsu techniques include massages with fingers, thumbs, feet and palms; assisted stretching; and joint manipulation and mobilization. ¹

Kabuki Springs & Spa features the extraordinary “Bliss Bath” formerly known as the Kiku or Kabuki plan, where one can enjoy the childlike joy of being bathed. Our guest is shown to a private room where an attendant washes her back, pouring warm water over the shoulders. Then, she is invited to sit in the deep square furo tub in a blend of organic matcha and sea salt and warm water, where all thoughts of stress are eradicated. After the bath like no other, the guest lies on the massage table and receives a vigorous massage that leaves one feeling dreamy and righteously healthy.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to

¹ Jarmey, Chris; Mojay, Gabriel (1991). Shiatsu: The Complete Guide. Thorsons. p. 8. ISBN 9780722522431.

retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Kabuki Springs & Spa should remain as an urban bathhouse and massage facility within the original intention.

While we have added many therapeutic pan Asian body treatments as well as Western massage, we continue to offer Shiatsu massage, bathing in the surprisingly accommodating deep Furo tubs and the communal bathing facility. We are primarily known for the communal bathing, but we also support 60 massage therapists who offer both Eastern and Western bodywork in our nine private massage rooms with Furo tubs and seven massage tables in the open communal massage room.

Updating equipment and modernization can improve the facility's reputation, but the footprint as a bathhouse and massage facility should remain.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

The heart and soul of Kabuki Springs & Spa are the baths. We are committed to maintaining the essence of the *senjo* (communal bathhouse) and its equipment including such things as the traditional sit down showers, the soothing warmth and the icy chill of the pools, the steam room and the sauna.

A spa and bath house takes dedication to cleanliness and maintenance. Kabuki Springs & Spa is not shiny and new, and it needs constant upkeep given the up-to-200 people who walk through the door on a daily basis. We close every year for 4-5 days in the summer to deep clean and upgrade our facilities, welcoming our guests back with small new changes and a fresh look and feel. Over time, some things may change such as lighting, tiles, etc. But we are committed to maintaining the baths and the spa environment into the future.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Included in the Legacy application is a brochure that demonstrates the tradition and intention of Kabuki Springs & Spa.



KABUKI

—
Springs & Spa

KABUKI
spring & spa







THEN & NOW

THE SPA

Main entrance and original signage 1990's



Main entrance and current signage 2017





Waiting Lounge 1970





Waiting Lounge 2017



Treatment Rooms 1970



Treatment Rooms 2017



Satori 1970



Satori 2017



COMMUNAL BATHS



Communal Baths 2016/17











Showers 1970



Communal Baths: Steam Room 1970



Communal Baths: Hot/Cold Pool 1970



Communal Baths: Steam Room 1970



Communal Baths: Steam Room & Cold Pool 1970



Communal Baths: Onsen Showers 1970



Communal Baths: Hot & Cold Pools 1970



Communal Baths: Sauna 1970





Communal Baths: Sauna 2017



Communal Baths: Hot/Cold Pool 2017



Communal Baths: Lounge Area 2017





Communal Baths: Onsen Showers 2017



Communal Baths: Onsen Showers 2017



Communal Baths: Showers 2017



Waiting Lounge: Communal Baths 2017

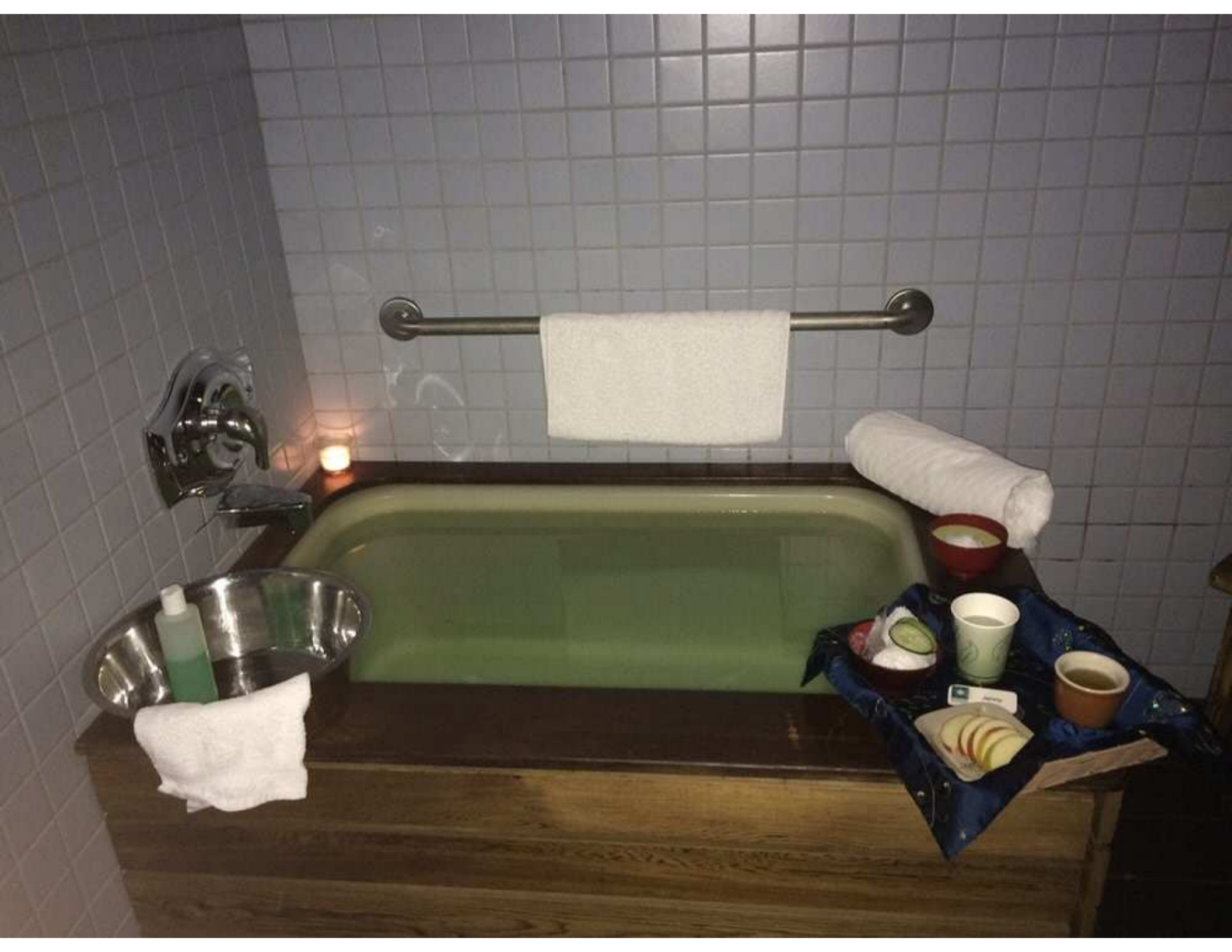
Locker Room 1970

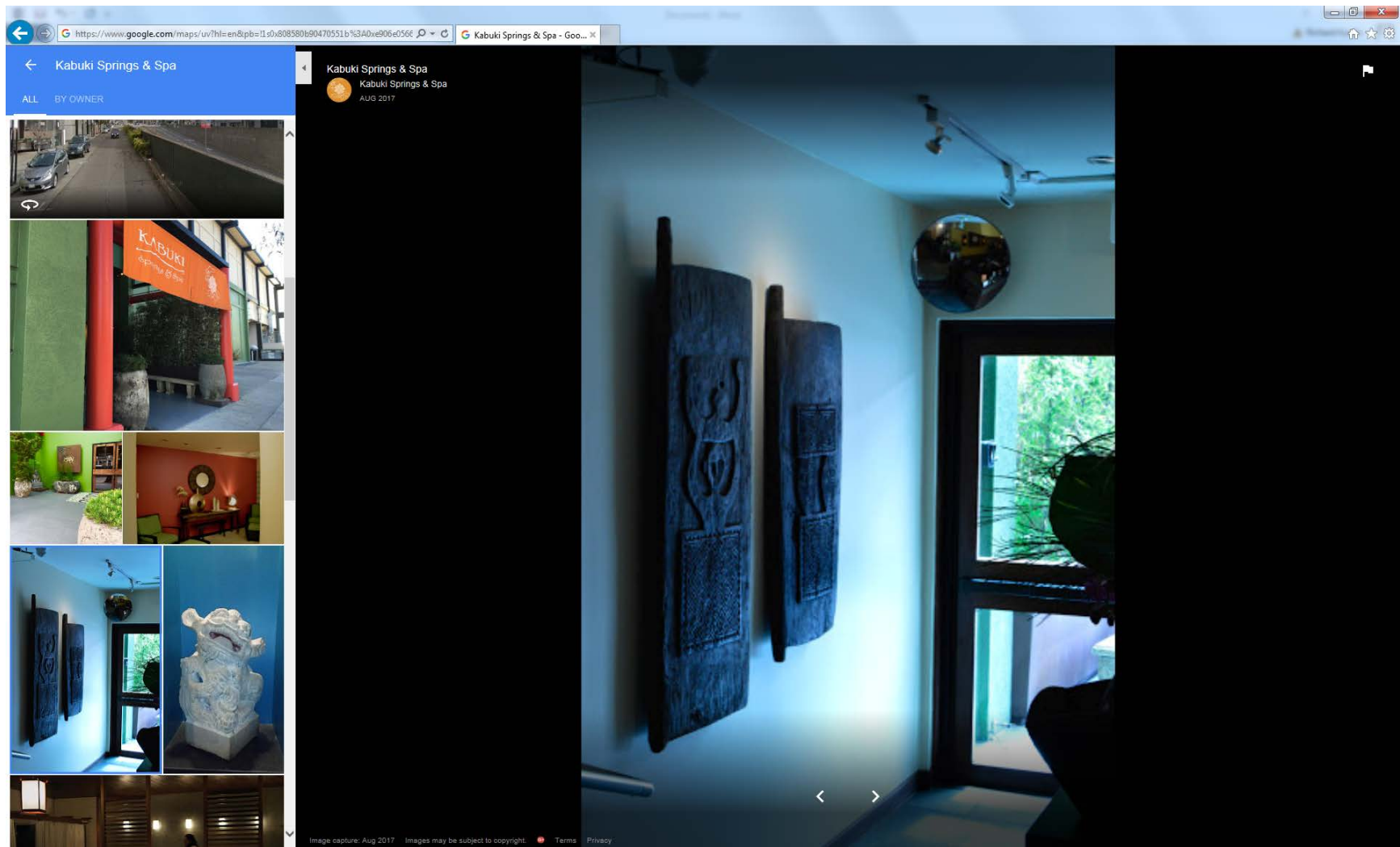


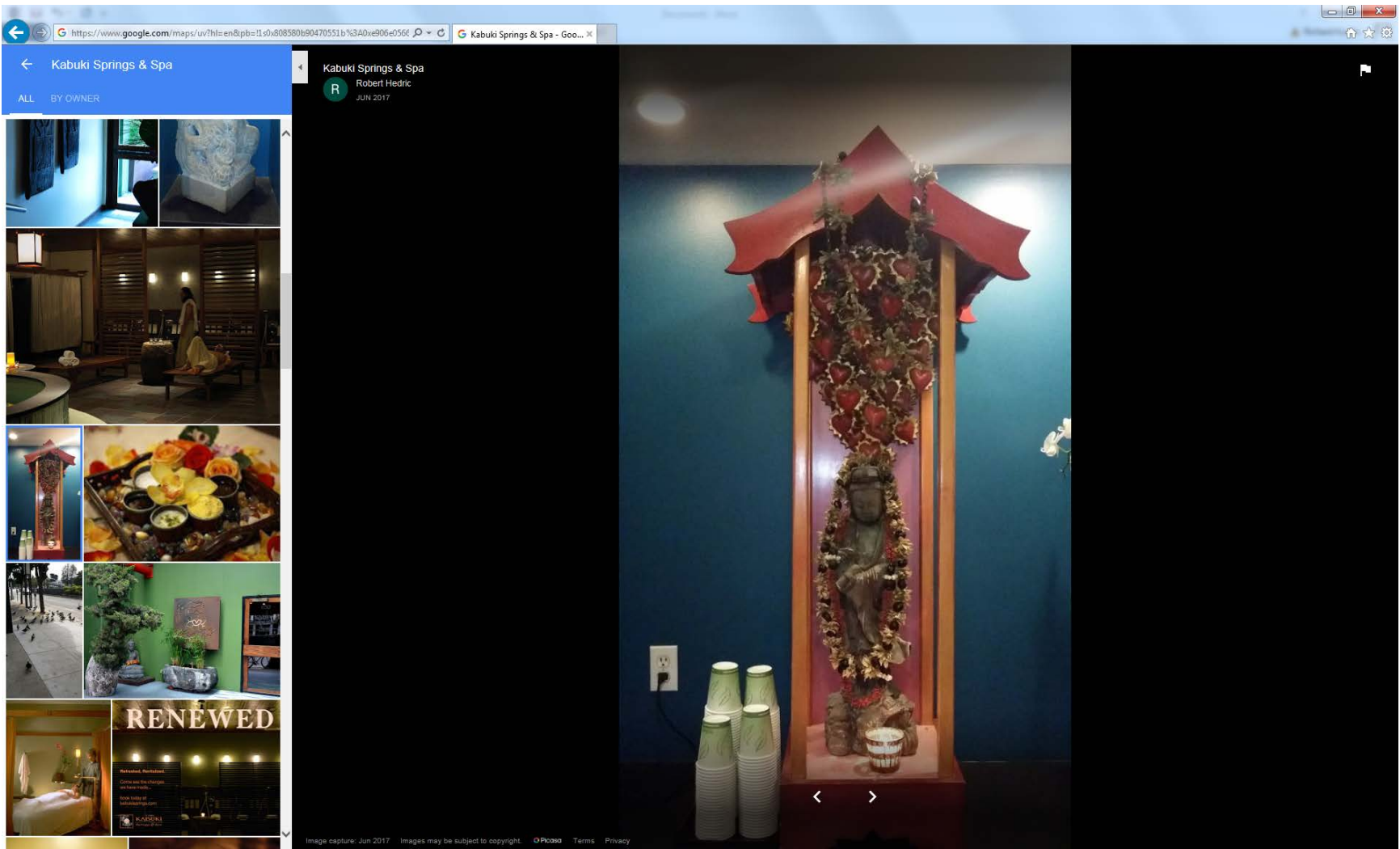
Locker Room 2017



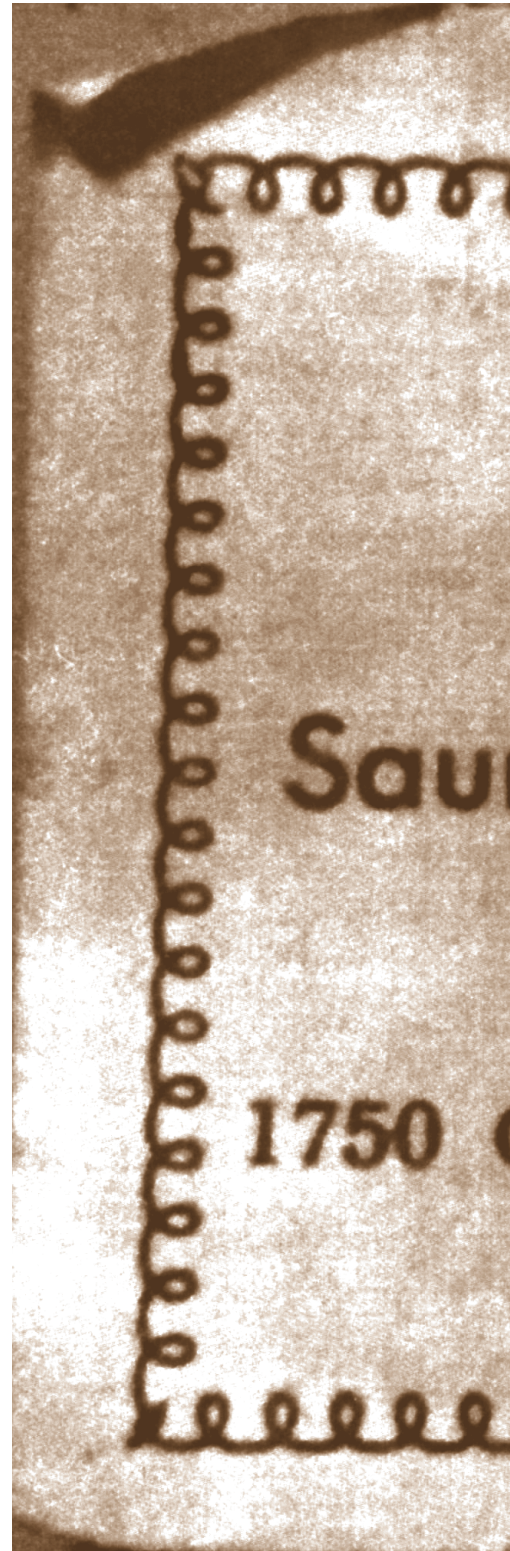








SIGNAGE



Nº

187

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Telephone: 922-6000

RELAX...

Kabuki

HOT SPRING

JAPANESE BATHS
SAUNA · STEAM

3
FURNISH

SAKURA

COMMUNAL
BATH, STEAM,
& SAUNA

COMMUNAL

FUJI

SAUNA

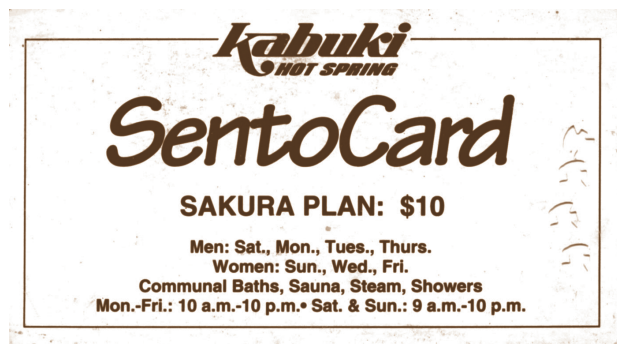
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5	<p>5 Visits One Free Sento Pack 10 Visits "2 for 1" Sakura (Bring a guest free) 15 Visits One Free Sakura 20 Visits \$10 Massage Discount Coupon</p> <p><small>*Awards not valid with other offers and not applicable towards Sento credit. Not responsible for lost or stolen cards.</small></p> <p>Kabuki HOT SPRING</p> <p>JAPAN CENTER, 1750 GEARY BLVD., SAN FRANCISCO 94115 (415) 922-6000</p>										16
4											17
3											18
2											19
1	20										

6089

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THE JAPANESE BATH

STEP

一

WASH AND RINSE THOROUGHLY
before entering tubs.

Use either the American (stand-up)
or Japanese (sit-down) showers.

STEP

二

SAUNA

Approx. 180°F dry heat.

Average stay: 10-15 minutes

STEP

三

MIZUBURO (Cold Pool—Round Tub)

Approx. 55-60°F.

Invigorating; excellent for circulation.

STEP

四

FURO (Hot Pool—Big Tub)

Approx. 104°F.

Relaxing; settle down and soak.



A GIFT CERTIFICATE FOR

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THE KABUKI PLAN ENTITLES YOU TO:

A deluxe, private, deep-tub Japanese bath; sauna or steam; and a half-hour shiatsu massage.

We suggest that you make an appointment two days in advance by calling (415) 922-6002.

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Japan Center
1750 Geary Blvd., San Francisco

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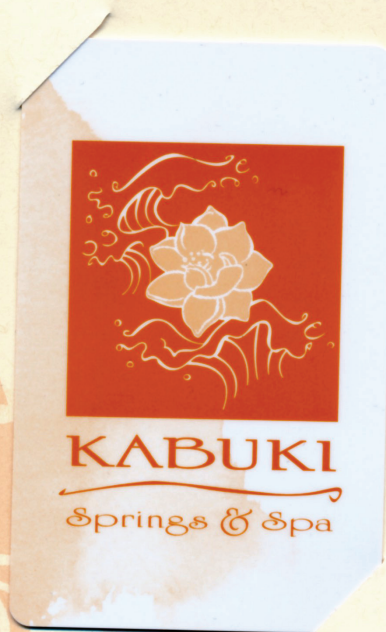


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Amount



ENHANCEMENTS

Wild Lime Scalp Treatment

Add an extra 25 minutes of deep relaxation to any massage or body treatment. This deliciously aromatic scalp massage calms the mind and gets you out of your head.

25 minutes

PACKAGES

Nirvana

Attain Nirvana with this luxurious package that includes a deluxe (80 minute) session Western or Eastern Massage, an Essential Facial, and an invigorating Express Body Polish.

Total Time: 155 minutes

Head and Toe

This calming treatment leaves you truly body-aware — your back is warmed with a detoxifying marine mud mask, your feet nurtured with a light exfoliation and delicious foot massage, and crowning this treatment is an aromatic scalp massage — encouraging mindful stillness and physical well-being.

Total Time: 80 minutes

Detoxify

Pair a 25 minute Western or Eastern Massage with your choice of any 50-minute Wrap (Detoxifying Seaweed, Warming Ginger, Antioxidant Green Tea) to create an experience that both relaxes and promotes your body's own detoxifying processes. While you are relaxing and wrapped in a nourishing body mask, your scalp is revitalized with an aromatic scalp massage.

Total Time: 80 minutes

Radiance

Choose your path to radiance. Combine any two of our popular half session treatments:

Body Polish, to slough dry skin

Half-session Western or Eastern Massage, a spot treatment for trouble areas

Half-session Reiki treatment, to calm your bodymind

Refreshing Facial, to re-energize your skin

Wild Lime Scalp Treatment, our aromatic scalp massage

Total Time: 50 minutes

WellBeing

This is an excellent introduction to acupuncture and is useful in promoting good health. This package includes 25 minutes of acupuncture and 25 minutes of Eastern or Western massage.

Total Time: 50 minutes

COMMUNAL BATHING

In the great tradition of Japanese public bathing, we encourage you to encourage harmony and relaxation. Enjoy a cold plunge, sauna, steam room, individual hot tubs. Complimentary amenities include aromatherapy, polishing sea salts, towels and bath products.

BATHS

Women: Sundays, Wednesdays and

Men: Mondays, Thursdays and

Coed: Tuesdays (swimsuits required)

GIFT CERTIFICATES

Available online or at the spa

HOURS

10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. daily

Photo I.D. required

KABUKI CLUB

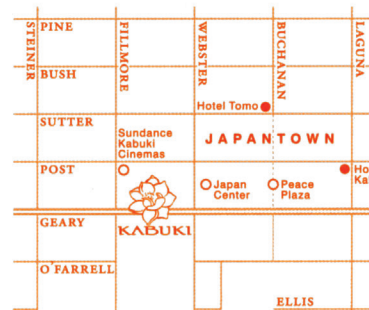
Our loyalty program is designed to reward you for your investment in nurturing your health and well-being. To enroll and ensure your commitment to the club, please contact us.

VALIDATED DISCOUNTS

Available from the Japan Center Parking Garage (with massage or other body treatment)

APPOINTMENTS AND RESERVATIONS

Massage appointments are available daily. A credit card is recommended. A 50% cancellation fee applies for reservations made less than 24 hours before your treatment. Please arrive 15 minutes early for your massage and 30 or more minutes early for your communal bathing facilities. Please turn off your cell phone to breathe before and after your treatment. Treatments are not recommended for pregnant women with high blood pressure or a heart condition.



Facilities

For the baths, this space is designed for relaxation. Facilities include a hot pool, multiple bathing areas and showers. Automatic drinking water and body products.

Open Fridays
Open Saturdays
(Closed on Wednesdays)

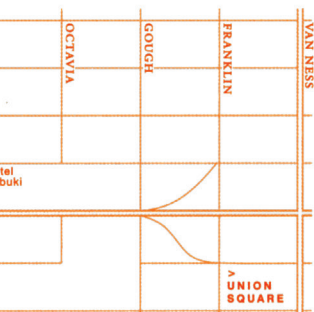
We thank you for every dollar you contribute to our well-being. Visit kabukisprings.com to learn more about us.

Parking

Free Parking Garage

Guidelines

Reservations and cancellations are required. Reservations are to assure your appointment. Reservations not cancelled a minimum of 24 hours. Please arrive 15 minutes early for your appointment. If you plan to use the communal hot tub, please bring your own towels and allow yourself time to relax. Hot baths, saunas and steam are available. Not recommended for persons with high blood pressure.



1000 Broadway Blvd. at Fillmore
San Francisco, CA 94115
Phone: 415.922.6005



KABUKI
Springs & Spa



...a serenity spa designed to encourage harmony through healing waters and therapeutic touch. We encourage you to disconnect with us, and enjoy the beauty and luxury of a quiet mind in a quiet space.

MASSAGE

Eastern and Western massage are the heart of what we offer at Kabuki Springs & Spa.

Western or Swedish style massage is done with oil or lotion and can incorporate long strokes, kneading, and warming of the skin to ease tension and to deeply relax and soothe muscles.

Eastern massage includes Shiatsu, a traditional Japanese style massage, which translates to “finger pressure”. It is an ancient form of massage performed to release energy blockages, with stretches to encourage movement of internal energy. Traditionally, oil is not used during this service.

Western and Eastern massages are offered in half sessions (25 minutes), full sessions (50 minutes), or deluxe sessions (80 minutes).

Our therapists have abundant knowledge, each bringing a wealth of training and professional experience, some in other modalities beyond Western and Eastern styles. Please book in advance and talk with our reservation staff regarding the service and style you prefer. When booking your massage session, you may request a male or a female therapist, or any individual.

Some of the specialized bodywork that we offer are:

Prenatal Massage

Our therapists are trained in either side lying work, or with the use of the “body cushion”. Please let our reservation staff know if you have any special needs, as well as how many weeks is your pregnancy.

Craniosacral Therapy

Using a soft touch, the practitioner releases restrictions in the craniosacral system, working with the cerebrospinal fluid of the spine and brain.

Reiki

Reiki is an ancient system of natural healing that works with the human energy bio-field. It is administered with a light touch of the hands upon various parts of the body in a pattern that promotes optimum energy balancing.

All specialized work is done in full sessions (50 minutes).

Thai Yoga Massage

Thai yoga massage is done fully clothed on a floor mat and incorporates yoga-like stretching. It balances the body on an energetic and physical level. Not recommended for anyone with spinal injury or serious back or hip issues. Please bring comfortable clothing to wear during the massage.
80 minutes

Grounding

This nurturing foot treatment leaves you feeling grounded in the Mother Earth. The therapist will cleanse and exfoliate your feet and give you a delicious foot massage, while you lie on a warm spinal treatment of self-heating mud.
50 minutes

Add the Wild Lime Scalp massage to create the Head and Toe Package.
80 minutes

...matcha and sea salt bath. Continue the bliss of the private bath with a full or deluxe session of Eastern or Western massage.

80 or 110 minutes

WORLDLY BODY TREATMENTS

Body Wraps

Our body wraps begin with an invigorating dry brush to stimulate and exfoliate, followed by an application of essential oils. You may choose the full body wrap with seaweed, ginger, or green tea. Your skin will glow with the benefits. You may add a 25 minute massage to any wrap to create a detoxifying relaxation experience.

Seaweed

French seaweed is rich in minerals which help revitalize a sluggish system. Not recommended for persons with allergies to iodine.

Ginger Glow

The therapeutic effects of fresh ginger are deeply warming, anti-spasmodic, and anti-inflammatory.

Matcha (Green Tea)

Known for its antioxidant, anti-aging, and mood elevating properties.
50 minutes

Signature Body Polish

Our signature polish begins with an invigorating scalp massage using our avocado oil based wild lime scalp oil. Next is a luscious hair wash and deep conditioning. This is followed by an exfoliating loofa and cucumber bath gel body wash. This crown-to-toe treatment culminates with an invigorating and nourishing almond oil based tangerine salt scrub that leaves you feeling velvety soft.
50 minutes

Express Body Polish

The body is gently scrubbed with a loofa and aromatic salts to exfoliate rough and dry skin. This invigorating exfoliation treatment stimulates the lymphatic and circulatory system and leaves the skin satiny soft.

25 minutes *It is recommended that you do not shave your legs prior to either body polish.*

Abhyanga Massage

Based on Ayurvedic massage techniques, this full body massage nourishes tissues, enhances the immune system and reduces stress in the body/mind. Marma therapy is the focus of this rhythmic and lyrical massage sequence. Warm oils are tailored to the individual dosha. The treatment concludes with a soak in a private deep furo tub.

80 minutes

Abhyanga Massage with Shirodara

You may add to the Abhyanga massage a Shirodara treatment, known as third eye therapy, for deeper relaxation. A gentle stream of warm oil is poured on the forehead and scalp to deeply calm the mind.

110 minutes

Javanese Lulur Body Treatment

This traditional Indonesian ritual begins with a luxurious massage with jasmine frangipani-scented flower oil and continues with Lulur, a turmeric and rice skin scrub, applied lightly to exfoliate and sweeten the skin. After the skin is cleansed, your body is pampered with a traditional yogurt application and an exotic flower bath.

80 minutes

Extend the Balinese style massage time within the Lulur.
110 minutes

Herbal Renewal

This is an aromatic Thai herbal compress treatment designed to warm the body and invigorate the senses using three ancient techniques.

Beginning with an Eastern massage, we further awaken the body with rhythmic kneading of a steamed poultice filled with organic Asian herbs. The session culminates with a Mandarin-infused oil massage to seal in the benefits for total body renewal.

80 minutes

Herbal Renewal with Herbal Bath

As a therapeutic continuation of this service, your body is immersed in an herbal infused private soak.

110 minutes

ACUPUNCTURE

The unique concept of Chinese medicine is that a human being is a microcosmic expression of harmony and balance. Harmony depends on the Qi and the goal of acupuncture is to release blocked Qi. Experience the deep relaxation, stress reduction, and general positive health effects of the ancient healing technique.

50 minutes

FACIALS

Revitalizing Lift

This high-performance restorative facial slows cellular aging, while plumping and firming the skin. We incorporate ultrasonic and microcurrent technology with highly active organic ingredients. This nonsurgical lift is designed to awaken your outer radiance and inspire your inner beauty.

80 minutes *Use of Accutane, Retin A, Glycolic Acid, Lactic Acid, Hydroxy Acid or Vitamin A do not preclude this treatment, but, we recommend you do not use for ten days prior to receiving our Revitalizing Lift or Botanical Peel.*

Botanical Peel Facial

This regenerative and corrective facial reduces fine lines and wrinkles while improving skin tone and firmness. The Botanical Peel uses naturally derived glycolic acids and fruit-derived AHAs, and hydration with an age-defying retinol and argan blend.

50 minutes

Essential Facial

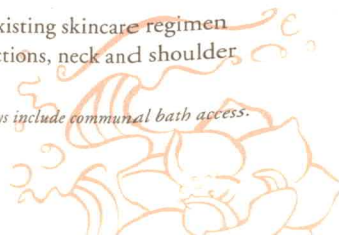
This European style organic facial is customized to your skin type by actively layering vitamins, antioxidants and anti-inflammatory botanicals, which leave your skin protected and revitalized.

50 minutes

Refreshing Facial

This facial designed to complement your existing skincare regimen with a cleansing, exfoliation without extractions, neck and shoulder massage, treatment mask and hydration.

25 minutes *Due to the abbreviated time, we always include communal bath access.*



SOCIAL MEDIA





melissabaldwincarroll
Kabuki Springs & Spa

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jenniferthompsondane, therealcinematic,
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OCTOBER 10

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msmayrapadilla
Kabuki Springs & Spa

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msmayrapadilla Grateful for the beauty and tranquility of one my favorite spots in San Francisco. And obsessed with green and offerings. #kabuki #kabukimagic #sanfrancisco #buddha #offerings #japanesedayspa #rest #relaxation #peace #quiet #tranquility #urbanoasis #kabukispringsandsa #latergram #waterhealing #orchids #orchidoffering #colorseekscolor #colorpop #gudrunart #favoritenooksofsanfrancisco

edible_europe I still miss this place all the time!! Can't find its equal in London!

msmayrapadilla @edible_europe come visit! I will treat. Or better yet, let's create it in London! Every major city needs an oasis of this kind. ♥



48 likes

MARCH 25

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carebearbarrett
Kabuki Springs & Spa

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carebearbarrett One of my favorite places in San Francisco. #Kabuki #Springs #Spa #Sauna #Wellness #Health

zenske That's definitely one of my favorite spot in SF 🥰🥰



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JANUARY 4

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tiffanyjoy137
Kabuki Springs & Spa

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sarytacoba Hermosa 🥰

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vayen9 love it lets share it dm ([@proudfitfamily]) for feature 😊



32 likes

JULY 20

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Kabuki Springs & Spa

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kabukispringsandspa Stay soft, it looks good on you. #kabukispringsandspa #saltscrub #urbanoasis #sanfrancisco #spalife

socialbeautyco.brides Love those salt scrubs!

meganlinney Looks the same even after all this time! I love that!! SF tradition!



20 likes

SEPTEMBER 13



Add a comment...





Beloved S.F. spas to beat the winter blues

Valerie Demicheva

Updated 8:50 pm, Friday, January 17, 2014

[ARTICLE EXCERPT HIGHLIGHTING KABUKI SPRINGS & SPA]

To kick off 2014, the Year of the Horse, we suggest paying homage to this spirited animal by getting serious about relaxation. After all, even the toughest show ponies have groomers. Finding a reason to pamper yourself in winter is simple: Even without a polar vortex, Hayes Valley in January can chill the bones, and city life can wear down the spirit. Whether you're looking to shed toxins by way of birch leaves or buff yourself shimmery with diamond dust, we have just what the doctor - or energy healer - ordered. Resist the urge to hibernate. Opt for a day of rejuvenation at any of these five beloved San Francisco spas that offer a bevy of cures for the winter blues as varied as the city's microclimates.

Kabuki Springs & Spa

Japantown institution Kabuki Springs & Spa offers a different brand of rest and relaxation. Even the walk from the communal Japanese baths to the treatment room can take on the serenity of tai chi movements. The spa offers a bouquet of pan-Asian body treatments. An Indonesian ritual for the senses, Javanese Lulur (from \$155, 80 minutes) incorporates jasmine frangipani scented oils into a massage, followed by a turmeric and rice skin scrub, a traditional yogurt application and a flower bath. Seeking a mind-soothing Zen treatment? Abhyanga with Shirodhara (from \$180, 110 minutes) combines an herbal scalp treatment with a slow pouring of warm oil across the forehead. The ancient practice is said to relax the body and mind. For a detoxifying treatment, pick from several seaweed wraps (starting at \$90, 50 minutes), including antioxidant-laden Matcha Green tea, mineral-rich seaweed from the Brittany coast, or anti-inflammatory Ginger Glow.

Kabuki Springs & Spa: 1750 Geary Blvd., S.F.; (415) 922-6000.
www.kabukisprings.com. Alternating days for women and men in communal baths.
Women: Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Men: Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Mixed: Tuesdays (bathing suit required).

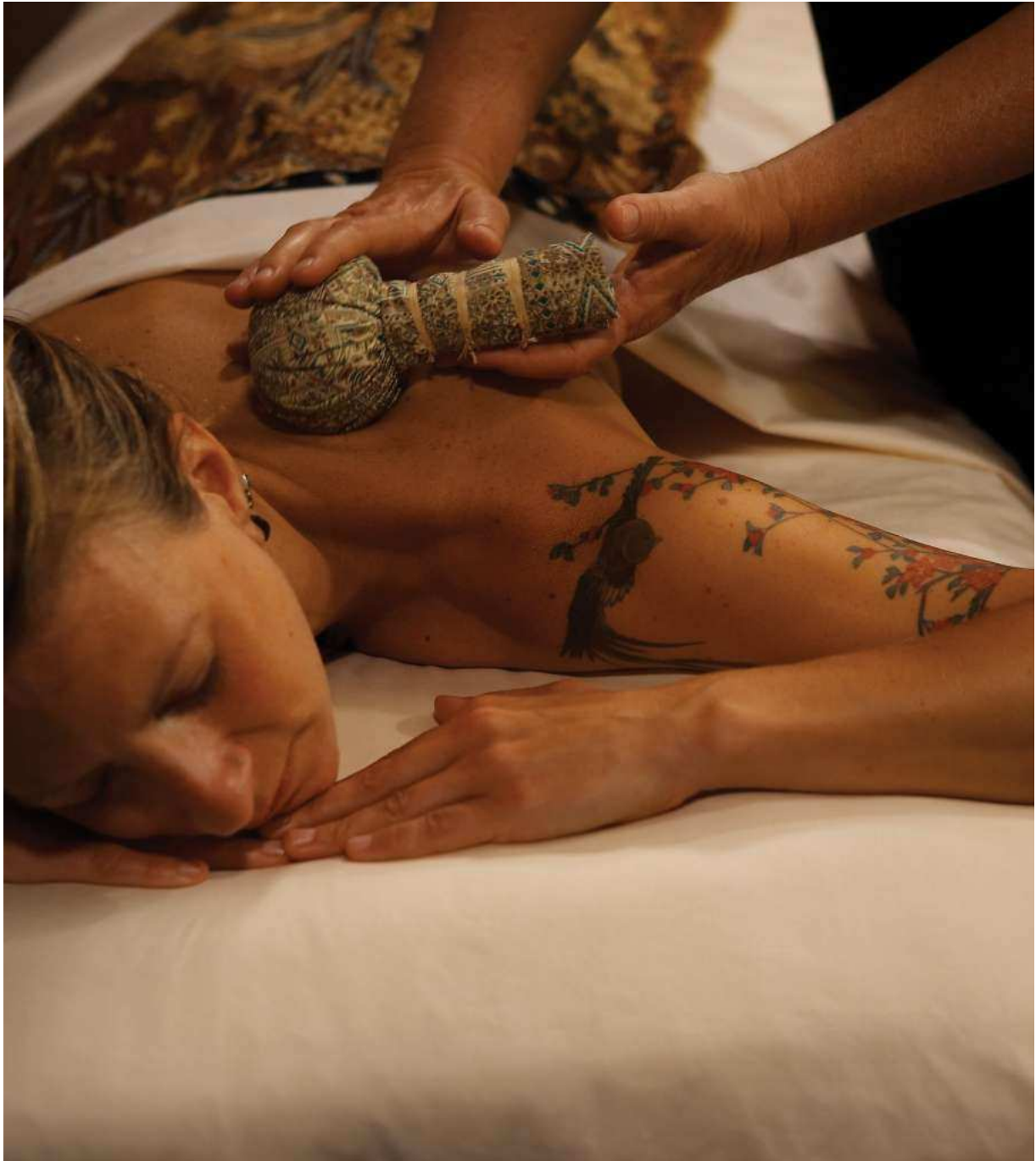


The communal Japanese baths at the Kabuki Springs & Spa, open different days for women and men, offer a respite from the stress of urban living. The spa facility also offers a bouquet of pan-Asian body treatments.

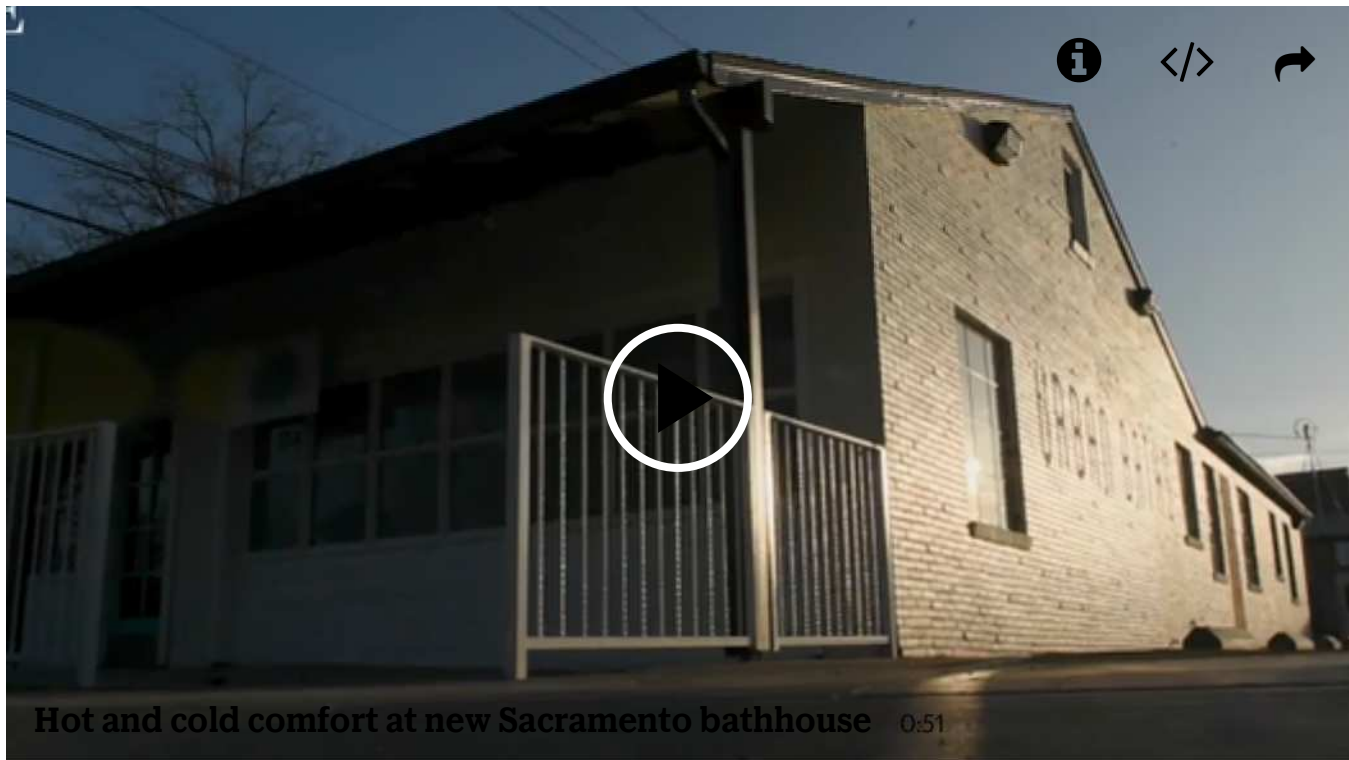
Photo: Frankie Frankeny



Kabuki Springs offers a different brand of rest and relaxation. Patrons of the tranquil spa take on serene Tai Chi-like movements as they move from the communal Japanese baths (pictured), which are open different days for women and men.
Photo: Frankie Frankeny



Longtime San Francisco institution Kabuki Springs offers a different brand of rest and relaxation. Patrons of the tranquil spa take on serene Tai Chi-like movements as they move from the communal Japanese baths to various treatment rooms for a bouquet of pan-Asian body treatments.
Photo: Frankie Frankeny



HEALTH & MEDICINE

Experience the bathhouse renaissance: Hydrotherapy reduces stress

BY ED FLETCHER
efletcher@sacbee.com

JANUARY 09, 2017 08:00 AM

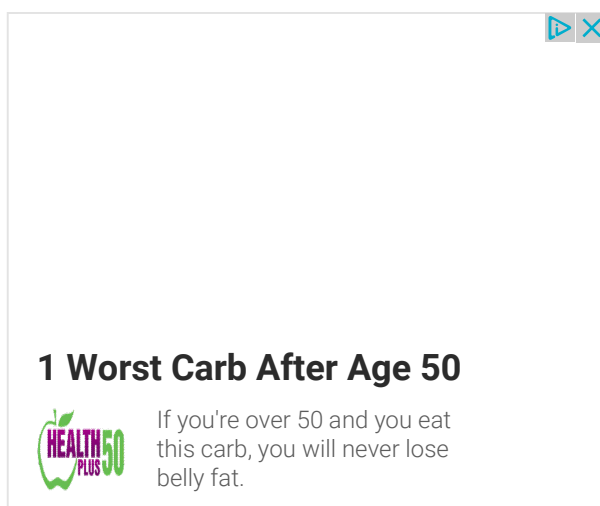
UPDATED JANUARY 09, 2017 06:09 PM

It's hardly a jump into a frozen lake, but try telling your body that as you step into the 55-degree "cold plunge" at the new Asha Urban Baths after a 120-plus-degree sauna.

The idea of alternating hot and cold temperatures on the body isn't a new concept. From Japan to Sweden, cultures around the world have explored the concept's benefits. Naturopathic doctors, who aim to bring more natural remedies into treatments, use hydrotherapy for ailments such as intestinal problems and

unexplained headaches. Modern sports medicine is also big on using cold water to restore vitality. Some Sacramento Kings basketball players regularly take a cold plunge after games.

“You can use hydrotherapy for a ton of conditions,” said Jina Ethelbah, a trained naturopathic doctor who practices out of the Balneology Association of North America’s Sacramento center. (Balneology is the science of the therapeutic use of baths.) “It’s an amazing tool to get people’s strength and vitality back,” she said.



Hydrotherapy is believed to help at the cellular level, with hot water increasing blood flow, while cold water causes the cells to constrict.

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Unlike Western medicine aimed at a specific ailment, hydrotherapy is a more generalized treatment for an assortment of ills, but it can take time, Ethelbah said.

Sacramento sports massage therapist Peter Ibarra encourages athletes to use ice baths after deep-tissue massage to force lactic acid out of muscles. He typically uses water closer to 35 degrees.

Despite their benefits, bathhouses are still considered a niche offering in the United States, where they're found mostly in big cities or connected to natural hot springs. The free-spirited lifestyle associated with bathhouses and hot springs can also be a deterrent for some people.

While Dennis Holding, president of the North American Bathhouse Association, told VICE magazine in 2014 he wants to make gay bathhouses cool again, Cori Martinez of Asha Urban Baths said she wants to cultivate a different experience.

Asha, which celebrated its grand opening Saturday, aims to balance serenity and community in a cultural fusion group bathhouse. Day spas dot the Sacramento region, but the new business is one of few public bathhouses in the area.

The new venture builds on Martinez's successful Asha Yoga studio. Much like yoga, alternating between hot and cold environments promises to relive stress and promote health.

"Asha Urban Baths is a place to come where you can slow down and relax and just get into the experience of enjoying life," Martinez said.

Asha is a co-ed and swimsuit-required facility. She said people come for wellness, relaxation and community.

After taking a shower (in a swimsuit), guests are encouraged to first enjoy a wet or dry sauna for five to 10 minutes before taking a transitional shower and then stepping into the cold plunge. After a few minutes in cold water, guests take another quick shower before immersing themselves in the hot pool. At \$25 a visit, guests can stay as long as they like.

Unlike day spas, the volume of a group bathhouse lets Asha charge a low enough price that most people can afford to make it a regular part of their lives.

Guests are required to turn off their digital devices. While visiting with friends is welcome, chatter should be kept light, Martinez said. The barriers to interacting with strangers fall away after 20 minutes of being in the spa.

As for public health, such bathhouses present little risk of bacteria or other problems so long as the water pumps are working and the daily logging of chemical levels are maintained as required, said Kelly McCoy, who heads Sacramento County's environmental health division. They're probably better maintained than a spa at an apartment building or fitness center, McCoy said.

"If the body of water, whether a spa or a pool, is monitored and maintained as it should be, there is no risk," McCoy said.

Kathy Nelsen, spa director at Kabuki Springs & Spa in San Francisco's Japantown, said she's seeing a bathhouse renaissance.

"It's a really old thing, but (bathhouses are) coming back," said Nelsen. "So many of the old bathhouses in the United States have turned off their mineral water."

Kabuki offers other services built to support the communal baths.

"For us, the quiet is part of the experience. You really can be meditative," said Nelsen. "It lets you turn off your cellphone. You really get to be by yourself."

"There is not a lot of places you get to do that."

Combined with a recently opened sensory deprivation float tank and community acupuncture, Sacramento is seeing growth in the alternative medicine sectors.

"People are re-realizing how important it is," Nelsen said of the relaxation provided by the bathhouse experience. "It is an inexpensive way to have stress reduction."

Ed Fletcher: 916-321-1269, @NewsFletch

ASHA URBAN BATHS

New bathhouse offers sauna and hot and cold tubs.

Location: 2417 27th St., Sacramento

Contact: 916-837-3290, ashaurbanbaths.com

Pricing: \$25 for drop-in (day use)

OTHER BATH OPTIONS

Oasis Sauna for Men

Authentic Korean-style sauna

Location: 9345 La Riviera Drive, Sacramento

Contact: 916-539-4226, sacramentooasis.wixsite.com/oasis

Pricing: \$25 (day use)

Miyazaki Bath House

Historic traditional Japanese bathhouse

Location: 1250 B St., Walnut Grove

Contact: 916-776-4290, facebook.com/miyazakibathhouse/

Pricing: \$70 for two hours, two-person minimum

reprints

COMMENTS

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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Letters of Recommendation

November 27, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support of the Kabuki Springs and Spa, as a legacy business.

Along with the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, Kabuki Theater and restaurant, the Kabuki Springs and Spa opened in 1968. At that time, the hot springs was a first of a kind spa that offered Japanese-style bathing and massage experience which opened the door to other spas in San Francisco, offering similar amenities.

Although there has been renovations and continuous improvements made to the facility, it has still retained most of the Asian-style traditions that continue to attract notable celebrities and guests from all over the world.

Despite current challenges, the owner and operator has maintained the 49+ year old facility in pristine condition offering a superior spa experience from others.

Moreover, the Kabuki Springs and Spa has been a major contributor to the annual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival by allowing the participants of the Taru Mikoshi (portable shrine) which is the highlight of the festival's grand parade to bath in their facilities afterwards. They also contribute to community organizations by donating spa packages towards their fund raising efforts. The spa is a real community partner that cares for Japantown's sustainability.

In 2018, the Kabuki Springs and Spa will be celebrating its 50th year anniversary and I encourage the City of San Francisco to recognize this community asset that set the stage for other spas by identifying them as one of San Francisco's legacy business.

Sincerely,



Richard Hashimoto
President, Japantown Merchants Association
General Co-chair, Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival

Lower Fillmore Merchant Association
1300 Fillmore Street
SF , CA 94115

Date: 11/21/17

To: Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Lower Fillmore Merchant Association and as a native San Franciscan, and a longtime resident and business owner in the Fillmore, I have fond memories past and recent at Kabuki Springs & Spa. San Francisco needs businesses that have history and legacy in our communities.

We all are too busy and too stressed and need to slow down and turn off our phones for a minute. The Hot Springs allows me and my fellow San Franciscans to do so. Personally, I am a fan of an eighty minute massage and a quick steam to keep me in shape running two businesses and several committees. They offer stress reduction for little money and little effort and with a big payback.

We all know the story of redevelopment and the Japanese and African American businesses and communities. Japan Center may not make amends for the past, but, it does give the neighborhood a flavor that would be dearly missed. There are parts of the Japan Center that need work, but, Kabuki Springs has stayed clean and welcoming and exactly the kind of business that draws people into the neighborhood.

I have served on the Japantown Parking Garage Corporation Board of Directors with Kathy Nelsen. She also attends the Lower Fillmore Merchants Association meetings at 1300. I know she is dedicated to making the Fillmore and Japantown neighborhoods the best they can be.

I ask the Board and the Honorable Mayor Lee to recognize Kabuki Springs & Spa as the valuable asset for the services they offer our community.

Sincerely,

Monetta White

Monetta White

Date: October 9th, 2017

Mayor Ed Lee
The SF Board of Supervisors

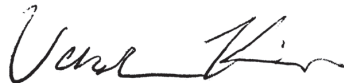
After 20 years in business at Fillmore and California I moved Zinc Details to the corner of Geary and Fillmore in 2014. I found myself with new neighbors, the Boom Boom Room, Goodwill, and the venerable Kabuki Springs & Spa. How fortunate I am to work across from not just a spa, but, the oldest Japanese style spa in San Francisco.

As Executive Director of the Fillmore Merchants Association, I have seen businesses come and go from Fillmore Street due to rent hikes, inadequate business plans, and economic flows. There are a few who continue to thrive, such as The Fillmore Auditorium, Browser Books, the Clay Theater, classics all, who tell the story of San Francisco and who we were and are.

Kabuki Springs & Spa is one of those businesses. San Francisco needs landmark businesses that attract all generations and demographics. And what Kabuki Springs & Spa sells is health. What could be more important than that? I love that they are affordable and generous in their congeniality. It is unclear which neighborhood they best fit, Japantown, Fillmore, Lower Fillmore? In the end it really doesn't matter as they contribute to all neighborhoods and to San Francisco in general.

I have personally enjoyed their Japanese style baths and massages for years and am proud to call them a neighbor. Businesses like Kabuki Springs are the very definition of Landmark or Legacy.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vas Kiniris', with a stylized, flowing script.

Vas Kiniris
Executive President
Fillmore Merchants Association

Take a Stone...

Use it to remember this
feeling of Peace and Joy
with Yourself.

Shanti

KABUKI

Spring & Fall

