



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: September 16, 2020

Filing Date: August 19, 2020
Record No.: 2020-007531LBR
Business Name: Ambiance
Business Address: 915 Howard St. (Primary Address)
Zoning: MUR (Mixed Use Residential)) Zoning District
180-CS Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3732/145A
Applicant: Donna O'Leary
915 Howard Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 6
Staff Contact: Elton Wu - 628-652-7415
Elton.Wu@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Ambiance is a women's boutique store that sells specially-curated clothing to the San Francisco community as well as visitors. Ambiance was founded by Gloria Garret in 1983 with their original Haight Street location (1458 Haight Street). Originating in San Luis Obispo and Santa Cruz, Garret operated Ambiance's San Francisco location from 1983- 1996. The store was then sold to its current owners, Donna and Kieran O'Leary. Since then, Ambiance has grown and currently has three extant retail storefront locations (1858 Union, 756 Irving, and 3979 24th Streets)(, and one office/warehouse location (915 Howard Street). Ambiance has had four other locations in its 37 years of operation, which are no longer extant. Their original storefront on Haight Street closed in March 2020, with the business owners citing operations complications due to COVID-19.

Ambiance is much more than a women's boutique. They have specifically chosen fashion pieces from many different recognizable brands and new upcoming designers. They are a democratic retailer to provide accessibility for everyone to find something inside. Ambiance has selectively chosen pieces that

they feel the community would enjoy throughout all of their stores. Ambiance carries clothing, jewelry, hats, bags, hair accessories, scarves, sunglasses, beauty products and much more. They are an iconic fashion destination for San Francisco, as they have been featured and awarded in publications like SF Weekly, SF Examiner, Jewish Weekly Readers, and many more.

Ambiance has always been a people business. They take pride in their exemplary customer service in talking to people and helping them on what they need. In addition, Ambiance has helped support multiple community events and fundraisers. Ambiance has been involved with local school's fundraisers. They have hosted private shopping parties with 10% of sales going to schools. They also employed over 94 people at once and many employees being students.

The businesses' primary location, the warehouse located at 915 Howard Street, is in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure on the southwest side of Howard Street between 5th and 6th streets in the South of Market neighborhood. It is within the MUR (Mixed Use-Residential) Zoning District and a 180-CS Height and Bulk District; a Youth and Family Zone, Fringe Financial, and the Central SoMa Special Use District; the Central SoMa Community Benefit District; and the SoMa Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage District. 915 Howard was included in several survey areas, including the South of Market Area Historic Resource Survey (2011), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "7R" (identified in reconnaissance level survey: not evaluated), and the Foundation for San Francisco Architectural Heritage Survey (1978), where it was identified as having "Contextual Importance." However, despite these former evaluations, none have been conclusive, and the property maintains a Planning Department status code of "B" (Unknown / Age Eligible).

Ambiance currently maintains three additional locations in the Marina (1858 Union St.; Category B, Union Street NCD/40-X Zoning District), Inner Sunset (756 Irving Street; Category B, Inner Sunset NCD/40-X Zoning District), and Noe Valley (3979 24th Street; Category A, 24th-Noe Valley NCD/40-X Zoning District) neighborhoods. Of Ambiance's extant locations, only 3979 24th Street has been evaluated and received a Planning Department Historic Resource status code of "A" (Historic Resource Present)

Staff Analysis

REVIEW CRITERIA

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1983.

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

Yes. Ambiance qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Ambiance has operated continuously in San Francisco for 37 years.
- ii. Ambiance has contributed to the history and identity of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and other neighborhoods in San Francisco.
- iii. Ambiance 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?*

Yes. The business is associated with the fashion industry and curation.

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

Yes, the Noe Valley location at 3979 24th Street is located in the California Register-eligible 24th Street Historic District for its association with early streetcar-suburb construction and commercial history. Additionally, the SoMa location at 915 Howard is located within the SoMa Philipinas Cultural Heritage District. The exteriors have been altered to represent Ambiance's branding. One of these exterior alterations, the mural on the 915 Howard Street warehouse, could be considered culturally significant to the business and SoMa area. Additionally, the original "Ambiance" neon sign remains a streetscape feature at its no-longer-extant location at 1458 Haight Street (closed March 2020). The sign and building that formerly housed the original Ambiance location is located in the California-eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District.

Famous people who have visited Ambiance are Alanis Morissette, Blondie, Steven Tyler, Courtney Love, Danny Glovers wife, Marisa Tomei, Danielle Steele and Jack Blades.

Although no longer in operation, the Ambiance location in Haight-Ashbury was its longest running (37 years). During the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love in 2017, Ambiance spearheaded a fundraising effort through the Haight Ashbury Merchants Association to put up colored lights on Haight Street from Mason to Stanyan streets. Ambiance raised \$25,000 for installation and maintenance, then personally supervised the project until its conclusion.

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

No, none of the properties are listed on a registry. However, the 3979 24th Street is located within the identified, California Register-eligible "24th Street Historic District" and 915 Howard Street is located within the SoMa Philipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District. The other two business locations (1858 Union and 756 Irving Street) are not historically significant for events, persons, or architecture and have a Planning Department Resource status code of "B" (Unknown / Age Eligible), as of the date of this executive summary.

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

No, Ambiance is not explicitly called out in any Historic Context Statements, as of the date of this Executive Summary. Ambiance is in several popular shopping districts around San Francisco's neighborhoods, supports community efforts to improve each neighborhood and is a member of each neighborhood's merchant association. The owners of Ambiance have dedicated sales towards community events, including for fires, school fundraisers, and larger efforts such as Black Girls Code.

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

Ambiance has won several “best of” readers polls in SF Weekly, San Francisco Bay Guardian, Jewish Weekly, and the San Francisco Examiner from 2000-2019. In SF Weekly, Ambiance won "Best Women's Boutique" every year in a row from 2008-2019.

The store’s awards are as follows:

- SF Weekly “Best Women’s Boutique” (2002, 2008-2019) San Francisco Bay Guardian “Best Women’s Boutique” (2002, 2008 – 2019)
- San Francisco Examiner “Best Women’s Clothing Store” (2017 and 2019)
- Jewish Weekly Readers’ Choice Award “Best San Francisco Boutique” (2014-2019)
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors “Certificate of Honor for Distinction and Merit” (2014)
- SF Magazine “Best Local Boutique” (2002-2004-2012)
- San Francisco Chronicle “Top 100 Shops in the Bay Area” (2012)
- Lucky Magazine “Reader’s Favorite Boutique” (2008)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

LOCATION(S) ASSOCIATED WITH THE BUSINESS: Previous locations:

- 1458 Haight Street from 1983 to March 2020 (37 years)
- 3985 24th Street from 1999 to 2014 (15 years)
- 1864 Union Street from 2000 – 2004 (4 years)

Current Locations:

- 915 Howard Street from 2001 – Present (19 years)
- 1858 Union Street from 2004- Present (16 years)
- 756 Irving Street from 2012- Present (8 years)
- 3979 24th Street from 2014 – Present (6 years)

RECOMMENDED BY APPLICANT

- Black and white color palate (storefronts and awnings)
- Black and white striped branding (shopping bags and gift boxes)
- Neon Sign that reads “Ambiance” in former Haight Street location

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED BY STAFF

- Mural on the front façade of 915 Howard Street location. Painted by Lango Oliveira

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. ###

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 16.2020

Record No.: 2020-007531LBR
Business Name: Ambiance
Business Address: 915 Howard St. (1858 Union St., 756 Irving St., 3979 24th St.)
Zoning: MUR (MIXED USE-RESIDENTIAL) Zoning District
180-CS Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3732/145A
Applicant: Donna O'Leary
915 Howard Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 9
Staff Contact: Elton Wu - 628-652-7415
Elton.Wu@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR AMIBANCE CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 915 HOWARD ST, BLOCK/LOT 3732/145A.

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 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 September 16, 2020, 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 Ambiance 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 Ambiance.

Location(s):

1. 1458 Haight Street from 1983 to 2020 (37 years)
2. 3985 24th Street from 1999 to 2014 (15 years)
3. 1864 Union Street from 2000 – 2004 (4 years)
4. 915 Howard Street from 2001 – Present (19 years)
5. 1858 Union Street from 2004- present (16 years)
6. 756 Irving Street from 2012- present (8 years)
7. 3979 24th Street from 2014- Present (6 Years)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

1. Black storefronts and black and white awnings
2. Black and white striped shopping bags and gift boxes
3. Neon Sign that reads “ambiance” in former Haight Store

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 to the Office of Small Business September 16, 2020.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

Resolution No. ###
September 16, 2020

RECORD NO. 2020-007531LBR
915 HOWARD ST

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 16, 2020



Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-025
Business Name: Ambiance
Business Address: 915 Howard Street; 1858 Union Street;
756 Irving Street; 3979 24th Street
District: Districts 6, 2, 5, and 8
Applicant: Donna O'Leary, Member
Nomination Date: December 4, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani

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?
☒ Yes ☐ No

1458 Haight Street from 1983 to 2020 (37 years)
3985 24th Street from 1999 to 2014 (15 years)
1864 Union Street from 2000 to 2004 (4 years)
915 Howard Street from 2001 to Present (19 years)
1858 Union Street from 2004 to Present (16 years)
756 Irving Street from 2012 to Present (8 years)
3979 24th Street from 2014 to Present (6 years)

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

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: August 19, 2020

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





CATHERINE STEFANI

December 4, 2019

Richard Kurylo
Office of Small Business
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, 94102

Dear Mr. Kurylo,

It is my pleasure to nominate Ambiance, owned and operated by Kieran and Donna O'Leary, for the Legacy Business Registry. Ambiance is a distinguished small business serving fashion conscious women in a community-driven boutique environment. Throughout their time with Ambiance, Kieran and Donna have focused on serving their community with impeccable customer service and providing each guest with a unique shopping experience.

The nominee has operated in San Francisco for well over 30 years and has maintained a strong and consistent identity. After the opening of the first location in the Haight Ashbury, Kieran and Donna have since opened locations in Noe Valley, Cow Hollow, South of Market, and the Inner Sunset. Ambiance previously received recognition from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco Bay Guardian, San Francisco Weekly, San Francisco Magazine, Jewish Weekly, and Lucky Magazine for its status as an outstanding women's boutique and its importance to San Francisco's small business economy.

As a small business institution, dedicated to the fashion needs of women throughout the City, Ambiance has become a vital community resource and contributor to the well-being of numerous neighborhood commercial districts. Each day, Ambiance assists women from San Francisco, and beyond, in finding outfits for some of life's most important occasions, including birthdays, graduations, and weddings. Ambiance's dedicated owners and staff are committed to providing each guest with an experience that is built upon the longstanding traditions of their small business boutique for women.

The nominee can be contacted here: Kieran and Donna O'Leary, 915 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, 415-596-1007, donkie1996@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catherine Stefani", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine Stefani
Member, Board of Supervisors

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please 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:	
Ambiance	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Kieran and Donna O'Leary	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
915 Howard Street San Francisco, CA 94103	415-596-1007
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	San Francisco, CA
P.O. Box 170699	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
	94117
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
Ambiancesf.com	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
www.facebook.com/ambiancesf	
TWITTER NAME:	
@ambiancesf	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Donna O'Leary	415-596-1007
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Member	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
0312587	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	

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
1458 Haight Street	94117	1983
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?		DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		1983 to March 2020

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
3985 24th Street	94114	Start: November 1999
		End: December 2014

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
1864 Union Street	94123	Start: November 2000
		End: February 2004

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
915 Howard Street	94103	Start: September 2001
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
1858 Union Street	94123	Start: February 2004
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
756 Irving Street	94122	Start: February 2012
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
3979 24th Street	94114	Start: December 2014
		End: Present

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. A business deemed not current 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 grants through the Legacy Business Program.

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.

Donna O'Leary

Dec 1 2019

Donna G. O'Leary

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

AMBIANCE

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 headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Ambiance was founded in San Francisco in 1983 at 1458 Haight Street. The original owner was Gloria Garret.

Gloria had an Ambiance store in San Luis Obispo that she sold in 1994 and one in Santa Cruz that was forced to close by the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989. It is unclear whether either or both of those stores preceded the San Francisco store, which would change Ambiance's starting date. A store named Ambiance with a starting date of 1973 still exists at 737 Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo.

Gloria owned and operated the Ambiance store in San Francisco from 1983 to 1996 with no breaks in service. On April 1, 1996, she sold Ambiance to its present owners Kieran and Donna O'Leary. The storefront at 1458 Haight Street had been in continual operation until 2020.

On November 1, 1999, Ambiance opened a store in Noe Valley at 3985 24th Street. On December 11, 2014, Ambiance expanded in Noe Valley, moving a few storefronts to its present location at 3979 24th Street.

Ambiance opened in Cow Hollow at 1864 Union Street in November 2000. In February 2004, the store expanded, moving to 1858 Union Street.

Ambiance also rented a warehouse on September 10, 2001, in SoMa at 915 Howard Street for its operations and offices.

The next Ambiance expansion was to the Inner Sunset on February 2, 2012, at 756 Irving Street.

There may have been an Ambiance store on Chestnut Street, but there is no record of that location.

On March 1, 2020, the Ambiance store at 1458 Haight Street closed, leaving three locations in San Francisco: Noe Valley, Cow Hollow and the Inner Sunset. Closing Haight Street, as difficult as it was, allowed the business to fully develop its internet presence with a new website at www.shop.ambiancesf.com.

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

Ambiance has not ceased operations in San Francisco since it was founded here in 1983 until the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Ambiance was closed from March 16 until May 15 in 2020.

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

Ambiance is a family-owned business, defined here as any business in which two or more family members are involved and the majority of ownership or control lies within a family. Since 1996, Ambiance has been owned by Kieran O'Leary and Donna O'Leary.

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

The ownership history of Ambiance is as follows:

1983 to 1996: Gloria Garret
1996 to Present: Kieran O'Leary and Donna O'Leary

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.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

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.

The historic resource statuses of the buildings housing Ambiance are as follows:

NOE VALLEY, 3979 24th Street: Category A (Historic Resource Present). The building is a contributor to the Eligible 24th Street Commercial Corridor Historic District.

MARINA, 1858 Union Street: Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible).

INNER SUNSET, 756 Irving Street: Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible).

CRITERION 2

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

Ambiance is located in San Francisco's hottest shopping neighborhoods, including Haight Ashbury, Noe Valley, Cow Hollow, and the Inner Sunset. The store is recognizable by its branding of black storefronts, black and white awnings, and black and white striped shopping bags and gift boxes. Ambiance supports community efforts to improve each neighborhood and is a member of each neighborhood's merchant association. The store is proud of their multiple awards for "Best Boutique" and are known for our amazing selection of clothing and accessories, and their incomparable customer service. Ambiance truly cares about making customers' experience fun, easy and fruitful. When customers leave happy, Ambiance is happy.

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

During the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love in 2017, Ambiance spearheaded a fundraising effort through the Haight Ashbury Merchants Association to put up colored lights on Haight Street from Mason to Stryan streets. Ambiance raised \$25,000 for installation and maintenance, then personally supervised the project until its conclusion.

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

Ambiance has won several "best of" readers polls in SF Weekly, San Francisco Bay Guardian, Jewish Weekly (www.thejewishweekly.com) and the San Francisco Examiner from 2000-2019. In SF Weekly, Ambiance won "Best Women's Boutique" every year in a row from 2008-2019. The store's awards are as follows:

SF Weekly "Best Women's Boutique"

2002 • 2008 • 2009 • 2010 • 2011 • 2012 • 2013 • 2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018 • 2019

San Francisco Bay Guardian "Best Women's Boutique"

2002 • 2008 • 2009 • 2010 • 2011 • 2012 • 2013 • 2014 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018 • 2019

San Francisco Examiner "Best Women's Clothing Store"

2017 • 2019

Jewish Weekly Readers Choice Award "Best San Francisco Boutique"

2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018 • 2019

San Francisco Board of Supervisors "Certificate of Honor for Distinction and Merit"

2014

SF Magazine "Best Local Boutique"

2002 • 2004 • 2005 • 2006 • 2007 • 2008 • 2009 • 2011 • 2012

San Francisco Chronicle "Top 100 Shops in the Bay Area"

2012

Lucky Magazine "Reader's Favorite Boutique"

2008

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

Alanis Morissette, Blondie, Steven Tyler, Courtney Love, Danny Glovers wife, Marisa Tomei, Danielle Steele and Jack Blades have all shopped with Ambiance.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

In the Inner Sunset, Ambiance worked with the neighborhood association to established a Green Benefit District (GBD), although that fell through. Ambiance also worked to get merchant support to beautify the 9th Street entrance to Golden Gate Park. Ambiance met regularly with City representatives on this project.

In October 2017 in response to the Santa Rosa fires, Ambiance did a weeklong collection at all locations of all needed goods and sent many truckloads to the fire victims. All goods were sent to the Redwood Empire Food Bank in Santa Rosa.

Ambiance contributes to every San Francisco school that asks for a donation. They have made numerous donations to a number of schools over the years. They have also dressed students for various fashion shows. Ambiance also does private shopping parties in which a group of people, like PTA members, reserve an Ambiance location for a personalized shopping experience. Participating school groups can receive 10% of the sales for the school. The schools can also sell tickets to those private shopping parties as further fundraising.

After George Floyd was killed by the Minneapolis Police Department on May 25, 2020, Ambiance found a great charity called "Black Girls Code" (www.blackgirlscodes.com). When Ambiance fully reopened in June 2020, the store pledged and gave 10% of their first week's sales to this organization. It totaled approximately \$4,000.

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

Ambiance serves fashion conscious individuals from all over the Bay Area and tourists visiting San Francisco. They also serve their neighborhoods through merchant contributions and through participation in special events for children and adults, especially in Cow Hollow and Noe Valley.

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

All Ambiance locations are old San Francisco buildings, and are all 100 years old or more. The interiors/exterior have been maintained by Ambiance, and the store has created a unique look that is a nod to historic San Francisco. The exteriors have been improved by Ambiance and have not been changed or "modernized." Culturally significant objects may include the mural across the front of the building at its SoMa office and the neon sign that reads "Ambiance" in the Haight Street store.

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

Ambiance is an anchor for its neighborhoods and brings business to all its commercial corridors. The stores are very popular in their neighborhoods and supported most closely by its local customers. Ambiance gives locals an easy place to get something new and fashionable without going downtown.

When retail was really strong, Ambiance employed 94 people. Before the coronavirus pandemic, business was declining, and Ambiance employed 48 staff at the time. After the coronavirus and resulting stay-at-home order, Ambiance closed for two months and now only employs 24 people. Business in 2020 is only 30% of the previous year. Over the years, Ambiance has employed hundreds of people including many students. Ambiance offers health and dental care, paid leave and a retirement program.

If Ambiance were to close, San Francisco would lose an iconic fashion destination and employer. Twenty-four employees would lose their jobs, eight of which have worked 15+ years. The loss of Ambiance would negatively affect the commercial corridors they occupy since the store is such a big draw.

CRITERION 3

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

Ambiance is an independent fashion boutique that carries many different recognizable brands but also emerging designers and hard to find labels. Ambiance is known for its personal, old fashioned service and their slogan, "Remember, at Ambiance we really like you!" The store has always employed more people to be able to provide better customer service. Ambiance means a great customer experience and fabulous clothes and accessories.

Ambiance is a democratic retailer. The store carries a variety of merchandise at different prices, from \$5 to \$375 in all stores. Customers can buy clothing, jewelry, hats, bags, hair accessories, scarves, sunglasses, beauty products and more. Ambiance wants every person who walks into the store to shop and take a treasure home regardless of their pocketbook.

Ambiance is recognizable by their branding of black storefronts, black and white awnings, black and white striped shopping bags and gift boxes. The iconic brand is recognized all over the city. They have even shown up in Paris. On a couple of occasions, the bags were spotted in Paris by Ambiance fans and posted on Instagram.

Following are a few of the hundreds of designers that Ambiance carries:

Clothing:

Free People, BB Dakota, Michael Stars, Sanctuary, Veronica M, Z Supply, Oat, Likely, Lush, Everly, Lovestitch, Ali & Jay, Adelyn Rae, Bobi, Dazey, Rebecca Minkoff, Liverpool, Bridge & Burn, Apricot

Denim:

Joe's Jeans, AG Jeans, 7 for All Mankind, Levi's, Good American, Boyish

Accessories and Jewelry:

Spanx, Smith's Rosebud Salve, Urban Expressions, Street Level, Quay, AJ Morgan, Incognito, Tumbleweed Sterling, Kris Nations, Glee Jewelry, Curious Creatures, Lover's Tempo, Olive & Pique, Wyeth USA, Hollywood Fashion, Lapcos, PF Candle

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

Ambiance is committed to maintaining its fashionable merchandise and old fashioned customer service. Most modern retail has moved to a supermarket model where it is difficult to get help. Ambiance mixes expensive and value priced clothing on the same racks. They have a warm, inviting vintage look in all their stores for a full sensory experience, not the modern slick glass and chrome minimalism of other stores. Ambiance is also committed to maintaining its branding featuring black storefronts and black and white stripes. These have never changed since the inception of Ambiance.

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.).

Ambiance is committed to maintaining the mural across the front of the building at its SoMa office, its black storefronts, its black-and-white awnings and the neon sign that reads "Ambiance" in the Haight Street store.

d. 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 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.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a clothing store for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

NOE VALLEY
3979 24TH ST.





COW HOLLOW
1864 UNION ST.





SOUTH OF MARKET
915 HOWARD ST.



REARERS
MATTRESSES
IRON BEDS
DOWN FACTORY
WASHING PLANT
FABRICS
SEWING FACTORY
BED LINENS
491 Howard St.
543-1800

LAVERGE



INNER SUNSET
756 IRVING ST.



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CARL M. OLSEN, Clerk
RICHARD P. BOSTERNAME **AMBIANCE**ADDRESS **1763-33rd AVENUE**CITY **SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94122**Ph. **731-3842****FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**
55616FILE NO. **55616** FILING FEE - \$10.00 FOR FIRST NAME \$2.00 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL NAME

THE FOLLOWING PERSON (PERSONS) IS (ARE) DOING BUSINESS AS

A (*) FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME **AMBIANCE**B at **1763-33rd AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94122**C 1 (***), **GLORIA GARRETT, INC.**

FULL NAME - TYPE/PRINT

1763-33rd AVENUE

STREET ADDRESS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94122

CITY

STATE

ZIP

CALIFORNIA

IF CORPORATION, SHOW STATE OF INCORPORATION

2 FULL NAME - TYPE/PRINT

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

IF CORPORATION, SHOW STATE OF INCORPORATION

3 FULL NAME - TYPE/PRINT

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

IF CORPORATION, SHOW STATE OF INCORPORATION

4 FULL NAME - TYPE/PRINT

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

IF CORPORATION, SHOW STATE OF INCORPORATION

D (****) This business is conducted by ☐ an individual, ☐ a general partnership, ☐ a limited partnership, ☐ an unincorporated association other than a partnership, ☒ incorporation, ☐ a business trust (CHECK ONE ONLY)

If registrant a corporation sign below

Corporation name **GLORIA GARRETT, INC.**

Signature & Title

Type or Print

Officer's Name & Title

Signed

Typed or Printed

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, California, on the date indicated by the stamp above.

CARL M. OLSEN
County Clerk
of the City and County of
San Francisco**Certification**I hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of
the original on file in my office.

CARL M. OLSEN

COUNTY CLERK

By

RICHARD P. BOSTER

DEPUTY

SEE REVERSE
SIDE C/D

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<https://sanfrancisco.momcollective.com/things-to-do/looking-for-a-fun-girls-night-out-check-out-ambiance-sf/>



SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA MOMSSM

San Francisco Bay Area Moms

Looking for a Fun Girls' Night Out? Check out Ambiance SF!

By **Meredith Kwiatkowski**
April 15, 2016



**This post is sponsored- but the thoughts and feelings are our own, and we only work with businesses we believe to be reputable and resourceful to our readers.*

Have you ever dreamed about a girls' night where you and your closest friends have private access to an amazing women's boutique with hundreds of outfits, shoes and accessories at your fingertips? Oh and what if they served you snacks and champagne? Well dream no more ladies, this amazing evening can be yours at the Ambiance SF Boutique!

I recently had the opportunity to host a private party there with eight of my closest friends, and we had such a blast! Julie, the District Manager, greeted us all by name at the door, welcoming us with a glass of champagne and big smiles. We were then quickly oriented to the store, including the tremendous sale selection, before being encouraged to start looking around.

I must mention that the customer service at Ambiance was phenomenal! All of the sales associates were helpful and easily available, but never pushy. They had great styling advice based on our needs and preferences, ranging from work outfits, dresses for special occasions, to more relaxed day-to-day clothing and accessories. There were also private dressing rooms available for each of us, with plenty of space and comfort.

If you are considering hosting your own private shopping party at Ambiance, I suggest you stop by one of their locations first to check it out! You will find that they emphasize variety, affordability, and a very personal shopping experience. Here is some more information from Ambiance SF Owner, Donna O'Leary herself:

1) Ambiance has been voted “Best Women’s Clothing Store” and “Best Women’s Boutique” several years running. What do you think is unique about Ambiance that sets it apart from other women’s clothing stores?

Other than our carefully selected and edited assortment of clothing and accessories, I would say our customer service. We employ more staff so the client can get styling advice and help when she needs it. We also carry everything you might need, so we can sell you the complete outfit, like a mini-department store with a non-corporate boutique flair.

2) How did Ambiance first get started? What are your goals for the clothing stores over the next 5-10 years?

We bought Ambiance in 1996. It had one location in the Haight-Ashbury and had been there since 1983. I worked in the fashion business for 10 years prior to buying Ambiance, and my husband and I always wanted to own our own store. Our goals are to possibly open another location and start selling on-line.

3) What has been the hardest part about being in the fashion business? The most rewarding?

The fashion business like any other depends on hiring and retaining great personnel. That is the hardest challenge and yet the most rewarding part. Great businesses are not built by the owners alone.

The second hardest part is staying on top of current trends and the changing tastes of your demographic. Like any other business, it is hard work, not all that glamorous but one that has a glamorous end result. We live and breathe fashion. After 20 years in the business, I am still excited before each and every buying show.

4) The customer service at Ambiance has been rated top notch. What do you teach your employees that seems to make such a difference?

We have a complete in-depth training program written by us. I had 1500 personal clients before I started Ambiance, so the training is based on my own experience in selling clothing. Our managers uphold the customer service standards and insist upon it from our staff.



5) What else would you like our readers to know about Ambiance SF?

We love everything about the fashion business, and we like people. We designed our business model with a range of prices from low to higher, so everyone could shop with us. In other words, we are trying to include everyone in our potential customer base.

Please check out Ambiance SF at <http://www.ambiancesf.com/> for more information.

<https://www.spottedbylocals.com/sanfrancisco/ambiance/>



HOME//SAN FRANCISCO//AMBIANCE



Image by Andrea Griffin

Ambiance – Best women’s clothing boutique

Aug 6th, 2020 | By: **Andrea Griffin**

If I had to choose just one clothing store to shop at for the rest of my life it would be Ambiance. This is definitely not your big box style store. **Ambiance** is intimate, fun and has the most stylish and modern clothing; I ALWAYS find something that is perfect just for me. I’ve discovered Kersh cardigan sweaters at Ambiance and every time I stop in, I ask if they have any new colors in my size.

The store at which I usually shop is in the Marina district but they also have 3 other boutiques in other neighborhoods – check their [website](#) for locations. A woman-owned business, Ambiance was started in 1996 by Donna O’Leary. She wanted Ambiance to have something for every woman; it is just that! From items ranging from \$5 to \$400, I always feel like I can get something I love without breaking the bank. My favorite pair of hoop earrings only cost me \$10.

I always feel welcome at Ambiance and the staff is fantastic at helping me find something specific that I’m looking for (e.g. Kersh sweaters) or I can simply browse on my own without feeling pressured. Ambiance has awesome sales – especially on holiday weekends – and they always have a sales rack or two at all other times.

I love Ambiance so much, I’ve told family members who’ve asked what I want for Christmas or other holidays, that a gift card from this girly, fashion-forward boutique *is what I really want!*

Details about this spot

Categories



Address

1858 Union Street, San Francisco

Telephone number

+14159239796

Opening Times

Mon - Fri 11:00 - 20:00, Sat 10:00 - 20:00, Sun 11:00 - 19:00

Price

Items from: US\$ 5

Website

[Ambiance](#)

Check on Facebook

facebook.com/ambiancesf

"In appreciation and public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to...the people of the City and County of San Francisco"

Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:

DONNA AND KIERAN O'LEARY

AMBIANCE

In recognition of Ambiance celebrating 18 years in business, the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco extends its highest commendation to you. Donna and Kieran not only expanded their business to Noe Valley, but other neighborhoods as well. They help women of all ages look professional and outstanding.

Scott Wiener

Scott Wiener
Supervisor, District 8
May 15, 2014

