



# LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2020**

*Filing Date:* September 24, 2020  
*Case No.:* **2020-008544LBR**  
*Business Name:* Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Primary Address)  
*Zoning:* RED-MX (Residential Enclave-Mixed) Zoning District  
45-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3517/030  
*Applicant:* Anne Cervantes  
225 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London N. Breed  
*Located In:* District 9  
*Staff Contact:* Gretel Gunther – 628.652.7607  
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

**Recommendation:** Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

## Business Description

Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. is a Mexican sit-down restaurant and bar, opened by Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez in September 1982 at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Don Ramon's has served authentic cuisine from Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico for dine-in and takeout since its opening 38 years ago. Dishes such as Jalisciense tamales, chile rellenos, enchiladas in mole, chile Colorado, and carne de Puerco en salsa, have remained staples on Don Ramon's menu for the past 38 years. Don Ramon's has been continuously family-owned and operated during its existence and is currently owned by Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez's eldest daughter Leonila Ramirez.

The Ramirez family first purchased what was then La Perla Grocery Store at present day 90 Kissling Street (formerly 229 11<sup>th</sup> Street) in 1966, originally leasing the building. In 1970, Javier Ramirez, son of founders Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez, purchased both 229 11<sup>th</sup> Street and the adjacent building at 80-90 Kissling Street and the store was renamed to Jay La Perla's Mexican Restaurant. In 1977, the Ramirez family purchased present day 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street in order to accommodate expansion of the business into a full restaurant. 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street

was renovated and combined with 229 11<sup>th</sup> Street (now part of 80-90 Kissling Street) in 1982. Don Ramon's current spacious two-story main dining area was designed in 1983 by Javier. Javier's vision for the dining area was for it to be reminiscent of a historic Mexican interior, with arches and iron balconies defining the main dining area. The main dining area is decorated with traditional Mexican-style wood dining tables and chairs and wall art of 1940s vintage Mexican travel posters. Further, the main dining area features Mexican Saltillo terracotta tile flooring and solid and patterned ceramic glazed tile imported from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico for the exterior restaurant façade and interior walls. The main dining area also features an interior arched portico, underneath which the bar is located.

Located in the South of Market neighborhood, Don Ramon's has served as both an eating and gathering location to the surrounding community, particularly SoMa's LGBTQ+ and Latinx populations, since its opening. Don Ramon's has consistently hosted and donated food to various LGBTQ+ and Latinx organizations and events through the neighborhood and San Francisco, including the Folsom Street Fair, Carmelite Monastery, ICA Basilica, Riordon High School, St. Stephens, St. Kevin's, Bill Graham Foundation, Bayview YMCA Prime & Prep, Dining Out For Life (AIDS fundraiser), SF Fire Fighter's Toys for Tots drive, The Entertainment Commission's Holiday Party, SF Foster Youth Fund, Dore Alley Fair (mid-1980s), Mr. S fundraising for AIDS, and the Uniform Club AIDS fundraising.

Don Ramon's has also been an employer in the SoMa neighborhood since its creation, actively employing SoMa's LGBTQ+ and Latinx population despite marginalization of these communities by other employers. Don Ramon's has also continuously employed and supported both SoMa and San Francisco's undocumented community for the duration of its operation. Don Ramon's was an early participant in the "Sanctuary Restaurants" movement, providing both a sanctuary workplace for undocumented employees and hosting workshops for restaurant owners and employees to learn about their legal rights.

Don Ramon's has also been a longstanding host of political functions for local politicians since its creation in 1982. One of the first political events at the restaurant was a brunch to raise funds to fight Mayor Feinstein's recall in 1983. Since then, the restaurant has hosted political functions for numerous San Francisco and California politicians including Senator Feinstein, Mayor Gavin Newsom, Mayor Willie Brown, City Attorney Dennis Herrera, District Attorney Kamala Harris, Attorney General Xavier Becerra, Supervisor Jose Medina, Supervisor Jim Gonzalez, Supervisor Susan Leal, City Treasurer Susan Leal, Supervisor Bevan Dufty, City Treasurer Jose Cisneros, Supervisor Susan Leal, Supervisor Angela Alioto, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, and Supervisor Shamann Walton.

The business's primary location at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street is a Category A (Historic Resource Present) commercial structure on the east side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Kissling and Howard Streets in the South of Market neighborhood. It is within the RED-MX (Residential Enclave-Mixed) Zoning District and a 45-X Height and Bulk District. It is also located within the Western SoMa and Fringe Financial Special Use Districts, the Fringe Financial Restricted Use District, the SOMA West Community Benefit District, the Western SoMa Eastern Neighborhoods Planning Area, the SoMa Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage and Leather & LGBTQ Cultural Districts, and the Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential California Register Historic District.

The business's primary location, the commercial structure located at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street, is in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) building built in 1928 and designed in the Exotic Revival style. 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street was included in the South of Market Area Historic Resource Survey (adopted 2011), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "3D" (appears eligible for NR as a contributor to a NR eligible district through

survey evaluation), identified as a contributor to the California Register Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District. 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street has also been identified through the Planning Department environmental review process as a potential contributor to the CEQA-Eligible LGBTQ Historic District.

Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. also occupies the building adjacent to 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street, at 80-90 Kissling Street (Category A, RED-MX (Residential Enclave-Mixed)/45-X Zoning District). 80-90 Kissling Street was built in 1906 in a style consistent with the Edwardian era. 80-90 Kissling Street is an "A" resource because it was included in the South of Market Area Historic Resource Survey (adopted 2011), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "3D" (appears eligible for NR as a contributor to a NR eligible district through survey evaluation), also a contributor to the California Register Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District.

## Staff Analysis

### Review Criteria

**1. *When was business founded?***

The business was founded in 1982.

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

Yes. Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. has operated continuously in San Francisco for 38 years.
- b. Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. has contributed to the history and identity of the South of Market neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. 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, or tradition?***

Yes. The business is associated with traditional cuisine from Jalisco, Mexico.

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

Yes. The 11<sup>th</sup> Street property is a contributor to the California Register Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District. The Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District developed from ca. 1906 -1936 and consists primarily of light industrial, residential, and some commercial properties that are cohesive in regard to scale, building typology, materials, architectural style, and relationship to the street. The 11<sup>th</sup> Street property has also been identified as a potential contributor to the CEQA-Eligible LGBTQ Historic District for its association with LGBTQ bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues in the South of Market neighborhood.

The Kissling Street property is also a contributor to the California Register Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District.

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

Yes. Both the 11<sup>th</sup> and Kissling Street properties are part of the California Register Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District. Both properties have Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of “A” (Historic Resource Present) because of their locations within the Western SOMA Light Industrial & Residential Historic District.

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

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

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

Yes. There have been a number of local features and articles on Don Ramon’s. Don Ramon’s was featured in the San Francisco Chronicle’s business section in May 2004 regarding their sustained success as a local, family-owned and operated small business. Don Ramon’s was also featured in the San Francisco Examiner in March 2017 for its participation in the “Sanctuary Restaurant” movement, both as a member of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association and as host of the first workshop for business employees and owners to learn about their legal rights. Most recently Don Ramon’s was featured in Hoodline regarding the negative economic impacts COVID-19 has had on small businesses in San Francisco.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

**Location(s) associated with the business:**

Current Locations:

- 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street (1982 – Present)
- 80-90 Kissling Street (1982 – Present)

**Recommended by Applicant**

- Mexican sit-down restaurant and bar
- Family-owned and operated
- Authentic cuisine from Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico
- Historic building exteriors at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 80-90 Kissling Street
- Traditional Mexican interior design of main dining area including use of arches, balconies, Saltillo terracotta tile flooring, and ceramic glazed tile from Guadalajara, Mexico for restaurant exterior and interior walls.
- Don Ramon exterior restaurant sign at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street

- Don Ramon exterior restaurant sign at 80-90 Kissling Street

#### Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

### 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: OCTOBER 21, 2020**

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*Business Name:* Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc.  
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221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
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*Nominated By:* Mayor London N. Breed  
*Located In:* District 9  
*Staff Contact:* Gretel Gunther – 628.652.7607  
[gretel.gunther@sfgov.org](mailto:gretel.gunther@sfgov.org)

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR DON RAMON'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT, INC. CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 221-225 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET, 3517/030.

**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 October 21, 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 Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. 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 Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc.

*Locations*

Current Locations:

- 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street (1982 – Present)
- 80-90 Kissling Street (1982 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- Not applicable

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

- Mexican sit-down restaurant and bar
- Family-owned and operated
- Authentic cuisine from Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico
- Historic building exteriors at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 80-90 Kissling Street
- Traditional Mexican interior design of main dining area including use of arches, balconies, Saltillo terracotta tile flooring, and ceramic glazed tile from Guadalajara, Mexico for restaurant exterior and interior walls.
- Don Ramon exterior restaurant sign at 221-225 11<sup>th</sup> Street
- Don Ramon exterior restaurant sign at 80-90 Kissling Street

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 2020-008544LBR to the Office of Small Business October 21, 2020.

Jonas P. Ionin  
*Commission Secretary*

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:



## Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2020-21-011  
*Business Name:* Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 225 11th Street  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Anne Cervantes, Owner Representative  
*Nomination Date:* September 22, 2020  
*Nominated By:* Mayor 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?

☒ Yes ☐ No

225 11th Street from 1982 to Present (38 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:** September 23, 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](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





September 22, 2020

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
San Francisco Office of Small Business  
City Hall, Room 110  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi,

I am writing to nominate Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

The purpose of the City's Legacy Business Registry is to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City. Per ordinance, a business must be nominated by the Mayor or a member of the Board of Supervisors to be reviewed, processed, and approved by the Small Business Commission as a Legacy Business at a public hearing if it meets the criteria set forth.

Since its grand opening in 1983, Don Ramon's has been providing a warm, authentic Mexican dining experience in SoMa for over 35 years. Founded by Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez, who immigrated to San Francisco from Jalisco, Mexico in the 1950s, Don Ramon's has grown to become one of the largest Mexican restaurants in the City, and has solidified its place as a gathering space for locals and visitors alike. In its decades of operations, the restaurant has welcomed a diverse array of patrons including SoMa residents, politicians, blue-collar workers, and members of the Latino and LGBTQ+ communities. Don Ramon's and the Ramirez family have contributed to the history and identity of our City and fostered civic engagement and pride.

It is an honor to recognize the legacy and contributions of Don Ramon's to our great City of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "London N. Breed".

London N. Breed  
Mayor

## 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.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc.		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
Leonila Ramirez		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
225 11th Street, San Francisco, Ca 94103		((415))864-2700
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		donramons@yahoo.com
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
www.donramonsrestaurante.com	https://www.facebook.com/DonRamonsSF/	https://www.yelp.com/biz/don-ramons-san-francisco-2

<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>	
Anne Cervantes, RA	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>	
Owner Representative	
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
	<b>EMAIL:</b>

<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
0102461	C3729427

<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>	
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>	<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>

## 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
225 11th Street	94103	September 21, 1982
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1982 to Present	

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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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:

## 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.

Leonila Ramirez May 23, 2018

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

Leonila Ramirez 5/23/18 Leonila Ramirez

## **DON RAMON'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT, INC.**

### **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.**

Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant, Inc. at 225-229 11th Street was established on September 21, 1982.

#### **BRIEF SUMMARY FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

"Ramon Ramirez and his wife, Guadalupe, immigrated to San Francisco from Jalisco, Mexico, in 1955 after Ramon had snuck into the United States illegally, fell in love with California, then fetched his family from Mexico and brought them back legally. Guadalupe worked at a Laundromat; Ramon as a meat packer for Swift; their son, Javier, at a deli.

"They later acquired jobs at the Valencia Cafe, owned by Guadalupe's (cousin), who eventually sold the business to the Ramirezes. In (1966), the family purchased a deli on 11<sup>th</sup> Street and named it Jay's La Perla, in honor of Javier.

"The deli sold Mexican food cooked and brought over from the Valencia Cafe. But the deli filled up fast, so the Ramirezes decided to expand it into a restaurant and close the Valencia Café. Don Ramon's opened its doors on Sept. 21, 1982, and the old deli became its kitchen."<sup>1</sup>

#### **DETAILED HISTORY**

The Ramirez family has been doing business in San Francisco for over 60 years, including Valencia Café at 211 Valencia Street (1960-1974), La Perla Restaurant at 229 11th Street (1966-1982), and Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant (1982-Present).

Ramon Ramirez came north from Mexico to work the fields in Santa Maria through the Bracero Program in the early 1950s. He returned to Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico, to his wife, Guadalupe. Guadalupe's brother-in-law, Francisco Quiroga, filed proper papers to immigrate to San Francisco. Ramon and Guadalupe immigrated with their three children – Javier, Leonilla, and Lucy – from Mexico to San Francisco in the mid-1950s. Ramon joined his wife's cousin Ignacio

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<sup>1</sup> Pia Sarkar, "Many co-workers, same gene pool: The family business is alive and kicking as two venerable S.F. restaurants show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 2, 2004, pages J1, J3.

Luna and worked as a meat packer at the Swift Company, located at 666 6th Street.<sup>2</sup> Nati Ramirez was born a few years later completing the Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez family.

## VALENCIA CAFÉ

Ignacio and Victoria Luna purchased Valencia Café at 211 Valencia Street and Le Fe Grocery Store at 1052 Folsom circa 1955 from Guadalupe Palacio who owned both businesses. In 1960, Ramon and Guadalupe purchased the Valencia Café from Ignacio and Victoria.<sup>3</sup>

## LA PERLA

In 1962, Ignacio purchased the business La Perla Grocery Store at 229 11th Street from Arthur L. Flores (eldest son of Arthur V. and Georgia Flores) and May Flores. Arthur V. owned the building that housed La Perla Grocery Store and established La Perla Market (Grocery Store) in 1951 with the original name A B Flores Market.

After a few years of ownership, Ignacio and Victoria decided to sell La Perla Grocery Store to the Ramirez family in 1966. The Ramirez family entered into a 3-year lease agreement with building owners Arthur V. and Georgia.

In 1970, Arthur V., then 75, sold the 229 11th Street building and the adjacent Kissling Building to Javier Ramirez, Ramon's eldest son. On March 20, 1970, Javier, on behalf of his mother and father, provided a check for \$4,000 made payable to Transamerica Title Insurance Company towards the purchase price of \$42,500 for the 229 11th Street building and 80, 82, 90 Kissling Street. The balance of \$38,500 was to be paid in installments by Javier and his parents.<sup>4</sup>

Valencia Café was closed in 1974 so the Ramirez family could focus on plans to expand La Perla into a restaurant. In 1975, the business was renamed Jay's La Perla Mexican Restaurant after Javier, Ramon's eldest son.

## EXPANSION

In 1976, they added a takeout food window to the restaurant and starting planning to expand the restaurant into the adjacent building at 225 11th Street.

In 1977, the Ramirez family purchased 225 11th Street from a toy manufacturer. The business registration with the San Francisco Treasurer and Tax Collector for the "221-225 11th St Bldg" is dated January 11, 1977, and listed under the ownership of "Guadalupe M Ramirez."

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<sup>2</sup> San Francisco City Directories 1945-1983

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Agreement of Sale and Deposit Receipt, March 20, 1970.

The major building renovation of 225-229 11th Street was completed in 1982. The renovation consolidated the 225 11th Street building and adjacent 229 11th Street building into one restaurant, and the name of the business was changed to Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant. There was a preview opening on September 21, 1982, and a copy of the invitation is included in the Legacy Business Registry application. The "Don Ramon's" business name was listed under the ownership of "Guadalupe M Ramirez" along with the building, so "Don Ramon's" adopted its start date of January 11, 1977, according to Treasurer and Tax Collector records.

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

Don Ramon's has not ceased operations or had any major lapses in business since it opened. During the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the restaurant pivoted from indoor dining to take-out and delivery.

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

The business is a family-owned business presently owned by the eldest daughter of the founders.

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

The ownership history of Don Ramon's is as follows:

1982 to 1992:	Javier Ramirez and Guadalupe Ramirez (Javier is the oldest son)
1992 to 2004:	Ramon Ramirez and Guadalupe Ramirez
2004 to 2010:	Ramon Ramirez and Leonilla Ramirez (Leonilla is the eldest daughter)
2010 to 2014:	Leonilla Ramirez
2014 to Present:	Leonilla Ramirez as CEO of the corporation

In 2014, Don Ramon's business structure was changed to separate the business from Leonilla Ramirez's assets.

**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 current ownership can be found on San Francisco Open Data where the ownership is under the name “Guadalupe Ramirez” which is the name of the Ramirez family trust.

**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 225 11th Street and 80-90 Kissling Street buildings are both contributors to the Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District with a Category A, California Historical Resource Code Category 3-D and is eligible for the National Register Criteria C. The historic period is from 1906-1936.

225 11th Street was built in 1928 in Exotic Revival Style and the retention of historic architecture is high.<sup>5</sup> The building records indicate that permits were issued on July 14, 1928, by the contractor Victor F. Horlscher and Daniel Enblum to construct a three-story reinforced concrete industrial building with an estimated cost of \$21,000.

80-90 Kissling Street was built in 1906, per the State of California - The Resource Agency’s primary record for the building (DPR Surveys), and the building is categorized as Edwardian. The retention of historic architecture is medium per the DPR surveys.<sup>6 7</sup> The original building located on this site was destroyed in the fires of the 1906 earthquake. Per the SF Spring Valley Water Tap records (original address 219 11th Street) was tapped on January 12, 1876, by T Petram. The 1889 Historic Sanborn map notes that the existing structure with “Sal.” Saloon and “S” Store use on the ground floor with residential above. The original structure was a 2-story wood framed building with commercial on the ground floor and residential above. The property was listed as one of the properties being publicly auctioned appearing in the San Francisco Call Bulletin May 22, 1890, and describes the building as a “substantial investment, 2-story bay-window house lower part contains store and 4 rooms, upper part 7 rooms, bath, etc.; a stable in the rear on Bowie (Kissling) for 4 horses, buggy and wagon. Anyone desiring to good rentable property should not fail to see this.”<sup>8</sup>

The Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District does not document the presence of Latinos in this district for the Latino Historic Period for the Reconstruction 1907-1915, World Wars 1916-1945, and Post World War II 1946-1960. The property research for the Ramirez and other Latino Legacy Families and shows a pattern of displacement of Latino business owners and families (Latino enclaves) moving to the South of Market displaced from the Latin Quarters and the building of the Broadway Tunnel and the Bay Bridge. No Latino Historic Resources have been documented as part of this Historic District. Cervantes Design Associates and the SF Latino Historical Society are recommending that this Latino business be

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<sup>5</sup> State of California, The Resources Agency, DPR 523 A- Primary Record, 3517030

<sup>6</sup> State of California, The Resources Agency, DPR 523 A- Primary Record, 3517029

<sup>7</sup> State of California, The Resources Agency, DPR- District Record, 523D

<sup>8</sup> Bovee, Toy & Co AUCTION, San Francisco Call Bulletin, May 29, 1890, Vol:67, Page 8

added as a Historic Resource to the Latino City-wide context statement, the LGBTQ Context statement, and the SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District.

## CRITERION 2

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

The Ramirez family has a business legacy in the food industry that spans more than six decades in San Francisco. The property they bought was previously owned by Latino families such as the Luna and Flores families. Don Ramon's has established a historical presence with the Latino and LGBTQ communities and with politicians, which makes the business' legacy so important to the history of San Francisco.

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

Don Ramon's and the Ramirez family have demonstrated active support of the LGBTQ community in San Francisco since their opening. The family made a commitment to hiring a large LGBTQ+ workforce at a time when acceptance for that marginalized community was virtually nonexistent. The Don Ramon's first restaurant manager was gay and active in the SOMA LGBTQ leather community and supported events connected with Dore Alley and the Folsom Street Fair. For the first Gay Pride parade, Don Ramon's funded a float to participate.

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

Don Ramon's is in the process of being recommended by the San Francisco Latino Historical Society to be referenced in the citywide Latino Context Statement as one of the Latino Community's Historic Resources. Don Ramon's has been profiled in the San Francisco Chronicle with a narrative exemplifying the ambition, traditions, sacrifices, culture, and effort of the Ramirez family in establishing and maintaining this business. That article, and other notable media mentions, are as follows:

1994 "Jay Ramirez," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Tuesday, January 4, 1994, page C3

2004 Pia Sakar, "Many co-workers, same gene pool: The family business is alive and kicking as two venerable SF restaurants show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Business, Sunday, May 21, 2004, pages J1 and J3

2005 Susan Sward, "Guadalupe Ramirez-restaurant owner," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Obituaries, March 29, 2005, page B5

2009 "Ramon Ramirez," *San Francisco Chronicle* and *SFGate.com*, In Memory, October 17, 2009, page C4

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

Don Ramon's has been associated with several historical persons starting with Mayor Diane Feinstein; longtime friends Senator John Burton, Angela Alioto and the Alioto family; State Senator Art Torres; District Attorney Terrance Hallinan; Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and her husband; and former Mayor Willie Brown.

Soon after the restaurant opening, in 1983, Jim Gonzalez, Jose Medina, Dr. Barrio, David Sanchez, and Pio Barrera hosted a brunch to raise funds to fight Mayor Feinstein's recall.

Don Ramon's hosted political functions for Senator Feinstein, Mayor Gavin Newson, Mayor Willie Brown, City Attorney Dennis Herrera, Kimiko Burton's run for Public Defender, District Attorney Kamala Harris, Attorney General Xavier Becerra, Supervisor Jose Medina, Supervisor Jim Gonzalez, Supervisor Susan Leal, City Treasurer Susan Leal, Supervisor Bevan Dufty, City Treasurer Jose Cisneros, City College Board Member Alex Randolph, Supervisor Susan Leal, Supervisor Angela Alioto, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, Supervisor Shamann Walton, and political consultants such as Robert Barnes.

The offices of Bill Graham, the rock concert promoter, and Carlos Santana were located at 11th and Harrison streets next door to Don Ramon's in the mid-1970s. Bill Graham frequented the La Perla Mexican Restaurant with his sons, with Ann Getty, and with members of The Grateful Dead. Carlos and his wife also dined here.

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

Don Ramon's has donated food and or hosted fundraisers for the Latino, LGBTQ, and business communities. The business was honored on October 11, 2011, during a Latino Heritage Celebration.

Don Ramon's hosted fundraisers or provide gift certificates and/or donated food to the following organizations: Carmelite Monastery, ICA Basilica, Riordon High School, St. Ignacia's High School, St. Stephens, St. Kevin's, Bill Graham Foundation, Bayview YMCA Prime & Prep, Dining Out For Life (AIDS fundraiser), SF Fire Fighter's Toys for Tots drive, Folsom Street Fair, The Entertainment Commission's Holiday Party, SF Foster Youth Fund, Dore Alley Fair (mid 1980s), Mr. S fundraising for AIDS, the Uniform Club AIDS fundraising.

Don Ramon's has been the meeting place for such organization such as the San Francisco Latino Democratic Club, Harvey Milk Democratic Club, Latino Unidos Democratic Club, Margaret Cruz Democratic Club, and Golden Gate Business Association.

In 2017, Don Ramon's hosted panel discussions, organized by Anne Cervantes, to assist Latino Restaurant owners on how to handle immigration officers entering their restaurants and became part of the Sanctuary Restaurant movement to protect their workers.

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

Don Ramon's Restaurant (formerly La Perla Restaurant), is located on 225 11th Street has been serving authentic Mexican cuisine from Ayutla, Jalisco, since 1966 serving a diverse community. This business is one of the largest Mexican restaurants in San Francisco, seating up to 300 customers. Its location in SoMa near Civic Center allowed the business to become an eating place and a gathering spot for a diverse population of people working in government, blue-collar workers in the South of Market neighborhood, and workers in the LGBTQ nightlife. Significant events involving the Latino, gay and City leadership communities have been hosted in this restaurant.

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

Javier Ramirez, the eldest son of Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez, designed the inside of the restaurant in the 1983 renovation of the building. His vision was to be reminiscent of a historic Mexican interior with arches and balconies defining the main dining area. Mexican Saltillo terracotta tile was used for the flooring. Solid and pattern ceramic glazed tile were imported from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico for the exterior façade and the interior walls.

The reception area walls feature Latina local artist Carmen Loma Garza's "Tamalada," and RC Gorman. The interior walls of the main dining area are lined in 1940s vintage Mexican travel posters given to the Ramirez family by friend Hank Ochoa. The collection of posters was Hank's father's collection.

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

San Francisco would be at a great loss if Don Ramon's were to be sold, relocated, or shut down because the establishment has been a place of gathering, safety, and comfort for people in the overall San Francisco community. Don Ramon's is part of the city's Latino community's identity, and losing the restaurant would be a loss to San Francisco and the contributions that Latinos have made in the development of San Francisco's identity and its history.

### CRITERION 3

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

The Ramirez family has made it a priority to carry their traditions from the town of Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico. The authenticity of their traditional Mexican cuisine has proven to be one of the essential features that defines their character.

**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)**

Don Ramon's serves dishes that continue to be extremely traditional because they are specific to the region of Jalisco, from where the Ramirez family originates. The family has been committed to maintain integrity in their traditional cuisine; the old style of cooking continues to be passed down through the through the generations of the Ramirez family working in the restaurant. Menu items include Jalisciense Tamales, Chile Rellenos, Enchiladas in Mole, Chile Colorado, and Carne de Puerco en Salsa. The traditional menu has not changed since the establishment of their first business Valencia Café. The family found that there was a high demand for authentic sit-and-dine Mexican cuisine in the area because there was a large population of Latinos living and working near the establishments.

**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 exterior of the building has kept its historic Exotic Revival Style since it was built in 1928, and the adjacent building is Edwardian Style and built in 1880s. Their iconic Don Ramon's sign was added in 1982. Both buildings are important contributors to the Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District.<sup>9</sup> Although the historic style of the building stayed the same, the commercial ground floor façade with the red tiling represents the community it derives from and serves.

Don Ramon's embodies structure, culture, community, and history all meeting together. The Ramirez family has created place "Sitio y Lengua"<sup>10</sup> with their language and cultural traditions

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<sup>9</sup> State of California – Resource Agency DPR 523A, 3517 029,3517 030.

<sup>10</sup> California Women and Politics, from the Gold Rush to the Great Depression, "I Do Not Like The White Man" Linda Heidenreich, "Sitio y Lengua" Emma Perez concept of space, University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

of Ayutla, Jalisco, Mexico that creates memory and sustains the contributions of Latinos to the development of the City and County of San Francisco

**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.**

This is not applicable.

## LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY

Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**

## Historic Legal Documents

Business License<sup>1</sup>

Location:	0102461-02-01
Business Account No.	102461
Ownership Name:	Guadalupe M Ramirez
DBA Name:	Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant
Street Address:	221 11 <sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, Ca
Business Start Date:	1/11/1977
Business End Date:	
Location Start Date:	1/11/1977
Location End Date:	
NAISC Code	7220-7229
NAISC Code Description:	Food Service
Neighborhood	South of Market

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<sup>1</sup> DataSF, Registered Business Locations, San Francisco, Economy & Community, <https://data.sfgov.org/Economy-and-Community/Registered-Business-Locations-San-Francisco/g8m3-pdis#>



## Registered Business Locations - San Francisco



Based on [Registered Business Locations - San Francisco](#)

This dataset includes the locations of businesses that pay taxes to the City and County of San Francisco. Each registered business may have ▶

More View

Location Id	Business Account Number	Ownership Name	DBA Name	Street Address	City	State	Source Zipcode	Business Start Date	Business End Date
0102461-01-001	0102461	Ramirez Guadalupe M	221-225 11th St Bldg	221 11th St	San Franc...	CA	94103	01/11/1977	
0102461-02-001	0102461	Ramirez Guadalupe M	Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant	221 11th St	San Franc...	CA	94103	01/11/1977	

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**

INTERIOR      1966-1978      La Perla Grocery/ Deli    229 11<sup>th</sup> Street



*Figure 3: Guadalupe Ramirez at the counter of La Perla Restaurant*



*Figure 4: Ramon Ramirez (L) with his son Javier Ramirez(R) at the end of the counter at La Perla*



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020

EXTERIOR 1977

La Perla Restaurant Expansion to 90 Kissling Street



Figure 5: La Perla Building purchase in 1970 and Jay's name added to La Perla Delicatessen, 1975



Figure 6: Jay's La Perla Delicatessen, side entrance to the dining area.

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**

LA PERLA  
MENU 1970



*Figure 7: J's La Perla Delicatessen/Restaurant Menu*

EXTERIOR 1981



*Figure 8: 225 11th Street purchase to expand restaurant.*

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**



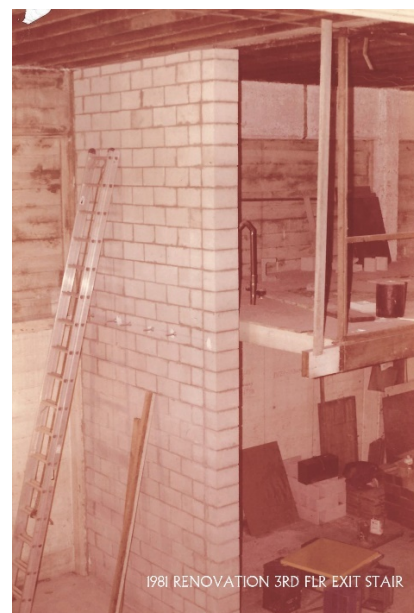
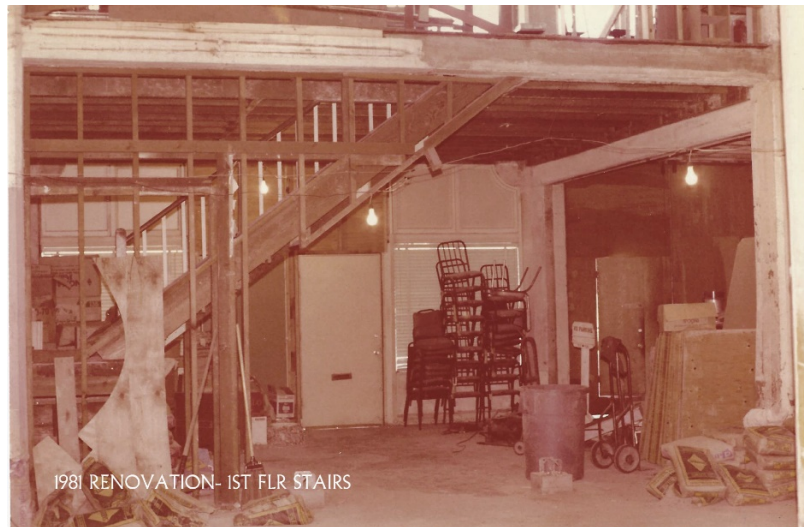
1981 RENOVATION 2ND STORY



1981 RENOVATION STAIRS

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

**Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020**



GRAND  
OPENING  
DON  
RAMON'S  
RESTAURANT

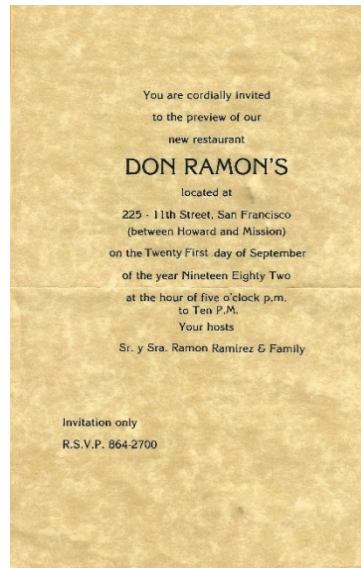
1983



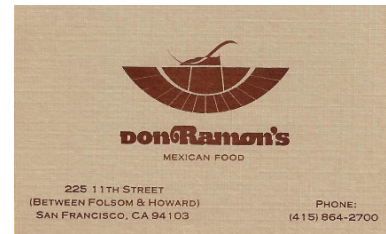
*Figure 9: Grand opening of Don Ramon's*

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY  
Don Ramon' Mexican Restaurant

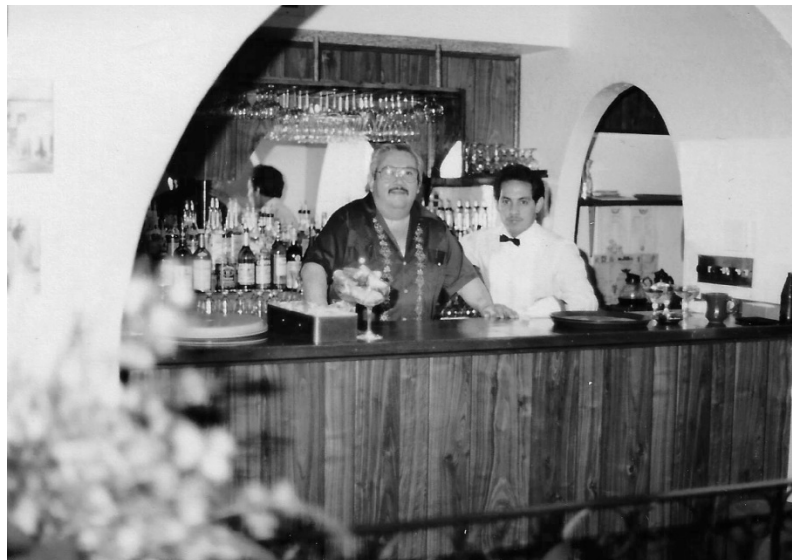
Section Five: Supplemental Historical Documents- September 9, 2020



*Figure 11: Don Ramon's 1982 Preliminary Opening Invite.*

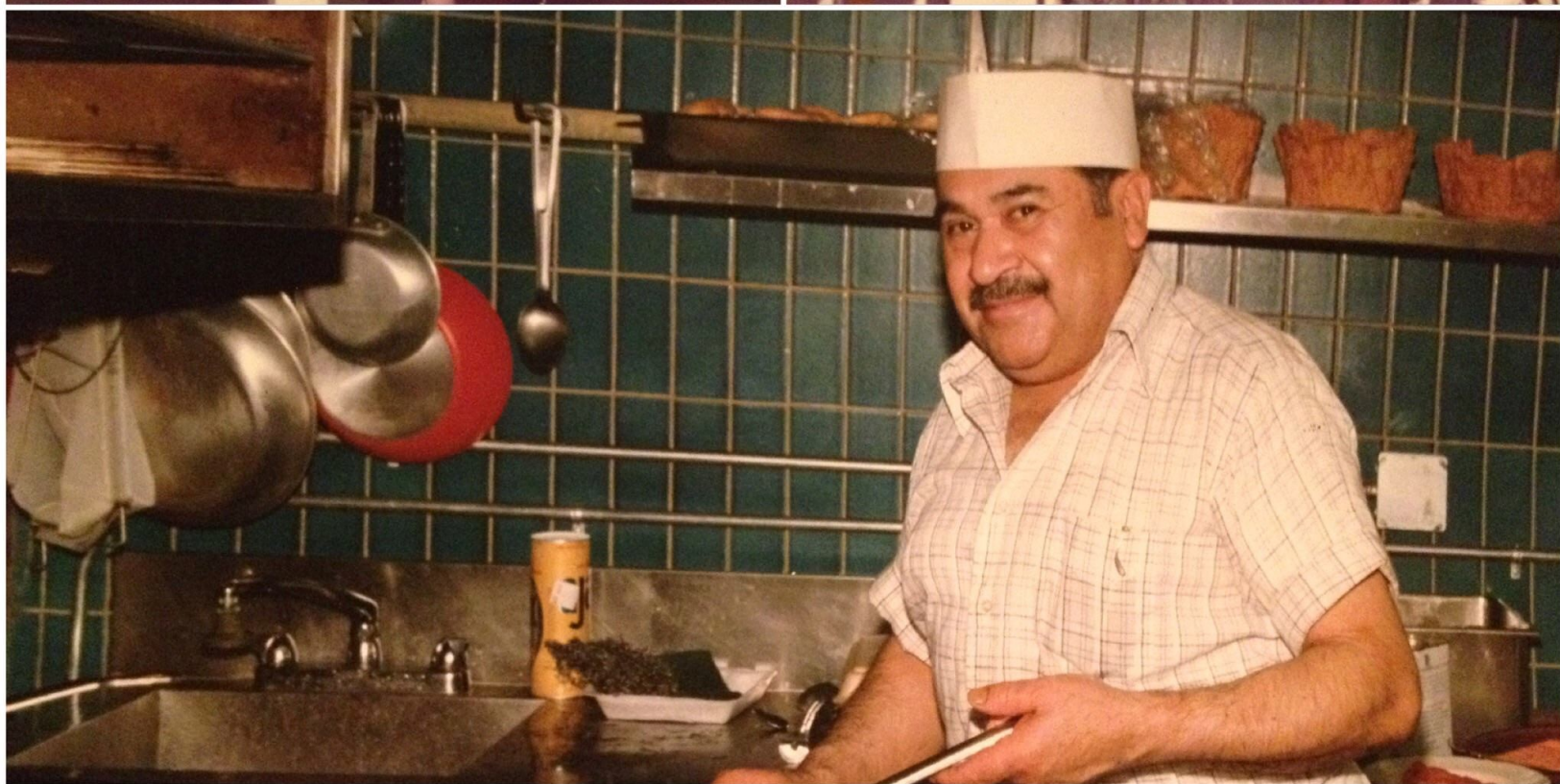
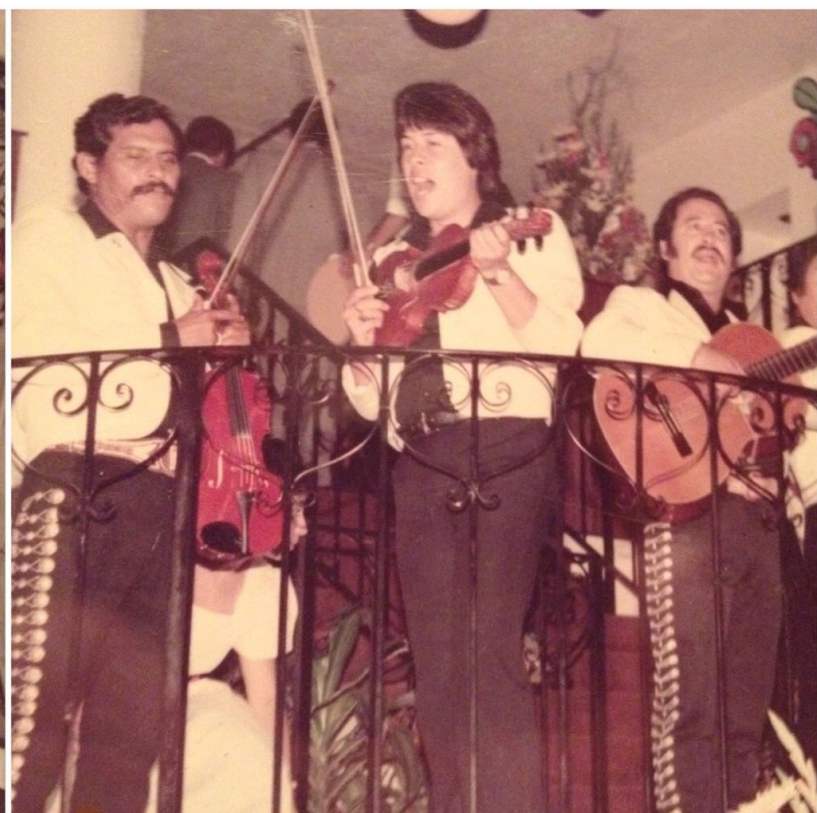


*Figure 10: Don Ramon's business card*



*Figure 12: Javier Ramirez (R) at the front bar*









23

# Don Ramon's

**Don Ramon's Mexican Restaurant**  
IS OPEN FOR TAKE OUT FOOD AND DELIVERIES  
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DELIVERIES: CUPERTINO • FOUNTAIN • DOWNTOWN  
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225



**PACIFICO**  
CLARA  
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6PM-9PM \$12  
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- TACO  
- BURRITO  
- MEXICAN CUISINE  
**ON TAP**

*Don  
Ramon's*

MEXICAN  
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6:00 pm  
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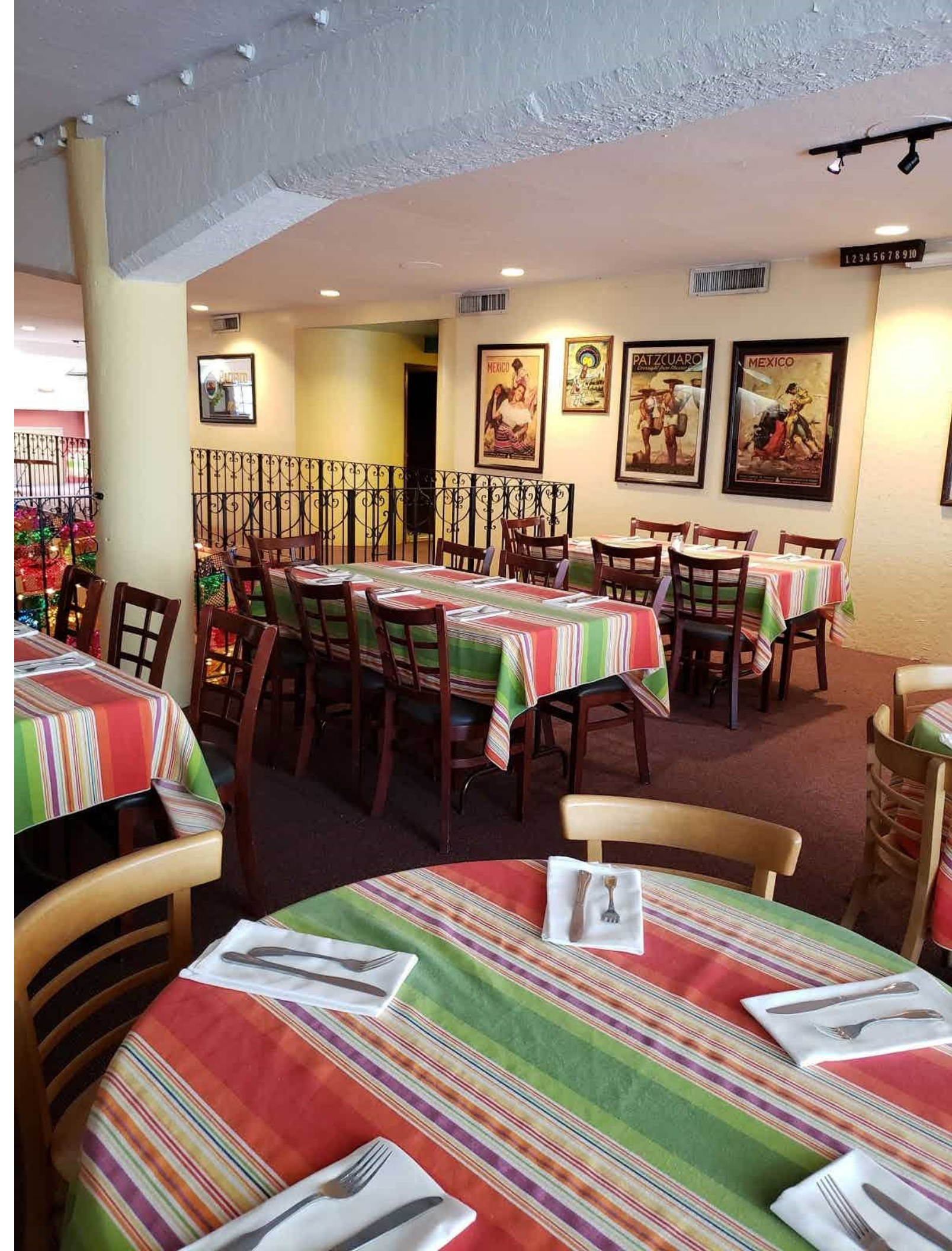






# TACO BOUT LOVE







It is with great pride and pleasure that DON RAMON'S opens its doors to Mayor Feinstein and her assembled guests on this special occasion. We hope that all will enjoy DON RAMON'S contribution to the event — the best of our family's cuisine, and a warm and welcome atmosphere — along with our wish for continuing success.

The Ramirez Family



**CONTACT US**

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# BUSINESS

## Pondering risks, returns of plunking money down on Google

### Prospectus lays out what could go wrong

If there is any lesson investors should have learned from the dot-com debacle, it is this: Before investing in an initial public offering, read — and take to heart — the risk factors.

Many investors, if they read the prospectus at all, tend to dismiss the risk factors, even though they are presented up front, usually in plain English.

Companies load up this section



**Kathleen Pender**  
*Net Worth*

with so many esoteric risks ("an asteroid hitting our main distribution facility could have a material impact on our business") that it's hard to focus on the real ones.

Potential investors in Google should look back at some of the

failed dot-com prospectuses; many read like the chronicle of a death foretold.

The Pets.com prospectus presciently predicted: "We may not be able to attract a large number of potential customers who shop in traditional retail stores to shop in our Web store."

It warned that customers might not want to pay shipping charges on a 20-pound bag of dog food and wait several days for delivery when they could grab it at the neighborhood pet store for the same price, sans shipping.

It pointed out, in all caps: "WE HAVE A HISTORY OF LOSSES AND WE EXPECT SIGNIFICANT

► **PENDER:** Page J4

### Swearing off the quarterly numbers game

Say what you will about Google's decisions to auction off shares to the highest bidder and minimize accountability to future shareholders, the Mountain View company got this much right: It's time for investors to stop obsessing about short-term gain and focus instead on the bigger picture.

Tipping their propeller caps to investment guru Warren Buffett,



**David Lazarus**  
*Lazarus at Large*

Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page said in a letter accompanying their filing for an initial public offering last week that "outside pressures too often tempt companies to sacrifice long-term opportunities to meet

quarterly market expectations." Google will not operate that way, they said.

"If opportunities arise that might cause us to sacrifice short-term results but are in the best long-term interest of our shareholders, we will take those opportunities," Brin and Page wrote. "We will have the fortitude to do this. We would request that our shareholders take the long-term view."

Yes.

This is a sentiment and a business philosophy that for too long has been absent from corporate America. Whether Google has the wherewithal to stick to its guns,

► **LAZARUS:** Page J2



Photos by KATY RADDATZ / The Chronicle

**Henry Chung**, (center), who opened his first Hunan Restaurant in San Francisco in 1974, sits surrounded by his 19 employees, most of them family members. On his lap is a portrait of his late wife, Diana.

## Many co-workers, same gene pool

### The family business is alive and kicking, as two venerable S.F. restaurants show

By Pia Sarkar  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

When Henry Chung and Ramon Ramirez each opened restaurants in San Francisco, they found their employees right under their noses. Sons turned into busboys, daughters into waitresses and wives into business partners.

Chung's business, Hunan Restaurant, gave him the means to bring over his relatives from China and provided at least 40 of them with a livelihood. Ramirez's business, Don Ramon's, allowed him to send his daughters to college and guarantee them jobs when they graduated.

Now, decades after they first opened shop,

they each grapple with the legacy and the unique issues of a family business.

Chung, 87, retired from his restaurant years ago, but his personality still outshines the rest of the family, who now run the business. For his part, Ramirez, 81, must contemplate his own mortality when considering his future at Don Ramon's.

Every small business struggles with problems such as raising capital, finding good workers and wading through regulations. But family businesses have an additional layer of complications in which love, loyalty and devotion often struggle against guilt, jealousy and thwarted ambitions.

Yet despite all the warnings against mixing family with business, the Chungs, Ramirezes and family with business, the Chungs, Ramirezes and

► **DYNASTY:** Page J3

**Nathalee Martinez** (from left), stands in front of Don Ramon's in SoMa, as her mother, Nati Ramirez, and aunts Lucy and Leonila Ramirez, show off some of their famous margaritas.



**THE CHRONICLE 200**

Look for a special 24-page report on the Bay Area's largest publicly held companies in Monday's Chronicle

## Growing market in the East gives much-needed boost to Boeing

### Japanese airline sees midsize 7E7 plane as good fit for far-flung cities in China

By David Armstrong  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

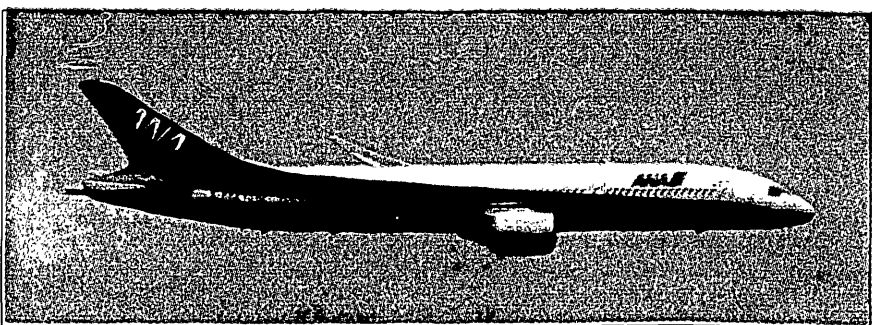
The Boeing Co., battered by its European rival Airbus and dogged by scandal, got a badly needed lift last week by hopping the jet stream to Asia.

Its \$6 billion deal with All Nippon Airways for 50 of the new 7E7 Dreamliners, announced Monday, puts Boeing back in the jetlin-

er game, as it ties the iconic American company's commercial jet division to the high-flying economies of East Asia.

Japanese carrier ANA will fly the first batch of 7E7s. Japanese manufacturers will make a third of the aircraft. And fast-growing inland cities in China will be among the first markets served by 7E7s, which Boeing touts as ex-

► **AIRCRAFT:** Page J5



A model of Boeing's new 7E7 Dreamliner passenger jet sports the All Nippon Airways paint scheme.



FREDERIC LARSON / The Chronicle

**Ramon and Guadalupe Ramirez**, owners for 40 years of Don Ramon's in San Francisco's SoMa, have passed down the business to their three daughters, but still do all the cooking at the restaurant.

## 2 venerable family businesses in S.F. alive and working

► **DYNASTY**  
From Page J1

thousands of other family businesses press on, embracing the notion that blood is thicker than water.

"We totally believe that we're together for a reason, so we all work together for the best," said Leonila Ramirez, Ramon's 55-year-old daughter, who manages the finances for Don Ramon's on 11th Street in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood.

That sense of unity explains why 80 percent of all businesses are started by families, including firms like Bechtel, Ford Motor Co., Wal-Mart and Anheuser-Busch. The past five years have produced more than 3 million new family businesses in the United States alone. And family-owned businesses account for 60 percent of total U.S. employment, 78 percent of all new jobs and 65 percent of all wages, according to research compiled by the University of San Francisco Family Business Center.

"Family tends to be very committed to business, so they really stick it out a lot longer than someone who's just in it for the money," said Eugene Muscat, senior associate dean at the University of San Francisco's School of Business and Management.

Families who work together see each other up close, warts and all. But they also share a tight bond because they are working toward a common goal — a means to their own survival.

"You see that dedication, and you can count on them," Muscat said. "You're not going to have that same relationship with a nonfamily member."

But family being what it is means that conflicts inevitably arise, and the chances of a business surviving through multiple generations diminish each time it passes through more hands.

"Every successive generation involves more people," Muscat said. "Unless you plan for growth, there's not enough money to go around."

About 87 percent of all family-owned businesses make it through the first generation, but that number plunges to 10 percent by the second generation. Only a bleak 0.3 percent lasts through the third generation.

"The first generation is in denial that they're getting older and will have to give up the business they love," Muscat said. "They can't believe that anyone will do it better — even their son or daughter — so they don't plan for turnover."

### Chungs move to Houston

Henry Chung and his wife, Diana, moved from China to Houston in 1948 on Christmas Eve, where Henry began working for the Chinese consulate. He resigned in 1953 — soon after the Communists took power in his homeland — and opened a burger shop because, as Henry puts it, "it was easy."

Eventually, his wife ached for a place where people spoke her lan-

guage, so the couple moved to San Francisco in 1961. Henry tried his hand in different ventures, opening a party supply store on Haight Street and a coffee shop on Kearny Street, but none took off.

Finally, at Diana's urging, he shifted gears and started a restaurant, importing recipes for hot and spicy cuisine from the Hunan province of China, a bold departure from the Cantonese dishes that had become standard fare in San Francisco.

Henry and his son, Marty, arrived at 853 Kearny St. and spent a week cleaning the storefront that would become their first Hunan Restaurant, opening in 1974.

They wiped grease off walls that reeked of fish, sometimes scraping them with a razor. They started small, with six tables and a counter. Diana took charge of the cooking.

The family opened a second restaurant in 1978 on Sansome Street, and closed the one on Kearny Street in 1989 after the Loma Prieta earthquake. Three more restaurants subsequently opened — one on Sacramento Street, run by Henry's daughter, Linda; one on Natoma Street, run by Henry's grandson, Frank; and another on Bryant Street, run by Henry's grandson, Jeff.

Marty, who has worked the longest alongside his father, became manager of the Sansome restaurant at 22.

"This has been my only job since I got out of school," he said.

Henry retired from the business in 1983; his wife passed away last April. He still stops by the restaurants on occasion, but not nearly as frequently as he used to.

"He thought I could handle the business, so he showed up less," Marty said.

"I don't worry about it," Henry said. "Marty, he's very honest, a hard worker. He keeps things in order."

### Ramirez set up shop

Ramon Ramirez and his wife, Guadalupe, immigrated to San Francisco from Jalisco, Mexico, in 1955, after Ramon had snuck into the United States illegally, fell in love with California, then fetched his family from Mexico and brought them back legally. Guadalupe worked at a Laundromat; Ramon as a meat packer for Swift; their son, Javier, at a deli.

They later acquired jobs at the Valencia Cafe, owned by Guadalupe's sister, who eventually sold the business to the Ramirezes. In 1967, the family purchased a deli on 11th Street and named it Jay's La Perla, in honor of Javier.

The deli sold Mexican food cooked and brought over from the Valencia Cafe. But the deli filled up fast, so the Ramirezes decided to expand it into a restaurant and close the Valencia Cafe. Don Ramon's opened its doors on Sept. 21, 1982, and the old deli became its kitchen.

Nati, 48, and the youngest of the three daughters, now manages the kitchen staff for the restaurant. The middle child, Lucy, 51, supervises



CHRIS HARDY / The Chronicle

**Marty Chung** runs the Hunan Restaurant chain, which his father started, with his sister and nephews.

the waiter staff and tends bar. Javier, who used to do the bookkeeping with Leonila, died of cancer in 1994 when he was 51. A yellow ribbon from his funeral wreath still hangs behind the restaurant's bar.

Although Guadalupe, 79, and her husband are well past their prime, they continue to do all the cooking for the restaurant.

"I can stay here all day — it doesn't bother me," Ramon said. "I work seven days a week. I like to stay at the restaurant more than the house."

### Family frustrations

Marty Chung openly talks about the frustrations of running a family operation. "You hire them, but you never fire them," he said of his relatives. "They can crawl to work but still get paid. . . . It's good and it's bad — it's good that you can trust them, but it's bad that they try to get the best of you."

Muscat, the senior associate dean at USF, calls this enmeshment, when family and business become too intertwined.

"You've got to separate the two," said Muscat, who worked for his family's grocery store before he left the business to pursue an academic career. "When you go to work, you're not the daughter."

But family members instinctively set different expectations for each other than for nonfamily employees. This can create an air of favoritism, but it can also result in relatives

working longer hours for less pay.

"You very often get worse working conditions and worse treatment because your parents don't think you'll quit," Muscat said.

Family members often don't quit because they feel obligated to stay — or guilty if they leave. Linda Chung said she moved back to San Francisco from Hawaii because she knew her father needed help.

She does not pretend that running a restaurant has ever been her life's ambition. She repeatedly declares: "I'm not a business person."

Others in her family have chosen a different path. Her sister, Sophia, became a mechanical engineer; her brother, Howard, is a lawyer; her other brother, Stephen, is a dentist. At the same time, Linda still feels a tug toward the family business.

"I figured that I should be involved, too," said Linda, a single mother of two. "I didn't want my parents to support me, so this was the next best thing."

Nati Ramirez got started at her father's business when she was 6 years old, filling up salt shakers and napkin dispensers alongside her siblings.

"We had to go to work and then go to school," she said. "It was hard. There were a lot of things I wasn't able to do as a child, because you were always there for your parents, as we still are today."

In high school, her father gave all three sisters the option to walk away

from the family business.

"My father told me, 'Are you going to make burritos all your life, or are you going to get an education?'" Nati said.

So she chose both. She went to college, and filled in shifts at the restaurant whenever she could. Today, she is the director of the San Francisco district attorney office's subpoena unit, but she still works the lunch crowd at Don Ramon's and pitches in during the evenings.

"I don't think it's in any of us to say, 'OK, I've done my part, I'm outta here,'" she said.

### Time for lunch

It is lunch hour at Hunan Restaurant on Sansome and Marty is cashing out customers from a small office in the front with cut-out windows. The restaurant's main light pours through windows in the entryway; the rest of the place is dim. Orange paper lanterns dangle from the ceiling.

The office where Marty spends his days is cluttered with filing cabinets, papers and a perpetually ringing phone requesting deliveries.

A cluster of keys hangs from Marty's belt loop. He swipes credit cards through a machine that prints receipts in a loud staccato. Marty stuffs brown paper bags inside pink plastic bags with napkins and chopsticks. He pushes buttons on the cash register while cradling the phone to his ear. His wife, Betty, works by his side.

The restaurant's kitchen is on display so that diners can watch their food being prepared. The five cooks — all women — stand side by side, stirring large pots with steam rising from them. They scoop meals onto plates and leave them on a narrow counter for waiters to pick up.

Lunchtime is the restaurant's busiest crowd. Diners tend to bring fewer people, especially since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and a falloff in tourism.

"This area is really changing," Marty said. "But we plan to stay here."

For the Chungs, there is no reason to leave. People know them by

their first names. And Marty and Betty can easily recite tiny details about their customers' lives that make them feel welcome.

Marty wants his own children — Matthew, 14, and Melissa, 13 — to work with him someday.

"That's one reason I stay in the business," Marty said.

As to whether his relationship with his children would change if they became his employees, Marty answers, "Yeah, I would like them better."

### Still working hard

Ramon and Guadalupe drive to their SoMa restaurant each morning between 4:30 and 5, from their home in the Excelsior neighborhood. The sky is still dark when they unlock the restaurant through the back door. On one recent morning, Guadalupe stoops over a stainless steel sink and rinses dishes, while Ramon fills a large, scuffed metal square pot with refried beans made with pure lard, which takes him two to three hours to prepare before they can be served to the lunch crowd.

Age has shrunk both Ramon and Guadalupe. Their backs hunch slightly. Guadalupe's hair is pure white and combed neatly; her husband's hair and mustache are streaked with gray, his face speckled with tiny liver spots.

His shoulders slump forward as he lugs a heavy pot of chile relleno sauce with both hands from one end of the kitchen to another. He shuffles slowly but always seems to have something to do.

Guadalupe is in charge of making fresh salsa for the baskets of tortilla chips placed on every table. But because her hands are weak from arthritis, Guadalupe must wait for the restaurant's early shift of employees to roll in so they can pry open the large cans of tomatoes for her.

In the meantime, she makes a strawberry smoothie for her granddaughter, Nathalee Martinez, Nati Ramirez's 11-year-old daughter, who, as Nati puts it, is "the only heir to this."

Nathalee stops by the restaurant every morning around 7 a.m., before her mom drops her off at the St. Bridgid School. Guadalupe betrays tenderness in her otherwise expressionless face when she sees Nathalee.

The two of them sit together at the restaurant's exclusive front booth, reserved for gossip sessions, entertaining friends, and hashing out important decisions about the business. Nati jokingly refers to it as "the Soprano table."

"My grandma always says this is going to be mine," Nathalee said. But Nathalee has plans for a different future.

"I want to be a choreographer," she said. "Also, I want to be a veterinarian because I like animals."

As for Nati, "I don't know what I'd do without the restaurant," she said. "I'll probably be here old and gray, just like my mom and dad."

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### Facts on family businesses:

- Family-run businesses account for half — or \$3.3 trillion — of the nation's gross domestic product.
- In 2002, approximately 60 percent of the 7,194 publicly traded companies in the United States were family-controlled.
- Nearly 35 percent of all Fortune 500 companies — or 165 companies — are family-owned.
- More than 25 percent of family firms expect their next CEO to be a woman.
- The most common form of a new family business in California is a so-called copreneurship, where spouses go into business together.

Research compiled by the University of San Francisco Family Business Center

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/san-francisco-restaurant-owners-offer-employees-sanctuary-workplace/>



## **San Francisco restaurant owners offer employees sanctuary workplace**

**JOSHUA SABATINI**

Mar. 10, 2017

San Francisco restaurants are joining a national movement to establish sanctuary workplaces for undocumented employees and ensuring business owners know their rights if federal immigration officials raid their establishments.

In less than three months in the White House, President Donald Trump has increased fears of mass sweeps by federal immigration officials and penned an executive order to slash federal funding for cities like San Francisco that provide sanctuary laws to not cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

City Hall has vowed to counter Trump's policies at every turn. This week, City Attorney Dennis Herrera took further legal action, filing in federal court a request to freeze Trump's executive order, and Public Defender Jeff Adachi began hiring attorneys to staff a new unit to defend people who have been detained in immigration court.

Now, the hospitality industry is stepping up, too.

The Golden Gate Restaurant Association, which represents about 1,000 of approximately 4,500 restaurants in San Francisco, became last month among the first trade associations to join the "Sanctuary Restaurants" movement. Since it was announced in January by Restaurant Opportunities Center, some 21 local restaurants — including Lebeau Deli on Nob Hill and Delfina in the Mission — have followed suit, according to ROC's website.

For a restaurant community with a strong reliance upon undocumented workers — more than 30 percent of San Francisco's restaurant workers are believed to be undocumented — the disruption caused by immigration enforcement raids could be disastrous, not to mention the potential impact on local tax revenue.

Today, a formal announcement of local participation in the movement is expected at Don Ramon's Mexican restaurant in the South of Market. The GGRA will also begin sponsoring a series of legal workshops for restaurant owners and employees to learn more about their legal rights from local immigration attorneys. The first workshop is scheduled on March 20 at Don Ramon's.



Nati Ramirez, right, with her sisters Lee, middle, and Lucy stand inside Don Ramon's Mexican restaurant, a locally owned and operated business since 1982. (Jessica Christian/S.F. Examiner)

Don Ramon's was more than happy to become a sanctuary restaurant and host the first of the legal workshops.

"Being born from immigrant parents, you kind of become a fighter," said Nati Ramirez, who is of three sisters who run the family-owned business, which opened in 1982.

"A lot of the employees are scared," she added.

Ramirez's parents crossed the border illegally in 1955 from Jalisco, Mexico. "I was the only one who was born here," she said.

After operating other restaurants in San Francisco, they opened in 1982 Don Ramon's which has something of a political center with notable local politicians as their patrons over the years as well as a choice spot for many campaign kick-offs.

By joining the sanctuary movement, restaurants commit to "not allow any harassment of any individual based on immigrant/refugee status, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation to occur in their restaurant" and "place a prominent 'SANCTUARY RESTAURANTS: A Place At the Table for Everyone' sign in the establishment, according to the ROC website. There is also commitment to "participate in a peer network to exchange ideas and strategies for protecting targeted workers."

Gwyneth Borden, executive director of the GGRA, said restaurant owners are looking for ways to help their employees during what's "been a very scary time."

"We already have a very tight labor market. We can't afford to lose our workers," Borden told the San Francisco Examiner on Thursday. "We also can't afford to have people showing up for work fearful of being able to stay in this country. We, in general, support a path to citizenship and wish that this administration would focus on [the] path to citizenship."

By signing onto the Sanctuary Restaurant movement, Borden hopes to encourage more restaurants to join the effort and put up the signs.

"More and more restaurants locally are starting to sign on to it. What I found is that there is concern about being a target. This president, he targets people," Borden said. "What we are hoping for is, through our counsel and support of the initiative, that we provide the political cover for people to feel comfortable to sign on to it."

Assemblymember David Chiu said he will attend the press event today to show his support.

"We commend the Golden Gate Restaurant Association as a private sector partner for stepping up and leading the resistance against anti-immigration policies that Trump has been spewing," said Jen Kwart, Chiu's spokesperson. Kwart noted that the trade association deserves praise for protecting the immigrant community who has made "the culinary industry what it is today."

Chiu is also exploring a possible state law to address workplace protections for undocumented employees. He has already introduced the Immigrant Tenant Protection Act, a measure that would bar landlords from disclosing or threatening to disclose a tenant's immigration status.

"We're actively researching policies around workplace and immigration issues," Kwart said.

Ramirez said she believes it's important for business owners to know their rights.

"Anybody can come into the front door, but you have to educate yourself as an owner and say is there a warrant, who are you looking for?" Ramirez said. "They can't just decide to barge into your open area in your kitchen because then someone is trespassing. They need to know when to say stop, wait a minute."