



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Legacy Business Registry Case Report

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2017

*Filing Date:* January 17, 2017  
*Case No.:* 2017-000806LBR  
*Business Name:* SB40/Carmen's Restaurant  
*Business Address:* Pier 40 The Embarcadero  
*Zoning:* M-2 (Heavy Industrial)/  
40-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 9900/040  
*Applicant:* Rejilyn Barles, Assistant Manager  
SB40/Carmen's Restaurant  
Pier 40 The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
*Nominated By:* Jane Kim, District 6  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

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### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

SB40/Carmen's Restaurant was founded in 1957 by 17-year-old Carmen Ferrer Solis, who migrated to San Francisco from the Philippines in 1954 and worked for several years in the food service industry before securing a loan to open "Carmen's Restaurant," as it was originally called. The business was originally located on Drumm Street between Clay and Washington Streets in the Financial District near the waterfront and catered largely to waterfront laborers, serving "hot cakes for breakfast and sandwiches for lunch," as noted in the attached application. Its regular offerings of traditional Filipino dishes also made it popular among the city's Filipino population and it eventually became an institution within that community.

Following its third successful year in business, Carmen's relocated to Pier 24 in order to expand business operations. It remained at this second location for 24 years until it relocated to 998 4<sup>th</sup> Street near Mission Creek in 1984 due to safety concerns at Pier 24. In 2002, after 18 years at the 4<sup>th</sup> Street location, Carmen's was once again forced to move as a result of two construction projects planned for the area: the Department of Public Works' 4<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Project and the adjacent Mission Bay development. It was at this time that Carmen's moved to its present location at Pier 40, The Embarcadero. Its new South Beach location inspired the owners to change the name of the business to "SB40/Carmen's." Together, Carmen and her husband, Benito, nurtured one of San Francisco's longest running and most well-known Filipino and Filipino-American-owned businesses. When Carmen passed away in 2012, Benito assumed full ownership of the business and continued to operate it with the help of Carmen and Benito's niece, Rejilyn and her husband, Hardy.

Over the course of its 60-year history, Carmen's Restaurant developed a reputation for supporting those in need. It provided free meals to striking workers during a 1962 longshoremen's strike and has long provided free meals to the homeless. The business also hosts civic and community groups who use the space for meetings, as well as fundraisers and events for various public health and social causes. It is popular among celebrities, politicians, and community advocates. While the set of a scene in *The Streets of San Francisco*, Carmen's became popular with the film's cast members such as Michael Douglas and Karl Malden. At another time, the restaurant hosted the former President of the Philippines, Gloria Arroyo and First Gentleman, Mike Arroyo. Carmen's is also a venue of choice for the South Beach Democratic Club and remains a gathering spot for Filipino community leaders.

The restaurant's menu has evolved with time and in response to its changing clientele. Its current location at Pier 40, a block away from AT&T Ballpark, attracts sports fans, members of the nearby Pier 40 Yacht Club, and South of Market tech workers. SB40/Carmen's has expanded its menu to include popular sports bar fare and seafood dishes while continuing to serve traditional Filipino fare such as pork & chicken adobo, pancit, dinuguan, kare-kare, sinigang, sisig, silogs, Filipino barbecue, Filipino desserts like halo-halo, turon, leche flan, and Filipino brands of beer including San Miguel and Red Horse.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### *Review Criteria*

1. *When was business founded?*

1957

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

Yes, SB40/Carmen's Restaurant qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. SB40/Carmen's has been in operation for 60 years.
- ii. SB40/Carmen's has contributed to the history of San Francisco's Filipino and Filipino-American community and to the identity of the city's waterfront area. The business is one of the city's longest-running and well-known Filipino/Filipino-American-owned businesses. Historically popular within the city's Filipino/Filipino-American and waterfront labor communities, the restaurant now attracts a diverse clientele and continues the traditions of its founder, Carmen Solis, in the preparation of traditional Filipino and American culinary dishes. The business also continues to demonstrate a history of supporting civic, charity, and labor organizing efforts in its neighborhood.
- iii. SB40/Carmen's is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its practice of making and serving traditional Filipino and American dishes.

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

The business is associated with Filipino and American cuisine.

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

Yes. The business is associated with one of the city's oldest and longest-running Filipino/Filipino-American businesses, as well as the 1962 longshoreman's strike. At the time of the 1962 longshoremen's strike, Carmen's Restaurant was located at Pier 24. During the strike, Benito and Carmen Solis became friends with Leroy King Jr., a member of the Local 6 chapter of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), a long-serving member of the San Francisco Redevelopment Commission, and a recognized local labor and civil rights leader. King became a lifelong patron of the restaurant.

In addition, the property that houses Carmen's Restaurant is considered a "Category A" historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is located within the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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

Yes, the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributor to the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.

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

No.

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

Yes. SB40/Carmen's has been profiled in a number of publications including, but not limited to:

*Sea Letter*, Summer 2001, "Historic Waterfront Joint," San Francisco Maritime National Park Association; *Filipinas Magazine*, 10/2002, "Carmen's; The San Francisco Treat," by Samantha Anne La'O; *Kababayan Edition*, 11/2002; *Chowhound*, 12/23/2002, "Carmen's Filipino Food near Pac Bell (SBC) Park," by Stanley Stephan; *Asian Week* (Vol. 24, Issue 21, pg. 14), 1/22/2003, "Filipino Americans Collaborate to build Community Centers," by Chow May; *Radiant View*, 4/2007, "Pinoy Dining Guide: Filipino Restaurants in the San Francisco Greater Bay Area"; *Eater San Francisco*, 3/3/2011, "Carmen's Becomes SB40, Serving BBQ, Oysters, Lots of Beer," by Carolyn Alburger; *SF Gate*, 11/5/2012, "The future of bayside haunt Carmen's (SB40) in doubt," by Paolo Lucchesi; *Chowhound*, 6/12/2013, "San Francisco's Legacy Bars and Restaurants," by hyperbowler; *San Francisco Heritage*, 9/2014, "Sustaining San Francisco's Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets"; MC Canlas, 10/4/2015, "Tabi Po, Respect for Those Who Came Before: Filipinos in South of Market, San Francisco."

The business was also featured or recognized in the following ways:

- SB40/Carmen's Restaurant was featured in the "Ex-Pats Kitchen" segment of *Filipinas Magazine Show*, May 13, 2009, accessible via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxaI6gkAl10>
- SB40/Carmen's is listed on San Francisco Heritage's list of Legacy Bars & Restaurants

- Carmen and Benito Solis were honored in 2004 at San Francisco's First Annual Filipino-American Empowerment event

### *Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

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

- Pier 40, The Embarcadero (current location)
- Pier 24, The Embarcadero (former location)
- 998 4<sup>th</sup> Street (former location)
- 201 Drumm Street (original location)

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Offering of Filipino-American fusion cuisine, casual American diner fare, seafood, and traditional Filipino dishes such as adobo, lumpia, and Filipino egg rolls
- Waterfront location and maritime association

#### **Additional Recommended by Staff**

- Tradition of supporting the community, such as laborers, the homeless, civic groups, and nonprofit charity organizations

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Applicant has been nominated as a "Legacy Business" by a member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor.

## **OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Per Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the subject nomination requires review and approval by the Small Business Commission at a public hearing in order to be added to the Legacy Business Registry.

## **PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**

The Department has not received any letters of support for the project.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS**

Nomination to the Legacy Business Registry does not constitute a "project" requiring environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The nomination act would not result in any physical alteration to the subject property and could not have an effect on the environment.



## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission find that SB40/Carmen's Restaurant qualify for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the above listed physical features and traditions as amended by Staff.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Resolution  
Legacy Business Application

DS: XXXX



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE FEBRUARY 15, 2017

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

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Pier 40 The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
*Nominated By:* Jane Kim, District 6  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR SB40/CARMEN'S RESTAURANT, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT PIER 40, THE EMBARCADERO (BLOCK/LOT 9900/040).**

**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 San Francisco's Filipino American history and the identity of San Francisco's waterfront area; and

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

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on February 15, 2017, 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 SB40/Carmen's Restaurant 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 SB40/Carmen's Restaurant:

***Location (if applicable)***

- *Pier 40, The Embarcadero*

***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business***

- *Offering of Filipino-American fusion cuisine, casual American diner fare, seafood, and traditional Filipino dishes such as adobo, lumpia, and Filipino egg rolls*
- *Waterfront location and maritime association*
- *Tradition of supporting the community, such as laborers, the homeless, civic groups, and nonprofit charity organizations*

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 2017-000806LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on February 15, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:



## Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-050  
*Business Name:* SB40/Carmen's Restaurant  
*Business Address:* Pier 40 The Embarcadero  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Rejilyn Barles, Assistant Manager  
*Nomination Date:* December 15, 2016  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Jane Kim

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

201 Drumm Street from 1957 to 1960 (3 years)  
Pier 24, The Embarcadero from 1960 to 1984 (24 years)  
998 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 1984 to 2002 (18 years)  
Pier 40, The Embarcadero from 2002 to Present (15 years)

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

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

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** January 17, 2017

Richard Kurylo  
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 6



City and County of San Francisco

**JANE KIM**

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December 15, 2016

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

Re: Carmen's/SB40 Restaurant

Dear Regina:

I would like to formally nominate Carmen's/SB40 Restaurant as a candidate for the registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco.

The story of the first Filipino restaurant along San Francisco's famous waterfront, Carmen's, as a nearly 60-year-old restaurant, truly begins with its founder, Carmen F. Solis. Carmen migrated to San Francisco from the Philippines in 1954 when she started working as a cashier, server, and cook at Clara's, an American-food eatery. It was at Clara's that Carmen discovered her passion for serving people delicious homemade dishes. With borrowed money, she bought Clara's and was so successful, she paid back the loan in a little over a year. By the age of 17, Carmen had established herself as a beloved restaurateur in the bustling downtown San Francisco area.

In 1957, Carmen's Restaurant opened for business on Drumm Street between Clay and Washington. After three years Carmen's moved to its next location, under the Bay Bridge, at Pier 24, where it remained for 24 years. Over the years, Carmen's had become a popular destination, a cultural icon, and a San Francisco institution for Filipinos and other San Franciscans alike. In 2004, Carmen and Benito Solis were honored at San Francisco's First Annual Filipino-American Empowerment event for their many contributions to the local community and for their civic leadership.

Carmen passed away in 2012, but this establishment remained family owned and operated by her husband, Benito and their niece, Reji, and her husband, Hardy. With the restaurant now situated a block away from AT&T Park and with a new name, SB40, Carmen's is serving new generations of Giants fans and Bay Area residents who enjoy delicious Filipino and American-Filipino fusion food.

Carmen's/SB40 has been referenced in several publications throughout its long history. Carmen's was a featured location in the summer 2001 San Francisco Maritime National Park Association's seasonal publication *Sea Letter*, as a "Historic Waterfront Joint." It was also mentioned in the October 2002 edition of *Filipinas Magazine*, a Filipino-American publication as a featured restaurant. Carmen's was also featured in the November 2002 edition of *Kababayan Edition* as an "ethno-tourism" destination in San Francisco.

Throughout the years, Carmen's/SB40 has been a fixture in the neighborhoods that it was located in. In 1962, during the longshoremen's strike, Carmen's supported the striking workers by providing them with free meals almost every day. It is common practice that Carmen's/SB40 feeds homeless people who come to the restaurant seeking assistance. Carmen's also hosts fundraisers and events for various causes such as cancer research, YMCA, and BAADS.

If Carmen's/SB40 were to close, the neighborhood would be losing a long time fixture that has consistently served the people of San Francisco a unique take on Filipino food. Carmen's is a vital part of the business community in South Beach and the SoMa. I am proud to nominate Carmen's/SB40 as a candidate for the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jane Kim', written in a stylized, cursive-like font.

Jane Kim

## Section One:

### Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

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

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
SB40/Carmen's Restaurant		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Benito Segovia Solis		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
Pier 40 The Embarcadero San Francisco, CA 94107		(415) 222-6169
		EMAIL:
		hardy.sb40@gmail.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
none		

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Rejilyn Barles	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Asst. Manager	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
424 Piche Street, San Francisco, CA 94134	(415) 812-8535
	EMAIL:
	hardy.sb40@gmail.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):
0004965	94-325-1094

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

## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

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

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
201 Drumm Street	94111	1957
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1957-1960	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
Pier 24, The Embarcadero	94105	Start: 1960 End: 1984

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
998 4th Street	94158	Start: 1984 End: 2002

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
Pier 40, The Embarcadero	94107	Start: 2002 End: 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:



## 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.

REJILYN BARLES

Name (Print):

11/23/16

Date:

  
Signature:

## **Legacy Business Registry Application: SB40/Carmen's**

### **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.**

Carmen's is the first Filipino restaurant along San Francisco's famous waterfront, but the story of the nearly 60-year-old restaurant begins with its founder, Carmen F. Solis, a native of Calasiao, Pangasinan, Philippines.

Carmen migrated to the city of San Francisco in 1954 and started working as a cashier, server, and cook at Clara's, an American-food eatery. It was at Clara's that Carmen discovered her passion for serving people delicious homemade dishes. With borrowed money, she bought Clara's and was so successful, she paid back the loan in a little over a year. By the age of 17, Carmen had established herself as a beloved restaurateur in the bustling downtown San Francisco area.

In 1957, Carmen's Restaurant opened for business on Drumm Street between Clay and Washington; she served hot cakes for breakfast and sandwiches for lunch. In order to expand, after three years Carmen's moved to its next location, under the Bay Bridge at Pier 24 where it remained for 24 years. Over the years, Carmen's had become a popular destination, a cultural icon, and a San Francisco institution among Filipinos and fellow San Franciscans.

In 1984, the Port Authority relocated Carmen's to an old waterfront space at 4th Street on Mission Creek, a block away from the Caltrain Station, the reason being that the foundation at Pier 24 was unsafe. The restaurant remained at this site for 18 years until the Department of Public Works 4<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Project. When construction began, the pier on which Carmen's was located needed to be severed from the land connection in order to create the bridge approach. This, along with the development of Mission Bay, caused Carmen's to once again relocate to a new space along the waterfront at South Beach Pier 40. The business continued and built steadily and by 2004, Carmen and Benito Solis were being honored at San Francisco's First Annual Filipino-American Empowerment event for their many contributions to the local community and for their civic leadership.

As Carmen's health declined in 2008 (she passed away in 2012 after battling cancer), she and Benito sought help from their niece Rejilyn and her husband, Hardy. With the restaurant now situated a block away from AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants, and with a new name,

SB40, Carmen's has moved into its next era as new generations of Giants fans and Bay Area residents discover the place, the family's legacy and its delicious Filipino food for the first time.

Great food, hospitality and customer service; a historical connection to the waterfront; and a bay view have all contributed to Carmen's becoming a popular landmark along the Embarcadero. Beloved by city officials, dignitaries from the Philippines, artists, business people, office workers, and families alike, Carmen's customers will tell you the restaurant is like a second home to them. But the reason they return to Carmen's over and over again is for the food. Carmen's belongs on any register of Legacy Businesses and restaurants that showcase the unique, culturally diverse San Francisco we know and love. And what a great tribute to the restaurant's founder and original namesake, Carmen Solis: A proud and pioneering Filipina-American and San Franciscan.

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

The original owner, Carmen Ferrer Solis owned and operated the restaurant since the original Carmen's restaurant was opened in 1957 on Drumm Street. Throughout the history of the restaurant and the various relocations, Carmen and her husband Benito owned and operated Carmen's, as it was then called. Carmen passed away on May 8, 2012 leaving Benito as the sole owner of the business. It was at this time that Carmen and Benito's niece Rejilyn and her husband Hardy came onboard to help with the management and day-to-day operations of the restaurant. The name also changed to SB40 in 2012 to demarcate the newest location, which is at "South Beach, Pier 40", as the restaurant had moved locations many times before.

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

Not Applicable.

**d. 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.**

SB40 is located at Pier 40 inside a building owned and operated by the Port of San Francisco. The facility in which the restaurant is located within is a former warehouse that also has housed other restaurants and shops. Prior to the construction of the Pier 40 Yacht Club, the warehouse was used as a facility to work on boats and ships for the Navy and longshoremen as well. The building still maintains many of the original features and characteristics, such as the wooden crossbeam ceilings and paint, however has been outfitted to accommodate the increase of tourism in the area.

## CRITERION 2

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

Throughout its history Carmen's has been located in several different areas of the Financial District and South of Market. During its time at these various locations, Carmen's served primarily traditional Filipino cuisine, served table to table by Carmen herself. The restaurant was known by locals as a place to convene and experience a different type of cuisine not as prevalent in the city at the time. Currently, at the Pier 40 location, SB40 draws from a number of different clientele including tourists, people on their way to and returning from AT&T Park to watch the Giants play, members of the Pier 40 Yacht Club, and employees of the various startup companies located in SOMA adjacent to South Beach. The fare has changed slightly to a more American-Filipino fusion with many traditional dishes remaining, however it has changed to meet the demands of the very diverse clientele that frequents the area. Some examples of more traditional Filipino dishes served by SB40 include: Pork & Chicken Adobo, Pancit (Filipino chow mein), Dinuguan (Pork blood stew), Kare-kare (peanut sauce), Sinigang (tamarind-based soup), Sisig, Silogs (Bangsilog, Longsilog, Tosilog), Filipino Barbecue, Filipino desserts such as Halo-halo, Turon (banana lumpia), leche flan, as well as Filipino beers such as San Miguel and Red Horse.

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

The Streets of San Francisco was filmed at Carmen's when it was located under the Bay Bridge. Carmen's was also a favored location for the cast and crew, including actors Michael Douglas and Karl Malden who would visit during shoots. "Manang Carmen," as she was known, was once an extra in the show, playing the role of a dining customer.

The South Beach District 6 Democratic Club also has been holding events at SB40 for the past several years. They currently host social events twice a year, a winter and summer event at SB40. Other events that are held at SB40 are fundraisers for the Lymphoma Society, YMCA, and BAADS, the Bay Area Association for Disabled Sailors.

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

Carmen's/SB40 has been referenced in several publications throughout its long history. Carmen's was a featured location in the summer 2001 San Francisco Maritime National Park Association's seasonal publication *Sea Letter*, as a "Historic Waterfront Joint." It was also mentioned in the October 2002 edition of *Filipinas Magazine*, a Filipino-American publication as a featured restaurant with the tagline "Carmen's, The San Francisco Treat." Carmen's was also featured in the November 2002 edition of *Kababayan Edition*, A Publication of the LBC Foundation as an ethnotourism destination in San Francisco.

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

Carmen's/SB40 has been associated with numerous historical figures in San Francisco from actors to politicians to civil rights leaders. One of the most prominent figures was civil rights and Local 6 leader LeRoy King, who befriended owner Benito during the 1962 longshoremen strike. During the strike, Carmen and Benito would feed the striking longshoremen adobo from their restaurant. LeRoy liked it so much that he became a regular friend and patron of Carmen's/SB40 throughout his life. SB40 has also been visited by actors Michael Douglas and Karl Malden, as well as San Francisco political figures such as Mayor Ed Lee, Governor Jerry Brown, former Mayor Frank Jordan, Mark Leno, Scott Wiener, Jane Kim, Angela Alioto, Daly City politician Mike Guingona, Leland Yee, David Chiu, former Port Commissioner Brian McWilliam, and current Commissioner Willie Adams. Some other extremely prominent people include San Francisco Giants Manager Bruce Bochy and the former President of the Philippines Gloria Arroyo and the First Gentlemen Mike Arroyo.

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

In 1962 during the longshoremen's strike, Carmen's was of tremendous community service when it supported the striking workers by providing them with free meals almost every day. Carmen's/SB40 also feeds homeless people who come to the restaurant seeking assistance which has been a San Francisco issue long before the original Carmen's had opened. Carmen's/SB40 also hosts fundraisers and events for various causes such as lymphoma, YMCA, and BAADS.

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

Throughout the years, Carmen's/SB40 has been a fixture in the neighborhoods in which it was located. During its time in the Financial District and SOMA, Carmen's was a local neighborhood spot that served traditional Filipino fare. In its current location at Pier 40 in South Beach, SB40 sees a myriad of different parts of the community. The area is heavily frequented by tourists seeking a view of the bay and Bay Bridge, as well as workers at the various tech startup firms located in SOMA. Residents in the area seem to rotate in and out of the neighborhood due to the drastic increases in rent over the past few years, however the restaurant remains busy due to its unique location on the San Francisco Bay in South Beach.

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

SB40 is currently located in a historic warehouse at Pier 40 on the Embarcadero. The building was formerly a warehouse where ships were built during the 1950s and 1960s, possibly even before this, it was a service engineering site for US Navy ships. The building also sits on the waterfront and is directly in front of the Pier 40 yacht Club which is a newer addition to the area. However, the building maintains many of its original characteristics such as the wooden

crossbeam ceilings and original paint color scheme in order to keep to the waterfront longshoremen traditions of San Francisco.

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

If SB40 were to close, the neighborhood would be losing a long time fixture that has consistently served the people of San Francisco a unique take on Filipino food, as well as a business that has served its community in a number of different ways. From feeding the homeless that frequent the area, to feeding the striking longshoremen in 1962, Carmen's/SB40 is a vital part of the business community of South Beach and SOMA. Its current location at Pier 40 also allows tourists visiting the area and heading to AT&T Park to see another San Francisco favorite, the Giants, to visit a business that has very deep roots in the City. The restaurant has proven its resiliency however by relocating whenever adversity has struck, however, it is an invaluable asset at Pier 40 and the community would lose a small piece of its history without it.

### **CRITERION 3**

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

SB40 is a Filipino-American fusion restaurant located in the warehouse at Pier 40 on the Embarcadero. The interior of the business maintains many of the looks of the original warehouse design, however outfitted for a restaurant and bar format. The building itself is directly on the Embarcadero and sees a heavy concentration of tourists and locals alike and is definitive of a maritime restaurant. Its character is defined both by its location and its ownership, as a seafood and Filipino restaurant, which serves a diverse array of cuisine from *adobo* to oysters. These are essential features to the business and give it a unique character within the neighborhood as well.

**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)**

Carmen's/SB40 was among the very first restaurants in town to pioneer a menu that fused American tastes with native Filipino cuisine. From *adobo*, a meat dish served with rice and topped with an egg, to *lumpia*, the traditional Filipino egg roll, Carmen's/SB40 serves traditional favorites to the Filipino community and to Filipino food lovers. Of course there are those who prefer the signature steak sandwich, the casual diner fare, and other quick bites on offer at reasonable prices.

**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 business has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining its physical features due to the historic character of the San Francisco waterfront, as well as due to the will of its landlords, the San Francisco Port Authority. All construction and improvement work must be approved by the Port, resulting in the maintenance of the original design of the building and detail down to the paint color scheme. The wooden framed warehouse has remained virtually untouched with the exception of upgrades to the paint and routine maintenance.



Agnes Guest House 1902 Broderick  
 Alamo Sanitarium 701 Scott  
 Boarding Home for Aged 1150 Franklin  
 Cella's Rest Home 435 19th av  
 Claire's Rest Home 520 30th av  
 Cleveland Rest Home 709 Scott  
 Colonial Home 1001 Balboa  
 Cottage Nursing Home 1244 5th av  
 DesRoches Hilltop H 1242 Arguello blvd  
 Don's Nursing Home 1601 9th av  
 Fair Oaks Rest Home 354 Fair Oaks  
 Fleetwood Rest Home The 1226 7th av  
**FLEETWOOD REST HOME TNE, 123 14th av, Tel**

**Bayview 1-1325**

Golden Gate Home for the Aged 1939 19th av  
 Halberg Nursing Home 1542 Page  
 Hall Lois E Mrs 584 30th av  
 Hanson Rest Home 1271 26th av and 1251 32d av  
 Harryman's Rest Home 760 22d av  
 Hebrew Home for Aged Disabled 302 Silver av  
 Helene Manor Rest Home 584 12th av and 2099 Lake  
 Hill Side Nursing Home 1618 11th av  
 Hoarde Margaret 8101 Geary blvd  
 Huff Nursing Home 1326 4th av  
 James Rest Home 778 10th av  
 Jewish Family Rest Home 3374 Sacramento  
 Jurado Boarding Home for the Aged 911 McAllister  
 Kahn Zalinde O Mrs 1719 10th av  
 Knolls Rest Home 1087 S Van Ness av  
 Laguna Honda Home 375 Laguna Honda blvd  
 Lamy's Rest Home 899 Guerrero

La Playa Nursing Home 1284 La Playa  
 Lemmon Rest Home 224 23d av  
 Lohree Convalescent Home 583 20th av  
 Mae's Home For the Aged 449 43d av  
 Miller Rest Home 1465 14th av  
 Pacific Heights Nursing Home 2857 Sacramento and  
 2311 Scott

Presidio Rest Home 507 11th av  
 Protestant Episcopal Old Ladies Home 2770 Lombard  
 Roberts Nursing Home 1891 and 1747 Newcomb av  
 Romero Rest Home 945 Minnesota  
 Russian Womens Home of Mercy 740 Clayton  
 St Joseph's Rest Home 1474 29th av  
 San Francisco Ladies Protection and Relief Society 3400  
 Laguna

Schade's Guest Home 1340 Arguello blvd  
 Stanford Convalescent Home 2412 Clay  
 Sunset Nursing Home 1801 47th av  
 Sunshine Rest Home 718 36th av  
 Sutter Street Nursing Home 2161 Sutter  
 University Mound Old Ladies Home 350 University  
 Unwin Rest Home 380 Parnassus av  
 Walker Nursing Home 779 Arguello blvd  
 Widfeldt Rest Home 755 Buena Vista av W

Auth Mary's Donut Shop 508 Valencia  
 Avenue Coffee Shop 1612 Ocean av  
 Avenue Sweet Shop 2646 San Bruno av  
 B&A Restaurant 1399 Harrison  
 B-G Foods Inc 250 Montgomery 121 and 484 Sutter  
 B&M Snack Bar 381 S Van Ness av  
 B&N Donuts 810 Larkin  
 B V Coffee Shop 111 Battery  
 Bagel Shop The 1308 Grant av  
 Balboa Coffee Bar 222 Balboa bldg  
 Balboa Dug Out 134 Onondaga av  
 Balfour Cigar Store & Coffee Shop 351 California av  
 lobby

Bail's 615 Sansome  
 Banis & Hamberlin Inc 272 McAllister  
 Banky's Coffee Shop 354 Sansome  
 Banquet Burger 700 Larkin  
 Barbecue Corral 811 Ulloa  
**BARDELLI'S, 243 O'Farrell, Tel YUkon 2-0243 (See**  
**Yellow Page 104)**

Barney's Cafe & Pizzeria 543 Divisadero  
 Barr's Sandwich Shop 608 Sutter  
 Basilio C Cafe 3348 Mission  
 Baatan Lunch 836 Kearny  
 Bay Cafe 1015 Fillmore  
 Bay City Restaurant 45 Turk  
 Bayshore Coffee Shop 300 Bay Shore blvd  
 Bayview Bar-B-Q 4720 3d

Bayview Restaurant Pier 28 The Embarcadero S  
 Baywood Lodge 388 7th  
 Bea's Coffee Shop 702 Mission  
 Beach Coffee Shop The 798 Great Hwy  
 Bean Pot The 780 Great Hwy  
 Bee-Jay Coffee Shop 358 Kearny  
 Bee's The 354 11th  
 Bel Flors 1000 Bush  
 Bell's Cafeteria bsmt 768 Market  
 Ben's Java House ft Townsend Pier 40  
 Ben's Quick Lunch 3015 Mission  
 Bennett's Coffee Shop 799 O'Farrell  
**BERNSTEIN'S FISH GROTTO (SEA FOOD)**

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Bert's Coffee Shop 458 Montgomery  
 Bert's Donut Bar 1175 Market  
 Best Coffee Shop 1309 Mission  
 Betty's Coffee Shop 3408 19th  
 Betty's Coffee Shop & Fountain 1431 Noriega  
 Betty's Donut Shop 504 Castro  
 Beverly Plaza Liquor & Coffee Shop 352 Grant av  
 Bi-Rito Restaurant 175 Scottia av  
 Biagio's Pizza 1963 Ocean av  
 Biddy's Cafe 2252 Clement

Burgeroo The 125 Mason  
 Burgerville 5024 Geary blvd  
 Burke's Drive In 2100 Market  
 Bush Street Fountain 453 Bush  
 Bush's Sandwich Shop 240 Kearny  
 C & O Coffee Shop 431 Front  
 C&S Fountain 287 Ellis  
 C&W Restaurant 442 Geary  
 Caesar's 2299 Powell  
 Cafe du Nord 2170 Market  
 Cafe El Salvador 401 Valencia  
 Cafe Fountain 2922 Diamond  
 Cairo Restaurant 77 4th  
 Caltia Restaurant 2785 24th  
 California Coffee Shop 46 California  
 Calile's Place 279 6th  
 Camille's Restaurant 447 Pine  
 Campus Fountain 1425 Ocean av  
 Canopy Fountain Lunch 92 2d  
 Capri Restaurant 479 Broadway  
 Capri Restaurant 1326 Grant av  
 Captain's Galley 2241 Chestnut  
 Captain's Table 690 1st  
 Cardinal Room The 1090 Van Ness av  
 Carl's Coffee Shop 119 Sansome

**Carl's Dutch Lunch 518 1/2 Bryant**  
**Carmen's Restaurant 201 Drumm**  
**Carrie's Coffee Shop 1805 Market**

Carter Frankie 123 Post  
 Caruso Cafe 574 Green  
**CARUSO'S, 136 Taylor, Tel PWSpect 5-9667**  
 Carving Board The 25 Grove  
 Casa Chiquita Cafe 595 Geary  
 Casa Palermo 2155 Polk  
 Cassandra's 348 Columbus av  
**CASTAÑOLA RESTAURANT, 288 Jefferson, Tel**  
**Prospect 6-5015**

Casten's Oxbow 371 Sutter  
 Castle Coffee Shop 115 4th  
 Castro Coffee Shop 484 Castro  
 Castro Grill 441 Castro  
**CATHAY HOUSE, California at Grant av, Tel YU-**  
**kon 2-3368 and 2-0301 (See Yellow Page 100)**

Cathay Kitchen The 1507 Polk  
 Cathy's Kitchen 624 Fillmore  
 Cavalier Restaurant 814 Market  
 Cavanagh's Place 3308 Mission  
 Cervantes Mexican Restaurant 180 Church  
 Char-Burger 39 Stockton  
 Charcoal Room 340 Stockton  
 Charlie's Park-In 2185 and 2419 Lombard  
 Charlie's Tamale Cafe 4133 18th  
 Chase's 709 Larkin  
 Chat & Chew 2884 Mission  
 Chateau Coffee Shop 4652 Geary blvd  
 Check-In Restaurant 801 Valencia



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Public Notice Advertising

SB40/CARMENS  
Attention to: HARDY BARLES  
PIER 40 THE EMBARCADERO  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94107

Customer #: 745915  
Case / P.O. #: 342198

Invoice #: 0186498401  
Invoice Date: 04/09/2012  
Due Date: Due Upon Receipt

PLEASE RETURN THIS SECTION WITH PAYMENT.

Amount Remitted

The Recorder

TEAR HERE

Invoice #: 0186498401 Invoice Date: 04/09/2012 Customer #: 745915 Case / P.O. #: 342198

Contact: Alexandra A. Elvitsky

Order #	Description	Ad Tag Line	Ad Size	Amount
		SB40/Carmens		
0186498401	Fictitious Business Name SF		1/2.19	46.00
	Run Date(s)	04/09/2012		
		04/16/2012		
		04/23/2012		
		04/30/2012		

Subtotal: 46.00

Paid Amount: (46.00)

Total Amount Due: \$0.00

Payment by Credit Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/> Amex
Account #: _____	Exp. Date: ____ / ____ Security Code: _____
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## FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 342198

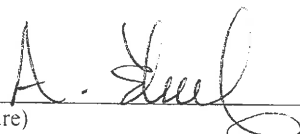
STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTIES OF SAN FRANCISCO  
AND SAN MATEO

*I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid. I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer and publisher of THE RECORDER, a newspaper of general circulation printed and published weekly, in the City and County of San Francisco with circulation in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California under the date December 2, 1907, recorded in Record Book 15, at page 155 thereof, and which newspaper was also adjudged a newspaper of general circulation in San Mateo County on December 5, 2001, that the notice of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to-wit:*

04/09/2012, 04/16/2012, 04/23/2012, 04/30/2012

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on 30th day of April, 2012  
at San Francisco, California

  
(Signature)

<b>FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT</b>	
File No. 342198	
Fictitious Business Name(s):	SB40/ Carmens, at Pier 40 The Embarcadero San Francisco, CA 94107. Principal Place of Business is in SF County. Registrant(s): Carmen Solis and Benito Solis. This busi- ness is conducted by an husband and wife. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above-listed fictitious business name or names on: 3/22/12. I de- clare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime.) Signed: Be- nito Solis. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk of San Francisco on March 22, 2012. <b>NOTICE:</b> Section 17920, a Fic- titious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the County Clerk.
No. 1864984	Apr 9, 16, 23, 30-R

by: The Recorder Newspaper  
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15-013147

Business Account Number 0004965	Period Covered 04/01/2015 - 03/31/2016	Fee Paid \$1,192.00
Class Account H25 - 500199	Description RESTAURANT 1K-2K SQFT	
Business Name SB40/CARMENS	Business Location 40 PIER THE EMBARCADERO	Permit Number 034634

SOLIS BENITO S  
PIER 40 THE EMBARCADERO  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94107

  
David Augustine  
Tax Collector

  
José Cisneros  
Treasurer

See reverse side for additional information  
Please post conspicuously at the business location

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14-005245

Certificate Number 004965	Period Covered 04/01/2014 - 03/31/2015	Fee Paid \$1,192.00
Class Account H25 - 500199	Description RESTAURANT 1K-2K SQFT	
Business Name SB40/CARMENS	Business Location 40 PIER THE EMBARCADERO	Permit Number 034634

SOLIS BENITO S  
BENITO SOLIS  
PIER 40 THE EMBARCADERO  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94107

  
David Augustine  
Tax Collector

  
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Business Account Number 004965	Period Covered 04/01/2016 - 03/31/2017	Fee Paid \$1,192.00
Class Account H25 - 500199	Description RESTAURANT 1K-2K SQFT	
Business Name SB40/CARMENS	Business Location 40 PIER THE EMBARCADERO	Permit Number 034634

SOLIS BENITO S  
PIER 40 THE EMBARCADERO  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94107

  
José Cisneros  
Treasurer

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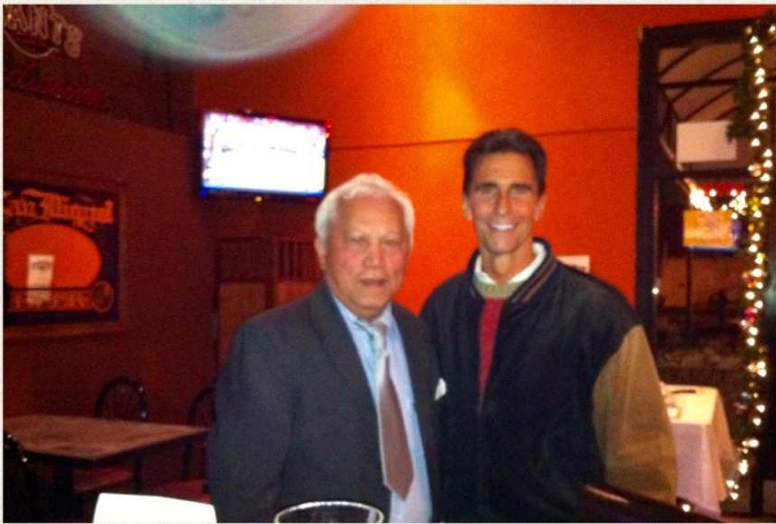




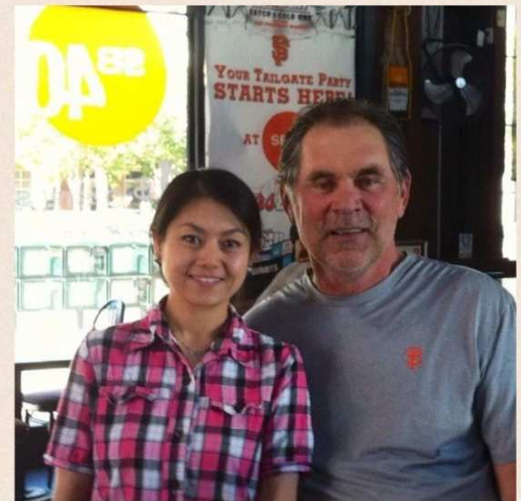














# FOR MAYOR



May '68

CTone



















**LeRoy was born in Fresno, California on September 9, 1923** and was the youngest of six children born to Georgia and Eddie King. LeRoy attended Edison High School and played trumpet and football in school. During the 30s, Edison High School was a segregated school with African American, Japanese, and Latino students.

At age 17, he moved to San Francisco and lived with his sister Hazel. He worked in the mailroom at Commercial Insurance and then attended City College with plans to become a chef.

At 19, he was drafted into the US Army 101st Airborne Division. He left Monterey, California on an integrated train and when he reached Brownsworth, Texas, the cars were emptied and the soldiers were segregated. From then on, black soldiers ate in the kitchen and whites ate at the main dining tables. He received ammunition training in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

LeRoy reached France toward the end of the Battle of the Bulge. He vividly described jumping into fox holes when "Bed-Check Charley would shoot at us. We (Blacks) were not allowed to carry weapons and had no way of shooting back to defend ourselves."

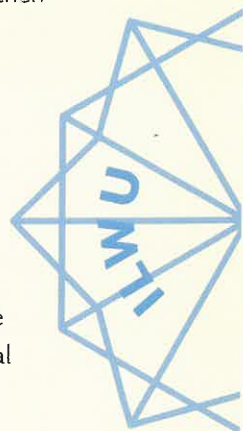
After the service, he found work as a warehouseman, and in 1946 he became a member of the ILWU.

He met his wife Julia (Judy) Huggins in 1950, and had to wait to marry her until 1951 because interracial marriage was not yet legal. During their first year of marriage, they were evicted nine times because they were an interracial couple attempting to rent in San Francisco.

In 1954, LeRoy and Judy joyfully took in Judy's first cousin's child Rebecca as a toddler. They were unable to adopt Rebecca until 1965 because it was doubtful the juvenile court would allow an interracial couple to adopt a white child.

In 1955 they moved to East Palo Alto and LeRoy worked as an ILWU warehouseman at Sharon's Paper Factory.

Their daughter Carolyn was born in 1958, followed by LeRoy Jr. in 1960.



Rebecca King Morrow   Carolyn Samoa and   LeRoy King Jr.

## LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,  
ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies,  
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has  
taught us,  
sing a song full of the hope that the present has  
brought us;  
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
let us march on till victory is won.



ing east on I-80 turn off at Crockett, dip under the bridge, follow the signs to a dirt road, park, then walk across the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and past a funky marina.

The Nantucket is a seafood restaurant which has been here "forever," the locals say. More like 50 years. It's a bit of a surprise: excellent food right on the water.

"When I first came here trying to get a job, I got lost," says Richard Crooks, who used to be the executive chef at the Nantucket but now works farther up the highway. He still comes back for the food — the ultimate compliment for a food professional. "The food here is really excellent," he says, "especially the clam chowder. And they make damn good drinks."

Crooks is not alone in praising the place. A *San Francisco Chronicle* food critic called the cioppino — the house specialty — "outstanding," and the atmosphere, she said, "makes the place tick. Timeless."

The atmosphere is definitely waterfront industrial. Besides the view of the vintage 1927 Carquinez bridge, built along the lines of an Erector set, there is the red brick C&H sugar refinery just east. Across the strait is the California

Maritime Academy's training ship *Golden Bear*. And up the strait come tugs and big oil tankers bound for the oil refineries at Benicia, Avon and points up the bay.

"This is a great place, a working place," says Kenny Hammond, who lives on a boat in the harbor just outside the restaurant windows.

Hammond is one of hundreds of people who live on the water, floating around the back channels of San Francisco Bay and its tributaries. They live on houseboats, cabin cruisers, old tugs and sailing vessels that will never sail again. They are not much interested in life in the fast lane or cyberspace. They live instead by the tides, the cold winds of winter and the rhythms of the bay.

They are the kind of people who come into places like the Nantucket or maybe Smitty's in Sausalito. For those who live on the water, a favorite bar becomes a kind of home port. The best waterfront joints provide a place where the land people and the water people can meet. They are a sort of zone between the tides, like the old Cannery Row in Monterey that John Steinbeck found so fascinating. Most of these places are gone, but not all. The attraction, of course, has never changed.

"When you are sitting out here, and the sun is setting and the breeze is blowing, there's nothing like it," Hammond says.

## CARMEN'S

Time and the real world have nearly caught up with Mission Creek in San Francisco. From about 1882 to the 1920s, it was the home port for hundreds of scow schooners like the *Alma*, now preserved at Hyde Street Pier. Lumber schooners like the *Wapama* also called there. It was, in the words of Captain Fred Klebingat, who worked there, "The busiest part of the waterfront."

In the 1930s, 40s and 50s, banana boats from Central and South America docked on the creek, which was lined with cheap restaurants and bars.

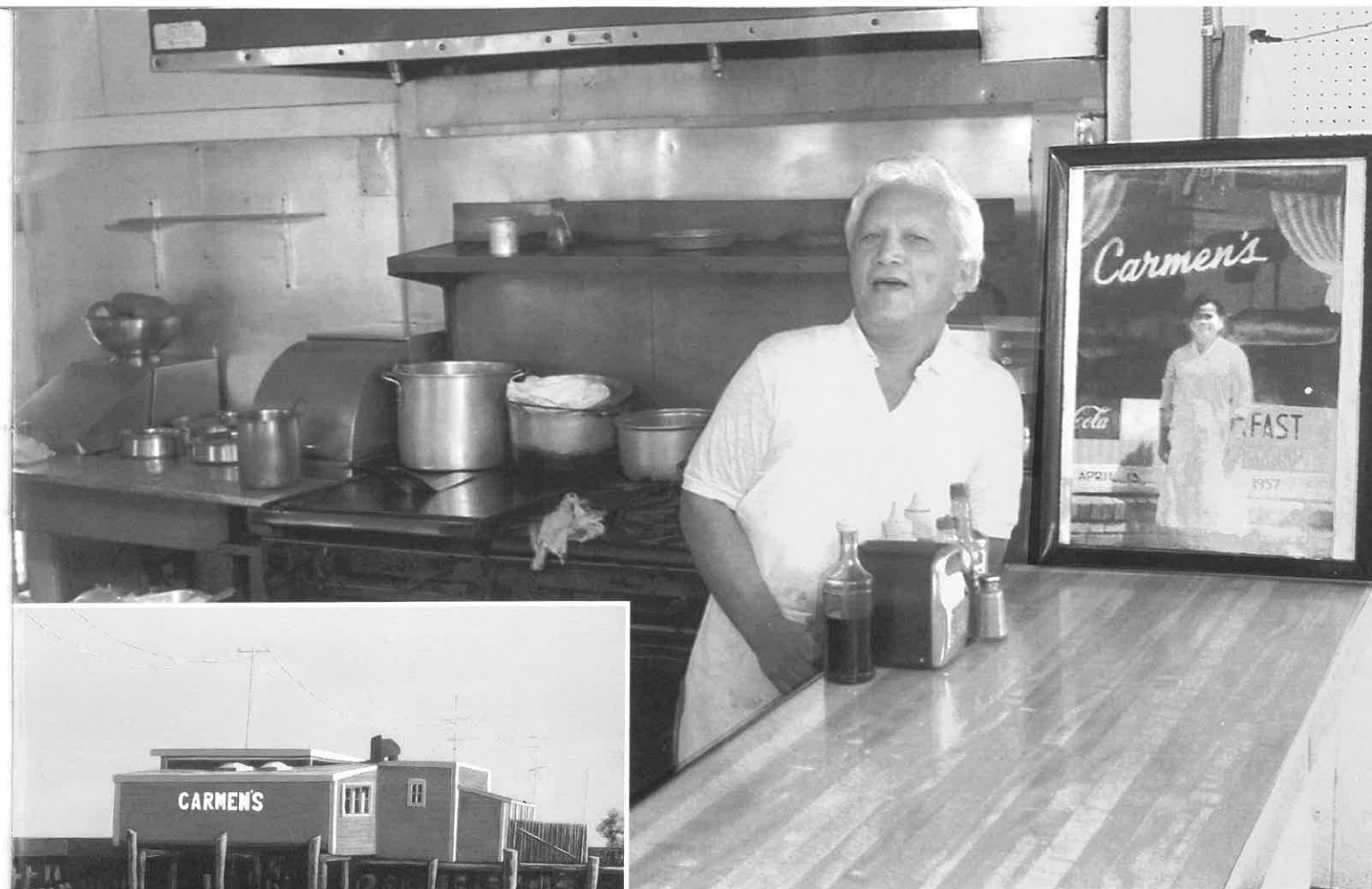
Some of the memories were not so pleasant; Mission Creek was a malodorous stream, an open sewer, and the work and the times were hard.

All of that has vanished now. Pacific Bell Park was built on the north bank of Mission Creek, at the Third Street Bridge. The University of California at San Francisco is building its Mission Bay Campus just south of the creek. One of the only places left from days gone by is Carmen's restaurant, located where the Fourth Street bridge crosses the creek.

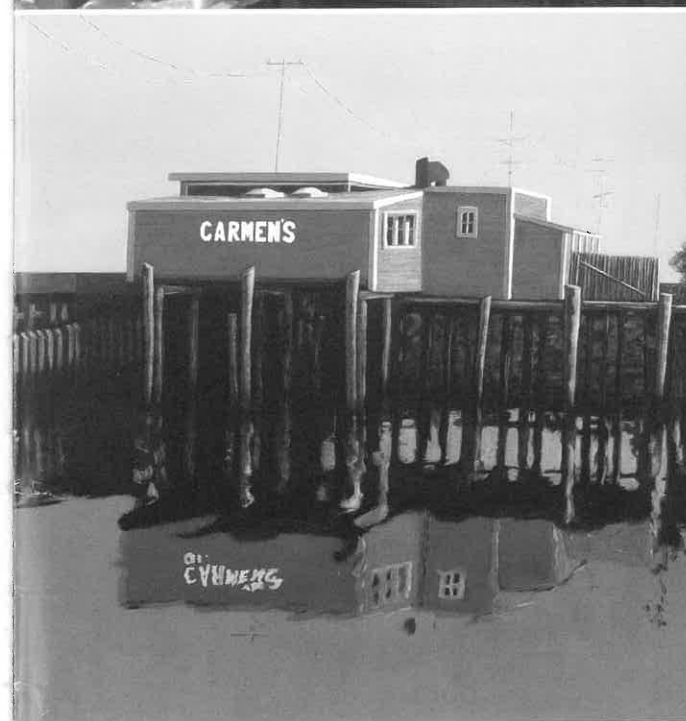
Historian Nancy Olmsted thinks the place is oldest waterfront joint in the Bay Area, dating back to the time of the Civil War when the Long Bridge ran across a marshland south from Fourth Street to the Bay View district. It is certainly the most authentic of the places, a bit rough but pleasant — not the kind of joint you'd take your finicky Aunt Janet.

Old sailors and dock workers, however, would feel right at home. It has the feel of a real place. Long ago it was called Crabby John's; more recently it was Blanche's, featuring a flower garden and gentle vibrations, the kind of place so far off the beaten track that secret romances flourished. It was a place to go for a romantic and discreet rendezvous. No one you knew ever went there.

Now it's Carmen's, named for Carmen Solis, the owner. The food has a Filipino bent to it: for breakfast you can have eggs with tapa, adobo, pancit or ticino. There is also the Denver omelet, and that glorious staple of the waterfront, cold beer.



Ben Solis with a photo of his wife, Carmen, owner of Carmen's in San Francisco. Inset: Painting of Carmen's by artist Richard L. Perri.



Outside, the morning sun glinted on the greenish waters of Mission Creek, now cleaned up. In the distance were the sounds of train whistles from the Caltrain station a block away.

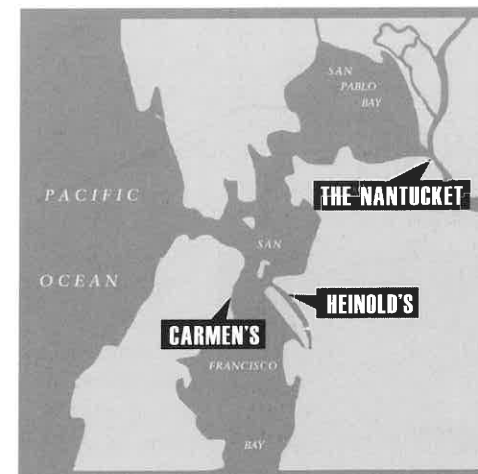
"We get people from all walks of life here," says

Reuben Mendoza, who works the morning shift on the grill. "We get politicians from City Hall, business people, working people, office people, even homeless people like this man here."

Like every waterfront joint, Carmen's has a picture gallery. There are the usual posters advertising beer and such, Giants pennants, that sort of thing. But Carmen's also features shots of distinguished visitors to the place, like former San Francisco mayor Frank Jordan, and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who stopped by one day not long ago.

"Now, you know," says Mendoza, "she is the president of the Philippines."

That's one of the charms of waterfront joints. You never know who may stop by: Jack London, a man who lives on a boat, the president of Lithuania, the future president of the Philippines. Maybe you. □



The Nantucket on Carquinez Strait in Crockett, Heinold's First And Last Chance at Jack London Square in Oakland and Carmen's on Mission Creek in San Francisco.

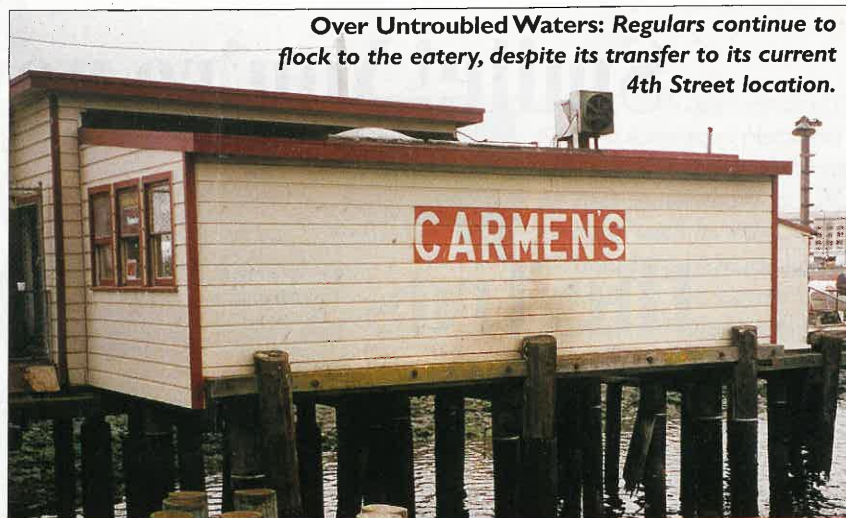


The Nantucket dining room looks out across the funky marina to Carquinez Straits and the bridge.



# Carmen's

Over Untroubled Waters: Regulars continue to flock to the eatery, despite its transfer to its current 4th Street location.



## The San Francisco Treat

By Samantha Anne La'O

Resting on wooden stilts, Carmen's, a Filipino eatery, hovers above the rippling waters of the San Francisco Bay, on a foundation built with hospitality and a historical connection to the community. With prominent visitors like current Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Daly City Mayor Mike Guingona mingling with longshoremen and blue collar workers, Carmen's brings everyone together for a relaxing, enjoyable and authentic home-cooked meal. For 45 years, Carmen's has dazzled its customers with Filipino cuisine (influences from northern Luzon) like its annatto-flavored *adobo* (which colors the pork stew a sizzling red). With modest prices that average about \$5, Carmen's is not only affordable but also reasonable. Many customers come for a quick lunch break or stop by for take-out on their way home for dinner. Due to redevelopment plans set for the bridge and roadway on 4th Street in downtown San Francisco, Carmen's has the chance to widen its customer base with an anticipated upgrade of the original eatery.

### Her Own Boss

When I meet Carmen F. Solis, she is impeccably attired with a dress shirt and matching pants. She walks slowly but confidently to each table and asks if anyone needs more water or drinks or if the food is warm enough. Recuperating from a stroke in 1997, Solis walks with a cane and is now considered "retired" by the rest of the staff

and customers. I can easily understand why her customers feel a kinship with her. She has a maternal way with people. As I sit down to interview her, she immediately asks me to eat first and tells Ruben Mendoza, her cook for over five years, to let me try "everything."

She stands beside a framed picture taken from her first days at Carmen's back in April 13, 1957. "I was only seventeen. They couldn't even give me a liquor license. I served soft drinks and water. I was too young to serve alcohol," she states matter-of-factly smiling the same girlish smirk in her framed photo.

Solis immigrated to the United States from the Philippines in 1954 and started to work at Clara's, an American-food eatery, where she cooked, cleaned and waitressed for a living. When Clara's owners decided to shut down business, Solis took action and offered to buy the place, after only two months of working and living in the United States. With a loan of \$2,500 and two months' pay, Solis was able to establish herself as a restaurateur in the bustling Downtown San Francisco area, between Drumm and Washington, currently the location of the impressive Hyatt Embarcadero. "I wanted to be my own boss and not answer to anybody," she explains.

"I wanted to be in charge of myself." She also wanted to be in charge of the new menu that fused American tastes with her native Filipino cuisine.

"I started to cook adobo with rice that had eggs on top of it for a breakfast item. The longshoremen loved it. They still ask for that dish after forty-five years," she remarks softly. New customers affectionately call her

"Manang Carmen" and kiss her on the cheek on their way in. Her breakfast specialty on the waterfront started a craze, as similar dishes were created by other Filipino eateries. This established Solis as the pioneer of a local eating trend (eggs over adobo and rice).

Carmen's moved its location twice before settling on the 4th Street location which opened in 1983 and has been "home" to many of its customers. Ed Palomar, a manager at the Pacific Bell Stadium parking says, "This place is like home to me. People here speak the same language and eat the same food that I would eat back in the Philippines."

In fact, people not only come to Carmen's to eat, they also gather at night for karaoke or dancing.

### An Institution Connected to its Community

Carmen's has also navigated San Francisco's political upheavals. For example, when the longshoremen were on strike in 1962, Carmen's supported their efforts by giving them a 50 percent discount. The longshoremen from that generation, some of them nearly 80-years-old, still come back to Carmen's to eat their favorite dishes. With the influx of homeless people in 1989, Solis was able to feed those who flocked to her eatery for help.

In 1992, the location of Carmen's on 4th Street caused a huge stir as the community rallied to save the restaurant from being evicted. With the support from attorneys Rod McLeod, Rene Picardo and most of all—her

customers, the case won and instilled a sense of dedication and loyalty between the owner and the customers.

"I love my customers and I try my best to do the most for them," Solis says. Ernie Abalos, a San Francisco mortgage broker, says Solis treats her customers like her family. "One time when a new customer came in with her newborn, Carmen went and got some flowers for the new mother and money for the baby. She is just that way. She is very kind," Abalos recalls. On a brief visit, I witness Carmen taking the time to joke with customers and making them feel special in her own warm way.

### Investment Possibilities

As a result of the Mission Bay Development project, one of the biggest to occur in San Francisco history, Solis plans to recruit potential partners and investors who would be interested in renovating the eatery to meet new requirements set forth by the San Francisco Port Commission. At a mere 800 square feet, Solis is expecting to double the size in order to accommodate more customers and keep her lease on the same property.

"Carmen's needs to be improved so it's not considered a nuisance to the rest of the development," she explains. She needs approximately \$300,000-\$1,000,000,000 dollars to come up to new standards. With the merging of different investors, Solis is willing to make changes under two conditions: that the eatery will always be named "Carmen's" and that it will always serve Filipino food.

Rod McLeod, a San Francisco lawyer and Carmen's devotee, indicates that the renovations will be beneficial.

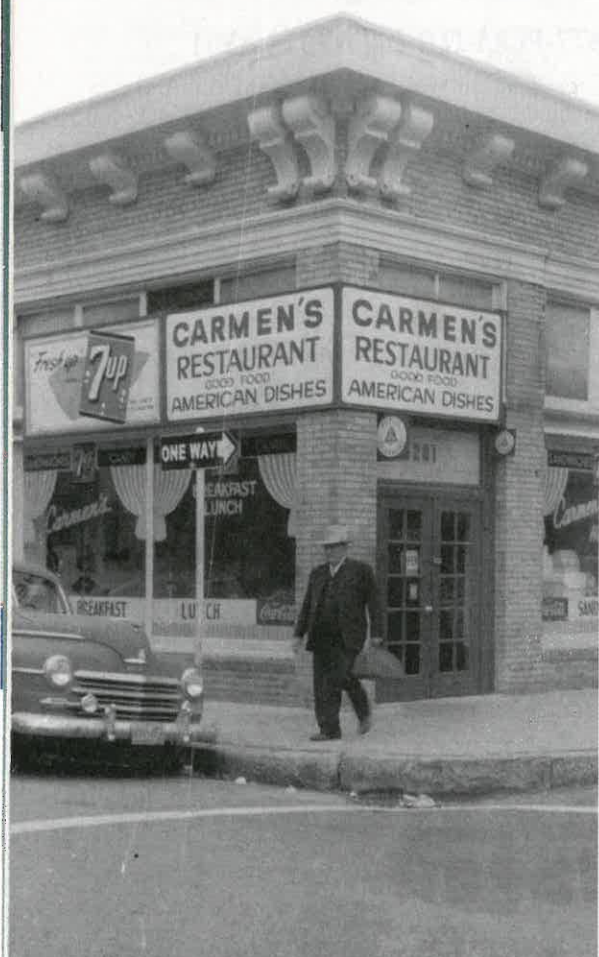
"Carmen's has the potential to have bigger accommodations and to draw more customers," he explains. Meanwhile, Solis is asking loyal customers to come to her establishment's temporary site on Pier 40 (between Embarcadero and Townsend) while renovations are in progress for approximately a year and a half starting this month.

In the future, Carmen's expects to change its atmosphere to fulfill the new standards, but for Ed Palomar, a loyal customer who likes the *kare-kare* (oxtail stew) for lunch, Carmen's—renovated or not—"will always be the same place where everybody knows your name." ■

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Gutsy Girl: Carmen, at 17, took the bold step of buying the restaurant only two months after she immigrated to the U.S.



The Original: Carmen bought the restaurant in the '50s with borrowed money which she repaid in a little over a year.



Culinary Couple: Carmen and her husband Benito Solis have welcomed Philippine and city dignitaries, as well as blue-collar workers to their unpretentious karinderya (eatery). Benito is the chef, while Carmen takes care of business.



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SWITCHEROOS

# Carmen's Becomes SB40, Serving BBQ, Oysters, Lots of Beer

by [Carolyn Alburger](#) | [@CarolynAlburger](#) | Mar 3, 2011, 6:30am PST[TWEET](#)[SHARE](#)[PIN](#)



**Carmen and Benito Solis**, owners of Filipino-American café **Carmen's Restaurant** at Pier 40 have enlisted the good people of Brisbane's **7 Mile House** to completely redo their concept. The sign you see here says it all (almost): "Coming Soon **SB40** Oysters, BBQ & Burgers." 7 Mile owner **Monica Bulos** tells Eater they are working with chef **Dominic Ainza** of **Mercury Lounge** to fill out the menu with some sandwiches, homemade hummus and entrees, including seafood pasta, salmon and steak dishes. The aforementioned bbq will consist of pulled pork and ribs at the start.

Inside, expect most of the changes at the bar, now built out so 12 can sit there. The tap count has also increased from four to 11 and they've painted the interior to orange, dark brown and beige "in honor of the Giants." **Speakeasy** reps are planning to supply two beers for the taps and an outdoor beer garden for game days **in the style of the 21st Amendment**. Bulos said they're shooting for a Monday opening, although she didn't sound too hopeful that would actually happen. Bank on this coming soon and look out for beefed-up bbq options and a beer and wine cocktail menu later this spring. [EaterWire]



**SB40**

Pier 40, San Francisco, CA

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