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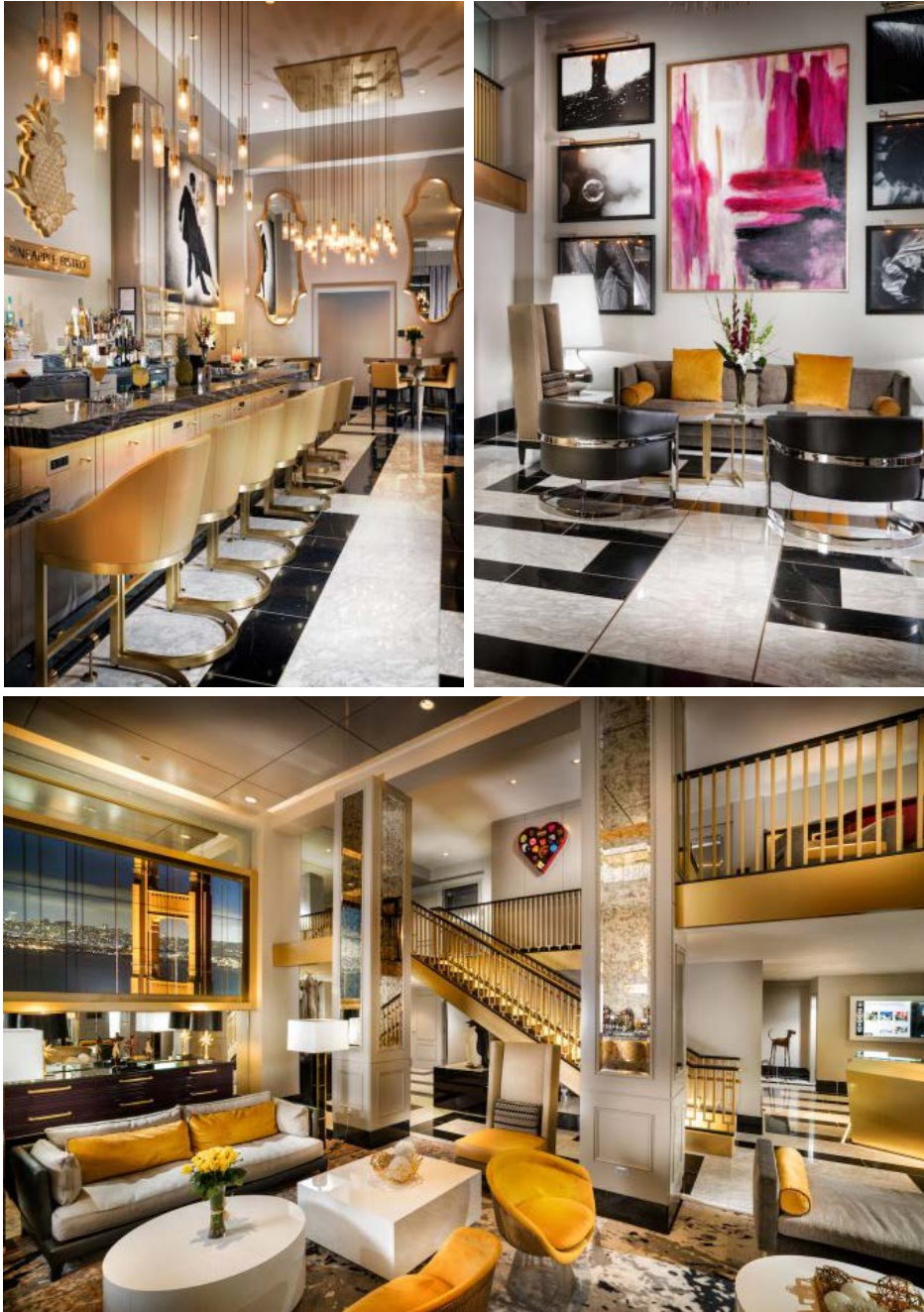
CITY GUIDE: SAN FRANCISCO

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There's something about San Francisco that's all its own – the hum of a city that's somehow still a laid-back hippie town by the bay despite its emergence as a global “technorati” hotspot. The tension between old and new runs high in San Francisco, but it's also what makes this hilly northern California city so charming. From faded skyscrapers hiding behind pastel-coloured houses, to local farm-to-table produce paid for with your phone, the juxtaposition of handcraft and technology is the heart and soul of San Francisco today.

A visit to this city will have you instagramming the beauty of an urban place where mountains, ocean and fog meet, and nature and civilisation are constantly coming together. You'll also enjoy some of the freshest food in the US thanks to San Francisco's proximity to fertile farmland and focus on local, sustainable produce. Each cup of coffee is a work of art, each glass of wine tells a story about the climate and family that produced it.

You will quickly realise that there's something for everyone here. And with plenty of day-trip escapes in any direction (Lake Tahoe for the weekend? Napa for the afternoon?) it's easy to see why so many people from all around the world decide to call San Francisco home – over 60 per cent of residents are California transplants and more than a third were born outside the US. You'll meet tie-dyed hippies in the Haight, hipster foodies in the Mission, lululemon-clad yuppies in the Marina, suited professionals downtown and seasoned surfers along Ocean Beach. So slip on your sneakers, tie on a scarf for the wind and get ready to explore like a local.



The Alise Tenderloin

The Alise takes its cues from its eclectic neighbourhood, where the City by the Bay meets show business. An opulent black-lacquer front door with gold scrollwork reveals a resplendent lobby with a nine-screen video panel that rotates a curated selection of artistic scenes, while a shiny red baby grand piano on the mezzanine level encourages guests to perform. Explore nearby sites such as Union Square and Golden Gate Bridge on one of the hotel's custom cruiser bikes, before heading back, where beds come complete with individually folded duvets to ensure a wresle-free sleep.

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