

The Wait is Over.... It's Time to Tonga!



SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Mai-tai merriment has recommenced at Fairmont San Francisco's beloved and much celebrated Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar. Located at the iconic Fairmont San Francisco hotel, Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar has delighted guests with its tropical décor, decadent libations and Polynesian-fusion cuisine since the 1940s. Delightfully nostalgic, this iconic local haunt exudes atmosphere in spades. Get ready to sip on umbrella-strewn mixed cocktails served in Tiki glasses and faux coconuts, and dine on Polynesian-fusion favorites.

As we approach the final countdown to reopening, here are five Tonga Tiki Tidbits to tide you over until it is Tonga Time.

- 1) The Plunge, San Francisco's first major hotel pool built in 1929, was converted into the lagoon in Tonga Room in the 1940s.
- 2) The original designs were done by Mel Melvin, a set designer for MGM and the restaurant first opened as S.S. Tonga, an Art Deco cruise liner themed eatery with lifeboats, metal air vents and life preservers.
- 3) The Tonga room was quickly renamed and re-imagined to be the Tiki masterpiece it remains today.
- 4) The Tonga Room incorporates masts, rigging and other relics of the S.S. Forester, a schooner that cruised the South Seas for many years.
- 5) In the 1950s, the dining room's nightly thunderstorms were installed, showering the pool with downpours, flashing lights and thunderous booms every thirty minute.



ABOUT TONGA ROOM
FROM POOL TO TROPICAL PARADISE

Fairmont San Francisco created an indoor 75-foot swimming pool on its Terrace Level in 1929. Known as the Fairmont Terrace Plunge, the elaborate tile pool attracted local crowds, Olympic athlete trainings and celebrities such as Helen Hayes, Ronald Reagan and members of the Water Follies.

In 1945, Metro Goldwyn Mayer's leading set director, Mel Melvin, was hired to transform The Terrace Plunge into Tonga Room. The pool became a lagoon, a floating stage for the orchestra that entertained guests each evening. Not surprisingly, Tonga Room was an instant success.

Following a \$1 million restoration by Gensler San Francisco in 2008 and an updated cocktail menu featuring fresh new ingredients in 2013, Tonga Room rekindled the interest and nostalgia of one of the nation's first Tiki palaces.

Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar features top-40 band, The Island Groove, performing on a thatch-covered barge in the lagoon; a dance floor built from the remains of the S.S. Forester, a lumber schooner that once traveled regularly between San Francisco and the South Sea Islands; and periodic light tropical rainstorms, complete with thunder and lightning.

Tonga Room will again ride the wave of the Tiki revival and is the venue of choice for several high-profile figures who have celebrated everything from wedding rehearsals, birthdays and holidays at this unique location. Tonga Room continues to be recognized as one of the nation's hottest bars by several notable publications and has been featured on numerous television shows. During a visit from *Travel Channel's* "The Layover," Anthony Bourdain even exclaimed Tonga Room is "the greatest place in the history of the world!"

Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar at The Fairmont San Francisco is located at 950 Mason Street. For reservations, please call 415-772-5278 or visit www.tongaroom.com

About Fairmont San Francisco

Since 1907, The Fairmont has served as the San Francisco residence for U.S. presidents, world leaders and entertainment stars. The landmark hotel offers 606 renovated guest rooms and suites, two distinctive restaurants, a health club and easy access to the city's most popular attractions. Fairmont San Francisco is located atop Nob Hill at 950 Mason Street. For reservations, please call [1-800-441-1414](tel:1-800-441-1414) or visit www.fairmont.com/san-francisco

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