



The City by the Bay – San Francisco Inaugural Dinner

A weekend of fun with super members

by Steve Gale

Black Tie Club International’s newest chapter rolled out the red carpet in grand style for its inaugural weekend October 24th - 26th.

On Friday night, 30 charter members gathered at the Gourmet Carousel Restaurant for a traditional Chinese banquet. The participants were overwhelmed with a succession of dishes ranging from Shredded Scallop Soup to Fried Quail to Peking Duck to Lobster to Steamed Fish and more. Secretary-Treasurer *Jim Boey*, one of the chapter’s Chinese members vouched to the dinner’s authenticity its presentation, taste, and atmosphere.

Saturday night brought the main event of the inaugural weekend, The Black Tie Dinner. 60 guests walked up the red carpet laid out at The Avalon, one of the new premier apartment complexes near the Embarcadero in San Francisco. The San Francisco Black Tie Club took over the Penthouse floor with floor-to-ceiling windows with sweeping views of the San Francisco skyline on one of the most spectacular evenings of the year in The City – clear skies and temperature about 80 degrees. The room was tastefully decorated with black tablecloths, chairs and flower arrangements to accent the stunning San Francisco views.

The evening began with hors d’oeuvres served by tuxedoed waiters during the hour-and-a-half cocktail time. The waiters also poured California wines and the open bar served up elegant martinis and other libations of choice.

President *Bob Highsmith* formally launched the new chapter with an opening address where he recognized individuals who had been instrumental in conceiving the chapter. *Len Olds*, President of the Laguna Beach chapter offered some historical perspective on Black Tie Club International for the attendees while welcoming everyone into the organization on behalf of International President Bob Gregson. Out of town members attending were: *Len Olds*, President & *Hugh Rouse*, Laguna Beach chapter; *Paul Bonness & Bob O’Neal*, Co-Presidents of New Mexico chapter; *John Meissner*, Palm Springs chapter and *John Herrick*, South Florida chapter. Guests dined on Fillet of Beef Tenderloin and Pan Seared Halibut prepared and served by Taste Catering of San Francisco with flowing California wines. Attendees were presented at each place setting with an official lapel pin of the San Francisco Black Tie Club before being chauffeured back to their cars in the nearby parking facility.



Bob Highsmith, Bob O’Neal, Paul Bonness, Gabriel Koh



Bob O’Neal, Paul Bonness, Gabriel Koh, Jim Boey, Bob Highsmith



Coit Tower



Bob Highsmith, Graeme Hanson, Gary Dougan, Jim Boey



Jim Boll, Jim Davis, John Piane



Bill Witcher, Bob McGrath, Joe Rosenthal, (back) Gabriel Koh, Steve Gale, John Herrick



*Bill Ryan, Mike Saltzman,
Carter Lowrie*



*Manuel Merjil, Eric Hoover,
Christopher Deighan*



*Dennis Setlock, Steve Gale,
Howard Lesnick*



*Dan Riley, Bob Highsmith,
George Lucas*



Fred Hudson, John Schwobeda



*Eric Hoover, Christopher Deighan,
Manuel Merjil, Garren Drew*



Gary Dougan, Charlie Priest



Ken Cleaveland, Dennis Setlock, Bob Highsmith, John Herrick, Steve Gale, Len Olds



*John Piane, Vince Beaudet,
Wally Myers, Henry Thurlow*



Bill Gregory, Dick Ingraham



*Don Morrison,
Jonathan Swain,
Gene Reineman,
Vince Beaudet*



Ted Tucker, Dennis Setlock



Sam Thal, Carter Lowrie, Michael Saltzman



Dick Ingraham (Sunday host), Carter Lowrie



Bill Witcher, Bob McGrath, John Kennedy, Steve Gale, Gabriel Koh, Michael Satzman



Torre San Gimignano



George Lucas, Howard Lesnick, Eugene Gardner, Dick Ingraham (Host), Ken Cleaveland

The endless weekend was capped with a Sunday Brunch hosted by *Bill Gregory* and *Dick Ingraham* in their garden home. Torre San Gimignano, the home's formal name, is set on multiple floors up above Noe Valley in San Francisco and offers magnificent views across The City and The Bay from every level. Guests were invited to tour the home and the garden while sipping Champagne, Bloody Marys, and Screwdrivers before sampling a buffet of gourmet dishes and desserts prepared by the hosts. 40 members and guests attended this final event of the weekend and they all were "oohing and aahing" throughout the afternoon – a tribute to the generosity of Bill and Dick.

As you can imagine, the San Francisco chapter's inaugural weekend proved to be a smashing success as members were able to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. Plans were already being made to meet again on January 31st at the Monaco Hotel.

A great weekend with a great group of guys!

***International President Bob Gregson couldn't attend because of illness but wishes to thank Len Olds, President of Laguna Beach Chapter for filling in for him. To all San Francisco members ... look for Gregson to be at the January 31st dinner.*

*Tom Rothgiesser,
Jim Boey,
Wally Myers,
Henry Thurlow*

