

# **Great location, good food, low cost rooms, but watch out for the lipstick**

## **Metropolitan Club, San Francisco, CA**

### **SUMMARY**

We stayed at the Metropolitan Club for three nights in November 2010 and ate dinner and breakfast there. The building is quite large, with about 200 feet on Sutter Street near Union Square. The bedrooms are quite large for San Francisco, are attractive, and have been re-done recently.

### **CLUB HISTORY AND FACILITIES**

The Club was founded in 1915 as the Woman's Athletic Club, the first women's social and athletic club west of the Mississippi. Club staff refused to give out any more information on the club history; this was an interesting first. However, the club website notes that by the 1960s the club focus had broadened and the club was renamed the Metropolitan Club.

The building has six stories and is decorated in traditional style. There are 18 overnight bedrooms including twins, queens, kings and suites. All these were renovated within the last year. (The renovations mentioned by the 2009 reviewers are now completed.)

There are various meeting rooms, a bar, elegant dining room, and library with about 3000 books. The substantial gym, with new equipment and numerous exercise machines, is off limits to men. The indoor swimming pool is three lanes wide and perhaps 90 feet long, enough for good laps. The pool can be used by men only during "family swim times" on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 2:30 to 8 pm. An indoor tennis court is available to all members and guests. Some of the hallways and other spaces need repainting or fixing.

The club is located one short block and 1.5 blocks northwest of Union Square, in a good neighborhood, close to many elegant shops. Two of these, Gumps and Wilkes-Bashford, have been written up as some of the most elegant and effective (and expensive) retailers in America.

Be aware that like many SF neighborhoods, this one is beset by panhandlers during the day and loud carousers at night. Parking is available at a discount at public open air lot next door. The discounted rate is \$20 per night (plus tax) instead of the usual \$30. Parking staff will allow you to lock up your car and cover it, although the normal procedure is to give them the keys. Since members of the public use the lot and sometimes park their own cars, there is some chance of getting a "ding."

Staff were generally helpful and knowledgeable.

## **FOOD**

Dining facilities are limited. The club is open for dinner only on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and never for lunch. Tea is offered in the afternoon. Continental breakfast is included with the room all seven days of the week. On offer are fresh fruit, excellent small scones, hard boiled eggs, coffee, toast, yogurt, pastries and cereal. A full breakfast can be ordered Monday through Friday for about \$7 to \$9. On a sour note, at breakfast each morning we noticed that over a third of the “clean” glasses had not been washed properly, with lipstick or juice pulp remaining on them.

We ate dinner at the club one night with a friend, and were impressed by the service and food. My organic green salad was too peppery, so I rated it a “B.” My sliced lamb roast was better, a “B+.” My wife had baked chicken, which she rated as an “A.” Our friend had quail, which he rated highly. My wife’s strawberry ice cream was a “B+” and my chocolate volcano cake was an “A-.” Service was good and tables were widely spaced. The room was a coppery gold color, with a working fireplace, very elegant.

## **BED ROOM DESCRIPTION**

We stayed in a standard en suite room (#602) with two twin beds on the sixth floor overlooking the parking lot. It was about 16 x 16 feet, quite spacious. It had light yellow walls, mirror and large prints, and two large, open-able windows. This room had no air conditioning, which was a problem on one unseasonably warm night. Staff supplied a small heater with a fan, which was supposed to cool the room with just the fan operating. But neither the heater nor the fan worked.

WiFi Internet connection was supplied to the room at no charge, and worked well. Shower controls were odd. The room rate was \$109 per night base rate plus \$20 reciprocal fee, plus taxes. This rate was perhaps half the cost of a comparable hotel in this upscale area.