



Real Estate

Bringing up Baby

Becoming a parent doesn't have to mean moving to the suburbs. City lovers will find plenty of housing options in these family-friendly SF 'hoods.

by Nicole Beckley

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Finding the perfect home in SF can be a challenge for anyone, but couples starting a family are looking beyond the baby bustle of Noe Valley and turning a progressive eye toward other neighborhoods, such as the more industrial Potrero Hill. “We’re in the middle of a baby boom,” says Bonnie Spindler, of Zephyr Real Estate (415-474-4445, bonniespindler.com). “There are so many couples having babies that you’re finding strollers in a lot more places in the city than you used to.”

The Hidden Treasure

“Potrero is up-and-coming,” says Rose Costello of Alain Pinel Realtors (415-593-8605, rosecostello.com). As the South of Market Area continues to develop, many families are choosing adjacent Potrero Hill for its low noise levels and easy access to freeways and downtown. The landscape may be hilly, but sidewalks are spacious and there’s plenty of room for play at the Jackson Playground on 17th and Carolina streets. On 18th Street, boutiques such as Bell and Trunk Flowers (1411 18th St., 415-648-0519) carry gifts and kids’ clothes by Kit & Lily.

Potrero Hill residents—from young professionals to older couples—can be found at the many cafes and bistros. Families will love Neighborhood Night on Mondays at Goat Hill Pizza (300 Connecticut St., 415-641-1440) for its all-you-can-eat pizza and salad, and a \$5.95 special for diners ages six to 12. Offering a mix of styles, including Edwardian and Arts and Crafts, Potrero Hill’s single-family homes have sold for an average of \$1.1 million over the past six months.

The Family Favorite

For that almost-suburban feeling, the Outer Sunset boasts houses with yards both front and back, plentiful parking and some of the lowest prices per square foot in the city. Single-family homes can be

found for less than \$1 million with prices averaging \$800,000 in the past six months. “If you have your heart set on a single-family, the Outer Sunset is probably where you’ll find it the fastest,” Costello says.

Bordering Ocean Beach and close to Lake Merced and the SF Zoo, this region offers many options for families to enjoy outdoor recreation. Kids are frequently spotted climbing the jungle gym at the West Sunset Playground on 40th and Ortega. Although the area is removed from the city’s bustling commercial centers, it’s easy to shop at Albertson’s (1515 Sloat Blvd., 415-681-4300) in Lakeshore Plaza Shopping Center, or hop on the Muni’s N Judah or L Taraval, which run to the Inner Sunset and downtown.

The All-Star

Laurel Heights, with its wide sidewalks and single-family Edwardian and mid-century homes, is in high demand. Situated near the Presidio, the neighborhood has single-family homes priced, on average, between \$1.3 and \$3.4 million and boasts countless amenities, including access to nearby UCSF and kids’ classes at the Jewish Community Center (3200 California St., 415-292-1200).

Bookended by Café Lo Cubano and Starbucks, the Laurel Village shopping strip has kid-stuff mainstay Gymboree (3407 California St., 415-668-1387) and Rigolo Café (3465 California St., 415-876-7777), which welcomes children with a stash of toys in the back. On Sacramento Street, in neighboring Presidio Heights, Snippetty Crickets specializes in kids’ cuts (3562 Sacramento St., 415-441-9363) and Mom’s the Word (3385 Sacramento St., 415-441-8261) stocks stylish maternity wear. Moms-to-be can enroll in parenting classes at DayOne, a mothers’ resource center and store (3490 California St., Ste. 203, 415-440-3291). “I see a lot of people having kids here and wanting to raise their children in the city, so they can have a more worldly experience,” Spindler says.

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