

DRUMMER FEATURE ARTICLE

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Isherwood's Divine Decadence...

THE BEST LITTLE BROTHEL IN SAN FRANCISCO

by Jack Fritscher

- This entire feature article "The Best Little Brothel in San Francisco" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written February 2, 1979, and published in *Drummer* 30, June 1979, the Fourth Anniversary Issue. I wrote this feature essay about the Brothel hotel because I wanted to promote the idea of "butch elegance," as much as I wanted to get laid by one of the Brothel's owners, Conrad, whom I featured on page 64 in photographs I had commissioned from Tony Plewik whom I profiled in the next issue, *Drummer* 31, September 1979.

Note the three full months of delay between issues. Half the phone calls *Drummer* received began: "Where's my next issue?" Around San Francisco, the delays were joked about with good humor.

Previously, pursuing Conrad, I had published him in a photograph David Sparrow shot for me in the Christmas issue, *Drummer* 25, December 1978, "*Drummer* Goes to Its Own Party," page 89, center, bottom.

True confessions.

Sexual desire was often a motivating force shaping who and what appeared in *Drummer*. Robert Mapplethorpe and David Sparrow and David Hurles (Old Reliable) entered through my desire just as John Preston entered through publisher John Embry's lust. -JF, April 24, 2000

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THE BROTHEL AIN'T THE HOTEL CALIFORNIA where "you can check in, but you can never leave." Check-out time at the Brothel is anytime you want to check out the broth-of-a-boy in the suite next door. The Brothel is, in fact, a bit of Old San Francisco with a bite of the New.

Some guys check in to remember. Hardly any check in to forget.

The Brothel caters to the best of guests. What the fuck holiday is at an Inn that advertises the "mompop" security of the "best surprise is no surprise at all?" [As opposed to the Holiday Inn ad campaign] The Brothel is pleasantly surprising. And surprise is where you find your art in SFO!

HOT-AND COLD RUNNING VICTORIANA

The Brothel is an *attitude*. In the best sense of the word. You can and probably will use your room as much for those quiet nights when you need real rest as for those nights when you want to swing from the Victorian chandeliers. Attitude, about tattoos and legs muscled-up on roller skates, has taught Brothel entrepreneurs Bobby and Conrad about the hot mix of turning the shell of an old apartment building into a truly professional hostelry.

They've got the bead on BUTCH ELEGANCE.

Why should queens have all the aMENities? The Brothel has very much the feel of a gentlemen's residence club—and every gentleman is an adventurer.

NEARER, MIGOD, TO THE CITY

The completely renovated Brothel is located three blocks from Polkstrasse but enjoys its own quiet Pacific Heights neighborhood. A quarter on a MUNI bus, or a mondo cheapo taxi ride can putt you off to the nightlife of Folsom or to the afternoon Castronaughtiness where over the intersection of 18th and Castro you can watch the bubbles from the bubble machine that once caused us to laugh at the campy Lawrence Welk show.

Meanwhile, back at 1500 Sutter, you can be taken in the gym, sweat it out in the new steam room, or graze in the intimate new coffee shop. A complete travel agency on the premises manfully handles your itinerary for both local and Grand Tours. In short, the whole joint is presentable. Your mother could pick you up in the lobby with nary a blush. So could men as butch as your ma!

A GUY LIKE YOU IN A NICE PLACE LIKE THIS

In the upstairs halls, business suits brush elbows with well-cured leather. Every man is one man by day and another by night. Gentlemen never tell. They just do it. That's the adventure!

Brothel prices fit the budget of travelers wanting clean, quiet, and responsibly staffed accommodations. There is no Disco Muzak piped into the halls.

The rooms are furnished like, well, rooms. You might bring along whatever aMENities you feel you need to sling it, fling it, or tie it down. You might also brush up your Berlitz because of the many hungry Europeans shopping for choice cuts of American prime meat. In how many languages can you say *yes*!

The Brothel is—how would Isherwood say it?—"divine decadence."

In fact, while the Brothel isn't a sex/bath, in many ways you could come out humming the Broadway score from *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*!

For further information and/or brochure with rates, write or call: The Brothel, 1500 Sutter, San Francisco, CA 94109; 415/775-6969

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ILLUSTRATIONS