



# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2020-21-032  
*Business Name:* Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant  
*Business Address:* 8 6th Street  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Man Pham, Owner  
*Nomination Letter Date:* January 12, 2021  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Haney

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes  No

8 6th Street from 1977 to Present (44 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes  No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** November 3, 2021

Richard Kurylo  
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

## Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





MATT HANEY

January 12, 2021

Regina Dick-Endrizzi, Director  
San Francisco Small Business Commission  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I am proud to nominate the TuLan Vietnamese Restaurant at 8 6<sup>th</sup> Street for the Legacy Business Program.

Since it first opened in 1976, TuLan Vietnamese Restaurant has been providing plentiful, affordable, and delicious food to theater goers, shoppers, and neighbors in downtown San Francisco. The restaurant is famous with locals for reasonably priced, delicious Vietnamese cuisine and has been run by members of the same family since it first opened. In fact, TuLan happens to be one of the very first Vietnamese restaurants to open in San Francisco.

Please contact Man Pham at 916-320-2135 [manpham62@gmail.com](mailto:manpham62@gmail.com) to inform them of their nomination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Haney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Haney".

# Section One:

## Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>	
TULAN VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT LLC	
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S)</b> (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
MAN M PHAM	
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>
8 - 6TH ST SAN FRANCISCO CA 94103	415-626-0927
	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
<b>MAILING ADDRESS - STREET ADDRESS:</b>	<b>MAILING ADDRESS - CITY AND STATE:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address 8300 - DOLLY D CT SACRAMENTO CA 95829	SACRAMENTO
	<b>MAILING ADDRESS - ZIP CODE:</b>
	95829
<b>WEBSITE ADDRESS:</b>	
TULANSF.COM	
<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	
<b>TWITTER NAME:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT'S NAME:</b>	<b>APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>
MAN PHAM	
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE:</b>	<b>APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
OWNER	
<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	
0484401	
<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):</b>	
201321010231	

# Section Two:

## Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
8 6th Street	94103	1977
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1977 to Present	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

MAN PAAM

11/11/21

Mantham

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

# TÚ LAN VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

## Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

### CRITERION 1

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant (“Tú Lan Restaurant” or “Tú Lan”) is located at 8 6th Street adjacent to the city’s Tenderloin district.

In 1977, Thao Nguyen and his sister Thu Hang Nguyen opened Tú Lan Restaurant, which was one of the first Vietnamese restaurants to open in the city. The owners thought it was a prime location – right off of Market Street, close to the Golden Gate and Orpheum theaters, and very close to the Emporium and other major shopping along 5th and Market streets.

Their plan was to offer affordable and plentiful food to customers whether rich or poor. Those customers who could not afford to pay were told to “pay later.” The kindness of the owners could not allow their neighbors to go hungry.

In 2008, Thao Nguyen and Thu Hang Nguyen both retired, and their nephew Anthony Nguyen took over the management of the restaurant. Alfred Truong came on as a business partner from 2012 to 2013.

In 2013, Anthony Nguyen and his uncle Man Pham were joined as business partners, and Alfred Truong withdrew from the business partnership. On July 29, 2013, Man Pham filed a form LLC-12NC for a Limited Liability Corporation called Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant LLC.

Man Pham and Anthony Nguyen were business partners from 2013 to 2018. Sadly, in 2018 Anthony became ill and passed away in his mid-30s. Man Pham, now owns and runs the business as the sole owner.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

In a challenging time for the business, Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant was shut down by Health Department inspectors in July 2012 for almost 13 months. The restaurant made several major renovations and upgrades, and a new co-manager was hired. The restaurant went through a complete overhaul including the kitchen and main and upper-level dining rooms. The entire electrical system had to be replaced, and all new kitchen appliances were added as well as a new front counter with seating.

Anthony Nguyen oversaw Tú Lan through this difficult period in its history, working with the Health Department to reopen the restaurant, thus saving it from a possible permanent closure. According to many patrons, it returned as good as ever.<sup>1</sup>

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

It is not a family-owned business at this time.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

The ownership history of Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant is as follows:

1977 to 2008:	Thao Nguyen and Thu Hang Nguyen
2008 to 2012:	Anthony Nguyen
2012 to 2013:	Anthony Nguyen and Alfred Truong
2013 to 2018:	Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant LLC – Man Pham and Anthony Nguyen (partners)
2018 to Present:	Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant LLC – Man Pham (sole owner)

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The historic resource status of the building that houses Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The 5-story building, known as the Delger Building, is a straightforward office building constructed in 1911 featuring banded brick, deeply punched double-hung windows, slight end pavilions, a dark cornice, and Renaissance/Baroque ornamentation. Delger was an Oakland businessman whose father made a fortune in real estate and shoes.

## **CRITERION 2**

**a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

Over time, Tú Lan has become a pillar of the community, with a reputation for offering delicious, affordable food. It has become a destination for theatergoers and shoppers. It is an oasis among dingy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sf.eater.com/2018/6/28/17516602/6th-stree-tu-lan-mourns-owners-anthony-nguyen>

streets littered with refuse and homeless people lying on the ground while drug deals are transacted. The immediate area is filled with old SRO hotels, although there are signs of newer development further down on 6th and Howard streets and on Natoma Street. Despite its gritty location, the restaurant continues to attract crowds of diners – both from the local neighborhood and from other parts of the city and surrounding suburbs.

**b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

In 2016, Tú Lan participated in the well-attended *Two Blocks of Art*, a street art fair and offered a 20% off discount on all food purchased between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. on the day of the art fair.

In 2017, Tú Lan catered the opening for Bindlestiff, a theater located on 6th Street.

**c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant has been featured in numerous publications, including the following:

- San Francisco Chronicle, by Herb Caen, November 15, 1985
- San Francisco Chronicle, “Tu Lan: Cleaned up but still as good as ever,” by Tara Duggan, October 9, 2013
- San Francisco Eater, “6th Street Institution Tú Lan Mourns Owner’s Passing,” by Caleb Pershan, June 28, 2018
- San Francisco Chronicle, “Did Julia Child really dine at Tu Lan? A legend rediscovered,” by Peter Hartlaub, March 6, 2019
- SF Weekly, “Sixth Street: S.F.’s Inner City Home,” by Peter-Astrid Kane, March 13, 2019
- Forbes, “Thirty Or Fewer Hours In San Francisco,” by Warren Bobrow, May 23, 2019
- KQED, “Check, Please! Bay Area reviews: Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant, Bistro SF Grill, Attraversiamo,” by Check, Please! Bay Area, May 21, 2020
- Thrillist, “30 Essential San Francisco Foods and Dining Experiences,” by Lauren Sloss, June 29, 2021

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

Jim Wood, a former well-known food and wine editor with the San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner who has since passed away, dined at the restaurant often. Its location, only a block and a half from the newspaper’s offices, made it an ideal spot for staff to have lunch.

One day in mid-November 1985, Jim had an appointment to meet the famous American chef Julia Child for lunch. Julia and her former diplomat husband, Paul Child, picked up Jim at the Chronicle/Examiner building in a limo. They drove the block and a half to the restaurant and had lunch at Tú Lan. The limo attracted the attention of one of the drunks that frequented the gritty block. He greeted Ms. Child with a bow and said, “It’s Julia!” Jim and the famous couple had a delicious meal. As they left the restaurant, a homeless man approached Ms. Child and said, “Bon Appetit!” When asked many years later about her meal at Tú Lan, Ms. Child said, “The food was very good.”



This single visit by the famous chef is promoted on the cover of the Tú Lan menu with an excerpt from the well-known San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen. His column that appeared on November 15, 1985, read, "FACES IN PLACES: Julia Child at Tú Lan on sleazy Sixth, a place with great Vietnamese chow. She contented herself with spring rolls, pork shish kebabs with rice noodles, lemon beef salad, fried fish in ginger and Tsingtao beer."

Mayor Ed Lee often dined at the restaurant while in office.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Tú Lan often offers free meals to those residents within the neighborhood who cannot afford to pay for their meals. They are told to "pay later."

Tú Lan has not raised its prices in many years, and the restaurant is still one of the best bargains in the city for residents and tourists looking for a delicious, hot meal.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

This area is officially considered part of the South of Market district, but it feels more like the Tenderloin. It is a neighborhood undergoing some slow gentrification. Homelessness and drug use are prevalent. There are several old SRO hotels along the 6th Street corridor.

Here are the demographics of the residents located in the vicinity surrounding the restaurant from 6th and Market streets south to Howard Street:

38.8% White

15.11% Hispanic

33.1% Black

8.6% Asian

4.39% Other

Ages 45-49: 16.3% majority

One-person household: 68.7%

Median income: \$12,200

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

As previously stated, the building in which Tú Lan is located is a 5-story building known as the Delger Building. It is a straightforward office building constructed in 1911 featuring banded brick, deeply punched double-hung windows, slight end pavilions, a dark cornice with Renaissance/Baroque ornamentation.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

Tú Lan is an oasis for good food along the 6th Street corridor. It is one of the few places in the city where you can get a delicious, hot meal at a bargain price. This type of restaurant is sorely needed, especially in this neighborhood with residents earning such low median incomes.

Tú Lan at one time had 18 employees, it is now down to 7 due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is important that the restaurant continue to serve its customers and keep its staff employed.

In its heyday, before the pandemic, there were long lines of customers waiting to get into the bustling restaurant.

### **CRITERION 3**

**a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant maintains the traditional cooking of Vietnam. All of the staff are Vietnamese. The main cook has been there 16 years; most employees have been there over 10 years. The manager, Tuyen Pham, has been there almost since the beginning – over 40 years! The open kitchen allows diners to view the cooks in action as they chop, fry, and serve hearty and delicious authentic Vietnamese food. The menu hasn't changed since it opened.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

The business is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as an authentic Vietnamese restaurant.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

In late 2019 through early 2020, the SF Shines program worked on creating a new façade for Tú Lan's exterior, but the project has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a Vietnamese restaurant for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.



SENECA

hom skillet

TAQUERIA  
CAN-CUN

TAQUERIA  
CAN-CUN  
OPEN

MARKET





Diners enjoy dinner at Tulan restaurant  
John Storey/Special to the Chronicle



Cook Hai Le cooks at Tu Lan on Sixth Street on Oct. 4, 2013  
John Storey / Special to the Chronicle











Diners enjoy dinner at Tulan restaurant  
John Storey/Special to the Chronicle

1001 MARKET  
street address

3703  
block number

1  
lot number

1  
summary

C. 4  
building type/use/number of floors

landmark number

RELATIONSHIP WITH SURROUNDING BUILDINGS

PROPOSED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Relationship of setting to building -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

CORNICE, PARAPET, APPENDAGE  
Importance of cornice to building design -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Importance as contribution to a cluster/streetscape -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Cornice contribution to streetscape -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN VALUATION

FACADE CONDITION

Facade proportions -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Physical condition -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Richness/Excellence of detailing/decoration -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Paint/Material color -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Unique visual feature of interest 0 1 2 3 4 5

REMODELING  
Appropriateness of improvements -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Example of a rare or unusual style or design 0 1 2 3 4 5

Overall architectural quality -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Engle 8.76  
date



Field Notes

HEINMANN BARTH, 1907

Review Notes

- Junior League Listing  
 text  index  file  
 Northern California Guide  
 Other Listing \_\_\_\_\_

photo 303.20

DA

<https://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/bargainbites/article/Tu-Lan-Cleaned-up-but-still-as-good-as-ever-4882440.php>

# San Francisco Chronicle

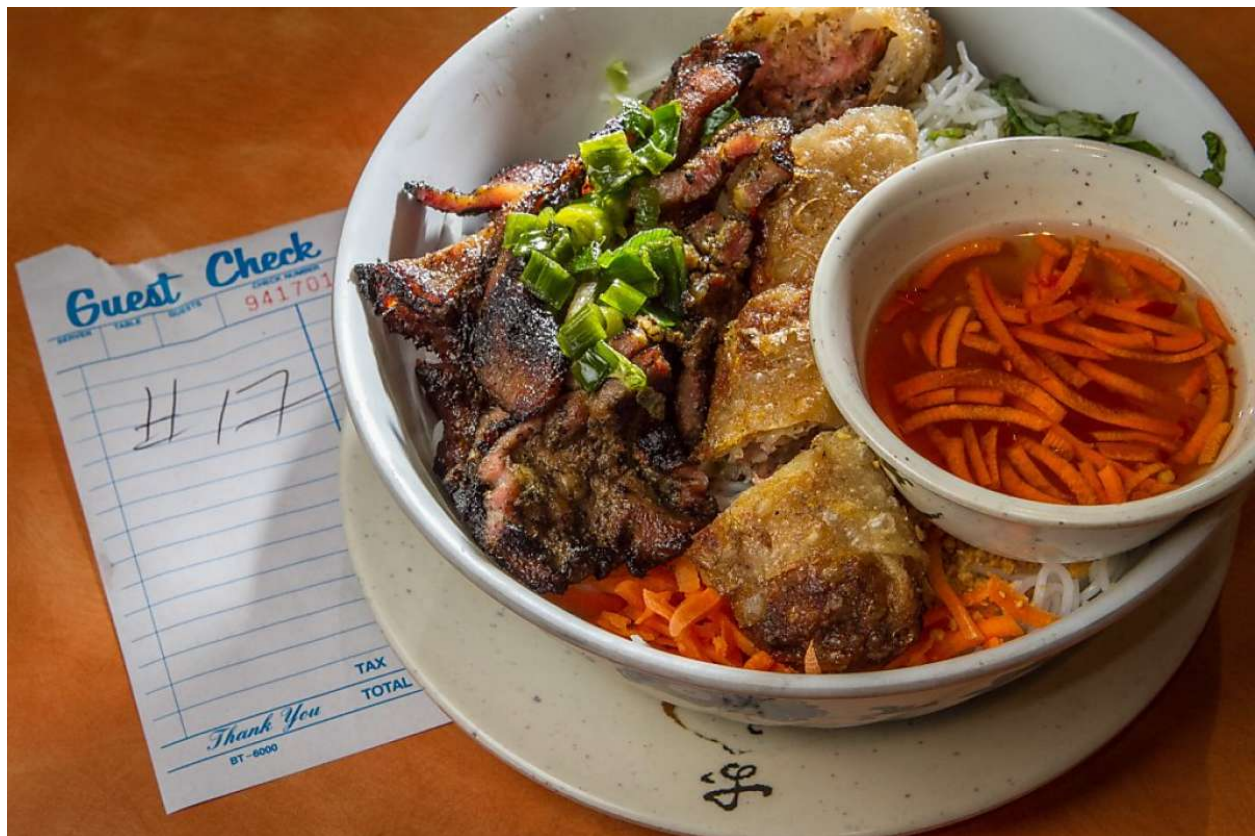
Food//[Bargain Bites Column](#)

## Tu Lan: Cleaned up but still as good as ever

Tara Duggan

Oct. 9, 2013

Updated: Dec. 24, 2013 3:47 p.m.



1 of 17

The pork shish kebab and imperial roll with rice noodles (\$7.45) at Tu Lan restaurant on Sixth Street in San Francisco.

John Storey/Special to the Chronicle



2 of 17

The exterior of Tulan restaurant in San Francisco, Calif., is seen on Friday, October 4th, 2013.  
John Storey/Special to the Chronicle

One of San Francisco's most long-standing, if not notorious, Bargain Bites, Tu Lan reopened recently after a one-year shutdown due to the Health Department revoking its permit.

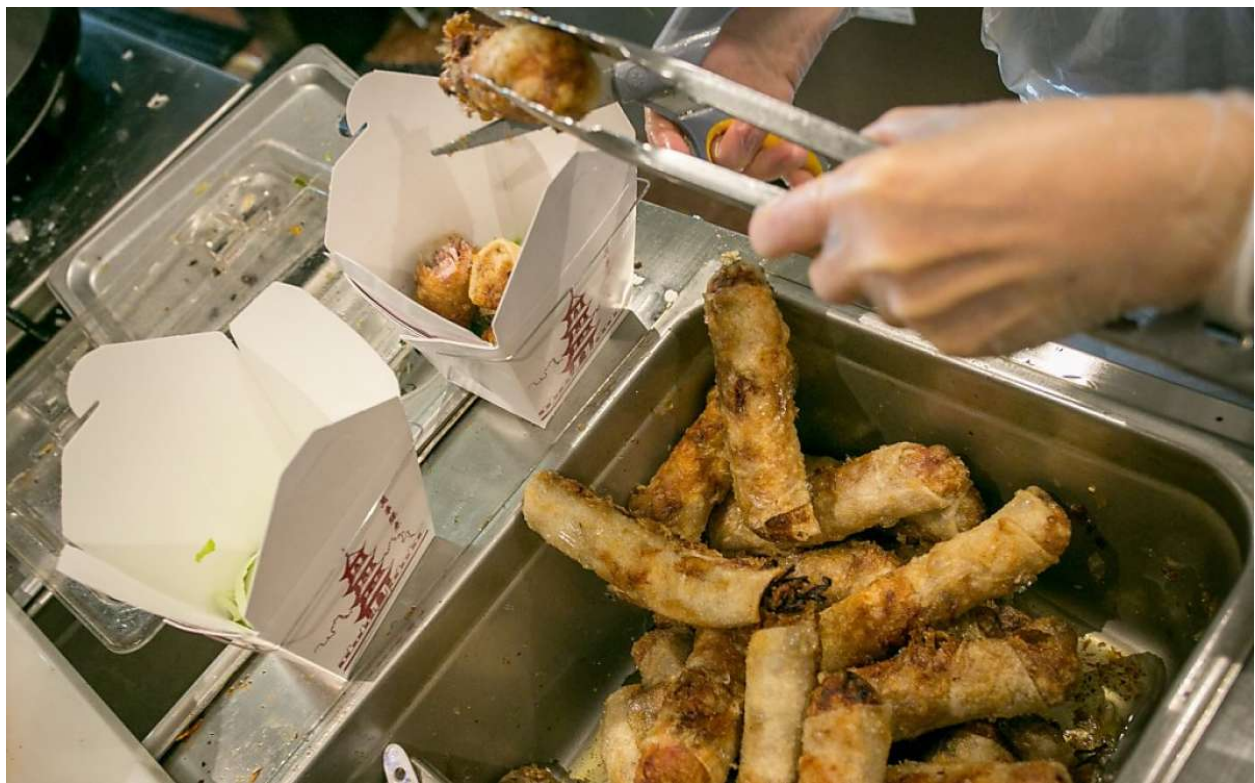
On Sixth Street since 1977 and once recommended by Julia Child, the Vietnamese standby has been renovated inside and out and given the green light by health inspectors.

Yet even with the fancy wooden awning outside - definitely a step up from its dingy predecessor - and a new stainless steel bar flanking the diner-style kitchen, Tu Lan still smells the same as it always did - a familiar, almost comforting aroma of seared meat mingled with just-fried imperial rolls and wok-seared shrimp.

The menu hasn't changed, with prices only slightly higher than they were before the shutdown and still a great value.

Fresh salad rolls with shrimp (\$5.75) and peanut sauce are some of the biggest we've seen, and you can still get a huge plate of Vietnamese-style shrimp fried rice with a hint of curry for \$7.25. A deep bowl of vermicelli with cucumbers, greens, pork kebabs and those crispy imperial rolls goes for \$7.45.

Lines form out the door for to-go orders, partly because there aren't many seats other than at a handful of tables in a back room and a few cafe tables where you're likely to get jostled by the friendly staff and other customers. Still, Tu Lan is worth checking out in its new incarnation.



13 of 17

Imperial rolls are cut at Tulan restaurant.

John Storey/Special to the Chronicle

# San Francisco Chronicle

CHRONICLE VAULT//OUR SAN FRANCISCO

## Did Julia Child really dine at Tu Lan? A legend rediscovered

Peter Hartlaub

March 6, 2019

New hires at The San Francisco Chronicle often begin their careers dining at Tu Lan.

The Vietnamese restaurant is a block and a half from the newsroom in San Francisco, and a time machine when it comes to both décor and price. It's a Chronicle tradition to appoint a pair of veteran journalists to take new employees to coffee, with a budget of \$30. At the 6th Street restaurant, on a block dominated by SRO hotels, it's still almost possible to stretch that into a sit-down lunch.

The destination has another draw, and it's completely free: The story of The Chronicle, Tu Lan and Julia Child.

The legend has been repeated in the newsroom, and the rest of the city, for decades. The corroboration is the menu itself; what looks like a photocopy-of-a-photocopy-of-a-photocopy-of-a-truncated Herb Caen column, with no date.

*"FACES IN PLACES: Julia Child at Tu Lan on sleazy Sixth, a place with great Vietnamese chow. She contented herself with spring rolls, pork shish kebabs with rice noodles, lemon beef salad, fried fish and Tsingtao beer."*



1 of 5. The menu of Vietnamese restaurant Tu Lan, with an undated Herb Caen item about Julia Child's visit to the establishment on Sixth Street in San Francisco.

Peter Hartlaub / The Chronicle

And yet beyond those details, there's almost no information readily available to the public. Did the world's most famous chef really eat a meal on a block reputed for its open-air drug deals? If so, when, where, how and why did that pairing happen? Is this just another Bay Area tale - like the Oakland port cranes that definitely didn't inspire "The Empire Strikes Back" - that is too captivating to be doubted?

The story was already old and oddly free of detail when veteran journalists brought me to Tu Lan in 1999, after I arrived as a reporter at the Chronicle-adjacent San Francisco Examiner.



A Google search in 2019 reveals no backstory, just one guide book-y write up after another repeating *“Tu Lan, which was once recommended by Julia Child ...”* Playwright and culture writer Michon Boston questioned the myth in a 2012 blog post, and checked Julia Child’s papers at the Schlesinger Library in Massachusetts. There was no record of a visit to the restaurant.

A search in The Chronicle’s digital archive quickly revealed that:

1. The Caen column was real. It ran on Nov. 15, 1985.
2. Caen’s item was indeed longer than what currently appears on the menu.

*“The owner, Thao Nguyen, had never heard of Child, but was pleased she liked the food ...,”* the item finished.



Any remaining suspense ended quickly, during a second search. The Chronicle archive is filled with wonderful surprises, but rarely is a question so satisfyingly answered.

An article in the Sunday Examiner & Chronicle — the papers used to publish a combined weekend edition — written by former Examiner food and wine editor Jim Wood explained everything, in the loveliest prose to come out of the mid-1980s. Here are Wood's first four paragraphs:

*"One of the editors couldn't believe it. 'You're taking Julia Child where for lunch?' I repeated what I'd already said, Tu Lan, a restaurant on Sixth Street in San Francisco.*

*"If you're like 99 percent plus of the world and have never heard of, much less set foot on, Sixth Street let me say it's the kind of street which sometimes evokes the word 'denizens,' a bit of dirty sidewalk and traffic jams where the wise walk without jingling their change and to look a passerby in the eye may be regarded as an unconscionable affront.*

*"But Sixth Street has another side, one I felt sure Julia Child and her former diplomat husband Paul Child would appreciate. It's a side you used to see at Christmas time when the local liquor store gave out sandwiches to all comers and the porn theaters put up holly and pine boughs (no mistletoe, they weren't that crazy) and the cops, particularly an old timer named Ed Casazza, were there to help, not punish, unless a person was too out of line - that was the Sixth Street I thought Julia Child, the top cook in America, the successor to James Beard, would appreciate.*

*"... From the counter, you can see the exhausting work that goes into making a new start in a new world. Tu Lan, to me, is America with its faults and its virtues and the added little bonus you never expect - the food is just fantastic."*

I read this just hours before recording a podcast with new Chronicle restaurant critic Soleil Ho, whose approach is to infuse discussion of race and culture and economic realities into her reviews. Jim Wood, it seemed, was a kindred spirit, writing similar prose several years before Soleil was born.



Cook Hai Le cooks at Tu Lan on Sixth Street on Oct. 4, 2013.

John Storey / Special to the Chronicle

The rest of Wood's review was filled with lovely details, proving that the writer's instincts about the Tu Lan/Julia Child kismet were correct.

Julia Child pulled up in a black limousine, picked up Wood, and drove a block and a half to the restaurant. A drunk man walked up, bowed and said, "It's Julia!"

She drank Tsingtao beer and liked it. Paul Child *really* liked the food, but in Wood's article, Child's thoughts about the meal remain vague throughout.

"The meal was wonderful, although I'm not sure that Julia liked it as well as I did," Wood wrote. "Her husband Paul took seconds, then thirds on the salad and the fish, so I think he really liked what he had."

On the way out, as Child headed to her limousine, a homeless man approached her, bowed deeply, and offered the chef's signature line: "Bon Appetit!"

That would be a fine kicker. But like a "Lord of the Rings" movie, or perhaps a good Tu Lan meal over too many beers, there are multiple false endings to this story.



Julia Child approaches cooking in the swashbuckling fashion that has made her the darling of public television. Julia Child cooking expert. Dated Nov. 11, 1971.

Jim Wood died in 2002, at age 72, of complications from a stroke.

After sharing these finds on social media last week, I was engaged by Wood's widow, the San Francisco journalist Carol Pogash, who saw the discussion on Twitter.

She said that the Tu Lan meal wasn't Wood's only time spent with Child. The Harvard-educated editor and reporter, who had covered schools, courts and food, had been working too hard. Fatigue caused a journalist's nightmare to come true.

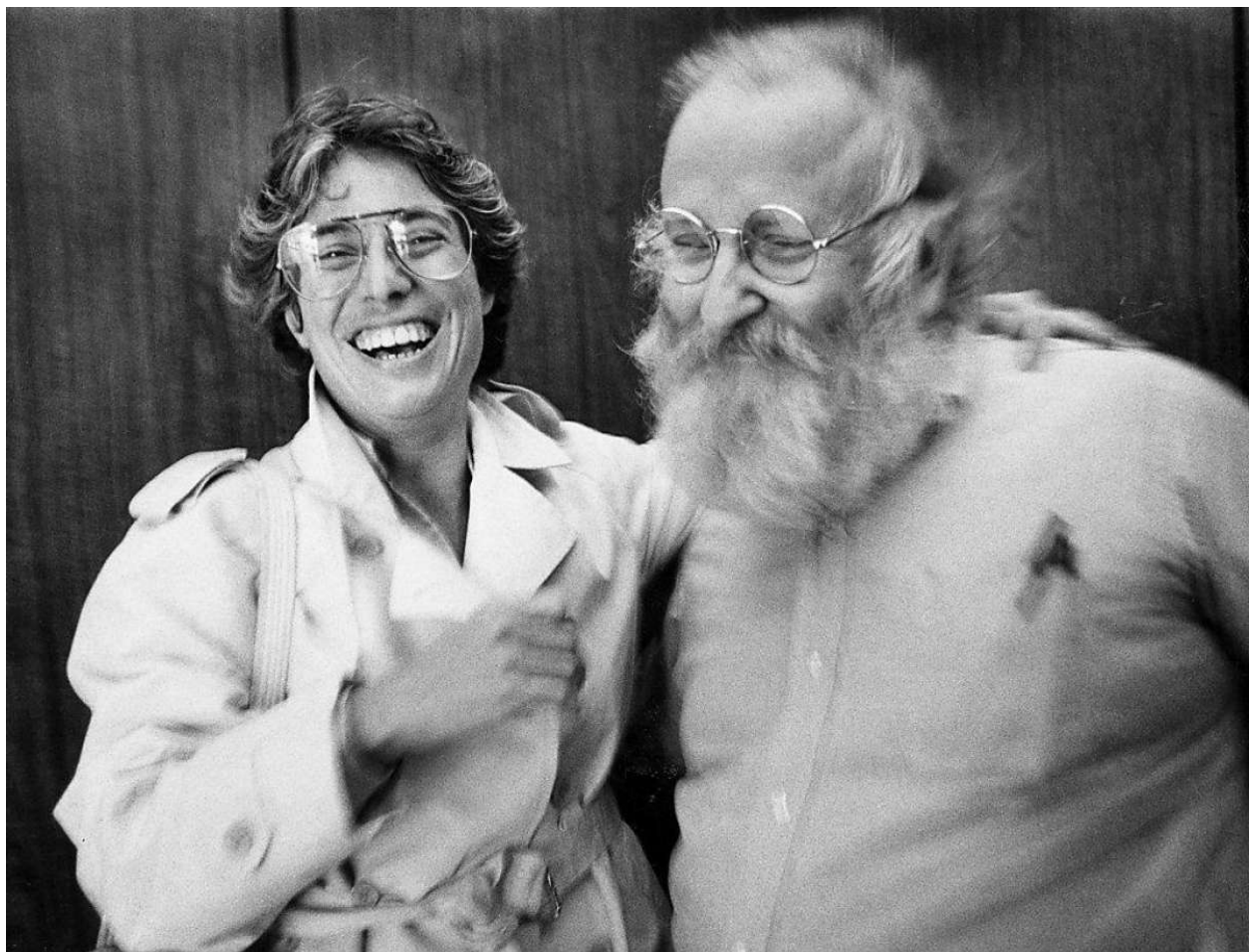
"One night, he came home and said, 'I've blown it.' He'd stood up Julia Child." Pogash wrote in an e-mail. "They'd had an appointment to meet for dinner and overwhelmed with work Jim forgot to check his calendar, Ever gracious, Julia

said it wasn't a problem and that she'd meet Jim and me, his wife, the following night for dinner. Which is how I met Julia. We talked that night about politics and butter, both of which she loved."

Pogash said there are no photos that she's aware of documenting either of Wood's meals with Child; the private one or the Tu Lan lunch. There are no images in The Chronicle archive. But Wood's family still cherishes the stories.

"Jim was a larger than life, brilliant, worldly and funny man," Pogash wrote. "I'm sure Julia appreciated that about him."

I decided after finding Wood's write-up of the Tu Lan visit to go back and read his full Chronicle obituary, more to honor the man than continue the sleuthing. Jim Wood had become as impressive a figure as Julia Child.



Reporter Carol Pogash and her husband, Jim Wood, both at work on the San Francisco Examiner. They were photographed June 15, 1981, in the elevator on the way up to the newsroom after finding out she was pregnant with their first child.



Vietnamese restaurant Tu Lan on Sixth Street in San Francisco. Peter Hartlaub

One more surprise awaited. After Wood died, his obituary writer Patricia Yollin remembered the Tu Lan/Julia Child story.

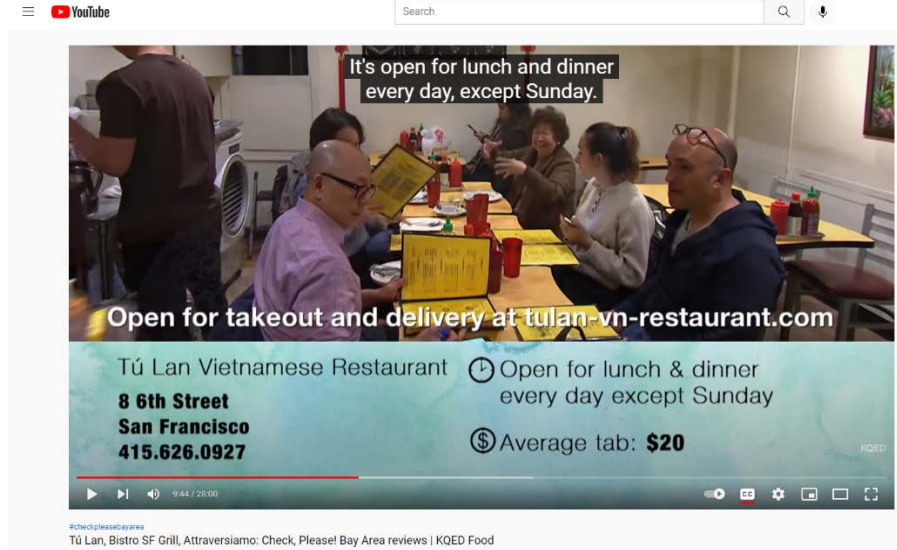
The reporter managed to reach an 89-year-old Child in 2002, as she was traveling down the California coast. The chef remembered Wood. (“It’s awfully young to die,” she said. “He was fun and he was good at what he did.”)

And after all those years, Child remembered Tu Lan. The words that followed are her only published review of the restaurant.

“The food was very good,” Child recalled. “It was a very dirty place, but I enjoyed it and had no ill effects.”

*Peter Hartlaub is The San Francisco Chronicle’s pop culture critic.  
Email: [phartlaub@sfchronicle.com](mailto:phartlaub@sfchronicle.com) Twitter: @PeterHartlaub*

# TÚ LAN VIDEOS



## Tú Lan, Bistro SF Grill, Attraversiamo: Check, Please! Bay Area reviews | KQED Food

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNZINHxS8ps>

Published on May 21, 2020

Posted by [KQED Food](#)

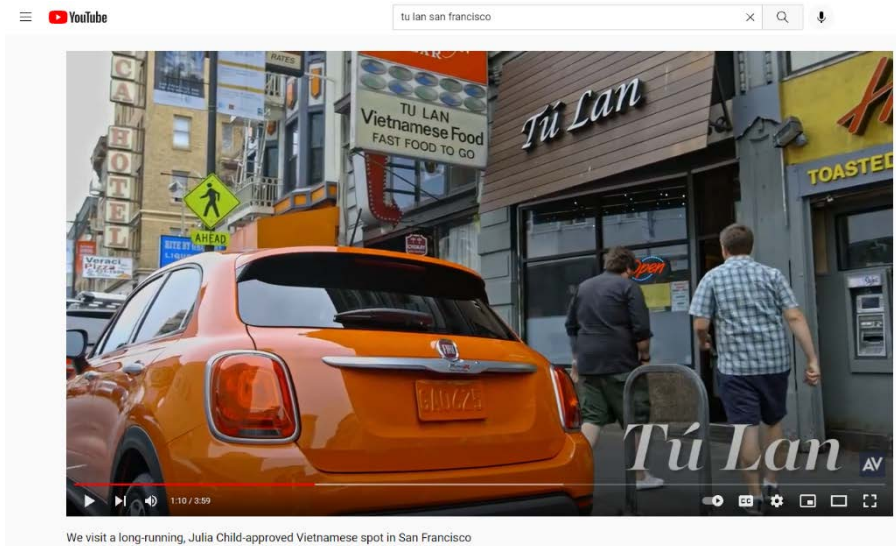
We begin at Tú Lan Vietnamese Restaurant, a hole-in-the wall in the Tenderloin that has cultivated a devoted following with comforting Vietnamese dishes for the past 43 years. Next, it's off to Noe Valley for festive Balkan cuisine and wines at Bistro SF Grill. Finally, we cross over the Bay to Attraversiamo, to devour Cal-Ital plates in the dazzling 'Streets of Brentwood.'

Check, Please! Bay Area Season 15, Episode 8, 2020. Guests: Mitsu Okubo, Kristin Tieche, Paschelle White.

Support restaurants AND eat deliciously while safely staying at home with our Season 15 Takeout Guide [→ http://bit.ly/CheckPleaseS15Takeout](http://bit.ly/CheckPleaseS15Takeout)

Watch more episodes at <http://kqed.org/checkplease>.  
[#checkpleasebayarea](#)

About Check Please Bay Area: Check, Please! Bay Area features guests and eateries as diverse as the Bay Area itself. With each episode of the James Beard and Emmy Award-winning program, three local diners are cast as restaurant critics and share their favorite spots. After trying each other's recommendations, they join host and moderator Leslie Sbrocco to discuss, dispute, and celebrate their dining experiences with lively commentary.



## We visit a long-running, Julia Child-approved Vietnamese spot in San Francisco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WW6ObyyWRl>

Published on Sep 25, 2015

Posted by [The A.V. Club](#)

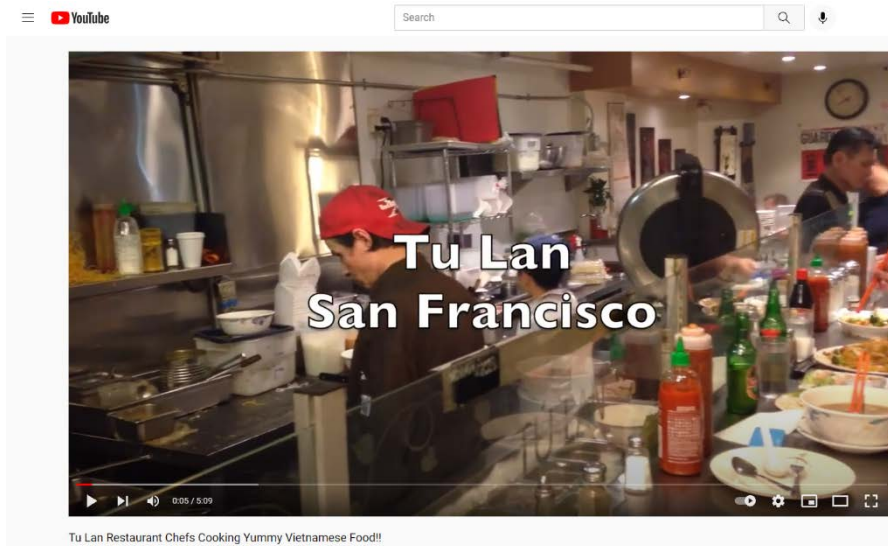
We visit the fantastic (and fantastically reasonable) Tu Lan, located in the heart of San Francisco, near 6th and Market streets. Tu Lan has been a local staple since 1977, serving authentic but approachable Vietnamese dishes like pho and imperial rolls; it was apparently a favorite of Julia Child, a drawing of whom appears on the menu. And only a few of these hearty dishes even crosses the \$10 threshold.

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## Tu Lan Restaurant Chefs Cooking Yummy Vietnamese Food!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pmY4WhgyKM>

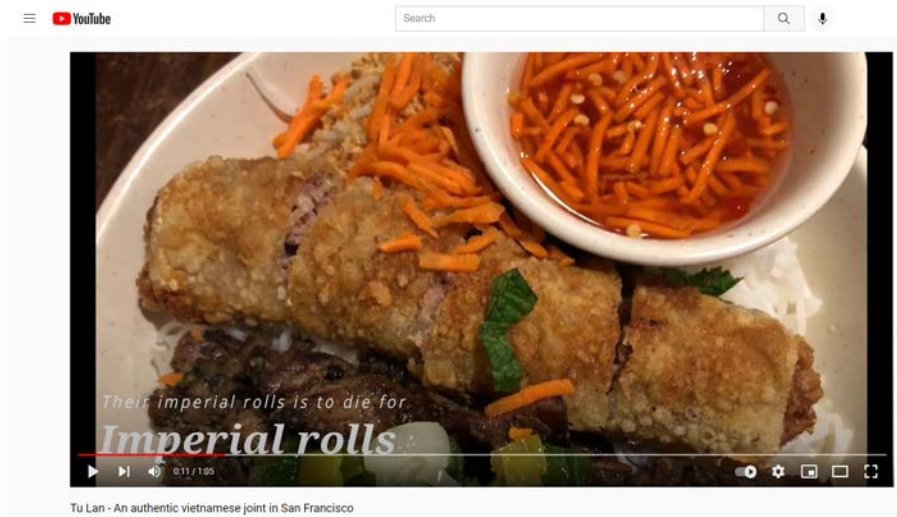
Published on Dec 20, 2014

Posted by [Videos From Here And There](#)

Travel to San Francisco: <http://amzn.to/1yVzSWB>

Vietnamese Home Cooking: <http://amzn.to/1AToYA5>

Tu Lan Restaurant Chefs Cooking Yummy Vietnamese Food!! This is my quick video of the Tu Lan Restaurant Chefs Cooking Yummy Vietnamese Food in San Francisco California. Stop in for a visit and eat at this very inexpensive Vietnamese restaurant full of tasty tasty Vietnamese food in the Tenderloin right off of 6th street.



## Tu Lan - An authentic vietnamese joint in San Francisco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6jqMniQJiA>

Published on Aug 17, 2018

Posted by [Hole in the Wall](#)

Tu Lan serves great Vietnamese food, this place is a must try if you're a foodie.

Maps - <https://goo.gl/aTAZHq>.



FACES IN PLACES: Julia Child at Tu Lan  
on sleeky Sixth, a place with great Vietnamese  
chow. She contented herself with spring rolls,  
pork shank kebabs with rice noodles, lemon beef  
salad, fried fish in ginger and Thuy's beer.

## TU LAN RESTAURANT

8 - 6th Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 626-0927

LUNCH - DINNER



BEER & WINE