

# San Francisco Chronicle

## BAY AREA

AND CALIFORNIA



Photos by MIKE KANE / The Chronicle

Todd Chapman, a partner at JMA Ventures that acquired Ghirardelli Square in 2004, tracks progress on the job.

### SAN FRANCISCO

## Ghirardelli Square's latest transformation

Almost everything but the chocolate outlets will be new

By Carl Nolte  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

There are more workers in hard hats than shoppers these spring days at San Francisco's famed Ghirardelli Square — the landmark retail complex is being torn up so that it can be reborn in the next few months as something that still looks old but will be brand new.

There will be new shops and a big wine-tasting and retail area, overlooked by 54 vacation apartments, where visitors can buy five weeks of San Francisco living for about \$250,000.

Except for the spiffy McCormick & Kuleto's restaurant and the landmark Ghirardelli chocolate outlets and soda fountains and a few other shops, the old Ghirardelli Square is gone, stripped to the bare walls and surrounded by chain-link fences.

On weekdays, shoppers have to dodge forklifts and skip loaders that zip around the plaza that architect Lawrence Halprin designed in the



Ghirardelli Square, a 1960s retail complex, is undergoing a make-over to bring it up date with a wine tasting area and time-share apartments.

1960s as a centerpiece to "a beehive of excitement."

It's not just a face-lift. The change is more like a complete overhaul. The only difference is that when the work is finished this fall, the place will still look the same — an old chocolate factory that looks like a confection in red brick — but the concept will be new.

"It's a rebirth," said Joe Nootbaar, one of the principals of JMA Ventures, which acquired the complex in

2004. "It's a rebirth of an important city icon."

Nootbaar and his partners at JMA say Ghirardelli Square had changed in recent years from a place where local people shopped to an extension of touristy Fisherman's Wharf, a place that most San Franciscans avoid.

"Mistakes were made" with the most recent incarnation of the square, said Todd Chapman, another of the four principals of JMA. "We want to

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