



PulseFactors™
expert advice on condominiums - san francisco

PULSE OF THE MARKET ©



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The Seven Sisters of San Francisco Condominiums

If I were to say Seven Sisters, what would come to mind? For me, it would be the seven major oil companies that ruled the world before the Arab states got together and formed OPEC in 1960.

It would also be the seven all-women liberal arts colleges in the Northeast, all founded between 1837 and 1889 and remaining women-only until Vassar went coed in 1969 and Radcliffe merged with Harvard in 1999.

Little did I know that the Seven Sisters is also the English name for a group of Moscow skyscrapers designed in the Stalinist era and built between 1947 and 1953. According to Wikipedia, they were built in an elaborate combination of Russian Baroque and Gothic styles using technology employed in building American skyscrapers. Check out some [pictures](#).

Now the world has the Seven Sisters of San Francisco; this is the name we hereby give to select high-end condominium buildings that have come to grace our skyline in the last few years. Consider this their formal name christening and debut.

The Seven Sisters:

The Brannan: A three-building complex started in 2001.

The Four Seasons: The City's first condominiums on top of a 5-Star hotel.

The St. Regis: Similar to the Four Seasons hotel/condo model.

The Ritz Carlton: A 5-Star hotel brand without the hotel. See the [May 2007 Pulse of the Market](#).

One Rincon: A 60-story tower that guards the Bay Bridge entrance.

The Infinity: A 650-unit complex with two towers and two podium buildings.

The Millennium: A 60-story tower and 11-story podium building by the same folks who brought us the Four Seasons. See the [November 2007 Pulse of the Market](#).

Together these seven buildings contain 2,051 condominiums and enjoy a host of amenities that did not exist in any San Francisco residential building before 2001. San Francisco has been recognized as a world-class city for decades, but it has existed without world-class condominium buildings. Now we have 'em!

So why are these buildings dubbed the Seven Sisters while others are not? It has to do with amenities, location and PulseFactors' proprietary analytics.

Amenities

While not all of the Seven Sisters have the same level of amenities, they all have two things in common: central air-conditioning and concierges. Many people might think that air-conditioning is not an amenity, but it is, and while the City boasts many fine high-end buildings built in the 20s and 30s, air-conditioning was not available then. It is now a standard for a high-end building. All of the Seven Sisters also have onsite concierges and state-of-the-art security – be it onsite security personnel and/or key fobs that restrict entrance.

They all have fitness centers, though the scope varies to a great extent, and most have media rooms, wine lockers, business centers, swimming pools and, in some cases, onsite dining.

Location

All of the Seven Sisters are clustered in the neighborhoods south of Market Street*. Okay, the Ritz Carlton is located on the north side of Market Street. Take a look at our [map](#).

Analytics

Some time ago, the PulseFactors team researched the relative value of one condominium building versus another and assigned each one what we call a ClassRating™. It just so happens that the Seven Sisters rank at the top of the PulseFactors.com ClassRating™ system.

How it works: Each building is assigned a specific value after its amenity level and location are taken into consideration. This value is separate and apart from the value of each individual condominium within that building. In other words, if I take a 1,000 sq. ft. condominium at The Brannan, and place that exact unit with the exact views, upgrades, etc. at The Millennium, that unit is going to have a different (market) value due to that specific building's amenity level and location.

Some sisters are more attractive than their siblings. Just as a diamond's value changes with its setting, so it goes with fine condominiums.

Top of the Heap

Since we are talking about high-end buildings, we should touch on the high-end of the high-end: the penthouses. Penthouses typically have the best views, the best light (they are closer to the sun and the moon) and may have bigger balconies or terraces and sometimes even private entrances. They may share the top floor with four or five neighbors or they may be the only residence on the floor, as with the penthouse at the St. Regis, which started out as three condominiums and then combined into one condominium by the buyer.

Information on these penthouses is not readily available because either owners are very private or developers feel that less information translates into more mystique and higher sale prices. I am not sure. In any event, we plan to do some digging in this garden and will share what we find on [PulseFactors.com](#).

*One major attraction of the south of Market Street area is the proximity of the 80 and 280 freeways, which offer easy access to the East Bay, Napa/Sonoma, the Silicon Valley and Monterrey. Another big draw is the Caltrans Station at 4th and Townsend, which provides train access to Silicon Valley. The Transbay Terminal, planned for Mission at First Street, will feature high-speed rail to Los Angeles and Sacramento. Plus, there is shopping at Union Square and Westfield Center, as well as AT&T Park, The Embarcadero, MOMA, Yerba Buena and a host of restaurants and entertainment venues. Unlike much of the City, these neighborhoods are flat and walkable.

Competitive Landscape

Anyone who thinks that the Seven Sisters do not compete with high-end condominiums in the traditionally high-end north of Market Street neighborhoods is sadly mistaken. As an example, last week a buyer visited one of my listings, a \$1.5+ million 3-bedroom/2.5-bath condominium in the heart of Pacific Heights. It turns out that she prefers a building south of Market Street that has 24/7 security, a fitness center and so on. She will probably pay more for a smaller unit, pay higher HOA dues and live in a neighborhood with seemingly fewer amenities. But for her, the much sought after ambiance of Pacific Heights is secondary to the upscale attributes of the Seven Sisters.

Don't Hesitate to Call

Check us out at PulseFactors.com, where we will shed considerably more light on the Seven Sisters. Also, stay tuned for the trillion-dollar contest (no, not the one the federal government is running!). And when you need agents with impeccable transaction expertise to help you buy or sell a residential property, please [contact](#) the PulseFactors.com team.

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