Discovering San Fran and surrounds’ most monumental wanderers ...

When San Francisco and the Bay Area springs to mind, many of us think of Zuckerberg and his Silicon Valley.

Hoard of startups-turned-industry-giants have made one of America’s most historic cities gleam with a tech-money sheen.

San Fran’s iconic cable cars date back to 1873 but are now a huge tourist draw card to the city. Photo: Getty
But the streets of San Fran and its surrounding counties boast more than new-age riches, the area is haunted by its rich gold rush past. From speakeasy bars, to haunted hotels and classic Franciscan meals, here are the most historic places to stay, eat and visit in Northern California ...

Stay:

Portola Hotel and Spa
Head south down Highway 1 to historic Monterey Bay, the first capital of California. It was the place of Cali’s first theatre, public building, and public library. These days Monterey is known as a luxe tourist spot and the moody backdrop of the hit show Big Little Lies. At the heart of the charming Fisherman’s Wharf is the Portola Hotel and Spa, a luxurious stay boasting nautical rooms and the biggest day spa in No-Cal. Portola is named after a Spanish soldier Gaspar de Portola who arrived in 1770 – the same year the city was colonised. You can stroll by the statue of Gasper right outside the hotel on your way down to the famous Cannery Row. Make sure you visit Carmel by the Sea, Big Sur, Carmel Valley, and 17-Mile Drive – all driveable from Portola Hotel and Spa.