



SEARCH

November 22, 2005



SEND TO A FRIEND

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Optimistic Approach

You're an optimist. The glass is always half full. What goes around surely comes around. And good things definitely come to those who wait.

So you'll love Union Street's new Italian wine bar, Ottimista (that's "optimist" in Italian).



Housed in the space that was formerly Rica, the eatery has been turned into a cozy, rustic spot perfect for lounging. Earthy tones and wooden barrel tables are accented with old black and white photos and a mural of a vintage Italian map. If you can score a prime spot on the outdoor patio, you're in for a treat.

The affordable wine list (\$7 a glass for many) is 50 percent Italian and 25 percent Californian, with the remainder coming from all over. Chef Mark Young (Slow Club, Slanted Door) has a delicious menu of small plates (olives baked in Asiago pastry crust, butternut squash crostada with walnuts and blue cheese) and bigger bites (gnocchi with Brussels sprouts, bacon, hazelnuts, and brown butter; pan-seared halibut with saffron-braised fennel).

Desserts (fresh ricotta doughnuts with nutmeg sugar, caramelized apple galette with honey ice cream) all but guarantee a sweet — and happy — ending.

Things are definitely looking up.

Ottimista Enoteca-Cafe, 1838 Union Street, between Laguna and Octavia Streets (415-674-8400 or



ottimistasf.com).



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