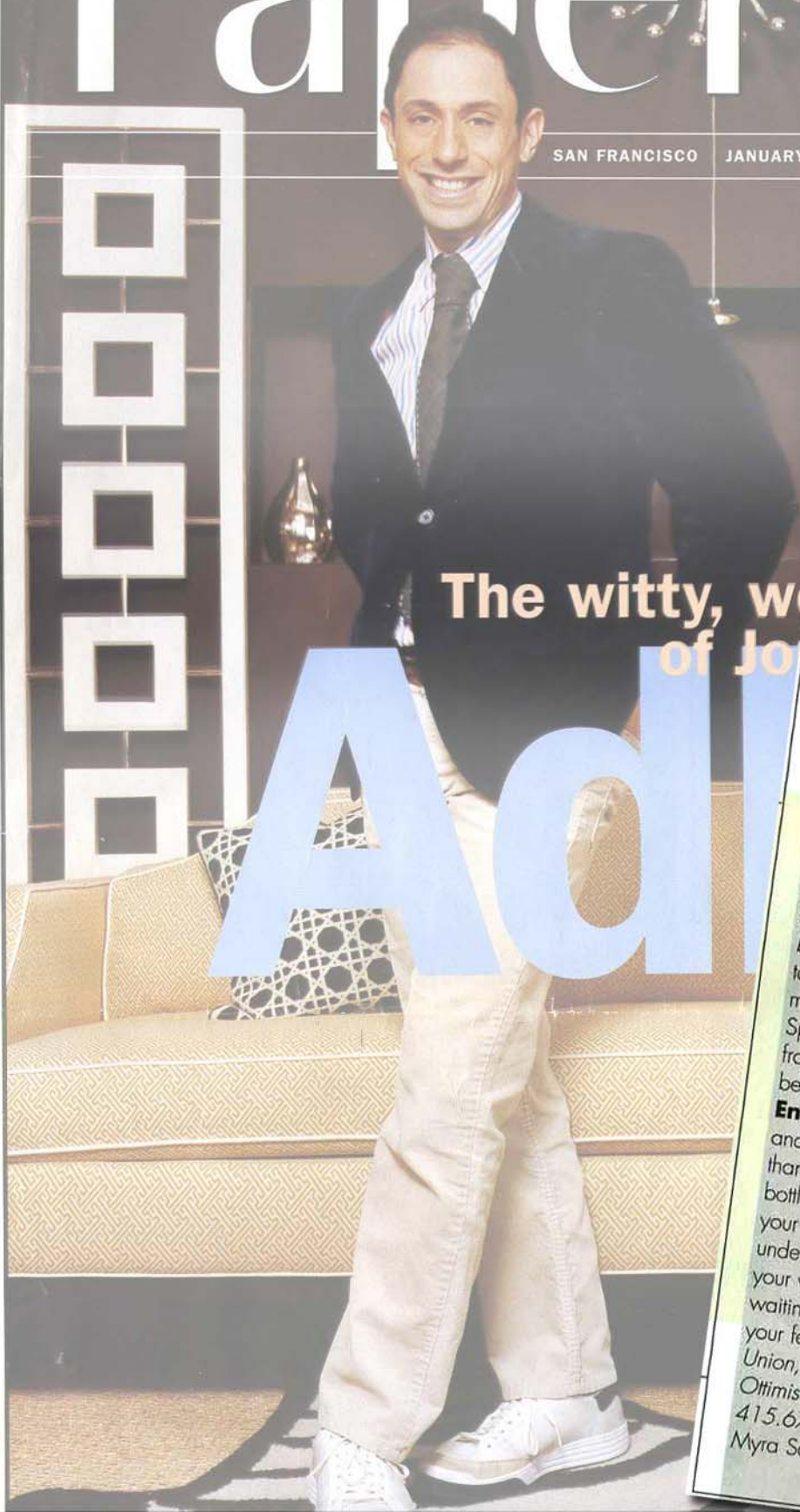


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SAN FRANCISCO JANUARY 2006

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DREW ALTIZER



Blanca Café's
Tanya Ristau

Charming Corkage

Why hang out in a coffee shop when you can swig at a wine bar? Both are fabulous European imports,

but the latter is a hipper take on cafe culture, minus the Starbucks-esque homogenization. Channel southern Spain at the intimate **Blanca Café** in North Beach, where Moroccan details infuse the romantic space. Sip on a goblet of rich Spanish vino; try bocadillos or plates of queso or carne; and take in the rhythmic pulse of live flamenco music. Over in Cow Hollow, pocket your Spanish passport and fish the Italian version from your Fendi (*Mission: Impossible*-style) before stepping into the lively **Ottimista Enoteca-Café** to savor small-plate dishes and cured meats while choosing from more than 25 wines by the glass or 200 by the bottle. You'll find yourself snuggling up to your beau in the warmth of candlelight under the open timber ceiling or swirling your wine dreamily on the outdoor patio, waiting for a hot *italiano* to sweep you off your feet. **Blanca Café**, 1441 Grant at Union, 415.291.9944; blancacafe.com. **Ottimista Enoteca-Café**, 1838 Union, 415.674.8400; ottimistasf.com.
Myra Sandoval

