

INTERNATIONAL

# BLACK TIE CLUB

June 2025



Convergence May 1-4 2025

## SAN FRANCISCO

Where Formal Meets Fabulous



**convergence  
Issue**



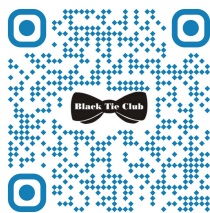
**Black Tie Club**

*International*

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[blacktieclubinternational.org](http://blacktieclubinternational.org)

Or scan QR code



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**Founding Editor** Bob Gregson, RIP

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Atlanta, Dallas,  
Ft. Lauderdale, Laguna Beach,  
Los Angeles, New Mexico,  
Palm Beach, Palm Springs,  
Phoenix/Scottsdale,  
Rehoboth Beach/Lewes,  
Rochester/Finger Lakes, San Diego,  
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#### Magazine Submissions

##### Deadlines

Summer Issue covering Jun - Sep

2025: 15 Sep 2025

Holiday Issue covering Oct - Dec 2025:

15 Dec

#### Cover Image

Convergence Program Cover



# Message from the Steering Committee

By Norm Dito

San Francisco Chapter Membership Chair

From April 30th through May 5th, the 2025 Convergence for Black Tie Club International, themed "Where Formal Meets Fabulous," was a great success with 130 members gathering in the City by the Bay, San Francisco. We were fortunate to have had members from almost all the chapters in attendance. An enthusiastic group for sure and we were delighted that so many men could join us for four days or more "celebrating the classic gentleman with fine food, superb wine, and fantastic fellowship." The sun shone brightly in San Francisco and the events were enjoyed by all. *You'll notice in the photo gallery the attendees took formal and fabulous to heights of sartorial splendor.*

We certainly hope you enjoy this special Convergence edition of the magazine. For those who attended, hopefully this edition of our BTC magazine will bring back some great memories. And for those who were unable to attend, hopefully you'll see what a great time was had by all and be motivated to join us for the next convergence. We were not able to put all the pictures in the magazine; to see them all, check out this link:

[Link to Convergence 2025 photos.](#)

Our chapter co-presidents, Rich Martini and Markham Miller, would like to especially thank the members and people who worked over the past three years to bring this event to a successful fruition. In particular, a big shout out to Jim Boey, Convergence Chair and formally co-president of the San Francisco Chapter. His tireless energy motivated committee members to truly deliver a gathering to be remembered. The planning started in late 2022 with a steering committee comprised of members Jim Boey, Norm Dito, Dan Joraanstad, Rich Walker, and Chris Wiseman. Out of the steering committee the planning evolved into many subcommittees each covering a specific event. The key to success was regular transparent communication, all overseen by our highly talented and highly organised new co-presidents, Rich and Markham. *From the "Lift Off Libation" Wednesday early arrivers event which was held at two members homes both located atop Nob Hill (you may recall that's "Where Little Cable Cars Climb Halfway To The Stars" as immortalized by Tony Bennett) to our Monday, May 5th, hold over event, "City Lights Into The Vineyard" excursion to the beautiful Valley of the Moon, Sonoma Wine Country, the raves resonated loudly in our attendees ears.*

As with all great things, Convergence ended far too quickly. And while I presume many of our visitors left a part of their heart in San Francisco, we look forward to the next Convergence in Rehoboth Beach/Lewes, Coastal Convergence 2026, May 14th through the 17th.

In good fellowship,

*Norm Dito*





## Wednesday Libation Lift Off Party

Inspired by the 2025 San Francisco Black Tie Club Convergence theme, “Where Formal Meets Fabulous,” this long-anticipated event was kicked off by a “lift off libations” event at not one, but two private homes in the City by the Bay. On April 30th, Arn Dito and Robert Beadle opened their beautiful homes, with vistas of the San Francisco Bay, to both local and out-of-town guests. This event was co-hosted by Jim Boey and Bob Highsmith at Robert’s home. Arn’s brother, Norm Dito, and his partner, Steve Weiner, co-hosted at Arn’s home.



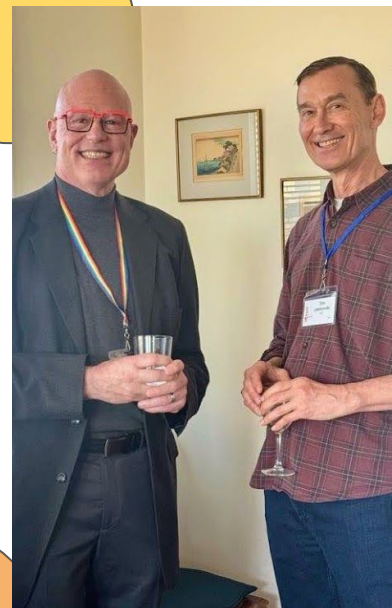














## Official Welcome Party at the Dawn Club

The following day, after out-of-town Black Tie Club members had registered at the host hotel, the SOMA Hyatt Regency, the official Convergence welcome party was convened at the Dawn Club, a SF historic entertainment site. With opening remarks by Rich Martini and Markham Miller, San Francisco Black Tie Club Co-Presidents, all those in attendance enjoyed crafted cocktails and heavy appetizers. The host and coordinator of this event was Patrick Rylee.



It's all about the sugar isn't it?



A bountiful buffet greeted us at the kick-off welcome party.





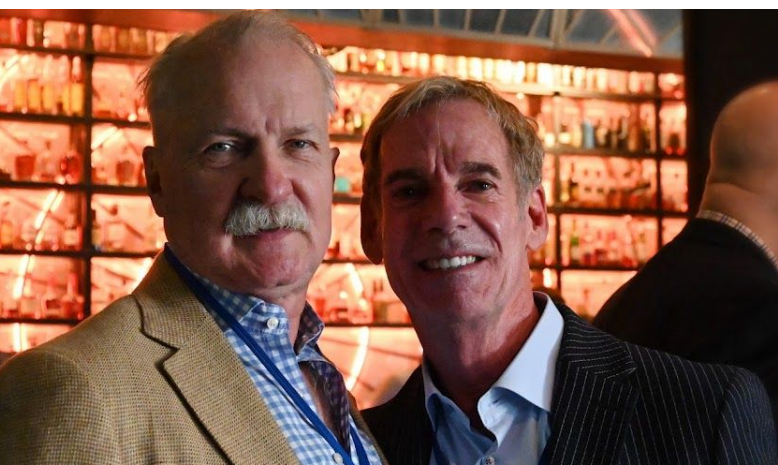
Opening remarks by San Francisco Black Tie Club Co-Presidents, Markham Miller and Rich Martini.



Event host Patrick Rylee welcoming the crowd.















*What a welcome! We think we'll leave our hearts in San Francisco.*





## Friday Daytime Outings

On Friday, May 2nd, all attendees were given options for the day that included a visit to Alcatraz, a lunch in Sausalito, or tours of the contemporary art museum, SFMOMA. All of these events were well attended. The coordinators were Jim Tom for Alcatraz, Jim Boey and Norm Dito for Sausalito, and Dan Joraanstad for SFMOMA.



SFMOMA balloons amok



SFMOMA "Curtain Call"





Now what have they called this sculpture? "Flushaway"



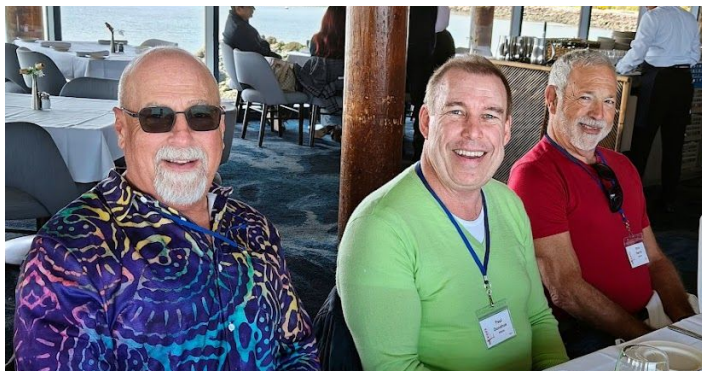
Stuck in a  
labyrinth of  
love in  
SFMOMA



*Sausalito or bust, here we come*







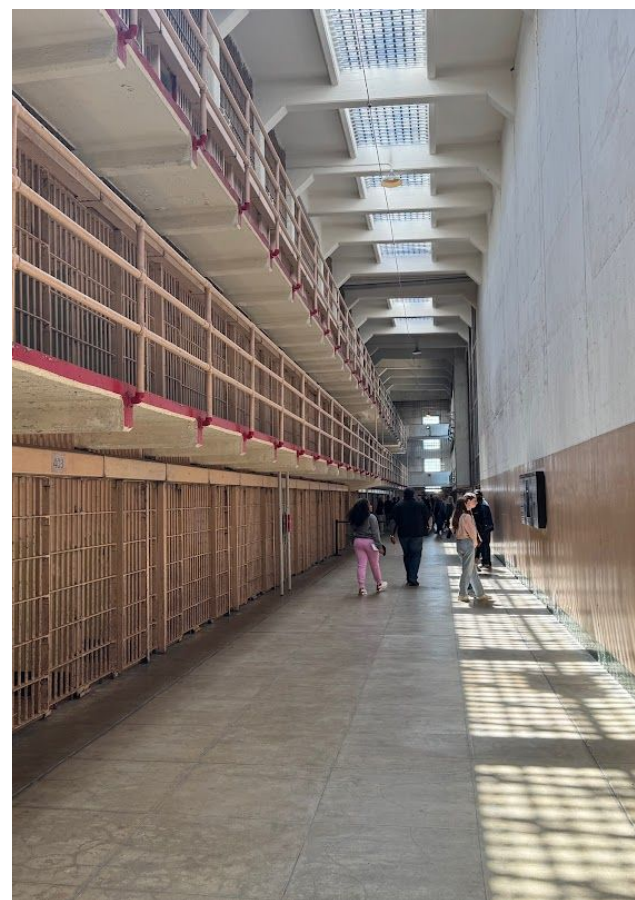
*Wine always gets a conversation started*





Scoma's of Sausalito is a delightful and historic waterfront restaurant.













## Friday Night Dine About

The evening events for Friday, May 2nd, was a “Taste Trek” of a variety of San Francisco restaurants, many with a delightful ethnic flair. Listed with their names and hosts, these restaurants included Poesia Italian Café with host Gary Keener; Catch French Bistro with hosts Norm Abramson and Mark Streshinsky; Fable Restaurant hosted by Ken Cleaveland; Lai Hong Cantonese Lounge hosted by Ben Wong and Jim Boey; Seven Hills, an American fare restaurant, hosted by Tom Rothgiesser and George Lucas; and La Mar Peruvian Restaurant hosted by Lawrence Wu and Dennis White. After dinner, the fun continued into the night with “Castro Capers,” a walking tour of Castro Street bars, led by Ken Cleaveland.



*La Mar Peruvian Restaurant*



Pre-dinner Mai  
Tai Li Po Lounge.  
What could  
possibly go  
wrong?





## *Poesia Restaurant*



## *Chinatown Chowdown Lai Hong Lounge*







*Fable Restaurant in the Castro*







## Saturday Black Tie Gala

Saturday, May 3rd's daytime agenda included a wide variety of activities throughout San Francisco including walking tours of the Embarcadero as well as Chinatown. Then, all Black Tie Club members got ready for the formal Gala cocktail party, dinner, and dancing at the host hotel, the Hyatt Regency SOMA's Atelier Ballroom. After a lengthy cocktail party, 130 members joined together to dine, toast all present, and enjoy a belly dancing performance. The evening ended with dancing and cocktails into the night.



*Always a dash of the "Debonaire" at a Black Tie Club event!*















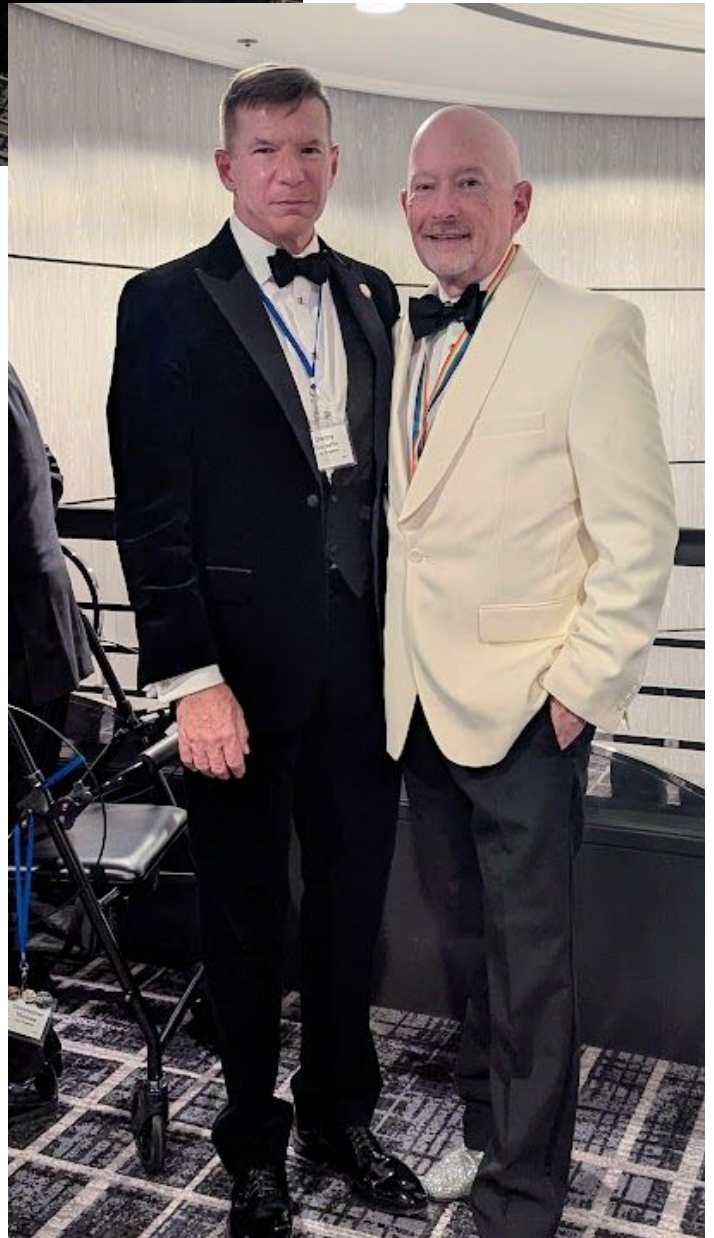
















Will "HE" ever stop talking  
says the crowd?



Will dinner ever be  
served?

















San Francisco Chapter welcomes y'all



San Francisco Chapter, Part II, continues to overflow; our own stairway to heaven





San Francisco Chapter again



Los Angeles Chapter, Proud and Tall!





Atlanta Chapter



Rehoboth Beach/Lewes Chapter ready to welcome Black Tie Convergence 2026











*We could have danced all night!*







## Sunday, A Final Farewell



Sunday, May 4th, the sun shone brightly on Market Street, the Champs Elysee of San Francisco, as 90 members walked down to celebrate our final day together with an over the top dim sum brunch at Harbor View Restaurant in the John Portman designed Embarcadero Center. Organized and hosted by San Francisco member, Ben Wong, and former San Francisco Black Tie Club Co-President, Jim Boey, it can only be described as a banquet extraordinaire. Liberal libations on the outdoor patio overlooking the Ferry Building was followed by far too many specialties to name, but a few included an elaborate fried and baked dim sum sampler, honey walnut prawns, “Ha Gow” shrimp dumplings, and a chef choice dessert of sesame balls and mango pudding. Our group of 90 toasted, roasted, and applauded the success of Convergence 2025 with a farewell message from International President Gary Dougan. Following brunch we slowly migrated back to the Hyatt for a dim sum nap in preparation of our Final Toast Soirée at San Francisco’s renowned gay piano bar, Martuni’s. Members belted out “Over the Rainbow,” “Where the Boys Are,” and every tune Gloria Gaynor ever recorded. Martinis and cosmos flowed like water and hugs of brotherly love were exchanged as 5 p.m. approached and we said, “curtain down” to Convergence 2025.

























Even our cocktail hostess entertained us.

*Piano bar for a perfect Sunday afternoon*







## City Lights Into The Vineyard

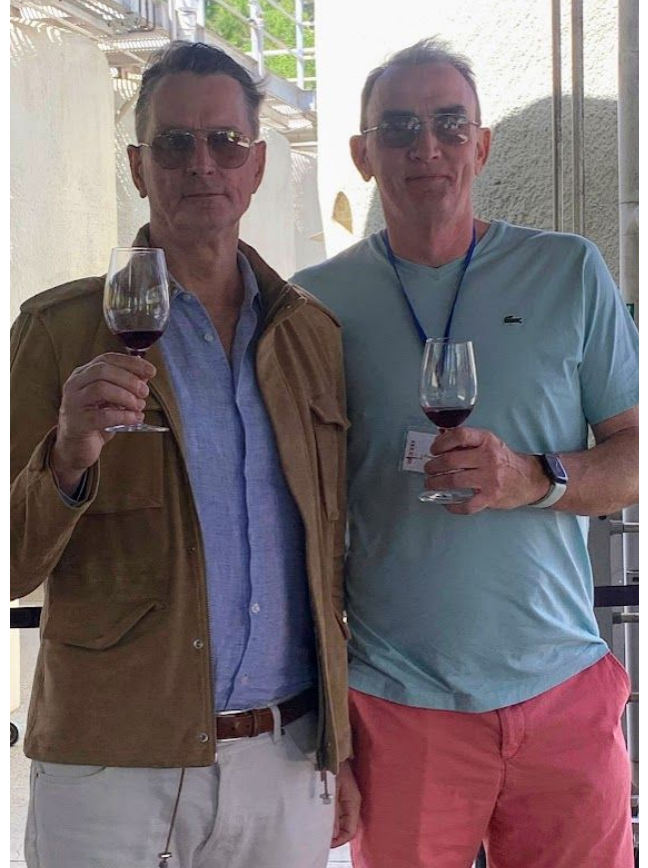
On Monday, May 5th, the gang of “just-can’t-leave-yets” allowed extra time for a Bay Area daytime adventure. Where better to spend a day than at a vineyard in Sonoma County. Thirty-four of us boarded a chartered bus and travelled north where the temperatures headed to the 80’s and the sky was a clear azure blue. Along the way, our host, Norm Dito, narrated the drive out of San Francisco and across the magnificent Golden Gate Bridge. A quick stop at Vista Point, on the north side of the bridge, produced once-in-a-lifetime photo opportunities of the San Francisco skyline. We continued through the Robin Williams Tunnel towards our first stop, Benziger Winery, located in the beautiful Valley of the Moon. At Benziger, we experienced a true climb on the tractor and a getting-dirt-under-your-nails ride into the vineyards and fields with generous wine tasting along the way. We learned of vineyard sustainability and mother nature’s important role in viticulture. Afterwards, we got back on the bus and meandered over the easy Sonoma hills to our next stop, Kunde Family Winery. We were met by our hostess, Teresa, who guided us into the tasting room for our pre-ordered box lunches and, of course, the appropriate wine to accompany them. After lunch, Teresa led us to the 60,000 square foot labyrinth of caves at Kunde where the aging, casking, and bottling processes were fully explained. This all occurred as we sat at the twenty-foot long cave banquet table. Too soon it was time for the last opportunity to purchase wine and perhaps to join the wine club before boarding the bus to head home. It was a quiet ride home until we crested the hill above the Golden Gate Bridge and our co-president, Rich Martini, connected his blue tooth to the bus speaker. As the bus rolled onto the bridge, we heard Dame Judy Garland belt out “San Francisco Open Your Golden Gate.” A roar of applause erupted as we gently rolled up to the Hyatt Hotel. Big hugs and so-great-to-meet-you exchanges, and of course, “we’ll see you next year” in Rehoboth resonated. A triumphant six days in San Francisco had come to an end.

















# Upcoming Convergences

For the latest Convergence updates visit  
[blacktieclubinternational.org/convergence](http://blacktieclubinternational.org/convergence)

## Coastal Convergence 2026

Rehoboth Beach ♦ Lewes

May 14 - 17

Registration for event and hotel will be available late October



Online Information at  
[btci.online](http://btci.online)



### Guest Hotel

The guest hotel is Hotel Rehoboth, an independent hotel located on Rehoboth Avenue. From the moment you enter the hotel's spacious lobby with a baby grand piano, central staircase, and fireplace sitting area, you are welcomed with genuine Rehoboth Beach hospitality.

### Tentative Schedule

#### Thursday

*Black Tie Beginnings: A Night of Sophisticated Greetings*  
At the home of Joe Filipek and Larry Richardson.

#### Friday

*"Par-Tee" at Kings Creek Country Club (Add-on Cost)*  
Enjoy exclusive access to one of the premier 18-hole golf courses on the Delmarva Peninsula.

*Excursion to Longwood Gardens (Add-on Cost)*  
Tour one of the world's finest horticultural displays.

*Moonlight Soirée at The Blue Moon*  
Appetizers and entertainment with access to downtown gay bars.

#### Saturday

*First Town Footsteps: A Journey through Lewes*  
Tour Lewes, the site of the first European settlement in Delaware.

*Black & White Ball: Coastal Elegance*  
Formal Dinner at the Kings Creek County Country Club.

#### Sunday

*Mimosas & Memories Brunch*  
At Above the Dunes Restaurant, the number one spot in Rehoboth to dine with an ocean view.

*Finale Fête: The Grand Afterglow*  
Business casual reception at the home of Andy Staton and Patrick Saparito.

## Convergence 2027

### Palm Beach

Dates and Details in the Making

