My favorite **spot** in San Francisco is Cafe Puccini- located in the North Beach neighborhood of the city. North Beach has a long and interesting history. It was originally the neighborhood for Italian **immigrants** in the city- and even today it has many Italian people, cafes, and restaurants. As a kid, the famous baseball player Joe Dimaggio lived in North Beach.

The most famous **period** for the neighborhood, however, was in the late 1950s and the 1960s--when North Beach served as the center of San Francisco's **literary renaissance**. In particular, North Beach was home to the Beat writers and poets. The Beats developed a new, free, open **style** of writing. They also challenged the **conservative** society of America in the 50s, and helped create San Francisco's **uniquely liberal** culture. Many **credit** the Beats as the fathers and mothers of the 1960s cultural **renaissance** in America.

Among the most famous Beat writers were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder- all of whom lived in North Beach at various times in their lives. The **focal point of the movement** was City Lights Bookstore- owned by the **anarchist** poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. In the 1950s, City Lights made history when they published Allen Ginsberg's **controversial** poem "Howl"- which shocked **mainstream** Americans at the time. Soon after, Jack Kerouac followed with his books "On The Road" and "The Dharma Bums"-- and the Beat movement was born. Ferlinghetti is still the owner of the bookstore, and City Lights is still a popular **independent publisher**.

And North Beach is still home to artists and writers, although it has become much more expensive and now attracts **wealthier residents** as well as tourists. Even though the **literary scene** is not what it used to be- North Beach still has many family owned cafes. You'll find artists, writers, poets, **entrepreneurs**, musicians, businesspeople, and tourists relaxing together in them.
My favorite is Cafe Puccini, which is named after the Italian opera composer. The cafe owner is Italian. He often plays opera music, and every day he sits at a table in the back and chats with his friends. They hold long animated conversations in Italian, adding to the music of the place.

I go to that cafe often. I usually get a mocha, find a small table, and then write articles for Effortless English. Sometimes I study a little Spanish or Japanese. Sometimes I read. Sometimes I just watch the people walk by the windows. The staff never seems to mind that I stay a long time- they are always friendly.

On sunny days I sit at a table on the sidewalk, but now, during the winter, I stay indoors.

If you get a chance to visit San Francisco, stop by Cafe Puccini. Its located near the intersection of Columbus and Vallejo streets, in North Beach. Be sure to bring a book by Kerouac or Ginsberg. Sit, enjoy the opera music, and relax for a while. No one will hurry you.

Learn More:

North Beach
http://www.sfnorthbeach.org/

Jack Kerouac

Allen Ginsberg

Gary Snyder
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Snyder