

THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

A sculptural tower that set itself apart

John King - Updated 7:27 a.m., Sunday, August 12, 2012

44 Montgomery St. Architect: [John Graham](#) | **Style:** Corporate modern **Size:** 43 stories | **Date built:** 1966

It's difficult to look at this striped monolith without seeing, primarily, a cautionary tale of the 1960s that treated its surroundings as a backdrop against which the New could proclaim that Today had arrived. But enough time has passed to also let us take in the tower's artistic ambitions. A dark marble colonnade is topped by gleaming aluminum bands that stretch to the heavens, banding twice as dense on the lower floors in an abstract gesture to context. This quest, to dazzle the eye, has returned to architecture of late. Time will tell what tomorrow thinks of our own today.

The 43-story tower at 44 Montgomery St. was the tallest tower in San Francisco when it opened in 1966. It remains a sharp departure in look and scale from older masonry buildings nearby. Photo: John King, The Chronicle / SF

