

# SANDY DAYS, SALTY NIGHTS

## The games people play

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Before the age of match.com, when dating was still novel and I hadn't heard every line in the book, I loved to read newspaper personal ads. Often cheesy, sometimes creepy, I felt like they gave a shorthand look into the world of dating, a sort of cryptic road map to help navigate the as-yet-uncharted realm of male-female engagements.

Among the many variations of SM's seeking SF's, there was one line that consistently caught my eye: "No games." It appeared so frequently that I came to understand early on, when I had barely gotten my own dating feet wet, that game-playing must factor into most relationships.

When I learned that this year's Alliance of the Arts fundraiser, Art Royale, was themed "The Games People Play," I immediately had a flash on those personal ads from the past and chuckled to myself. It seems game-playing is still in vogue.

For the event, my friend Susie and I donned costumes (she, an all-noir, über-artsy Magic 8 Ball; me, the Queen of Hearts) and mingled with the Fort



Myers art scene. As we sampled tuna tataki from Crü and pomegranate martinis at the bar, we scanned the crowd, on the lookout for eligible bachelors.

Friends since high school, Susie and my dating records have often run parallel, with more time spent as single women than with significant others. The most notable exception came in our early twenties, when our first taste of love had a decidedly European flavor.

For Susie, it was a British engineer, attractive and endearing, with a sense of humor and English accent that made him utterly swoon-worthy. My tastes ran more continental, and I gave my heart to a boy from the south of France that played the guitar and had the green-brown-gold eyes of a sun-drenched vineyard. He spoke a languid, lyrical French, inflected with the intonations of Provence, and merely the way he said my name ruined me on American men for many years afterward.

Art Royale, though a good time, was bereft in the dating department, and Susie and I left without so much as a prospect on our social agendas. Still, the theme of the night stuck with us, and we found ourselves rehashing our first relationships and how little we knew then about the game of love.

Young and new to the dating market, we were artifice free. We didn't strategize or scheme, plot or connive. We were helplessly, hopelessly in love, and we took the maxim, "no games," to heart.

"We were disastrous!" Susie said.

I laughed with her, and we both cringed as we remembered how we returned calls immediately and made ourselves shamelessly available. It was a long, painful lesson for each of us and ultimately ended in heartache on both our parts.

Now, years later, we have taken the lessons learned from those first, artless relationships and turned them into tools in our dating skill set. We are not masters of the game, per se, but we are diligent protégés.

When Susie's first love sent her flowers for this year's birthday, an unimaginable act of generosity in our game-free days, she was carefully insouciant in her response. And, when my French love tracked me down on Facebook this week - four years since the last time we spoke - I sent a circumspectly indifferent reply, 48 hours after his initial message.

In a perfect world, none of us would play games and relationships would be as seamless and uncomplicated as our sentiments. Until there is a universal détente, however, my player days are far from over. ■

**Contact Artis**  
Send your dating tips, questions, and disasters to sandydays@florida-weekly.com

# Caution!!!

### Tapas

- Scallop - Serrano Ham & Roasted Fennel...6
- Tuna Tartar - Lime - Basil Vinaigrette...8
- Shrimp - Banderilla Dressing...10
- Artisanal - Blu Del Moncenisio, Triple Cream...9
- Carne - Speck Ham, Bresaola...7.5
- Spicy Crab Roll - Sriracha & Sweet Teriyaki...9.5
- Bonzi Roll - Manchego & Cru Steak Sauce...8.5
- Mediterranean Mussel - Tamarind-Tomato-Coriander Broth...10
- Escargot - Forrest Mushrooms, Wilted Spinach, Lobster Essence...9
- Kobe Meatballs - Goat Cheese Ravioli, Tomato Pomegranate Au Poivre 4pc...8 6pc...11

### Sea

- Tripletail - Heirloom Tomato Risotto...22
- Grouper - Celery Root Puree, Walnuts...22
- Sea Bass - Wild Mushrooms, Watercress, Parmesan...27
- Scallops - Leeks, Chorizo, Clams, Cipollini...20

### PURE Greens

- Tomato Mozz - Basil, Avocado Oil, Fig & Almond Jam...12
- Grilled Romaine - Pecorino Pepato, Anchovy Dressing...9
- Spinach & Arugula - Tarragon & Bacon Shallot Vinaigrette...8.5
- Frisee & Wild Mushrooms - Quail Egg, Sherry Vinaigrette...9

### Antipasti

- Grand Cru...25
- Big Eye Sashimi, Beef Tartar
- Diver Scallop, Seared Foie Gras
- Shrimp & Serrano Handrolls, And Imported Cheese

### Social Plate...17

- Tuna Tartar, Porchetta, Crespone, Smoked Almonds
- Truffled Mushroom Puree, Gravlox, Duck Sausage

### Bacchus Board...15

- Pesto, Tapenade, Mozzarella, Cheddar Roasted Reds
- Olives, Balsamic Reduction
- Grilled Bread

### Classics

- Spanish Chicken and Rice - Smoked Chicken, Olives, Chef's Vegetables, Saffron Rice...17
- Cru Paella - Mussels, Clams, Shrimp, Scallops, Chorizo...19
- 10 oz Ashley Farms Chicken - Balsamic Roasted Tomatoes, Bacon & Blue Cheese...17
- Chef's Fresh Pasta - Garlic, Tomatoes, Pine Nuts, Lemon-Caper Sauce...16

### Extras

- Skinny Fries...5
- Truffle Fries...9
- Roasted Foie Gras Potatoes...9
- Broccolini, Leeks, & Spinach...8.5
- Tomato and "Caroline's" Cheese Risotto...8
- \*Add a Maine Lobster Tail...19

### Sashimi

- Tuna...6
- Salmon...6
- Hamachi...7
- White Tuna...6
- Wahoo...5

### Chef's Plates

- Buffalo Au Poivre...32
- Duck Breast - Bean & Ham Hock Cassoulet...20
- Pork Chop - Cauliflower, Fennel & Raisin Jam...19
- Maine Lobster Tail - Gnocchi, Spinach, Mushrooms, Hollandaise...29
- Chateaubriand - (Dinner For Two-Choice of Two Extras) ...39 - per guest

### Land

- Lamb Chops...28
- 16 oz Delmonico...35
- Beef Tenderloin...24
- 12 oz NY Strip...27
- Ostrich Filet...28
- 10 oz Cru Steak...20 (Over Skinny Fries)

### Chef's Meat Partner of:

- Brussel Sprouts, Field Onions, Roma Tomatoes, Winter Squash, Chervil, Chives, And Tarragon

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