

SANDY DAYS, SALTY NIGHTS

In vino veritas

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After nearly eight hours in the air, my flight settled smoothly onto the runway at London's Gatwick airport. I ran a hand through my hair and nervously pressed my lips together, excited and jittery about seeing the Londoner for the first time on British soil. He'd promised to meet me at the airport, cup of tea in hand, and I was shakier than I ever was during our three days together in India. The sudden, passionate product of a friend's wedding, the budding relationship was exciting, invigorating, and at times, utterly frustrating. Despite my own doubts, I found myself crossing an ocean to see him again.

As promised, he was there waiting, the cup of tea missing, but I hardly noticed in the nervous exchange of shy smiles and tentative embraces. He was as handsome as I remembered - more, even - and as he pressed his warm cheek against mine, I could smell the masculine, spicy sent of his cologne that instantly transported me back to our first meeting in Goa.

On my second night in London, he took me out for dinner, holding my hand in the cold night and pointing out the

Christmas decorations lining the cobblestone street. I laughed at his stories and found myself absorbed in his dark good looks.

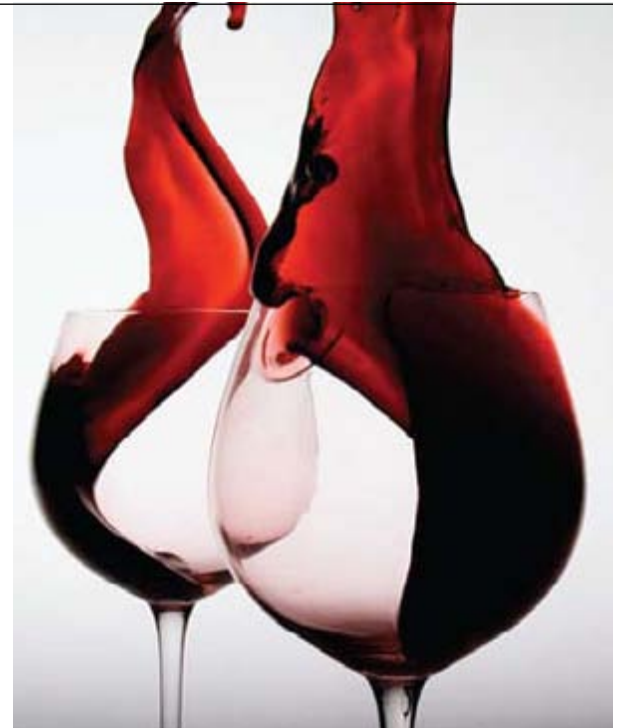
At a trendy Japanese restaurant, the waiter sat us on wooden benches in a minimalist dining room. Even in its casually urban atmosphere, it was far more hip than what I'm used to, and I suddenly felt like a gawky suburbanite in the brightly lit interior. The Londoner gallantly took my coat and moved to hang it on a wall rack, passing two girls my age, both stylishly dressed and well made-up. Did he give one the eye on his way past? I wasn't sure, but suddenly felt conspicuously out of my element.

He ordered for us, a combination of Japanese dumplings and steaming plates of noodles, surreptitiously glancing at the lovely brunette to my left. By the time the meal was over, there was a heaviness in my gut and the first tendrils of doubt in my heart.

The week progressed, him working during the day and me exploring London with a friend, and on Tuesday night, he took me to a tiny Italian restaurant nestled in one of London's quaint neighborhoods. The meal was exquisite, buttery carpaccio and tender veal, and we shared a bottle of rich, full-bodied Barolo.

Nearing the end of the bottle, my hand in his across the tiny table, our whispered

I hesitated, halfway between the back of the booth and his waiting lips. I weighed the options, knowing in my heart what the outcome would be, and yet leaned in to meet him, sealing my fate, as it were, with a kiss.



words loosened by the effects of the wine, I spoke the thoughts that had been stirring in me since our first meeting.

"You have an intensity about you that's ... powerful. Frightening. Sometimes, I want to surrender to it, to give you my heart without thinking about what comes next. But, sometimes - and this is my rational mind talking - I just want to cut and run."

He stared back, his already dark eyes darkening further. "Cut and run," he said.

I stared at him, and there was a pause, a beat that passed between us. Then, he laughed disarmingly and squeezed my hand. "No, of course not. I want you

to stay."

He leaned forward over our shared dessert. "They say that in every kiss, the man gives 90 percent and the woman must give the last 10 percent." He smiled and looked at me, expectantly.

I hesitated, halfway between the back of the booth and his waiting lips. I weighed the options, knowing in my heart what the outcome would be, and yet leaned in to meet him, sealing my fate, as it were, with a kiss. ■

Contact Artis

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

Have Plans For New Years Eve?

-Antipasti-

Duet of Bonzi and Spicy Crab Rolls...\$10

Seared and Smoked Diver Scallops
Lemon Confit, Melon & Shaved Proscuitto,
25 yr Old Balsamic...\$13

Sweet and Salty

Foie Gras Blinis topped with Crème Fraiche & Caviar,
Bacon Wrapped Dates with Whipped Brie & Fig Syrup,
Fleur de Sel, Micro Chive...\$15

-Salads-

Red Romaine, Frisee, Avocado, Goat Cheese, Candied Pecans
Blood Orange - Pomegranate Vinaigrette...\$10

Vegetable Terrine with Lobster Aspic
Mache & Dandelion Greens, Truffled Pesto Croutons, Tempured Crab...\$14

- Intermezzo-

"Limoncello Ice"

-Entrees-

10 oz Filet Mignon
Blu del Moncenisio, Grilled Asparagus, Au Poivre Sauce...\$40

Grilled Veal Chop
Dijon Roasted Fingerling Potatoes,
Wild Mushroom and Roasted Garlic "Forrestiere" Sauce...\$60

Hudson Valley Moulard Duck Breast
Seared Foie Gras, Turnip Confit, Crispy Leeks,
Syrah-Fig Reduction...\$32

Pan Flashed John Dory
Watercress, Sunchokes
Lobster Vichyssoise and Black Truffle Essence...\$35

**Add Lobster Tail...\$24 **Add King Crab...\$18

Sides Available Upon Request

-Dessert-

Buttermilk Panna Cotta
Lemon Soaked Sponge Cake
Blackberries and Saba...\$10

Milk Chocolate Soufflé Cake
Macadamia Nut Brittle
Espresso Crème Chantilly...\$12

Dinner Seatings From 6pm-9pm
Live DJ from 10pm-1am
Drink Specials All Night Long
Complimentary Champagne Toast
@ Midnight

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