

“Ladies and Gentlemen... Wield Your Weapons!”

I feel at this point in our relationship you should have a fairly decent sense of who I am and what makes me tick. We've established that I'm a pretty quirky, wildly imaginative, somewhat eccentric, giant lady-child who just might probably be a foodie of epically gargantuan proportions, and who marches to her own drummer, AND creates the most delectable run-on sentences known to man. And if you don't? Well... pffft... in the famous words of Septa Unella of Game of Thrones... SHAME.... SHAME.... SHAME ((bells tickling)). SO! If you know me by now (which we've just established, keep up) it totally won't shock you in the least to hear that when I was offered to combine wielding a lethal weapon and imbibing alcohol I was like “Uhhhhhhhh duh!”.

Some may not realize, but Axe-Throwing has been a favored pastime since... like... the dawn of civilization. From Mesopotamia to the Dark Ages, to the Victorian Era and the Millennial Generation, people have been enjoying the art of slinging battle axes while shouting “MORE MEADE!” for as long as men have been fighting over land masses. So, clearly as a sport, this isn't a new thing. But! I must admit, the concept was somewhat new to me. It was about 4 years ago when I moved to New Jersey when I first heard about it. At first I thought it was super strange and must be like a “Pine Barrens thing” but then I heard it was a national pastime with sport leagues and stuff to rival the sport of bowling. THEN I found out it was so big they even have their own federation! The NATF, (or National Axe Throwing Federation), was established in 2016 with the vision of creating a standard rule system to enable broad and accessible competition amongst players. There are over 6,000 league members in the United States! So when I read all of this I said to myself, “self, if it's totally normal and socially acceptable to go to an underground facility in Long Island and pretend to slay zombies while chugging IPAs, then who are you to judge inebriated individuals throwing sharp, pointy lethal thingies at bull's eyes??”. And when I was told our end of July GACCA meeting was to take place at AC Axe and Pub at Steel Pier I jumped out of my chair like an overly enthusiastic 5 year old when told she's going to get to eat her way through Hershey Park (incidentally it will be helpful to know contrary to what your big brother tells you the lamp posts in Hershey are not in fact edible), and embraced it, with open arms, outstretched to the point of near dislocation and ready to feel the all awesome power of a mighty axe in my hand (and a slice of greasy, gooey pizza deliciousness in my mouth). Yes, I ate pizza while throwing the axe, yes, the axe slipped when I tried throwing it. Yes it was from the pizza grease. NO! I didn't hurt anyone in the process. Well... that's not entirely true, but no one is pressing charges anymore (man, that was one tense phone conversation) so it's all good.

Now, granted, AC Axe and Pub was not what I initially envisioned what an axe throwing venue should look like, (because again, if you know me, you'd know I would naturally envision a facility where men in long tunics holding massive weapons with both hands over their heads shouting, “For the realm! For freedom!”), it was such a pleasantly surprising place! Right off the main entrance of the pier, where live music reverberates in the air from out front, the pub has an almost beer-hall-esque vibe with a huge, fully stocked bar and a giant chalkboard on the wall listing cool, fun facts about the history of Steel Pier. And you get a strong sense of calm and determination when you're in the stall flinging the axe at the target. You get into a sort of trance, it's just you and the axe and the target. You can get really “into” it if you know what I mean, battle cry and all. You can get carried away. Swept up in the moment. You can become... a shield maiden name Olga, preparing to defend your village in the name of your king, Ragnar Lothbrok, from a neighboring overlord challenging his crown. At one point I swear a barrel-chested man named Wilhelm with long hair and braided side plaits tied with leather strips came out of nowhere, extended his hand and said to me in a husky baritone, “come vis me if you want to live”. But once the combination of pizza grease and Pinot Grigio wore off I was totally back to myself. And after I figured out that I'm a “both arm, over the head” thrower I was able to actually hit the target (as opposed to the other times I threw the axe and it either bounced off the target completely or got wedged pretty hard into the ceiling). And yes that actually happened.

And for anyone who is a newbie to the whole concept, AC Axe and Pub has axe experts on standby to help guide you through the process. It can be extremely intimidating, especially when you've never held an axe before. They explained how to hold it, how to stand, how to aim and how to throw so you don't injure yourself. And I was told they're even trained to not laugh hysterically when you involuntarily scream every time your axe leaves your hand. And sure, the question runs through your mind the entire time "how on earth is combining alcohol consumption and throwing axes safe?" but surprisingly it's apparently no more dangerous than picking daisies (not to be confused with pushing them) or going to the movies. Funny side story, I had to go to the hospital and get stitches one time after going to see Big Fish, starring Ewan Macgregor... let's just say a rather heated and lengthy lecture ensued over the concept and importance of how silence is golden in a movie theatre and an unexpectedly hard box of Goobers was involved.

I digress... Here's my personal draw to AC Axe and Pub. It's a totally versatile place. It's perfect for pretty much any occasion, adult birthday parties, date nights (there was a extremely cute couple on their first date next to our stall and I genuinely think it is such an awesome idea to be active while getting to know each other), bachelor and bachelorette parties (for SO MANY obvious reasons), and corporate retreats (there is an awesome team-building exercise draw here). I mean, I can't even quantify why you would NOT hold your post funeral reception here. I'm not saying it's a conventional idea but just hear me out before you go pooh-pooing it. Alcohol, check. Food, check. Grieving guests in desperate need to channel their emotions and aggression, check. Then again, I'm the kind of person who wants to be cremated at a very lengthy beach party reception with a slew of food trucks and live music and then at sunset my ashes shot out a circus cannon into the ocean... Yeah. Anyway, I'm going off topic again... What I'm saying is let the liquor flow freely (yet responsibly) and axes soar through the air candidly (yet respectfully) for your event and have yourself a rockin' good time. There is an endless list of possibilities here. AC Axe and Pub is where it's at. And they are open all year round! See? Yes, Atlantic City is alive and well even after Labor Day. And this place is definitely a place to add to your fall and winter list of to-do's.



Communications Director – GACCA
Director of Sales – Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar

