

“Splurging on Seafood and Legends”

Sticking with the whole “Judy is playing favorites with the Atlantic City Marina again, Mom!” theme... On July 25th the Greater Atlantic City Concierge Association had the opportunity to splurge and check out two very, extremely, and indubitably cool attractions, one a restaurant and the other a concert, at Harrah’s Resort. Listen, it’s not my fault they hosted us. Its total happenstance our meeting took place in (of all places!!!) the marina. And yes, I consider a restaurant to be an attraction. I get just as much if not more thrills from a plate of deliciousness as I would on a roller coaster. The fact that you question it ((looking off in the distance retrospectively))... It’s like... you don’t even know me.

The first stop was at McCormick and Schmick’s Seafood and Steaks. NOW! There are a slew of cool eateries around the Marina. We’ve discussed this. In (to some) excruciating lengths. This is me after all. And I likey the food. BUT! If you want to go a little more extra than normal, you really must try McCormick’s and Schmick’s. Just a little background for you... ((fade to flash back montage))... The history of McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood Restaurants began with the purchase of Jake’s Famous Crawfish Restaurant located in Portland, Oregon, by none other than Bill McCormick and Doug Schmick, bringing the more than 100-year-old landmark back to life, and since then, has grown to become the nation’s premier family of seafood restaurants, establishing more than 80 restaurants and catering operations throughout the country - an extraordinary feat in a business with the highest attrition rate of any in the United States. In 2004 they became a public company and then in 2012 they were acquired by Landry’s Inc. and now they’re part of an over 300 location conglomerate of deliciousness ((brain... tightening... saliva forming... involuntarily)). So, Cliff’s Notes version, Bill and Doug were members of a super top secret and elite group of food ninjas and basically Jedi-mind-tricked America’s taste buds with their awesome eats. They even have an award winning Happy Hour menu AND they have two amazing (pronounced uhhhh-mazing) dishes, one called the Lobster Cobb Tower, the other called Open Blue Cobia Tacos (blackened with a chimichurri jicama slaw) that are so out of this galaxy you will live an extremely insufficient life if you don’t try these at least once in your lifetime. So go there. Go there now. If you dare... ((cue Vincent Price laugh))

We, the GACCA, were spoiled rotten with a huge selection of tasty (and might I add refreshing) treats: Fresh Bruschetta with Balsamic-Drizzled Crostini, an Oyster Tower with extremely delicious and fresh oysters on the half shell with various complimenting sauces, Fresh Mussels, savory Shrimp Toast and Charred Octopus. I could go on a totally random side bar right now and explain to you my visceral fear of baby octopus (it’s something about their little round baby heads and the squiggly arms frozen in either an excited hug or sheer terror) and how, early on in my career here at Cuba Libre Restaurant and Rum Bar, my boss made me try the grilled baby octopus on our menu and I cried hysterically the entire time, swallowing my pride and sense of self-preservation along with the masticated octopus, but I won’t. I will spare you the agony that stays with me so closely... like a foot fungus you can’t quite get rid of, no matter how strong that prescription cream your podiatrist gave you... As I was saying, their Charred Octopus is actually delicious and cooked to Perfection (that’s with a capital P for emphasis). To cap off the meal we got to taste their warm apple pie a la mode, served in martini glasses! I love food served in martini glasses by the way, don’t you? It makes whatever the glass is holding far more fun and upscale... I keep a martini glass in my kitchen cabinet for when I’m craving cheese curls or peanut butter M&Ms. The glass totally justifies the craving, trust me. And they’re so good at their seafood know-how they even have a menu titled “Oysterology”. And their coup de grâce ... you guys... they have a dessert that comes in a bag... and you can EAT the bag. The “Chocolate Bag” consists of decadent white chocolate mousse with fresh whipped cream and berries, presented in a chocolate “paper” bag. My mind is literally blown... proverbial brain matter is strewn across the frozen tundra of what I call an office that I work from right now. And I don’t even care. Anyway, I’m going way off topic. When everyone was full to the gills (get it??? Because it’s a seafood venue???) and extremely content, we all moved to the concert arena next door to watch Legends in Concert!

For those of you unaware, Legends In Concert is in town at Harrah's from July 24th through September 1st, featuring Donna Summer, David Bowie, Bruno Mars, George Michael, the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin and The King himself, Elvis Presley! What started in 1983 as a limited six week engagement at the Imperial Palace Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, now celebrates 35 years of entertaining more than 30 million fans around the globe. Since its debut at the Imperial Palace, the show has earned entertainment industry awards for "Show of the Year," "Entertainers of the Year," "Grand Slam" and the prestigious "Show of Shows" awarded by the International Press Association. Today, Legends in Concert still shines bright on the Las Vegas strip, along with 2 handfuls of other prestigious venues around the country, and we get to have them here in Atlantic City at Harrah's for the whole month of August! They have first rate performers singing and dancing iconic songs that have transcended generations. And when I say "first rate" I mean exactly that. I mean, obviously you go into it knowing that all of them aren't really who they claim they are, because well, let's just expose the elephant here, they're no longer with us... in the corporeal sense (sans Bruno Mars). And if it really WERE them then that would involve an entirely different, in depth, and lightly-treaded discussion ((insert gif here of little Haley Joel Osment's "I see dead people" moment)). But in all seriousness, you completely forget they're actors impersonating their respective artists. They look, sound, act and move just like them (especially George Michael shaking it to and fro while singing "Faith")... ((taking deep slow breaths)) that you completely forget it's NOT them. It is so beyond entertaining that you leave the arena afterward with a permanent smile plastered to your face and a little breathless from dancing around in your seat, and a little less uncomfortable from scarfing down copious amounts of seafood.

The night's experiences were an indulged treat to say the least. If you get a chance you really should get over there. Strike that. You **MUST** make time and you **MUST** get over to Harrah's Resort and check out McCormick and Schmick's and then Legends in Concert. Right now. Before the opportunity is gone. Forever. Like the whisper of a dream evaporating into nothingness. If not for the Chocolate Bag or George Michael then do it for humanity. Do it for your country. Do it for me! Whatever you do, just do it.

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