

More, More, More...Morongo!

by Maia Harari

Last weekend I did one of those things that's really not fair to do to your boyfriend. I told him I wanted to do something extra fun and that I wanted him to plan it. I do this to him a lot and we often end up happily watching a movie and eating take-out instead, so I didn't think anything of it when I canceled on him last-minute. He waited until I got home from dinner to tell me that he had actually come up with a plan, "What is it?" "It's no big deal." "What is it?" "We can do it another night." "What is it?!" So he told me that he was going to ask me if I didn't mind not sleeping at either of our houses. Where would we have slept? A fancy hotel in Santa Barbara? His parents' beach house in Ventura? Paris??,

"Morongo Casino." Morongo Casino???? Was he serious? That wasn't romantic! But he told me that he was going to take me to the fancy restaurant on the top floor and that he'd show me the rooms online and even I'd think they were pretty nice. And when he brought it up again at breakfast the next day, I could see that he really wanted to go and maybe I should just suck it up and go. And anyway, we could stop at Hadley's for date shakes on the way back. And he thought maybe I could wear that green dress I wore the night we met because it was lucky. And where else would he fit in with that ridiculous moustache he'd recently grown?

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Sure enough when we walked in the doors, we counted 15 other moustaches in the front entryway alone. We checked into our room—which WAS actually pretty nice—and got ready for dinner at Cielo, the seafood restaurant on the top floor. It was everything I wanted it to be and more. Glittering chandeliers that change colors to invoke some kitsch fantasy of what a sunset looks like. Oversized gold frames housing flat screen televisions that rotated images of paintings from 17th century Flemish portraiture to Degas to Van Gogh. One of the best martinis I think I've ever had and lobster macaroni and cheese that one could become dangerously addicted to.

And we set a time limit on our gambling, since nobody wants to be the dregs at the party and somehow when the clock struck 3am we were up enough to pay for the whole trip and even in the morning when we tried to win just a little bit

more, miraculously, we did. And maybe that green dress is lucky after all. Or maybe it's the moustache.

Morongo Casino

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