

Cassidy and the Olde Rock and Roll Hotel

If Cassidy seems to be somewhat unduly upset at the advent of a new compounding pharmacy in the hood, it can probably be put down to jealousy and an old resentment.

When I moved into Ye Olde University Village many years ago, Cassidy was making money on the side in a number of questionable enterprises. Actually, he was the one who originally sold me the goat farm, although that's another story.

At any rate, one of his sidelines was the "Olde Rock and Roll Hotel", a sort of borderline bordello he was operating with a major development grant, I believe, from Adeline Dutoit. This, I should emphasize, was in the wild old days before he became affianced to his current life's mate and "settled down." Although I visited infrequently, one of the attractions was an old-fashioned bar which specialized not so much in alcohol but in compounded or "designer" pharmaceuticals. It was an exotic little place, tended by one of those bikini baristas you hear so much about these days, but who in that era were very much ahead of the times.

I remember fondly bellying up to the bar and being asked "What's your pleasure?" by Sweet Lorraine, my favorite barista, a lovely diminutive Chinese lady who hailed from Singapore. You could choose from a long and variegated menu that usually included hibiscus, geraniums, Adderall, nasturtium powders, hashish, Auntie Ruth's Hemp Bars, several varieties of opiates, and absinthe. The menu changed daily, and part of the excitement was checking out the day's menu, which always included some new and exotic elements.

You called out your choices and Lorraine would grind the dry ingredients with an old-fashioned pestle and mortar. Part of the pleasure, of course, was watching her do exotic dances to a soundtrack of oldies from the jukebox. I remember fondly listening to the Doors doing "Strange Days" or John Ellison's "Some Kind of Wonderful" while Sweet Lorraine did her thing. The bar itself was comfortably low-rent, decorated with Tiffany lamps and strobe lamps, black lights and velvet posters of tasteful nudes by Degas, Manet and Ingres.

Then Sweet Lorraine would shake the dry ingredients with the absinthe or whatever in a cocktail shaker and hand it over the bar with a hearty "Bottoms up!" and I would retire to one of the overstuffed armchairs, take a sip, and let the stuff do its magic.

A good time while it lasted, but of course there came a day when a squad of rather over-zealous narco fuzz busted the place. Fortunately for Cassidy, he had lots of spare cash about him in those days, and a judicious payoff spared him from what might have been a lengthy jail term. Unfortunately for the community, however, the "Olde Rock and Roll Hotel" shuttered its doors, never to reopen.

I tell this not only in the spirit of nostalgia, and as part of my duties as the unofficial president of the Alternate Reality University City Historical Society, but also to explain to the neighbors why Cassidy seems so awfully bitter about the start-up of a new compounding pharmacy facility, and calls it a "suicide business." Just old resentments, really, and I do hope that Cassidy gets over it pretty damn quick.

--Ross Bender