

Bar owner

Arthur Farley

In January, St. James Infirmary quietly closed its doors for renovations, and just as quietly reopened them two weeks ago. Arthur Farley is the owner and proprietor of the Infirmary, as well as Brasserie Saint James and The Saint. Farley launched the Infirmary over a decade ago, and, 11 years later, has made changes in line with his original vision for the place.

What was the idea behind the renovations?

When I originally opened this bar in 2008, it was actually supposed to open at the end of 2006 but there was, like, code changes and the building's owner had to do a lot of stuff to get us permitted for the operation we wanted. So, we ended up opening, like, a year and a half later than we originally planned. When I actually took possession of it, my son, who's now almost 11, had just been born three days before. So I was scrambling, to say the least, with a new baby and everything. ... There were things that I did I was really happy with, and I love the original St. James, but there were things that I did finish-wise that were more about getting done and getting open than actually what I would've done if I had time. As you can see, everything now has this old wood paneling and steel, you know,



PHOTO: MATT BIEKER

chrome edges and corners on everything. Because of the galaxy block front and the flat roof of the building, I always saw this place as like a hip father's den, like a mid-century, *Mad Men*-esque place. And so I knew I really wanted that, and this time I actually had the time, by shutting it down and gutting it, I had time to do it exactly how I wanted to do it originally while still kind of respecting the original place.

It struck me as kind of a classic Tahoe, Cal-Neva Lodge vibe when I walked in.

You know, when I first turned 21 ... my sister was in school in Vegas and I'd go visit her, and I'm from L.A. When I was in L.A., we'd pop into these old bars that were built like in the '40s, '50s and '60s, and they all had just a cool vibe, which I didn't feel like newer places had that. They were too industrial or modern or

just kind of sterile. A lot of the bars I remember first going to when I came of age had, like, old fireplaces, and they'd have these fireside chats and I always thought that was cool. I knew I wanted to bring that back into vogue.

Anything that you're happy to have changed, specifically?

I mean, I always wanted to have some rock. But when you're doing rock on the scale that we've done at this time, no one can work in here for those couple of weeks it takes just to do those few rock accent walls. It's just noisy. It's messy. So, that was something I just said, "Well, it would be cool, but let's shelve that for a later date." ... So, that's the stuff I wanted to put back and the fireplace thing was something I really, really wanted to do, but we'd already permitted—you know, it just didn't happen.

The fireplace took over the DJ booth. What's the plan for music?

At first, I thought it was a cool idea to have the band in the window, but you're walking up behind the band, which is kind of cool but kind of weird too. And now you walk in, you're sort of rudely walking right in front of the band. And everybody always wants pictures of themselves and the old Reno sign. So I felt, "Well that should be the stage." So when you walk in, you're looking straight at the Reno sign, which is right above the stage. And so then I created sort of a built-in DJ room, but the DJ can also set up out on the stage if he wants to. □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

Vetoing voter choice

The two biggest political disasters of my 66-year-old existence have taken place because of a dreadful, outdated institution called the Electoral College. The bizarre machinery of this rank *thing* has made possible the elections of the two worst presidents in U.S. history, and that's not opinion, that's fact. It's not even close. Dubya was the hands-down winner of that unfortunate title until Dum Dum the Malevolent Mob Boss showed up. Is it a coincidence that the two Lamest Effing Morons ever to occupy the White House also just happened to lose the national popular vote? Methinks not. It was only the twisted reality of the E.C. that saved the day for Republicans, and the result has been nothing less than incalculable damage to both people and planet.

So I was shocked when I saw that our new *Democratic* Governor Sissylak vetoed the Nevada ver-

sion of the National Popular Vote Bill, a measure that would abolish the accursed E.C. once and for all. Not just shocked, but out and out gobsmacked. Here's how the NPV bill would perform this urgently needed mercy killing—if states comprising a total of 270 electoral votes pass it, the Wrecktural College is dead. Poof. Just like that. The President would then be elected by a national popular vote, as in the candidate with the most votes wins. What a concept. Pretty complex, I know, but I'm guessing most Americans could eventually learn to cope.

So Sissylak vetoed it. Unbelievable. We were all set to toss our puny little six-pack of chump change electoral votes down the sewer hole of history, where it belongs, and Sissylak then fired up his political air ball. He defended this rank brain fart with some weakass twaddle about how Nevada would

have a diminished role in choosing the blah, blah, blah and you know what, Governor Steve? You just screwed up. Big time. *How could you?* Goddammit, WTF were you thinking?

By comparison, our neighbors in Oregon just signed the NPV bill into law. With Oregon's 12 Electoral Votes, the national tally now stands at 196, culled from 16 states ranging in size from Delaware to California. That means only 74 more electoral votes from any combination of states are needed to kill this ancient absurdity that sprang from the minds of elitist, racist, sexist slavers wearing really stupid powdered wigs. Our six votes would've helped the cause.

It would've sent a nice message. A real nice message. And I'll tell you this, Gov. Steve—I bet Chris Giunchigliani would've signed that sumbitch into law. □



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