

The Video Zone

Weekly video picks

BY TODD RODGERS
STAFF REPORTER

Welcome to the zone. This week I would like to thank Tower Video for supplying the rentals I have reviewed. I hope last weeks column was helpful on your trip to the video store. There are so many films to choose from, but once again I have narrowed it down to three. So lets jump right in and get started for this week.

Airheads What do you get when you throw three musicians, a couple of toy guns, and an odd group of hostages into a radio station? You get *Airheads*. Fraiser and Sandler play two musicians who break into a radio station with their band mate in an effort to get their demo tape played on the air. After the station refuses to play the tape, they whip out a couple of uzi water pistols and start a hostage situation. They manage to ruin the demo and what follows is a rowdy romp to get the other copy of their demo. You have police, music, and morons in this film, What more could you ask for? Probably quite a bit. Granted it was entertaining in parts, but overall this film really needed some work. Some of the conversations were very funny and some were down right stupid. I am going to give this one a C-.

PCU "Animal House of the 90's", well not exactly. A quote like this establishes some pre-

conceived notions. Yet, it failed to live up to expectations. You just can't take a college and a bunch of misfits and expect to recreate *Animal House*. The one who billed PCU as this should have realized that. The film itself is about a group of students, lead by their seventh year senior, who find themselves about to be thrown out of their frat house. They need to come up with \$7,000 to pay their damage bill for the year. They then run around collecting the essential ingredients for a party to raise the money. Beer, music, beer, people, beer... you get the point. This film was pretty bad. It fell on its face on many occasions. This one gets a generous rating of D.

The Shadow Alec Baldwin stars in this film version of the old radio show. Baldwin plays the Shadow himself and he has gone through the ages. He finds that an old foe has turned up to battle him. This film had some very conflicting ideas for me. I really enjoyed the design of the sets and the art direction. Baldwin was very good and his supporting cast did their jobs very well. The only real problem that kept me from enjoying this film was that it started a little too slow for me. I found myself doing other things and not really paying strict attention. I'll give this one a B.

Well that's it for another week. A few other videos that were released are *True Lies*, *North*, *Trial by Jury*, and *Killing Zoe*. So until next week, enjoy your trip to the video store and I'll see you next week.

Trotter's Sets New Standard

BY FRANK KAWECKI
STAFF REPORTER

On Sept. 7, 1994, Charlie Trotter of Chicago announced that he would open a second restaurant of his name at the MGM Grand Hotel. Trotter joins Wolfgang Puck and Mark Miller in redefining the Las Vegas restaurant scene and building a strong foundation for the evolution of our city's culinary culture.

Today, only five months later, Charlie Trotters at the MGM Grand is fully operational and open to the public. Hours are 6-11 p.m. Wednesday through Monday. Reservations are required three to four weeks in advance for weekends; one to two days for weekdays.

The culinary voyage at the newly constructed Charlie Trotters begins with a dining room modeled after the 19th century Biedermeier style, enhancing an elegant European ambiance. The dining room contains pressed linen from the Italian company Pratesi, the Sommelier serves his wine in Riedel stemware, the flatware is Christophe, and the flowers are freshened daily.

The menu has changes made to it nightly, but the degustation style stays consistent. Once the guest is seated he is greeted by a plate of five distinctive canapés. The canapés are meant to awaken the guest's palate (each with a uniquely intense flavor). The guest is then presented a menu containing two degustation selections.

The first choices is the Grand Degustation, at \$85, consisting of four savory courses enforcing nutritional standards (natural and pure ingredients), which are rooted in classical French cuisine. An example of one grand degustation starts with smoked Maine salmon with pulped avo-

cado, daikon, potato tuiles, lemon vinaigrette and spicy herb sauce; California squid and Maine lobster with braised leeks, water chestnuts and curried carrot broth; Japanese yellowtail with red cabbage, crispy pig's feet, herbed potato gnocchi and red wine sauce; and finally, for the main course, poached Colorado beef with truffle-garlic potato "risotto" and meat juices.

The second degustation, at \$65, is devoted to pure and organic vegetables—a true challenge for any chef. The open minded guest who chooses this menu could receive first a terrain of grilled salsify and roasted butternut squash with 50 year old Balsamico; truffled potato soup with braised leeks and black truffles, then the aromatic ragout of tiny vegetables and wild mushrooms in pappiollette with white truffle oil; and for the entree, a taste of quinoa, couscous and bulgar with mushroom sauce and red wine essence.

Once the table has been cleared, the palate cleansing warm fruit soup with two fruit sorbets is presented. This course cleanses the palate and readies the guest for the surprise dessert wave. During this wave, the table is literally covered with desserts created by Pastry Chef

Michelle Gayer. Some of these desserts include apple puff pastry with cashew caramel ice cream and caramel vinegar sauce; brown butter bananas and meringue with black walnut; and chocolate charlotte with malted panna gelata.

To finish these incredible degustations Gayer sends each table a plate of mignardises. These mignardises could include Chocolate truffle twice dipped, Nut clusters, Suckers with house made dried fruits, Chocolate meringue, Dried fruit toffee, and Chocolate nut citrus truffle.

One cannot set a rating or grade on what has just been described. Charlie Trotter's at the MGM Grand is incomparable to anything in Las Vegas. In the same manner that Catherine de Medici, a 16th century Italian Princess, refined French cuisine after her marriage to Henri II of France, Charlie Trotter will define and set a new set of standards in Las Vegas dining.

This modest writer can only salute Charlie Trotter's by presenting his most passionate and strongest recommendation to the quietly kept restaurant. Charlie Trotter's has created a perception of excellence and perfection, the task is to now transform a perception into reality.

Martling

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about the crowd screaming the "Hoot-Hoot" that Martling is known for either.

The crowd tried to "stump the joke man." A person would give the first line of a two line joke and Martling would tell the punch-line. But if Martling got stumped the person would get a T-shirt and compact disk.

On the other hand if Martling knew the punch line (which he normally did) the whole crowd would scream "your a dick!" in unison.

Martling started the stumpon by inviting all ladies who had a joke to come on stage. It was obvious that some of the women were on the stage not to tell a joke, but because they had visited the bar several times more than they should have. One girl was ac-

tually more interested in touching Martling than of stumping him.

In an "invite only" after party in Martling's suite, the host impressed the partygoers with some facts about the show. Martling said he told over 400 jokes by memory without a break, and was only stumped by the crowd's jokes four times! (three of which were from the drunken girls from the stage.)

Martling, who struggles for an identity outside of the *Howard Stern Show*, truly proved his comedic talent with total approval from the crowd. Hey! If you want a sample, Martling has a toll-free joke line. Just dial (516) 922-WINE for some dirty joke. (18 and over only so all you teenagers in the freshman dorms, get parental permission first) Or call 1-800-323-5464 for all his fine promotional products.

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