

A “Mancation” at a Las Vegas Strip Hotel

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Chief Luciano Pellegrini, Valentino Las Vegas

I walk with my head tilted back and looking up, even spinning around to see it all; appearing as if a rube in New York City but in actuality, this is flat Las Vegas, Nevada. The expansive ceiling above me is masked as a blue sky day and it is so realistic that I mistake a recessed light for the arc of a bird's wing, if only briefly. Walking alongside the Venetian Grand Canal replete with singing gondoliers, I am pulled into the experience of an array of shops, restaurants, performance venues, and casinos of what makes up the Palazzo-Venetian hotel complex. After passing the human crush and hucksters on the Strip outside, I gladly succumb to the marvels of the Palazzo Hotel and the Venetian nested alongside. As a mariner, it is as if gigantic cruise ships are

breasted together in a landlocked moorage and provide all amenities for sustenance of passengers.

Four days at the [Palazzo Hotel](#) for a conference includes behind the scenes dining and drinking experiences designed to help me experience a month of residency. I tasted the scrumptious one pound meatballs prepared at the [Lavo](#) restaurant, tasted fresh seafood at the [AquaKnox](#), and enjoyed a multi-course offering of the best fare of [Valentino](#) restaurant served by Chief Luciano Pellegrini. Valentino is sister restaurant to multiple James Beard Award-winner Piero Selvaggio's world-renowned Valentino in Santa Monica, California.

I soon get going on my usual Mancation focus. I notice things a man on vacation will enjoy outside of the casino and food or stage performances taken in with the better half of your team.



Wendy Hodges, Fusion Bar mixologist in the casino of Palazzo Hotel

[Fusion Bar](#) is a custom mixology bar located in the casino of the Palazzo Hotel. The deal here is you think of something and they make a mixed drink that mimics the thought. For example; mention vanilla, basil, and cucumber. Not a likely combination, but back comes a mixed drink that involves these flavors and pleases everyone. This is also an infusion bar, where flavors and fruits are blended over time in a container used for mixing purposes. Wendy Hodges is the international competition mixologist that we found entertaining and she can mix an original Mai Tai from San Francisco plus tell interesting stories.

Las Vegas is about adult entertainment and this also means fine spirits. At [Taqueria Canonita](#), I got to do a tequila tasting of premium Don Julio varieties, and scoop my fill of a fabulous guacamole. Preparing the pallet for the next pairing means double up on the chips – no washing away the taste here as in wine tasting,

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Don Julio tequila tasting at Canonita

just eat and drink. Following the tasting was a flaming shrimp dish tasting too good for words prepared by Executive Chef Reed Osterholt.

At the end of my stay, I realized that I never had the time or inclination to leave the Palazzo Hotel. Everything necessary to entertain me was here, as on a cruise ship, except the tour of the ship's bridge with the Third Mate

suffering my presence. Once I remembered my cramped space on the cruise ship and its lacking internet in the cabin, I tuned in my favorite evening business show in my luxury Palazzo suite and temporarily forgot about my love of the sea.



Reed Osterholt, Executive Chef, Canonita, prepares a tasty shrimp dish