

The BAY AREA REPORTER

Marker our words

by Roberto Friedman

When **Tratto** restaurant in the **Hotel Marker** asked Out There if we wanted to swing by for a meal during **Negroni Week** earlier this month, we uncharacteristically hesitated. First, what is Negroni Week? Turns out it's a worldwide promotion with over 6,000 participating venues raising funds for the charities of their choice, and this year it raised over \$400,000 in a single week.

Second, what is a Negroni? The classic recipe has but three ingredients: Campari, gin and vermouth. But Tratto was offering their own variations: the Negroni Rabarbaro, with rhubarb-infused gin, Lo-Fi sweet vermouth and Campari; and the Negroni Float, with Pixie Tangerine Sorbet,

it, gin. Delicious gin! Even straight up or on the rocks! Now Tratto was playing our song. So we rolled into the Marker for dinner one recent evening when their charity beneficiary was the **SF-Marin Food Bank**, a very worthy cause we were glad to support.

The eatery, in the space formally the Grand Café, offers what they call "rustic Italian fare with a modern sensibility."

We started with a plate of Gin-Pickled Vegetables (Beefeater gin, carrots, fennel, leaks), because what can we say? We relate to gin-pickled vegetables. They were yummy, baby carrots absolutely pungent with gin. And you know, baby *anything*



Out There



Courtesy Hotel Marker

Interior of Tratto restaurant in the Hotel Marker, San Francisco.

octopus. We sure were baby-killers that night!

Dessert offerings, if we ate dessert, but we don't, included Italian donuts in a bourbon-caramel sauce, polenta almond torte, or house-made gelato or sorbet. Tratto also makes limoncello in-house, and boasts quite a decent dessert wine list from California and Italy.

To our surprise and delight, the Marker offered us a room for the night so we didn't have to stumble home in a gin- and cephalopod-besotted haze. Also, now we have more to describe.

An iconic turn-of-the-century building at the corner of Geary and Taylor streets, the Marker, a Joie de Vivre hotel, was built in 1910 as the Bellevue Hotel. Dapper in its Beaux Arts style, the most impres-

sive features from the original architecture are its high-domed lobby ceiling, two-story French inglenook fireplace, and grand marble staircase.

Our room for the night turned out to be a junior suite up on the 6th floor, its windows overlooking impressive views of downtown San Francisco. The sitting-room was comfortable, and the big, barn-sized bed in the bedroom more than accommodating. In true Joie de Vivre style, the furniture was quirky and diverse.

If it were a dinner service, nothing would match, but it would still feel like someone got out the good china. A thoughtful someone had put out a nice bottle of Californian wine, so we got comfortable. To the Marker and Tratto, color us much obliged. We had a grand San Francisco adventure.