



richie's rendezvous
creative dating ideas



Have I Got A Story For You

I have somehow managed to finagle myself into a sweet situation: every issue I get to go out on a date with a beautiful girl and stick my boss with the tab. It's a cool gig, but there are some ground rules:

- 1) I have to take a NEW girl every time – no duplicates (even if I fall in love).*
- 2) My rendezvous must give our readers creative, informative and inspirational dating ideas that can be easily replicated.*
- 3) I can't run the tab up too much (Yeah right;). Through extensive research I set myself up for awesome adventures. My ultimate goal is for you to duplicate my ideas when you are looking to add a little zing and romance to your relationship. We are in this together!*

I kind of like the whole concept of dating celebrities, I mean who wouldn't? In addition to the special treatment you receive when out & about with one, they never seem to fail in the "electrifying personality" department.

With that said, allow me to introduce Mary Rambin, a famous handbag designer (moebags.com), fashion guru, blog goddess, & reality TV star. Not a bad resume for a 26 year old.

Our agenda for the evening could not be more fitting for this fashion queen with the contagious personality. Here is our plan:

- Judging a MOTH storySLAM – an utterly unbelievable storytelling contest held at the Nuyorican Poets Café.
- Dinner at Suba- one the most visually spectacular, romantic dining institutions in the city

I meet up with my date outside of the Nuyorican Poets Café. At first glance I can tell that Mary is something special, with her long legs, wavy blond hair,

sparkling eyes and unparalleled glow. Plus, Mary has one of the most vibrant smiles you will ever come across. This girl is classy & sexy with a heavy dose of charisma; it seems as though she has a touch of Marilyn Monroe in her.

The Nuyorican Poets Café just happens to be the venue for tonight's performance. The MOTH, a not-for profit storytelling organization, hosts the event. What a find this MOTH organization is! Here is their existence in a nutshell:

Twice a month the group will choose a location off the beaten path to host one of their gatherings, or StorySLAMS, as they call it. The StorySLAM is a live event based around the simple formula of great storytelling from anybody & everybody that wants to take a crack at it. Show up at the event, put your name in the hat & if you are one of the lucky chosen you get 5 minutes on stage to spin your best oral creation. Each contestant is judged on 3 categories: time, topic and the ability to peak the interest of the audience.

It just so happens that with a twirl of her celebrity wand Mary & I get the privilege of sitting on the judging panel for the evening. Tonight's winner earns the right to participate in the World Series of storytelling a.k.a the "Grand Slam".

We take our seats, grab our scorecards, clean out the earwax and prepare for one



Something About Mary!



Judging the contest



Jim, the StorySLAM champ

of the most enthralling & mesmerizing experiences of a lifetime. Yes, it's that good!

One by one these tale spinners step up and rock our worlds with their verbal communications. The storytellers are not allowed to bring notes, papers, scripts or cheat sheets on stage; after all this is not a venue for reading; it's a venue for old fashioned storytelling. Spontaneity is the key.

Mary is quick to point out the art form that we are witnessing. By no means is this amateur night at the Community Theater. The room is filled with hardcore, seriously seasoned individuals with the knack for narrative. I can't believe my ears as I listen to the sagas they spin. Each talent has their own style, incorporating speech, gestures, and creation of characters to engage the audience from beginning to middle to end.

All in all we witness ten tales told by ten unique souls. It's a diverse pool of talent and the competition is tight but Mary, I & the other judges decide on the one king to award the crown.

His name is Jim O'Grady and he is a rare breed, truly one of a kind. He tells a true story about growing up O'Grady. His tale highlights the dramatic differences between muscles, brains & popularity, two of which characteristics he never had.

You see Jim is a brainiac; he is super smart, cunningly clever, overwhelmingly witty and sharp as a razor on the mike. He is a self-proclaimed nerd and he truly fits the bill. Sporting a small dweeb-like stature, he is skinny as a rail, has big ears, wears his pants too high, tucks his shirt in too tight and he rocks a pair of oversized glasses.

However, when Jim starts to talk your belly begins to fill with laughter. He has a magical way of describing his mishaps growing up and the friends he met along the way. For example, his dear friend Leo, who only has two skills: playing piano & fixing radios. Leo & Jim set out on quests to find someone (preferably an individual of the opposite sex) to befriend, but it never seems to quite work out. His story is hilarious, dry, wry, brash & totally unscripted. Words will not do Jim justice; I just hope that you are lucky enough to come across your own version of Jim O'Grady when& if you go see a storySLAM. (Trust me, it's worth it so go see one!)

The show must go on and now that we have used our eyes and ears it is time to incorporate our stomachs into the evening's escapades. Our gastronomic getaway for the night is called Suba, and it is perhaps one of the most alluring and romantic date spots on the planet.

Walking in the door just makes you feel hip. This place is cooler than the North

Pole. The space is shamelessly seductive and sleek with a buzzing bar right up front. Once you take a peek around the corner things really start to get crazy. Located under the bar & below street level are not one, but two subterranean dining rooms; it's a multi-faceted, tri level venue.

We opt to dine in the groundbreaking and chic Grotto Room. As we descend down the steel grated metal steps we plunge into a candle lit brick basement. The Grotto Room is a 600-foot oasis surrounded by a rippling and burbling pool of water. It's like dining on a concrete island. Submerged deep within the water are 50 illuminating lights, which display a playful shimmering effect off the walls and ceiling. This room is something else, like a journey into the netherworld of creative dining.

The Grotto Room is brilliant, the sort of place that makes you feel like hanging around for a while and tossing back a few psychedelic sangrias. Perusing the menu is like taking a trip to Cuba. This Spanish institution remains true to its roots and features critically acclaimed contemporary Spanish cuisine.

Mary & I opt to go with the tasting menu created by Chef Mullen, the Iberian cuisine master himself!

Our tasty tapas extravaganza is devised of a myriad of artfully presented small plates. We munch on everything under the sun ranging from roasted heirloom beets, blistered shishito peppers, big eye tuna crudo...still going... Maya prawns a la plancha; chorizo stuffed chicken, baked bamba rice, ...still going... oxtail, pork shank, saddle of Vermont lamb and finally some plum clafouti surrounded by a sea of cinnamon ice cream to finish off. It's like the energizer bunny is in the kitchen pumping out dish after dish after dish.

The food is absolutely off the hook, the sangria is silly good and the atmosphere is super flirtatious. If you can't seal the deal for a second date at this joint then you might as well just give up. Mary sums it up pretty damn well by saying, "Que rico, que bella, que espectacular!" Not a bad comment from this sexy seniorita.

The Moth
www.themoth.org
212-742-0551

Nuyorican Poets Café
236 E 3rd St
NY, NY
www.nuyorican.org

Suba
109 Ludlow St
NY, NY
212-982-5714
www.subanyc.com