

GENTLEMEN

THE WALLPAPER IN THIS ROOM IS A COPY OF ANCIENT PERSIAN EROTIC ART. IT MAY BE OFFENSIVE TO SOME INDIVIDUALS. IF SO PLEASE USE THE MENS ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

The men's room at 'Truffles.'

Offended patron objects to Kama Sutra wallpaper

"Hey, have you seen the wallpaper in the men's room at Truffles?" That's a question commonly asked of patrons of the chic after-hours spot in Naples, located above The Chef's Garden restaurant.

One person did take a look at the paper depicting Kama Sutra, the Hindu Ritual of Love, better known as ancient Persian erotic art. He was offended, and telephoned the police to take a look for themselves.

Soon after, a police officer arrived at the scene, reviewed the wallpaper, and sug-

gested to proprietors Tony Ridgeway and Beirne Brown that they post an "adults only" sign on the door of the bathroom.

Brown consulted his attorney and was told there was no legal jurisdiction in the case.

As shown in the above photo, a different kind of sign was posted.

By the way, the wallpaper in the women's room at Truffles is a scene of parrots. One woman was overheard saying, "It's just not fair."

Restroom Art Isn't a Trifle, Customers Cry to Truffles

By BELLA ENGLISH
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Even bigger than the battles over nasty news racks, tacky trashcans and malevolent melaleucas in Naples is the latest brouhaha brewing at one of the city's newest eateries.

Angry tourists have penned indignant letters to the Chamber of Commerce. Newspapers have editorialized on it. Police have come in to case the joint.

And, of course, Naples' telephone wires have buzzed with the news: have you heard about the — oh my God, how can we say this tactfully — wallpaper at Truffles?

BEFORE HE takes you into the foyer of the men's room in the elegant bistro, Truffles co-owner Beirne Brown warns, "It's not pornography."

Brown is more amused than defensive about the scenes that paper the walls in the men's bathroom. "I find it hard to believe anyone is offended by this," he says, glancing at the multi-colored walls.

Staring back at him are scantily clad Indian ladies and gents, in greens and blues and reds — royalty probably, judging from their turbans and jewels — in, if you will,

compromising positions.

"A top decorator picked it out for us, and it's simply ancient erotic art. I just don't understand the problem," Brown, 32, sighs.

EVERYTHING WAS going fine in Truffles, where dishes such as cassoulet, steak and kidney pie and ratatouille — not to mention the desserts that look too magnificent to eat — are served up to Naples' creme de la creme.

Until, that is, someone — "a woman," Brown says — complained to Naples police that the wallpaper in the men's bathroom was simply horrid.

"First of all, a woman had no business being in the men's room," Brown says. "And then the police came and said they didn't see anything wrong with it."

But, being the gentlemen they are, the valiant men in blue advised Brown to hang a warning sign on the door. No sooner said than done:

"THE WALLPAPER in this room is a copy of ancient Persian erotic art. It may be offensive to some individuals. If so, please use the men's room on the ground floor."

Brown thinks the whole thing is absurd. "Lots of men come in and

ask if they can show the paper to their wives," he says. "They think it's cute."

As for the poor ladies, they have to be content with a silver foil wallpaper in their powder room, decorated with huge brown-and-beige toucans.

Some of the women have complained that they always get stuck with the dregs, Brown says.

BEHIND THE scenes lurks the true villain, if there is one in this story.

Her name is Rosemary Robinson. She has been decorating homes and stores around the country for decades. She doesn't want to give her age, but suffice it to say she was around during the Great Depression.

She selected the wallpaper, named Persian Delights, from her huge tome of samples. "It is an elegant design," she says in an elegant voice.

"But to tell you the truth, it's not really Persian," she adds, her voice dropping. "It's ancient Indian art; reproductions from the Kamasutra, a book on the Hindu art of love."

"I think it's elegant, and I think they," she sniffs, "are ridiculous."