



## HAUNTING



## Epic Immersive's Infernal Motel Offers a Descent in to a Surreal Afterlife

📅 January 10, 2018 👤 By Katherine O'Harrow ✍️ In Epic Immersive, Review

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*"I need something from you.*

*It just might change a man's life.*

*I have arranged for you to stay at an exclusive underground resort..."*

I'm handed an aged enveloped, sealed by a red wax; but what's inside is far more interesting. Within, I find a mysterious letter and a small slip of paper that reveals itself to be a useful, if not ominous, map of the seven levels of hell as described in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*.

It's an odd feeling, to be excited to descend into hell; but, as an ecstatic bellhop in a 1930's uniform leads me down the street and asks me about my stay, I grow more eager to check-in to *The Infernal Motel*. I swipe my keycard, adorned by the word *Envy*, into the card reader and begin my voyage into the unknown.



Alika Spencer-Koknar as "Beatrice" – Photo Credit: Tyler Heibeck / The Rathskeller Club

Director Steven M. Boyle helms an extremely talented cast and crew in this immersive production of **Epic Immersive** and **Rathskeller Club's** *The Infernal Motel*. From wise-cracked jokes to truly sentimental moments, this show elicits a wide range of emotions from guests while they traverse a surreal realm. Much like a dream, parts of this production feel strange and mysterious, while others make one feel comfortable and oddly at home.

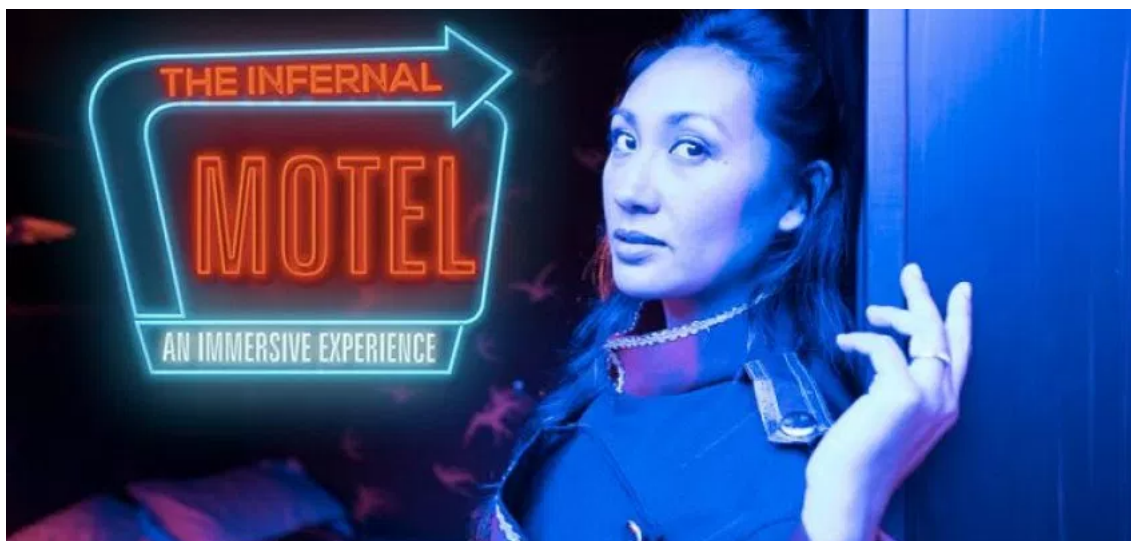
The immersive set design of *The Infernal Motel* successfully imparts a sense of wonder through clever abstraction. Environment designer Jackie Moy juxtaposes objects from various time periods (think a dusty SNES game console next to an oil lamp) to create the sense that you are existing within a memory, and not within any given year. Everything seems to fit perfectly in the environment, but nothing *quite* makes sense, which sets an unsettling tone for the experience. In conjunction with the beautiful space that almost acts as a member of the cast itself, Sound Designer Andrew Lowe creates an audio element that seamlessly follows guests through the story and solidifies the more emotional aspects of the show in the audience's memory.



Max Koknar as "Dante" – Photo Credit: Tyler Heibeck / The Rathskeller Club

While the gorgeously detailed environment is a definite highlight of the production, it is the cast that truly makes this experience memorable. In particular, Bora "Max" Koknar's Dante Alighieri brings a frantic energy that at once is both simultaneously disarming and comforting. At times, he is a caricature reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland's Mad Hatter, while at others, he is a sympathetic friend sharing some very real hopes and fears with his guests. The supporting cast does double (sometimes triple) duty by each playing multiple characters. While this makes sense in the context of the narrative, one would be advised to brush-up on at least a high-level synopsis of the source-material, Dante's *Inferno*. While by no means a direct translation of the famous novel, without this context, the show may read more disorienting than mysterious.

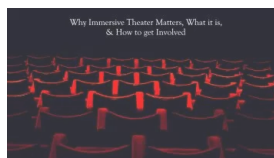
A note on ticket selection: for my initial foray into this show, I chose to check-in to the *Envy* suite. From what I could gather from speaking to others who attended the show, each of the four suites (*Lust*, *Greed*, *Gluttony*, and *Envy*) offer unique elements to the overall narrative. As someone who is claustrophobic, it was advised that I select the *Envy* suite option, and I'm very glad I did. If you're someone with similar phobias or have slight mobility constraints I would recommend this option as well. *Envy* is also one of two options (the other being *Lust*) that allows you to go through the experience with one other individual by your side, the other suites are individual experiences.



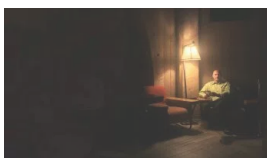
Dana Soliman, Photo Credit: Tyler Heibeck / The Rathskeller Club

Checking-in to *The Infernal Motel* is a truly unique experience that has the power to make guests forget where they are, and at times who they are. I'm personally crossing my fingers for another extension to the show's run, for a chance to explore additional suites and get lost in the in-between once again. For more information and tickets to San Francisco's *Infernal Motel* please [see here](#). Learn more about Epic Immersive [here](#), and catch them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) as well.

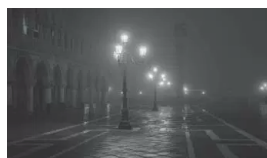
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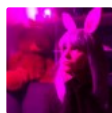
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About The Author



Katherine O'Harrow

Katherine has been a fan of immersive experiences since before she even knew what that meant. Luckily, her love of horror led her to Haunting.net, where she fell down the proverbial rabbit hole, and has not emerge from there since. She works as a tech marketing professional in San Francisco.

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