

St. Valentine's Day

MASSACRE

Al Capone orchestrated the famous gangland hit on a day meant for lovers

Next Saturday is St. Valentine's Day, so I tried to find a nice website or app that would help couples enjoy a romantic evening. After looking over many sites and apps that were little more than thinly disguised vehicles for selling flowers, candy, lingerie, dinners or lovers' getaways, I was ready to give up. It didn't seem like there were



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InSites

any interesting or original sites dedicated to the holiday of love. At least not any that I could feature in a family newspaper.

But then I remembered that Valentine's Day is famous for something besides Cupid shooting arrows into the backsides of smitten couples. It's also the day a group of Al Capone's hitmen fired 70 rounds of lead from a couple Tommy guns — and a few shotgun blasts for good measure — into the backsides of seven members of the Moran gang. No love was lost between them.

Bad boys need love, too

It turns out finding a good website dedicated to the St. Valentine's Day Massacre was almost as hard as finding a good one for the holiday. The event is featured on many history, news and gangster-related sites but it doesn't have one it can truly call its own. I found a site, **MyAlCaponeMuseum.com**, that dedicates a good deal of space to it.

The site is a labor of love built by Mario Gomes, a self-described Capone-aholic. He was inspired by Robert De Niro's portrayal of the gangster in the 1987 film "The Untouchables." After watching it, he embarked on a quest to learn everything he could about Capone that continues to this day. Photos of Mr. Gomes on the site show him wearing the gangster uniform of the day, a pin-striped suit and fedora, and sporting a large tattoo portrait of Capone on his shoulder.

The website is a veritable encyclopedia of all things Capone. It features well over 100 pages of content including thousands of photographs and documents that chronicle his life and times.

Gangster chic

The home page features the title My Al Capone Museum across the top in red letters on a black background. A large image of an embossed medallion featuring Capone's portrait is the only art on the page. Below that is a link to enter the site.

Entering the site is a bit visually jarring. While Mr. Gomes appears to be a genuine expert on Capone and the Chicago gangster era, his expertise does not extend to website design. A riot of type in different fonts, sizes and colors sprawls across the full width of the page. It's centered in a single column that scrolls down a considerable depth. Images are interspersed between paragraphs at various points. Links to other pages are sprinkled throughout.

The main navigation consists of a long list of links in the middle of the page. There are pages for a variety of Capone memorabilia, such as his telephone, hat and light fixtures. Some pages are for his colorfully named associates, like "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn, Anthony "Tough Tony" Capezio or Salvatore "Samoots" Ammatuna. There's pages for gangster talk, gangster fashion and, of course, gangster molls. There's even a page for the famous Geraldo Rivera opening of Al Capone's vault.

Bloody Valentine

Out of the many pages on the site there are at least 10 devoted to the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. They tell the fascinating story of how Capone hired out-of-town talent to get rid of his rival, George "Bugs" Moran. The killers, dressed as policemen, lined the victims up against a wall and mowed them down on Valentine's Day in 1929. Moran had spotted their stolen police cars on his way in and escaped the massacre.

My Al Capone Museum is not a professional website. The design and writing are obviously the work of an amateur. In fact, Mr. Gomes states as much in his FAQ section. Nevertheless, it's a fascinating site with a wealth of great information and images.

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