

Anthony's America 2: Pumpkin Pie, Pear Pizza & a Sacramental New Years

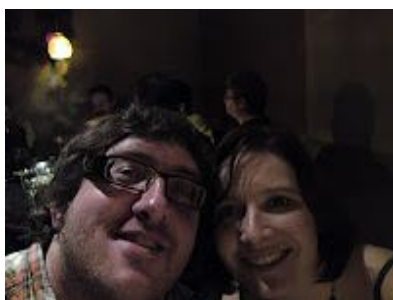


Here I go again on my own. Except, not quite as I met some new friends in Fort Bragg last week - a woman and her boyfriend, Hilary and Martin, who own a local vintage clothes store called 'If the Shoe Fits' - and two really lovely married gay guys (who both work at the hospital) and who own the biggest, cutest fluffball mountain dog puppy I've ever seen. I'm going to get myself a dog one day.

I went out to the local Italian pub, Piaci's, with them all and had pizza with cheese, bacon, olives and...pear. Yes, pear. It was a gorgeous combination and, to continue my night of eating, we all went back to the gay guys' very big house for homemade pumpkin pie. Apparently that's what they do up here in the northern Californian countryside...they really do go round each other's homes for pie. I think it beats getting pissed and scoffing down an undercooked kebab.



The day before new years eve I went for a drive up to Westport to see the Pacific coastline and then down south to Mendocino village which is a lovely, relaxing place full of little homemade jewellery shops, spiritual healing centres, cafes, massage and therapy places and a huge bookshop. Generally speaking, a modern hippy village. Man.



Then I drove four hours down California Highway 20 through mountains and forests to Sacramento to stay with Lynne and Ben. I haven't seen Lynne in over a year and it was great to catch up with her and spend time with her three cool cats. Lynne lives in an apartment in a gated community which has its own swimming pool and gym. Nice.

I had a fantastic new years eve. I went out with Lynne, Ben, Mike (Ben's workmate), his wife Melinda (a non-gypsy - as she liked to point out - from Hungary) and Sam (from New Zealand).

We went to a fondue restaurant called Melting Pot in Sacramento (another new culinary



experience for me...this trip is going to be mostly about food, I can see it) and then went on to a house party. But it was a house party in someone's loft. The couple that lived there have converted the top of their home into a sound-proof bar, stage and dancefloor area with a built-in karaoke machine. I sang classics such as Louis Armstrong's *It's a Wonderful World* until 5am the next day.