



Cover Quartet Delights Fans at Nardi's

Trippin' Carla Steps Up The Summer Hits

Nardi's Tavern in Haven Beach was burning the midnight oil last Friday with Trippin' Carla performing on stage.

The cover band, which calls Denville, N.J., its home, made the trek down to Nardi's, as it will be doing throughout the summer, to play a night of fun and energetic covers from all different genres and eras. The group finds time to play all summer long while juggling their careers, but that doesn't discourage them one bit.

Trippin' Carla has been wowing bar crowds, festivals and private parties in their current lineup for a year now, and they have no plans of slowing down. The band consists of friends, Jason DeRuggiero belting out the notes on lead vocals, Mike Erianne killing the chords on lead guitar, Bill Costello laying down the lines on bass, and Steve Pozzellanti banging the beats on drums. The current formation of Trippin' Carla has played together in other bands for years under different names, including Urban Trip. Erianne and DeRuggiero will also perform covers as an acoustic duo on Monday nights throughout the summer at Joe Pop's in Ship Bottom.

The group's fun style and energetic stage presence had the Friday night crowd up and moving, living up to Nardi's reputation as "the

best little dance bar on Long Beach Island." Classic songs such as "Honky Tonk Woman" by the Rolling Stones and "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith are a staple of a Trippin' Carla performance, with newer and different style songs like "Harder to Breathe" by Maroon 5 and "Santeria" by Sublime scattered throughout. Trippin' Carla has played as far south as Ocean City, Md. and as far north as New York state.

"We really just try to get the crowd to come out and have a good time," DeRuggiero said of the band's aspirations, adding, "I think to die on stage would be an absolute plus." Some of the other members of the band weren't so enthusiastic about the second part of DeRuggiero's sentiment, but they all agreed that having fun was the driving force behind Trippin' Carla.

"We don't have fun unless the crowd is having fun," Costello said. "If the crowd is into it, I feed off of their energy, and it really makes it a better show."

Erianne added that it's the band's responsibility to make sure everyone is having fun. "We do get into it if they get into it, but you have to give them a reason to get into it. It's like the chicken versus the egg theory," he said.

DeRuggiero and Costello, who describes the band's performances as "jubilant," get the

crowd involved in the show by coming off the stage and weaving through the crowd while singing and playing the bass, respectively.

The guys in Trippin' Carla say they want their fans to "do it all," from singing along to getting down on the dance floor. Though their set list is long and varied, if there is a song you want to hear, the band will do their best to accommodate you by belting out their best version of it.

"We do take requests from time to time," DeRuggiero said. "'Friends in Low Places' (by Garth Brooks) is always a crowd pleaser. Really, any song that allows people to sing along and flex their beer muscles is a winner," he added.

DeRuggiero made sure everyone in the crowd was given the opportunity to sing along, wishing them a frequent "Happy Friday" and encouraging the crowd to sing and dance along with the band in honor of the new week-

ROCK STEADY: (Top left, from left) Bill Costello, Jason DeRuggiero and Mike Erianne lay down their sound. (Above) Meghan Henderson and Justin Kinzler get close on the dance floor.



Photographs by Jack Reynolds

end. The crowd had no choice but to oblige.

The band normally would have played at Nardi's this past winter, but due to the renovations of the bar, they were forced to look elsewhere, and performed throughout the state. Aside from their regular shows at Nardi's and acoustic duo sets at Joe Pop's, the band will also play shows throughout the summer at Joe Pop's.

The high-energy stage presence and toe-tapping tunes of Trippin' Carla are a lock for a fun time anywhere the band plays this summer.

— David Wright
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Set List Snippet

"(There's) Always Something There to Remind Me" — Naked Eyes
 "The Impression That I Get" — The Mighty Mighty Bosstones
 "Take on Me" — a-ha
 "Life Is a Highway" — Tom Cochrane
 "Hard to Handle" — Black Crowes
 "Move It on Over" — George Thorogood