

At the Banketbakkerij



Whenever Bob was in West Palm Beach, he always made a point of visiting the Banketbakkerij, an eatery known far and wide for its rats. It wasn't an infestation problem – heavens, no! Rather, it was the only restaurant in town that knew how to turn hard luck vermin into a bona fide dining experience. Stir-fried with camphor, parboiled and garnished with slug truffle, chopped up in a smoothie – there was simply no end to how the Banketbakkerij chefs could prepare 'em! The waitstaff were busy assisting other trenchermen, so Bob seated himself at a table underneath the giant, inflatable rat that helped support the ceiling. Accompanying the typical complement of tableware was a Victor brand rat trap (the company preferred to call it a “rodent control solution”) that obviously had seen its share of casualties. Bob instinctively reached for the sliver of cheese balanced on the trap's pedal, but hesitated when he noticed that the device was spring-loaded and ready to fire. Just then, Paul the waiter appeared in front of the table with a menu. Bob waved it away. “Just bring me the house special, s'il vous plaît!” he said. The waiter made a note on the back of his hand. “And to drink, one of your famous ratafees!” Bob added. Paul clicked his heels together, bowed slightly and scurried off to the kitchen – not unlike a rat in estrus. Bob looked around to see what other patrons were eating. Hmm, the ratatouille seemed to be popular. So, too, was the ratandoori. The aromas that wafted from various eating stations made his mouth water. Without considering the consequences, Bob allowed his fingers to stray toward the cheese. Suddenly, a deafening *snap!* reverberated through the restaurant followed immediately by a sharp yelp of anguish. Bob jumped up, vigorously flailing his hand this way and that, but the trap refused to let go. Swinging his arm in a high arc, he raked the bottom of the inflatable rat with the razor-sharp edge of the rodent control solution. Slowly, the restaurant's centerpiece began to deflate. The ceiling collapsed soon thereafter, followed by the second floor abattoir and holding pens – and that's when things *really* began to get out of hand!