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Community Seasonal Spring 2025
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QUEER LIVING

HOME & GARDEN

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- Dahlia Black gets us rooted, outside and in ◦
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From the Publisher



Spring always feels like a beginning.

If you're a devoted PinkPlayMags reader, you already know that each year we embrace a new theme — a new lens through which we tell our stories and explore our community. This issue marks not only the first edition of 2026, but the beginning of a new two-year journey — one we are calling Queer Living.

Over the next eight editions, we will explore what it truly means to live — beautifully, intentionally, creatively — within our 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. This new chapter is inspired by the warmth and lifestyle elegance of publications like Martha Stewart Living, Country Living, and Cottage Life — magazines that celebrate home, rituals, and the poetry of everyday life.

We're leaning into that world. You'll notice softer palettes, refreshed typography, new layouts, and a design language that feels cozy. We're playing. We're styling. We're storytelling visually in new ways. It's still us — just dressed for a different kind of dinner party.

For nearly 17 years, PinkPlayMags has never stood still. We've explored themes,

scenes, movements, and moments — always reinventing, always keeping it fresh. That creative restlessness has always been part of our DNA. It was deeply humbling to once be described by the Church-Wellesley Village BIA as one of the most creative magazines in our community's history. We carry that recognition with gratitude — and a little sparkle in our step.

We begin this Queer Living journey with Home & Garden. There is something profoundly powerful about the relationship between queer people and the spaces we create. For many of us, home has been sanctuary, rebellion, reinvention, chosen family headquarters, and sometimes the very first place we felt safe being fully ourselves. Our gardens, balconies, kitchens, and living rooms hold our stories. So, starting here? It felt obvious. It felt right.

This issue also introduces three new columns that reflect the fullness of our community:

- A cooking column celebrating nourishment, culture, and the joy of gathering.
- A youth column amplifying emerging voices shaping our future.

- A growing older in our community column honouring wisdom, resilience, and lived experience.

And in a meaningful return to our roots, we are bringing back original fiction and poetry by queer writers in our Fiction column — because storytelling has always been central to who we are. Publishing creative work from our community isn't just content. It's legacy-building. It's joy-building.

I am also proud to officially welcome our new Editor-in-Chief, Sherry Sylvain. With Sherry's leadership comes renewed energy, thoughtful perspective, and a shared belief in both beauty and belonging. Together, we look forward to many years of growth, imagination, and continuing to serve our community with heart.

PinkPlayMags has always been more than a publication. It's a mirror. A celebration. A home in its own right. As we step into this new chapter, we remain committed to being what we have always strived to be — truly the feel-good media of our community.

Welcome to Spring.

Welcome to Queer Living.

Welcome home.

Antoine Elhashem
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In this issue

- 12 It's Gorgeous Darling — Menaka Skrypnyk
- 21 Getting Rooted — Dahlia Black
- 28 Dust, Drama, and Decluttering — Rolyn Chambers
- 44 Fiction: Poetry – Romeo Pierre

Regular features

- 34 Travel: The World Is Your Garden — Bryen Dunn
- 40 Incredible Bites — Kara Thurston
- 42 Hot Artist: Geordie Gordon — Sean Ban Beaton
- 47 Community Cornerstone: EGALE Canada — Sherry Sylvain
- 50 Youth – Ahmad Agha
- 52 Grey Matters — Brian Cope
- 55 Spring In the City — Sherry Sylvain
- 62 From the Heart — Mychol Scully
- 64 Spring Horoscopes

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From the Editor

As I write this, I look forward to being able to recite an old rhyme:

*“Spring is sprung, the grass is riz,
I wonder where the birdies is...”*
(anonymous)

It has been a long winter, and we look forward to regeneration and growth, in ourselves, and in our environment. And, at PinkPlayMags, we celebrate both regeneration, with the return of our Fiction column to be written by a series of guests from within our community, and the growth of our roster of writers, and some new columns.

First, we are pleased to welcome Brian Cope, a respected senior of our community, with his new column, “Grey Matters”, which will offer a look at topics of interest to our senior readers, and which will offer some enlightenment to our younger readers on what it means to be a senior, today.

Next, we are pleased to begin the new column, “Generation QZ”, focusing on the voices of queer writers from GenZ – for my fellow boomers who can’t quite keep track, GenZ is currently aged 14 to 29 years. Not only should this new perspective address areas of interest for younger readers, it may offer insight for older readers.

We hope that offering two juxtaposed views on living queer in 2026, and beyond, can improve understanding and dialogue between two groups who have more in common, and more to respect in each other than some might have thought.

Another addition to our roster of writers, and an exciting new column is “Indr’edible Bites”, a cooking column by chef and caterer Kara Thurston, who offers a delectable seasonal recipe with each new issue, including “Chef Tips” for a successful outcome.



Which brings us to our new theme for 2026 – Queer Living. What makes a queer home a home? How might we best achieve a space where we can grow green things to supplement our pantries, or improve our enjoyment of life? Are you missing anything when you undertake your spring cleaning?

Menaka Skrypnyk begins our look at Queer Living with her feature looking at designing a queer home which offers joy, warmth, and a sense of belonging.

Guest writer, Dahlia Black, a gender fluid contributor, offers a look at growing green things, indoors and out, and getting rooted in your space.

Rolyn Chambers offers us a look at spring cleaning, and things you may not have thought about giving that annual scrub, or final purge, as we look to clean, organize, and declutter our spaces for a fresh start to a season of renewal.

And, you won’t want to miss any of our regular columns, “From The Heart”, “In The City”, “Hot Artist”, “Community Cornerstone”, “Horoscopes”, or “Travel”, all of which offer interesting and informative reading

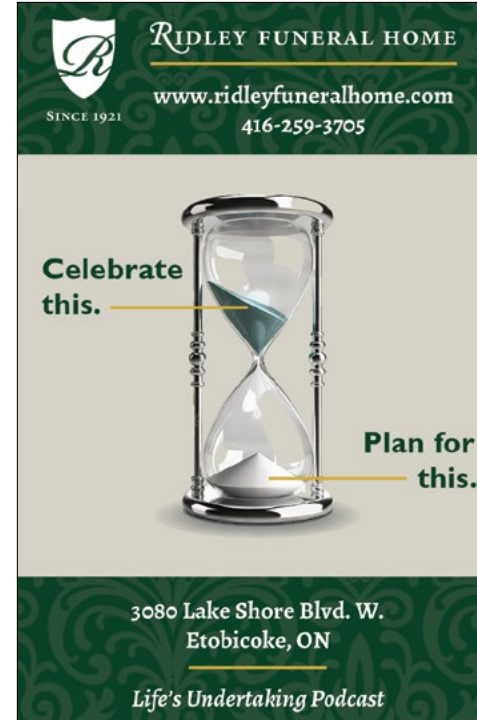
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It's Gorgeous Darling

Designing a home with colour, personality, and queer energy

By Menaka Skrypnyk

The immediate search results for “queer culture” are vibrant, bright, and bold, spanning colours, patterns, aesthetics, and the community who bring it to life.

It should not be a surprise, then, to walk into the home of a queer person and find daring bold choices in paint, patterns, furniture, and art.

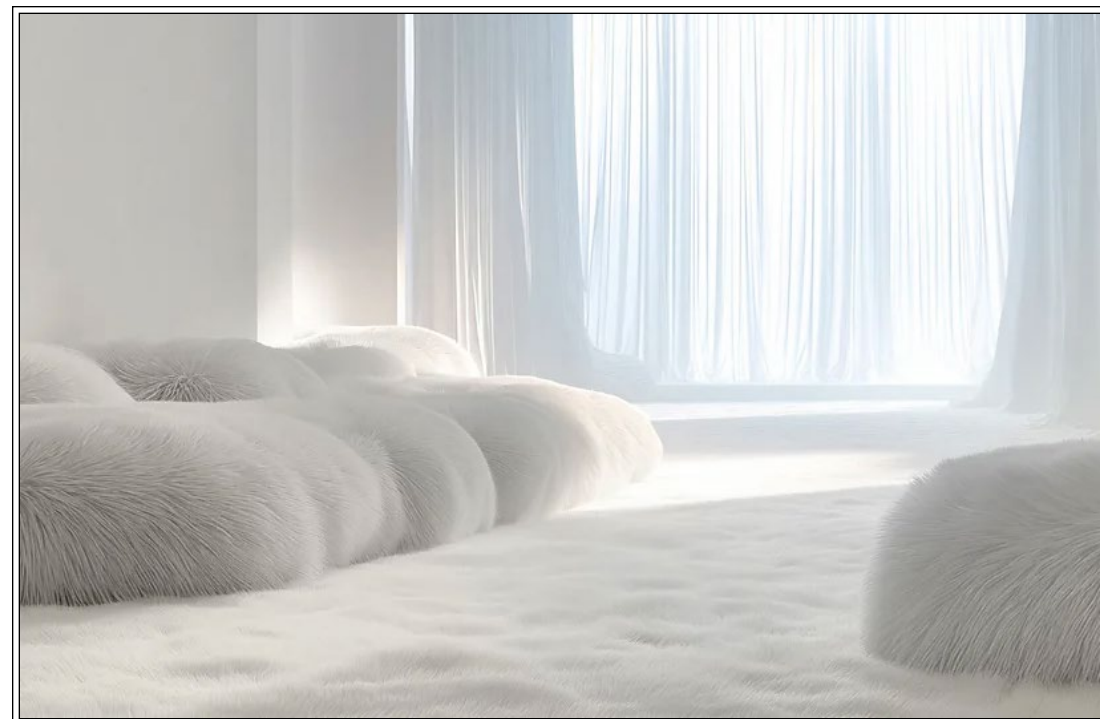
Colour is expressive. It's intentional, curated, and deeply personal. There isn't really a wrong way to mix it; it ultimately comes down to what the

homeowner wants to see in their space and what makes them happy.

Which is why Pantone's 2026 colour of the year, “Cloud Dancer” has been polarizing and can feel, at first, like the opposite of queer.

We rarely associate white with vibrancy, warmth, and comfort. It can read as safe, controlled, clinical, and even cold. Think back to when Kim Kardashian revealed her famously minimalist, white-on-white interiors, inciting very divided reactions. Designer Chris Beaumont suggested to the BBC that Kardashian's space (and, by extension, the white theme) “came to represent ‘wealth, order and distance from chaos.’”

According to leaders at the Pantone Color Institute, “Cloud White” reflects a collective desire for calm. Executive director Lee Eiseman describes it as expressing “our aspiration for a future free from toxicity and excess.” Vice president Laurie Pressman echoes that sentiment,





noting that in a world where stimuli arrive from every direction, people crave gentler hues that suggest simplicity and authenticity.

Contrary to Pressman's statement, white and authenticity can feel like a juxtaposition. If everyone followed the white-on-white trend, individuality would be lost. Not everyone sees calm as best represented by pale neutrality, especially in queer interiors, where warmth and individuality are prized. Surrey-based interior designer Lara Clarke, also speaking with the BBC, argues that homes should spark joy and feel warm and lived-in. Unfortunately, this particular shade can feel removed from that emotional pull.

Joy, warmth, belonging, these are words that surface again and again when queer people talk about home.

In *Architectural Digest*, the feature "What Makes a Space Gay – Unpacking Queer Interiors" gathers designers and creatives to explore how queerness is expressed in interiors. The consensus is less about a specific palette and more about intention. Queer homes, the participants suggest, are unique, inclusive, and grounded in safety.

That said, certain aesthetics do pop up repeatedly: jewel tones, vintage references, glamour, and especially a love affair with the theatricality of the '70s and '80s. Kevin Chan, partner at Toronto design firm Nivek Remas, sums up the appeal: "The '80s are having a big moment – bold colours, lacquered surfaces, mirrored everything – and it feels inherently gay [...] more drama, more personality, more feeling." For non-binary artist Scott Csoke, that drama is also about escape. Queerness, they explain, is "appreciating the things that aren't appreciated in the mainstream ... creating a fantasy or just creating a space where you finally belong."





Belonging may be the real common denominator.

On Apartment Therapy, writer Alex Polish arrives at a similar conclusion in 7 Trans Artists Share How They Showcase Queer and Trans Joy in Their Home Decor. Reflecting on their own experience, they share, “coming out as transmasculine and coming home to my own body helped me realize, among other important realities, that the more centred I am in my own skin, the more comfortable I feel bringing a strong sense of uniqueness, joy, and care into my home design”. Queer design, therefore, becomes less about external validation and more about internal recognition.

Across the artists interviewed, homes are described as community-forward; they are places meant to gather, protect, and affirm identity. Their

queerness might be visible in the art on the walls, in the plants chosen, or in furniture positioned to welcome others in. Queerness in design does not always have to be loud, either. Artist Arthit Chandransu notes that trans art does not need to be explicitly “infused with transness.” It can live quietly in shapes, colours, and atmosphere. That nuance matters. Expression does not always require maximalism.

Given that housing security has historically been fragile for many queer and trans people, particularly trans women and gender-nonconforming individuals, having a home at all can feel extraordinary. One non-binary illustrator, Jade, describes it as a sacred site: “[Our homes are] places we build to welcome others into and heal together while keeping out those who cause us harm.”

While many queer design conversations focus on individual expression or chosen aesthetics, queer

homes are also sites of family life in all its diversity. According to a recent article in LGBTQ Nation, LGBTQ+ people are building families in record numbers through adoption, foster care, surrogacy, and fertility, with a growing insistence on environments that reflect their values of affirming care, emotional support, and inclusivity. Much of this shift reflects an insistence on working with providers who truly understand queer family-building needs, clearer cost transparency, expanded mental-health support tailored to queer parents, and a rise in community-driven peer networks and education that help families feel less alone in the process. This emphasizes how design isn’t just about colour and pattern, but about shaping spaces where relationships grow and thrive; whether a couple is welcoming a newborn, blending households, or making room for chosen family.

From that perspective, the measure of a queer home is not how loudly it announces itself, but

how genuinely and firmly it supports the people inside it.

Which brings us back to white.

Pushing the envelope with this, perhaps it is not inherently bland. Perhaps, instead, it is the potential of a base layer waiting to be brought to life by memory, art, texture, and the lives that unfold within it.

Pushing boundaries is a queer act in itself, of breaking molds, embracing difference where conformity was once demanded, and choosing to live visibly and unapologetically. That freedom is hard won. Reflecting on their own journey in the Apartment Therapy article, writer Alex Polish admits, “I couldn’t imagine an authentic way to

exist in my body; I don't think I could imagine, let alone create, an affirming physical space to live in."

To explore how this plays out in real projects, Montreal-based interior design duo Pierce and Kayla, owners of RUMIIS, share their insight on interior design trends, choices they see queer clients making, and Pantone's 2026 colour of the year.

They share their experience with queer clients, stating that the starting point is almost always community and safety. Even when a palette leans neutral, personality enters through statement pieces, expressive and queer art, and sentimental keepsakes that signal belonging. White walls, they say, are best counterbalanced with textiles: lush throw pillows, heavily textured throw blankets, and elements like tassels or heavier weaves on upholstered items.

They also challenge the presented notion that white-on-white dominates design. Following the debate around Pantone's "Cloud Dancer", it is apparent that more people are leaning away from white and embracing colour. In recent years, they have watched maximalism make a comeback and colour-drenching surge in popularity (renters being the only exception, as painting is not allowed). Ultimately, they believe colour is what transforms a dwelling into a home, and makes it unmistakably personal.

Queer clients, RUMIIS observes, are rarely interested in following trends. Historically accustomed to carving their own paths, they are eager to explore new mediums, take chances and stay true to themselves, even if this means going against societal norms. "Queer clients take more design risks and don't follow trends," they share. "That is in and of itself a brave way to design."

Breaking so-called design rules such as combining multiple patterns or bold colours in one space, keeping inherited pieces, and bending layouts to suit real life, is not rebellion for rebellion's sake. RUMIIS explains, "In today's day and age, with micro units being the trend in construction,

sometimes you have to break design rules to make the space work."

When asked what they would retire from the design world, the pair laughs: "the trend of trends." Their philosophy resists disposability. A dated floral sofa, for example, can still sing as a statement piece. Success lies in how a space is layered and how the client wants to feel within it.

And maybe that is the heart of the matter.

A queer home can be loud. It can be bold and daring. It can drench itself in colour and nostalgia. But it can also be gentle, restorative, even white, as long as it tells the truth about the life unfolding inside.

Stylist Katie Malik echoes Pantone's take on "Cloud Dancer" to the BBC as "a blank canvas that allows all colours to shine". She says, "A blank canvas isn't an empty space, it's a space filled with potential. [Its success] won't be in its universal adoption, but in how it anchors a larger conversation about what we want from our homes."


Beyond neutrality, beyond rules, beyond what the market expects, queer design is ultimately about permission: to feel safe, to feel seen, and to create a space, however small, where belonging begins at the front door.

Menaka Skrypyk is a Sri Lankan-Canadian Communications professional with an innate passion for writing and exploring the unfamiliar. She enjoys spending her free time with her family -- and the occasional cheeky glass of wine.



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Getting Rooted

From balcony to backyard, creating your own green space

By Dahlia Black

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Along with the sourdough renaissance of 2020 (remember that fun phase?), gardening also became one of the most popular defining hobbies of the pandemic era.

is a common misconception that plants require sprawling space to thrive, and that the smaller the home, the smaller the opportunity to grow. The opposite is often true. Gardening is less about property and more about understanding light, using vertical space creatively, and rethinking what a “garden” could look like.

Condo Living: Creating a Safe Space for Green Space

Nurturing plants, in particular, requires patience and consistency. When the world appeared bleak, they gave us something to care for and something tangible to watch grow. Gardening can be deeply therapeutic, while also adding beauty, colour, and vibrancy to our homes.

For condo dwellers without a balcony, indoor gardening becomes both a hobby and design feature. The key is to treat your home as a microclimate where every room reacts differently.

If you’re a downtown Toronto dweller living in an apartment or condominium, your square footage may not be the most expansive, and your “yard” might be a balcony or a windowsill. There

Kitchens, with their warmth and humidity, can provide surprisingly hospitable conditions for tropical plants. When paired with natural light from a nearby window, they become one of the most plant-friendly rooms in the home. Snake



plants, Aloe Vera, Golden Pothos, and the ever-popular Monstera Deliciosa are all well-suited to this environment.

Living rooms often offer the brightest light and can support plants that require more sun.

People shy away from plants in their bathrooms because of lower light levels, but their humidity can make them surprisingly suitable for certain varieties. If exposed to even indirect light, plants such as Boston ferns or orchids can thrive in these spaces.

Before purchasing plants, observe your space first. Note which direction your windows face. How many hours of direct light does your space receive? Do you have neighbouring buildings which block the afternoon sun? Start simply by looking into resilient plants that would thrive in lower light (think snake plants and pothos, which are incredibly forgiving and don't require much

attention), or creating a small herb garden near a bright window.

If natural light in your home is limited, modern



LED grow lights are convenient supplements, as they are discreet, affordable, and energy efficient. Install them under shelving or hang them over tables and countertops, and you'll be able to nurture your plant babies well past the summer months.

Gardening in a small indoor space also requires a keen interior design eye, especially with layering and intention. Look into using plant stands to create height, and hang trailing plants to draw the eye upward. You could also incorporate a ladder shelf to stagger pots and maximize vertical real estate, which is both practical and trendy.

What's a Grow Light?

If your apartment lacks generous sunlight (especially during our Canadian winters when

daylight hours are pretty much cut in half), grow lights can serve as a reliable substitute.

In a guide from plant retailer The Sill, grow lights are described as artificial lighting designed to replicate sunlight and provide plants with the energy they need to grow. They can supplement natural light or replace it entirely in spaces with limited sun, helping indoor greenery remain healthy and vibrant year-round.

Grow lights come in several formats, most commonly fluorescent, LED, and high-intensity discharge (HID). For most condo dwellers, LED options are the most practical choice, as they're energy efficient, long-lasting, and don't emit excessive heat — a key consideration with small spaces.



Understanding Light Spectrum

Plants don't just need light, they need specific wavelengths of light.

Blue light supports leafy, vegetative growth, helping plants develop strong stems and roots. Red light encourages flowering and fruit production. Some grow lights combine these wavelengths, creating a purple glow that emphasizes particular growth phases.

Full-spectrum lights, however, aim to more closely resemble natural daylight. Rather than focusing solely on red and blue wavelengths, they include green and yellow tones as well, creating a more balanced light environment. This broader

spectrum supports plants through multiple stages of growth, from germination to flowering.

For indoor gardeners seeking simplicity and versatility, full-spectrum LED lights are often the most adaptable option.

Condo Living: Balcony Garden

If you are one of the lucky ones with a balcony (small or more spacious), you have the potential for a thriving outdoor garden; however, you still would need to understand your home's direction and light exposure.

In her article, "How To Create the Perfect Balcony Garden", writer Anne Balogh notes that

while sunlight is critical, "wind exposure and temperature are important too."

She explains that strong winds can dry out soil, damage petals, and knock over tall potted plants. To combat this, she suggests using balcony privacy screens or placing more delicate plants in lower containers near a wall to offer additional protection. Be mindful of sun reflecting off windows, which can intensify the heat of a balcony garden and burn foliage. The construction of the balcony itself (for example, concrete versus wood) will also affect how much heat it retains.

Outdoor Yards

For those of you who have access to a yard, you do have room for more possibilities. Thoughtful planning is still key with more space.

Raised beds provide structure and improved drainage, while in-ground planting allows for

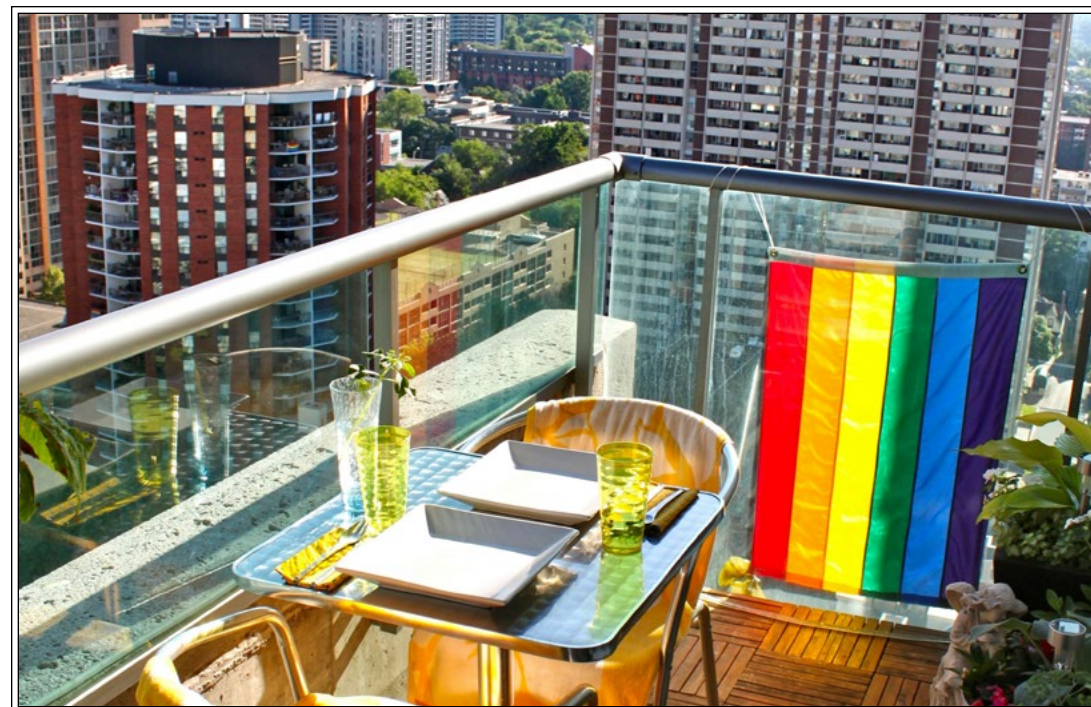
deeper root systems and larger crops. Native plants are an especially thoughtful choice; they require less maintenance, adapt well to regional climate conditions, and support local ecosystems.

According to Toronto Master Gardeners, "Studies have shown that native plants support a greater number and diversity of insects that depend on those plants for food and shelter than non-natives." Incorporating pollinator-friendly varieties not only benefits the environment but brings movement and life into your garden space.

If you're unsure which plants are native to Ontario, consult a specialist at your local nursery for guidance.

Let There Be Light

And lastly, there is direction. If you're anything like me, you've probably placed plants wherever they look most alluring and pray to the garden





gods that they won't just survive, they'll thrive. Unfortunately, aesthetics alone won't keep them alive, it's about understanding where your light actually falls.

A south-facing space, whether it's a yard, balcony, or window, typically receives six or more hours of direct sunlight. This exposure can support sun-loving plants such as tomatoes, peppers, basil, and lavender. The soil in these spaces dries out quickly though, so larger containers and consistent watering are essential.

An east-facing exposure offers gentler morning light, making the area ideal for leafy greens, strawberries, mint, and many varieties of shade-tolerant flowers. The softer start to the day is less intense and often more forgiving.

West-facing areas are defined by intense afternoon rays, which suits hardy herbs and succulents but may require a privacy screen or shade cloth during peak summer.

North-facing spaces receive the least direct sunlight and are best suited to foliage-forward plants like ferns and other varieties that thrive in lower light conditions.

Before buying plants, assess your home's exposure. Understanding this simple orientation can prevent frustration and plant loss. In smaller homes especially, light determines placement. A bright

window may be able to support edible herbs year-round, while a shaded corner might call for sculptural, low-light greenery instead.

Ultimately, gardening, whether in a high-rise condo or a backyard, is less about square footage and more about intention. Work with what you have, whether it be a cozy nook with a patch of light, a narrow ledge, balcony railing, or a wall waiting for greenery. It's about noticing the light, tending what you can, and finding satisfaction in small, steady growth.

In many ways, that's what drew so many of us to gardening in the first place. In uncertain times, they reminded us that growth is quiet, incremental, and often happening beneath the surface. You do not need acreage to grow something meaningful. Sometimes all it takes is a pot, a window, and the willingness to begin.

Dahlia is the female voice of a genderfluid guest writer for SpringPlay. Dahlia is newly self-identified as genderfluid, and does not yet feel comfortable with a photo. Dahlia enjoys exploring their identity, and reading fantasy and fantasy-realism fiction.



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Dust, Drama, and Decluttering

Spring Cleaning Your Home (and Maybe Your Mind)

By Rolyn Chambers

There's something about the arrival of spring that makes us want to throw open the windows, shake out the rugs, and reclaim our space from the long Canadian winter. After months of nesting indoors — heavier clothes, closed windows, and comfort clutter — our homes tend to accumulate more than we realize.

Spring cleaning isn't just about scrubbing surfaces and attacking dust bunnies like a warrior with a spray bottle. It's about resetting the space where we live our daily lives, so it feels lighter, calmer, and ready for the brighter months ahead.

And the good news? It doesn't require perfection. Just a bit of planning, a little honesty about what we no longer need, and maybe a good playlist while you work — whether that's Madonna, Gaga, Whitney, Céline, or a little dance-floor energy from Kylie or Purple Disco Machine to keep the momentum going.

Start With a Plan

Before diving in, take a walk through your home and decide where to begin. Breaking the process into smaller zones makes the task far less overwhelming.

A simple approach is to think of your home room by room — the kitchen, bathroom, living room, bedroom, closets and storage areas, and even your balcony or outdoor space. Creating a short checklist for each room helps keep the process manageable. Even spending an hour on a single area can make a noticeable difference and build momentum.

Declutter First, Clean Second

One of the most common mistakes during spring cleaning is trying to clean around clutter. Instead,



begin by removing items that no longer belong in your space.

Take a moment to ask yourself a few simple questions: Have I used this in the past year? Do I actually enjoy having it in my home? Would someone else benefit from it more than I? Items in good condition can be donated to local charities or community organizations. Clearing out what you no longer need creates space and makes the actual cleaning process much easier. Donating gently used items can also help support queer community organizations and local charities — something our community has always done well when it comes to taking care of one another.

And let's be serious — most of us have at least one drawer full of mysterious cables from electronics we stopped using years ago.

Reset Your Closet

Closets are often where winter accumulates the most clutter. Spring is the perfect moment to rotate seasonal clothing and reassess what deserves space in your wardrobe.

Store heavier coats and sweaters that won't be needed for several months. While you're there, take a moment to look at the pieces that haven't been worn in years. If something no longer fits your style, your body, or your life, it may be time to let it go. And if you're holding onto something because you might wear it to Pride one day — be honest with yourself.

A refreshed closet can make daily routines easier and remove one more source of unnecessary stress.



Clean the Forgotten Spaces

Spring cleaning is also the time to tackle the areas that rarely make it into regular cleaning routines.

Think about the small details that quietly collect dust throughout the year — baseboards and door frames, window tracks and blinds, kitchen cabinet fronts and handles, light fixtures and ceiling fans, and the spaces behind or underneath furniture. These details may seem minor, but they can make a big difference in how fresh and welcoming a home feels.

Opening windows while you clean can also bring in fresh air and that unmistakable feeling that winter is finally ending.

Refresh the Energy of Your Space

Once the deep cleaning is done, a few simple changes can transform the mood of a room.

Adding fresh flowers or houseplants, switching to lighter cushions or fabrics, rearranging furniture for better flow, or introducing brighter colours and natural textures can all help bring the feeling of spring indoors. You don't need to redecorate your entire home. Sometimes the smallest updates create the biggest sense of renewal.

Don't Forget the Balcony

If you have a balcony or small outdoor space, spring cleaning is the perfect opportunity to prepare it for warmer days ahead.

Sweep the floors, wipe down outdoor furniture, and consider adding a few welcoming touches such as herbs, flowers, or soft lighting. Even a modest balcony can become a peaceful place for morning coffee or a quiet evening drink. A tidy balcony can also be the perfect spot for a glass of wine with friends, a relaxed chat at sunset, or



that first warm evening when everyone suddenly remembers how much they missed being outside.

A Fresh Home, A Fresh Start

There's a reason people often say that cleaning their space clears their mind. A tidy, organized home can create calm, reduce stress, and make everyday life feel easier.

Spring cleaning doesn't have to happen all at once. A few hours here and there can gradually transform your home into a lighter, brighter environment ready for the season ahead. Sometimes the best way to welcome spring is simply to make room for it — in your home and in your life.

Quick Spring Cleaning Wins

(Before Your Girly Friends Come Over)

Short on time? A few quick tasks can still make a noticeable difference in your home. Wiping down kitchen cabinet doors and handles, cleaning light switches and door handles, tossing expired food from the fridge and pantry, washing throw blankets and pillow covers, vacuuming under furniture and rugs, and opening the windows to circulate fresh air can instantly make a space feel refreshed.



Cleaning Your “Mental Closet”

- Spring cleaning isn't always just about closets and cupboards. Sometimes it's about clearing emotional clutter too.
- Breakups can leave behind reminders — photos, messages, and habits that keep pulling your mind back to the past. In queer communities especially, where chosen family and social circles often overlap, breakups can sometimes ripple through friendships and shared spaces as well. Just like cleaning a home, moving forward often begins by removing what no longer belongs in your life.
- Many people recognize familiar emotional stages after a breakup: denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and eventually acceptance. The process isn't always linear, and it's normal to move through these feelings more than once.
- Limiting social media exposure to an ex can help prevent old emotions from being constantly triggered. Returning belongings, donating items, or storing them out of sight can reduce visual reminders. Leaning on friends, chosen family, and supportive community members can also make the healing process easier.
- Most importantly, be patient with yourself. Healing takes time, and focusing on activities that reconnect you with joy and energy can help create a sense of renewal.
- Spring is, after all, a season of fresh starts.

Jamaican-born Rolyn Chambers grew up in Mississauga and studied at OCAD. In 2001, he launched *Deep Dish with fab Magazine*, which ran for a decade and featured interviews with notable people. *Deep Dish* now continues in *theBUZZ*. Chambers also self-published *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse* through YumEee!



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The World Is Your Garden

By BryenDunn

The purpose for travelling and the joy that comes with that experience resonates differently for everyone. While some are happy to wile away the days basking in the sun, others seek out more experiential types of travel. This can be achieved in many different manners depending on one's interests, passions, and ability, among many other attributes.

As this issue is themed around Home and Garden, we've decided to take a look at some of the many international flower shows happening around the globe. As the world consists of varying dynamics

of climate and natural elements, there are literally millions of different types of plants and flowers, with many endemic to particular regions, globally. We're here to guide you on your blossoming journey of botanical discoveries.

Toronto Blooms

Garden tours offer the opportunity to admire colourful blossoms while strolling through beautiful landscapes, with some allowing rare access to private gardens not usually open to the public. One doesn't have to go far from home to catch flowers during their peak bloom period. For those in the Toronto area, there's the Toronto Botanical Garden, open May to October at 777 Lawrence Ave East, Toronto, that spans almost two hectares, with 17 themed sections showcasing over 4,000 plant and flower varieties. Visitors can explore on their own, or book a free guided garden tour. There are also annual private garden tours



Toronto Botanical Gardens

called "Through the Garden Gate", which take place in different neighbourhoods each year. Elsewhere around the city, open year-round at 205 Humber College Blvd., there's the Humber Arboretum, a 100-hectare public garden and arboretum located behind Humber Polytechnic, in the Humber River watershed of North Etobicoke. Visitors can explore a variety of outdoor gardens, such as the tranquility bird garden and the native pollinator garden, and learn about the trees on the tree caching trail. The Lake Shore West Garden Tour, held annually in June at varying locations, is a free one-day event featuring privately owned self-guided garden tours in the neighbourhoods of Lakeshore West in Etobicoke, including Long Branch, Alderwood, New Toronto, and Mimico.

North America Blossoms

International Garden Festival is held at Reford Gardens, also known as Jardins de Métis, on

the south shore of the St. Lawrence River northeast of Quebec City. They were initially created by Elsie Reford, who from 1926 to 1958 transformed an old fishing camp and stretch of forest into a magnificent network of gardens. It makes an inspiring setting for this annual festival held during the summer months, which has featured over 250 gardens and installations by designers from 15 countries. Known for innovation, activism and artistic concepts, it draws participants from many disciplines.

Garden Walk Buffalo is the largest free, self-guided garden tour in the United States, held annually the last week of July, attracting both local and international visitors. Tens of thousands of garden enthusiasts visit over 300 public and private locations to enjoy the creativity and work of the city's best ambassadors—its gardeners. The appeal also lies in the city's abundance of historic homes and tree-lined streets as much as the gardens, which have included everything from

outdoor kitchens to koi ponds, waterfalls, murals, sculptures, hellstrips and espaliers.

Philadelphia Flower Show, a marquee event at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, has been running for almost two centuries and is known around the world for its spectacular, immersive floral exhibits and plant competitions. The show takes place each spring and the theme for this year is “United by Flowers”, celebrating the connective power of gardening and how it brings people and communities together. The show attracts thousands of people from the East Coast and farther afield keen to see the riot of colour and maximalist floral arrangements as the space is transformed by large-scale creations.

European Vacation

The world renown Amsterdam Tulip Festival runs from March 19 to May 10, 2026 with millions of blooms; the iconic Keukenhof Gardens, and the “Flower Parade” on April 12 features floats travelling from Noordwijk to Haarlem. Key highlights include city-wide displays, “The Tulip Experience”, and the Tulip Barn, with peak blooms typically in mid-April. Keukenhof Express buses run from Amsterdam RAI, Schiphol Airport, and Haarlem. Be sure to make a stop at the Amsterdam Tulip Museum as well, and while in the region make a side trip to visit Flevoland and the Bollenstreek region known for their extensive flower fields.

Equally as prestigious is the RHS Chelsea Flower Show held annually during May in London, UK. This could well be the world’s greatest flower show, with stunning garden designs, gorgeous floral displays, and endless shopping. Experience world-class design and expert growers. The Royal Horticultural Society is the UK’s leading gardening charity. This organization aims to enrich everyone’s lives through plants and to make the UK a greener, more beautiful place.

At the beginning of May this year, Belgium will once again burst into bloom during Floraliën Ghent, the renowned international plant and flower festival held only once every four years. The 10-day festival features top national and

international florists, ornamental growers, landscape architects, and artists, who join forces to present breathtaking floral creations and innovative green concepts. The 2026 edition revolves around the theme “Power of Connection”, celebrating the unique ability of flowers and plants to bring people closer together and strengthen our bond with nature.

Internationale Gartenbaumesse Tulln (the International Horticultural Fair Tulln) is Austria’s largest garden event. Held annually in August, approximately 500 exhibitors present everything related to gardening and plants. One highlight is the exhibition of Austrian gardeners and florists, with over 200,000 flowers, an entire hall is transformed into a sea of colours, shapes, and scents. The thousands of flowers are arranged into unique floral works of art.

International Garden Festival in Chaumont-sur-Loire, France is an annual contemporary garden and landscape festival where a range of professionals, from garden designers to artists, create show gardens that are open to visitors from April to November, with each year having a different focus. Set within the grounds of the historic Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, visitors can also take in the impressive château and its historic grounds.

Art & Gardens Project Hauts-de-France is a maze of floating gardens that greets visitors to this unique annual festival, spread across the Hortillonages region, a network of waterways and cultivated islets spanning 740 acres in the heart of Amiens, France. The festival promotes landscape, architectural and artistic creation, and visitors can explore by foot and by boat from early summer until mid autumn.

Radicepura is a biennial event that takes place in the Sicily region of Italy against the backdrop of the smoking dome of Mount Etna, and is dedicated to Mediterranean garden design. Each festival is built around a different theme, and each year one established designer is asked to create a show garden that remains on the site. Students of landscape architecture, architecture, art and other related disciplines from all around the world are



also invited to design temporary, concept-driven schemes, which are then constructed by young landscapers. The festival grounds are also home to a new botanic garden and several art installations. The show runs from May to December.

Leverano in Fiore also held in May, is a prestigious event dedicated to floral art, in which the historic centre of Leverano, Italy is transformed into an enchanting garden with extraordinary floral installations and decorations. A unique experience that showcases the creativity of artists from over a dozen nations, making this event a true celebration of floral art on an international stage.

Italy’s Orticolario is held annually in October on the grounds of the magnificent 19th-century Villa Erba, Cernobbio, an exceptional setting on the western shore of Lake Como in northern Italy. The event brings together top designers, nurseries, and garden product companies, all with an eye to the very best in gardening, art, and design. As well as vibrant installations and displays, there are talks, creative workshops, entertainment, and seasonal food and drink.

Bloom is Ireland’s largest gardening event for flowers, food and family, and takes place annually

around the end of May at the Phoenix Park in Dublin. 2026 will be its 20th year of presenting an unusual mix of show and feature gardens, plant displays, food and crafts events.

International Floral

Singapore Garden Festival is a biennial garden show held in August that features show gardens by local and international designers as well as floral art, demonstrations, and plant exhibits. Designers from all over the world come together to exhibit, with experimental designs, materials and plant choices encouraged. “Singapore is known as the ‘Garden City’ so around and outside of the show there is plenty of inspiring landscape and garden design to see as well.

Melbourne International Garden Show features a hall of fresh market flowers, a sculpture exhibition, beautiful heritage buildings, floral displays and inspiring show gardens by local and international designers as just some of the attractions at Australia’s largest flower show. The show is held every March in and around Melbourne’s UNESCO-listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

Hopefully our glimpse into the world of flower and garden festivals may have inspired you to visit some of these destinations. Most can be booked directly, along with flights and accommodations. However, if you’d prefer someone else handle these details for you, there are a number of tour operators happy to do so, such as Garden Tours. For the armchair travellers, there’s something for you as well, cozy up at home and take one of many virtual garden tours from the comfort of your own home. Safe travels!

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.





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by Kara Thurston

Incr'edible Bites

These homemade ricotta gnocchi, dressed in a lively lemon piccata sauce, capture the shift into spring. Light, tender, and delicately rich, the gnocchi become the ideal canvas for a sauce that sparkles with citrus, briny capers, and a silky finish. It's the kind of dish that feels both comforting and invigorating — substantial enough for a cool early-spring evening, yet vibrant enough to hint at the warmer days ahead. This recipe celebrates the season's return to light, colour, and effortless elegance.

Ingredients:

- Whole-Milk Ricotta (dry) 200 g
- Eggs 1
- All-Purpose Flour 75–100 g
- Parmesan (finely grated) 25 g
- Salt ½ tsp
- Pepper pinch

Note: Set aside extra flour for adjusting dough texture.

To make this recipe Vegan: Use Nafsikas Garden ricotta, and replace the egg with ¼ cup of “just egg”. If you are gluten-free, this can be made with oat flour.

Place ricotta in a fine-mesh strainer or cheesecloth-lined colander. Let drain for 10–20 minutes (longer if watery). Press gently with a spoon to remove excess moisture. Ricotta should look slightly drier and crumbly, not wet and shiny.

Chef Tip: Too much moisture = sticky dough requiring excess flour = dense gnocchi.

While the ricotta is draining;

In a separate bowl lightly beat the egg and set aside. Measure out other ingredients and transfer drained ricotta to a bowl. Gently fold together: ricotta, egg, parmesan, salt and pepper. Add flour



gradually until the dough is soft and slightly sticky. Turn dough onto a floured work surface. Gently knead 4–6 turns only—just enough to bring it together.

Goal: Tender, slightly tacky dough that holds its shape.

Warning: Overmixing = tough, chewy gnocchi.

Divide dough into 4–6 balls. Roll the desired amount into long ropes approximately ¾ inch thick. Cut ropes into 1-inch pillows.

Cooking Instructions:

Bring a pot of salted water to a gentle boil, then reduce to a simmer.

Add gnocchi; when it floats, cook for another 60 seconds.

Remove with a slotted spoon to a lightly oiled tray.

Chef Tip: If gnocchi dissolve or fall apart, add a touch more flour to the remaining dough.

Lemon Piccata Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp unsalted butter (or vegan butter)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small shallot, finely minced (optional but recommended)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- ½ cup dry white wine (or vegetable broth)
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 2 tbsp capers, drained (rinsed if very salty)
- ¼–½ cup reserved gnocchi cooking water

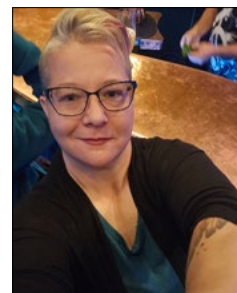
Melt butter (or vegan becel) in a skillet until foamy. Add olive oil. Sauté shallot (or onion) & garlic. Add wine (broth), lemon juice, and drained capers. Add gnocchi + splash of pasta water.

Toss until coated and glossy.

Garnish with lemon zest

I look forward to creating an incr'edible' experience with you in every issue, with a little Tender Love and Kare in every bite!

After many years in the restaurant world, Kara Thurston decided to venture out on their own. Now, they focus on the things they love the most - small intimate parties of approximately 40–60 people, serving a variety of filling bite-sized items that are sure to please the palate.



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by Sean Ban Beaton

Hot Artist

A lot of people don't understand the appeal of 'sad songs' - why would you want to feel sad? The truth is, they aren't meant to bring you grief, but rather they allow your pain to feel seen and shared. Our featured artist, indie folk musician Geordie Gordon, understands that 'good hurt' as he calls it, and through his music, attempts to "stir up the kind of emotion...that sits between sorrow and happiness".

"River Round" is the title of his latest release, kicked off by its lead single, "Endless Line" - a plaintive folk ballad Gordon Lightfoot would easily have had a soft spot for. With this, his third self-produced solo album, he takes a more '70s British folk-rock approach, lyrically inspired by the poetic candour of Lucinda Williams, and the traditional melodies and deep groove of bands like Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span. The album is decidedly guitar-centred, and Gordon enlists a broad collection of Toronto talent to help give it a live-from-the-floor feel, absent his signature polished synth and drum programming style.

Born into a musical family, he was surrounded by instruments as a child and managed to become proficient at more than a handful of them - he plays twelve on this album alone. In his early teens, he was already well-connected in the music scene of his hometown of Guelph, Ontario. Unlike most teenagers, his high school years were spent touring big city venues in bands, playing alongside acts like Final Fantasy and Arcade Fire, which exposed him to a whole world of musicians, and made fitting in at school an afterthought.

Eventually moving to Toronto, he kept busy as a touring member of Islands and U.S. Girls, but it took a pandemic to corner him in his apartment long enough for him to focus on his solo career. He explains, "At the start of lockdown, a group of friends invited me into an email club where everyone had to write and record a song each week and share it with the group. It was supposed to be



just rough demos, but I really got into it and pretty much finished a full production each week. Then, after a few months, I found myself with a complete record!" Those songs led to him getting signed to Victory Pool Records without having even met with the label.

The current album explores themes of resilience and connection, highlighting the strength of community coming together in times of grief. Still, there are beautiful, lighter moments of growth and vulnerability, particularly in the charmingly earnest opening track "Held Me Up," which leaves you a little better than when you arrived.

Find him on Instagram @geordiegordonmusic and be sure to check out his two record release shows - May 27 at The Burdock Music Hall in Toronto, and May 30 at Silence in Guelph.

Sean Ban Beaton is a music creator, performer, and sound editor in Toronto.



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Fiction

BABY COME BACK TO ME

Baby cause you don't know
when you love someone
if there really loving you
just remember,
don't forget,
together we were the best,
ha, I cant believe how the days don't change huh,
former friends,
we went from lover to stranger,
and you don't know how the hell
I feel girl, but that's the way love goes,
That's for real huh, I thought a lot of things
through,
but in the end, you can't depend on nobody but
you,
true,
star-crossed
we eventually lost,
there's no ice box here, its potentially frost
when you love somebody,
you gotta hurt somebody,
and you have to watch and let them love or walk
away
Baby come back to me

By Romeo Pierre

TRANS WARRIOR

I am Trans and I am me
what you see is what you get
Don't hate me because I am me
But hate me because I am beautiful
Talented and unique
I am Trans
What do you see, when you, you look at me
Let me tell you what I see, I see me
An Artist an Activist Talented Powerful
I am a Warrior who has overcome alot of obstacles.
And that is who I see
I am Me
I am Strong, Powerful and Beautiful

By Romeo Pierre

IM ON THE BLOCK

I'm on the block, running through time and
wondering do I ever cross your mind, 'cuz at
times, things change and you cant rewind, what
if i could, then I prolly would, try to live it again,
back to those first days when you were more then
a friend, yeah, I think about it, and I cant even
lie, you broke my heart, and I cant even cry, why,
'cuz I don't know how you got me this way, but I
finally have the courage to say, I miss you, did you
know, I thought the world of you, huh, my homies
tellin' me I'm soft but I love you, so what, and I'm
guessin' you never understood the things i do, but
my tears gotta eat on the streets for meetin' you, I
know its tough 'cuz I was lost in the game, and so

everybody talks to me, surrounded by fame, but
when it came down to us, you were first, better or
worse, they were nothin' but a memory 'cuz real
love hurts when you love somebody, you gotta
hurt somebody, and you have to watch and let
them love or walk away, all the pain will make you
feel like you'll never be the same, but I guess I've
got to realize that sometimes love hurts I gotta
wonder what you're dealin' with now, yeah, its
been a while, I'm still missin' your smile, 'cuz when
the day's gone grey, you was there for me to hold,
made a chill feel warm inside when it was cold,
but I gave you my heart and you tore it apart, now
I'm back to the beginning, no Lois and Clark,
and I ain't mad sweet miss, I still wish that you
blessed, just remember, don't forget, together we
was the best, ha, I can't believe how the days don't
change huh, former friends, we went from lover to
stranger, and you don't know how the hell I feel
girl, but that's the way love goes, that's for real huh,
I thought a lot of things through, but in the end,
you cant depend on nobody but you, true, star-
crossed we eventually lost, there's no ice box here,
its potentially frost when you love somebody, you
gotta hurt somebody, and you have to watch and
let them love or walk away, all the pain will make
you feel like you'll never be the same, but I guess
I've got to realize that sometimes love hurts when
you love somebody, and it hurts your body, and
you have to watch and let them love or walk away,
all the pain will make you feel like you'll never
be the same, but I guess I've got to realize that
sometimes love hurts

By Romeo Pierre

Spoken Word Artist/Rapper
Romeo was born in Trinidad
and Tobago and came to
Canada at the age of 4 years
old. Romeo has performed
with Beat 2 Da Streetz who
empower youth thru urban
music, and at Toronto Pride
events and Arts in the Park.



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EGALE Canada was founded in 1986 by Les McAfee in response to the critical need for increased rights and protections for 2SLGBTQI people. Through legal advocacy in the courts and by winning the hearts and minds of many Canadians, EGALE has played a significant role in advancing the rights of 2SLGBTQI people and combating discrimination.

EGALE is Canada's leading organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues. They improve and save lives through research, education, awareness, and by advocating for human rights and equality in Canada and around the world. Their work helps create societies and systems that reflect the universal truth that all persons are equal, and none is "other".

The vision for the future is a Canada, and ultimately a world, without homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or any other forms of oppression, so that every person can achieve their full potential, free from hatred and bias.

EGALE Canada's work is data-informed and begins with community-based action-oriented research to better understand 2SLGBTQI experiences across several areas, including education, employment, healthcare, and housing. This critical research informs the education that is developed to work towards long-term systemic change. EGALE's awareness campaigns amplify community voices, experiences, and promote the educational initiatives to shift the culture of inclusion across sectors and societies.

by Sherry Sylvain

Community Cornerstone

Legal advocacy ensures that our communities have the best possible legislative protections and that the work being done is lasting and reflected in policies at all levels.

In 1995, with EGALE's intervention, in the case of Egan v. Canada, the Supreme Court of Canada found for the first time that human rights based on sexual orientation are protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In 1996, EGALE Canada Human Rights Trust was launched and became Canada's national 2SLGBTQI charity.

EGALE Canada was involved in the major court challenges that ultimately established the right to marry for same-sex couples in Canada, including Canada v. Mossop, Layland v. Ontario, M. v. H., Halpern v. Canada, and the Supreme Court of Canada's Reference re Same-Sex Marriage. During the same period, they worked on cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment (Vriend v. Alberta), education (Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers), and in the enforcement of obscenity laws (Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada).

EGALE Canada is a registered charity, and you can help support their important work in various ways at egale.ca/donate/

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).



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Youth

I started discovering my identity at the age of twelve, when I noticed I was attracted to boys. At the time, I didn't even have the language to understand what I was feeling. I remember searching online late at night, hoping to find answers. Instead, many of the resources I found described being gay as a sin, which made me believe something was wrong with me.

For the next few years, I lived with a constant internal battle. I tried to change myself so I could be the person my community expected me to be. I focused more on religion, spent more time with girls, and hoped the feelings would disappear. Around that time, I tried to confide in a friend. I trusted her enough to share something I barely understood myself. Her response was that it was haram (sin in Arabic). Soon after, the rest of our group found out. The rejection that followed — the insults, the distance, the silence — pushed me even further into trying to deny who I was.

But the internet that once confused me also became a place where I slowly found pieces of myself reflected back. I began coming across people who were sharing their stories openly — their struggles, their fears, and eventually their acceptance of who they were. Seeing others speak honestly about their journeys planted the first seeds of self-acceptance for me.

Growing up in the age of social media comes with contradictions. On one hand, it's easier than ever to find community and support; people share resources and experiences that remind you that you are not alone. Visibility matters, and it can be powerful. At the same time, social media also creates pressure. Within the queer community, there can be expectations



about body image, lifestyle, or personality that make people feel they must fit into a certain mold in order to belong.

Many older generations grew up in environments where identity and sexuality were shaped heavily by cultural expectations. Younger generations may feel more freedom to express who they are; but, that doesn't mean the journey is easy. Online spaces can still bring bullying, judgment, and pressure. Growing up queer today means learning to navigate both the freedom of visibility, and the challenge of staying true to yourself.

Ahmad Agha is a queer Syrian-Canadian activist, biochemistry student, sexual health educator with LetsStopAIDS, and Vice President of INSPIRE Awards, dedicated to empowering youth and advancing inclusive change.



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by Brian Cope

Grey Matters

If you are a senior queer, you may ask what it has taken for a person to self-qualify as an older queer, and what their life is today.

Historically, you were likely othered from the time you were born. You didn't know you were going to be identified as queer, it's just that you were gently shunned and excluded, even as a very young child. You may have been thrown out of your family home, or forced to run away, lived on the street, or escorted. You may have lived with food, shelter, and clothing insecurity, and growing up, were denied opportunities which were part of "normal" lives.

If you managed to get a valued education, you were still perceived as different and were passed over for new positions and promotions. If you were in the military, RCMP or Federal civil service, you were subjected to the Purge. You may have lived an apparently fun life but were surrounded by substance abuse issues. When HIV struck, and many friends got ill and died, you may have missed the devastation only to acquire survivors' guilt and the disfigurement of early HIV drug remedies.

You celebrated removing homosexuality from the criminal code in '69, only to be subject to decades of medical and police discrimination.

And now you find yourself in the "golden years". They may be golden for many straight people who enjoyed consistent employment for decades; not necessarily for us...

And what is your life? A great number of older people face challenges; we are not the only ones; however, they are exacerbated for us.

It is unreasonable to rank these realities, and added together they seem daunting, but queer Canadians are used to facing challenges; we are a resilient and resourceful bunch.



Many queer seniors face isolation and loneliness, having never married or raised children, or having lost partners and friends from HIV. Many are financially challenged, often not having the opportunities for higher paying jobs, and being financially illiterate. Many live on less per capita than our straight contemporaries.

Many face tech challenges because we can't afford equipment, and don't know to use it.

Many are underhoused, not knowing how to find and secure safe, decent housing.

Many are hungry; lack of money and knowledge about food preparation contribute to unhealthy eating options, which translate into health issues.

We carry stigma from the HIV crisis, are 3.5 times as likely to have mental health issues, and face a shorter life expectancy.

We are still othered...

In "Grey Matters", queer senior Brian Cope offers news, facts, entertainment and other topics that 'matter' to grey queers.



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SPRING IN THE CITY

by Sherry Sylvain

Let's support some local charities!

TICOT Drag Brunch

March 29; 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

This is a drag brunch with a little something different - an open stage where all tips from all performers are donated to the charities of The Imperial Court of Toronto. Help make change with your spare change.

The Well, 487 Church St., Toronto

www.theimperialcourtoftoronto.com/

TICOT Charity Bingo

April 12; 3:00 p.m.

King Father 2025 Charles McFee hosts bingo, with proceeds to Reign 39 Charities of Choice: PWA FOOD ESSENTIALS MARKET; DURHAM ALLIANCE OUTREACH FOOD PANTRY; FRIENDS OF RUBY.

Flash On Church, 463 Church St., Toronto

www.theimperialcourtoftoronto.com/



SUNDAY MARCH 29th
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Jaymz Bee's Caravan of Music for Unison

April 16; 6:30 p.m.

One night where you can #ChooseYourOwnAdventure - taking over one an iconic venue for an unforgettable evening of non-stop live music, all in support of Unison Fund. Over 100 musicians throughout the venue.

Old Mill Toronto, 45 Old Mill Rd., Toronto

www.universe.com/events/jaymz-bees-caravan-of-music-tickets-T4V5KD



An Evening of Hope and Harmony

May 26; 6:00 p.m.

A gala evening filled with inspiration, celebration and joyful connection with others who share the belief in providing hope and help to those living with kidney disease.

Palais Royale Ballroom, 1601 Lakeshore Blvd. W., Toronto

kidney.akaraisin.com/ui/ongala26/tickets



What's happening in and around The Village?

C.U. Next Tuesday - Open Stage

Tuesdays from 9:00 p.m. to midnight

Bring your sheet music or pick a song from their song books. Musical Theatre & Jazz Standards encouraged but you may sing what you like.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

www.ogradyschurch.com/

Open Stage Cabaret

Tuesdays from 10:00 p.m.

An open stage event hosted by a stunning array of leading queens, with special guests. DJ Cory Activate. GLORIOUS Star Making Machinery & BIG Fun. Arrive early to sign up as a performer.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch

Hump Night Honeys

Wednesdays; from 10:00 p.m.

Hosts Carlotta Carlisle and Katinka Kature welcome an array of special guest stars with DJ Chris Steinbach, and Toronto's sweetest staff.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch

Jock Night Thursdays

Thursdays; from 10:00 p.m.

Join hostess Morgan James, everyone's second favourite drag queen, and the semi-clad (or less) men of Cock Bar for an evening of feisty fun and frivolity. Drink specials, prizes, and surprises. This is a "men only" space on the second floor, and not handicap accessible.

Cock Bar, 461 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

www.flashonchurch.com/

The Dmanda Show

Fridays from 9:00 p.m.

Friday Night Drag Race viewing party and live Drag Show with Dmanda Tension and Vitality Black, plus some of Toronto's best performers! Must be 19+ with valid ID.

The Drink, 459 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

beacons.ai/drinkatthedrink

Devine's Sunday Chaotic Drag Brunch

April 5; 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Join your Sunday host Devine Darlin and special guest Pythia for an unforgettable Greek-themed afternoon. Savour a delicious brunch menu, featuring both classic dishes and authentic Greek cuisine.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

www.eventbrite.ca/e/devines-chaotic-drag-brunch-mykonos-edition-tickets-1983639526221



Hollywood Broadway Show

Sundays from 6:00 p.m.

Hilarious host Georgie Girl welcomes a selection of guest performers every Sunday evening serving up your favourite hits of stage and screen, and more.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch

Looking for Queer fun outside The Village?

Spiritual Circle

Last Sunday of each month; 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

In partnership with Durham Alliance Outreach, Pride Durham, and Club 717. Hosted by Glenn. A monthly spiritual circle where all are welcome to explore faith in an inclusive environment.

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa

www.club717.com/

Hump Day Comedy: Midweek Laughs

April 1; 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays are hard, so Gay AF Comedy is serving Toronto's top comedians to get you over the hump with laughs that will put a spring in your step!

Comedy Bar, 945 Bloor St. W., Toronto

comedybar.ca/shows/gay-af



Karaoke

Thursdays; 8:00 p.m. to midnight

Whether you're an award-winning vocalist, a show-tune aficionado, or just enjoy a great time, with great music, and good friends, this night is for you! No cover.

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa

www.club717.com/

Looking for fun with the Queer-adjacent crowd?

Canadian Blues Music Awards

March 30; 6:00 p.m.

Presented by the Toronto Blues Society, this is a new iteration of the national blues awards in Canada. After the awards show, there will be an "AfterGlow" jam in the Parlour Room.

The Phoenix, 410 Sherbourne St., Toronto

www.ticketweb.ca/event/canadian-blues-music-awards-honouring-the-phoenix-concert-theatre-tickets/14708623



Sister Act

April 16 to 19; matinees and evenings

This musical is a sparkling celebration of friendship, community, and finding your voice in the most unexpected places. When disco diva Deloris Van Cartier witnesses a crime, she hides in the last place anyone would look - a convent.

The Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton

tickets.brampton.ca/Online

Snow White On Ice

May 9; 11:00 a.m.

A live, theatrical ice-skating production, featuring, in some productions, Olympic Champion Eric Radford, combining skating, aerial acts, and visual storytelling.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/

How about hanging out with the Str8 peoples?

What You Won't Do For Love

March 23; 8:00 p.m.

Environmental icons David Suzuki and Tara Cullis join forces with theatre artists in a poetic, thought-provoking performance about love, legacy, and our shared responsibility to the planet. Following the performance there will be a short presentation by Dr. Suzuki which will include a Q&A session.

The Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton

tickets.brampton.ca/Online/default.asp?

Holly Cole

Match 27; 8:00 p.m.

Holly Cole is a Canadian jazz singer and actor, originally from Halifax, NS.

Elgin and Wintergarden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/

Thee Phantom & The Illharmonic Orchestra

May 15; 8:00 p.m.

When was the last time you witnessed; strings, horns and piano at a Hip-Hop concert? Add to that, a party-rocking DJ, a soul-stirring female vocalist and a fire-breathing MC and that is still but a fraction of what you'll see when you catch Thee Phantom & The Illharmonic Orchestra in action!

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

roythomsonhall.mhrth.com/tickets/the-illharmonic-orchestra/

Resurrection: Mahler 2

June 6; 7:30 p.m.

To close the season, Orchestra Toronto performs one of the most ambitious and transcendent works in the orchestral repertoire: Mahler's Symphony No. 2, the "Resurrection." Meridian Arts Centre, George Weston Theatre. 5040 Yonge St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/resurrection-mahler-2-toronto-ontario-06-06-2026/event/100062B7D30E43C2

What about a Road Trip?

Diana Krall

April 8; 7:30 p.m.

Record-breaking musician, Canadian contralto Diana Krall is the only jazz singer to have eight albums debut at the top of the Billboard Jazz Albums chart. Her albums have garnered two GRAMMY Awards, ten Juno Awards and have earned nine Gold, three Platinum, and seven multi-Platinum status albums.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton

www.ticketmaster.ca/



Just For Laughs Road Show

April 10; 8:00 p.m.

Expect an evening of laugh-a-minute entertainment with some of the best acts in standup. Four comics take the stage in this annual favourite for a night of pure comic relief.

River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., Guelph

riverrun.ca/whats-on/just-for-laughs-road-show26/

Celtic Woman - A New Era

April 16; 7:30 p.m.

Marking an exciting new chapter in the group's acclaimed 21-year journey, A New Era blends Celtic Woman's signature sound with fresh arrangements, stunning visual production, and the breathtaking talent that has captivated audiences worldwide.

Centre In The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener

centreinthesquare.com/event



Etsy Waterloo Spring Market

April 25; 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

You'll find home decor, pottery, jewellery, clothing, food, art, things for your four-legged friends, bath and body products, and more from local makers.

RIM Park, 2001 University Ave. E., Waterloo

www.etsywaterlooregion.com/

Grease and The Music of The 50s and 60s

May 23; 7:30 p.m.

An all-Canadian live concert production featuring talented singers, actors, and comedians performing hit songs from the film "Grease" alongside classic rock and roll tunes. This energetic show features multimedia video and covers hits.

Pickering Casino Resort, 888 Durham Live Ave., Pickering

www.ticketmaster.ca/



Clue

May 24; 7:00 p.m.

CLUE The Musical, based on the board game, has entertained audiences for over 20 years with productions in more than 500 cities worldwide. This is an interactive entertainment for audiences of all ages, with 216 possible endings.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton

www.ticketmaster.ca/

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).





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communityradio.ca
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From The Heart



It's been a long-standing stereotype that gay men are "fabulous interior decorators." The factors supporting this stereotype are layered.

There is a notable cultural and aesthetic connection between gay men and interior design, a relationship rooted in history, social dynamics, and shared artistic sensibilities.

Historical Context

Historically, gay men have often faced social marginalization, which in some cases led to a focus on personal expression and creativity as forms of resistance and identity affirmation. During the 20th century, especially in urban centers like New York, San Francisco, and London, gay men played a significant role in shaping avant-garde art and design movements.

Shared Aesthetic Values

Several aesthetic qualities are commonly associated with gay men's approach to interior design, including:

- **Eclecticism:** A tendency to blend various styles, eras, and influences to create personalized spaces.
- **Boldness:** Use of vibrant colors, striking patterns, and statement pieces that reflect confidence and individuality.

- **Attention to Detail:** A meticulous focus on accessories, lighting, and textures to craft a cohesive and inviting environment.

Influence on Mainstream Design

The influence of gay men on interior design has permeated mainstream culture, especially through the rise of interior design personalities, magazines, and television shows that celebrate diversity and creativity.

Contemporary Perspectives

Today, the connection between gay men and interior design continues to evolve, reflecting broader societal acceptance and the increasing visibility of LGBTQ+ communities. Many gay designers advocate for inclusive, sustainable, and innovative design practices, emphasizing the importance of personal expression and cultural identity in creating meaningful living spaces. This ongoing influence underscores the importance of diversity in shaping the future of interior design.

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing any time at mychol@mychol.com.



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Spring Horoscopes

Spring arrives with movement, colour, and possibility. After the quiet introspection of winter, this season asks us to open windows, rearrange rooms, and let new energy circulate. For queer people, “home” has always been more than four walls — it is chosen family, creative self-expression, and the courage to build spaces where we feel safe and celebrated. These spring horoscopes are about nurturing those spaces: tending to the garden, clearing out what no longer fits, and planting intentions that reflect who you truly are. Take what resonates, leave what doesn't, and let this season inspire you to create a home that feels like freedom.

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Spring sparks a desire to refresh your space and your routines. Rearrange, repaint, or simply clear out what feels stale. Your home becomes a launchpad for bold new beginnings.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Comfort is your superpower this season. Add soft textures, fresh flowers, or a new favourite corner to relax in. When your space feels beautiful and grounded, everything else flows more easily.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

Your home becomes a hub of conversation and connection. Open the windows, invite people over, or start a small creative project. Fresh ideas blossom where energy can move freely.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Spring invites you to nurture your sanctuary. Cook more meals at home, tend to plants, or refresh your bedroom. The more care you pour into your space, the more supported you feel.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

Your personality shines through your surroundings this season. Add bold colours, statement pieces, or something playful. Your home should feel like a stage where your authentic self can glow.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Decluttering brings clarity. Sort, organize, and let go of items that no longer serve you. As your physical space becomes lighter, your mind follows.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Harmony returns when your space reflects your sense of balance and beauty. Refresh shared areas, add art, or create a cozy gathering spot. Your home becomes a place where connection feels effortless.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Spring encourages deep transformation. Let go of old belongings, emotional clutter, or heavy energy. Clearing space makes room for something more authentic to grow.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Your adventurous spirit brings new inspiration into your home. Add travel-inspired décor, try a new recipe, or rearrange your layout. Exploration doesn't always require leaving the house.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Focus on foundations. Repairs, upgrades, or practical improvements pay off now. When your home feels stable and well-structured, you can relax and enjoy the season's rewards.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Innovation enters your living space. Try a new layout, bring in unexpected colours, or experiment with plants and lighting. Your home thrives when it reflects your originality.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Create a dreamy, peaceful environment. Soft lighting, gentle music, or a small indoor garden helps you recharge. Your intuition grows stronger in spaces that feel calm and inspired.



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