

For the couple with no time to plan their perfect wedding

The date: November 9, 2013 • The place: JW Marriott The Rosseau Muskoka

The plan:

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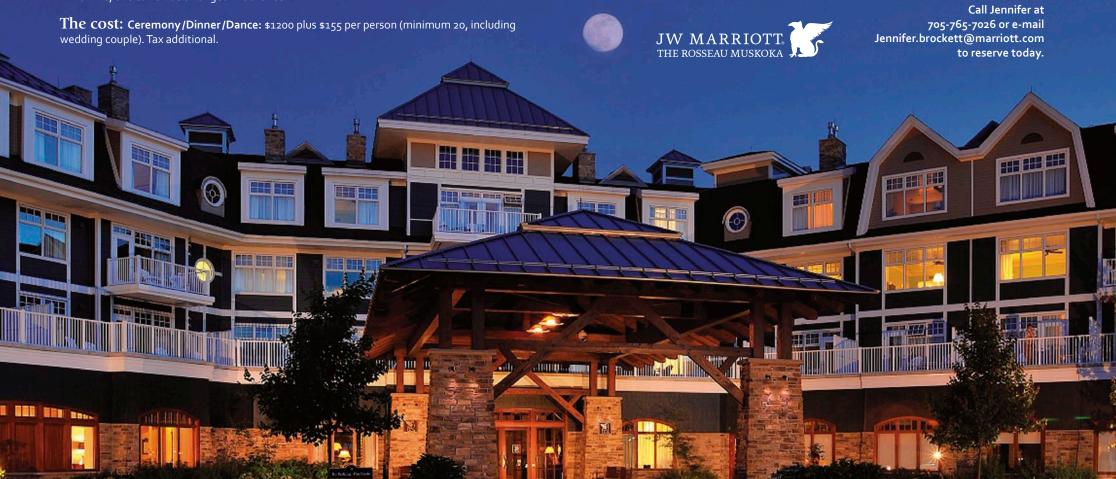
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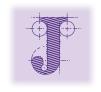


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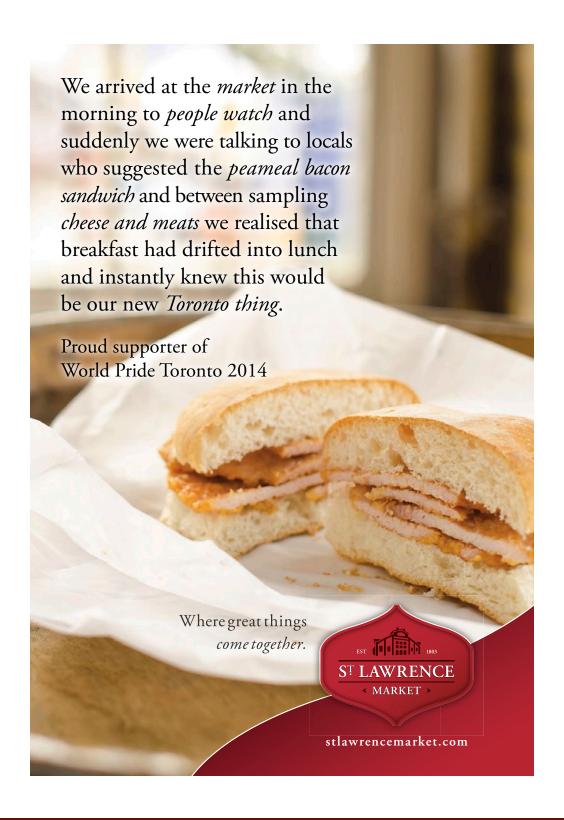
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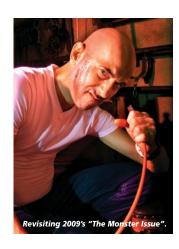
WorldPride 2014 interviews with organizers and members from our community

And pick up your summer 2014 copy of PinkPlayMag's **WorldPink** our extensive guide to the festival

www.worldpink.ca



From the Publisher



Until a few days before press time I had no idea what to write about in my autumn letter.

Autumn for me is all about the beautiful coloured leaves and Thanksgiving around the corner. It is the back to school and back to business season, when people around me stop using cottages, vacations and the kids as an excuse not to pay attention to work (I tease). But most importantly, autumn for me is all about Halloween, horror, and the season of the witch.

I have a tradition. Right before the first day of October, I line up all the horror movies in my DVD library and pay a visit to HMV to load up on some new ones. Then from the start of October to the 31st of the month, I have myself a horror marathon: 31 horror movies in 31 days.

Along with some all time favorites, like Interview with the Vampire, Rosemary's Baby, Hellraiser, and The Exorcist, this October I will be looking forward to viewing the new Nightmare on Elm Street, and the new Evil Dead; and trust me, this isn't an easy announcement. Evil Dead was one of the first horror movies I saw as a teen, it was the "one" that to this day scares me the most. So when I heard that those bad bad bad Hollywood producers were going to shame my favourite horror with a remake, I called boycott. But now I am hearing it is really good, so I must see it. As for Nightmare, I am sorry, but I have no really good excuse for wanting to see it, except that I dressed up as Freddy for a few of Halloweens past, and that the originals were fun. If it is as awful as I hear, then those will be 95 wasted minutes.

Horror, in theory, shouldn't be big business. By their gory nature, horror movies alienate a great number of the movie going audience. A lot of folks can't stomach them. Parents can't take their kids to see them. The elderly don't generally like them. They frequently have low budgets and no-name actors. They shouldn't work.

And yet, they do. Why? Why do we pay to scare ourselves sick? Why do we pay to watch others turned into mincemeat and murdered? Why do we want to see what fear looks like?

Is it because we want good to win against evil, or because we want an excuse to wrap an arm around a trembling new lover, or is it due to our voyeuristic nature that makes us want to see a busty cheerleader being chased by an ax wielding man in a mask?

Could it be that we want to see things we wouldn't usually see in our daily lives. Curiosity is powerful. There's a sense of the forbidden to horror that is very seductive. From a very early

age we are taught that watching horror movies, like porn and smoking a joint, is wrong. Does part of the appeal of horror come down to the basic thrill of seeking out that which we're not meant to see? Is horror merely socially acceptable porn, a drug that numbs our senses if you will?

There's an argument that horror films serve to reaffirm our status as healthy, well-adjusted human beings. We grimace at Freddy Krueger's burnt face and metal-clawed brown leather glove, Regan MacNeil's unconventional use of a crucifix, the devouring madness of Jack Torrance and think to ourselves: thank God this isn't my reality!

Or maybe it is much simpler than that. When I was on vacation alone by myself at a cottage in the summer, I posted a facebook status about turning the lights off late at night and popping in a slasher film. Some of my friends questioned my judgement and why in hell would I want to do that to myself. The only answer I had was, "Because it is exciting and I will end up being up all night." Horror makes our heart race, like being on a rollercoaster. I want to prove to myself I can handle the ride, that I can stare evil in the face. I like that.

The principal reason we are drawn to horror, Stephen King believes, is not because of the above reasons I recited, but because we are all fundamentally insane. Indeed, of all horror movie experts, King is surely the most qualified to weigh in with an opinion. "I think that we're all mentally ill," he writes. "Those of us outside the asylums only hide it a little better."

Horror allows us to purge our insanity. Most of us keep our uncivilized selves—our Mr. Hydes—locked away deep inside us, so there is a therapeutic feeling when they are allowed to break free. As sports games are the modern equivalent to war, King suggests, horror movies are the modern equivalent of a savage and chaotic public lynching. "The potential lyncher is in almost all of us, and every now and then, he has to be let loose to scream and roll around in the grass," says King. It's an intriguing theory, and a little creeov.

Horror movies will continue to make money because we are always seeking that dark ride. And we'll take it any way we can. Enjoy your Halloween, and our "Glorious Autumn Issue."

Antoine Elhashem publisher@pinkplaymags.com

Autumnplay!

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags Free • Autumn 2013

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Glorious Autumn Issue

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From the Editor



Putting together the autumn issue I've gone through a bit of a personal transformation that took me quite by surprise.

I've always been a diehard true-blooded romantic. I love movies that make me cry, think sending or getting flowers is sexy, am turned on by a man who can cook, and yes, I love walks on the beach. However, I've always been of the opinion that traditional marriage is a waste of money and a sure-fire cause of unnecessary drama. I've always believed we should be able to marry who we love regardless of sexual orientation and gender, but I've never seen it as something for me personally. I'd rather put a down payment on a house with that money instead. Bit of a paradox really, isn't it?

Over the last handful of years though, I've been to some wonderful ceremonies—gay and straight—where two people, deeply in love commit their future lives together in front of loved ones. I've even cried a few times when the heartfelt vows were recited. I guess seeing people I care for deeply profess their love for each other in such a public way finally swayed the balance between my humbug and my romantic. My romantic won and you can witness him win that battle, with the help of two wonderful wedding planners: Jane Dayus-Hinch and Karim Shivji (page 12).

When my parents got married they went to Niagara Falls—the honeymoon capital of the world—to celebrate. I remember my mom saying how much she loved it, especially the splendour of the majestic falls. Well, Niagara has grown up to be quite the getaway, with Niagara-on-the-Lake's wine and theatre country just a skip away. Join Bryen as he romances you with one of the world's greatest attractions, right in our own backyard (page 32).

Autumn is also the time for bountiful harvests—who doesn't savour the fresh produce abundant during this season, especially the cherries, peaches and apples and all the fresh baked pies and preserves available at this time of year. As more and more of us become conscious of where and how our food is grown and by whom, the venerable tradition of the Farmers' Market has once again become a mainstream event for buying groceries and creating relationships with the people who feed us. Knowing that gives us great peace of mind and nourishes our souls as well as our stomachs. Kelly gladly gives us the lowdown on the farmers' hoedown as she takes you on a tour of all the Farmers' Markets in our grand city (page 19).

Good food comes from plants in balance. And plants in balance produce healthy food, which in turn keeps us healthy, not only in body, but in mind and spirit too. Shelley continues her series on The Healing Power of Plants with a look into the modality of Plant Spirit Medicine. A practitioner now for eight years, Shelley gives you an indepth look at this natural path back into personal harmony (page 25).

Weddings, wine, a bountiful harvest, being in balance with yourself and nature—sounds like a wonderful reason to celebrate, and who better than with family and friends over Thanksgiving. I wish you and yours much to be thankful for this season of plenty. Don't forget to share the love and we'll see you in time for the year-end holidays.

Much love.

Jeff Harrison editor@pinkplaymags.com







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Tying the Knot for Love



by Jeff Harrison

A mere decade after winning the right to get married to our same-sex partner in Canada, most of us seem indifferent at best with this liberty that we now seem to take for granted. You ask the average person on the street and they'll tell you weddings are a nightmare. They look at the financial side of it and say they'd rather put a down payment on a house. I myself have been a big advocate of that route most of my life, but after being included in my fair share of heartwarming ceremonies these past years, and especially after sitting down for an afternoon with Jane Dayus-Hinch and Karim Shivji, wedding planners extraordinaire, my mind has been forever changed.

o if you want a ring on your finger, the photographs and the ceremony—how do you do that without offending anyone, or losing your mind in the planning? Popular hostess for Slice TV's *Wedding SOS*, Jane Dayus-Hinch has been using her unique skills to pull off perfect weddings for celebrities, socialites and even royalty across the pond for over 30 years. A traditionalist at heart she has spent her time becoming an expert on everything to do with that special day—she can even officiate at your ceremony if you need someone completely open-minded and ready to give you that unique

touch. And if something does go wrong, she knows exactly how to fix it.

Canada is a good place to start—we live in a country perfectly suited for unusual weddings. "Isn't that why we love Canada?" asks Dayus-Hinch. "It's refreshing, it's liberating! We accept everybody."

Shivji, who specializes in same-sex and multicultural weddings agrees. "If you looked at the multicultural weddings say 10 or





15 years ago, you'd see that everyone still married within their own cultures. But now you see a lot of diversity. You see an Italian marrying an Indian girl, a Sikh marrying a Hindu, or a Hindu marrying a Muslim, which would not be possible abroad."

"Name me anywhere else you can have the kinds of weddings

that you can have here," chimes in Dayus-Hinch.

Open-Minded Nation

As same-sex weddings have become more mainstream. people's attitudes evolving. There can still be unexpected obstacles though, even in a country as openminded as Canada. Shivji and his partner decided on a small gathering of family and friends, but he discovered last minute that his family wasn't comfortable with the proceedings. "They all came for the reception, but not the one hour ceremony," he recalls. "I walked into the room, I had put everyone's on their chairs names and the three rows of my family, all those chairs were empty. You can see it in my wedding photos. It really hurt me. I asked them about it afterwards, why did you not come? They said they couldn't see two guys getting married. multicultural weddings, being gay there's going to be a lot of issues with family." For anyone who comes face-

to-face with that, Shivji offers this advice: "No matter what, don't let it ruin your day."

This is not just a gay issue either, says Dayus-Hinch, "I've had straight couples faced with the same issue where their parents don't agree with who their son or daughter are marrying and they boycott the wedding. What you have to say is, especially if you are faced with a bride who hasn't got a father to walk her down the aisle, at the end of the day, it's all about the two of you. As long as the two of you are at the end of the aisle, everybody else is a bonus. Saying that, this is where you burn bridges, this is where you mend rifts because from that day forward you are no longer alone, you are a married couple. From there on in, look what the family is giving up by not being there. It is not just a day. It is a whole life-changing event. It has a huge impact. You never forget that day."

And that day can be an emotional rollercoaster, bringing out the best and worst of people. "On your wedding day you will have people come up to you and say the most unexpected things" Dayus-Hinch continues. "If they've never told you that they love you, they will tell you on your wedding day. Your mother and father will say things they've always wanted to tell you. A bit of advice I share is: on the morning when you get up for your wedding you have to say to yourself no one is going to upset me. Even if someone comes up to you and says something bad, wrong, difficult, to hurt you, you just say, 'Thank you.' Absorb. Whatever. Then gone. Deal with it tomorrow. You do not at any point get into it, because then your whole memory of your wedding day will be that moment, not the rest of it. Absorb all the love, all the goodness, all the joy."

There's only two people in a marriage. So, what's your vision for your wedding day?

Plan Your Wedding i invaluable organizing things," she continu photographer, the floand they think they'r need permits? Have sorted out everybody information pack of vis? ...No, they say. O After 30 years of plathe choice between

Because we all know you can't choose who you fall in love with, can you? "I'm one of those people who say, okay, we'll make it work somehow. What is it that you want? Give me your vision and let's see what we can do," asserts Dayus-Hinch.

Don and Jako: A day they'll always remember,

with Jane's help.

A Day You Never Forget

Having a vision is your most important starting point. Be prepared for compromises along the way—the plan for the day may well change multiple times—but in order for you to pull it off, everyone involved must be on the same page. So how do you accomplish that? That's where a good wedding planner comes in. "You've got

to talk it though," states Dayus-Hinch. "You have to sit down and have a family meeting. There's only two people in a marriage. So, what's your vision for your wedding day? Then you need to make sure there's a compromise between the couple. There's no point getting started until you've managed to accomplish this."

A good planner will wear many hats. They are the therapist, making sure everyone gets along; they might be your financial adviser ensuring that you don't go over budget, because it's almost guaranteed you will. They can also be your life-coach when it comes to family politics or cultural differences. They'll be instrumental in helping you with all the final decisions: who's on

the guest list, where it's going to be, will it be a sit down dinner or buffet, who's doing the flowers, the photographs, the music, the food, what you're wearing, even what your vows are. They will keep you on track and hopefully on budget.

Dayus-Hinch is constantly saying to people, "Where are we at? That's what I do with my wedding wall planner." She teaches a one-day course at Centennial College called

Plan Your Wedding in a Day, showing you how to best use this invaluable organizing tool. "People are very good at booking things," she continues. "I've booked the hall, I've booked the photographer, the florist, the caterer, the DJ, book book book and they think they're done now. Okay, does your photographer need permits? Have you got a wet weather plan? Have you sorted out everybody's food allergies? Will you give everyone an information pack of where to park, what the timing of the event is? ... No, they say. Oh okay then, shall we get into the details? After 30 years of planning the big day, she's seen it all. Given the choice between a bride so obsessed with her wedding that she's got spreadsheets and calls in every half-hour on the hour with changes, to two girls showing up and saying, 'We're getting married. We've got the rings, but Jane's doing it all; we don't know what she's doing, but she's going to take care of it all.' Dayus-Hinch prefers the middle road.

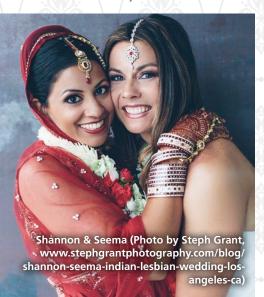
When it comes to same-sex couples, as a rule, ladies you are the most unorganized; if anyone is going to be obsessing and handing someone like Dayus-Hinch spreadsheets, it'll be the guys.

Promising Your Heart

So now that you have your vision, how do you bridge the gap—sometimes chasm—between old world traditional ceremonies and this new thing called same-sex equality in matrimony? There are extra details to keep in mind that your average hetero couple doesn't need to worry about, like traditional gender roles. For a lesbian couple, who will wear the dress, will either don the gown?

Both, neither? Who walks down the aisle? And this applies to the guys as well. Cultural gender roles can often be even more inflexible. "Often in multicultural same-sex weddings it's both guys coming down the aisle or one of them coming down with their mother, or sister, or grandmother, it's usually maternal," says Shivji.

And the heart of the event? The rings and the vows. "Vows are something personalized," says Shivji. "The Hindu culture has really opened up. A few months ago I did a wedding for a Hindu and a Canadian guy, and they had the ceremony with the henna and the food and two different receptions, one for friends and one for family."



"When I say to people what's the most important part of the day, if they say it's the party and the dancing I tell them they've got the wrong person," says Dayus-Hinch. "Why am I doing what I do? It's because of the ceremony. There are several magic moments. As you walk someone down the aisle and everyone gets up to watch, you can feel it. And when you see each other, this is the person of your dreams. This is your moment. So when I say by law you've got to say these words, I ask, what are you promising each other?"

To Dayus-Hinch the vows are probably the single most important thing of the entire ceremony. She gives the couple each a piece of paper and sends them away to write down what the whole thing means to them. So when they come back having written they want to be the other's work-out partner for life, she's often disappointed. "What do you want the next 25 years to be?" she asks. "Isn't it that you want to love and care for each other? To make each other happy in the good times and the bad, to be their rock, the place they come

home to for refuge, to always put them first? All those fabulous things. Sometimes our language isn't big enough. I find the word 'love' bandied around everywhere. Oh, I love that cup of tea; oh, I love you. The word isn't big enough, so you have to bring in lots of other words to say what love means to you and what it means on that day."

Once you've distilled those emotions into words, learn them. "The reason we recite vows after someone," Dayus-Hinch informs me, "is because the learned man could read and the common man was illiterate and you recited them because you couldn't read. On *your* wedding day, you should be able to recite your vows with no prompting. Tape them up on the bathroom door, in the car, on the fridge—everywhere. *Learn* your vows, so when you put that ring on their finger, you are giving that ring as a sign of your marriage, so you never forget them. If you really mean what you say, learn it for life."

"And they make you cry," says Shivji. "That's the crying point, the climax of the wedding. You can see the guests feeling it too."

"That's where the word love and what it means becomes more than one word. That's what this is all about," avers Dayus-Hinch.

And that's what the entire day really comes down to: love. It's also, incidentally why the ring goes on the third finger of your left hand—it's the only finger that has a vein directly connected all the way to the heart. "All the people are there because they love you, they support you and they are witnessing your marriage," she says. "Are you doing it for them? No. You want them to always remember your wedding day, you want them to

Learn your vows, so when you put that ring on their finger, you are giving that ring as a sign of your marriage, so you never forget them. If you really mean what you say, learn it for life.

remember it for all the magical moments you created in the day, so that you have the best wedding you can ever have. That's why I think you need to have an expert to help with all the planning so you can decide what you want to achieve."

Shivji agrees whole-heartedly, "Your birthday, your wedding day and the day you die are the most important days of your life. Your

wedding day is the only one you have any control of."

That's why Dayus-Hinch and Shivji come full-circle and ask again and again the single most important question of the day: "What do the two of you want?"

Same-sex weddings are blazing new trails, breaking down barriers and causing people to re-invent this special day. "The more gay marriages you see, the more people realize that these couples are in love," says Shivji. "At my own wedding when my 75-year-old cousin came, her head was down, she had no idea

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At the end of my ceremony she
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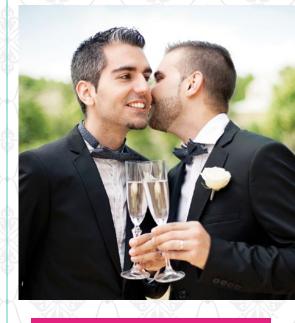
what a gay couple would be like. At the end of my ceremony she said to me, 'I'm happy that you are happy. Don't care about anybody else and what they think about you, or what they say. If you are happy, then you are happy.'"

"That's the best thing you can say, and it can apply to anybody," Dayus-Hinch agrees.

"And I think a lot of families are looking at that," adds Shivji. "What's going to make my daughter, or my son happy? That's what it comes down to now. You take a gay couple or any multicultural couple, it comes down to what their happiness is."

"The world of weddings and marriages has evolved," finishes Dayus-Hinch. "Yes the world is becoming more accepting, as with a lot of things. Is it for the good? Well where love is concerned, it's all good. If it's making people happy, who's to say it's wrong?"

Jeff Harrison is the editor of this magazine.



WorldPride 2014

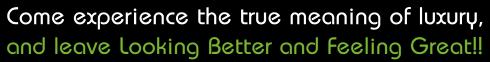
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TODAY OR ANY
DAY!





t's hard to be Zen in a grocery store. It just is. So when we have the alternative of something else, it is not surprising that we would take advantage of it. Many of us have this image (and I am one of those people): I see me, early summer to late fall, delicious wind in my hair, mesh bag draped ecstatically over one shoulder, strolling past the awning sheltered stalls showcasing a cornucopia of local fruits and vegetables. I see myself chatting with the vendors and mulling over the baskets of small, but intensely flavourful local berries. I inhale the warm aroma of fresh baked bread in the air and taste the samples of smooth, tangy cheese. It makes my imagination come alive with main courses and dinner parties and a general excitement to feed myself. Just remembering the rumble of wheels moving dollies of produce, the laugher of exuberant farmers and the easy going smiles on the faces of the other like-minded market goers, makes me sigh.

I don't always make it to market though. When I am out of milk or cereal, this kind of shopping gets deprioritized. When I am running low on laundry soap, or down to my last square of toilet paper it just seems like I can't justify it. Especially if I also need to go to the post office, buy diapers and do my laundry. In a world of days and weeks

and months of what seems like constant busyness, the Farmers' Market can be a luxurious beacon of ease on a day that aspires to being relaxed, casual and literally bountiful.

For the past year I have enjoyed the East York Civic Centre Farmers Market (Tuesday 8am-2pm; 850 Coxwell Ave.). It has become a family tradition. Not just for the gorgeous produce, and the show of support owing to Ontario farmers, but the time spent together. Having gone to The University of Guelph and being aware of its Agricultural roots, I have loved the campaign of little yellow buttons that have been circulated in the last few years saying, "Farmers Feed Cities." It reminds me of the t-shirts that the agricultural students wore from time to time bearing slogans like, "If you ate today thank a farmer." So very true! The sweat, patience and commitment it takes to feed a nation is staggering and I want my son to grow up knowing where his food comes from.

I also want him to grow up with the beautiful memory of food. How we sigh over the smooth, purple eggplants and summer corn. We all are familiar with an onion. I thought I was too, but just the other day when I was at the market I saw it in the glow of a new light. Bunches of onion were lined up on a



shelf in one of the stalls, still attached to their leafy tops and I almost thought they were overgrown heads of garlic. The leaves were bright green and the white, pearly flesh of the onion was glossy. I had to put it up to my nose and smell it just to convince myself that it was in fact an onion. We sliced it up to put on a burger that night and it was the most delicious onion I had ever tasted.

Just Groceries, or Entertainment?

Not everyone has the time, inclination or funds to celebrate the buying and consumption of food this way, but for those who would like a little more of a road map to navigate a personal journey into this world of edible bliss, look no further.

My initial guide on this journey was Sheryl Kirby (www.sherylkirby.com), editor and publisher of former website TasteT.O. Now on to other projects including a new Literary Food Journal *Beer and Butter Tarts*, she continues to share her fresh, green expertise with Toronto.

"I think first and foremost, market goers really need to decide whether they are going to buy their groceries or whether they are going to socialize because different markets are set up differently. For instance, Brickworks (ebw.evergreen.ca/farmers-market) usually has bands and entertainment, there is usually stuff going on for the kids, there are lots of prepared foods. Whereas, if you go to St. Lawrence Market (www.stlawrencemarket.com), we're all there to get our groceries, because it gets crazy busy. I'm the one who is there at eight in the morning getting my stuff and getting the heck home, Kirby says with a laugh.

At this point in the conversation I could tell I was playing for the other team on that one, but I totally agree about deciding what you want and creating the experience you would like to have. "It's very much about what you are looking for in a market in terms of the products there," she continues, speaking about the particular vendors where she likes to shop at St. Lawrence. "Some of them in have been in the market going on a hundred years, passed down from generation, to generation, to generation. That's where you go to buy most of your meats, your cheeseparticularly imported cheese. There is a Montréal Bagel place, there are a lot of bulk places downstairs, and there is a rice place, which has all the kinds of rice in the world, which will make your head explode! And then on Saturday in the north market you have your farmers, obviously selling everything that is in season, but what's there will depends on the time of season."

Thinking about the autumn fare, my mind comes alive with apple pies, and hot buttered squash, smooth orange pumpkins and a warm cup of cider in my cold hands. Sorauren Park (Mondays 3-7pm; Dundas and Lansdown; www.westendfood.coop), or the small market in Dufferin Grove Park (Thursday 3-7pm; www.dufferinpark.ca), were other suggestions, but for the strollers and bikes and soccer games. I consider the market at Dufferin Grove to be a tiny gem held at a little ice rink house in the summer and a small section outdoors. Even before I had a stroller or a munchkin I did not mind weaving around kids and bikes and a tight crowd to pick a few things up.

Getting to Know Your Local Growers

One market that Kirby particularly enjoys for the wide-open spaces is Nathan Phillips Square (Wednesday 8am-2:30pm; 100 Queen West). "It has lots of space between vendors and because they are catering to the office crowd (in summer) when you have peaches and plumbs and cherries and apples and pears coming in they will do a little mix basket," Kirby says. "It's just me and my husband and a bushel basket of peaches...we're not going to eat all that. It's quiet in the mornings,

they have a band at lunch, but it's mostly for getting groceries. Many of the same vendors are at Metro Hall in David Pecaut Square (Thursdays 8am-2pm; 55 John St.).

"If on the other hand," she continues, "you want to talk to a farmer and learn about what you are buying, I would advise doing this when it's not busy. It's their livelihood, they don't have the time to explain how peaches grow, but if it's quiet then they will. I've had great conversations about apples with farmers when the farmers' market is quiet, but if there are five people in line behind you... sometimes people go with expectations, 'I'm going to be friends with Farmer Brown' but Farmer Brown's got a job to do, it's his income."

This made me chuckle as it brought to mind my relationship with the mushroom man and his wife, and how I was wondering if he would remember us this season after the long moments we discussed shitakes and creminis. Especially since he gave me my regular bag of mushrooms one Tuesday even though I was two dollars short. He was ecstatic when I brought him a toonie the next week and went on an on about the nature of good folk at length as I stocked up again. I always teased my mother about making friends wherever she went and I must say that I have completely developed my own panache for the friendly, quiet exchange of conversation

that can happen, especially somewhere like a quiet morning at the Farmers' Market.

For me it's about the quality of the experience: the smells and the textures and the atmosphere. I fully admit to falling peach, pear and plum for the romanticized, social concept of a farmers' market. The East York Civic Centre Market is ideal for me. It set up as a square that the shoppers rotate around on a wide sidewalk. Sure there are strollers and bikes, field trips and people just picking up their groceries, but it is surrounded by a wide space of grass where people take their hot dogs and sit down for lunch. It is definitely a luxury that not everyone can afford in terms of the money and in my case, the time it takes to fit a leisurely hour or two into an over-stuffed day. Buying local and supporting my community gives me a fantastic feeling and when I can, I certainly do.

Mind Your Ps and Qs

There also seems to be a very clear etiquette forming in my mind about farmers' markets, which was clearly reflected from Kirby's perspective. When I asked her about that she informed me she had done a blog post called "Farmers Market Etiquette" and I was immediately intrigued.

"A lot of people go in at peak times expecting to talk with the farmer like it's a ride at a fair... And there are so many markets that insist that the farmer who grew the stuff come to sell the stuff. Well how is he going to grow the stuff if he is in town? It's like a novelty. When you go to a U-pick, where you go to the farm, that is not entertaining enough for people anymore. You read articles and stories about farmers adding bouncy castles to their property, and picnic areas. Its great, but I also think we need to adjust our attitude towards it a little. A lot of farmers are not happy that they have to be there to sell their stuff." This makes so much sense given that many of these farms are family run and those individuals who tend the fields and grow the crops can't work consistently if they have to be performing the overall clad,

From her perspective there are a lot

straw hat wearing

farmer, to some degree.



of things you can do to make your experience and the experience for the vendors more pleasant. "Bring change," Kirby laughs and describes how she would see people buying a box of strawberries with a fifty-dollar bill. "Don't squeeze the peaches!" She laughs again. "I had a farmer show me how to hold and squeeze a peach for ripeness and its not how most people do it. I stood there one day as he watched a customer just destroy a box of peaches 'cause he squeezed all these peaches and then just put them down and walked away. He (the farmer) just picked up the baskets and put them in the bin at the back, because those were garbage now. With peaches, even if they are green if you squeeze them with your fingers that is where you are going to have little indentations."

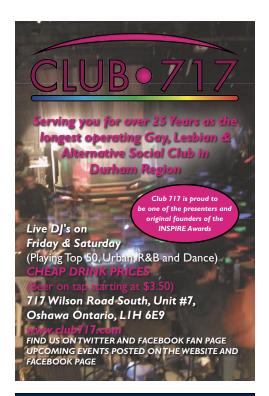
Oh my God—I have to figure out how to squeeze a peach! Who knew right?! "You squeeze a peach with the palm of your hand, and squeeze it with the muscles of your hand and not with the tips of your fingers," explains Kirby. In addition to asking before you squeeze she had a number of other wise suggestions like: bringing reusable bags; no sampling without permission; leave bikes and strollers at home if it is a super busy or crowded farmers market; dispose of your garbage correctly. Another big one, I would say the

biggest, is be patient with the farmers; some have been up since midnight loading trucks. Get to know them on down times and just like mom said, use the "pleases and the thank yous." They are bringing supper to your table after all.

For a full list of the many Toronto Farmers Markets go to www.tfmn.ca/?page_id=2

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer, Reiki Master and Reflexologist. She is also a woman processing the death of her 35 year old wife. To heal, she has invented a seriously disheveled super hero version of herself and started a blog.

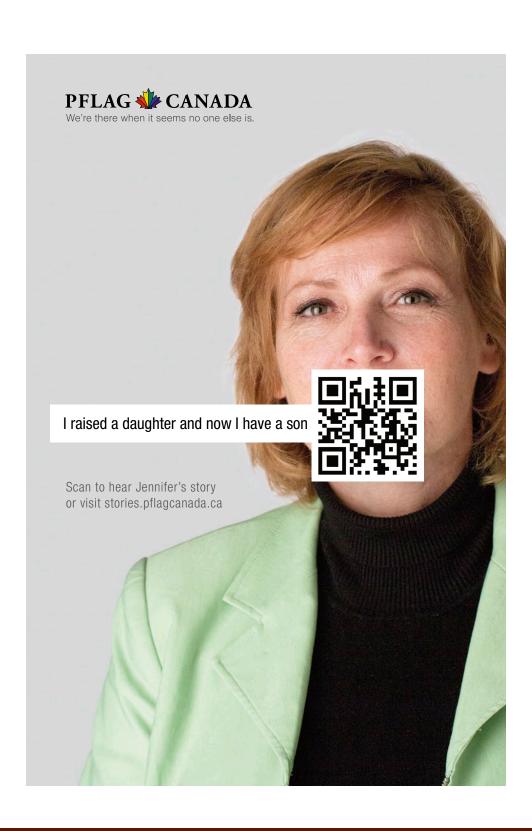














My introduction to Plant Spirit Medicine (PSM, not to be confused with PMS, ladies) came through author Eliot Cowan's book by the same name. So many folks who are now trained in this modality tell the same story of how this little green book just seemed to leap out at them from a bookshelf

one day as though calling them directly.

I was already a "hobby herbalist," living in the country outside Ottawa collecting a lot of my own medicine and drying plants for herbal teas and tinctures for my own uses. I already respected that plants are sentient beings, which are like people imbued with spirit and presence. I would tune into them to see how many in a patch they might allow me to harvest, and what their therapeutic qualities might be besides just looking it up in a book

Two years later, I was on my way to work with Eliot at a farmhouse retreat in Collingwood to be trained in PSM. I met my friends and colleagues, including Mai Duong and Elyse Parchoma (now Portal), who will also share their stories of

journeying with this profound and elegant form of healing.

First Impressions

Elyse Portal

Mai Duong

I will never forget the first PSM treatment I received. I arrived the first night of our training at the farm late and a total wreck. I was in total resistance to arriving, afraid to connect with others because I was so raw. I had recently been torn apart by a relationship that included an abortion and was poorly wading through a sea of grief and devastation. During that week of training, I had my first treatment with Gail Byrne, one of the teaching assistants. In a PSM treatment, sometimes before we can even deliver the medicine to a person's spirit, there are layers of blockage that the plants need to clear away. I must have had all of them, because as Gail administered the first transmissions of plants through her hands, I erupted in tears. It felt like an emotional car wreck was being lifted off of me. As the treatment continued, I became calmer and calmer.

Mai Duong's background was in business and the arts, so being a healer was not something that she had aspired to. Her first introduction to Plant Spirit Medicine was as a result of an illness. "I was desperately seeking anything to take away my hives which got progressively worse over a period of five months," she recalls. "I also felt really disconnected and lost from myself and from others. I went to see Eliot Cowan, who is an elder shaman, a teacher of PSM, and spiritual healer. Surprisingly, after a few treatments I became more in touch with myself, my culture and roots behind my 'dis-ease' or imbalance.

"I had been taking antihistamines daily," she continues, "but after the PSM treatments I reduced the dosage to one pill per month for two months then the hives disappeared. Would this work for everyone? I don't know; however, these treatments set a new healing journey for my life that I could not have imagined. My hives have not returned since 2002. I now feel much more connected, balanced and in the flow or rhythm of life. I would like to think of the hives as a blessing that was a nudge that lead me to restore balance in my life in a way that was unconventional, unlike other forms of medicine or healing."

"I too received my first treatment from Gail," says Elise Portal, who graduated from Cowan's class in 2006. "She asked me all sorts of questions, some were quite puzzling. Later, I came to learn she was querying into my imbalance—to find the source cause. The session was definitely layered, and I fell into a deep sleep during and after. In the morning, I felt like someone hit my 'restart' button. I had energy for life and my journey again!"

The Plants Take Root

The second big treatment I received was from Eliot. I was still getting over the relationship, yet also still clinging to hope we might get back together (he had moved back to Texas)... literally. I arrived at the treatment like Linus from the Peanuts, wrapped in a blanket he had given me. I think Eliot realized I was taking this guy's side and sympathizing with him, when I should have been raging at his abandonment and lack of sympathy and care for me. I was out of balance. It wasn't making me physically sick yet, but emotionally I was still pretty messed up. I don't know what plant he treated me with to reset my self-preservation boundaries properly, but





at the end of the treatment, I flung the blanket off of me, and later burned it in the stove to release it. The next morning, I felt it coming and knew I needed to go for a walk on my own...maybe a run. A huge torpedo of suppressed anger was coming up, and it wanted to MOVE! I crashed through the woods, stomping my feet, and raged at the gods, yelling. Whew, what a relief! Sheesh, good treatment. I felt ebullient and recharged afterward. It's not always comfortable to finally move emotional energy that has been jammed up in our system and making us sick, but the peace and joy that comes after the smoke clears is so worth it.

These days, my regular practitioner Carla works with me weekly, or bi-weekly to keep me growing in a good direction. I'm dealing with constant work pressure as a self-employed entrepreneur, and get irritated and short way too easily when I'm tired and frustrated. We realized I'm like a tree that has a lot of branches with roots not prolific or grounded enough to sustain the top-heavy growth: I'm scattered in too many directions with too many projects and talents, but not pulling up enough sustenance financially or emotionally. It leaves me feeling desperate sometimes, and depleted. She is treating me with a plant that helps me to send my roots down deeper. I feel really calm after treatments, my legs are less tense, and my knees ache less. There is less tension all over in my body. It's easier to slow down, and my viewpoint changes too. When I'm in balance, life looks okay, like everything is coming along, but I just need to slow down and regulate my growth so I

don't deplete my energy reserves before my roots can suck in more nourishment. The medicine helps me to do that, rather than my unbalanced expression of rushing off in all directions and pushing myself too hard.

Duong also graduated from the PSM training in 2006. "Some of my clients came to me with histories of depression, issues of self-esteem, lack of motivation and dissatisfaction in their marriage, another with symptoms of psoriasis," she says. "We do not make any promises to cure or to treat our client's symptoms. We look at the whole person. We get to the root of a person's imbalance and use the appropriate plants to provide the client with what they need for their mind, body and spirit. The plant spirits have the ability to touch our hearts and our minds to produce healing. The changes in physical symptoms is a by-product of a more joyous and more fulfilling relationship that my clients have with their lives.

"One of my clients," Duong continues, "years ago, was adjusting to a new marriage late in life, experiencing issues that needed clarifying and facing, as well as taking permanent care of her adult disabled child. Her major issues were anxiety and depression. She found from the first treatment that the mind-body-spirit aspect of the work was really respectful of where she was at the time, and taught her some self-respect and self-confidence also. As time went by she began to see her sessions providing clarity and calm as well as healing that she described as deeply cellular. She told



me, 'I will always remember the day when I arrived in a place of terrible anxiety, lay down on your table, received the first dose of plant healing, and then exclaimed, almost laughing, You sedated me!' I smiled and nodded. One of the things in Plant Spirit Medicine, is when the mother is treated, the child improves. My client experienced this on several occasions."

Portal feels, "An important part of my healing journey was to heal my relationship with the earth. In my early 20s, I had backpacked around the world and spent time in very special places. Through the medicine, I came to learn that one of these special places was a sacred site: it had a timeless relationship with human beings, offering them blessings in exchange for being given appropriate offerings. The only problem was that I didn't know that, and further, 'appropriate offerings' weren't even on my radar. I came to see how upsetting this sacred place created upset in almost every area of my life. Fortunately, through ongoing sessions, I received the support to remedy the situation. Finally, I found enough stability to open to my life purpose."

Offering the Medicine

I've spent years developing my second sight as a trained Energy Healer. When I had the chance to observe what was happening during a PSM treatment during our clinical week of training, I was blown away. Each student had a client to present and treat in front of the rest of the class under Eliot's guidance. He interviewed the client to help us clarify what their deepest need was, and what plant might help to attend to that need. Then the client lay down clothed on a massage table while we administered the treatment. We would lay our hands on the client, ask one of the plant spirits we had befriended through shamanic journey work to come into the client, and then check their pulses (in the tradition of Chinese Medicine: see my column "From the Heart" this year to learn more.) As an observer in the audience I could sit back and watch. I could see huge morphs happening in their energy fields as the plant spirits were sent in. but it was happening on a level I couldn't identify. In the Barbara Brennan School of Healing 4-year training, we were taught to observe and work with energy/consciousness on seven different levels. What I was witnessing seemed to be happening on an even deeper plane than the aura. I was very impressed. I have to say that seeing this is what has kept me wanting to offer this medicine to my clients, because I know the benefits and potential to transform are deep.

"I've been practicing PSM part-time and have developed a profound deep relationship with the plants," says Duong. "The plants are beings, full of wisdom, knowledge, awareness and feelings. In developing this relationship, what is created is a deep connection to the natural world and restoring one's

ability to listen to our heart's voice. This is medicine and has the capacity to begin our own healing journeys. Plant Spirit Medicine is not just a form of healing, but can also be a wonderful form of exploring and discovering the world that we live in, its sacredness."

"I always had a deep interest in herbal medicine," says Portal, "but PSM filled my longing for an intimate and personal connection to plants. From a space that navigates deep listening and wonderment, I offer plant spirits, and observe the metamorphosis of the client from session to session. It is one of my favourite things to do. I have come to learn that our deepest challenges yield intrinsic gifts. With an ongoing commitment to this medicine, the plants are able to enter the client's life-world to expand their awareness and facilitate a movement toward balance.

To Grow a Garden

Nature has much to offer us on so many levels. All of our material needs are provided for, we are nourished physically, and there is medicine for our body, emotions, and deepest essence. Our pill-popping culture would prefer to make things just go away, but the plants in their wisdom, understand that real bounty and healthy growth is like growing a garden: much joyful tending is needed to make it thrive. Most of us neglect our spirits since we live in a culture that views it as trite, or tries to outright control it. Few of us really understand what we hunger for on a soul level. Luckily the plants haven't forgotten. So if you are ready to find deep balance, and are willing to commit to the journey, there are Plant Spirit Medicine practitioners in Toronto ready to sow some health with you.

You can read more about Plant Spirit Medicine at www.plantspiritmedicine.org. Both Mai Duong (psmontario@gmail.com) and Elyse Portal (elyseportal.com) are Toronto-based practitioners who are currently accepting clients.

Shelley A. Harrison is an Energy Healer in Ottawa. She graduated from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing 4-year professional training and has been working in private practice for over 10 years. She visits Toronto regularly to see clients and visit her brother, Jeff, the editor of this magazine.





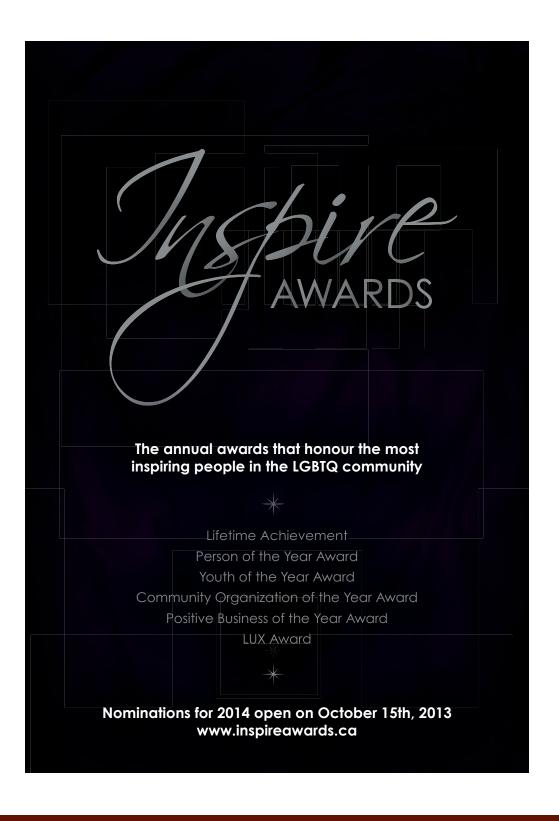
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he Niagara region is well known for the infamous Niagara Falls, all the fun and fear houses up along Clifton Hill, and for being the Honeymoon Capital of the World. While further up the road, Niagara-On-The-Lake has carved out a name for itself as a live theatre hub, specifically based around playwright Bernard Shaw, as well as a thriving wine region that has gained worldwide recognition for the production of ice wines. However, there's a whole other world beyond this microscopic setting that's yet to be discovered by mainstream tourism. Here's a rundown on what the Niagara region of Ontario has to offer year round, other than waterfalls and wineries.

The majority of visitors head toward the Niagara River for a snapshot photo of the raging waterfalls, spilling on average almost four million cubic feet of water over its edge each minute! For those wanting more than a glimpse at the mighty waters, there are opportunities to

get below it, above it, and even on the water that flows from it. **Journey Behind the Falls** (niagaraparks.com/niagara-falls-attractions/journey-behind-the-falls.html) allows visitors the opportunity to don a rain parka and descend down an elevator 150 feet through bedrock to tunnels beneath the misty cascade of falling water. It's quite surreal if you find yourself roaming down there without the crowds, so try for early morning or just before closing time.

Naturally Inspiring

For those who like to keep their feet on the ground Niagara Nature Tours (niagaranaturetours.ca) offers a variety of guided tours to explore the Niagara Escarpment along the Bruce Trail, the Niagara River , Agriculture and



Niagara Helicopters.



Gara by Bryen Dunn

Nature Tours based on the geology of the Niagara Peninsula. For those more adventurous types, there's an opportunity to experience fifteen minutes of flight high and above The Falls within the bubble of a helicopter. **Niagara Helicopters** (niagarahelicopters.com) offers thrill seekers a chance to view the region from a bird's eye perspective flying high above the Niagara River, over the international bridges that connect Canada and the United States, and the thunderous Horseshoe



Jet Boat Tours.

Falls. Keep your eyes peeled for all those welcoming rainbows! Finally, an experience definitely worth getting wet for are the **Jet Boat Tours** (whirlpooljet.com) that ride the rapids created by the momentous overflow of water that tumbles downward and rushes along the Niagara River. There's no way of not getting wet on this one, but the 360 degree above water flips definitely will perk you up and kick start your day faster

than a jolt of java. Now that you've done The Falls in every imaginable way possible, it's time to hit the town and see what other adventures await.

Clifton Hill is the main drag where everyone heads to, and is definitely worth a stroll to soak up the carnival-like atmosphere that happens day and night. It's like a permanent amusement park with games, rides, wax museums, and haunted houses. There are plenty of places to grab a guick bite, or a refreshing cocktail along the strip. For something a bit more exhilarating Windows by Jamie Kennedy (windowsbyjamiekennedy. com) offers some sourced tasteful locally



Windows by Jamie Kennedy.



Greg Frewin Theatre.

dishes and a great cocktail menu. Try to reserve one of the prime tables alongside the floor to ceiling windows for spectacular views of the Horseshoe Falls high atop the **Sheraton Hotel**. In the evening, the **Greg Frewin Theatre** (gregfrewintheatre.com) hosts a variety of entertainment, including his own jaw-dropping illusionist IMAGINE show. This two-hour program has the slickness of Vegas, unlike any other production in Canada. Pre-show dinner packages and backstage access tours after the show are also available.

Head Downtown Niagara to "The Q"

Once you've ticked off the touristic docket, a stroll along the emerging revitalization of the downtown strip of **Queen Street** is most definitely warranted. Recently rebranded as "**The Q**", it's still an area in rapid transition as new businesses continue to open and bring this historic area back to life. As with many smaller communities, the struggles of keeping "main street" vibrant in the era of big box retailers has been a hurdle. There are still a few storefronts that remain vacant, while others have been filled with an eclectic mix of entrepreneurial start ups. **Taps Brewhouse** (tapsbeer.ca) and **Grand Central** are two of the original mainstays that offer brews and bands, each with an extensive food menu and outdoor patios.

A couple of the more interesting start-ups over the last year are **Paris Crêpes Café** (pariscrepescafe.com), a quaint bistro with a real Parisian atmosphere. As the name implies, they offer a huge selection of crêpes, both sweet and savoury, that are created in the open-concept kitchen at the front of the café. This is in addition to their full menu of French specialties such as salade toulousaine, escargot, foie gras, confit de canard, and crême brulée. The walls are sprinkled with local art, and they often have live entertainment. As for wines, there's a great selection of local Niagara region wines, as well as international bottles from France and beyond. They also allow patrons to bring their own wine on certain nights with a minimal corkage fee. It's definitely a worthy dining experience.

Many locals frequent Paris Crêpes before or after catching a production at the **Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects** (Itpniagara.com), Niagara region's year round source for staged events, located directly across the street from the café. Current productions coming up in the 2013/14 season are Willy Russell's *Shirley Valentine*, Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, and *The Ravine* by George F. Walker. Located in the historic Seneca Queen Theatre, this completely refurbished venue is perfect for getting your off-season theatre fix. In fact, many of the actors are from Shaw productions over in Niagara-On-The-Lake, who live in the region and take the fall and winter downtime to perform here.

One way to bring the streets back to life is by having outdoor events. There's free outdoor live music on Friday nights in the summer in front of City Hall, and also regularly in front of Tap's Brewhouse. Springlicious Food and Beer Festival takes place early May, while Niagara Falls Buskerfest takes place the end

of August, presented by the same people behind Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects. Before leaving "The Q" be sure to grab a java at Coffee Culture, and explore some of the unique shopping opportunities, such as Russell's Interiors, Eagle's Nest, and Ragged Glory. There are also a few art galleries that have sprung up here as well.

Wine and Chocolate

The other reason people flock to this region is for the wineries, whether they be the larger Inniskillin or Jackson Triggs, or one of the hundred smaller vineyards that appear almost around every bend. Sometimes the best way of discovering these are to stop in and sample. **Chateau Des Charmes** (fromtheboscfamily.com/chateau-des-charmes) is one of the original majestic wineries in the area, steeped in history, and known for their award winning wines harvested from French grapes. The production itself is located within a grand mansion on several well-manicured acres, where it's possible to sit out in the backyard and have a catered picnic lunch served up with your choice of wine. (Editor's Note: be sure to read our in-depth article on the Bosc Family in our 2008 issue of summerplay!)

Another relatively new producer on the block is Ravine



Bosc Chateau and Vineyard.

Vineyard (ravinevineyard.com), located in the tiny hamlet of St. David's. Situated on a 34-acre site in a century old familyowned farmhouse, the surrounding sub-appellation lands allow for a unique blend of wines to be produced due to it having the highest elevation and warmest temperatures in the region. Ravine also has recognized the importance of offering something more than the opportunity for wine samplings and purchases. They've incorporated a bakery and cheese boutique onsite, as well as a terrific restaurant out back that prepares fresh wood-oven pizzas, among other specialties. For those wanting to take away more than a bottle of wine, the Canning House Grocery Store is stocked with jams, pickles, sauces and canned whole fruits from the region that are produced onsite. Also, check their website for their live music nights featuring both local and out of town artists.

Just down the road from Ravine is **Chocolate FX** (chocolatefx.ca), offering nearly 100 different products made



Chocolate FX.

onsite that would make even Willy Wonka kick up his heels. The space is open to the public, who can sample many of the treats on display in the showroom from their chocolate tasting bar, or take a short tour that explains the whole production process that allows visitors to see the actual flow of this creamy delight. No drooling allowed! So now that you've got your wine and chocolate fix, it's time to hit up the quaint surroundings of Niagara-On-The-Lake for a taste of culture.

The Place to Celebrate

Rivaling some of the larger metropolises globally, this tiny town bursts at the seams with theatre-hungry patrons filling four historic theatres within a one-kilometre radius. Each year there's a new lot of productions, some more daring or fringe, but primarily mainstream and definitely includes at least one or two Bernard Shaw classics. Since 1962, the **Shaw Festival** (shawfest.com) has produced plays from and about his era, and contemporary plays that share Shaw's provocative exploration of society and celebration of humanity. The 2013 season runs until late fall with the likes of *Guys and Dolls*, Oscar Wilde's, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and Tom Stoppard's, *Arcadia*.



Harbour House.

When it's time to call it a night, Niagara-On-The-Lake has some of the more unique options, such as one of three Niagara's Finest Inns (niagarasfinest.com). Each has its own distinctive character, but all offer top level service and above par accommodations. **Harbour House** has spacious traditional rooms, many with views of the Niagara River, while the **Charles Inn** and adjacent **Shaw Club** have more of a modern décor and are

located closer to the main street. Before ending your discovery tour of this area, be sure to allow some time for a bit of pampering at the Shaw Spa, and treat yourself to some delectable dishes at either Zee's Grill, with its large wraparound enclosed patio, or perhaps some afternoon tea and scones at the elegant Charles Restaurant. White Oaks Resort and Spa (whiteoaksresort.com) is ideally located between Niagara-On-The-Lake and Niagara Falls, making it perfect for exploring in all directions. This four-star property has also played host to several same-sex weddings, has some excellent onsite dining options, and the largest fitness club in



Zee's Grill.

the area with access included for hotel guests.

So while the Niagara Region is known for its water and wineries, there's definitely more out there worth exploring. Getting there from Toronto is easy, with regular service on Megabus, GO Transit, and VIA Rail.

Good Things Brewing in Buffalo

Less than an hour away on the other side of the international border is the city of Buffalo, New York. Once recognized as having the most millionaires per capita than any other American city, as well as one of the first skyscrapers, this industrial port lost some of its luster when the ships ceased operations. Today, there's somewhat of a renaissance happening there with the waterfront being developed and made accessible to the public once again, historical buildings being repurposed for elegant boutique hotels, a thriving music and theatre scene, high-end dining options, and the beginnings of a new brewery district in the downtown core that is soon to bring even more life to the streets. Watch for our Buffalo spotlight in our winter issue of PinkPlayMags.

Get Your Tourism On

Niagara Falls Tourism - niagarafallstourism.com The Q Downtown Niagara - niagarafallsdowntown.com Niagara-on-the-Lake Tourism - notl.org Buffalo Tourism - visitbuffaloniagara.com LGBT Tourism Conference - tgcconference.com

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. He's willing to take on any assignments of interest, attend parties with free booze, listen to rants, and travel the world in search of the great unknown. He's eager to discover the new, remember the past, and look into the future.













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GAMING IS THE NEW CHIC

Toronto's Own Gamercamp Turns Five

by cee sando

MUCH IN THE SAME WAY THAT GEEK CHIC IS SUDDENLY VERY MUCH IN STYLE (JUST CHECK OUT THOSE HUGE BLACK-RIMMED, LENSLESS GLASSES ON YOUR NEAREST HIPSTER), IT SEEMS THAT THOSE THINGS THAT WERE ONCE CONSIDERED ONLY FOR "NERDS" AND "GEEKS" IS VERY MUCH THE NEW NEW.

nter gaming. Who wasn't completely obsessed with Mortal Kombat or Sonic the Hedgehog or those iconic familial plumbers, the Super Mario Brothers when they were younger? Well guess what, video games are cool again! No longer simply the fodder of outcasts, video game culture is not only accessible to the masses, but has truly become a part of the zeitgeist. If you've watched a new movie recently or listened to a rap song, or even walked into one of the many fast-fashion clothing chains around, chances are you have seen, heard or come across some reference to a video game, game character, or gaming in general.

Enter Gamercamp. If you have yet to hear of Toronto's Gamercamp, you have definitely been missing out! For the past 5 years, Gamercamp has been the city's premiere video game festival. Described as "TIFF with joysticks", Gamercamp was founded by gaming enthusiasts Jaime Woo (PinkPlayMags' Hyper-Culture columnist) and Mark Rabo to provide a forum for gamers and fans alike to discuss and discover new games in the local community. Since its inception, Gamercamp has presented some of the most interesting game makers and their creations to the nation's largest city. What started as a one day event with 55 presenters about and 125 attendees (founders Woo and Rabo had expected no more than 50), has now exploded into a two day festival complete with speakers

and workshops and an estimated attendance of 1,500 for this year's festivities. Showing work from across North America to an engaged, audience of enthusiasts, developers, and media, the festival now also boasts speakers and presenters from all over the world.

Metro News reports that due to Gamercamp "Toronto is a video gaming backwater no more... Toronto has become a video game hub almost despite itself." (metronews.ca/voices/backstage-pass/423966/gamercamp-toronto-a-video-gaming-backwater-no-more/).

When asked why Toronto, and why games, Woo responds "Toronto has released some of the most interesting and creative games in the market over the past 5 years. But it's not just talent. There is a real sense of fellowship here in Toronto's games community unlike anything I've experienced before. We're still a young city for games, so knowing there's so much room to grow is something to look forward to as well."

Feel like you need to be a hardcore gamer to attend the fest? Woo, disagrees, "It's just like how you don't need to be a film snob to attend TIFF. Instead, try out new video and board games with families and friends. Attend a talk to hear about what's leading the way in games. Check out our exhibitions packed with cool facts and works of art exploring the history of games... In the end, it's about the love of games more

than anything else, so when I see people lose themselves in their excitement for the games, that's when I know I have done my job."

Want a little sample of games that have been shown at the festival? Sworcery, N+, Dyad, Sound Shapes, Mega Run, Guacamelee, Super TIME Force, Lovers in a Dangerous Spacetime, Friendship in 4 Colours, ProbabilityO, Hokra, Deep Sea, BariBaraBall and Home are just a few hot indie titles to be showcased.

Though gaming is primarily about the fantasy and the fun it provides, Woo is very much aware of the educational and boundary-pushing opportunities it allows. Gamercamp recently collaborated with fashion illustrator Danielle Meder to create a series of portraits of iconic female game characters re-imagined in modern-day couture. It is undeniable that the large majority of games are made by and for a straight male perspective, which translates to the majority of characters being male, and female characters that do exist sport incredibly revealing costumes (not to mention sky-high heels), which barely cover unrealistic physical proportions. By re-imagining these characters, the project entitled, "Double Flawless" hopes to spark a conversation about the expression of female identities in games, gaming culture, and the gaming industry. With more female gamers existing than ever before, the project could not be more timely.

For the project, Woo purposely chose Meder, a complete gaming outsider for the costume re-vamps. Of the illustrations, says Woo, "[Meder] is able to capture something shockingly rare in videogames: a female perspective on the

concept of sexy... "Double Flawless," counters the narrow views of sexuality and gender so pervasive in videogame culture. With her sophisticated eve for detail, [Meder] immediately transports us to a world where colours, textures, and silhouettes convey appeal over the traditional shorthands of bigger breasts and barer skin."

Woo is optimistic that the project will help encourage an entirely new audience to become interested in gaming and the culture. Given the trajectory of the festival and gaming culture as a whole, over the past five years, it seems safe to say that as more people of different genders, sexualities, backgrounds, and experiences become involved in gaming the less progressive aspects of the genre will be forced to stand up, pay attention and change its clothes.

Gamercamp takes place in Toronto November 1-3, for details check out www.gamercamp.ca

Currently calling Toronto home, cee sando rarely sits still. Jet-setting throughout the Caribbean, France, Dubai, India, Mexico, the USA and Canada, cee documents her experiences through words, photos and her fashion choices. Obsessed with style and pop culture, cee has a bohemian heart and readily admits her love for the classic rock-and-roll lifestyle.





Style Icon: Lindsay Lohan Collection: Balmain Spring 2011

Mileena's unhinged aspect immediately suggested Lindsay Lohan as her icon. Lohan has got this scattershot fashion sense that occasionally veers towards the overly revealing.

She's often also unashamedly dishevelled, with over processed, unkempt hair and a disregard for details. Balmain Spring/Summer 2011 is the perfect collection for Mileena because it's basically made for a hot mess of a rich girl, outrageous tastelessness rendered über fashionable by the fact that it's very, very expensive.

Check out her other inspired re-interpretations: www.gamercamp.ca/magazine/double-flawless-fall-winter-2013-2014

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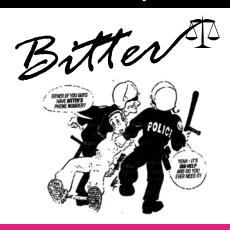
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HYPER-CULTURE

by Jaime Woo



recently spent nine days in the Québec countryside for my friends' wedding. There was a large mountain to climb, a beautiful lake to swim in, and at night the stars came out in numbers I hadn't seen since I moved downtown. The strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries

were some of the tastiest I have ever had, and of course I could not neglect the famous Québécois cheese.

Perhaps because of the calmer, less hectic pace of the country, I thought it would be a good time as well to take a vacation from social media. I removed the bookmarks for Twitter and Facebook off my phone to prevent temptation and quelled the desire to constantly share the many thoughts and observations I had from day to day.

It got me thinking about moments and what we do with them. We're lucky that our minds can hold memories, but we also have technology—from paper and pen all the way to smartphones—to help capture and share them externally as well.

The relationship can be a fickle one: people are often accused of over-sharing, and there's something to be said about being able to capture

> everything that renders it all meaningless. In addition, the constant nag of whether to record something or not, must take a psychological toll, the slow drip-drip-drip of decision fatigue.

> In the countryside, given my self-imposed exile from social media, I captured moments just for myself. There was no pressure, no nudge to do anymore than that. And it felt more valuable for some reason.

I mention all this not just to go down some philosophical path, but because common tools can be seen in a new light when we revisit them with a strategic and purposeful eye.



Great restaurant experience? Remember it with FourSquare.

For example, instead of arbitrarily sharing my location on the app Foursquare, I tend to now use it as a personal record of what I liked and didn't like, that way the next time I go to a restaurant I know what to order and what to avoid. It's easier than logging everything in a single file and visually it makes more sense.

The nice thing about Foursquare being location-based is that when I am back in the area of the restaurants, I can see and be reminded of the places around me. It helps me better contextualize the space I'm in. At the same time, the app may also suggest somewhere new for me to try.

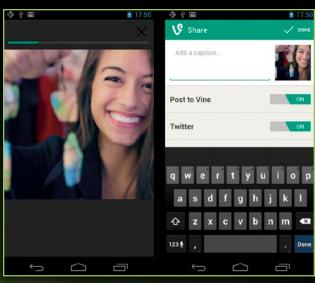
In a similar way, there's the **On The Go** app by the LCBO, a favourite of my editor's. Just scan the barcode of a bottle of wine and the app can alert you to a full description, its price, and keep a record for you to purchase next time. It's a smart method to keep track of things that so often we promise ourselves to remember, but don't! (Especially after all that wine!)

Even if you don't have the app, I now make a habit of using my smartphone camera to take pictures of everything for later reference. In addition to bottles of wine or scotch that I want to remember, I've also done this for business cards, emails written on scraps of paper, and receipts, that way in case I lose the slips, which inevitably I will, I have a back-up with my phone. Or, I can even toss away the bits and pieces, removing my clutter.

During the wedding, my friends and I used the micro-video app Vine to create quick 6 second



With On the Go remember that special bottle despite how much you enjoyed it.



Vine captures a brief moment in time to cherish.

looping videos. Animated GIFs are now the rage, in part I think because our memories tend to stutter that way too. There are times when we run through moments in our head again and again and looped video replicates that.

Photos can be unsatisfying because we can't get a sense of the moments before or after. (Also, there's no sound!) Videos can be dreadfully disconnecting when they are unedited, either with too much or too little left included to make any sense of what's going on.

When friends shared their Vines with me, however, these snippets were the Baby Bear of moments—just right—feeling more intimate and immediate than a photo or a longer clip would have been. It's worth a shot if you haven't downloaded it yet.

Upon returning to the city, it became too easy to fall back into the routine of all social media all the time. I appreciate having had the break to afford some reflection. Sometimes, I learned, you don't need to capture everything, when just six seconds will do.

Jaime Woo is a writer living in Toronto and the festival director of Gamercamp. An avid geek at the nexus of games and technology, he's just published his first book: Meet Grindr: How One App Changed The Way We Connect.



"Babies. Babies. Babies. What happens when bundles of joy turn into a whole load of trouble? Liz Bugg leads the reader down a gentle garden path that suddenly turns treacherous when danger from the past proves perilously potent."

— Anthony Bidulka, author of the Russell Quant mysteries



YELLOW VENGEANCE
LIZ BUGG

An excerpt from the novel Yellow Vengeance, by Liz Bugg AFTER RECENTLY ACCEPTING AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE CASE, AND TEMPORARILY DODGING THE "LET'S START A FAMILY" BULLET, TORONTO P.I. CALLI BARNOW IS LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EVENING OF FUN WITH HER WIFE, JESS. DINNER IN THE VILLAGE FOLLOWED BY A DRAG SHOW STARRING CALLI'S BEST FRIEND AND SOMETIMES COLLEAGUE, DEWEY, IS JUST WHAT'S NEEDED.

ess and I had agreed to meet at Dorothy's before heading down to Studs for the show. Although I try to attend every performance Dewey gives, Jess hadn't seen his Lady Dee a couple of years. She'd been out of town when he almost won the Queen Diva Contest, and other commitments had somehow prevented her from being there to cheer him on at his subsequent performances. As a result, she was glowing with anticipation.

We'd scored a spot near the back of the restaurant, tucked away from most of the bustle. The candle in the middle of the table flickered through its cut glass container causing ripples of light and shadow to dance across the plush wallpaper. Everything was perfect. There I was in my favourite restaurant with my beautiful wife, about to spend a wonderful evening surrounded by our people, watching the best drag queen in the city, who just happened to be my best friend.

Then, part way through our main course, Jess put down her knife and fork and looked at me. "So, Calli, have you been thinking about it?"

Nine times out of ten when she asked if I'd been thinking about *it* I wouldn't have a clue what she was referring to. This time, however, there was no question in my mind. "Yes, I have," I said, and concentrated on my bacon mushroom burger.

"Well?"

I swallowed, but held onto my bun. "Actually, I think we need to talk about some very important issues before we can even think about making a decision."

"Wow!"

"Wow?"

"You *have* been thinking about this. I'm impressed, Calli."

"I do sometimes think, you know." I could feel my hackles go up, probably due to my view on the subject and the fact that regardless of what I had just said to her, I didn't want to talk about it at all, and especially at that moment.

"Of course you do. I was just teasing. I didn't mean to upset you." When I didn't respond she walked her fingers across the table and stroked the back of my hand.

"I'm not upset," I said, more to convince myself than her.

"Okay. So, what do we need to discuss?" Leaning back against the bench seat she made herself comfortable and waited.

I almost began to elaborate on my previous self-defence, giving myriad examples to prove I think about all sorts of things. I knew such a move would result in a disagreement that would pre-empt our talk. I also knew it would just be a temporary postponement. It wasn't worth it, and besides, we were in a public place and we'd promised to attend Dewey's performance. I decided to make the best of it. "Well, for example, do you want to physically have a baby, or do you want to adopt?"

I could tell by the slight lift of her eyebrows that Jess was surprised at the depth of my thinking and the clarity with which I expressed it. This time she paused before answering. "I'm not sure. It would be nice to give birth, have a child who is biologically part of me. But for us it isn't straightforward. I don't know how I'd feel about choosing the father out of a catalogue. That's so impersonal. But if we asked someone we know, then it's another person to consider—in everything."

I was glad she couldn't give me a pat answer. If she was unsure about these basic decisions, maybe it wasn't too late to put the kibosh on the whole crazy idea and get back to our previous state of marital harmony. I decided to throw it back at her, and I hoped it could remain there. "Since you're the one who would be carrying the child and going through the whole birth thing," I made it sound as distasteful as possible, "you would need to be really comfortable with whatever was decided." Burger juice ran down my thumbs, forcing me to put it down and clean myself up.

"But Calli, I want to hear more about how you feel. I know you never said you wanted children; in fact, you said quite the opposite. But that's how you felt about getting married and now look at us. Sometimes people just need time to get used to an idea. You said you've thought about it even though initially you hadn't considered it a possibility. Do you now?"

"I hadn't. And I can't properly consider it now, unless I know what it would involve. A big part of that is where the child would be coming from." I could feel the glow of satisfaction growing inside me. Rarely did I sound so logical, especially when discussing an important issue with Jess. "I still can't picture

myself as a parent, but I said I'd think about it, so that's what I'm going to continue doing. I need to think about *everything* though, and to do that we need to look at all the possibilities. I mean, it could be like our wedding; the choice at the top of the list might not be feasible for some reason."

Jess turned pale. "That's true," she said in a small voice. "Oh, Calli, I hate this. I wish we could just wake up some morning and the baby would be there, or we'd know it was on its way. This is all so clinical. So...I don't know—cold. And I wish you and I could have a baby. You know, one that's part of both of us. That's what I really want. Why should I be the only one that's linked genetically?"

Although I was deeply touched by her wish, instead of agreeing, I tried to lighten the mood. "That's kind of how it works, when a couple's missing half the required parts." My attempt failed, and I swallowed my smile when I saw that

Jess was on the verge of tears.

"I know," she murmured and grabbed her fork. I watched her stab a piece of lettuce and carry it with purpose to her mouth. In the candlelight I could just make out the quivering of her chin, as she chewed and continued to stare at the remnants of her salad. I desperately wanted to make her feel better, but I was a huge part of the problem. I swallowed and opened my mouth, trusting that some words of comfort would escape. "If we adopted, then we'd be equal in every way." Holy shi! Where did that come from?

"Is that what you want, Calli?" She looked up at me, hopeful.

My burger was growing cold, but not as cold

as the chill that was down running spine. I had been putting forward arguments that sounded remarkably like I was gung-ho about the whole child thing. "All I want is...." What did I want? How could I tell Jess, when I didn't know in my own mind? At least she seemed confused too. But she was crystal

clear on one point: she definitely wanted to be a parent. "All I want is for us to be sure about whatever it is we decide. And I want you to be happy. I want us both to be happy."

My burger had lost its appeal, but Jess seemed satisfied, at least for the time being.

Studs was throbbing with music and laughter and the camaraderie that is typical of a gay bar in the Village. The owners had found that providing mid-week entertainment from time to time boosted liquor sales and got the ball rolling for the weekends. It also brought in new clientele. That's why they'd asked Dewey to do a set tonight, but he had a more personal reason for accepting. His drag act was increasingly popular, and he was playing bigger bars, but he liked to return to his roots from time to time and grace the tiny stage along the back wall of the establishment where he'd given his first performance.

Jess and I wove our way toward the bar where I ordered a beer for me and a cooler for her. "Enjoy this while you can," I said and winked. Only when Jess blessed me with her smile did I realize my mistake. I had sounded like a future parent, no question about it. Jess continued to beam at me as she clinked her bottle on mine.

Before I could respond, the lights dimmed and Bruce, one of the owners of Studs, took the stage. "I hope your glasses are full, 'cause you'll need a drink."

"Hey, Bruce, you trying to scare us or what?" A slightly inebriated audience member in white spandex shorts shouted.

"If your wardrobe doesn't scare you, honey,

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO

EXPECT. AND WHEN THE

OPENING NOTES OF THE

INTRODUCTION BEGAN...

nothing will," Bruce responded directly at the drunk.

The crowd laughed.
The man adjusted the glittery suspenders that were attached to

the shorts and vamped for anyone who was looking.

"Okay now, settle down, girls. You're gonna need a drink

for a couple a reasons. In a minute someone's

gonna be on this stage who'll raise the room temperature to hot, hot, hot." Bruce hadn't advertised who the performer for tonight would be.

Hoots and wolf whistles rattled the glasses on the shelves.

"And you're gonna be cheerin' and pantin' so much that you'll need that drink to revive you."

Applause cut him off.

Raising his voice, Bruce announced, "Back by popular demand, give a down-homo welcome to Lady Deeeeee!"

The walls shook with shouts, cheers, and stomping feet.

Bruce left the stage.

The ruckus continued.

After making the crowd wait just long enough, Dewey oozed through the door and onto the platform. Well, it wasn't really Dewey at all; it was the astonishing Lady Dee. I wouldn't have thought it possible, but at the sight of her the volume of the crowd increased.

Lady Dee was wearing a new gown, styled just for her from gold lamé. It looked remarkably similar to the material Dewey had been drooling over during our visit to Fabric Fun last winter. Whoever had designed and sewn the dress had hit the mark. Lady Dee was more gorgeous than ever. When she finally managed to calm down the fans, she began with one of her standards, Aretha's "Respect." By the end, she had everyone panting, as Bruce had predicted.

"Now boys and girls, I'm going to sing something new tonight. And it's dedicated to two very dear friends." She looked directly at our table,

and just in case there was any doubt, she gestured with a long-gloved arm first toward Jess and then toward me. She followed that by blowing us a noisy kiss.

I had no idea what to expect, and when the opening notes of the introduction began, I was still in the dark. Then Bette Midler's voice

channelled through Lady Dee, as every ear in the place softened to the sweetness of "Baby Mine."

Jess took my hand and held on tight.

I didn't need to look at her to know she was crying. My own eyes were tearing up at the sentimental message and the beauty of Dewey's performance. Without my lifting a finger, I knew we'd just moved a step closer to parenthood.

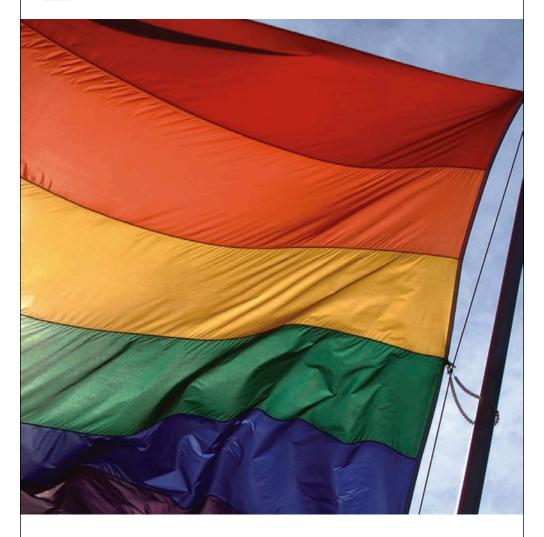
Liz Bugg is the awardwinning author of the Calli Barnow mystery series, as well as short literary and commercial pieces. She lives in Toronto where she also teaches and acts.



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Community Cornerstones



by Jeffrey Luscombe

This summer marked the tenth anniversary of same-sex marriage in Ontario. However the road to marriage equality was not an easy one; it was a long difficult struggle. And Égale Canada was on the frontline of that battle

every inch of the way.

The origins of Égale Canada go back to Ottawa in 1986 with a small group of people who were determined to add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act, and they were willing to take the fight to the courts.

Égale's vision, in their own words is, "a Canada free of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and all other forms of discrimination so that every person can achieve their full potential, unencumbered by hatred and bias."

For the last twenty-six years Égale has intervened before Canadian courts and tribunals in twenty-four cases, including eleven before the Supreme Court of Canada. In addition to arguing for the inclusion of sexual orientation in human rights legislation and the Charter, Égale has also fought on behalf of the LGBTQ community for the recognition of spousal benefits for same-sex couples and, of course, marriage equality.

And the fight continues today.

"As important as marriage was, the job is still not finished," says Helen Kennedy executive director of Égale Canada. "A lot of work still needs to be done in Canada."

Today Égale is a leader in teen suicide prevention. "Gay rights in Canada are often measured against marriage equality," Kennedy says. "But there are other problems. LGBTQ youth are still victims of violence and homelessness. They are still killing themselves." Last year, Égale hosted the first LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Summit, bringing fifty experts from around North America to Toronto and from that summit was created a guide for the development of an LGBTQ youth suicide prevention strategy.

Égale also works with school boards and provincial ministries of

education to create safer and more inclusive policies. "We do education work from elementary to post secondary," says Kennedy. "We provide youth educators with resources such as lesson plans and workshops for teacher training." As part of their continuing education program, Égale plans to bring a holocaust exhibition of Nazi persecution of gays from Washington D.C. to Canada for the first time. The exhibition will visit Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver and have lesson plans to accompany the exhibition.

In Ontario, Égale now has a pilot program in university and colleges to train deans on campuses about LGBTQ students. "Right now we have six trainers running around the province to every college and university," says Kennedy. "For example, a person who identifies as trans moves into the dorm. What should you do? People just don't know. We provide the education."

And Égale's focus reaches beyond LBGTQ youth. "We are looking at doing more work for seniors," says Kennedy. "Specifically training for caregivers, but more research about LGBTQ seniors has to be done. We want to look into issues such as isolation, abuse and overall lack of services and quality of care. Often our seniors have to return to the closet. That is unacceptable."

Égale has also been working to pass bill C-279, the federal trans rights bill that would add trans rights in Canadian anti-discrimination and hate laws under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The bill is currently stuck in the Senate. "We are still hopeful C-279 will pass when the Senate returns in fall," Kennedy says. "Once they come back we will start lobbying Senators and connecting with Canadians. One thing your readers can do is get in touch with their Senator and ask them to support the bill."

And Égale's efforts do not stop at Canada's border. Russia's anti-gay laws and the Winter Olympics in Sochi is currently a hot topic for Canadians. "We work with local NGOs in Russia," says Kennedy, "with respect to how they want the west to address these issues. We wrote to IOC and asked them to ban Russia from the summer games in 2016 along with all the other countries with similar laws. We say if you don't rescind these draconian laws you are not in any more games."

Recently, Égale trained police in Montenegro before Montenegro's very first pride parade. "And the police protected the marchers against five or six hundred anti-gay protestors," says Kennedy. "That may not have happened if we were not there to train those police officers.

But all this work costs money. Since marriage equality was won, Canadians are not giving to Égale's in numbers they once did. Égale is the advocacy organization primarily in litigation while Égale Canada Human Rights Trust (ECHRT) is Canada's only national charity promoting



lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans human rights through research, education and community engagement.

"After The Court Challenges Program was cancelled it meant we could no longer pay lawyers to do the work we needed to do and our litigation was stifled," says Kennedy. "And now any work is done pro bono. This greatly limits our ability to take cases like Whatcott [the recent hate-speech Supreme Court Case] through the courts. We would love to do more, but after marriage equality, people stopped giving."

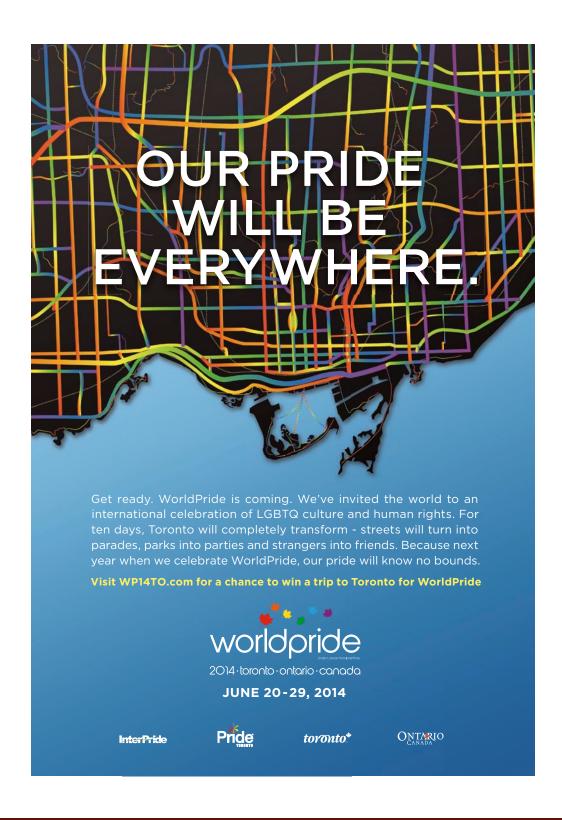
At the height of the marriage fight, Égale raised about a million dollars. But to put that into perspective, in the United States one donor gave thirteen million toward the fight to overturn DOMA.

"It's difficult to motivate people," Kennedy says. "It's really hard to get someone to part with five dollars a month to address some of these issues. Though when marriage was threatened last year, we raised five thousand dollars within fifteen minutes. But when the conversation moves to homeless LGBTQ kids or the trans community, we get nothing. A donation to Égale Canada Human Rights Trust helps us provide education, community engagement, and research to Canada's LGBT community."

Donating to a Égale Canada Human Rights Trust (egale.ca) is wonderful way to get involved with community outreach and support those in need.

Jeffrey Luscombe is a freelance writer and author of the novel *Shirts and Skins*. He is also the creator and author of The Gay Groom blog







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Here goes! It's my first time writing this column and I'm very honoured to do so. For those that do not know me, I'm a full-time jazz musician and music is my life. I spend most of my life at music venues, either performing or being inspired by others, so one of my challenges in terms of writing this column is to provide coverage of non-musical events, of which there are plenty to discover! Toronto is so full of things to do that it makes such a task a tad overwhelming, but I've chosen some people, places and things that I'm very pleased to recommend to you. Wishing you all a fabulous fall!



HEALING & WELLNESS

Bodyone Clinic & Spa

688 Richmond Street West, Suite 302 416-516-2114

By appointment, 7 days a week, 8am - 8pm www.bodyone.ca

Fall is an excellent time for a tune-up, and Bodyone is an ideal place to start. The staff is extremely friendly and very dedicated to the client's health and well-being. Focusing on a traditional approach to healing with a dedication to environmentally conscious practices, Bodyone offers a wide variety of services including: registered massage therapy, acupuncture, holistic and Chinese herbal medicine, nutritional

counseling, homeopathy, bach flower therapy, shiatsu massage, relaxation massage, aromatherapy, reiki, hypnosis, hydrotherapy, reflexology, Thai massage, natural skin care and spa packages including full body scrubs, all-natural facial treatments and waxing/hair removal. A detailed list of services and packages is available online; appointments can be booked either by phone or on the website.

Tip: email info@bodyone.ca to join the mailing list, where you can find out about monthly specials, discounts and workshops!



DESIGN

Toronto's Fall Home Show

October 3 to 6
Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place
1-877-715-7469
www.fallhomeshow.com

TICKETS: \$15; \$13(senior/child); free (12 and under).

For those who like to get a head start on their holiday shopping, an excellent place to do so will be at the Toronto's Fall Home Show, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Featuring over 300 renovation and home décor specialists, show highlights will include presentations by Property Brothers Jonathan and Drew Scott, paint legend Annie Sloan, and daily cheese presentations by artisan Kevin Durkee, the "Big Cheese" of Cheesewerks. One particularly interesting highlight will be "What's Your Design Dilemma?" which will allow attendees the opportunity to pick the brains of renovators, design and décor experts about challenging design dilemmas. Professional interior designers and celebrity experts will be on hand to offer one-on-one consultations, free advice and expert tricks on how to tackle problems, including celebrity designer Glen Peloso, contractor Jim Caruk, designer Erica Gelman, interior designer Evelyn Eshun, and home product specialist Vicky Sanderson. New this year will be great buys on fabulous furniture in support of the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation: walk away with deals on a huge selection of quality furniture and home furnishings.

Tip: buy your tickets online and save \$3 off admission!

DESSERT

Bite Bar

57 Elm Street 647-907-4465 www.bitebar.ca Confession: I've never been a fan of cupcakes myself, but one visit to Bite Bar has changed me! Aside from the excellent flavour and texture of the cupcakes made here, the cool factor is that they are bite-sized. There is an impressive variety of flavours, including chocolate mocha, red velvet and lemon, but my favourite is their signature "Just Bite It!" which is a vanilla cake stuffed with raspberry puree and topped with a raspberry vodka vanilla buttercream icing. Bite Bar also specializes in marshmallow bars, mini cheesecakes and dessert teas. Excellent for parties and available for catering!

Tip: The Elm Street location is licensed, so you can have a drink with your bites!

FOODIE FEAST

Eat to the Beat Culinary Fundraiser

October 22

7pm Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe Street 416-778-6314 ext.236 www.eattothebeat.ca TICKETS: \$175

A good cause that tastes good: Eat to the Beat benefits Willow Breast Cancer Support Canada, a not-for-profit organization that offers free peer support to anyone coping with breast cancer. The fundraiser attracts hundreds of foodies each year by providing tons of sweet and savoury foods, wines, premium beers and spirits for sampling at stations positioned around Roy Thomson Hall's outer lobby. For the 18th edition of Eat to the Beat, sixty of Canada's top female chefs will be donating their time and talent, including Dufflet Rosenberg of Dufflet Pastries and Wanda Beaver of Wanda's Pie in the Sky. The evening also includes live music, a silent auction featuring must-have items, and a raffle draw for a chance to win great prizes.

"Eat to the Beat is a mecca for urban foodies, and those who

want to be, to experience the best Ontario's culinary scene has to offer," states Barbara Track, Eat to the Beat Chair. "It is the only event in Canada that exclusively features the talent of 60 female chefs—women supporting women, it doesn't get any better than that and it's an evening that should not be missed!"

Tip: Come very hungry! For a full list of the chefs, check out eattothebeat.ca

THEATRE

I Love Lucy! Live on Stage

October 15 to 27

Royal Alexandra Theatre, 260 King Street West 416-872-1212

www.ilovelucvlive.com

Very cool concept and a must-see for lovers of the classic television series, the Canadian premiere of this touring production takes us back to 1952 and the dawn of this brand new thing called "television." In between scenes, the Crystaltone Singers perform live advertising jingles in harmony. Starring Sirena Irwin as Lucy, Bill Mendieta as Ricky, Bill Chott as Fred and Lisa Joffrey as Ethel. Promises to be sweet, funny and nostalgic.

Tip: Take your mom!

COMEDY, MUSIC & MORE!

The Flying Beaver Pubaret

488 Parliament Street 647-347-6567

www.pubaret.com

Located in the heart of Cabbagetown, the one-of-a-kind Flying



Beaver Pubaret offers a unique variety of entertainment in a purely unpretentious venue. The space is neatly divided in two, allowing for a neighbourhood pub on one side and a cabaret space on the other, featuring excellent sight lines and a charmingly intimate room. The entertainment is curated by comic Maggie Cassella, herself a hilarious tour-de-force who often introduces the acts: "If you have a cell phone, please turn it off, and if you have a pager, ask yourself WHY? It's 2013 for crying out loud!" In addition to stand up comedy and live music, there are special events including a monthly Psychic Brunch on the last Sunday of every month, from 11am-3pm. Acts that have graced the stage on more than one occasion include: Sharron Matthews, Paul Bellini, Lea Delaria, Julie Michels, Marilla Wex, Gabi Epstein and yours truly! Some of the entertainment booked this fall includes comedian Kate Rigg (October 5, 9pm); Carol Pope (October 14, 9pm); Carla Collins (October 25, 7pm); Ryan G. Hinds (October 25, 9pm) and Chris Tsujiuchi (October 27, 8pm). Check out pubaret.com for full listings and all the deets!

TIP: Dinner patrons get priority seating. The California turkey burger, topped with bacon and avocado salsa, is a classic!



CONCERT

Micah Barnes & Friends at Hugh's Room

Thursday, October 24 8:30pm 2261 Dundas Street West 416-531-6604

www.hughsroom.com TICKETS: \$30/\$28.50(adv)

Singer, songwriter, recording artist and former member of The Nylons, Micah Barnes is excited about his upcoming album, New York Stories, set for release next spring. In anticipation of the recording, he will be celebrating the



music of New York City by performing at Hugh's Room with special guests Billy Newton Davis, Tyrone Gabriel, and Gavin Hope.

"This concert is a chance for me to present the new material of our upcoming disc, a collection of jazz, blues and cabaret songs inspired by the musical culture of New York City and ask a few of my favourite singers to join the party," says Barnes. "Since the guests are all either former or current members of



The Nylons, our special focus is going to be on songs from The Brill Building. Lots of opportunity to jump into harmony there!"

For those who have never been to Hugh's Room, consider this an excellent opportunity to discover one of the city's finest rooms for live music. Having recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, this west-end venue features a grand piano, superior sound and seating for 200. It is one of Toronto's premier places to experience artists in various genres, including folk, roots, blues, classical and jazz.

Tip: Micah is also an in-demand vocal coach, specializing in helping artists overcome stage fright. Find out more at www.singersplayground.com

SING JAZZ!

Lisa Particelli's GNO Jazz Jam

Every Wednesday 8pm to midnight Chalkers Pub 247 Marlee Avenue 416-789-2531 www.gnoiazz.com

Ever wanted to try singing jazz, but never had the courage to do so? GNO stands for Girls Night Out (where Gentlemen are welcome too), and it's a supportive environment for singers of all levels to do their thing, whether they are amateurs or professionals, or even if they have never tried it before! Featuring accompaniment by some of Toronto's finest on piano, bass and drums, the concept has been going strong since January 2005, when vocalist and flautist Lisa Particelli began her guest for a vocalist-friendly weekly night, and there were four singers in the audience that night. Eight years later, well over a thousand singers have graced the stage of GNO, now located at Chalkers Pub, one of North York's most popular places for live music, billiards and good times. What makes GNO special is not only the singers that come out time after time, but the regulars who come out to listen and support. It is a wonderfully positive environment where everyone is welcome to sing, listen, share, grow and connect. There is no cover charge for this event, but tips are appreciated.

Tip: Parking is free and ample; if you're coming by TTC, Chalkers is a short walk from Glencairn subway station.

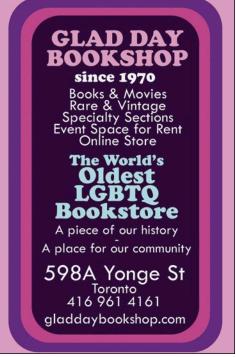
Ori Dagan is an award-winning jazz vocalist and freelance entertainment journalist.

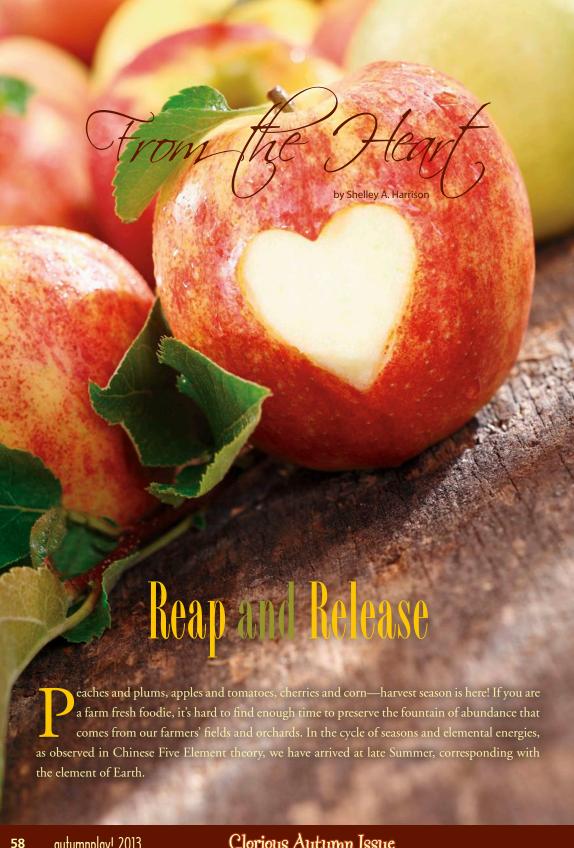












The heat of summer in its embodiment of the Fire Element, begins to mellow, the days are shorter and the cycle of plant growth reaches fruition. There is nourishment for all if the season has been good. Similarly, if our Earth element is in balance, it's like having a full stomach: on the physical level, our appetite is good and our digestion works well to breakdown the nourishment and deliver it to all parts of our cell tissue. On the mental level, we can breakdown and digest our experiences so they become "food for thought." The emotion that corresponds with Earth is sympathy, so balance here looks like an ability to comfort others when they are hurt, and also to feel sufficiently comforted and attended to when we suffer, so that the "bobo" calms down and we can go back to playing. When our spirit is ripe with Earth energy, we feel like we are "enough" and are centred with a strong self-identity. Think of the classic stereotype of mom in the kitchen baking yummy stuff, and coming over to kiss you and coo to you when you fall down. That's the Earth energy in a nutshell!

A person with deficient Earth, may have no appetite or even an eating disorder. They are wasting away and can't put on flesh. Sometimes no matter how much sympathy you give them, it never seems to fill them up or settle them down. They are like an emotional bottomless pit. At the level of the spirit and mind, they can't take in what is offered so they are starving and have a weak sense of self. They can be very ungrounded.

When the Earth element is in excess, a person may overeat and still not feel satisfied. They could be very hardened and unsympathetic or gushy emotional. They chew things over and over, worrying, and maybe even obsessing over experiences they can't break down. Or they become the classic "smother mother" dousing those around them with sympathy without enforcing boundaries.

The organs or officials in the body that govern the Earth energy are the Stomach, and Spleen/Pancreas. The stomach is the official in charge of "rotting and ripening." She embodies the sweetness of mother, so we can receive our spoonful in body, mind, and spirit. It's no use having a cornucopia before you, if you can't take it in and break it down. The Spleen is the transportation official. This is the hard work of mothering. She is in charge of food distribution. The storehouse may be full, but if you can't get it to the grocery store before it rots, it's not much use to the people. Everything that moves in the body, from peristalsis in the bowels to nerve impulses is run by her. In the mind she moves the thoughts and files them. In the spirit, she integrates your deeper experiences to feed your soul growth. She is mom running around the house multitasking!

As late Summer gives way to Autumn, the leaves turn and then fall to the ground to rot and become compost for the next cycle of growth. It becomes cold, bleak, barren. It is an ending and a death. Nature is stripped to its bare essence, and there is a sharp invigorating cold to the air. The emotion of grief expresses this energy and is appropriate when something or someone of value to us is lost. This is the time of the Metal Element—that which is rare and precious and gives essential nutrients to the soil, the essence of pure air, our breath, and the breath of the divine. Metal is somber and serious and confers respect and dignity. Most of us would rather fly to Florida in November, than dwell in this energy of loss, ending, and drizzle! But without the precious essence of Metal within us, we have no capacity to value ourselves or others.

When deficient, we might totally neglect our hygiene and appearance. We lack self-respect. It's as though we cannot find what is precious within us. We may be totally disconnected from our grief. The inability to mourn loss means the cycle can never be completed. The tears of our weeping become the rains of spring that water new growth. Just as nature teaches us, without the death and letting go part of the cycle, there is no compost to furnish the new beginnings in our life.

In excess, you get the rigid perfectionist. Sometimes this may also be expressed as arrogance. Ever been in a conversation with someone who keeps name dropping and constantly saying, "...and I did this, and I did that"? Excessive Metal can also appear as unending grief that never seems to resolve. Getting treated with acupuncture or Plant Spirit Medicine can help a person to get to the bottom, and move on.

The two officials of Metal are the Colon and the Lungs. The Colon official takes care of the "drainage and dregs." Yep, the sewage department. He clears out the waste, lets go of grudges and shame, and restores the uplifting sparkle and righteousness to our body, mind and spirit. Our Lungs are the official "receiver of chi energy from the heavens." Whoa, beautiful! We breathe in not just the oxygen we need to thrive and shine, but renewed clarity, and divine inspiration. How precious is that?

So reap the harvest and mellow out as you stroll beneath the autumn leaves in gratitude for your generous and Earthly mom-human. As the leaves and temperature fall, let go of what needs to move on in your life so you can see what is essential and let it shine.

Shelley A. Harrison is an Energy Healer in Ottawa. She graduated from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing 4-year professional training and has been working in private practice for over 10 years. She visits Toronto regularly to see clients and visit her brother, Jeff, the editor of this magazine. You can write Shelley at fromtheheart@pinkplaymags.com



Autumn Horoscopes

by Joan Ann Evelyn

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)

In October, pay close attention to your partner's finances and pay off joint debts. You will have to work harder than usual to meet your job obligations in November. A pet may need extra attention. In December, enjoy special moments with the one you love.

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)

If you plan to travel in October, leave after the 21st. If you would like to meet a significant other, attend parties and participate in fun activities in November. Pace yourself during the busy month of December, get plenty of rest and avoid overindulging.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)

In October, plan activities with friends and groups. Invite friends over to a home cooked meal. If you work from home, November will be a productive period. Do home repairs promptly. In December, start a new creative project.

Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)

Be your charming self in October, since your powers of attraction are greater than ever. In November, be very careful what you say or put on paper. Sign papers after the 10th. In December, draw up a plan for a major home redecorating project.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

In October, sign up for a college or Internet course you would enjoy studying. Control an urge to splurge in November. Do not spend more money than you can afford. Get in touch with friends and relatives who live at a distance in December.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)

Intuition will play a large role in your life in October. Do not discount your hunches. In November, your social circle and network will expand and you will make many new contacts. Money matters come to the fore in December. Give generously at Christmas.

Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22)

In October, the spotlight is on you and the image you project. Pace yourself and enjoy relaxation time in November. If needed, help out a family member who is ill. December is a wonderful month to promote your own interests and accomplish great things.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Get in touch with your spiritual side in October.
If you are unhappy with your life, make positive changes. In November, create a supportive network of people who will help you achieve your goals.
Try to be flexible in all of your relationships in December.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

More charismatic, you can attract a new love interest in October. In November, show off your personal skills to people who can help you move up the ladder and complete jobs that showcase your talents. Launch a new business venture in December.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

In October, do not lend money or co-sign for anyone. Pay outstanding bills on time. Take a break from your usual routine in November. Spend a weekend at a spa or relax at a resort. Do not overload your circuits in December. Only take on what you can handle.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

In October and early November, double check dates, times and appointments. Stay on top of debts, insurance and joint accounts in November. Enjoy an adventure in December. Attend parties, plays, concerts and exhibits or travel for the holidays.

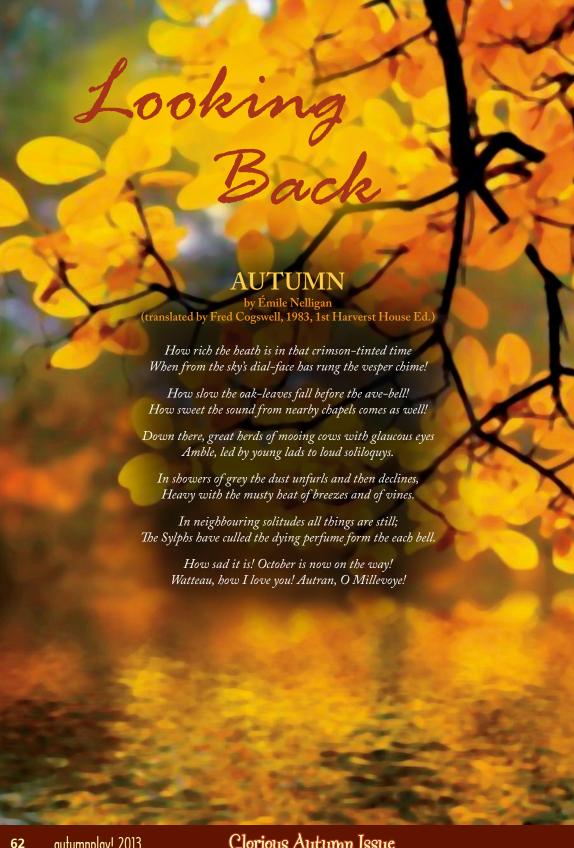
Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Enjoy a romantic month in October. Spend pleasurable time with your partner. Get started on a new exercise program. Impress decision makers with your unique skills in November. Get rid of clutter and make more space. Feng Shui your home in December.

Passionate about Astrology, Joan Ann manages her own consulting business AstroConsultation. She is President of the Canadian Association for Astrological Education and teaches intermediate to advanced Astrology. Joan Ann gives presentations and workshops on her favorite subject Astrology.







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