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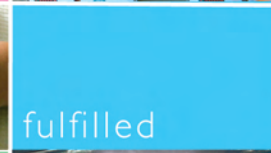
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looks back
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From the Publisher



I have some news to share. You may know that our publications were produced under The Pink Pages Directory. The two seasonal publications, one for winter and one for summer, were conceived about four years ago. They took their time growing and now they are ready to take flight. Our magazines are going quarterly!

Starting next issue, which now will be *autumnplay!*, we will be going under the umbrella Pink Play Mags adding also *springplay!* next year to the family of *winterplay!* and *summerplay!*. This is part of our celebration as we enter the 20th year anniversary of The Pink Pages Directory coming out June 2009, and it's going to be a great year gearing up to those festivities.

Thank you everyone for a great response to the last issue of *winterplay!*. It was heartwarming and very encouraging to say the least. It makes us confident that we made the right decision to re-launch those magazines when our publishers INspired Media Inc. acquired the publishing rights last summer.

While photographing the cover for this issue I was trying hard to fight being overwhelmed with emotions. It was thrilling to see so many people from the community: the guys upstairs at Priape; everyone downstairs at Woody's; and everyone who was part of the shoot, Nancy our wonderful

cover photographer, the guys, and the gals, all coming together and working as a team with smiles all around. Chris Edwards was so sweet to come up to me in between her fabulous poses and encourage the direction that we are taking with this publication.

One thing that Chris said to me that hit me hard was when she commented on how nice it was to see someone doing a fun cover and having the queens involved in the process. She loved that we were coming from a respectful human place and not a comical, "hey look at those drag queens." After all the time that she has been in the community, Chris made note that she has never been asked to do something like this and loved that we asked. This is where I go back to thinking, hey maybe we are on the right track by making our magazines be about human beings, without all the layers of who we are on the outside and what we do sexually.

Please indulge me while I take a moment to thank our editor (in case I don't thank him enough already) on continuing with the commitment of pooling some very talented writers for each issue. Everyone involved seems to be putting their heart into it. I am especially proud of the continuation of things such as the fiction and now the promise of a featured artist in each future issue.

Dear reader, I hope you enjoy your read. I am out of here. I've got a summer to enjoy and I hope you do too.

Antoine Elhashem



summerplay!

Gay & Lesbian seasonal from PinkPlayMags
Free • Summer 2008

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Cover: Beach Party

Cover Photo Nancy Paiva

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Hair Elijah Barnett, Kim Gell from Exit Salon

Make Up Kevin Levesque

Clothing Guys: Priape, Toronto. Gals: Bikini Village, Eatons Centre. Chris Edwards decided to bring her own.

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From the Editor



Well, we made it through that long cold winter and summer is finally here—YAY!

Nothing puts a spring in my stride quite like the warm sunshine beating

down and I know I'm not the only one. Clothes come off, smiles are put on and Church Street suddenly bustles to life as people gear up for what many consider Gay Christmas—Pride! With so many parties going on it's hard not to get completely lost in the ensuing festivities. We've come a long way since that first picnic on Ward's Island in 1972. Some people though, despair at the chaos the week often embodies wondering is this what we were fighting for? Matt explores the question "What Does Pride Mean?"

In our regular closing column, "Looking Back," this year's parade Grand Marshall—Enza Supermodel Anderson—shares memories of her first ever Pride Day and how it influenced her to become who she is today.

Some of us do everything we can to get out of the city at the end of June, or any other weekend for that matter. Need a break from the hectic urban pace? In "Gay Wilderness Get Away," Troy guides that rare breed of homosexual--the camper, and no I don't mean show tunes and drag!--to the best spots to pitch a tent and get back to nature.

Prefer a getaway with a little more sophistication? Head to wine country right in our very own backyard. Niagara-on-the-Lake is

host to more world famous wineries that you could possibly see in just one weekend. Join me as I take you on a tour and talk to the man instrumental in transforming our alcoholic grape juice into vintages worthy of winning prestigious international medals. Be sure to take along Mark's article "Antiquing 101" just in case you happen by an estate auction or yard sale.

For those of us who just can't live without the vibe of the city in summer, get the low-down from Manny on the events to see and be seen at in "Summer in the City," while Scott serves up fabu patios in "Swish Summer Hot Spots."

Rather spend an afternoon at the beach or the pool relaxing with a good book? We've got you covered. Our fiction piece, "Stealing Nasreen," is an excerpt from Farzana's full length novel of the same name—so be sure to pick it up if the story excites your steamy summer mood. Michele waxes poetic on just that in her regular column, "From the Heart."

When Shaun Proulx, editor of Gay Guide Toronto.com, gave me my first ever column he asked me to discover up-and-coming local gay artists and introduce them to the community. Toronto is home to so many creative people I always loved the idea of bringing their talents to the attention of others, so much so that I've resurrected "Hot Artist" here in the pages of Pink Play Mags. This issue, join Daniella as she uncovers our city's hidden jazz scene with torch singer Serafin.

Whew! We've got a lot packed between our covers, so enjoy and we'll see you in the autumn as we officially become a quarterly.

Have a great summer,

Jeff Harrison

editor@thepinkpagesdirectory.com

Letters

I picked up your latest issue of winterplay! when I was downtown Toronto and couldn't stop reading it on the way back home to Etobicoke on the train. Congratulations. What a fun read! Hope I will be able to pick up future issues closer to home.

Jenny O'Dwyer
Etobicoke

I loved your piece titled "From the Heart". Very inspiring around the Holidays.

Sharon Wannamaker
Toronto

I was surprised when I picked up your magazine. I have never noticed it before. It's fantastic. The article "Gay Christmas in a Small Town" was a nice read and brought back memories. Come to think of it every article was fun to read. Great recipes too. Looking forward to your next issue.

Martin Chapman
Whitby



It is very nice to see a new magazine that doesn't rely on sensationalism and overt sexuality to sell issues. Not that I am a prude. There is a place and time for everything. But this is refreshing. Keep up the good work.

Matt Rudnick
Toronto

I picked up your magazine while waiting for a friend to join me for coffee and just flipping through it your holiday recipes caught my eye—love Jamie Kennedy—so I decided to take it home for further reading.

Once home I read it cover-to-cover in one sitting and thought it fun and informative, a very enjoyable read. I must say I was pleasantly surprised, what a refreshing addition to the community.

Looking forward to the next issue.

Will Peterson
Toronto



A dark blue Nissan Altima sedan is shown from a front three-quarter perspective. The car features a chrome grille with the Nissan emblem, multi-spoke alloy wheels, and a sleek, aerodynamic design. The background is plain white.

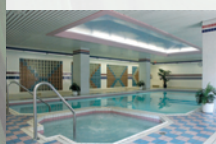
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What Does

Pride

Mean

by Matt Cassano



Pride festivities originally began as an annual event for LGBTQ to show the world that we exist and we matter. These days it seems revelers are only interested in over indulging in excessive booze and wild parties, while the media focuses on highlighting only what they deem worthy of selling papers—drag queens and gratuitous nudity. Pride is no longer perceived as a time to celebrate legal rights won and acceptance hard fought for, as in years before. Instead, it's become parties we barely remember.

Last year was my first Pride. I drank. I tanned. I saw more boobs than I could have ever imagined thanks to the bold lesbians and bears in attendance. By the end of the weekend, I was exhausted from the events, sun exposure, and countless rows of booths asking me to join a group or wear their pins. Was this what Pride was about? Was I supposed to take pride

in a surly stranger's lame pick-up lines? Was I supposed to wear a corporation's logo and walk up and down Church Street like a billboard?

I foolishly built Pride up in my mind as being this momentous event to celebrate the freedom to be myself, love who I wish, and be proud of my sexuality. Instead, the entire weekend turned into a boozy haze that I barely remember.

Certain moments stand out in my mind, but the majority of my weekend was a blur. That has been one of the major

criticisms my generation of gays—the scenesters, the partiers—face regularly. The youth of our community are constantly being reprimanded for drinking and partying too much. We are called obnoxious and loud, and take advantage of what the past generations fought for. We don't "fully appreciate" our rights or even understand what celebrating Pride is supposed to mean. I admit that there are gays of my generation who use Pride as an excuse to see friends and party, like 22 year old Mike Irvine. "I don't think Pride has lost its meaning at all. I think it's more meaningful now than ever. The reason we do go crazy for Pride is because we appreciate the fact that we can express who we truly are."

Meanwhile, there are other examples, such as 20 year old Sean Grech, who proves that some youth are able to look beyond the commercialism and drunken partying that is now associated with the week long event in June. "I think people are missing out on the intention of what it means to celebrate Pride. The late night partying, excessive drinking, and drugs are not a release. The intention of Pride has a new direction in modern day society."

I didn't think too much about the current state of Pride and how it differs from the past until a conversation earlier this year. While visiting



Sean, I found myself discussing the meaning of Pride with his roommate. The man is in his 40s and remembers the glory days when Pride was more than just an excuse to drink cocktails at eight in the morning. Before, Pride was about celebrating who you were and fighting for rights that were only available to heterosexuals. Of course, partying was a key ingredient, but there was more to it. He regaled me with fascinating stories about marches to Queen's Park and the protests that followed. Together, the community, stood as one.

These days, it feels more like we march to the LCBO and protest when the supplies of our favourite liqueurs are low. After all, queers today have the majority of rights that heterosexuals have been accustomed to all their lives. There are still battles that loom with regard to adoption laws and transgender rights, but marriage and employment practices have drastically improved since the first year of Pride festivities.





After hearing about past Prides, I felt torn in a strange way. Part of me was thrilled that I am able to experience who I am because of those before me. At the same time, I felt a sudden desire to be apart of the action. It was as if I had not done enough to earn what I have received. This discussion left me with a puzzling question. If the majority of 'big' battles have been won, then what makes Pride still meaningful within our community?

Well, maybe it's because our community hasn't won all the big battles we think we have. In January, I attended the Pride Toronto General Meeting hoping to gain a better understanding of why members of our community still find Pride important. I was stunned by how many of the candidates for both grand marshal and honoured dyke discussed the need for stronger trans inclusion in Pride festivities. Transsexuals have been greatly underrepresented in the media and our very own gaybourhoods. In the past,

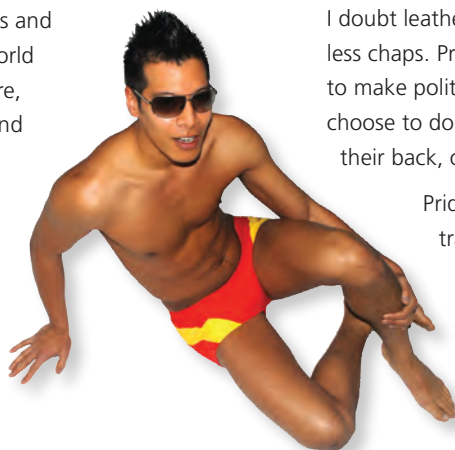
the rights of gay men and lesbians have been the focal point of Pride celebrations, marches, and protests. Now, despite the freedoms Canadian LGBTQ has won, the trans community are still faced with hardship and challenges. Their rights have not been fully covered under the law and their inclusion in Pride festivities has been inadequate at best. Last year marked the first time a trans event was included in Pride festivities. This year, Pride Toronto will be introducing an entire stage for trans performers. Early on in the meeting, it was announced that this year's international grand marshal will be Gareth Henry. Henry hails from Jamaica, where consensual sex between people of the same sex is viewed as a criminal offence. Homosexuals living in Jamaica are subjected to violence, mutilation, and are at risk of being murdered by mobs. Henry has been the victim of homophobic attacks himself, and yet continues to place his own safety at risk by being an outspoken gay man and taking part in organizations that try to promote awareness for the cruelty that LGBTQ face in other countries around the world.





Fatima Amarshi, the executive director of Pride Toronto, is anticipating Henry's

role as international grand marshal and feels his presence as a human rights activist will be an important addition to Pride festivities and promote awareness about the hate crimes that go unnoticed in other countries. "Many of us weren't born here, and lived in countries where there are no legal protections for queer people and in many cases, there is cultural, religious and politically sanctioned violence and even murder of queer peoples," said Amarshi. "While our legal system may have evolved in Canada, we still have a responsibility to our queer brothers and sisters around the world that are facing torture, death, harassment and discrimination on a daily basis, to stand in solidarity with them to fight for their rights as part of our overall struggle for queer rights."



After listening to the speeches, announcements and overhearing people's thoughts on this year's Pride in a public forum, I realized why Pride is still important in our community. It has nothing to do with the drinking, partying, commercialism, or tension between generations. I understand those factors will always be associated with Pride, but there is more to it. Pride has and always will be about freedom of speech. Pride lets people express themselves in a way they normally can't, due to society's standards of what is deemed appropriate. I don't think lesbians walk around their workplaces with their breasts exposed and I doubt leather daddies show up to work in ass-less chaps. Pride allows people the opportunity to make political statements whether they choose to do so with a sign, button, writing on their back, or their choice in attire.

Pride is still important for the trans community. They are a group of people within our own neighbourhood that go unrecognized and are still fighting for stronger rights. Sexuality is covered under the

Human Rights Code, but gender is not. We may think “the fight” is over, but this portion of our community still face challenges and continue their fight for rights everyday. Pride is also important for those who live outside of Canada and continue to fight for freedoms in their own homelands. They travel from all over the world and land in Canada to take part in Pride celebrations as a refuge. They can experience, for one weekend of the year, the same privileges the gay communities in Canada have grown accustom to.

So, let’s stop complaining about the minor problems surrounding Pride. We need to look past the generation gaps and complaints about disrespect. Instead, we, as a community, should

be focused on the greater picture in all of this rather than dividing ourselves by age. There are still battles within our community that need to be won and we all have the opportunity to continue the fight we may have only heard about through stories from the past. Now, it is our chance to prove what we can do by lending our support, time and effort to causes and challenges the community is still facing.

Matt Cassano is a 20 year old freelance journalist in Toronto. This is Matt’s first time writing for Pink Play Mags. He studies Broadcast Journalism at Ryerson University, and is also a columnist for fab magazine.

Photography by Nancy Paiva
Pride photos past: from the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Archives
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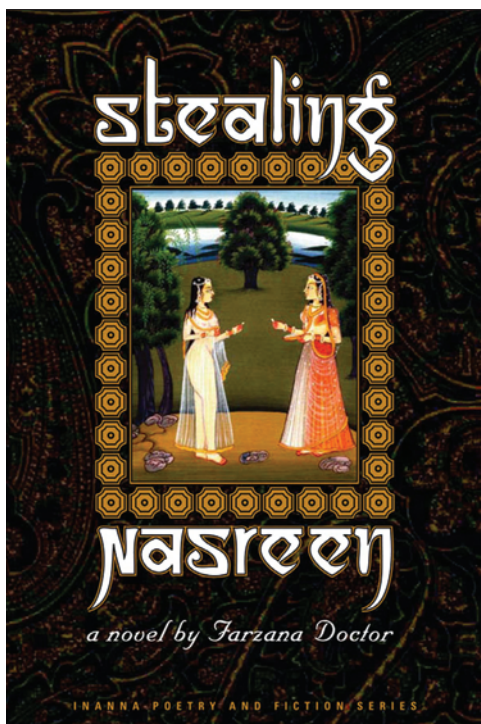


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Hot Artist: Serafin LaRiviere

by Daniela Newman



Golden crust on the outside with an exposed moist center, it's a perfectly formed loaf of bread. Currently, it is also a stand-in model for a renovated chicken coop. Shifting the bread this way then that, local jazz cat Serafin LaRiviere demonstrates the layout of the coop—his first real place after being outed a lifetime ago by his parents.

"I'd been living in a Ford Fairmont my grandfather gave me. It was the summer time and it was great. Then I moved into the renovated chicken coop and it was heaven. I remember thinking no one can get in here unless I want them to. That to me is idyllic," says Serafin mere moments after discussing his upcoming temporary relocation to San Francisco.

That's how it is speaking with this red-headed friendly giant. His delicate bird-like face emotes such warmth that one instantly loses the fact of his physical grandness. Likewise, his conversation flows as easily as his agile 4.4/5 octave voice, no matter the tone or the topic.

When Serafin launched his second CD *Nothing*

Goes Quietly with The Littlest Jazz Orchestra (WAY back in frigid February), providing the city with some much-needed warmth, the TTC had shut-down due to weather conditions. Still, 100 people found their way to Hugh's Room to soak up some good music. "I was blown away by the people that love listening to live music so much they just go no matter what", he says. People continue turning-up to hear classics reshaped by a voice that defies gender lines in a matter of notes. You know the songs (both jazz and pop standards); you've just never heard them like this. And yet, as the music festival season opens, authenticity doesn't seem to be everyone's bag.

"There's this hierarchal idea of what jazz is and what jazz isn't. Festivals in Toronto are very exclusive and yet jazz came from the misfits from the disenfranchised people. It came out of defiance. So it's ironic to me that the people that run jazz have no more room for misfits. It breaks my heart." Serafin says, adding, "My gigs are fairly well attended. I say this having very vivid memories of playing to a crowd of two. And I



Back Row, left to right : Kevin Clark (holding trumpet), Richard Underhill (pretending to play sax), Roger Clown, Lyne Tremblay, William Carn and Glenn Anderson. Front Row: Serafin LaRiviere (mel), Great Bob Scott, Christopher Plock, Waylen Miki. Not present in photo: Tony Quarrington

still get 'you're a little to gay for your own good. You're better suited to show tunes'."

This last album though, has generated quite some hype. There is Serafin's distinct vocal phrasing, Waylen Miki's arranging, and an orchestra of musicians with a significant number of accolades and independent albums. Serafin doles out the love, "All the bandmates are so different in their styles. They are the influence for the album." While most of the songs are classics, four original numbers were written specifically for members of the orchestra. "I feel like we have a vampiric relationship because I am constantly looking at what they do. I used to think every song had to be a wow song, but there's different kinds of wow," he says.

As the afternoon sun dissipates and the loaf of bread stands doomed for dinner, our local foremost torch singer looks forward to coming endeavors, "I think I won't be quite as much a freak show there [San Fran] as I am here," he laughs. "Live performance in Toronto is very much receding. There's not very many places left where the raison d'être is jazz." Take note Toronto, this summer rejoice in all that is authentically local while it is still here. "Jazz is the music of survivalists," he says. Listening to Serafin sing one believes it.

Daniella Newman is a Toronto based freelance writer who's been here written about this, been there written about that and is now off to somewhere new to write about that too.

Not into overpriced festival tickets and impersonal concert halls? Take it from Serafin and Co. there's plenty to ensure a jazzy summer.

We asked:

1. What's on replay in your head?
2. Fave summer tunes?
3. Where's the scene at?

Serafin:

1. "Dela Reece "When You Were Mine" live 1966."
2. "Sarah Vaughn. I think of her as a butterfly, her voice just swoops with such effervescence. Richard Underhill's Kensington Suite, he is so energetic. Kevin Clark's Skinny Dippin and Other Fun."
3. "The Pilot (22 Cumberland, 416.923.5716) has great food, great patio, and great people that run it. The Rex (194 Queen West, 416.598.2475) is a staple for solid music with a side patio onto the loud street, but you can still hear the music."

Kevin Laliberte (Flamenco Guitarist):

1. "Anything and everything by flamenco guitarist Juan Manuel Cañizares."
2. "See above...."
3. "Gate 403 (403 Roncesvalles, 416.588.2930) has a wide variety of live music, no cover, great vibe, and I play there once a month."

William Carn (Trombonist):

1. "The bass groove to "I Thought It Was You" by Herbie Hancock."
2. "Sunlight by Herbie Hancock."
3. "Chalker's Pub (247 Marlee Ave, 416.789.2531)."

Tony Quarrington (Guitarist):

1. "I'm reviewing songs in my head that I plan to record in June on a duet album with Don Thompson."
2. "John Coltrane, summer, fall, winter and spring."
3. "A new little place I play every 2nd Wednesday night, Reposado (136 Ossington, 416.532.6474)."

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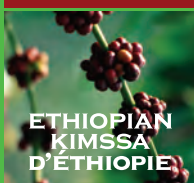
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Niagara-on-the-Lake: Wine Country in Our Own Backyard

by Jeff Harrison

Just a short jaunt off the QEW after a mere 90 minute drive from downtown TO and I'm in Niagara-on-the-Lake, our very own Rhône Valley.

Cruising down the road with fields of grape vines stretching into the distance a massive French chateau come into sight and suddenly I feel like I've made a wrong turn and ended up in the south of France. No need to check the map because the vineyard is everything it ought to be, considering it's home to the man who transformed Ontario's once alcoholic grape juice into internationally acclaimed, award winning wine.

Welcome to Chateau des Charmes (905.262.4219, 1025 York Road, www.chateaudescharmes.com), home to the Bosc family and no, I'm not kidding about how the patriarch of the family, Paul Bosc Senior., revolutionized local winemaking. Just ask your parents how Ontario wine used to taste. In 2005 Paul Bosc Senior was awarded the Order of Canada for his contribution to Canadian wine

making and last year he was named Wine Maker of the Year at the 2007 Ontario Wine Awards.

Old World Traditions

Originally hailing from the Alsace region of France, the Bosc family was comfortably ensconced in French Algeria until the bloody War of Independence broke out in 1954. Close to one million French patriots were forced to flee, however their ancestral lands of France weren't particularly welcoming to the refugees, so the Boscs decided to emigrate to French Canada instead.

Paul Sr. was soon joined by his wife, affectionately referred to as "Madame, the ambassador of the winery," who still presides over the estate's restaurant. Son, Paul-André, followed in his father's steps along with his wife Michele and now their new baby boy marks the seventh generation of wine growers. A "hands on family," the Boscs are big believers in the French tradition of fine wine making—wine is not made, it is grown.



A graduate of one of Europe's finest winemaking schools, the University of Burgundy in Dijon, Paul Senior quickly got a job working for the Quebec liquor board. Putting his knowledge to use decanting defective wines, he noticed the biggest culprit was Canada. On a particular shipment from Chateau-Gai Paul Sr. decided to call the winery with an offer on how to correct the problem.

"It's not that the wine wasn't made properly, it was made as close to the way we do it today, it was the variety of grape," he recalls. "At the time it was said that no other type of grape would grow here, none of the European varieties would mature here and it was just accepted. So they were not doing anything worse than anybody else; it was just the industry at the time. They were making an alcoholic drink from regular juice grapes and there was no sophistication of taste in the consumer. Sure you had some people in Canada then who knew their wines, but they were very few because at the time France had 80%-90% of the world market."

Rather than just jump right in with his thoughts, he watched and learned, wondering what he may be missing about wine production in Canada. "I was thinking that if they're not doing it the European way then they must know something that I don't. But then I realized that they just didn't know anything," he says with a smile.

Comparing the years of knowledge he'd gained growing wine in Algeria and France, the longer

he lived in southern Ontario the more he was convinced he could grow the same quality grape that the European market was known for.

"I knew the season was good because I compared it to Burgundy. I knew that the mildew situation wasn't any worse than in France or Algeria. The wine growers just seemed to want to grow a grape where they wouldn't have to do much with it. But then you ended up not getting much either," he states matter-of-factly. And so that became his challenge—to prove that European grapes varieties could grow in Ontario.

Passion and Innovation

So how did Paul Sr. manage to make it all work when no one believed it could be done? The Niagara Escarpment is a micro-climate, which means the south facing slopes are exposed to more direct sunlight making the summer one full month longer. This makes it ideal for growing tender fruit, especially grapes.

France at the time had embarked on a research project cloning varieties of grapes and were making them available to anybody who wanted to give them a try. "They were delighted that I was interested in taking a chance," Paul Sr. says. "I was able to bring over all kinds of clones and today I've probably got the best selection in the world."

Having a great selection of grapes was just the start though; the challenge was getting them to survive the frigid Canadian winters. The first few were really touch and go as each tried and tested traditional way of protecting the vines failed. "I knew that in Washington they were using wind machines against spring frost. At the time we were flying helicopters for spring frost, which was okay because one helicopter could fly this whole farm."

Helicopters? Yep, the man is nothing if not innovative. On a calm night the ground where your vines are growing, loses temperature; however, there is a layer of warmer air five feet and above. Using helicopters to fly over the land pushes the warm air down keeping the vines from freezing and dying.



"So we were flying the helicopters in the winter, one pass warmed the ground 6°-7°, but it cooled down again so fast they had to fly back every 5-10 minutes all night long. At \$1,500 an hour I might as well have given our pilot the vineyard!" He remembers with a chuckle. "After returning to Washington year after year I saw that these wind machines really worked, so I brought back 30 of them."

Of course once again everyone shook their heads and laughed at Paul Sr. and his crazy ideas. First he thinks he can get European grapes to survive the harsh climate, and then he comes back from the states with wind machines? Yet, less than two decades later, over 300 of the machines are used across the escarpment keeping the wintering vines from freezing.

The Bosc family is always experimenting, striving to create a better grape, heartier vines and wines unique to the Niagara region. "At the time we were 20 years ahead—in life you gotta be there at the right time. If you arrive before, well then you're ignored and if you arrive after then you're too late. Then when it becomes obvious then everyone is suddenly an expert."

With over 320 acres of land, 280 of which is currently under vine, Chateau des Charmes still leads the way with original thinking. Practicing very green agriculture all the water on the land is re-circulated, all the left over grape "debris" is put back on the fields as compost, even the horse manure from the Arabians Paul Sr. raises across the road goes right back onto the land, making them one of the areas' completely self-sufficient wineries (a lot of wineries will buy grapes from local growers).

"I've always wanted my own vineyard and I want to be able to grow like any other winery in

the world. So we've gotta do these extra things. You look at my vineyard and then the good ones in France or Germany and you don't find any difference," Paul Sr. says with a note of modest pride. "I think I've accomplished what I set out to accomplish. To start with something that was thought to be impossible and make it not only possible, but it's something that looks and tastes very good."

Brief History of Niagara-on-the-Lake: shopping; wine tours; old town; Shaw festival

Niagara-on-the-Lake was an historically important town in the defence of Upper Canada, the area that's now become Toronto. The town also gave many black Americans their first taste of freedom as a stop on the Underground Railroad and it was home to Laura Secord, the woman famous for warning the British Loyalists of an impending American attack during the war of 1812.

Referred to as the "loveliest town in Canada" it was home to the province's first newspaper, lending library and parliament and as a result its beautifully restored Regency and Classical Revival buildings are considered the best in the country from the post-war period.

With so many wineries close by to see, quaint shops and Shaw Festival's repertoire season of plays, Niagara-on-the-Lake makes the idea w/e getaway, especially when you consider how close it is to Toronto. So whether you wish to step back in time and soak up the province's heritage, or discover the cutting edge in luxury during your stay, you won't be disappointed. You'll just wonder what took you so long to discover the perfect retreat so close to home, I know I did.



Oenology

Do you prefer white wine in the summer and red wine in the winter, or are you wary of breaking the tradition of serving reds with hearty meats like beef and pork and whites with lighter courses of fish and chicken? Those who know their grape varieties break the rules all the time. Sitting in the tasting room with Paul Sr.'s daughter-in-law, Michèle Bosc, I learn a few secrets.

"For me wine and food pairing isn't as much about colour or grape variety as it is about texture and weight. That's where I tend to start," she says. "If wine is well balanced you should feel some acidity along with some fruit flavours and some tannins, a little bit of everything without one thing coming out too much. If on your first taste you say, 'Gee, I taste this...' and then on your next sip you say, 'Oh, now I taste this...' generally that means it's a well balanced wine with lots going on."

Tannins are vegetable based compounds that occurs naturally in the bark and fruit of various plants, especially in certain oaks and is used in clarifying wine and beer.

Choosing the right wine has less to do with colour and more with the variety of grape the wine is produced with. Light, crisp fruity wines lend themselves well to lighter foods, while a heavier, more full-bodied wine will stand up to heartier meats and sauces no matter if it's red or white.

Michèle surprises me when she screws the top off one of the bottles we sample. I smile and ask

her to dispel the myth about a screw cap signifying a cheap wine. "Ninety-five percent of all the wines in the world still come with a traditional cork closure," she assures me. "That said, there are times when non-cork closures are appropriate. Say for example, you have a young fresh white wine that didn't necessarily need to age and you wanted to ensure that when you opened it it's exactly the way the wine-maker had wanted it to taste. To me that's an ideal candidate for a screw cap."

Michèle also explained the reason we're seeing more synthetic corks these days, especially from the newer wineries. "Up to 5% of corks actually impart negative flavours into the wine—called 'cork taint.' The question has become, is that acceptable? The challenge is you never know which bottle that cork taint is going to hit. It's a living breathing thing—natural cork—and each bottle of wine is a living breathing thing and the way they interact it's hard to always know the outcome. Mind you, cork manufacturers have gotten very good at making high quality corks and we search to make sure that we find a cork producer that we can trust."

Just a taste of the knowledge the Bosc family imparted. With Madame cooking in the kitchen, Chateau des Charmes offers everything from a privately catered picnic for two, to corporate parties, group wine tasting and serves as the perfect backdrop for a fairy tale wedding. (905.262.4219, 1025 York Road, www.chateaudescharmes.com)



Where to Stay



Harbour House is a luxurious boutique hotel conveniently located on a quiet side street close to the Niagara River and within a short walk to the Shaw Festival. Warm woods and period antiques are reminiscent of the Maritimes at the turn of the century. After enjoying the freshly prepared breakfast in the conservatory, relax in front of the fire with a good book, or head out for a stroll to the downtown historic centre just moments away. (905.468.4683 or 1.866.277.6677, 85 Melville Street, www.harbourhousehotel.ca)



The Charles Inn, built in 1832, has been completely refurbished with period antiques. Each of the 12 beautifully decorated guestrooms is unique in size, décor and amenities. Enjoy a cocktail in the elegantly appointed lounge with its distinct red leather chairs, or a full multi-course dinner in the Victorian dining room. Slip outside for dessert or enjoy breakfast in the morning on one of the screen enclosed verandas overlooking North America's oldest golf course and Lake Ontario. (905.468.4588 or 1.866.556.8883, 209 Queen Street, www.charlesinn.ca)



The Shaw Club Hotel, located on the main street and directly across from the Shaw Festival Theatre, is designed with the feel of a private club. Enjoy modern amenities like the cascading rainfall shower, 42" plasma screen TV and all the technological benefits of home. A full DVD library is available to borrow from and if you're traveling alone why not order a complimentary Japanese fighting fish to be your decorative companion for your stay? Steps down the street is the Shaw Spa offering its distinctive

vinotherapy treatments, where the unique anti-oxidant properties of the grape will rejuvenate and relax you. (905.468.5711 or 1.800.511.7070, 92 Picton Street, www.shawclub.com)

Jeff Harrison is the Editor-in-Chief of our Pink Play Mags. He is also a Toronto based freelance writer whose work has appeared in Eye Weekly, Gay Guide Toronto.com, fab magazine, Xtra!, and Instinct. When he's not running around like a maniac meeting deadlines you'll find him kicking back on a patio soaking up the summer sun and enjoying a frosty margarita.

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An excerpt from :

Stealing Nasreen

by Farzana Doctor

Nasreen Bastawala, an Indo-Canadian lesbian, is a burnt-out psychologist who becomes enmeshed in the lives of Shaffiq and Salma Paperwala, a newly emigrated Mumbai couple. Shaffiq and Salma develop confusing attractions for Nasreen, endangering their marriage.

Previously, while studying Gujarati under Salma's tutelage, Nasreen joked with her friend Asha about being queer. This class, however, Asha is not present to break the tension...

Nasreen stares blankly at the vocabulary sheet Salma has placed before her. Her fingers drum against the metal kitchen table while she strains to remember the words she learned last week.

"You didn't study this week?" Salma asks in a teacherly tone.

"Well, I did, but I'm drawing a blank for some reason."

"Try again. Come on now, how do you say 'I would like to have lunch'?" Nasreen stumbles through some phrases in her mind, wishing that Asha, her friend and co-student, was here to deflect some of Salma's intense energy away from her.

"I'm not sure what's wrong with me today. I just can't seem to remember much."

"Let's take a break then. You want some chai?"

"Yeah, that would be good. Maybe the caffeine will wake me up."

Salma turns away from Nasreen and fills the kettle, welcoming the distraction. For the last hour, she has avoided Nasreen's eyes. She has tried not to focus on the butterfly feeling in her stomach,

or Nasreen's lips, or her bare neck, or the wisps of hair drying in tight coils around her soft ears. Is this what Shaffiq sees too?

Nasreen, too, takes a moment to settle herself. Something has been different today and a part of her brain has been busy, working hard to interpret the vibes coming from Salma. What would Asha say? Is she really right about the crush? No, it can't be true, Nasreen thinks. What would a nice, married woman like Salma want with me?

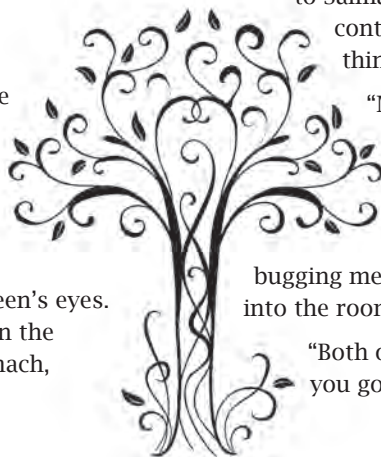
"Nas, I've been curious about something," Salma turns around and leans against the counter. She crosses her arms in front of her chest. "Maybe it is none of my business. If I am being too nosey, just say."

Nasreen leans back in her chair and nods to Salma, giving her permission to continue. Here it comes, she thinks.

"Mummy, Saleema is being mean to me!"

"No I'm not! She should just leave me alone. I'm trying to read and she's bugging me!" Salma's children burst into the room.

"Both of you out of here! Shireen, you go play in the bedroom and





Saleema, you read in the living room. I don't want any more interruptions. Go!" The girls listen to the seriousness of her tone and follow her pointed finger out of the kitchen. Salma continues to chide them in Gujarati and then closes the kitchen door firmly behind them.

"Sorry about that. They are always fighting with each other, always at each other's throats."

"That's ok. They seem like pretty normal kids to me. What were you going to ask me?"

"Well, last time you and Asha were here, you talked about being attracted to women.... I've wondered....are you both, well ... gays?" She says the last word quietly, as though it requires a delicate touch.

"Yes, well, actually we call ourselves lesbian or queer. What would you like to know? You know it is alright to ask questions about this. Most people are a bit curious." Nasreen is back on solid ground. This is why Salma has been so strange with me. Of course she would have questions after the way we carried on last time.

"Well, I am curious. I'm not sure about what exactly. It just got me thinking you know, about attractions to women. Remembering. You know, I am married and I am very happy with my husband, but there was a time when ..." she says very quietly, "well, I had a relationship with a woman. It was long ago, in India."

"Really?" Nasreen is the one who is curious now.

"It's silly, I don't know why I'm thinking about it now. I shouldn't be telling you this."

"Have you told anyone?"

Nasreen asks, understanding that Salma has revealed a big secret.

"Well ... no. We had to keep things hush-hush. No one knew. But it was just a short affair," Salma says, her voice hesitant. She hears the gurgling of boiling water and she turns to remove the kettle from the stove before it whistles. She transfers hot water from kettle to tea pot, placing it on the table between them.

"Tell me about it anyway. I bet lots of married women have experimented with women at some point in their lives." Nasreen tries to sound reassuring.

"Shhh! Please speak softly. My nine-year-old out there likes to listen in on everything. It was only for a few months, when I just starting teaching. It was a kind of a phase, you know, a curiosity, I think. I broke it off when she started to get too serious. And then there was quite a lot of pressure to settle down and get married. I was already turning twenty-five by then."

"It must have been hard to keep it a secret, you know, to sneak around?" Nasreen says in a stage-whisper.

"Well, I don't know how hard it was to keep it secret. We just knew we had to. I didn't even tell my best friend, Ritu. Although she may have suspected something. She disliked Raj because Raj was sort of known to be that way. She was sort of mannish ... and people spread rumours - you know how people can be about things like that."

"Sounds like Raj was butch. People always give the gender-nonconforming queers the hardest time. It's so stupid."

"I don't really know about all that. But, well, she did stand out. She was obvious... not like how you are." Salma pours tea into two ceramic cups. "I can't believe I'm telling you this. It was a long time ago."





We were young, and she was more serious than I."

"It sounds like it was a big deal. How do you know it was just a phase? That's what my parents said when I first started dating women. This phase has lasted a long time."

"Well, we did care about each other, but we both knew that it was only temporary, that it wouldn't last long, or couldn't last very long. But still, she was very hurt when I broke it off." Salma sits down at the table and passes Nasreen a cup. "I felt bad about that. Maybe it wasn't a phase for her. She was more that way than me. More, you know, lesbian," she says, as though testing out the new word, "more lesbian than me. If I am really at all that way myself." Salma shrugs, uncertain what she is driving at, why she is making this confession.

"What does that mean, Salma? Let me ask you this," Nasreen says, leaning in a little closer. "If there had not been a need to keep it a secret, and if you hadn't been expected to get married, would you have broken it off? Did you like being in a relationship with her?" Nasreen watches as Salma wrinkles her forehead and takes a sip of her tea.

"I don't know. That is how the world is. I made the decision to put a stop to it based on what the reality was then," she says, trying to sound sure of herself. But is this true? Was it just my own fears?

"But if it hadn't been the reality? If things had been different?" Nasreen presses her.

"But things weren't different. Don't you see? It was India almost fifteen years ago, not Canada today," Salma replies, realizing that Nasreen cannot possibly comprehend. She grew up here.

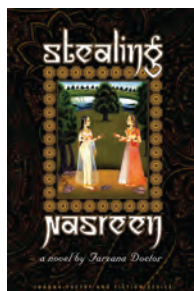
"But I've heard that there are plenty of out lesbians in India. One of my friends was

there for a while and made contact with all these lesbian and gay groups in Delhi and Bombay. And in Calcutta."

"I don't know. I don't think those things existed back then. Or at least I didn't know about them. If things had been different maybe Raj and I would have stayed together. I can't say. I did care about her." She looks up at Nasreen, her eyes watering. "I did care about her. If it were Canada today, I might have made some different choices." Nasreen reaches out for Salma's hand.

"But Salma, it is Canada today." Salma feels the warmth of Nasreen's hand on hers and heeds the electricity that prickles across the expanse of skin between her wrist and shoulder. The sensation continues all the way to her groin, and ends up somewhere in her stomach. She reaches out to touch Nasreen's cheek and without thinking, without looking for Nasreen's startled reaction, presses her mouth against soft lips. They yield to her and pure sunshine radiates over Salma when she feels Nas drawing closer. The bright light thaws something frozen within her, and she feels her insides turn to liquid. And then, as suddenly as it appeared, the sunlight is gone, refracted by the dark pupils of Nas's eyes and the force of her fingertips, gently pushing her away.

Farzana Doctor is a Toronto-based author and social worker. Her novel, *Stealing Nasreen* (Inanna Publications, 2007) has received critical acclaim from the *Globe and Mail*, *Quill and Quire*, and *NOW Magazine*.



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Antiquing 101

PART 1

by Daniel James

In this plastic and two-dimensional world of ours, it's no surprise that people are grasping for traditional, classic, and sometimes nostalgic wares. As a result, the market for antiques and vintage valuables has exploded.

You can see the trends manifest just about everywhere around you: High-end restaurants are serving pork chops and mashed potatoes; Value Village has become a pseudo fashion house; and just about all things 'Mid-Century-Modern' are commanding prices equal to or greater than their contemporary counterparts.

I don't think this should be particularly surprising. If the alternative to these well-worn, enduring, and vintage bits is the disposable furniture of the layman, I'll take the former. There are a number of things that have allowed this market to flourish. Many people believe, and have found, that quality pieces that have aged well maintain their value; or better, increase in value.

This school of thinking has primarily been driven by an educated group of consumers, fuelled in part by programs like the *Antiques Road Show* and *Cash in the Attic*. These programs have led consumers to believe that everything old has value. True, if it has lasted for 100 years or more, and someone has taken care of it, it probably has maintained some kind of value to someone. That said, these programs don't always show the disappointed heirs. We don't often see scenes of experts apologizing for Victorian pastoral scenes being out of fashion, or that the chip in the Clarice Cliff jug has rendered it worthless. This kind of footage usually ends up on the cutting room floor. When being diplomatic, people in the industry will tell overly hopeful sellers that sometimes the *sentimental* value exceeds the *monetary*."



Andrea Zeifman, a decorative arts and fashion specialist at Ritchies Auctioneers in

Toronto shared a great story with me about a recent hopeful client: "She called and told me she had purchased the Queen Mother's *"London Fog"* raincoat at a charity shop," recalls Zeifman. "When I asked what made her believe the coat had been the Queen Mum's she replied that the label said '*By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen Mother.*'"

The punch line might be lost on most, but the moral of Zeifman's story is that occasionally we must disappoint clients who have something and have seen 'one just like it' on television given a very high value.

There are a number of things to be aware of when buying antiques, collectibles, and vintage valuables so that you don't get burned.

Many serious and capable collectors will tell you to buy from a dealer with a good reputation, whose knowledge can be trusted, and whom you have built a relationship with. They will do all of the legwork for you, which is usually all of the fun. Toronto is blessed with a litany of dealers and our long history of immigration has brought treasures to the city from all over the world. The best ones are generally in neighbourhoods such as Yorkville.

Canada's longest running antique business, The Paisley Shoppe, is located right on Yorkville Avenue. If you're in the market for a choice pair of antique 19th century mahogany armchairs in the Hepplewhite manner that happen to be enriched with carved "Prince of Wales" plume and shell inlays, then this is the place to find them.

Just down the road, tucked behind the Four Seasons' hotel, are two more terrific shops: Jonny's Antiques and 51 Antiques. Both offer eclectic, ever-changing collections from all periods and always of exceptional quality and pedigree. Further north, on Davenport Ave, is the impeccably reputed Robert Noakes International. Specializing in 18th century furniture and decorative arts, this trusted firm has decorated

many of Toronto's finest homes. When you buy antiques from these dealers, and pay the prices that they command, you can be confident that you are getting what you pay for. Their experience is like a divining rod. If you ask about an item, you'll definitely find that they are happy to share that knowledge with you.

Sean Quinn, one of the Decorative Arts specialists at Ritchies auctioneers in Toronto, gives me a lesson on what to look for in a bona-fide antique. "It depends on what kind of antique you are talking about. Wood oxidizes (darkens) as it ages, and the underside of reproduction furniture will often be stained to mock this effect. Look for metal hardware that looks machine made, as opposed to hand forged."

The age of mechanical reproduction has given us perfect smooth forms that would be mind-blowing to any 18th century time-traveler. The blacksmiths of yore made hinges with a hammer against an anvil – not with the vacuum formers that give us such fine finishes. Quinn continues: "Also check for old oxidation (rust) or pitting, often a sign of age. Of course many porcelain, glass and silver pieces bear makers marks or hallmarks attesting to their age. There is nothing wrong with a well-made reproduction. A lot of quality reproductions were made in the Edwardian era, solid pieces with good lines." "Makers marks" are like hieroglyphs. They tell a precise story about when and where a piece was made, and usually by whom. As a novice collector, it is advised that you buy a dictionary of silver or porcelain marks – available at many fine book shops. Other books that might be useful are price guides, usually published annually. *Koval's* and *Miller's* are some of the better known examples, and might help you determine a fair price for the piece that you're haggling over (always worth trying, though it's a hard art to master).

Quinn also noted that mid 20th century modern furniture and decorative arts is getting more attention than ever and will likely see an increase



in value as these things become more coveted and scarce. Ritchies auctioneers, is a great venue for treasure hunting. Their bi-weekly Discovery sales happen on the first and third Tuesday of every month, a preview of the wares is held the day before. Serious collectors are often buying for investment, and expect to someday get a return. It requires a significant down payment to be reasonably assured of a return on your investment and not everyone is capable of the cost. The rest of us just have fun digging for treasures and marveling at the way things used to be.

Although you have to be diligent to find anything worthwhile, yard sales, thrift shops (like Salvation Army and Goodwill), are great places to find hidden treasures. There are also many good stores along Queen Street, both east and west.

The Queen West Antique Market's owner, Mike, has brought a marvelous inventory of mid-century modern wares together from across Canada. The intention is to sell only original, authentic relics of 20th century design that range from vintage maps and botanical diagrams, to Herman Miller and Jean Prouvé office furniture.

Other specialty shops can be found on this block of Queen West, including Sam the Chandelier Man. As the name suggests, this store is full of chandeliers and is so crowded with product that you can barely walk through it. Stand at the front door and yell: "I'm looking for a 19th Century bronze and ormolu chandelier with cut crystal icicle prismatic droppers and beaded chains! Preferably French!" Within seconds, and out of a glittering luminescent pile, Sam will produce one for you. Further east, in between Spadina and Bathurst, you'll find Red Indian Art Deco. On a recent visit I overheard someone ask for a paper bag as she prepared to hyperventilate upon seeing a red velvet and rosewood sofa, loveseat and chair combo that may as well have come from the Paris World's Fair of 1937. I've been told that this kind of reaction is common.

Sunday mornings on the other side of town, at



the intersection of Front and Jarvis Street, is the St. Lawrence market, one of my favourite places to find the best odds and sods. This may not be the best place to furnish your apartment, but you will definitely find a magical gift for yourself or someone you really care about. Dealers from all over Southern Ontario have scoured the countryside over the previous week and unload their trunks at 5am – so arrive early if you hope to be competitive. I love country auctions and estate sales, but these are getting scarce. There are still plenty of independent auctioneers in small towns and hamlets across Ontario whose many sales are listed on a relevant and timely calendar at: www.auctionsfind.com. Collectors, generally, are a curious breed of people, but these days they are more likely to be found trolling websites like EBay and Craigslist and as a result, everyone is able to get their hands on meaningful artifacts from almost anywhere in the world. The search engine makes them extremely efficient at finding exactly what you're looking for, but they fail to simulate that rare

and wonderful feeling of glaring at your bidding opponent in the auction room.

As contemporary consumer culture becomes increasingly plastic and disposable, the upswing of vintage valuables can be seen as either a response to (or rejection of) that. As consumers become more educated (or nostalgic), laminated veneers hiding low formaldehyde emission particleboards aren't as appealing as they once were. Certain big box stores champion excellence in design and bargain prices, but the prospect of everyone's home looking the same is bleak at best. A little creativity in choices, and sense of play when shopping, will prove that bold is the best cure for bland.

Daniel James's roots as a serious collector began in early childhood with his International collection of beer bottle caps salvaged from underneath bleachers at the local baseball diamonds. He sells Canadian art in Toronto.

Photography by David Hawe



Read Part 2 in the upcoming issue of AutumnPlay!

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Summer Hot Spots

Nothing makes Toronto shine in the summer quite like a fine patio

by Scott Dagostino

Way back on a cold day at the end of March, I noticed a man as he sat outside, his red fleece hoodie pulled up tight over his head. He wasn't homeless; he was braving the patio at a Richmond Street restaurant. In a city that seems to have a winter lasting nine months and a summer lasting two, it's no secret that people in Toronto love to eat outside.

"People want flowers, people want comfortable chairs... something nice," says Jimmy Georgoulis. The unofficial Patio King of Church Street, he presides over the 200-seat patio at **O'Grady's** (518 Church Street), but it's the outdoor seating at **Fuzion** (580 Church Street) he's proudest of. "We like to call it our courtyard," he says. "It's got lots of casual, comfortable seating with cushions and drapes





and flowers everywhere. We do something on a higher end, to match the quality of our food and the inside of our restaurant.”

There’s a shameful abundance of downtown restaurants that stick two plastic table-and-chairs sets out on the sidewalk and call it a patio. Georgoulis cries foul: “For a successful patio, you need a large space. People want to be outside in the summer, among lots of other people.” Aside from his own space at Fuzion, he loves the outdoor vibe at **Ultra Supper Club** (314 Queen St. W). “Ultra’s beautiful,” he says.

While the giant patio at Queen West’s **Black Bull Tavern** (298 Queen St. W., at Beverly) was and is one of the city’s best spots to grab a beer and people-watch, its green plastic tables and chairs can’t hope to match the glamour of its swanky neighbour – and the Ultra Supper Club is becoming the rule rather than the exception. Its owners are now partnering with the Liberty Group on the **Buddha Bar**-inspired **Spice Route** (499 King Street W.), an Indo-Chinese restaurant

with a 150-seat outdoor terrace, just across from the already-popular **Brant House** (522 King St. W). With ever more design, fashion and advertising firms making the King West Village their home, the area has seen a rapid growth curve in glammed-up pubs and fancy bistros.

Robert Cristello hopes this westward trend continues. His “Italian-style tapas parlour” **Urbano** (942 Queen St. W, at Shaw Ave.) is a charming little slice of the Mediterranean, tucked into a cozy space amongst the area’s funky art boutiques. Cristello has cultivated a steady and loyal following for weekend brunch but knows that a patio is vital in attracting new guests. “There are surprisingly few good places to eat outdoors,” he says and he’s been working to convert the restaurant’s small backyard (complete with a delightful flowering tree) into a dining spot as cozy as the interior.

Closer to Yorkville, Jamie Johnson agrees. As the man behind the lavish patio at **5th Element** (1033 Bay St., at Irwin Ave.), he insists on the

same wooden tables with linen tablecloths outdoors. "There's the same kind of slight formality as in the restaurant inside," he says. Some curtains and a large fountain complete the scene. "I liken it to an Italian piazza," Johnson says. "You've got a light breeze, some nice tables with people sitting outside having light conversation. It's all about talking and being with people. We want to offer the al fresco experience."

"A good patio is a necessity," says Maria Anzulovic, the former manager of **Eleven** (11 Jarvis St., at Front St. E.), noting that a decent-sized patio can double the capacity of the restaurant. Located across from the bustling St. Lawrence Market with its antiques show on Sunday [for more on antiques, read "Antiquing 101" on page 39], the corner that once housed a tragic Golden Griddle is now home to a spacious patio that offers a chic counterpoint to the elegant outdoor spaces of neighbourhood fixtures **La Maquette** (111 King St. E) and **Biagio** (155 King St. E.).

"People always say we have two seasons in Toronto: hockey season and patio season," Anzulovic laughs. "We're cuddled indoors the whole winter long and nobody actually goes anywhere. Sitting out on a patio is part of the thrill of summer!"

Scott Dagostino is a Toronto-based freelance writer who adores the city that Canada loves to hate. Scott is the new Editor-in-Chief of "the LOCAL BIZ magazine", a new community magazine for the Durham Region from the publishers of Pink Play Mags. Scott is the former managing editor of fab, he also writes for Xtra! and spent his youth working in three of Toronto's best bookstores. He rambles on at www.scottdagostino.com

Photography by David Hawe



Succulent Summerplay! Sangria

(White Wine substitutions in parentheses)

1½-2 bottle Cabernet Sauvignon red wine

(Chardonnay white wine, or try a Gewurztraminer if you prefer it sweeter)

3-4 oz Grand Marnier;

half brandy, half triple sec will also work

(substitute half the Grand Marnier or the triple sec with peach schnapps)

1 large sliced lemon

1 large sliced lime

2-3 large sliced oranges

2-3 large sectioned apples

1 large sliced cantaloupe, or melon

1 half basket of strawberries, or cherries

1 bunch seedless red grapes

(1 bunch seedless white grapes)

1-2 bottles of Perrier / sparkling water

1. Mix ingredients together in a large container, stir, and let sit in a refrigerator for 18-24 hrs.
2. Before serving, stir again, and add sugar to taste if needed (anywhere from 1-2 tablespoons to ½ cup). It should be fairly strong and fairly sweet.
3. Then, cut the mixture with some sort of bubbly water (orange or lemon flavored if possible, but plain bubbly water is fine), until it seems to have a thinner, more wine like consistency.

Serve immediately in festive glasses.



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Are you a rugged outdoorsman?

I'm not talking about sitting on a lawn chair with a beer-cozy in the backyard.

Think of taking a two-day trip on white-water rapids, a hike with a local geologist, or doing some yoga in the fresh air surrounded by nature.

With more and more gay get-aways popping up, I've done a little research for you adventure-pursuing, outdoorsy types ...



Gay Wilderness Get-Aways

by Troy Brooks



Rugged Adventure

For the thrill seeker, we have **Bushboy Adventures**, Canada's first wilderness adventure company just for gay men. It's located at Killarney Provincial Park in the heart of the Cloche Mountain Range, roughly 5 - 6 hours from Toronto, just northeast of Manitoulin Island. Miles of undeveloped wilderness shoreline nestled among a lake with white quartzite and pink granite mountains. The name La Cloche (French for "the bell") comes from the legend that the Aboriginals of the land once used these rocks for warning signals, when struck the sound could be heard for a considerable distance.

Bushboy's new Canada Day Weekend Canoe Trip (4 nights for \$520, June 28 to July 2nd), begins with first night accommodations at a northern base with cabins and a sauna. Then you have three nights of camping, hiking and white water canoeing in what is considered to be a premiere destination, beginning 30 minutes West of Sudbury Ontario on the Spanish River. Delicious organic dinners and outdoor yoga sessions, round out your stay. All

you bring is a sleeping bag, outdoor clothing and whichever face cream packs tightest. Prior camping experience is recommended - www.bushboyadventures.com.

Across the ocean is **Danube Dreams**, a gay biking tour from Vienna through Bratislava to Budapest. Imagine peddling past cathedrals, castles and fairy tale forests as you travel along the river that has inspired so many legendary artists and musicians. As you make your way through three of the most romantic capital cities in Eastern Europe, you'll experience an incredible variety of food, wine, beer, and culture. There are comfortable accommodations and delicious local cuisine at the end of each day. Party it up at the end of the ride with a night in the beautiful city of Budapest, central Europe's hotspot destination

This is a typical bike tour with anywhere from 30 to 50 miles a day, over roads that are flat and about a half day of hills. You are encouraged to move at your own pace, so there's lots of time to stop and take some pictures and enjoy the gorgeous Danube valley. For you over-achievers there are longer optional routes if you insist on more cycling. Just make sure you stay hydrated for an evening of cocktails. Running July 5th - 12th and July 18th - 25th, the price is \$2695.00 per person, based on double occupancy. That includes the hotels or inns for each night, the services of two guides, all breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners with wine included. They even take care of the transportation of luggage to the destination and supply you a bike—what more could you ask for - www.alysonadventures.com.



Camping It Up

For the less rugged, there are the gay campgrounds. Most of these resorts have outdoor activities like hiking, tennis and canoe rentals. **Cedars Campground** in Milgrove, just West of Burlington, even boasts a big barn clubhouse with DJs and dancing on the weekends - www.cedarscampground.com The Point Tent and Trailer resort in Turkey Point has the clothing optional element in some sections - www.get-tothepoint.com.

So who shows up to these campgrounds? "A real mixed crowd," says Cedars Campground owner, Chris Smicek. "Young and old, women and men." Depending on how quiet you like your camping trips, plan ahead. "The most popular time is the long weekends," says Smicek. "But you don't have to be an outdoorsman type to camp here. If you don't want to pitch a tent we have cabins and a duplex to rent."

Anyway you slice it, it's a convenient and inexpensive way to get out of the city and recapture that lost frat boy weekend, or spend some romantic time away under the stars with your partner. There are no friendlier people to vacation with than campers, so bring your guitar and mosey on down to the neighboring campfire to introduce yourself. It's the perfect atmosphere to meet new people and relax. Oh, and Chris wanted me to mention that there is a restaurant if you're not in the mood to cook

Have you ever heard of **Spearhead**? Established in 1970, they are the oldest leather/denim organization in Canada. On Labor Day weekend, they host "Come Play in the Woods," an all new, men's only, backwoods get-a-way. Enjoy over 700 acres of lake front private property 3 hours North of Toronto outside Haliburton, Ontario. Non-Members pay from \$280 to \$350 depending on when you register. Being a rugged outdoorsman is not completely necessary.

For the Gals

For the ladies we have **Wild Women Expeditions**, who have been planning adventures like white water canoeing, mountain biking, surfing and kayaking for women for nearly 20 years. "Our out-of-province trips, whether west coast, east coast or the far north are our most popular trips each year," says Beth Mairs, Wild Women's basecamp host. "Mostly our women are 35-55, city slickers and usually single."

They supply the equipment, food and guides as you travel through the spectacular coastlines, lakes, rivers and trails of Canada. They have 230 gorgeous acres of waterfront property outside Sudbury, Ontario, just a half day's drive from Toronto or Ottawa. But how outdoorsy do you have to be?

"It depends," says Beth "there are a range of trips for those who are experienced and comfortable in wilderness settings. Other trips not so important." In June there's a great chance to explore Vancouver Island's Pacific Coast followed by a week of mountain biking in Fernie, then a week to hike and rejuvenate in the Rockies.

Ask them about catering to private groups and customized adventures to meet your particular needs and budget. That way you can experience a unique adventure with your friends if roughing it with strangers isn't your cup of tea. With over 25 different adventure based offerings, ranging 2 to 7 nights, Beth's advice is to "be brave and sign up on your own, most women do." Sounds like a great way to get in shape, make some new friends and experience our incredible Canadian landscape - www.wildwomenexp.com



"We will all be sleeping on comfortable beds with mattresses," says Spearhead Organizer, Jack Pearce. "Our cabins are meant for nine or more, but we as a rule only place 6 in each." I guess that's to keep the numbers even. After you register, leave your wallet at home. Everything is covered. "Each year, a variety of different guys of all ages from all over Canada, the USA and abroad come to Spearhead's Leather-Denim Pride Run," Pearce tells me. "Leather, denim, cowboy and motorcycle clubs join us – it's a celebration of all things male. You name it, we got it." That sounds promising.

I asked Pearce if he had any advice for the first timer and he answered, "Bring only what you need and leave your domestic dramas at home." With 6 men to a cabin, I suppose that's a reasonable request. This is a weekend jamboree of rugged macho stereotypes with one of the friendliest (not to mention philanthropic) leather groups around. Round-the-clock alcohol and non-alcohol beverages are available along with 3 meals a day including snacks and formal dinners. On Saturday there's a BBQ with dancing.

Also part of the weekend's entertainment are an auction, nightly "Bone-fires," play parties, canoeing, swimming, workshops, live entertainment and a motorcycle run – whew! Sounds like these guys have all the bases covered. "It's like an outdoor leather party with cabins," Pearce says. "Everyone is over 19 and no Drag, dogs or drugs."

There's no telling what could happen. Just make sure you know what color hanky to sport - www.spearheadtoronto.com

Zen Retreat

My personal favorite is the 16th Annual Summer Retreat to Jemez Springs, New Mexico. Apparently by popular demand an extra day has been added and runs from August 11 to August 17. Listed as being for gay and "bi" men, feel



free to bring your "roommate." I have to admit this trip sounds pretty incredible. It's basically a combination of all the getaways listed above.

Take someone you love or go alone but be warned, this trip is reputed to potentially be the bonding experience of a lifetime and you could walk away a different person. Trance Dance rituals are held with global music and blindfolds to connect your body with your subconscious and discover your "authentic nature." The Sweat Lodge is a purification and healing practice that takes place in a dome-shaped hut filled with natural steam created by hot rocks, water and herbs. There are Shamanic Ceremonies drawn from the Toltec tradition and other indigenous wisdom teachings of the world as well as Zen Practice at the Bodhi Manda Zen Centre. \$1295.00 includes 7 days/6 nights lodging, three meals daily and all other retreat activities - www.spiritjourneys.com

So whether you venture out as far as New Mexico to experience a life changing reawakening, peddle along the exotic European countryside, or travel no further than Burlington for a friendly campground excursion, just be sure to get caught up in the fun of the season and enjoy that warm blue sky as much as Mother Nature lets you.

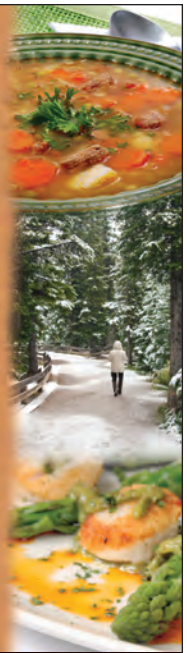
Troy Brooks is a freelance writer, artist and musician living in Toronto. You can check him out at troybrooks.deviantart.com.

Photography by Nancy Paiva



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Summer in the City

by Manny Machado

Not too long ago summer in the city meant the streets were barren because all the residents left for greener pastures, while those that stayed behind imagined an exciting urban experience. Well their determination has paid off and you'll be pleasantly surprised that this is only a fraction of the events drawing the crowds in. Make like a tourist and discover. My only advice as you get ready for some world class events is get out and stay out!

Festivals

Taste of the Danforth

August 8 to August 10

Between Broadview and Dewhurst

Free

14th annual Greek street fest celebrating the very best in food and culture. The subway is the best way to get there and you can access the festivities at any of these four stations, Broadview, Chester, Pape or Donlands.

TIP: Come with an empty stomach. www.toronto.com/tasteofthedanforth

Buskerfest

August 8 to August 10

Front Street, between Church and Jarvis (noon till late)

Free (with a donation of choice in support of Epilepsy Toronto)

Hilarious, ingenious, energetic street performers spontaneously appear along Front Street. AfterDark features amazing fire performers for the late crowd.

TIP: Free up your day, cause you'll want to stay for the whole spectacle. www.torontobuskerfest.com

Festival of Fire

June 26, July 1 and July 3

Ontario Place

Free

You will be oohing and awwing as the waterfront comes alive with an unbelievable spectacle of lights and music.

TIP: Find a comfortable seat and tune into 98.1 FM on the radio. www.ontarioplace.com/en/events/festival.html



Try Something Different

Summerlicious

July 4 to July 20

Prix Fixe Menu

Foodie's everywhere can experience Toronto's finest cuisine at affordable prices. Some of the city's top restaurants are offering lunches at fixed prices of \$10-\$20 and dinners at \$20-\$30. **TIP:** If you want to enjoy the atmosphere along with the food, lunches are best and make sure you book early. www.toronto.com/summerlicious

Ribfest

June 27 to July 1

256 Centennial Park Rd, Etobicoke

\$10-\$20

TTC: Bloor Line west- exit Royal York, get on 48 Rathburn bus and off at Centennial Park Rd. Give yourself 1 hour. Best BBQ experience you'll have all summer long as Canadian and US grill aficionados compete to be crowned Best BBQ Broiler of 2008. **TIP:** These are authentic traveling "Carnie Folk" so bring along your family and friends cause they'll need to see it to believe it. www.torontoribfest.com

Fringe Festival

July 2 – July 13

\$10 up to one hour before show at the door

Various venues around the city featuring a wide variety of plays ranging from musicals to dramas and comedies to dance; all comprising the original Fringe philosophy of accessible, inexpensive and fun theatre going.

TIP: Sunscreen and water will be your best friends during the festival. 416.966.1062, www.fringetoronto.com

Opera & Orchestra

Don Giovanni & Renard By the Canadian Opera Company

June 16, 18, 20- 7:30 pm; June 22
at 2 pm

Oil Opera Theatre, 227 Front St.
E. Toronto

\$65 General Admission

A non-subscription performance for
the opera curious to check out.
416.363.8231, www.coc.ca

Summer Music in the Garden

June 29 through September 14
Thursday evenings at 7 pm and
on most Sundays at 4 pm
Waterfront at 475 Queens Quay
West

Free

Classical music lovers will enjoy the
20 free out-door concerts along the
waterfront. **TIP:** Perfect picnic or date
spot on a sunny summer day.
416.973.4000,
www.harbourfrontcentre.com

Sunday Serenades

July 10 to Aug 24, 7:30 to 9pm
Free

Mel Lastman Square

Yonge line and exit at North York
Center Looking for a cool groove to
wind down the hot summer weekend,
these six fun filled Sundays featuring
the best in swing, big band and jazz
were made for you. **TIP:** The Square is
only minutes away from downtown via
subway to the North York Centre stop.
www.toronto.ca/special_events/serenades



Theatre

Art Sexy @ Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

May 13 to June 29

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre,
12 Alexander St**

Check out a variety of shows including
interactive audience involved "The
Beauty Salon," and the intense "My
Fellow Creatures." **TIP:** Take a chance
and see something unexpected.
416.979.8555, www.artsexy.ca

SummerWorks Festival

August 2 to August 12

\$10 per performance

The city's premier festival of cutting-
edge, exciting, professional theatre,
considered to be the breeding ground
and hub for Toronto's most dynamic,
dedicated theatre professionals.

TIP: Make sure you're on time for the
shows, as latecomers won't be let in.
1.888.222.6608,
www.summerworks.ca

Avenue Q

July 29 to August 31

**Tue – Sun 8pm; Wed & Sat 2pm
Elgin and Winter Garden
Theatre**

Tickets: \$50 to \$100

Avenue Q is Broadway's 2004 Tony
Award winner for Best Musical where
puppets and people try to make it in
New York; a hilarious show, full of
heart and hum-able tunes! **TIP:** This
is not for the kiddies; this show would
even make Miss Piggy blush.
416.872.5555,
www.dancaptickets.com/shows

Toronto's Hidden Secrets

Yoga in the Park

June 7 & 8, July 12 & 13, August
16 & 17, Sept 13 & 14, 12 noon
– 1 pm, Cherry Beach, \$20

Flexibility, friendship and fun all in the
sun; Karey Spady will keep you coming
back for more with her intuitive and
real philosophy on feeling great.

TIP: Bring your own towel or
mat and water. 647.232.5760,
bodyarchitecture.ca

Tasty Thursdays

July 10 to Aug 28

11 am – 2 pm

Nathan Philips Square

Free

Not just hot dogs and ice cream at
the heart of the city hall, a variety
of prime Toronto restaurants will be
featuring select menus for \$5 dollars
or less. **TIP:** Impress date no.2 with
a midday get away on the northwest
side of Nathan Philips. www.toronto.ca/special_events/thursdays

Farmer's Markets

**Wednesdays: June 4 to Oct 15,
10 am – 2 pm**

**Central East-Withrow Park (725
Logan Ave. TTC: Pape station)**

**Saturdays: May 24 to Oct 25,
9am – 2 pm**

**Central West-Trinity Bellwoods
Park (Dundas and Shaw TTC:
Dundas West)**

**Tuesdays: May 13 to Oct 28, 3
pm – 7 pm**

Free

Help support these locations as they
bring vibrancy and good food to their
communities. Downtown at Nathan
Philips Square **TIP:** Bring your own
re-usable eco friendly bags.
www.toronto.ca/special_events



Music

Toronto Jazz Festival

June 25 to July 4

Free

Nathan Philips Square main-stage will feature a variety of free concerts from talented musicians, while the big name draws, like Al Green, will be at the Sony Center on June 19.

TIP: Keep your ears on the band and eyes on the crowd; you never know whom you'll spot. 416.928.2033, www.torontojazz.com

Virgin Festival

September 6 & 7

Toronto Island Park

\$87 1 day/\$159 2 days

One of the biggest music parties this city will see all summer, featuring draws like the FOO FIGHTERS and OASIS. Ticket prices include the ferry fees. **TIP:** You'll want to get there early as line ups for the ferry grow as the day progresses. www.virginfestival.ca

True Colors

June 4, 6pm

Molson Amphitheatre, 909 Lakeshore Blvd. West

Cyndi Lauper, B52's, Rosie O'Donnell, Indigo Girls, with Special host, Carson Kressley, if this doesn't get your gay genes ready for pride, nothing will.

TIP: Leave your car at home to avoid the traffic. Easy access to venue, get on the Exhibition streetcar from Union station and walk over the footbridge to Molson Amphitheatre. www.truecolortour.com



Comedy

The Cocky Variety Hour

June 1 and August 3 7:30pm

Diesel Playhouse, 56 Blue Jays Way

\$10-\$75

3 funny gay men Ted Morris, Stephen Sharpe, and Doug Taylor perform a modern throw back to the beloved variety show in the spirit of The Muppets, Carol Burnett and Sony and Cher; this jam-packed show of song, sketch, interviews and special guests delights audiences. **TIP:** The boys will also be making an appearance at Homo Night in Canada June 28 at Buddies in Bad Times. 416.971.5656, www.dieselpayhouse.com

Tazed and Confused

Ongoing

Tues – Thurs at 8pm; \$23.00

Fri at 8 pm, Sat at 8pm &

10:30pm; \$28.00

Sun at 7pm; \$23.00

The Second City, 51 Mercer Street

Social commentary to leave you laughing out loud, poking fun at city dwellers and the situations we create.

TIP: A new show will be introduced mid-summer, so make sure you check their website for news. 416.343.0011, www.secondcity.com

Culture/Art

Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition

July 11, 12 & 13

Friday 10am – 8pm, Saturday

10am – 7pm, Sunday 10am

– 6pm

Nathan Philips Square

Free



Approximately 500 artists featuring undiscovered talents and established artists selling their work directly to the public. **TIP:** Perfect opportunity to purchase an original piece of art for your home. 416.408.2754, www.torontoutdoorart.org

Java Knights Public Forum

June 17, July 29 & August 26

Tuesdays (Check website for times)

Gladstone Hotel Art Bar, 1214 Queen St W

Free

Topics cover everything from Amnesty International to Beijing Summer Olympics, a chance to speak your mind on the hot topics affecting our community. **TIP:** fresh finger food and soft drinks served along with a cash bar. 416.551.1709, gaywest.905host.net/files/javaknights.php

Luminato

June 6 to June 15

Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity

Free and paid performances.

Performance program encompasses a broad spectrum of creative expression including music, dance, theatre, film, literature, visual arts and lectures.

TIP: Don't miss the big finale "Carnival H2O" along the waterfront at 235 Queens Quay West, Harborfront Center. 416.872.1111, www.luminato.com



Outdoor Adventure

Cowboy/Cowgirl Weekend

August 8 to August 10

Cedars Campground

\$16.00 +tx/ night

Buckaroos and Buckerettes get your saddles on and head on over to Cedars Campground for a fun filled weekend of horseplay and memories. Organized by the Central Canada Gay Rodeo Association **TIP:** Gay Cowboys, I think that says it all! YEE-HAW!

www.ccgrra.ca

Suspension Bridge

Daily from June to October

Niagara Escarpment

\$18.50 Park admission

Take a walk on the wild side along Ontario's longest footbridge and be amazed at the vistas. **TIP:** Hiking shoes are required. 705.446.0256, www.sceniccaves.com

Water Front Trail

Open Yearly

Rollerblading, cycling or hiking

780 km along Lake Ontario

Free

Discover it for a day, or make it a summer-long adventure, amenities all along for easy "personal maintenance." **TIP:** Bring provisions in case you go farther than anticipated. 416.943.8080, www.ontariotrails.on.ca/trails-a-z/waterfront-trail

Watersports

Scuba Diving

June to October

Fathom Five National Park:

Tobermory, Ontario

\$38.00 – \$100.00

Labeled the shipwreck capital of Canada the crystal clear waters makes this a premiere diving destination.

TIP: Water is at its warmest in August. For gayer dives check out www.trrr.org. 519.596.2363, www.diversden.ca

Kitesurfing

All Summer long

\$399 all day lesson

Sauble Beach

Thrill seekers will love this one, experience the freedom speeding across the water and launching yourself into the air. **TIP:** Eat AFTER you've gone kitesurfing, you and the crowd will appreciate it.

705.326.9470, www.kiterider.ca

Outdoor Sports

Summer Gay & Lesbian

Sports Club

All summer long

Great way to get some exercise and make new friends. Enjoy everything from camping in the Algonquins and kayaking, to cycling around town and leisurely strolls to the neighbourhood Dairy Queen. **TIP:** Check out page 49 for Troy's travel article on more Gay Camping. www.outandout.on.ca

Gay West Bicycling Club

All summer long

Entering their 5th year with close to 100 members, join Ontario's only dedicated bicycling club on Sunday afternoons for a leisurely 5 hour trip along Toronto's many trails. **TIP:** Bring lots of water and don't forget to pack yourself a snack. 416.551.1709, www.gaywest.905host.net

Beaches and Pools

Toronto Community Pools

June 1 to Labour Day

Free

For those of you not into getting sand in every crevice, check out Toronto's many outdoor pools. **TIP:** Riverdale Park is always a bevy of hot studs in Speedos. Pool hotline 416-338-7665, www.toronto.ca/parks/recreation_facilities/swimming/south_swim.htm

Hanlan's Point

Toronto Island

Take the Hanlan's Ferry

\$6.00 Ferry Fee

Toronto finally got over its prudishness and embraced the European flair of a nude beach. **TIP:** There's little to no shade, so bring lots of water and if you don't feel like carrying an umbrella, you can rent them there for a small fee, which includes proper set up so it won't blow over. 416.392.8193, www.torontoisland.org

Collingwood and Wasaga Beach

Day trip or weekend getaway worthy, so take a scenic drive through the countryside to add to the experience.

TIP: Traffic can be a bit of a nightmare, so plan an extra day or two off of work so you can leave early Friday morning and come back Monday. www.wasaga.com



Manny Machado is a freelance writer and small space guru inspired by mankind and all things design. His multitude of projects include host on MTV's Budget Crib, CEO of Elbowroom Studio, Décor Chair for Fashion Cares 2008 and initiating a community response to the fire, Queen Street: A Fresh Start.

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FROM THE HEART

by Michele Gill



Excuse me dear reader when I say that just the very thought of "Love" puts me in a happy, giddy and poetic mood...

A clear blue sky

The break of day

A sense of hope that comes my way

It truly is remarkable how

Life all comes together now

With optimism I have this to say...

LOVE

I'm compelled to welcome this day with open arms.

The adventure awaits and I'm filled with anticipation at the thought of its outcome.

Each breath of the warm air fills my being with excitement as I venture in my car, the roof open, towards one of my favorite places to be.

The boardwalk, on such a lovely summer's day, holds some of my fondest memories.

The people, the sights, the sounds, and the smells; they nudge at every one of my senses with utter delight.

My backpack is with me, which has seen better days.

It matters not, as I focus on looking forward to accept each moment as it unfolds.

A cozy spot I'll find, with a most delightful view, and that's where I'll stop after I take a stroll.

So much to see.

I pause and take it all in.

A man tossing a Frisbee to his dog.

The elderly couple strolling at a comfortable pace, hand in hand.

Roller blades and bicycles zipping by.

Melting ice cream cones in the hands of babes.

Sunbathers, families with kids, people reading, couples, singles, it's all here.

I close my eyes and feel grateful for such a wonderful day.

A sense of calmness overcomes me and I stay here for a while lingering in that energy.

Imagine dear reader, as I take you on this little adventure...

You find yourself headed towards the shoreline.

The sand beneath your bare feet is soothing and you enjoy its sensation.

The water, it sparkles where the sun's light glistens on its surface and you're mesmerized by its magic.

As you linger there, lost in your thoughts, you're oblivious to what surrounds you.

An awakening is in your calling, and you are startled by the splashing sound of what appears to be a large stone landing in the water just in front of you.

Glancing over to its origin, you're awestruck.

For there, is the sight of a most beautiful being, whom happens to want your attention.

Noticing they are smiling directly at you,
you smile back, not really sure what to think.
Suddenly you're feeling awkward, shy, not sure
what the next step is supposed to be.

They approach you with all the confidence in
the world and your curiosity is now aroused.

You find you can't wipe the smile from your
face as the vision gets closer with each stride.

Standing before you now it's quite clear that
the chemistry between you is performing its
magic. It dances to its own tune, unrehearsed
and unannounced, it unfolds.

Their eyes are striking, so much so you find
your stare is locked upon them.

You get lost in that moment till you hear a
voice that bears a greeting.

Oh, how that simple "hello" has your head
spinning.

And that smile! You're breathless as you try
not to mutter or stammer in your reply.

A light conversation begins and in no time
you venture off on a walk, sharing stories and
enjoying each other's company.

The light touch of their hand as it reaches out
to hold yours in theirs makes you smile, makes
the walk so much more enjoyable.

Off the beaten path and into a more secluded
part of the area, you stop and embrace.

The touch of their lips, their warmth, and
the tenderness of it, tells you that you're
exactly where you're supposed to be in that
moment of time.

**Passion rages within
both souls and you
find yourself in
total abandon...**



*It fills my heart,
to be able to
Love so deeply
the way I do
And in return
Be loved that way
I'll be grateful for
Each and every day!*

This may be the beginning of love.

It has to start somewhere.

It sometimes comes when we least expect
it and at other times when we look forward to
receiving such an opportunity with someone
who's caught our attention.

With both willing to take the leap and surrender
to its magic, the journey is most rewarding.

How special are we to have such a power
within us. Not only to give, but also to receive.

*Love yourself.
Love all that surrounds you.
Love being in love.
Love the anticipation of being in love.
Feel it, trust it, cherish it.*

I open my eyes and on this beautiful summer day
I view the world ready to receive such love and
so willing to give it.

Wait, there's someone I've just noticed standing
by the waters edge...

Michele Gill is an inspirational
speaker, conducting writing and
participating in guided group
meditations. She is thrilled to have
just completed her Reiki Masters
Certification.

**You can write Michele with
your life concerns,
to share thoughts, and for
advice at [fromtheheart@
thepinkpagesdirectory.com](mailto:fromtheheart@thepinkpagesdirectory.com)**



Looking Back

by Enza Anderson



It was my drag mother, the late Dale Barnett, who suggested I come down for Pride Weekend and hang out with the rest of my newly adopted drag family. That was eighteen years ago. I've never missed a Pride since.

I grew up in Toronto's suburban north end, that part of town they call Downsview. That weekend, I got all fancied up. It would not be the first time that I would don a blue, flower print summer dress, black heels, and deep red, shoulder length, full bodied hair. I sat by the sidelines and watched with complete excitement the sheer magnitude of the LGBT community.

One memory I will always cherish was seeing the large number of drag queens on Church Street. They were everywhere! I truly thought I had died and gone to queer heaven. They flaunted their feather boas at passersby; some frantically fanned, trying to keep the make-up from running; at times I was blinded by the rays of sunlight hitting the sequins. It was a remarkable sight.

At the parade the next day, I got a juicier taste of that crowd euphoria. As the route made its way north on Yonge Street, spectators ran up to queens for a photo-op or simply joined in the parade, there were no steel barriers holding

anyone back. It was amazing how the people ended up engulfing what was back then only a few cordoned off city blocks.

Men were kissing men. Women were holding hands with other women. At times the line of drag queen bedecked convertibles slowed to a crawl and kept the parade route from moving along in a timely fashion. Being free to walk the street as a transgendered woman, all out in the open for the public to see, that was freedom.

While it would be many years later that I would christen myself with the title Supermodel and walk for the first time in the parade, my first Pride experience was the catalyst for not only getting me involved with future Pride celebrations, but teaching me that I could be out and proud of who I wanted to be.

Not in a million years would I have imagined being bestowed the honour of Grand Marshal for one of the world's biggest parades, the 2008 Toronto Pride Parade. In all my years as a supermodel, in name only of course, I have never graced a single catwalk and now I get to ride down the world's longest runway—Yonge Street. For this supermodel, the honour is truly worth getting out of bed for.

Enza Anderson, a writer, activist and media personality, is a trans-woman who works and lives in Toronto. Her wit, giving nature, and outgoing personality also play up to her public persona as Enza Supermodel. She is the social columnist at The Metro Daily News. This year she is Pride's Grand Marshal.

Photography by Ajoy Pinto

Next Issue

autumnplay!

Part 2 of Antiquing.

Back to School - gay & straight alliance comes together.

Michele talks about the light at end of each tunnel in *From the Heart*.

And a lot more. Coming end of August 2008.

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