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From the Publisher

In my dream, I am in this sparsely decorated room, old Mediterranean style, and I'm lying beside another masculine, sweaty, naked body on white linen sheets. We've just spent a wild night of passion, the sun is starting to come up, and we roll over and both light a cigarette (yes that fantasy started back when cigarettes were still cool, and in my young mind very macho). We throw some clothes on, slip into some sandals and walk out to a nearby little café to watch the world rising.

This was the fantasy that I fell asleep to many nights in my teenage years. Sex, romance, love, heat, passion, play...have always been things that mixed and mingled in my mind.

Welcome to our Love & Sex edition.

I never struggled with sexuality. I feel lucky that way. I always knew sex as joyous and freeing since I became aware of it. So even as a young one, I always believed sex is natural (... "sex is good, not everybody does it, but everybody should"). I had my fair share of wild times and I certainly am no prude.

However, planning this issue left me squirming. Unlike my Mediterranean European roots and upbringing, I am aware of the uncomfortable relationship North America has with sex.

Liberal as I may be, I do believe, like many other things, sex has its time and place. As a magazine, especially a gay and lesbian one, we are aware of the impact of what we publish.

"With great power comes great responsibility," happens to be my favorite line from the first Spidey movie. I believe it is a line worth living by. That is why planning each issue of our magazine takes many meetings, many a heated discussions, and many decisions.

So our poor Editor-in-Chief knew that he'd have his hands full working with me on this edition of *summerplay!*. I was excited about the concept of

the issue, I've wanted to do the theme for a while, but I repeated many times that I expect us to present something exciting, classy and sexy. Vulgar for the sake of shock value is not my style. Mere nudity is not sexy to me.

Seduction, playfulness, and something left to the imagination—and trust me I have a vivid one—now that is SEXY. Think Meg Ryan in *When Harry Met Sally's* orgasm scene in the restaurant; not a hint of nudity, but left you wanting "whatever she is having." Full frontal is not as provocative; full frontal is more like porn (don't get me wrong, porn is hot, and should be available, behind the counter, for adults, who wish to view such material, in the privacy of their own home).

I hope you enjoy the sensual, sexually charged covers that came together due to the help of the most amazing people from the community. Everyone was so eager to participate, and be part of this, and I much appreciate their enthusiasm and trust in what we are trying to do.

With this issue we will romance, seduce, inform, tickle the senses, and cause a stir in your pants (or skirt, or dress, or shorts). Go on, have some lovin', and some sex. Stay safe.

Antoine Elhashem



summerplay!

Gay and lesbian seasonal from PinkPlayMags.
Free. Summer 2010.

Publisher/Creative Director Antoine Elhashem
Editor-in-Chief Jeff Harrison
Art Director Alex Long

Contributors

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Josh Levy, Manny Machado, Jules Richer

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Cover:
Bath Haus of
Pink Play -
“Love & Sex” issue

Cover Photography Kevin Slack
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Photography Assistant Marlon Solomon

Cover Models: At the Locker Room

from left to right: Todd Royle, Larry Au, Kasha Visutskie, Chad Simon, Joe Valenti, Pippa Stevenson, Deb Pearce, Melissa, Faith, James Courtney, Mardi Reid, Miss Conception, Nicolette Brown... (Pippa Stevenson is wearing one of her original creations. To find out more about Pippa's work email her at pippasrubberdolls@gmail.com)

Cover Models: It's Play Time

from left to right: Mardi Reid, Pippa Stevenson, Faith, Melissa, Kasha Visutskie, James Courtney, Chad Simon, Larry Au, Todd Royle

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I've never been of the mind that full frontal nudity is porn—after all, the first man I ever saw the Full Monty on was Michelangelo's David, and I immediately fell in love...or was it lust?

Love & Sex. Nothing is older in our world than the feeling of love and no emotion is stronger than that of desire. It's what brings us together for a passionate embrace, keeps us together through the forming of families and lingering well on into the winter of our years.

In our chest is this amazing muscle that pumps blood through our bodies and keeps us alive. Yet, anyone who has felt the exciting rush of heat for another person, the longing to be close to The One we just locked eyes with, or the stabbing loss of all our desires crashing to an end, knows this organ, hard-wired directly to our brain, yet so often muddled by our hormones, is far more complicated than any pound of flesh has a right to be.

I think North Americans are a little afraid of this all powerful overlap between physical lust and the emotional charge of the heart. Europeans seem to have a more comfortable relationship in the intersection of these two states of being, while those descended from the native tribes that once ruled the Americas have never lost the deep understanding of this primal force.

As skittish as our society seems to be around it though, sex and love is everywhere. It sells advertising, TV shows, movies and music videos. Just take a look at Christina Aguilera's new video, or anything by Lady Gaga, or turn on Showcase or Bravo—it's so steamy out there, the windows

keep fogging up! Everyone wants to be seen as sexy and everyone wants to be loved. Mankind is a social creature after all, and wants to belong, to share who they are with other people of similar desires.

As we swing into the heat of summer, nothing expresses these tumultuous emotions better than Pride. There will be as many varied encounters of love and sexual desire as there are people at the parade—that's a lot of making out! Isn't it wonderful that we have an actual week-long festival encouraging us to celebrate who we are as loving sexual beings?

Speaking of Pride, I'm over-the-top excited to feature an interview this issue with none other than that she bopping, unusual girl—Cyndi Lauper. She's always been of the belief, like myself, that we should be free to love who we want to love and never feel judged by who we choose to have sex with. Be sure to check out her free concert in Queen's Park, Saturday July 3rd, at 9pm. Maybe I'll see you there. Our eyes can lock for a moment, and we'll share a smile.

Happy Pride!

Jeff Harrison



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Sluts and Whores:

No, You are Not Alone

by Karen Fulcher

I was 18 and Boston's "More Than a Feeling" was drifting through the bathroom window, mingling with laughter. I remember the smell of coconut on my skin and the warm touch from the sun. I was slightly dizzy from a wine spritzer and was examining myself in the bathroom mirror. How shiny and blonde my hair looked, my teeth white, eyes blue, skin the colour of caramel. I was awash in desire.

This desire had something to do with the attention I was getting that summer day, but had none of the other complications attached to it. I was open and willing to lean into a kiss, my belly doing flips, my middle pulsing and alert. I wasn't thinking about sexual disease, if I might be hurt, if this would lead somewhere. This was no-consequences, in-the-moment desire, and I wanted to do something about it. Certainly, I hadn't considered the repercussion of getting the devastating label of "slut" even though the label (still) has more to do with your socioeconomic status and gender than with actual sexual behaviour.

Sexual power is seductive and confusing for someone so young. That kind of heightened innocent sexuality can be both liberating and dangerous, depending on who is around at the time. And if you are lucky enough to be unharmed by other people or by the social bullying of the slut label, you may have experiences of endless possibilities, endless desire.

Desire is personal and changeable. One moment you're feeling like you want to passionately bite that lower lip of your companion

and can't stop from glancing at her mouth while she speaks, and in the next, you feel a steel door slamming and blood draining away from your groin because her eating habits are atrocious.

Not only moment-to-moment do our desires change, but day-to-day, and month-to-month. Acknowledging that desire fluctuates, let's assume that most people have a baseline of desire. The range of desire could begin at asexual and end at sexual obsession, regardless of how society may label you and how much you may act upon your desires.

A recent article, "Not Tonight. And Not Ever!" by Siri Agrell, published in *Chatelaine*, explored the experiences of people who declared that they had virtually no desire for sex. They argued that we resist the urge to pathologize asexuality, that it is simply one orientation along the spectrum of desire experienced by about 1% of the population. In order to avoid the potential heartache in a relationship in which one person is asexual, some negotiate open relationships, have sex as a gesture of love for their mate, or seek other asexual people to form relationships with.



On the other end of the scale is sexual obsession, or "hypersexuality," as listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (the DSM, bible of the therapist). This condition was previously called *nymphomania* (regarding women) and *satyriasis* (referring to men) before it was reworked in the DSM. Interestingly, the term for men is a rather unfamiliar one, but "nympho" is widely recognized. I suggest that this reflects the other side of desire: action. Women's sexual behaviour is something that society has long wanted to control, often through shame and using the label "slut" or "whore," which has now been termed "sexual shaming."

Ironically, it doesn't matter how much sex you might be having, it's about perception. The Riot Grrrls of the 90s confronted this shaming by using their anger with the double standards in society via their music. They declared themselves feminists and wrote words like "slut," "whore" and "rape" with markers on their bodies as a way of saying, "That's what you think of me; confront your own bigotry." The Riot Grrrl defines herself as sex-positive. In a *Newsweek* article, "Revolution, Girl Style," authors interviewed young women

making statements like, "sex isn't dirty... And it isn't 'bad' unless someone is forcing it on you." This very theme of reclamation is further emphasized in fanzines such as *Hungry Girl*, which declared: "SLUT. Yeah, I'm a slut. My body belongs to me. I sleep with who I want... I'm not your property."

Women are taught to be the gatekeepers of heterosexual exchanges and since most of us weren't raised in a homo-normative environment, we invariably absorbed this ideology. Ingrained in this cultural teaching is the idea that women don't actually desire sex—women don't actually pursue sex themselves. In some ways that conditioning gets played out in queer culture with the femme submitting to the butch advance. The stereotype of the top always being butch is incorrect. Have you ever heard the saying: "femme on the streets, butch in the sheets"?

Comedian Lea DeLaria performs a hilarious comparison of queer women negotiating a stereotypical gay men pickup scene in an urban park at night. She's the butch hiding in the bushes waiting for a femme to "just happen by" and says "Pssst! Hey, sweetheart, wanna open a



Debut

Love and Sex



bookstore?" Of course, the audience loves it because many queer women don't necessarily think acting like men, or stereotypical gay men, is the definition of their sexual revolution.

I spent some time in Tokyo and remember our twice a year weekend lesbo retreats. By the time Sunday rolled around, you could cut the sexual tension with knife and most of the hook-ups happened at the sexy party AFTER the retreat. I suspect that there are more than a few queer men that don't necessarily embrace the anonymous hook-up as the ideal sexual encounter as well. As my cute boxing buddy told me in response to my asking him if he liked the guy bathhouse scene, "No, thanks, I like to at least be told I'm pretty before I jump into it!"

Being open, free and sexy doesn't mean banging someone you first see or doing it in a place that is possibly a little dangerous, although I have to say that friends and I have shared tips about the best, cleanest and most private public washrooms. Some of us need a little time, a little build-up to get in the mood, but it doesn't always need to be candles and dinner.

Getting back to desire, is the degree of desire related only to hormones? If so, the old saying that men hit their sexual peak at 18 and women at 30-40 doesn't ring true, because both genders' hormones rage near the same age: adolescence. The difference however, is that socially, men are encouraged to sow their oats while women receive the "scarlet letter" if they behave as their male counterparts.

Does this idea of sexual peak in women suggest a freedom at 30 to 40 from the social pressure to be virginal and a sexual gatekeeper and allowing women to act with sexual openness and

unabashed action? As I described at the beginning of this article, I had no problem acting on desire as a teenager. Does that mean it's all over for me?

Not in the least! I believe that we continuously grow in our expression and discovery of our complex sexual natures. People are as varied in their pursuits and interests (which change over time) as they are in their private desires.

Reading Sally Tisdale's book *Talk Dirty to Me*, and Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt's *The Ethical Slut*, launched what I would see as the third stage in my sexual evolution. Easton and Liszt taught me that loving more than one person is not only possible, but often a preferred way to build your chosen family. The radical lesbian feminist would tell me that my desire has been programmed by a misogynist culture and that I need retraining to rid myself of harmful-to-women desires. But Tisdale questioned radical, lesbian feminist perspectives of ideal sexual encounters (such as all penetration is rape, all porn is harmful) and as most of my female friends do, I enjoy a little porn and my goodness, I need a little spice in my vanilla!

When I read Tisdale's book I let out an audible sigh of relief. She suggested that we can never separate our outer realities from our expressions in the bedroom; that our sexual desires are inextricably tied to our experiences in the world. She encourages all of us to embrace a freedom to explore our own sexual landscape in whatever way we choose, as long as we do no harm to ourselves or others.

In other words, keep the politics out of the bed but keep the sensitivity and awareness of others in. The best way to summarize is from the book,



Yes Means Yes by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti: ensure your partner is showing enthusiastic, continuous consent. Even if you are playing with power, there should always be a safe word/signal that implies enthusiastic, continuous consent.

Such wonderful variety can be explored in sexual exchanges: kinky, vanilla, top, bottom or switch, power plays, bondage and discipline, romance, anonymity, voyeurism, exhibitionism, toys, masturbation, role-play, group sex, leather, porn... oh, the places you can go! Thankfully, Toronto (unlike that small town I grew up in) offers so many communities in which to explore these predilections.

Why do people have sex? It's recreational, offers comfort, of course procreates the race, creates long-lasting bonds, and even causes us to spiritually grow. Sexually expressive people seem operational in the recreational arena but the term "slut" is prudish, loaded with judgement and shame and is too often a criticism.

Many self-proclaimed sexually uninhibited folks say they have very intimate encounters with lovers not leading to commitment and that it is society that labels them as frivolous. Perhaps, people just don't have a lot of sexual role models to learn from to negotiate rich sexual lives. My sexy 'party' friend (let's call her "Jane") puts it this way: "You can have glorious fun with strangers and friends, just be nice to people." Having a one-nighter, or a lover that is strictly about sex, doesn't mean anyone gets the permission to treat the other with a lack of respect.

So, if you are considering spending more energy on your sex life, consider your wants and needs, be open, be honest, be kind, don't be

selfish, enjoy yourself and most of all, be safe! Remember, not every sexual encounter need result in a committed relationship.

Toronto sexual educator and therapist, Tara McKee, suggests happy sex adventurers can make latex sexy (or an alternative if you are allergic to latex). The snap of a glove or condom can be a signal that things are just about to get a lot hotter and without the consequence of an STI. Thinking you only sleep with women (if you are a woman) automatically makes you low risk, is a myth. Just one group of STI, human papillomaviruses (HPVs), are passed on easily to anyone no matter who you are getting it on with and can cause anal, cervical and throat cancers. McKee encourages people to go to queer positive doctors who understand the complexities of queer sexual behaviour (and don't make hetero-normative assumptions).

Interestingly, discoveries of the similarities between men and women are increasing. The G-spot (Grafenberg Spot) is referring to glands, called Skene's glands, surrounding the urethral tube and are apparently similar to a man's prostate. Stimulation of the glands can cause a woman to emit a liquid that is chemically similar to seminal fluid and stimulating a woman's G-spot or a man's prostate and can cause much pleasure.

It doesn't stop there. Helen Fisher, PhD Biological Anthropologist in Rutgers University and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Internet dating site, Chemistry.com (a division of Match.com) explains that we lust because of the release of testosterone and oestrogen in both men and women. We stay attracted to our lover because we are swimming in adrenaline, dopamine and serotonin (during approximately the first six months) and finally, in the attachment phase, the

hormones oxytocin and vasopressin lull us into staying home and cuddling. As a friend once said, lovers begin as ranging fires but become warm stoves of comfort.

However, just because we might experience a predictable flood of hormones doesn't mean we follow a prescribed path. Sexual desires bring a range of relationship choices and they can range from monogamous to polyamorous, from the "quirkyalone"* (written about in the book, *Quirkyalone: A Manifesto for Uncompromising Romantics*) to being a part of a triad of lovers, having an unfettered bachelor life or matrimonial commitments.

What we do in the bedroom (or bathroom, kitchen, park...) and whether it's "normal" has crossed all of our minds. What really turns you on? Can you answer that question? Did you need to meet someone that introduced you to an action or object or scene that blew your mind?

Everyone wants to know what's normal/average or healthy, but we find it really hard to talk about. Often discovering a book (if you're like me), a friend, a group, or a blog that talks about what you are feeling or are desiring, is a deliverance from self-doubt, shame or worry that we are alone with our desires.

Wouldn't it be great if the world were truly inclusive? A world in which when someone propositions you your choice of responses expands tenfold no matter what gender/age/ability the person is? So instead of: "No thanks, I'm queer..." the exchange could be:

Q. "Hey babe, wanna get down?"

A. "Thanks, I'm flattered but, I'm: a) in a monogamous construct; b) not looking for a dom; c) not really feeling the spark; d) practicing abstinence; e) looking for a bonding experience and you're looking for recreation at the moment; or f) feeling like trying new things—your place or mine?"

**Quirkyalone: n. adj. a person who enjoys being single (or spending time alone) and so prefers to wait for the right person to come along rather than dating indiscriminately; relishing equal doses of solitude and friendship; attracted to freedom and possibility.*

Karen Fulcher a self-identified, quirkyalone horndog with discerning taste, who is on a rather tame path at the moment, but always open to new experiences.

PHOTOGRAPHY by Kevin Slack

[Editor's Note: the title of this article is in no way a reflection on the people pictured... unless of course, you mean it as a compliment.]

Ready for More?

1. Take one of the fabulously sexy classes or workshops at sex education and toy stores:
a) Good for Her (women and trans-only hours on Sundays) at 175 Harbord Street www.goodforher.com, b) Come as You Are at 701 Queen Street West www.comeasyouare.com and c) Red Tent Sisters at 810 Danforth Ave www.redtentsisters.com.
2. Visit a Pussy Palace event: pussypalacetoronto.com; guys you can hit up the bathhouses any time for an adventure.
3. Read Tristan Taormino's *Opening Up* about creating and sustaining open relationships.
4. Visit the Sherbourne Health Centre (333 Sherbourne Street; www.sherbourne.on.ca) or the Hassle Free Clinic (66 Gerrard Street East, 2nd Floor; www.hasslefreeclinic.org) for queer positive healthcare.
5. Check out Nerve.com for kink-friendly dating and Dan Savage's column.
6. For your girl who likes to relax before fun, visit Body Blitz Spa, women-only spa in Toronto (471 Adelaide Street West; www.bodyblitzspa.com); guys you have quite a few to try—Google "gay bath houses Toronto."
7. Watch for Toronto's Strip Spelling Bees at stripspellingbee.blogspot.com for their next event.
8. Attend, read, write, listen or get inspired at Oral: Adventures in Erotica reading series (www.oralerotica.webs.com).
9. Learn some tips or just be a happy voyeur at Toronto's Burlesque Festival this July 21 to 25 (www.torontoburlesquefestival.com).
10. Check out the back of Northbound Leather (586 Yonge Street; www.northbound.com) for some sexy kinkster toys.

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A person with light skin and short hair, wearing a pale yellow t-shirt, holds a large, textured pink heart in front of their chest. The heart is the central focus, with white text written on it. The background is a solid, vibrant pink. The person's face is partially visible at the top, showing their nose and mouth.

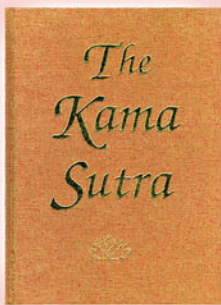
A Short History of Love

by Scott Dagostino

It's an odd bit of grammar in that, even as we move into a more enlightened 21st century, old notions and taboos linger—even in the feature theme of this big-city, glossy gay and lesbian magazine you're holding. The “Love & Sex” issue, like most of our culture, keeps love and sex as separate, their hands barely touching.

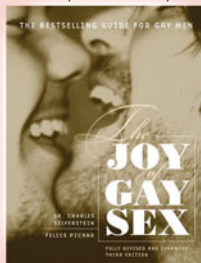
Maybe this is just my jealousy that the mighty Karen Fulcher gets to do the meaty, throbbing "sex" portion of the issue while my head must float with thoughts of fluffy, gooey "love," but that right there seems like the problem. We all, especially men, seem very good at compartmentalizing love and sex, even sometimes treating them as opposites, and love comes in second place, always seeming to arrive "someday" while our sex drives demand it harder, better, faster, stronger. Love's labours are lost, and in the divorce, sex got great coffee table books like the *Kama Sutra* and *The Joy of Gay Sex*, while love got the horrors of Valentine's Day and a lecture from Oprah.

But here's the secret: in the long buildup to the birth of the gay rights movement, the gap between sex and love actually helped foster both, and the post-Stonewall explosion of the sexual liberation movement was really all about romance. So even though the summer sun is keeping flesh exposed and the drumbeats of



Pride are luring our hips to sway, we'll cue up some Celine Dion and talk about love, looking back on centuries of gay and lesbian romance.

First, however, there's its greatest roadblock.



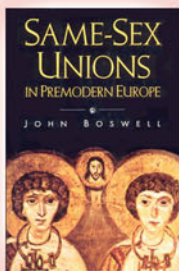
Queer people have long endured the religious right's obsession with denying us the basic rights we steadily keep winning anyway. We've had to fight for our love and, until 2003, most gay and lesbian people grew up without any expectation of joining

the wider culture's view of marriage as a bedrock of society. If "love and sex" are frequently placed at odds with each other, "love and marriage" are not. It's expected—demanded, some say—that one follows the other, but now that's becoming the case even if you're queer.

But despite the right's insistence that marriage is a sacred institution that will bring down society if tampered with, yada yada yada, the truth is that the supposedly eternal institution of marriage always had a couple of queer twists that allowed gay romance to flourish.

In 1994, Yale professor John Boswell published





his groundbreaking book, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*. While it was long understood that homosexuality had flourished in ancient Greece, feudal Japan and Mughal-era India, the dominance of a homophobic Judeo-Christianity in the West was assumed to leave no room for same-sex love.

Instead, Boswell showed that the Catholic and Orthodox churches of Europe, from between roughly 500 AD to 1500 AD, conducted a ceremony for the lifelong union of same-sex couples. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, especially, the wording in the ceremonies is almost exactly that of heterosexual weddings. Boswell's work was controversial because he surmised that these ceremonies were uniting gay couples, despite no solid evidence that the same-gender pairings involved were actually in sexual relationships.

In the September 2007 issue of the *Journal of Modern History*, Shippensburg University professor Allan Tulchin added to the debate with evidence of legal contracts in late medieval France that referred to the term "affrèment" (or

"brotherment"). It was a way of allowing siblings to jointly inherit the family home and pool all their goods together. In the ceremony, the "affrères" would pledge to live together before a notary and witnesses.

"Western family structures have been much more varied than many people today seem to realize," Tulchin wrote, noting that these contracts were also used by single, unrelated men and insists that this is "considerable evidence that the affrères were using affrèments to formalize same-sex loving relationships." As with Boswell's theories, Tulchin admitted, "It is impossible to prove either way and probably also somewhat irrelevant to understanding their way of thinking." Whatever may or may not have been going on between these men sexually, he concludes, "They loved each other, and the community accepted that."

If the split between love and sex creates a difficulty for historians, William Shakespeare is one of their greatest puzzles. While Shakespeare was married with three children, he also wrote over a hundred love sonnets proclaiming his intense romantic feelings for a particular young man. Academics will continue to argue whether Shakespeare was actually in love with his young friend or just expressing an intense affection that





we now read as sexual, but either way, it's clear that there was a lot more acceptance for romance between men when it was automatically assumed no hands were going below the waist.

Not that that was a safe assumption when we see how the west was won. There's a reason the cowboy has become a standard gay archetype and it's not because of the Village People. By the mid-19th century, many men were heading west in search of fortune and those cold, lonely nights became a cliché. In their exhaustive book *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman document not only how "the West provided extensive opportunities for male-male intimacy," but also served as an arena for "passing," as lesbians would dress as men and transgender women would marry male partners. Heterosexuality was often just an illusion.

By the Victorian era, sex was firmly sealed behind closed doors, but "romantic friendships" were common. It was unremarkable for male friends to kiss or hug or even sleep together, in the same way that women had, and this both cemented great bonds between heterosexual friends and provided cover for secret homosexual relationships. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman became vocal advocates of the former and perhaps the latter as British all-boys schools created traditions of homoeroticism.

While all this "manly love" carried on into the 20th century, however, the increasing study of sexual practices by doctors and scientists began to unravel everything. Watchdogs for "sexual perversion"

grew louder as even Whitman grew quieter. In the most terrible example, of course, the great Oscar Wilde was sent to prison for "acts of gross indecency with other male persons."



The gap between sex and love that had sheltered secret affairs was closing and Sigmund Freud was largely responsible. The man who ushered in the psychoanalytic era wrote openly about the tension between sexuality and love, maintaining that sexual passion was a product of an aggressive id while love had to be cultivated by a compassionate superego. Our entire adult lives, he argued, are spent trying to reconcile the two.

Unless you're Gore Vidal, American essayist and political biographer. By publishing his gay-themed novel *The City and the Pillar* in 1948, at the age of 23, he blew the doors off America's refusal to discuss homosexuality, backed by the groundbreaking research later that year by sociologist Alfred Kinsey. Both men maintained that, as Vidal put it, "there are no homosexual



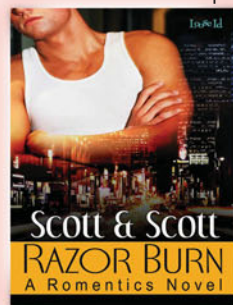
people, only homosexual acts" but Vidal disagreed with Freud's theory of reconciliation in that he was entirely comfortable keeping his love life and his sex life separate. Vidal had a string of affairs with both men and women but lived for over 50 years with partner Howard Austen, who he met in a bathhouse. When asked for his secret to such a long marriage, Vidal would say, "Simple. Like so many old marriages, no sex."

"The nature and the degree of one's sexual desire...will change over time," admits Richard A. Isay, in his book *Commitment and Healing: Gay Men and the Need for Romantic Love*, but the psychiatrist echoes Freud when he insists, "Romantic love is based on sexual passion [and] is of primary importance early in all relationships of romantic love." Most gay men, Isay argues, grow up with a poor self-image from our homophobic society, and a healthy committed relationship that combines sex and love is the best antidote.

Gay dating guru Mike Alvear, author of *Men Are Pigs, But We Love Bacon*, wouldn't disagree, but jokes, "The Dewey Decimal system can't compartmentalize love and sex the way men can...Dating would be so much simpler if our sexual desire obeyed our emotional attachments." It's possible though that now, in an era of same-sex marriage, we've now combined love and sex TOO well, demanding that one person be our greatest friend, lover, housemate and confidant.

Ever the provocateur, Gore Vidal flipped this notion on his head back in the early 70s, arguing that rather than insist on one person fulfilling all your romantic and sexual needs, spread the love around. "If you don't love someone sexually, you cannot love them at all," he proclaimed, "That doesn't mean you have to respond to everybody. To put it differently, if you always inhibit your sexual response, you will have a terrible time dealing with others in other respects."

Isay, of course, disagrees, explaining in his book that such resistance to monogamy comes from queer fears that "they will be confined by a social acceptance that will deprive them of the freedom to determine the structure of their relationships for themselves." By hopefully arriving at a point at which people can talk openly of their needs for sex AND romance, we can form the kinds of relationships that work best for everyone. As it stands now, we talk about love and sex a lot but don't practice it enough, and there's no shortage of judgment to go around: single people are made to feel dysfunctional, married people are made to feel dependent and the promiscuous are made to feel deprived.



Great Gay and Lesbian Couples

Want romance?

These stories are legends

Gilgamesh and Enkidu

In the ancient epic poem, the Sumerian king goes to hell and back for the man he loves.

Achilles and Patroclus

The hero of Troy returned to the battlefield to avenge his lover's death.

Aimee and Jaguar

First a book, then film, about two women in WWII Germany who brave the odds.



Beautiful Thing

David and Jonathan

Were the Bible pair actually gay? So what, the line "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" still inspires.

Maurice and Alec

The hero of EM Forster's novel, Maurice insists on more than a romantic friendship.

Michael "Mouse" and Doctor Fielding

In Armistead Maupin's wondrous *Tales of the City*, these two fight and make up, over and over, gloriously.

Gabriel and Mark

Kept from having sex, the NYC boys in the movie *Trick* end up falling in love instead.

Willow and Tara

Lesbian witches fighting evil alongside TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* were never so adorable.

Jamie and Ste

A movie about two working-class British teenagers in love turns out to be a *Beautiful Thing*.

"I am convinced that most bitter gay men are deep sentimentalists and rarely let that come out," author Scott Whittier told the *New York Times* upon the release of the latest gay romance novel from him and partner Scott Pomfret. With titles like *Razor Burn* and *Hot Sauce* from their awkwardly titled *Romantics* line, Whittier and Pomfret have waved the flag for Isay's vision of sexy fidelity.

But if these Harlequin novels always end in monogamous matrimony, joked playwright Paul Rudnick, "Then it's not called gay romance, it's called gay fantasy. Or sci-fi."

Rudnick is no stranger to romance, having written the films *Jeffrey* and *In & Out*, but argued that gay romance isn't cute and cuddly to straight people but surprisingly radical. "It's still always an interesting moment when you ask the audience to accept a real Hollywood smooch, when you ask them to imagine: What if Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler were two guys or two women? Would that be as equally romantic?"

A straight audience, he noted, "will accept gay sexuality, but gay romance can sometimes be a line in the sand...there is a certain trepidation about presenting gay lives in real fullness."

The idea that fluffy, gooeey romantic visions could actually be radical seems surprising, but we live in a society that still wants invisibility from queer people, and Plato said as much way back in ancient Greece. Writing in "The Symposium" about the heroic couple Aristogeiton and Harmodius, who fought against tyranny in Athens, Plato said that "the interests of rulers require that their subjects should be poor in spirit and that there should be no strong bond of friendship or society among them, which love, above all inspires."

So next time you're hooking up with someone on Grindr, take a risk and treat them to a little romance. Whether you end up together for 50 minutes or 50 years, love can move mountains. I think Celine Dion said so.

Scott Dagostino is a freelance writer in Toronto. He speaks of many things, fools and kings, but knows the greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return.

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by Jeff Harrison

Grilling on the 'Que

Nothing says summer like throwing on your shorts, slipping into your sandals and firing up the barbeque. When I was a kid, and our family went camping, Dad was the master fire builder. We'd help him gather the wood and then, once it was starting to burn, my sister and I would go looking for the perfect roasting stick. It had to be long enough so we could remain a safe distance away from the flames, yet green enough that it wouldn't burn up. This all important stick was used to spear our wieners for cooking and later hold our marshmallows for toasting. Dad would always open up a can of brown beans and then put them in the fire—still in the can—so they could bake. I remember one time my sister's wiener fell off her stick and into the fire. When Dad quickly scooped it up and brushed off the ash, my sister said through tears, "But it's all dirty!" "No it's not," Dad replied, "the char and ash gives it more flavour." And he was right. Shelley made a habit of dropping her hot dogs into the fire on purpose after that.

I know I'm not the only one with fond childhood memories of cooking over open flame and watching dad man the BBQ. That distinct smell of grilled food is one of the quintessential scents of summer. So in keeping with the tradition of the season, I hung out with club promoter turned chef, Chris Schroer, while he whipped up a feast of epic proportions, and taught me about grilling and roasting on gas and charcoal, how to smoke your meat, and a myriad of tricks of the trade along the way.

"Barbequing is supposed to be casual," Schroer states. "It's fun! And I think it takes us back to our primordial—Man! Fire! Meat!—existence." It's also a great excuse to get moms out of the kitchen and kids playing outside, as suddenly the family meal is in the yard around the picnic table.

Tools of the trade include lots of tongs and a good grill brush to keep your surface nice and

clean. "It's really handy to have some spray: an oil mister and a water mister," recommends Schroer. "Just put them in a spray bottle, so they are handy to spray down the grill. The oil is to keep things from sticking and the water is used to control your flame. You can really use any oil you like; I use sunflower oil."

According to Schroer, you want an oil with a high burn temperature so it'll withstand the heat and do its job of keeping your food from sticking. Olive oil has a low burn temperature, so it's not a great choice. Grape seed oil, on the other hand, has a very high smoke threshold, so is ideal.

GRILLING & SEARING

You've really got two choices when it comes to cooking over flame: gas and charcoal. While most people use propane barbeques these days, the charcoal hibachi perseveres for its portability and the distinct flavour it gives meat. "I love gas, it's so convenient," says Schroer. "I love it because you can instantly adjust the temperature; you can keep it running low until you need it. The big



thing with charcoal though, is the flavour. You'll always get that beautiful smoky flavour if you grill with it."

Some people are turned off by how high maintenance charcoal may seem; however, don't be daunted, as hibachis remain the most economical way to get yourself grilling. To get started, just pile your briquettes into a pyramid and don't be afraid to use lighter fluid—not too much, mind—to get your flames going. It should be good and burned off by the time the barbeque is hot enough. Once your charcoal has settled into a somewhat uniform flat formation, it's a good indication that you're good to go.

"There are two uses for a barbeque: high heat grilling and low heat slow roasting and smoking," Schroer says. "Anytime we're doing any of the high heat grilling, like steaks, chicken and pork, that's when we want to oil up the grill, we want a nice slick surface, really high heat, and then were just going to throw it down. What we're looking for is caramelization of the meat and those distinctive black grill marks. We're looking to build flavour by creating that quick burn. This builds flavour in a number of ways: the char which creates that smoky flavour [which will taste burnt if you overdo it]; and there are sugars in the meat which will caramelize at that high temp, so you're increasing the sweetness of the meat."

"When you're first getting into grilling," he continues, "I think one of the most critical things to work on is searing—that's what barbequing is really all about. The most common mistake when doing this is people put things on for too long at too low a heat. With meat, especially beef, you really—even if you want your meat medium-well—you really still need that high heat. Don't worry about burning it. You want to get as much flavour and colour developed as you can and that doesn't really take a lot of time when you're cooking at 425 degrees."

Barbequing is not just for meat lovers either. Vegetarians can also grill tofu, polenta and cheese. The firmer these choices are, the better, as it'll hold its shape in the heat. Alumi and Asiago cheeses are great flavourful choices.

Typically, you want to sear 2-3 minutes on a side. As the meat cooks up, it gets firmer. There's a chef's secret for knowing exactly when your meat is cooked to perfection: Curl your fingers and press into the meat of your palm. The feel of resistance of each finger will be the same when you press into the meat you're cooking. Index finger = rare; middle finger = medium; and ring finger = well done.

Careful you don't flip your meat too constantly—playing with your food on the grill

will keep it from cooking through and just burn it on the outside. Also, you'll ruin your chances of getting those beautiful grill marks you see in the commercials. Turning your meat ninety degrees on each flip will give you that perfect cross-hatching you see in the high-end steak houses.

Remember: you can always put your food back on the grill, or even in the oven, if you cut into it and find it undercooked. There is nothing you can do to save overcooked meat.



ROASTING

Slow cooking over lower heat on the barbeque roasts the meat. "Something like a dry rub chicken will be looking to slowly roast for about an hour-and-a-half," Schroer says. "Not all parts of the same animal can be treated the same way. The legs and thighs of a chicken are tougher than the breast, especially in free range birds, but they have much more flavour. The more meat works—or gets exercise—the more it develops flavour. However, at the same time, it will have more connective tissue and is tougher, so that's why you want to cook the meat slowly so that all the fat on the bird can render for a fuller flavour and the skin can get really crispy. A lot of people are not used to this style of cooking on the barbeque and it's really good for that."

JERK

Another technique for slow cooking and fast grilling is doing jerked meats. "You can do jerked in two ways: a wet BBQ sauce, or a dry rub. Why do we have these two different techniques?" Schroer asks, ready for my question. "Because all meats are different. A breast cooks a lot faster than a leg. If I put my BBQ sauce that has sugar, cooked down tomatoes and such, on the leg that I want to cook for a good period of time really slowly, the sauce is going to burn before the meat is actually cooked through. Whereas the breasts that I'm cooking skinless with the wet sauce, I'm just going to cook that as quickly as possible. I'm going to get some nice caramelization, and it's

only going to take a matter of minutes to be done."

SMOKING

Another delicious cooking option for your 'que is smoking. "I think it's a technique that people can get excited about. You can do it right on your barbeque in the backyard," explains Schroer. "Smoking on the barbeque is different from a cold smoke, which you would do in a smoke-house. This is a hot smoke and actually cooks the meat, infusing it with that smoky flavour."

Soak mesquite chips, which you can find at your local hardware store, in plain tap water for 2-4 hours. Throw them in an aluminum pie plate, place it beneath the bottom grill and close your lid. You might need to ramp the heat up in the very beginning to get your chips smoking, but after that you want the heat as low as it can go without putting the flame out. You'll know when it's ready because, you'll actually see smoke drifting off the chips. This is one of the few times you actually want a smoky fire, just make sure your guests are upwind from it. Fish is ideal for this.

LOOKING LIKE A PRO

"One of the first things they teach you in chef's school is the concept of *mis en place*, which is having everything you need to cook with, prepared ahead of time and ready to go," says Schroer. Have everything peeled, chopped and measured out into little bowls, so it's ready to use at a moment's notice while you're cooking. This way you don't have to take time out—time your food could be over cooking—to find or prepare that missing ingredient. "Timing can be crucial and the way you achieve perfect timing is by planning," instructs Schroer. Prep before company arrives will save you time, allow you to stay focused while doing the actual cooking and be social all at once. You'll look like a pro!



BBQ Hot Smoked Lake Trout

- 1 large Lake Trout fillet, deboned and skin on
- 250 ml (1 cup) Maple Syrup
- 75 ml (1 / 3 cup) Birch Syrup (from Forbes Wild Foods, St Lawrence Market)
- 10 ml (2 tsp) Coarse Sea Salt

500 ml (2 cups) Wood chips

Place the trout, skin down in a container. Add maple syrup, birch syrup and salt, cover and gently shake to mix and coat the fish. Place in the fridge for 24 hours, re-shaking a few times to recoat.

Approximately 2.5 hours before you want to serve, light your BBQ and heat thoroughly. Split the woodchips and place on two old aluminum pie plates. Place the first plate on one side of the BBQ below the grill, over medium heat and close the lid. Once you see signs of smoke, place the trout on the top rack, opposite the woodchips. Turn the gas on the fish side off, and turn the side with the chips down to med-low, and close the BBQ.

About a third of the way through the cooking you will want to add that other plate of woodchips. The fish should be finished after about 1.5 – 2 hours, or once all the woodchips have stopped smoking and the fish has a nice firm texture and a rich caramel colour.

Smoked Tofu Satays

- 1 package Soyganic Smoked Tofu (found at many organic health food stores)
- 30 mushrooms such as cremini and shitakes
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) whole coriander seeds
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cardamom
- 3 shallots, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 piece of ginger, about 1 inch long, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 3 Thai chillies, seeds removed
- 2 limes, juiced
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) honey
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) grape seed oil, plus more for the grill
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) miso paste

4 – 6 Long bamboo or metal BBQ skewers. If using bamboo, soak them in water for an hour before assembling.

Cut tofu into 2 cm by 1 cm cubes. Clean the mushrooms and remove the stems.

In a food processor, chop the coriander seed until fine. Add remaining ingredients and process until a consistent paste.

Assemble the satays by running your skewer through a mushroom, then alternating with tofu until skewer is filled. Leave room on either end for handling. Brush with the marinade paste and cover until ready to grill.

Preheat your BBQ until quite hot—at least 230°C / 450°F. Brush the grill with oil and place on satays. They will cook fairly fast so be sure to have a good set of tongs handy and rotate every minute or so. Once the mushrooms have taken on some char colour and softened, serve immediately with your favourite peanut sauce.

Jerk Chicken 2 Ways

1 whole chicken, separated into boneless skinless breasts, and skin on thighs and drumsticks. Depending on your comfort level you can separate the legs and breasts from a chicken yourself, ask your butcher to, or simply buy them separately.

For Dry Rub:

30 ml (2 tbsp) ground allspice

15 ml (1 tbsp) ground thyme

5 ml (1 tsp) ground sage

5 ml (1 tsp) cayenne pepper

4 ml (3/5 tsp) ground nutmeg

5 ml (1 tsp) ground cinnamon

5 ml (1 tsp) ginger powder

2 cloves garlic, minced

15 ml (1 Tbsp) brown sugar

5 ml (1 tsp) sea salt

2 Scotch Bonnet Peppers*, seeds removed and minced

*available at Latin American grocery stores, or find them in season (September) from Ontario farmer's markets

For Wet Jerk Sauce:

Half of dry rub recipe

75 ml (1/4 cup) soy sauce

30 ml (2 tbsp) white vinegar

15 ml (1tbsp) dark rum

1 onion

1 lime, juiced

Mix all the ingredients for the dry rub. Take your thighs and drumsticks and mix these with half the spice rub.

Take the other half of your spice rub and blend in a food processor with the remaining ingredients until smooth. Mix with breasts.

If you are using a charcoal BBQ, once the coals are burning, pile them up on one side of the BBQ. This will give you an area to cook the thighs and drumstick slowly at a slightly lower temperature. If you are using a gas BBQ you simply need to turn the temperature down part way through cooking.

Start by cooking the drumsticks and thighs on the side opposite the coals. If you are using gas start at a high enough heat to get a good sear (a nice brown but not necessarily charred colour) on the drumstick and thighs, and then reduce the heat by half. Leave for about 25 – 30 minutes.

Once the drumsticks and thighs are almost done, cook the breasts directly over the coals. In the case of gas, move the leg pieces to the top rack and turn the burner up to give the breast a hot grill to cook on. The breasts should only take about 4 – 6 minutes a side.



Chris Schroer: Originally we know him as a club promoter extraordinaire, starting his first booze can at 412 Richmond, then moving on to become the marketing manager for Government, organizing the very successful Bitch Slap! parties, and 3 years as programming coordinator for Pride. After a 3-year program at George Brown, where he headed up the school's Chef Club, he finished off by studying in Italy. He's now rocking the world with his cooking by doing local organic catering through Eat Your Greens, and is the new brunch Chef at the queer Junction hangout, Yasi's Place.

PHOTOGRAPHY by Robert Foster

10 Great Herbs to Grill With

Sage – a light peppery flavour

Summer Savoury – melange of dill and thyme

Chillies – hot n' spicy

Thyme – hearty and pungent

Garlic – the quintessential cooking herb

Cilantro / Coriander – fresh and citrusy

Lemon Balm – tastes just like lemon

Oregano – intriguing and complex

Rosemary – aromatic and robust

Mint – cool and refreshing



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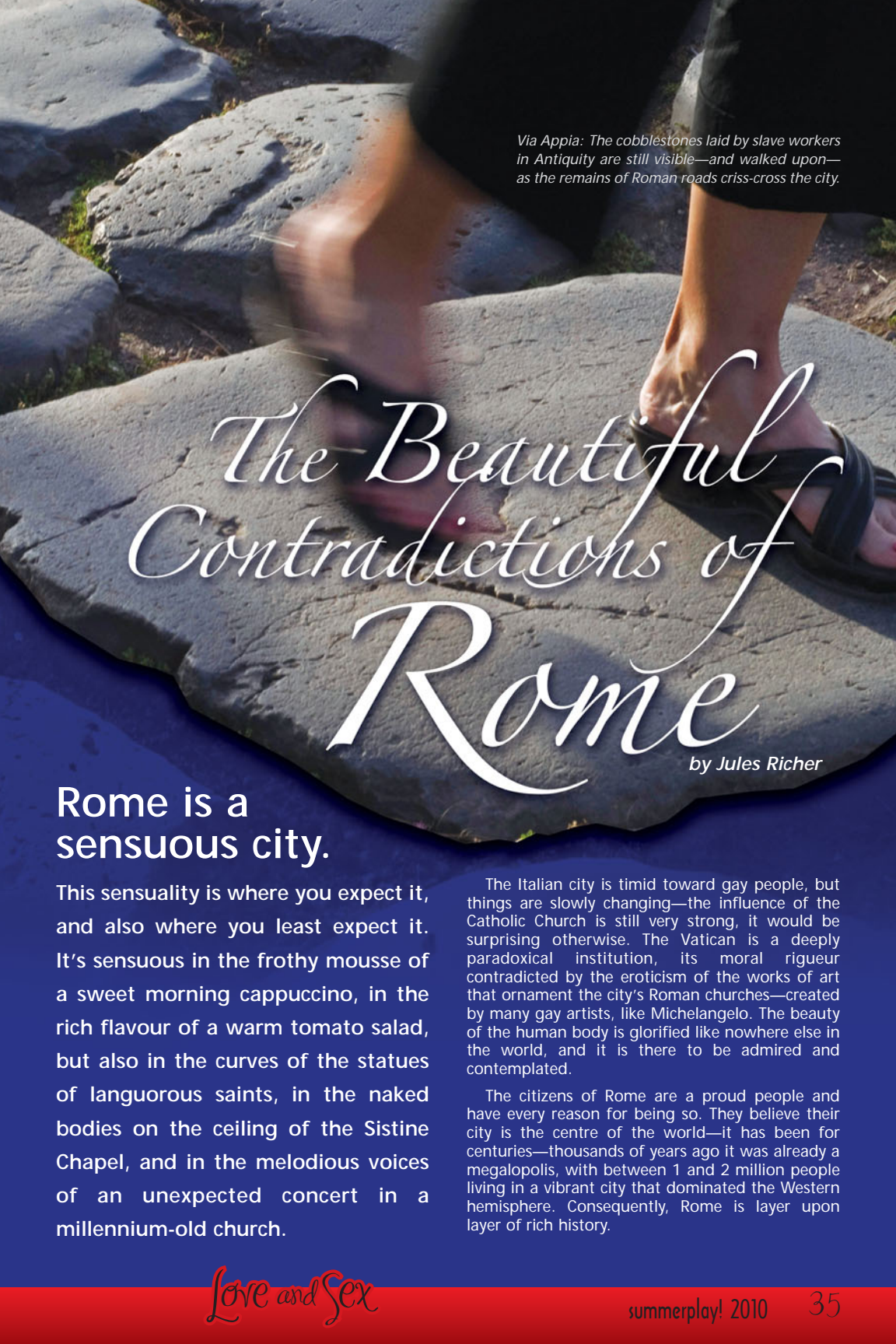
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A photograph showing a person's feet walking on large, flat, grey stone cobbles. The person is wearing black sandals. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the same stone surface and some greenery.

Via Appia: The cobblestones laid by slave workers in Antiquity are still visible—and walked upon—as the remains of Roman roads criss-cross the city.

The Beautiful Contradictions of Rome

by Jules Richer

Rome is a sensuous city.

This sensuality is where you expect it, and also where you least expect it. It's sensuous in the frothy mousse of a sweet morning cappuccino, in the rich flavour of a warm tomato salad, but also in the curves of the statues of languorous saints, in the naked bodies on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and in the melodious voices of an unexpected concert in a millennium-old church.

The Italian city is timid toward gay people, but things are slowly changing—the influence of the Catholic Church is still very strong, it would be surprising otherwise. The Vatican is a deeply paradoxical institution, its moral rigueur contradicted by the eroticism of the works of art that ornament the city's Roman churches—created by many gay artists, like Michelangelo. The beauty of the human body is glorified like nowhere else in the world, and it is there to be admired and contemplated.

The citizens of Rome are a proud people and have every reason for being so. They believe their city is the centre of the world—it has been for centuries—thousands of years ago it was already a megalopolis, with between 1 and 2 million people living in a vibrant city that dominated the Western hemisphere. Consequently, Rome is layer upon layer of rich history.

Romans say you'd need more than a lifetime to fully discover their city, and that's its charm. With so much to see it's impossible to get bored. If I could risk the comparison: there's definitely more to see here than in Paris.

Everywhere you look there's a swirling mix of styles from every conceivable era. While walking in the streets, you can, at any given time, find a 2,000-year-old Roman temple supported with big white columns, and right around the corner there could be a church, not listed in the guide books, where you can admire frescoes from the Middle Ages. Then it's off to a trattoria to savour the best spaghetti carbonara you've ever tasted. Such a place requires that you give yourself over to the pleasure of wandering the streets for a while and then stopping at a café to recharge with a good espresso.

In its own way, Rome is an inviting city. But first, you need to love it, respect it, and then you will be paid back tenfold. After all, Romans are forced to put up with the hordes of poorly-mannered tourists who come in droves and act like they own the place. A smile, some politeness, a few words in Italian (hello: "buon giorno"; please: "per favore"; thank you: "grazie"; it's easy to pick up) will quickly be repaid in kind. Once the ice has been broken, you'll be surprised by their kindness. And you don't have to be dressed like a model to make a good impression; just don't show up looking like you're going jogging. But if you want to dress like a model, go ahead—the impression you make will be even better!

If you're staying in the city a few days and you get into a routine, the locals will quickly accept you. The owner of the little bar where you go to get your morning cappuccino will recognize you and will offer a kind greeting. If you can, stand at the counter because it's cheaper and you get to interact with the locals. The headwaiter at the fantastic little restaurant you found and where you keep coming back—because of that great spaghetti carbonara—now gives you his best table and treats you like a prince.

Of course, Rome is expensive, but it's not all that bad if you know where to find good deals. Carriers like Air Transat and Air Canada offer transportation and accommodation packages for very reasonable prices. Restaurants can be pricey, but it depends on the area. In the Trastevere neighbourhood (a trendy area, popular with both the local people and the tourists), for example, you can easily find excellent full-course meals for around \$20. A strong Canadian dollar will also help to foot the bill.

But what to see, where to start? There are the mandatory destinations: the Vatican, for its superb works of art; the Coliseum, to catch a glimpse of Imperial Rome; the ruins in the historic centre of the city, to get a poignant view of well preserved Roman temples; the Pantheon, where Antiquity and Christianity mingle in a unique mix; the Castel Sant'Angelo, with its great statues of angels; the catacombs, where you can see an eerie place where the passage of time has left almost no imprint; and don't miss the Trevi fountain, for its romance—you can't go to Rome without visiting this place. The museums are a must-see, in particular, the vast and well presented collection of the Musei Capitolini.

Then there are the churches. In my view, they are one of the Italian capital's most interesting aspects. They're everywhere, on every street corner, from every era and in all sizes. There are more than 900 in the Eternal City. They're overflowing with history, relics, unique treasures, masterpieces, anecdotes, icons and commemorative plaques. And, of course, sensuous works of art.

Faced with a Catholic Church that's increasingly disconnected with reality, the Italians have risen to the occasion. They've kept their faith, but maintain the illusion they're still following the Vatican's moral precepts. Italians have deep religious beliefs, like only Latin people know how to have. That spiritual quest is not limited to older persons. In many churches, you can see young Italian men and women sharply dressed, praying intensely.

Ruins: The Roman ruins downtown cover an enormous area.





Santa Maria: The Santa-Maria di Trastevere basilica is decorated with 13th century mosaics. Nearly every night, a wonderful choir performs.

The result is a religious fervour that can be felt in places of worship. These places can be quite moving, as in the case of the Church of Santa Maria di Trastevere. Covered in ornate 13th century mosaics and incorporating elements from the Roman era, it plays host almost every night of the week to concerts of religious music. The quality of the choirs is magnificent and the atmosphere is heavenly. It is impossible not to sit down and take a moment to open your senses and listen to that superb music while looking at the colourful mosaics. What you believe in is unimportant; it's just the immediate moment that counts in a place outside time. When you leave the church, you will feel strangely appeased.

Another church, the Basilica of Saint Clement, offers an amazing journey into history and serves as a reminder that Rome really wasn't built in a day. Excavations at the site found two floors below the church. The lowest level dates back to Roman times and the second one to the High Middle Ages. In addition to the discovery of frescoes on the Roman level, searchers discovered an altar to the god Mithras (who had a large following around the time of Christ) and even a spring of

groundwater that is still active. The tours down into the lower levels feel like you're descending into the cold and humid belly of Rome.

You need to open your mind and just go with the flow of people and the ambiance of the place. In the church Santa Maria del Pozzo, there is a miraculous well that dispenses water that will supposedly heal everything. Go ahead, drink the

The Giant: The Capitolini museums house parts of what makes up an enormous statue of Emperor Constantin I.



Angel: Artwork by students of Bernini can be seen on the Sant'Angelo Bridge that leads towards the castle of the same name.



Bicycles and religion: Walking through Rome you will discover examples of where the "eternal" runs into modern day life.

water, it's part of the experience. A priest will give it to you in a side chapel, after you line up with a lot of elderly people. It can do no harm, and certainly better for your health than a Diet Coke.

Visiting Rome is really about the pleasure of discovery. It's a sophisticated city with an incredibly tormented past that has not been forgotten. With a little bit of respect and love, it will give back memories that will last a lifetime.

Jules Richer studied journalism at Université du Québec à Montréal and soon after started his reporter's career at La Presse newspaper, followed by positions at the Canadian Press news agency, News Editor at Quebec's Le Devoir and Managing Editor at Radio-Canada's Téljournal. Travel writing is quickly becoming his new love.

PHOTOGRAPHY by Isabelle Laflamme - After completing a successful bachelor's degree in Art Direction at Université du Québec à Montréal, Isabelle Laflamme has worked with some of the top advertising agencies in Quebec for both local and multinational companies. Over the years, she has developed a growing interest for photography, especially experimenting with forms and colours while walking the streets of her beloved hometown of Montréal. After wonderful trips to Italy and California, travel photography has become her new passion.

Useful tips

When to go: Spring or fall, as summer is too hot.

How to get around: All those archaeological remains have limited the subway network to just two lines. The busses work well but watch out for pickpockets on routes popular with tourists.

Booking a place to stay: Packages from Air Canada or Air Transat can take care of most of your travel needs.

Booking a place yourself: My favourite Web site for hotel rooms in Italy is www.venere.com. If you're interested in cheap and original stays, a stay in monastery could tempt you, so have a look on www.monasterystays.com

Top 10 Romantic Vacations

(alphabetically)

1. **Buenos Aires, Argentina** (a mix between the elegance of Europe's capitals and the spirit of South America)
2. **Sydney, Australia** (the centre of gay life in Australia)
3. **Curacao** (gay welcoming island, Dutch culture)
4. **Prague, Czech Republic** (best time to visit is from early April to middle of November)
5. **Berlin, Germany** (it even has a gay museum)
6. **Santorini, Greece** (great sunsets)
7. **Kauai, Hawaii** (paradise on earth)
8. **Cape Town, South Africa** (astounding scenery)
9. **Sitges, Spain** (more romantic, less party than Ibiza)
10. **Phuket, Thailand** (top world snorkelling and scuba diving)

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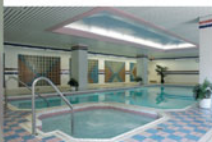
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OUR OPINION... and we have one!

This issues topic:

One Night Stands *vs.* Long-term Relationships

by Maggie Cassella and Steven Bereznai



Steven Bereznai: So the last one-night stand I had was with a high-functioning alcoholic who I was afraid to let drive drunk home to Brampton from downtown Toronto. The things I do for the good of the people. He was a sweet guy, and certainly the most affectionate one-nighter in a while, but perhaps that was just the Keith's talking (brand names have been changed to protect the not-so innocent). Predictably, like any beer that's gone flat, the experience left me with a sour taste in my mouth. I've since been much more into dates that involve more sobriety, and less barf bucket placed at the side of the bed.

Maggie Cassella: I'm sorry what's a one night stand again? That's where you meet one night then stay together for at least a dozen years right?

SB: Oh dear. Is this how parents feel when they have to explain the birds and the bees, to their kids? I tried finding a suitable sex-ed video from the 40s to send you, but out of laziness have turned to Wikipedia. Here's their definition: "Originally, a one-night stand referred to a single night theatre performance, usually by a guest group on tour. Today, however, the term is more commonly understood as a single sexual

encounter between individuals, where neither individual has any immediate intention or expectation of establishing a long-term sexual or romantic relationship." Perhaps they need a lesbian rewrite.

MC: Oh no, I get it. I once did a show for Save the Whales that was just one night. But I don't get where the beer comes in. That was a vegan, alcohol free event, so there wasn't any... Wait a minute. Did you say sex? One night of sex? Oh. Okay. Yes, I've heard about that from my gay male friends and the occasional dyke who's trying REEEEEALLY hard to break the female (and note I did not say lesbian) stereotype of wanting a meaningful relationship instead of just getting boinked, which we all know most of us can handle perfectly well on our own if we have to. I'm just sayin'...

SB: So what's the dyke secret to turning a one-nighter into forever after (ish)?

MC: Again, not a dyke thing a WOMAN thing. And besides it's a myth. You just fell for me perpetrating it. Ha! The fact is, you and I both know one night standing is a thing of individual taste—you either have the stomach, or the balls, or the vajayjay for it, or you don't. PLUS the mood. You have to be in the mood too, right? So for some, it's

10 things you should have in your nightstand:

MC: A lock. If you have a smart dog, it's the first thing you need to have, 'cuz my guy can open the drawer with his nose and let's just say it's a bit much when your dog greets you at the door with Senor Pee-Pee in his mouth—especially when you're bringing home houseguests from the airport...not that that's ever happened to me.

SB: Condoms and lube are basic.

MC: Whatever makes you and your honey happy.

SB: Cockring(s) if that's your fancy.

MC: Matches.

SB: Which are great for incense or scented burning oil to set the mood. Massage oil (and to go with it, oil friendly condoms made from polyurethane for the boyz—yes, I like to be prepared). A bit of rope can be fun (surgical scissors are a good idea if this is your thing in case you can't undo the knots—that can definitely spoil the mood). On the nightstand, if not candles, then some sort of soft lighting. Lava lamps can be fun, but PLEASE invest in an expensive one so it doesn't look like it came from Walmart, and avoid colours that don't happen in nature. An iPod with sensual tunes hooked up to suave docking station with speakers.

MC: Pen and paper.

SB: I'm embarrassed, but I don't actually understand the pen/paper thing. Wait...for exchanging numbers? Isn't that what iPhones are for?

MC: No, the pen and paper is practical, you can have SOME practical things in that drawer—geezuz. The pen and paper is for remembering shit in the middle of the night or right before bed. Admittedly they usually end up covered in massage oil (why do those lids never stay shut?) but still, good to have.

completely out of the question for whatever reason, and for others it's exciting and adventurous, but only if you don't have a headache. In which case, your one night stand is you, a bottle of Advil, and a cold compress.

SB: But I LOVE the stereotyping! Commit to the perpetration Cassella! But let's get to the meat of things. So relationships vs. one-night stands. I often feel like the in-between would be nice. Sometimes I think people give up too much of who they are, and pull away from friends too much, when they get into relationships. The friends with benefits can be a nice way of having something more on-going than a one nighter. I remember a couple of these scenarios that got me off, but also helped get me through some challenging emotional times in my life.

MC: You know what? I can't believe I'm gonna say this, but I think I agree with you Bereznai. In fact, if we're going to go with the stereotypes, then I say the lezbos can learn a few things from the gay guys about tricking and the gay guys can take a few notes from the lezbos about commitment. Maybe then, we'll have achieved the perfect balance. Except, using those stereotypes I just left out the BTTIQ2SAs whom I know we could all learn a lot from so, so much for my theory. Plus, what do I know. I've been married for 13 years having the longest one night stand of my life and enjoying every second of it. So yeah, I guess I'm out.

Maggie Cassella is a current events commentator, actor, writer, producer, and founder of the We're Funny That Way™ queer comedy festival, now in its 14th year.

Steven Bereznai is the author of the super hero novel Queeroes, and the dating bible Gay and Single...Forever?. His anthology contributions include Second Person Queer, I Like It Like That, and Best Gay Love Stories 2010. He can be reached online through his website www.stevenbereznai.com.

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by Janet Collins

Hot Artist:

Cyndi Lauper

While career dreams can be made or broken today with the announcement: "the lines are now open—call or text your vote..." Cyndi Lauper has made her own dreams come true by being the architect of her artistry and career. Claiming she can only be who she is and that's all she can be, has enabled her to survive and thrive in an unforgiving business. Admitting to always feeling like the odd person out, she puts more stock in being true to herself than in being popular. It's hard to believe that it's been almost 30 years since the release of *She's So Unusual* and we first caught sight of her on Much Music.

Since then, she's gone on to act, winning an Emmy for her role as Marianne on *Mad about You*, direct, and has even performed on Broadway. Of course her true love is her music—going to wherever her need to make music takes her, collaborating with artists who are important to her, and exploring a variety of genres. And if that weren't enough, she's currently in the process of writing her autobiography.



Whenever she's had the spotlight on her, she has never hesitated to use it to bring attention to causes close to her heart. An outspoken activist for the LGBT community and a human rights advocate, she was in the East Room of the White House last fall when President Obama enacted the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Summerplay! caught up with Cyndi and discussed topics ranging from the upcoming release of *Memphis Blues*, her latest album (on June 22 – her 58th birthday), her activism and her girlie pursuits with MAC Cosmetics and Barbie.

Summerplay!: While making *Memphis Blues* you actually lived in Memphis, what made you decide to go there for this project?

Cyndi Lauper: Memphis is just beautiful. I can't say I lived there, but yes stayed there for the two weeks while we recorded the CD. It is an amazing music town. Everywhere you go you hear great music, have great conversations about music, people seemed to live it there. I went there to find the roots of the music I've been singing all my life. I got to work with the people who made the music that started me on my path.

SP! Tell me about the music and the inspiration you're sharing with us on *Memphis Blues*.

CL: *Memphis Blues* is a collection of blues cover songs including "Shattered Dreams," "Just Your Fool," "Early in the Mornin'....the list goes on. I got to work with amazing artists such as B.B. King, Jonny Lang, Allen Toussaint, Ann Peebles and Charlie Musselwhite. I am so proud of this release. This is the album I've wanted to make for years.

SP! You are quoted as saying "for me, every part of music is about empowerment and God." Can you explain that importance?

CL: For me music makes me strong, and I think whether you are a singer or a listener—which I am both—music can move you to really connect to your feelings and your inner self, and that is empowering and I think it's such a huge gift that it has to have been sent by God, whoever your God is.

SP! I know you're a big fan of the dulcimer; I'd never heard of one until you played it on David Letterman's show. It's not the most popular of instruments, but an obvious favourite of yours. Is it featured on *Memphis Blues*?

CL: Of course I had to include it on one song, "Wild Women" and I will probably bring it on the road.

SP! How did the creation of the True Colors Fund come about?

CL: The True Colors fund was born from the True Colors Tour. We wanted to raise money to help groups helping the LGBT community—HRC, Centerlink, Pflag. The True Colors Fund's main focus of work right now is to inspire straight people to get involved in making equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people a reality here in the States. As a straight person, with many family and friends who are gay or transgender, I started the Fund a couple of years ago to try and help make a difference. So far, we are off to a great start. We recently launched the Give a Damn Campaign to great success. It is a far reaching and innovative online initiative to empower straight people to stand up for equality. I can give you a lengthy explanation about it, but it is much cooler to actually visit at www.wegiveadamn.org. Make sure you check out the Damn Videos! The True Colors Fund has raised over \$200,000 in partnership with True Colors Tour for LGBT charities and is a primary supporter of the True Colors Residence, which recently broke ground and will be the first permanent housing facility for LGBT homeless youth in New York City.

SP! What are you hoping to achieve with the True Colors Residence currently under construction in Harlem?

CL: Perfect segue to last question. GLBT teens are coming out in greater numbers as they see themselves accepted and represented on TV and in movies, but they're still being kicked out of their homes or running away and living on the streets. We need to make sure we're taking care of them and they have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The mission of the shelter is to house a number of GLBT youths and allow them to actually live in the residence for an extended period of time.

SP! I read that your sister is gay and that when you were a teenager you felt like the odd person out because a lot of your friends were coming out and you're straight. How did that lead you to become a champion for gay rights?

CL: I have always been a champion for rights whether it is civil rights, women's rights or gay rights. I was an outsider and so I guess I was always compelled to fight for myself as somewhat of an outsider or someone on the fringe—so it was a natural progression. Long before my career took off, I was always fighting for someone and usually the someone or the "ones" were people that were outside of the so called "norm," and back then GLBT people were definitely not accepted in the mainstream ideal of society. We really have come a long way with trans rights and visibility beyond just the white bread plain old gay folks. [Laughs] Back to your question, it was a



natural progression and still is a natural progression for my advocacy and my artistry. I don't stay within the lines. I never have.

SP! I don't think any country should be too smug about its human rights because it's something we always have to be vigilant about. Why do you think there is such a disconnect in believing all people are equal, but little support for gay marriages, or gays in the military (don't ask don't tell), and Proposition 8 failing to pass in a place like California?

CL: We are a country of great wealth and hypocrisy. U.S. Media visibility doesn't match equality in real U.S. life; the advances in GLBT imagery and integration of the commonality of GLBT people's lives and stories have advanced greatly in the past 10 to 15 years. I do think entertainment pushes politics forward, but politics push back and organized religion pushes back and good ole boy power pushes back...we really do need to wake up. Smug, we don't have anything to be smug about. We still have a long way to come on varied civil rights, not just the GLBT rights. I just watched that amazing PBS documentary about the civil rights struggle *Keep Your Eyes on the Prize* and I'm reminded of how short a period of time it's been since the African American community galvanized itself and fought tooth and nail. We are not as advanced as we think we are, I mean look what's going on in Arizona—its bullshit. It's racial profiling. It's not right. I understand immigration policy reform is an issue, but that's not the way to go about it, in my opinion, but it's happening. In a minute you are going get people going into Arizona just like the freedom fighters did in the deep-south. Our kids coming up, they'll eradicate the old guard. They get it, they will build upon what we as enlightened individuals today, who are controlling politics and social change, [have built]. We push hard. We'll continue to push hard so they won't have to push as hard. Yeah, I'm a liberal and a

New Yorker, but it's not just the liberal New Yorkers that are starting to wake up. We are getting closer to marriage equality, and as the older generations who are steadfast against it pass, then eventually the newer liberated enlightened generations will nail it down. It's not in my kid's lifetime, it's soon...in my lifetime—but not soon enough.

SP! How did you end up in Donald Trump's boardroom for *Celebrity Apprentice*? Donald Trump!!! For crying out loud! What made you decide to do the show?

CL: I was happy to do it. I wanted to play for the True Colors Fund and knew so many people watch the show that it could really help me push the mission of the fund forward.

SP! It only makes sense that you would do a Viva Glam campaign, how did that come about?

CL: MAC was one of the sponsors of True Colors Tour, and the Viva Glam campaign was the next step. I am a huge fan of MAC's cosmetics so it was a dream to represent them and the charity work they do for people affected with AIDS and research in helping find a cure.

SP! What was it like working with Lady Gaga?

CL: Gaga is truly amazing, also one of the hardest working girls out there. We met a couple of years ago at the Logo's New Now Next Awards and reconnected at various different gigs after that. We had a blast at the photo shoot as well as doing promo together for this campaign.

SP! Did you ever imagine you would have your own Cyndi Lauper Barbie one day? Did they give you lots of input on her design?

CL: I had a blast with the creative process.

SP! You've been to Toronto Pride before, what drew you back and what are you most excited about in returning?

CL: The event, people, love, support, music and the energy. What can I say...I always have fun there.

Cyndi will be in Toronto during the Pride celebrations on July 3 for a free concert at Queen's Park, you only need to show your true colours to get in!

Janet Collins was also born, like Steven, "in a galaxy far, far away," however, the one known as Windsor, Ontario. She made her escape early and washed up on the shores of Ashbridge's Bay. Lacking of any super powers herself, she lives with a little pug whom possesses many, foremost among them—mind control of humans...

PHOTOGRAPHY by Ellen van Unwerth

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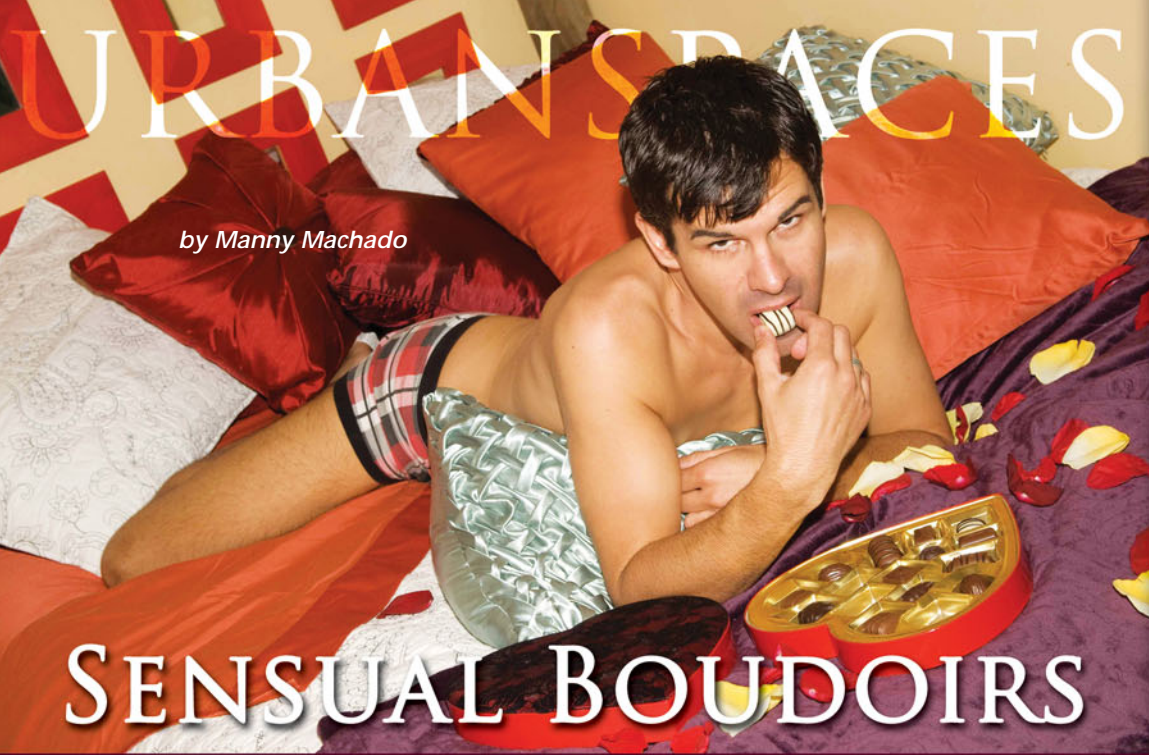
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Love and Sex

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by Manny Machado

SENSUAL BOUDOIRS

Boudoir, the very nature of the word conjures up images of sensuality and sexuality, but where does it come from and what exactly does it mean for you? The dictionary claims the word originates from the French verb “bouder”, which means to pout or sulk, and commonly associated with women during the French Revolution, who would retreat to their boudoir—or sulking room—until they were in a better mood. I imagine removing the heavy wig and binding corset would be the equivalent to de-dragging, and from personal experience, I can tell you that freeing yourself from restrictive undergarments and taking a pound of makeup off your face would make anyone feel a lot better not to mention, ten pounds lighter.

The room was traditionally located just off the bedroom and was considered to be a place of privacy, sometimes used as a dressing room, sitting room or for entertaining intimate acquaintances. Over the years, the legacy of the boudoir has left a mark on many cultures and thus

interpreted in many incarnations as either private bathrooms, walk-in closets, vanities and even dens. However the predominate assumption is that it remains a place of intimacy and sexuality.

Unfortunately, most modern homes do not have dedicated spaces to create boudoirs or private rooms, but as most people who I've helped live in smaller spaces can attest, adapting your environment to your needs is the best way to get the most out of your real estate. The boudoir isn't just a lady's prerogative any longer, and if creating an area to explore and comfort your intimate desires is something you are seeking, then I say have at it!

The first step in any room decoration and design is to clearly understand your goal, meaning, what is the room going to be doing for you. So in this case, creating an environment that evokes sensuality means it has to relate to you through your five senses: sight, smell, touch, sound and taste.

Visually, the simplest and most effective way to change any room is with paint color, adding a bold color to the location of your intended boudoir is always the first step. Traditionally these rooms were designed with opulence and richness in mind, using colors like golds, reds and purples. Since this is not the 1700s and most paint suppliers offers thousands of color variations, pick



bulbs a more natural look. You can also affect the quantity of light with varying sizes of candles and wicks.

Our sense of smell is one of our most powerful senses, and typically the most overlooked in design and décor. Incense, clean linens and flowers are just some of the ways to add a fragrant quality to your space. Try sprays or even scented room deodorizers for an instant connection to your favorite moment, or to add a subtle layer to your intimate area. For a longer lasting effect, spritz linens, rugs and drapes. Evoke your sense of smell by way of scented candles with aphrodisiac qualities like, bergamot, cedar wood, lavender, rose and patchouli. Aromas of cinnamon, chocolate and vanilla, will excite your sense of taste as well, awaking your appetite for indulgence.

Nothing sets a mood better than music. Think ahead with your listening selection. Apple's Genius feature on iTunes makes it easy to create specific play lists for different activities and docking stations for iPods are an easy solution that won't detract from your décor.

Fabrics and furnishings have huge impact on the overall affect of your room, so make sure you select soft and sumptuous linens and pillows, and don't neglect comforting floor coverings in order to create an inviting and welcoming environment.

Choose furniture that relates to how you intend to play, relax or enjoy your private area. Work with a theme that you can draw inspiration from. Two good suggestions are: Moroccan, with its rich color palette and dark wood furnishings; or Parisian, famous in many boudoirs for its curvy ornate furniture in wood or wrought iron.

If you have the space for it, start with a chaise lounge, versatile in function and truly a must have for your space. Styles range from modern with large angular cushions and sleek design, to the more traditional wood designs with opulent trim and mouldings, upholstered in an extravagant or unusual fabric.

Select side tables or nightstands that coordinate with your chosen style and that will provide you with plenty of storage for all your accoutrements and apparatuses. Customize existing items by way of glass or ornate knobs and trimmings. Casually draping silk or cashmere throws over a chair gives an added splash of colour and texture.

The most usable tip to creating a boudoir is defining the space into elegant and organized

one that you like. Used sparingly as in a feature wall, will prevent the room from being overwhelmed by your color choice.

Wall papers are also available in a variety of prints, patterns and graphics, making them not only an exciting option for injecting the room with color, but flocked papers (a process that leaves a raised relief of pattern or print) also adds texture, incorporating a secondary sense into the equation, touch. Complete the visual stimuli with prints, art and canvases that evoke the mood you're trying to create in the space. The ladies of the renaissance had private portraits of themselves in their boudoirs, so why not commission a local artist to create your own boudoir depiction?

Controlling the amount of light to enhance the mood is key in creating the right ambiance. Small table lamps, floor lamps and overhead lighting fixtures can all benefit from a dimmer switch. Dimmer switches instantly allow you to control the mood of your room, from bright and cheerful, to intimately dim. One of the easiest ways to change up the lighting in your boudoir without replacing current fixtures is with colored bulbs. A soft pink gives off a glow that mimics candlelight, while red bulbs will certainly spice up your light. Also, swapping your lampshades for those with golden or rose tones will give compact fluorescent



FABRICS

Egyptian Cottons: Never underestimate the luxurious feel of a high thread count! Available in a variety of colours and patterns, this staple fabric can be used in everything from bed sheets and quilts, to drapes and clothing.

Linen: Highly durable with a natural luster, its absorbency wicks perspiration away from the skin and keeps you cool. Ideal for bedding or clothing.

Silk: One of nature's smoothest materials, known for its crisp flexibility, which makes it crease-resistant. It's comfortable, breathable, delicate, and comes in vivid shades. Choose as bedding, clothing, pillows and scarves, to wear or drape over lamp shades.

Cashmere: Intensely soft, it keeps you warm, yet is very lightweight. Nothing will pamper you more than the feel of cashmere on your skin. Use as throws, blankets and bed linens.

Lace: Delicate and romantic, evoking a pure sense of sex. Saucy, revealing and flirty, it's perfect for under garments and accented drapes or pillows.

Velvets: Elegant, rich and exotic, it has adorned many a boudoir throughout history. Use its rich tones for drapes, upholstery and pillows.

Bamboo: Fabric created from this ancient plant is soft, silky and luxurious. Breathable, anti-bacterial and odor free, as well as absorbent and fast drying, makes it incredibly practical. Most importantly, it's biodegradable and good for our environment. Available as linens, throws and clothing.

Faux Fur: Comes in natural as well as creatively vibrant colors—nothing makes a boudoir wilder than an animal print. Great for keeping you warm, it adds texture and a sense of adventure to your room. Use for throws, pillows, toys or apparatuses.

Leather: Leather upholstery is easy to care for and can spice up a décor. Also great for exploring the many adult toys and accoutrements available, like harnesses, corsets and other risqué under garments. No dungeon is complete without it.

Rubber and latex: Flexible, highly versatile with a multitude of uses including linens, upholstery and clothing. Easy to clean and highly durable, latex is a natural fabric and therefore breathable, while rubber can be more restrictive.

areas like a place to sleep and pamper yourself. Added storage for your individual necessities can also enhance the mood of your room. Perhaps you require a bar for your favorite elixirs, or a mirrored vanity for your cosmetics and collection of eau de toilette. Artwork, custom prints and treasured accessories make your design much more personal and intimate. Confine evidence of modern life to a drawer or a hidden shelf, don't let them interfere with your time away from the world. And evict the TV or any mobile technology from the boudoir altogether. This is your place to relax and decompress, so leave work outside the door.

Designer and stylist Manny Machado, believes that having the power to dream means having the power to create. Manny's unique perspective allows him to transform even the most impossible spaces into something clients are proud to call their own. His latest project, the PRIDE float for A.C.T has been a joy to work on and he'll be waving, jumping and wishing everyone he comes past a wonderful and happy Pride!
www.mannymachadodesigns.com

PHOTOGRAPHY by Robert Foster

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“LUIS”

by Josh Levy



I blame Venice for making me miserable. I had been roaming around Europe for months, mostly on my own. I was nineteen years old and wanted to see the world. Tripping from place to place with no predetermined plan made me drunk on freedom. London, Amsterdam and Berlin were a blur of hostels, museums and pubs. In Switzerland I hiked the Alps and slept on a glacier. But then the rain came, and it was relentless. The downpour seemed to chase me from Vienna to Budapest and on to Italy. Now I wandered the maze-like streets of Venice, lined with fetid canals and overflowing with fat, glistening tourists. I was drenched, hungry, and weighed down by an oversized backpack. I was running low on cash and stamina. I longed for sunshine. There was only one solution before me: It was time to make my way to Greece.

The journey from Venice to Athens took forever. I took the train to the port of Brindisi (“Let’s Go Europe” on Brindisi: “Remember, suicide is not an option.”) where I boarded a boat to Greece. I slept out on the deck of the ship under the Mediterranean stars. It was freezing cold. Fierce winds inflated my sleeping bag like a sail and sent me hurtling across the ship’s deck until I was pressed up against the railing. After docking, another train brought me from Patras to Athens, which was crowded, noisy and foul. I spent the afternoon exploring the Acropolis. But by then I had had enough of cities. That night I went down

to the docks and boarded a night ferry to the island of Mykonos.

I was walking along the upper deck when I noticed a heavily muscled man in his early thirties with a strong brow, skin darkened by the sun, extraordinarily handsome. He was wearing slacks and a polo shirt. On his thick left forearm was a tattoo of an anchor with a rose wrapped around it. The man grinned at me but I looked away, embarrassed to be caught staring at him.

The ferry arrived on Mykonos at 2 AM. I disembarked and was immediately surrounded by people offering accommodations of various kinds. It was obvious I had no money, so they mostly ignored me. I was dead-tired and had nowhere to stay.

Then I spotted the handsome man from the ferry. He looked lost too. Our eyes met and he shot me his dangerous grin once again. This time I returned his smile. He cocked his head, beckoning me. I walked over to him. He was nodding at a tiny woman who was speaking very quickly in Greek. He turned to me and motioned for me to join him. Having no other option, I followed him to the woman’s car.



We rode across the top of the island in absolute darkness, crammed together into the backseat of the tiny vehicle. My leg was pressed up against his. His thigh was twice as thick as my own. We rode in silence. Even in the middle of the night, the wind was hot. I had no idea where we were headed, and that was fine by me.

The car came to a stop and we climbed out. I could hear waves crashing on the shore and feel sand under my feet. I was finally at the beach, but I was too tired to care. The woman indicated a small army tent perched right there on the beach. I crawled inside the tent next to the man and we began unrolling our sleeping bags. I told him my name. He nodded and grunted his own name, "Luis", in a thick accent.

"Are you from Spain?" I asked. "Or Portugal?"

He shook his head as he pulled off his shirt.

"Brasilia." Before I could ask him another question, he was sound asleep. And moments later, I was too.

When I woke up in the morning the temperature in the tent was stifling. I watched Luis sweat in his sleep for a bit. Soon his eyes fluttered open. He wiped the sweat from his face and said something in Portuguese. He pointed at me. I looked down at my arm in horror. It was crawling with ants. I could feel them all over me. I yelped and jumped up out of my sleeping bag. My whole body was covered with ants.

I screamed and ran out of the tent. I raced down the beach in the blinding sun, frantically wiping the ants off my body. I dove into the cool water. I looked back at the shore to see Luis laughing at me. He was laughing so hard he collapsed in the sand. Now I was laughing too. Suddenly Luis stripped off his underwear and joined me in the water. The sun reflected off his wet skin. Even his muscles had muscles. We splashed around, washed up and dried off, then headed into town.

Luis babbled at me in Portuguese all the way into town. I couldn't understand a word he said, but the sound of his deep voice and the flash of his smile made it so it didn't matter. To this day I think Portuguese is the sexiest language on earth.

Mykonos is a labyrinth of shops, bars, restaurants and windmills. All the buildings are whitewashed, with doors and windows painted a bright Adriatic blue, mirroring the big sky and the glittering sea. Bright pink and purple flowers grow everywhere. It looks fake, like the set of a movie.

At a market we bought supplies: bread, tomatoes, olives, cheese, wine. Then we rented a moped so we could get around the island. No helmets, of course. I climbed on the bike behind Luis, my legs splayed against his, my arms wrapped around his waist. I could feel the heat of his body pressed against mine.

The moment we set off on that bike I knew I was in love with him. Luis felt solid and strong. I could feel his stomach muscles contracting under his t-shirt as we leaned into hazardous turns. I will never forget the feeling of holding onto him as we flew down dirt roads at a dangerous speed, the sea wind blowing back my hair, dust in my eyes.

Later that day we went to Super Paradise Beach, a nude beach that is largely gay on the

right side and straight on the left. I still wasn't sure if Luis was gay or straight. I felt there was heat between us, but he was so macho, and I was so young. Luis headed to the left and my heart sank.

I'd never been naked in public before. I peeled off my t-shirt, then my shorts. I stood in my underwear for a moment and surveyed the beach. Everybody was nude, whether tall, short, fat or thin. I took a deep breath and pulled off my underwear. The sea breeze on my skin felt amazing. Luis and I lay next to each other on the beach for a long while. I tried to steal surreptitious glances of his naked body. The sun caused beads of sweat to form on Luis's skin, which was lightly covered in hair, except on his chest where the hair was thicker.

Luis stood up and stretched. The sun silhouetted his body. He looked like an ancient statue come to life. He beckoned me to follow him, and then he ran into the sea. I followed him like a love-struck zombie.

Luis swam out further and further, and I struggled to keep up. He was as fast in the water as he was on the moped. We swam around the cove until we came upon a large rock jutting up out of the sea. Luis turned to me as we floated in the water next to the rock and grinned like the devil. Then he grabbed me and kissed me hard on the mouth. He tasted of salt and sunshine. Luis climbed up on the rock, and then leaned down to help me up. I lay down next to him, and soon we were kissing again.

I was no virgin, but I was close. I'd known some boys, but I had never been with a real man. His weight on me was so heavy; I thought he would crush the air from my lungs. I could feel him hard against me. He was huge, but expert. To this day, making love to the Brazilian sailor on that rock in the Aegean remains one of the great memories of my life.

We spent the afternoon making out on the beach. Later we built a fire and got drunk on cheap wine. We slept out under the stars, my head on his chest, the scent of his skin mixing with the salty breeze.

Days went by in a heady mix of sex and sand and wine and heat. The fact that we couldn't speak each other's language forced us to communicate in other ways. I knew almost nothing about Luis, except how I felt about him.

Then one day Luis took me down to the docks. Luis seemed pensive as a ferry approached the dock. He scanned the disembarking tourists until he spotted someone he knew. An older German gentleman, who was delicate in manner and finely dressed. They embraced, and he kissed Luis on each cheek, European-style. The German looked me up and down with a cold look in his eyes. Luis and the man conversed in German like old friends. I had some sense that things would be different now between Luis and me.

That night we ate dinner at a fancy restaurant in town. Luis and The German looked stylish in elegant clothes. I felt ridiculous in my cut-off jean shorts and ratty t-shirt. The food was terrible. I had spaghetti and meatballs, which turned out to be over-cooked noodles sprinkled with shredded lamb. The German paid for everything. He never took his eyes off Luis, and who could blame him.

After dinner we wandered the streets and alleys of Mykonos, cruising from bar to bar. We ended up at a raucous Greek tavern where the men were dancing in traditional style. The local people were loud and drunk and full of life. A kid with Down's Syndrome was kicking up a storm in the middle of the bar, and everyone was cheering him on. When the German excused himself to use the bathroom, Luis took my face in his hands and kissed me long and hard. He stuffed some bills in my hand, grinned, and indicated I should go get us some drinks at the bar. He slapped my butt playfully as we parted.



When I got back with the drinks, Luis and The German were gone. I waited for a while, sipping my drink and watching the men dance. Eventually I realized that Luis wasn't coming back.

Later, I walked back to the tent on the beach under a night sky blanketed by stars. I was on my own once again.

I sometimes wonder whatever became of Luis. I have been lucky enough to love several beautiful, fascinating men in the years since. But once in a while, I still dream of making love with Luis on that rock in the sea, my love that lasted just a few days one summer in Greece, a lifetime ago.

Josh Levy is a writer and filmmaker who splits his time between Toronto and Los Angeles. Join Josh on Facebook or check out his website at www.nemedia.ca.



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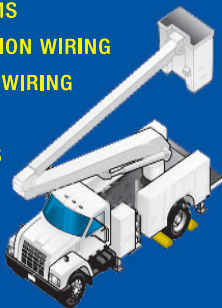


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SUMMER THE CITY

by Ricky Boudreau



*Summer's in the air...
everywhere I look
around... summer's in
the air... every sight
and every sound...*

As Torontonians, we absolutely love this time of year. It's the ideal time to take advantage of our beautiful city. With so much to do in this season, where do you begin and how do you choose? You can take a ferry to the island, go for a rollerblade or bike ride along the waterfront, host and attend BBQ's, enjoy corn on the cob—the list is endless. No matter what it is that you're into, Toronto definitely has lots to offer. "Stay-cations" are the way to go. Cottages, skinny-dipping, or beach volleyball, summer brings out the best in us all. Pride this year is bound to be great; For starters, we are celebrating our 30th year! I imagine it will also be a warm up for World Pride, 2014. It's amazing that it's all happening later on the calendar, which means better weather. The line-up is jam-packed and I'm sure we will be host to many of our "gaybours" south of the border. Get out there and enjoy your summer to the fullest.



Pride Week 2010

June 25 to July 4

www.pridetoronto.com

Toronto's Pride week, is one of the world's largest Pride celebrations. It boasts a spectacular cultural and arts festival with thousands taking part in a 10-day program. It has grown in leaps and bounds over the last three decades and nowadays we see more and more people from our various communities, including many straight people and families, joining in our celebrations. What an amazing time for us all. It really should be like this all the time. With world class DJ's and parties, our Pride has an event for everyone and is something that we should all be proud of. Here are some great things to take part in...

Gala & Awards Ceremony

June 30

6pm

Carlu

444 Yonge St. 7th floor

416.597.1931

www.pridetoronto.com

Individual tickets - \$350

Every year, the Gala & Awards ceremony honours people who have created a positive impact on the lives of Toronto's queer communities. Come spend a fun filled evening of food and entertainment at the Carlu, a national Historic site that has been refurbished to its 1930's splendor.

TIP: *Don your best gown and aim for something period for that extra bit of glam.*

Cyndi Lauper in Concert

July 3

9pm

Queen's Park

FREE

Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, don't they? Cyndi Lauper wowed us all with that anthem in 1983. She holds numerous awards including 13 Grammy's, 2 Emmy's and 18 MTV awards. Cyndi will be hitting the stage at Queen's Park, as part of a full line up, to help us celebrate Toronto's 30th year of Pride festivals. She has been a long time gay activist and has recently joined forces with Lady Gaga as the newest Viva Glam ambassadors for MAC Cosmetics. Queen's Park is a new addition to the expanding sites of Pride week.

TIP: *The new Queen's Park site will include a beverage garden and more street fair exhibitors...Dragonette and The Clicks are to perform as well.*



AQUA

July 3

1 - 8pm

TD Wellesley Stage - NEW VENUE

\$25

www.prismtoronto.com

This one is my favourite party. Bring your squirt guns and banana hammocks, cause this one is sure to get you wet! An amazing DJ line up, including Ana Paula from Brazil and a show starring Lena Love. A major international recording star is still to be announced...

TIP: *Don't forget the sunscreen, cause burnt buns and wienies are no fun.*

REVIVAL - 10th Anniversary Edition

July 4

10pm - 8am

The Guvernment / Sky Bar

\$65 + taxes

www.prismtoronto.com

This is the "wrap" party of our amazing Pride Week. This one boasts a DJ lineup of Peter Rauhofer, Honey Dijon and Shawn Riker with a special appearance from Alan T, performing his number one dance track "Whateva!"

TIP: *Pace yourself to get to this one.*

Helping Hands

Condom Stuffing Party

June 23

5:30 – 8pm

AIDS Committee of Toronto

416-340-8224

399 Church St. 4th floor

www.actoronto.org/condomstuffing

Lend your brothers and sisters a helping hand. ACT is looking for fun, enthusiastic, nimble fingered people to help stuff condoms and lube packs together. It's only a few hours of your time and refreshments and pizza will be served.

TIP: Bring some friends and make it a social!

Find an organization of interest and volunteer some of your time this summer to help out our wonderful community, places like the 519 or Casey House.

Calphalon Culinary Centre

425 King St. West

416.847.2212

www.calphalonculinarycenter.com

They say that a way to your loved one's heart is through their stomach, so check out the Calphalon Culinary Center for fantastic cooking classes. These classes are very interactive and designed for any skill level. Topics range from essential skills to exotic themes. It's a great social atmosphere where you can pair learning about and preparing food, to being able to improve your kitchen skills and creating great meals to enjoy and share with loved ones.

TIP: You get to bring home the meal that you make each class and someone else washes up after you!



Festivals

World Routes Festival

July 1 to September 6

Harbourfront Centre

235 Queen's Quay West

www.harbourfrontcentre.com

416-973-4000

The Harbourfront World Routes Festival is a fantastic series of FREE weekend outdoor activities. It brings together the global community through creativity. You will be able to enjoy music, dance, visual arts, film and theatre. It is also home of the International Market Place, where you can shop for things from all over the world.

July 1

Come celebrate Canada's 143rd birthday with what our country has to offer. Live music, dance, games, food and film from around the world, from noon until midnight.

July 2 to 4 The Hot Spot

Returning for its second year. Experience the hottest trends in the arts from around the globe.

July 9 to 11 Beats, Breaks & Culture

Here is one of North America's leading electronic music and culture festivals. It is presented by *NOW Magazine*, and is celebrating its 7th year.

TIP: Bring water to stay hydrated.

Longo's FREE Flicks

Wednesdays, July 7 to August 11

9pm

SIRIUS Satellite Radio Stage

www.harbourfrontcentre.com/freeflicks

Enjoy a selection of free movies, all summer at the Harbourfront Centre. "Hump" days will be more enjoyable if you get outside and catch a flick, by the lake...for FREE!

TIP: A great first date option...

Music

Toronto Jazz Festival

June 25 to July 4

Nathan Phillips Square and various venues

www.torontojazz.com

416.928.2033

Tickets range from free to \$107

The Toronto Jazz festival is now celebrating its 20th year and has welcomed more than 6 million people to the festival. It has also presented over 1500 free events and presented over 20 000 artists, 85% of whom are Canadian. Over 1500 musicians will be taking part again, this year.

TIP: *Harry Connick Jr. & Orchestra will be performing at the Cannon Theatre, Sunday June 27th. Tickets range from \$50 - \$150.*

Michael Buble's Crazy For Love Tour

August 10

8pm

Air Canada Centre

50 Bay Street

\$59.50 - \$199.50

Michael Buble brings his love of music and touring to Toronto with his Crazy For Love tour. Buble is a native of Vancouver and has released his third album, *Call Me Irresponsible*. He has two Grammy nominations under his belt and has sold over 11 million albums.

TIP: *Make a whole night of it, dinner and a show.*

Summer Music in the Garden

July 1 to September 19

Thursday evenings @7pm

and most Sundays @4pm

Waterfront at 475 Queen's Quay West

416.973.4000

www.harbourfrontcentre.com

What better way to enjoy a lovely, warm summer evening or Sunday afternoon than a free, live classical music concert along the lakefront? Johann Sebastian Bach inspired this picturesque Music Garden.

TIP: *If you enjoy classical music, you must check this out.*

Ricky Boudreau blossomed as a true social butterfly while traveling the world as a professional figure skater for 15 years. He loves the gift of the gab and discovering great parties in the city. With a love for culture, great food and beauty, Ricky spends his time very creatively as a professional makeup artist for MAC Pro cosmetics. He has helped artists like Deborah Cox and Dame Shirley Bassey look gorgeous. Heard of a new hot spot? Email him as intheCity@pinkplaymags.com

PHOTOGRAPHY by Robert Foster

There are so many great places in our city to take a first date or have date night with your current love. I have listed a top 10 here but I encourage you all to search out and discover your own faves. We are so fortunate here, to have all kinds of food and culture around us. Why not try to break some habits this year and step outside your comfort zone. Had a favourite sport growing up? Chances are there is a gay friendly version of it here in Toronto. Join a league or group and make the most of the summer and what Toronto has to offer. Cheers to all of you...

Ricky's Fave Places to bring a first date for a cocktail...in no particular order.

Fuzion – 580 Church St.; 416.944.9888;
www.fuzionexperience.com

Byzantium – 499 Church St.; 416.922.3859;
www.byz.ca

Barchef – 472 Queen St. West; 416.868.4800;
www.barcheftoronto.com

The Reservoir Lounge – 52 Wellington St.;
416.955.0887; www.reservoirlounge.com

Panorama Lounge –
55 Bloor St. West, 51st floor; 416.967.0000;
www.entertainment.com/restaurants/panorama

Salvador Darling – 1237 Queen St. West;
416.822.0891

The Painted Lady – 218 Ossington Ave.;
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The Energies of

When you connect with someone in a relationship, whether it's a romantic interest, or a casual fling, you extend energy to each other. In your aura, these connections look like cords of light and consciousness, extending from your chakra centres along your spine, to the paired chakra of the person you're becoming involved with. These 'relational cords' mirror the exact quality of your bond to others, whether healthy or dysfunctional.

Healthy relationships have beautiful cords exchanging energy on many levels of our being, whereas dysfunctional relationships have distortions that appear exactly as we feel when we interact with that person. For example, if we feel controlled, the other person may have hooked aggressive cords into our chakras. If we feel disconnected, our cords may be hanging out in space. When we leave a relationship in anger, we may rip our cords out, causing a great deal of damage and pain to both parties.

There are many levels on which we relate to our lovers and sex partners. When all we share with another is physical intimacy, we mostly connect from our second chakras. The deeper we connect, the longer we spend together and the more levels upon which we build our sharing, the more plentiful, resilient, and beautiful the cord connections grow.

Our root chakra connects us downward into the earth from the energy centre at the floor of our pelvis, and represents how much stability we feel in relating to our partner. When you get scared, you may "pull out" and disconnect here. Your partner will feel like you are checking out. When you pack the U-Haul and move in together,

you are building root chakra cords together, you now share: your home, your finances, and the way you draw the necessary energies from the earth to provide for yourselves as a couple. This can be a source of increased stability, or strife.

From the second chakra in the pelvis, we exchange the enjoyment of our sensual, sexual and creative energies. Healthy and mutually satisfying sexual exchange will appear as beautifully coloured cords with a high energy charge. Any shame we feel, or sexual difficulty, will appear as a struggle in our attempt to connect healthy cords between our pelvic chakras.

When we first meet someone, we usually extend cords from our solar plexus/stomach chakra first. This is the centre of our ego identity, so when we introduce ourselves we usually share our name, our work, where we live, and similar details that define our place in the world. The cords here represent how appropriately we take care of ourselves and others in relationship. A lot of tug-of-war can go on in this chakra as we try to meet the needs of others, while getting our own needs met. How well are you able to maintain your sense of self when you get involved? Often we get lost in co-dependence or are unable to maintain connection. The goal here is a healthy interdependence where both partners have a strong sense of self that can also support the other without feeling threatened.

From the heart, we explore the balance between love and will. Are you able to accept the other unconditionally, or are you a control freak? Are you truly able to open your heart and receive

Love and Sex

love, or is this a challenge due to past wounds and cord damage that still tugs on your heartstrings? Usually we try to find, or make the other, the right person for us. We have a long list of qualities we are seeking. Try asking yourself if you are able to be the right person for them instead. This may help you to soften your will to change or control them, and put the control where it really is—in your own behaviour and ability to open and give from your heart.

Connecting the relational cords in our throat requires more than just French kissing! Truthful communication through sound, music, words and symbols builds trust. Lies and difficulty voicing your true needs can cause struggle here. If we didn't learn healthy communication skills growing up, we may need couples counselling to grow stronger exchanges in this area. Poems, love notes, romantic songs, and symbolic gestures like flowers, sometimes express what we aren't able to say in words.

The sixth chakra is located in the forehead. Our ties here grow when we exchange higher concepts, ideas, and our dreams, while at the same time experiencing the ecstasy of unconditional, or spiritual love. If you can see your partner as a beautiful being of light and love, rather than just a person to fulfill your demands, you are seeing clearly with the eyes of the spirit and will be able to uplift one another.

The cords that extend out the top of our head, connect us to the realms of spirit and the inspiration of divine mind. We feel a sense of the big picture of our life, and we can see the higher purpose or contract in our relationships. What

lessons have you agreed to play out with this other soul before you? If you both feel that the relationship is sustained and given by the grace of the divine, a tremendous alignment in your cords happens here. When doubts and confusion arise about the future, you have lost your connection with the purpose of your sacred contract with each other.

Relationships have a tremendous impact on our health. Entangled, torn or distorted cords cause our chakras to dysfunction, and thus affect the related part of our psychological and physical health, since the chakras feed our physical body, as well as our consciousness. Energy healers trained to work with the relational cords can be a great resource to shed light on dynamics and sort out damaged cord connections. Whether you're in it for sex or love, sensing into how you are reaching out to the other and what you are seeking to receive, adds a whole new dimension to dating and relating.

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



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summer Horoscopes

by Lawrence Grecco

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Be sure to temper your enthusiasm and impulsiveness with some caution and planning during this time period. While it may feel more natural to dive in head first, the current volatile energy around you requires that you look before you leap, lest you end up spending your days regretting instead of relishing what you've accomplished.

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Sometimes it feels a bit tough to get going but this is only because you need some time to graze, consider, rest, and recharge before plowing forward. But once you do, the universe had better watch out! This is an especially potent time for you bulls to decide what it is you want and go for it.

Gemini: May 21 - Jun 20

Your bubbly and curious nature has unfairly earned you the reputation of an unfocused scatter brain—so now is your chance show everyone how wrong they are. It's your wonderfully diverse interests and talents that make you such a great communicator. Remember that, as you begin this new chapter of your life.

Cancer: Jun 21 - Jul 22

Letting go of things and people is certainly not your strong point, but every once in a while the universe asks us to purge what is no longer useful in our lives. Use this time to distinguish between what you're holding on to out of a sense of habit and familiarity and what is really serving your life's purpose. You'll be glad you did.

Leo: Jul 23 - Aug 22

There are times when the sun must disappear behind the clouds and let the rain have its way, at least for a little while. It isn't always possible to be center stage, so try not to pressure yourself quite so much. Life is handing you a rare opportunity to discover how brilliantly you shine, even in the dullest of circumstances.

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Take care not to lose sight of the bigger picture as you tend to the tiniest of details. Your uncanny ability to get things done, even when everyone else is ready to throw in the towel, will really pay off one day soon—just as long as you balance efficiency with some timeliness.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

The pressure is on but don't mistake a positive opportunity for some kind of cosmic punishment. The trials and tribulations you're currently experiencing are meant only to test your resolve and help you evolve into the truest possible version of yourself. Persistence and perseverance are more than called for right now.

Scorpio: Oct 23 - Nov 21

Your ability to see very deeply into things is both your strong point and your downfall if you allow what you see to discourage you or cause you to fear. Utilize your keen sense of what goes on beneath the surface to get more in tune with your significant other or your closest friends. It's all about relationships after all.

Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21

You're chock full of aspiration and inspiration and this marvelous combination will propel you to even greater heights than you're used to. If you take care not to let your undying optimism cloud your better judgment, you'll be sure to create the kind of life that makes the most sense for you.

Capricorn: Dec 24 - Jan 19

Change is in the air, and how! You've known this for some time but it looked easier on paper than it might be in real life. The universe never hands you anything you can't handle, and the key to dealing with this time period is to simply roll with the punches and open the door whenever opportunity knocks. Less resistance = more contentment.

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Other people might mistake your impervious nature for indifference, but this is a mistaken view. No one is as capable of taking care of the underdog as you are—and these days you're getting your fair share of opportunities to selflessly care for others. Keep moving forward no matter what anyone else says, you're on the right track.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Life is but a dream, sweetheart. There is nothing wrong with escaping from the doldrums of life every once in a while, and now is no exception. You've been through many changes over the past few years—so pampering yourself is more than called for right now. Doing so will make you more productive when things get busier this fall.

Lawrence Grecco is a professional astrologer and Zen Life Coach in New York City. He is also a student at the Maitreya Buddhist Seminary and a member of the board of directors of the National Council of Geocosmic Research, NYC chapter. Visit his web site at www.zenrising.com.

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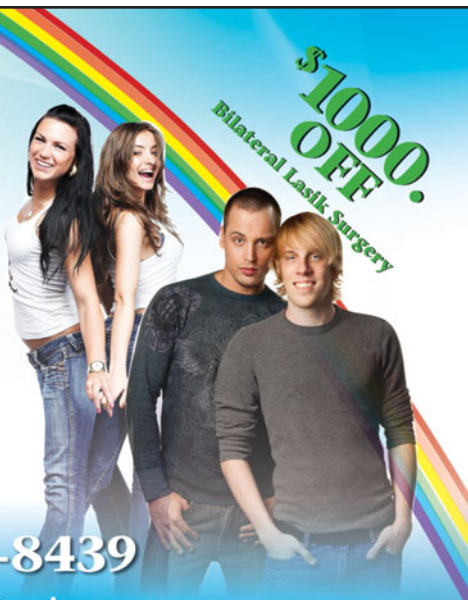
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Looking back

by Dan Cudle & John Lebarge

Danny Cudle and John LaBarge celebrated 30 years together on May 9th—a feat impressive to any couple, gay or straight. They share with us how they met and their secret to a long and happy relationship.

John: A girl I used to hang around with told me to come out with her to a women's bar. Originally I said no, but she insisted, so I figured why not, and if I don't like it, I could go around the corner to a men's club instead. Later, as I was about to leave the club, I saw Danny coming in the door, so I turned back.

Danny: I'd just walked into a lesbian bar called the Cameo, on Trinity Avenue, in a basement of a factory, when John approached me and asked, 'Can I buy you a drink, or what?' I replied with a quick no thank you. A little while later he approached me again and asked, 'Are you gay or what?' His persistence and the approach he was taking made me laugh. I was intrigued with the 'or what?' I was not drinking any alcohol at the time, so I said yes, he could buy me a cola. I would not say it was love at first sight, but I would say we grew fond for one another quickly, and we became inseparable fairly early on. John became a member of the family and has been there for a couple of generations now. We have been there for each other through the loss of parents and continue to support each other.

John: I would say there was a connection there for sure. When I saw this tall attractive guy come

in the club, I knew I had to meet him. We have been together ever since.

Danny: Our secret to staying happily together for so long? We made a pact not to go to bed angry, and over the years have learned to be tolerant of one another. Most arguments happen over trying to make your partner into something they are not, or trying to change them into what you want them to be. But if you think about it, what attracted you to them in the first place is the fact that you were different. Sure, we argue, as all couples do, but we have come to the realization that we are different and respect each others for our differences.

John: The main thing is be true to each other and talk about whatever is on your mind. Don't hold things in. Always communicate and never hold the other person back. You are two, and planning must be done together.

Danny: Remember, the mind of your partner is their own, not yours. You have to let them be able to think freely and express themselves. Eventually you have to come to terms with the realization, the only person you can change is yourself.

Dan and John own and operate their own business. They are very active members of the LGBT community in the Durham Region. Dan is the President at Oshawa's nightclub Club 717 (www.club717.ca), and he was one of the recipients of PFLAG Canada's "Durham Region Champions Against Homophobia and Transphobia Award 2010".



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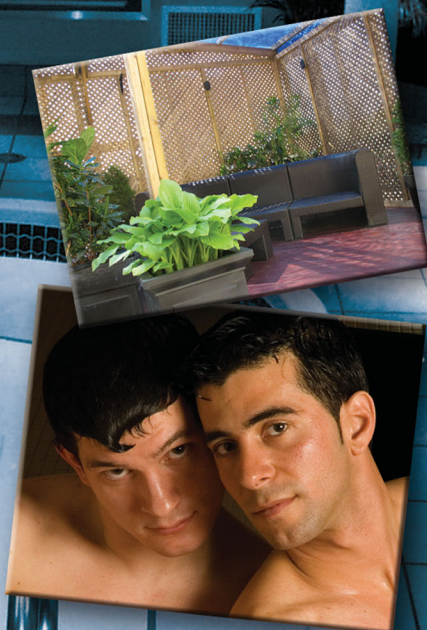
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