



For the couple with no time to plan their perfect wedding

The Date: March 28-30, 2014 The Place: JW Marriott The Rosseau Muskoka

The Plan:

- Begin by contacting JW Marriott The Rosseau Muskoka to book your destination wedding: an intimate ceremony followed by a gala dinner and dance for your guests.
- Once confirmed, your Event Manager will consult with you to plan all the details.
- On Saturday, March 29, your personal Wedding Planner will be "on point" with you before, during and after your wedding ceremony, to ensure that your experience is flawless.
- That afternoon, you will welcome your invited guests to a private ceremony and cocktail reception.
- That evening, you and your guests will join other happy couples for a gala dinner and dance complete with beautiful formal décor, live entertainment and a late-night buffet. A cash bar will be offered and if you wish to order wine for your guests or to pay for their drinks, this can all be arranged in advance.

Includes:

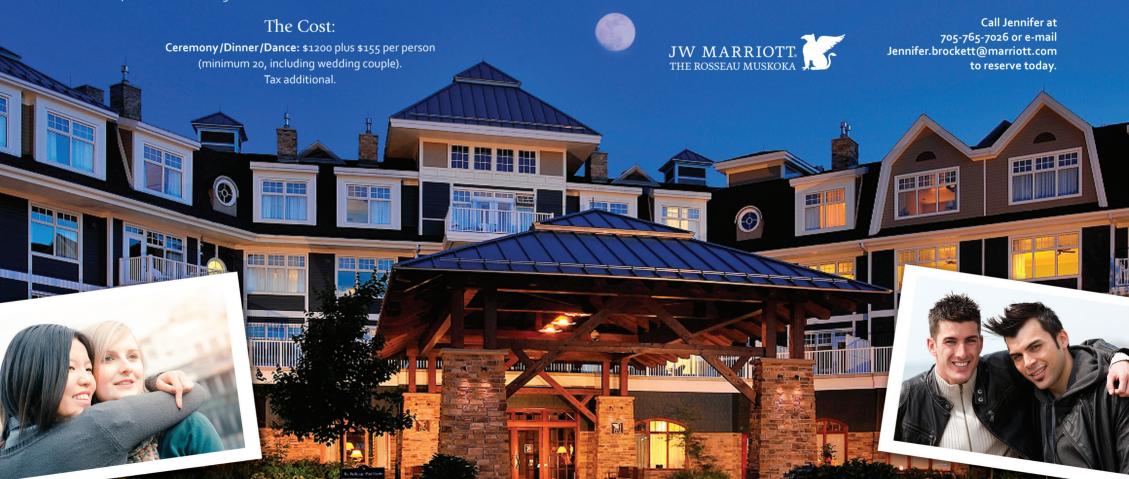
Ceremony: room rental, chairs, registry-signing table, décor selected by resort, hors d'oeuvres, one glass Prosecco per person

Dinner / Dance: room décor, elegant buffet dinner, service charge, dance with live entertainment, late-night snacks

Not included in fees, but available through your Event Manager: officiant, photographer, host bar

Special accommodation rate for a two-night stay in a luxurious King Studio, \$125 per night plus \$14 resort fee plus tax.

Next Steps: A lifetime of happiness together. We'll see you in March!



PinkPlayMags Presents



Check out our new website dedicated to celebrating WorldPride 2014, the most wonderful LGBTQ community festival to be hosted in our region next June

Business Listings

WorldPride 2014 interviews with organizers and members from our community

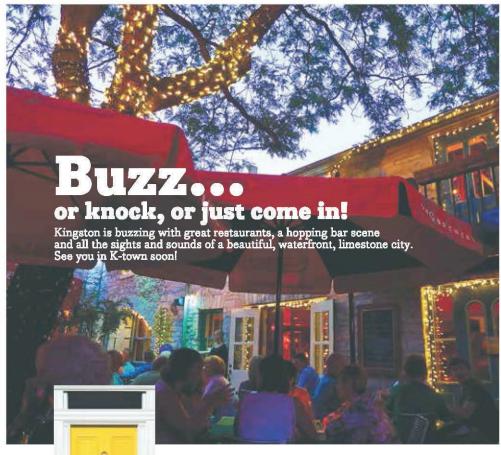
And pick up your summer 2014 copy of PinkPlayMag's **WorldPink** our extensive guide to the festival

www.worldpink.ca











From the Publisher



Here we come to the end of the sixth year in the life of PinkPlayMags.

On behalf of myself and our team I cannot thank you enough for all the love and support, for all the letters and notes we frequently get telling us how much you enjoy our magazine. I truly hope that we continue providing you with a pleasurable and informative reading experience for years to come.

In the past year we published four laid back editions, spending time discovering the pleasures derived from each of the four seasons. We covered many activities such as biking, prefect picnics, sailing, travel, cottaging, camping, and so much more. This issue we wrap it up all up with a bit of hibernating and personal care.

The coming year is a big year for our community and for our publications. The biggest and most exciting festival in the history of the LGBTQ community in North America is coming to Toronto, and PinkPlayMags has a whole year plan to get you ready and to cover WorldPride 2014.

"The World is Coming," our spring issue, will kick start it all. In this issue we will take a look at LGBTQ issues from around the world and report on what to expect come June.

The summer issue we're calling "WorldPink," and it will be your extensive guide to understanding the festival and planning your activities. Look for interviews with headliners, performers, DJs, and lists upon lists of things to do. This particular edition has had a mini website dedicated to it that we launched a few months back (www.worldpink.ca). If you haven't had a chance to check it out you must have a look. Over the course of the coming year we will be posting a five-part article series showcasing to our readers and community all the preparations

taking place for WorldPride 2014, penned by our Editor-in-Chief Jeff Harrison.

After everyone is gone and the streets have been swept of all the glitter and feathers, "Thank You for Coming" will be our autumn edition. In this issue we will have a look at the impact this mega-festival has had on our fabulous city and province.

"WorldPride: Looking Back" will close off the year with 32 interviews with 32 people from the community who will be answering the question: "What effect has WorldPride 2014 had on you personally?"

Sounds exciting? We sure hope so. How are you getting ready for 2014?

But before all that, and before I personally embark on one of the busiest years of my entire life, I can't wait for a wee bit of a break around the holidays. I plan to spend time with my family, have sleep-ins, play with Buddy, my dog, visit with friends, and catch up on a collection of movie classics that I've picked up lately. One thing I am very much looking forward to is to get all cozied up in a thick blanket and dive into a book that I set aside especially for the Holiday Season. A Dog's Purpose, written by W. Bruce Cameron, was recommended to me by a very good friend who says it changed her life. A dedication by Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Color Purple reads: "An Amazing book. I laughed and smiled and cried. Wise...and sure to open the hearts of all who read it." I feel am in for a real treat.

Season's Greetings!

Antoine Elhashem publisher@pinkplaymags.com

winterplay!

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

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cozy winter issue

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From the Editor



Over the past year we've taken a look at the four seasons—Canada is lucky to be blessed with four distinct times of year delineated by the changing weather.

I know, I know, you're thinking: "Lucky?! Having winter is lucky?!" Like a bunch of Canadians, I'm not a fan of winter. The short days, too long nights, frigid weather, shoveling, defrosting, tromping though the snow and slush—it can be downright depressing. That said, I can admit to enjoying a light snowfall of fluffy flakes tumbling from the sky; heck, I love a good solid blizzard, as long as I'm snug at home and don't have to cycle or drive anywhere. The aftermath can be dreamy, romantic even, especially with the right company—whether it's a lover, family, or friends. (I'm going to choose to ignore the soggy mess it all turns into until I actually get caught in it).

Despite my often humbug attitude towards the weather, it can be loads of fun too; all you have to do is spend a little time outside with kids to be quickly reminded of that: building a snowman, tobogganing, or a good snowball fight. When we were kids, my sister and I absolutely loved winter! We used to sneak up onto the roof of the house when Mom and Dad were still at work and slide off it into the deep snowbanks that always surrounded our Spanish-style bungalow out in the country. This was back when we used to get mountains of snow! We've never forgotten the evening we had just

pushed off for one more wild ride, when halfway down, Mom's car pulled in the driveway. To say our new fangled winter sport did not go over well would be an enormous understatement, and all future rooftop Luge runs were permanently canceled. However, it's still a favourite family tale that gets told around the turkey dinner year after year.

Enjoy it however you like, curling up inside is all the more rewarding when you come in from the cold and nothing warms you up better than a nice hot drink. Kelly has you covered when it comes to tasty potables to thaw your spirit and she even includes a few recipes that are bound to become a seasonal tradition (page 10).

I continue the sensory indulgence with the perfect hibernation, enticing you with blazing fires, self pampering and the secret to a good cuddle with a loved one beneath a cozy quilt (page 17).

Shelley wraps up her four-part article series on The Healing Power of Plants, by looking at Naturopathy (page 23) bringing your self-care full circle.

So no matter if you are an avid hibernator, or a gung-ho abominable snow person, I wish you a warm, safe holiday season filled with joy. We'll see you in the spring for the launch of our year-long WorldPride party. See you then!

Much love,

Jeff Harrison editor@pinkplaymags.com







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The Plan



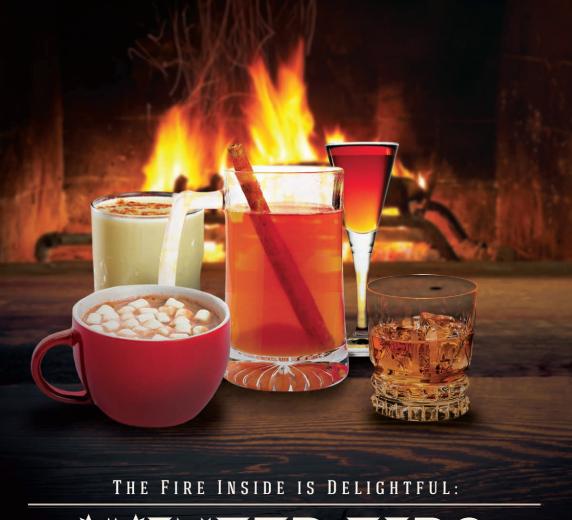
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WINTER TIPS For WARM SIPS

by Kelly Wilk

We still have them, or at least we did until very recently—the late seventies, retro chic string of Christmas lights that I imagine you can't buy replacement bulbs for anywhere. Good thing my father kept a shoebox full of replacement bulbs that have seen us through the last decade. The light from these blubs always seems more aged, more mellow. No wonder my mother doesn't like the new, fiercely bright LED twinklers. "The colors seem wrong," she said to me one year.

It's the little things you remember about the Holidays, whatever your celebrations might be, that stay with you in the visceral sense. For me it is that aged light, yellow as an old photograph. It's

the kitchen odors of hot chocolate and gingerbread and grandmother's cardamom flavoured cookies made in the shape of a chicken. It is the laugher as we opened gifts, which have stayed with me. The sights, the sounds, the smells and, where I am most concerned, the tastes cling to my memories like a light dusting of sugar.

The Wilks were always tradition heavy in terms of festivity. The structure of our holiday events followed one after the other, predictable and orderly as a well-oiled German clock. In the German tradition we opened our presents on Christmas Eve

and left the 25th to Santa, stockings, books, games, movies and a turkey. The evening of 24th was an adult occasion with grown up delicacies like oysters and steak tartar on rye bread at midnight. My sister and I were not invited until we were older and it was then were introduced to an amusing ritual my parents and grandparents participated in: giving and receiving of medium to tall, predictably cylindrical objects that sloshed.

I remember with fine clarity the delighted expression on my mother's face as she held up such an object, shook it and with glee unwrapped a tall tawny coloured bottle of Glenfiddich single malt scotch whisky. Giggling like a little girl she uttered a family adage, "It gurgles! If it gurgles it's good!"

Since enduring moments like this I have willingly fallen in line when it comes to appreciating a good spirit, especially around the holidays. Scotch, port, mulled wine, eggnog, hot chocolate and even Ouzo were regularly sampled during the holiday season, so I would like to offer some potable joy, from our table (or glass as the case may be) to yours.

OUZO - STEIN E YASOU!

So lets talk Ouzo. I am not a fan myself, but for anyone who loves licorice you can guess they may be partial to this anise-flavored beverage from Greece. Ouzo is pressed out of the remnants of grapes that are used for wine and flavoured with mint or anise or coriander. It has a high sugar content as well as an alcohol content of about 40% so look out! My parents drank it straight expect on exceptionally festive or chilly nights.

For those special nights they gave it the following treatment: first they floated a coffee bean on the glass of Ouzo, then they lit it on fire. After a short appreciation of a rather blue flame they watched it go out and drank it. And most times they ate the coffee bean as well. Done and done.

SCOTCH - SLAINTE MHATH!

"IT

GURGLES!

IF IT

GURGLES

IT'S

GOOD!"

I am also not a Scotch drinker like my parents and Grandfather, but for this reason it has earned a constant spot in the family liquor cabinets.

Scotch is a liquor distilled from barley. My mother's favorite, Glenfiddich, is fermented in Douglas Fir wood and is identifiable for it's "characteristic pear notes." The maturation casks are oak that previously held bourbon and sherry, and drink in the Highland air in Scotland as they ready their nectar for consumption (www.glenfiddich.com).

It seems like you either love or hate this drink, so I figured I would talk to someone in the yes camp. I caught up with a scotch enthusiast and friend of my

mom's, Bob Taylor, to learn more.

"First off there isn't a bad scotch" he said, "I prefer single malt with my favorite being 12 year old Macallan. Unfortunately almost all single malts are definitely on the pricey side." His favorite is usually \$90 for a 750 ml bottle and could even be upwards of \$300 or \$400 depending the age. No wonder my mom only got it at Christmas!

My grandfather always drank his with tonic. My mother sometimes plunked in an ice cube. Taylor drinks his without either.

"Some experts prefer it with a small drop of distilled water which releases the 'nose' or fragrance of the scotch. Like a good wine, with single malts you should initially swirl it in the glass and nose it." Also like a good wine the differences of producer and region bring unique qualities to the various brands of scotch and scotch blends. For example Highland, Lowland, Speyside and Islay (pronounced Eyelay) are some of the areas that produce single malts.

PORT - SAUDE!

This is where I hit my stride on warm sipping drinks. It is not a drink that is consumed warm, but when I drink it I swear it could be, for all the richness and flavour it packs. Having a major sweet tooth, I like to have it as a digestif. I drank a glass of tawny port a few weeks ago with a flourless chocolate torte at Leslie Jones restaurant and died a euphoric dessert death!

My whole family consists of major port fans. Port is a fortified wine made with grapes grown in Portugal. My favorite tawny port, which is made with red grapes and aged at least two years in barrels, is produced by Grahams and is grown the Douro region. It only has to be fermented for two days, as the fortification process requires adding natural grape spirit or brandy to the fermenting juice. At this point the process of fermentation is interrupted when only half of the sugar in the grapes has been converted to alcohol. This is apparently how it retains its richness and also how it manages to have a considerable potential to be aged. You can get ports aged in 10-year-increments increasing in price.

I have also enjoyed a Taylor Fladgate on occasion. The first of its kind, late bottled port remains in the wood casks for four to six years. During this time it greatly matures and is ready to drink when opened without decanting. Usually their port is only matured for twenty months until it is bottled to age. Ruby is the cheapest however, as it is aged in stainless steel casks after fermentation and generally does not improve with age. White port is made with white grapes and is a great base for cocktails or mixed with tonic. Rose is close to a rosé wine, as it is not overly exposed to the grape skins. Vintage port is only made from gapes grown in a "vintage year" carefully determined by the grower. They are aged two-and-half-years before bottling and then require ten to forty years to reach optimum vintage (www.taylor.pt/en).

Mulled Wine and Cider - Cheers!

When I was in high school a friend of mine and her British family always had a Mulled Wine party in December. The aroma of the warm, spicy wine in the air mixed with mince meat pies and other Holiday delectables inspired me to create my own tradition. Whether it is a grand affair, or a small personal gathering of friends, I always look forward to my annual party of which mulled wine is the centerpiece. The way the sweet, velvety scent seems to fill every nook and cranny of the house, and washes over my guests when they arrive at my door gives me this marvelous feeling of immense satisfaction and gratitude.

The first use of mulling wine was by the Romans, who did it so that the wine did not spoil. Sweet way to save something if you ask me! However, it was not called mulled wine until the 14th century in Britain and was named so after an old English word "muddled." This denotes a muddled state brought on by alcohol. It was apparently Charles Dickens that wrote it into A Christmas Carol and it has since gained the status as a traditional holiday drink (grape.com/mulled-winehistoryrecipe).

Some prefer dry wines for this recipe, but the good folks at the Wine Rack (www.winerack.com) assure me that you can use any red wine to make mulled wine. Really it is just personal preference. However, using their Wine Matchmaker System they introduced me to, it seems to make the most sense to choose a medium to rich red. For example The Jackson-Triggs Cabernet Frank has a plumb and anise note that would make an interesting combination with the other spices, or the Naked Grape Shiraz which is quite affordable, would do well with its blackberry and spice flavouring.

For rich reds I like the sound of the Jackson-Triggs Cabernet Sauvignon, as its black current flavouring fits the bill. If you are more of a light red wine person the Inniskillian Pinot Noir also looks intriguing for its berry flavouring as well as its "aroma of fresh fruit."

Depending on how much I am making, I tend to grab a couple of cheap two litre bottles of red. It tends to cook off a bit. Mulled wine is traditionally cooked with spices like cinnamon and nutmeg. It is also the kind of drink you can get creative with by adding citrus fruits and other ingredients. To make this drink you will need a large mesh tea ball or bag to put the spices in. The citrus peels you can just plunk in if you want, but it is better to have the whole spices contained in something for ease of

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serving. I would recommend heavier glasses with handles for ease of drinking, though it usually goes down pretty easy in any case.

Mulled Wine Recipe

- · 4 litres of wine
- 1 cup of sugar or honey to taste
- 1 lemon, lime, or orange peel
- 1-2 cinnamon sticks
- · half a fresh nutmeg, grated
- 6 cardamom pods
- 6 cloves
- all spice, star anise, ginger, vanilla beans, raisins, or dates to taste



- Put 4 liters wine into a large pot and add lemon, lime or orange peels in. Then throw in the cinnamon stick and grated nutmeg.
- 2. Put your whole spices and dried fruit into the tea hall.
- 3. Add your cup of sugar or honey to sweeten.
- 4. Heat mixture until it starts to steam, but don't let it boil.
- Keep warm in a crockpot and serve with a festive variety of cheeses, meats, cookies and sweet pastries.

I also like to give a non-alcoholic apple cider the same mulling treatment for the DD guests and kids. I must admit, last year I had a pretty lazy holiday season and went to Williams-Sonoma for some prepackaged mulling spices. Handy if you are too busy icing gingerbread, trimming the tree or just trying to put an outfit together and look halfway respectable when you open the door.

EGGNOG

There were things I did not understand when I was a child, like why would anyone want to eat a Brussels sprout, or an oyster, or steak tartar. I have since learned the error of childhood and embraced much of what was once labeled icky. Eggnog was one of those things. I stood back in wonder and watched my parents preparing the egg mixture in the kitchen. I mostly remember the huge beige

porcelain bowl my mother mixed it in.

This versatile dairy concoction sweetened with sugar and spice can also be added to coffee or tea for flavouring, as well as used for a custard or ice cream base. However for our purposes here are the straight goods on this fluffy drink.

Eggnog Recipe

- 4 cups milk
- 5 whole cloves
- 2 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 12 egg yolks
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 4 cups light cream
- 2 ½ cups light rum
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg



- 1. Combine milk, cloves, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, and cinnamon in a saucepan, and heat over lowest setting for 5 minutes. Slowly bring milk mixture to a boil.
- 2. In a large bowl, combine egg yolks and sugar. Whisk together until fluffy. Whisk hot milk mixture slowly into the eggs. Pour mixture into saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly for 3 minutes, or until thick. Do not allow mixture to boil. Strain to remove cloves, and let cool for about an hour.
- Stir in rum, cream, 2 teaspoon vanilla, and nutmeg. Refrigerate overnight before serving (allrecipes.com/recipe/amazingly-goodeggnog)

HOT CHOCOLATE - YUM!

Who could forget this holiday staple? Whether you are dashing through the snow on a one horse open sleigh, skating away on a river, thumpity thump thumping over the hills of snow, gone a-caroling, or just gone a-shoveling the driveway, hot chocolate is the best way to warm you up. The quick fix of shaking a package of chocolate powder into a cup of warm milk is not to be sneezed at, especially if you have mini marshmallows at hand.

When my parents were out on the slopes it was

always a special treat for them to go into the chalet and order a Mocha (half coffee half hot chocolate)



to perk themselves up for the drive home. As I am not a coffee fan, I think I would like to try mixing David's Tea Love Potion Number 7 with it. The black tea flavoured with chocolate, strawberries and rose petals would be well suited for a half-andhalf drink.

Frothy Hot Cocoa

- 2½ cups milk, divided
- 1 cup 18% table cream
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- · pinch salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- In saucepan, heat 2 cups of the milk and the cream over medium heat, stirring often, until steaming.
- In bowl, whisk together sugar, cocoa and salt.
 Whisk in remaining 1/2 cup cold milk and vanilla to make a smooth paste.

- Reduce heat to medium-low and gradually whisk cocoa mixture into hot milk mixture until blended.
- 4. Heat, stirring, for about 2 min or until steaming hot. Ladle hot chocolate into 4 warmed mugs. Serve immediately.

 (www.dairygoodness.ca/recipes/decadent-hot-

(www.dairygoodness.ca/recipes/decadent-hot-chocolate).

I would like to see if I can stir it up a bit this Christmas and make my hot chocolate more exciting. The next time I invite friends in from out of the cold, I plan to have a bottle of Baileys Irish Cream, Kahlua, or even Peppermint Schnapps handy to add to our beverages. Of course I would serve this with a frothy coating of whipped cream and a candy cane.

So wherever your warm winter sips take you I wish you health, happiness and celebrations that engage all your senses this holiday season.

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer, Reiki Master and Reflexologist (www.feetmatter.ca). She is also a woman processing the death of her 35 year old wife. To heal she has invented a seriously disheveled super hero version of herself and started a blog. To read her soggy Thursday capers go to www.captaingrief.com and be ready to laugh and cry along with her!





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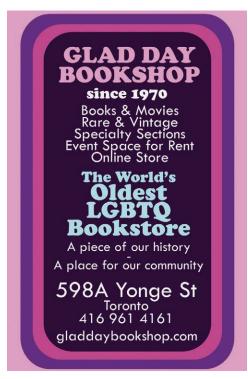
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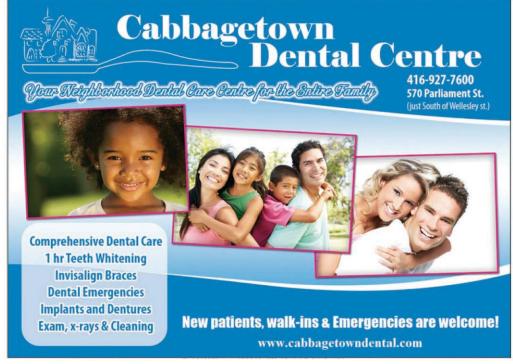
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The nights have gotten longer, the weather colder, the dampness seeping into your bones, and if it's not snowing, then the rain is freezing. Getting up to darkness and coming home to darkness takes its toll. It's winter, and unless you are an avid outdoors person, with skiing, skating, or snowmobiling keeping your energy up, it's likely your least favourite of the four seasons. My preferred way to deal with this often gloomy time of year is to stock up on booze and books, put the extra comforter on my bed and retreat from the world until the first leaves come out on the trees. Join me as I tantalize your five senses with the perfect hibernation that will get you through the frigid, dark days and nights.



gight is our most dominant sense. My favourite sights this time of year are a Christmas tree lit up and sparkling, crackling fires, fluffy snowflakes tumbling down and the peaceful, pristine winter wonderland the aftermath creates. If you are lucky enough to have a working fireplace, buy a



bundle of wood from your local grocery store, or Farmers' Market, take a quick look on YouTube to learn how to build the perfect blaze and away you go just make sure the flue is open. You can

always go the artificial log route if you prefer things a little simpler.

If you have a fireplace, but it's not in working order, you can fill it with candles, just be sure to put them in a tinfoil pan to make clean-up after easy. You could decorate the pan so it's a little more festive, or pile cut logs around it to obscure it. If you feel like treating yourself to an amazing gift this holiday season, splurge on a stylized gas fireplace, like Ponton's (www.pontonliving.eu/fireplace1eng.html) gorgeous indoor fire pillar. Another nice alternative to open flame is to get yourself one of the pink Himalayan salt lamps. My sister got me one a handful of Christmases back and I love the warm glow it emits, which is also good for combating all the electronic radiation we are exposed to from all our handy, techy gadgets surrounding us.

My favourite thing to do while sitting by a fire, real or otherwise, is to curl up with a glass of wine, scotch or port and a new book. This time of year is also ideal for catching up on all the movies and TV you've been meaning to watch, but never seemed to find the time to.

Have a friend over for a bottle of wine. Invest in a board game or two—the classics like Clue (a family tradition for me and mine), Scrabble and Monopoly have experienced a real resurgence. Toronto has many great game stores, with Snakes and Lattes (www.snakesandlattes.com) being my all time fave. Treat yourself to that special game from childhood, as laughter and good company are the boon to an enjoyable hibernation.

Our lives are so sight focused that we often forget about indulging our other senses. So let's close our eyes and be still for a few moments.

A Listen N

ften the next sense that kicks in as soon as we close

our eyes, is hearing. Sound can be quite emotionally evocative—it creates mood. My favourite winter sound is the crunch snow makes beneath



my feet as I trudge home to my cozy cave.

Choosing your own personal soundtrack can easily create the ideal retreat for you. I love to cook to Jazz (Nina, Ella, and Billie are my faves), chill-out to ambient while reading a good book, or put on some lively classical, especially during the holidays. Each creates a different mood for me.

There are so many free radio stations out there nowadays that you can easily sample different styles and discover new songs

for your playlist. My favourite on iTunes in the Ambient section is called Ambient Popsicle, by Groovera.com. I use my phone's Shazam app to capture the tracks I love, zip over to the iTunes store, buy them and immediately have the perfect background for my mellow moods, dinner parties and wine dates. I haven't bought a single song I don't absolutely love for well over five years now.

Another fantastic thing to listen too are audio books. There is such an incredible selection of titles out there now, it's great for the busy hibernator to catch up on some reading while doing other household projects like cooking, baking, or wrapping gifts.

1 Smell N

Mell evokes emotion and triggers memories. One of the things I love about winter is the scents that waft by: food simmering on the stove, treats baking in the oven and the freshness of evergreen.

Scents can turn us on, energize us, excite us, or calm us, taking away a stressful day. Aromatherapy via essential oils or incense can be a wonderful way to perk up a gloomy day, or cut the tension of a hectic holiday schedule. Here are five commonly found, heady scents that should keep you well balanced during the dark months ahead.

Feeling run down and worn out? **Peppermint** is excellent for mental fatigue and depression, refreshing the spirit, stimulating the mind and improving concentration.

In a bit of a panic, or feeling overextended? Lavender has a calming effect on nerves, relieves tension, depression, panic

and nervous exhaustion. It's excellent for headaches, migraines and insomnia.

Feeling a bit Grinchy, or are the kids overexcited about Santa's visit? **Orange** is a sunny and radiant oil, bringing happiness and warmth to the mind and helps people to relax, and children to sleep at night.

Continuing that feeling of joy, **Rose** will make your heart grow three sizes big. Damask rose oil soothes and harmonizes the mind and helps with depression, anger, grief, fear, nervous tension and stress and at the same time

boosts sensuality, self-nurturing, self esteem.

At this time of year I personally love **Cedarwood**, a deep woodsy smell that grounds me and makes me feel like I've

just received a big masculine hug, and the sexy **Ylang Ylang**, which perks me up from physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, calming my overly chatty mind.

Smell leads us naturally to taste, as once your nose gets excited it's a short jaunt to the kitchen to turn wonderful smells into delicious treats for the stomach.



here is a reason we are drawn to comfort foods in the dead of winter—they warm us up from the inside and make us feel satisfied. Oatmeal, pancakes, French toast, hot-cross buns and quiche for breakfast; grilled cheese, a croque monsieur and soup for lunch; stew, chili, potpie, mashed potatoes—sweet or regular—and oven-roasted root veggies for dinner. Hungry yet?

During our year-long look at the healing properties of plants I've

discovered that there are four essential herbs that no kitchen should be without if you want to stay healthy.





can combat colds, soothe sore throats and calm upset stomachs. Drinking it as tea creates a magical elixir; simply simmer some slivers of ginger in water for five minutes, cool slightly and drink. Add a dollop of local honey to supercharge its benefits.

Basil, Oregano and Thyme are other wonderful smelling and tasting super-herbs that are also anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and anti-inflammatory. Most of us are familiar with these Italian seasonings, using them in sauces and to spice up meat and pasta dishes.

Another herb, which may be a little uncommon in Western kitchens, but has been used for its miraculous health benefits for centuries in the East, is **turmeric**. Most of us familiar with the yellow spice consume it in curries, another great dish for the season. Known for fighting depression, reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes, it also combats cancer. Turmeric's properties are best absorbed by the body when cooked with fat, like butter, olive or coconut oil, and milk. Sprinkle some on an avocado, dissolve it in a tablespoon of coconut oil before adding it to a smoothie, or stir it into olive

oil and then toss in fresh vegetables before roasting them. No winter hibernation would be complete without chocolate, am I right? I'm going to let this recipe do all the talking for me.

Orange and Cranberry Dark Chocolate Bark

Peels from 2 navel oranges, washed

- 3 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1 pound bittersweet chocolate (preferably 66%), chopped
- 1/2 cup unsalted roasted pistachios (2 1/2 ounces)
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1. Using a sharp knife, remove the bitter white pith from the orange peels and cut into 1/4-inch- strips. Transfer peels to a saucepan filled with cold water; bring to a boil, add the peels for 7 minutes. Drain. Repeat with fresh water, until orange peels are tender, about 15 minutes total.
- 2. Rinse out saucepan. Add 2 1/2 cups of the sugar, corn syrup and 2 cups of water and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add orange peels and simmer over low heat until slightly translucent, about 30 minutes.
- 3. Spread remaining 1 cup of sugar in a pie plate. Using a slotted spoon, lift the candied peels from the syrup and transfer to pie plate. Toss warm peels in sugar to coat thoroughly. Let peels cool completely in sugar, tossing occasionally, about 30 minutes.
- 4. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. In a double boiler set over a pot of simmering water, heat the bittersweet chocolate until two-thirds melted. Remove from heat. Stir chocolate with a rubber spatula until completely melted.
- 5. Spread warm chocolate on parchment paper to a rough 9-by-13-inch rectangle. Working quickly, so the chocolate doesn't set, pick out the orange peels. Scatter orange peels, pistachios and dried cranberries evenly over melted chocolate; gently tap the cookie sheet on the counter to flatten the chocolate and allow the toppings to sink in slightly. Refrigerate for about 15 minutes, until firm. Cut or break the bark into pieces and serve.

Touch ~

ouch is arguably our most erotic sense. We often forget how electric touch can be until we are caressed by a lover. No lover? No worries, I have a few wonderful solutions to pamper yourself, especially in this season where our skin takes a real beating from the elements of frigid weather and dry heat.



One of the best things to treat yourself to in the cold months is a nice hot bath. Brew a tea, put on your favourite tunes, or grab a good book—audio books mean you don't have to worry about turning the pages with wet fingers, just don't drop your iPad in the tub! You can get a special caddy to rest it all on, a wonderful qift to yourself or someone else to make bath time special.

Sea Salt or Epsom Salt baths are fantastic for detoxifying. If you consider stress as a toxin, then this type of bath is perfect for getting rid of that toxic build-up. Epsom salt is said to be able to help with the circulatory system as well as improving nerve functions. Taking a regular salt bath is a simple way to improve your health and well-being.

Essential Oils bath. Remember those magical properties we discussed a few moments ago when we were talking about your nose? Adding any of those oils to your soothing soak will increase the benefits tenfold as you immerse yourself in their healing properties. Turn your tub time into a full-on sensory sensation just by adding 2-5 drops.

Been around sick people all day, rode the germ infested TTC and now feel the sniffles or sore throat coming on just in time to ruin your days off? Try a **Hydrogen Peroxide** bath. Also referred to as an oxygen detox bath, hydrogen peroxide is antibacterial and antiviral. And it will bubble and fizz, adding a new dimension to your delightful dip.

Run your water as hot as you can stand it and immerse yourself for half-an hour, or until the water starts to get cool. Once you're done give yourself a good rubdown with fresh towels, a nice light moisturizing cream and then slip into something more comfortable.

Let's talk for a moment about sheets, bathrobes, slippers, duvets, hot water bottles and teddy bears. Yes, teddy bears. If you don't have a special someone to slip into bed and cuddle with during the winter months then these things will make a great substitute. Sheets with a thread count 1,200 and up will feel great next to your naked skin. Make them flannel, or invest in pajamas or a bathrobe of the same warm fuzzy cloth and you'll be in heaven. Add slippers or thick socks and your tootsies will thank you.

I cannot tell you how luxurious it feels to nestle beneath my down duvet—they are a must-have for this chilly time of year. Keep an eye out for post Christmas sales and snag a good one. I prefer them sewn into a patterns of squares so when you wash them, all the down doesn't get displaced.

And for the quintessential snuggle-buddy? A hot water bottle, maybe with a cashmere cover, or a teddy bear made of faux fur. Better yet, find a hot water bottle cover that IS a stuffed animal. Trust me on this one—next best thing to a lover!

Now that you are all nestled in bed, with a full tummy, a body and mind empty of stress, smelling good enough to eat and cozied up to a good book, sexy company, or your new teddy bear, enjoy your hibernation and we'll see you in the spring.

Jeff Harrison is the editor of this magazine.

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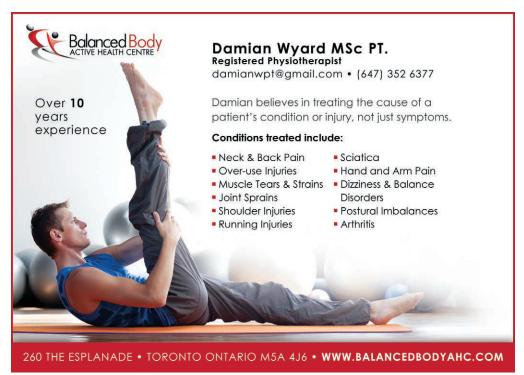
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NATUROPATHY

by Shelley A. Harrison

This year at PinkPlayMags, we have been exploring the many gifts of plants in our healthcare. For our final installment of the Healing Power of Plants we will wrap it all together with a practice that works with plants in many forms and beyond: Naturopathy.



he name itself literally translated it means "nature-disease." Hmm, is that kinda like sicking nature on the disease? Go get'em! The term was coined back in 1895 by John Scheel, an MD in the U.S., and then purchased by Benedict Lust, a German who started out with humble beginnings in life as a waiter in Geneva, and New York. He fell ill, so he returned home to work with one of the famous forefathers of natural cures, Father Sebastian Kneipp, a Catholic priest in Germany. Kneipp had developed the "water cure" or hydrotherapy techniques and also used botanical treatments, diet, and exercise. The Kneipp society still exists today and trains practitioners in its methods (www.kneipp.com).

Lust was cured by Kneipp's methods, and became a fervent believer in natural medicine. Prompted by Father Kneipp he returned to the U.S. and went on to become renowned as the forefather of Naturopathy in America. He opened an early health food store, published magazines promoting hydrotherapy and nature cure, graduated from Homeopathic and Osteopathic colleges in 1901 and 1902 and opened the first naturopathic medical school in the world in New York City: the American School of Naturopathy. He founded the American Naturopathic Association, and in 1918 he published the Universal Naturopathic Encyclopedia for drugless therapy, and also published Nature's Path magazine. He opened health resorts and even advocated nude sun bathing. He got arrested several times for this among other things—not easy to be a pioneer in conservative times!

From its roots in the Natural Cure movement in Europe, to Naturopathy in the US, the practice spread, and by 1920 it was even well established in Canada. But the path of nature wasn't always an easy one.

In the US, the obvious surge in enthusiasm for naturopathy from 1902 to the '30s, was reflected in the number of states that licensed the practice: Naturopaths became regulated under naturopathic or drugless practitioner laws in 25 states. After the '30s however, Naturopathy went into decline due to the advent of penicillin and other so called "miracle drugs" that increased the popularity of modern

drugs" that increased the popularity of modern medicine. There came a surge of attacks on the practice's lack of grounding in medical science and research; 1940-1963 the American Medical Association campaigned against medical systems outside of its scope practice, including naturopathy. This destructively effective. and by 1958 licensure had dropped from 25 to 5 states! In 1968 the United States Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare issued a report concluding that naturopathy was not grounded in medical science and that naturopathic education was inadequate to prepare graduates to make appropriate diagnosis and provide treatment. This is quite a

66

Even the thought of bringing a child into the world can stir up all kinds of root and sexual chakra concerns.

contrast from the professional standing we see in modern naturopathy.

"

The revival of this drugless form of medicine followed the revolution in consciousness and break with the conventions of the '50s, onward into the '60s and '70s. The natural health movement was healthcare's expression of the "back to the land" movement and vegetarianism, which was inspired by the influx of Eastern spirituality, especially yoga, and an emphasis on arts rather than sciences.

In Canada laws regulating naturopathic practice were enacted in Ontario by 1925. A federal organization to represent the profession was developed called the Canadian Association for Naturopathic Medicine (CAND) and has been representing the profession's interests in Canada since 1955.

Similarly, after the Second World War health care in Canada moved away from a more natural approach, focusing on the advances in surgical techniques, the introduction of antibiotics and the growth of the pharmaceutical industry. However, in the last twenty years, public desire for greater control in the healthcare process and a growing dissatisfaction with high-tech solutions has resulted in a resurgent interest in the natural methods of preventive care. This trend has increased demand for naturopathic services as people seek ways to improve their health, cope with day-to-day stresses and avoid illness.

Natural Cures Rebloom

In Canada we have two schools that train NDs. The first one, the Ontario College of Naturopathic Medicine (OCNM)

was founded in 1978 right here in Toronto. At first it only offered training to chiropractors,

dentists and medical doctors, but by 1983, the first four-year, full-time program was offered and enrolment was expanded to include students with a University degree who had completed the appropriate prerequisites. In 1992, the college changed its name to the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM). Application rates to the program have grown over 10 times since 1991.

which illustrates how quickly interest and demand for this approach is spreading. In 2000 the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine opened in British Columbia reflecting the growing demand for naturopathic doctors across Canada.

Nana Jokura

Every year, graduates step out into the world of Canadian healthcare ready to bridge the gap between conventional care, and what doctors call CAMs, or Complimentary and Alternative Modalities. Nana Jokura is one such graduate. I met Jokura in December 2012, when we both attended training in Craniosacral Therapy, specializing in work for conception, pregnancy, birth, and postnatal care. I was thrilled to hear she was opening her own clinic just two doors away from my brother's apartment, my usual landing pad when in Toronto.

Jokura, is a licensed Naturopathic Doctor and graduate of the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto where she graduated in May 2012. She is a member of OAND (Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors), CAND (Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors), and the Association of Perinatal Naturopathic Doctors (APND). She started her practice at 1533 Danforth Avenue at Coxwell, but in April of this year she opened Accept Wellness at 120 Carlton Street at Jarvis.

So what exactly does an ND do? "Naturopathic Doctors in general look at the whole person including physical, mental and emotional health, environmental and social factors," explains Jokura. "My particular passion is to work with people at their core level of healing. I help with physical and immediate concerns, but there is always something deeper going on. Symptoms are messages from the body. Sometimes people are aware of what that deeper thing is, and other times it's a process of discovering it together. Basically what does the physical symptom tell us about the person's inner state? I love to create a space where people can be honest with themselves, discover their true nature so they can live in harmony with themselves and others."

Jokura also specializes in working with issues around fertility. "Even the thought of bringing a child into the world can stir up all kinds of root and sexual chakra concerns," she shares. "Families using assisted reproductive techniques (ART) such as intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in vitro fertilization (IVF) often use acupuncture and naturopathic medicine to significantly improve their chances of success."

A mom herself, I asked her if she felt comfortable working with non-traditional families. "I'm sensitive to the many additional challenges LGBTQ families face when starting families. The 519 offers courses for LGBTQ family planning including Dykes Planning Tykes, Daddies and Papas 2B and Queer and Trans Family planning (www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca/programs.cfm). Of course once people get pregnant, I help them have a vibrant pregnancy, wonderful birth and provide postpartum care to keep everyone healthy and happy."

Healing is a Journey

To become a modern ND at an accredited Naturopathic College, you are required to have pre-medical university

level courses, and once you're enrolled you're looking at a very full time four-year post-graduate program. You learn anatomy, physiology, western pathologies, pharmacology and physical clinical examinations, including gynecology similar to conventional medical school. Additionally you are trained in nutrition, acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, botanical or herbal medicine, homeopathy, lifestyle counseling, and hydrotherapy. There are two sets of licensing examinations: one after second year, and the other after graduation, plus there is a board licensing examination.

Jokura's undergraduate degree was in songwriting at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. She felt that her work in the arts offered her a unique perspective in a medical career. "My background as a musician allowed me to really develop the skill of listening," she says, "which is critical when I am working with clients. The subtleties of how someone expresses themselves is often more significant than what they say, similar to how a musician emotes when singing, or plays certain dynamics and with a certain attitude. Music also requires incredible discipline, which I certainly needed to get through my training and to set up the clinic."

Witnessing her mother's own journey with cancer is what prompted her to move from the arts, to healthcare. "I saw my mother deal with her cancer by using conventional medicine and also trying to self-prescribe natural therapies. We didn't even know that there were naturopathic doctors who could help her select herbs and nutritional supplements that would work in co-operation with the other treatments she was using," she says. Observing her mother's illness also tuned her in to the deeper dimensions of disease. "I was also able to recognize a deep pattern in her that presented a huge obstacle in her healing. In that moment I realized that I wanted to help other people in their healing journey and make a real difference in people's lives."

Bridging Communities

Now that Naturopathy's popularity is on the rise, do Naturopathic doctors sense competitiveness from conventional doctors? "I find many medical doctors are very open to communicating with NDs," Jokura says, "because there is an understanding that we are all on the same team for the patient's care. Patients will often bring in their results from medical tests, or will go see their MDs for tests that could help us get to the bottom of certain symptoms." She sees the role of NDs as providing a bridge between the mainstream healthcare, and the alternative systems. "We are trained in the languages of both and are always looking at possible interactions and safety."

When I asked Jokura if she worked with plants in her own practice, she replied enthusiastically, "I love herbs! I recommend prescriptions of teas and herbal tinctures all the time. Plants have a way of dealing with physical concerns, but also offer energetic healing properties. Their effects are multifaceted."

She also sees the role plants play in homeopathy, which is

one of the modalities NDs are trained in. "Homeopathy is based on the idea of like curing like, and looks at the totality of symptoms," she states. "It works on an energetic level, allowing the person's innate healing capacity to be turned on. Sometimes the homeopathic version of a plant is better

Craniosacral Therapy

indicated than the crude herb." Many homeopathic remedies are taken from plants.

I'm excited that Jokura has brought her clinic to the downtown area, and so close to the hub of the LGBTQ community. She is enthused about being downtown too, "I love being so central and so close to the subway and transit. Being accessible is important to me. I grew up in downtown Toronto and I love the diversity of the city. This is my hometown and I want to do my part in developing a stronger community, where we all feel more connected. It's a bit corny, but I want to improve the health of our city, and country, one person at a time," she says.

One thing you may not see at other clinics is the community acupuncture program. If someone could really use naturopathic medicine, Jokura does her best to get them care by offering compassionate rates and community acupuncture—affordable treatment in a group setting. "We love community outreach," she says. "We get invited into the community where we offer workshops on stress, immunity, sleep or any other health topic at work places or community organizations. If anybody is interested in improving the health of their team, it's pretty easy to set up by giving us a call. We also have health talks at the clinic that are open to the public. I'm going to have a talk Wednesday January 8th at 6pm called Love, Energy & Life: the power of naturopathic

medicine." I myself, will also be giving one on Energy Healing on Thursday January 30th, hosted by Accept Wellness!

As we wrapped up, I asked Jokura if Naturopathy has anything to offer HIV/AIDS patients. "NDs can improve quality of life. Acupuncture, craniosacral therapy and homeopathy work

on an energetic level and therefore I feel confident using them while someone is on meds. There are also many nutritional things that can help. Most people living with HIV/AIDS carry huge emotional burdens, and often visits involve a lot of listening, counseling and body work," she says.

I think these developments are exciting, considering how overburdened our wonderful free healthcare system seems to be getting, with longer wait times and stressed care-workers. As healthcare consumers, Canadians are either feeling more afraid of conventional care, or taking more responsibility for their own health by addressing lifestyle concerns with practitioners like NDs who have more time to offer since they are not constrained by OHIP, and are trained in areas like nutrition that MDs don't have a focus on.

"Without health, there's nothing. You need to be alive and well to share your gifts with the world. And we need everyone's unique gifts," says Jokura. And she's right.

Accept Wellness Natural Family Health: "Helping families and professionals get the most out of life." Nana Jokura, B.Mus, ND, Naturopathic Doctor & CranioSacral Therapy, 120 Carlton St. #210 (at Jarvis), www.acceptwellness.com.

Check with different Naturopaths to find one that meets your needs: www.homeopathycanada.com/homeopathic-practitioners-directory.

Shelley A. Harrison is an Energy Healer in Ottawa. She graduated

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

















Like many other American cities, Buffalo, New York, is undergoing a development boom in the downtown core as people are migrating back not only for an emerging arts and culture scene, but to call it home again as well. Art galleries, theatres, live music venues, restaurants, and other independent retailers have sprung up throughout. While some might not have even considered visiting Buffalo based on their own preconceived notions from the past, it's now time to take note of some of the grand changes taking place in this city a mere two hours from Toronto.



It was once home to the most millionaires per capita, more than any other American city and much of the architecture of that time period is still very prominent. In fact, this current revival is incorporating many of those historic buildings that have remained vacant for so many years. Many of these properties once had connections to the thriving brewery scene of the late 1800s, so it's interesting to see this new resurgence including the development of several new microbreweries as well.

Brews and Bites

Buffalo Brew Pub, New York State's oldest brew pub, opened its doors in 1986 and started to chip away at the monopoly control of the few major players. The newly designated downtown Brewery District (www.buffalobrewerydistrict.com)



Pearl Street Grill & Brewery

is fast becoming a destination point for both locals and tourists alike. At the nucleus is the mega-complex Pearl Street Grill & Brewery. This multilevel brew pub features top notch pub grub, the largest



Pearl Street Speakeasy

patio in the city, and a selection of microbrews distilled right on the premises. Established in 1996, the wraparound outdoor balcony is somewhat reminiscent of those in New Orleans, and helps to connect the multiple service bars on the premises. The historic building was constructed during the late 1800s in what was then known as the Canal District, often referred to as "the most evil square mile in America" at the time.

The Flying Bison Brewery opened on Ontario Street in 2000, but plans are to relocate to 840 Seneca Street in the downtown Larkin District in the coming year. As well, Big Ditch Brewing Co. has selected a downtown Buffalo building to be its headquarters and production facility. It's ideally situated on Ellicott Street across from the recently opened Italian eatery Tappo, operated by local celebrity restaurateur Michael Andrzejewski. Other breweries worthy of note are Southern Tier Brewing Company, Community Beer Works, and Cosmic Frog Handcrafted Ales. While most breweries are happy to offer a short guided tour of their facilities, die-hard beer enthusiasts will want to check out the "Brewer for a Day" event at Ellicottville Brewing Company and the "Good Beer Club" at Mister Goodbar. As well, annual beer events include Beerology at the Buffalo Museum of Science, featuring presentations on beer-related science and brewing history, as well as Buffalo Brewfest (www.buffalobeerweek.com).

Beer enthusiasts wanting to get a taste of what Buffalo is all about can check out one of the many beer focused bars scattered throughout the city, such as Alternative Brews, Amherst Ale House, Blue Monk, Buffalo Tap Room, Coles, Colter Bay, and Sterling Place Tavern. Despite this growing trend to drink local, Labatt Blue still accounts for approximately one quarter of the beer sold in the area. Labatt USA is headquartered in Buffalo, and it's the only American city where a Canadian beer is most popular.

Buffalo has also become a great dining destination. Sample Restaurant in Allentown offers a menu of plates for sharing, Betty's on Virginia Street is where you'll find hearty home-cooked meals with vegan options on the menu, while Seabar Restaurant on Ellicott Street serves up nouveau sushi creations, fresh seafood, and artisan sakes. Anchor Bar is a must visit as this is where the original Buffalo Wing was created back in 1964. If time allows, two up and coming new areas to explore are Amherst Street between Delaware and



Brawler's

Elmwood and Hertel Avenue between Delaware and Colvin. This area of Amherst Street is referred to locally as Black Rock, where places like Black Rock Kitchen and Sportsmen Tavern are leading the revitalization. The strip along Hertel Avenue is known as Little Italy, which is where you'll find great eateries, bakeries, and espresso shops.

Amazing Architecture

Another great thing to do in Buffalo is to take a day to just explore the city's architecture. Approximately 80 sites are included on the National Register of Historic Places, and many of the major American architects of the 19th and early 20th century built masterpieces in Buffalo, most of which are still standing. The Guaranty Building designed by Louis Sullivan was one of the world's first skyscrapers, and the Ellicott Square Building was once the largest office building in the world when it first opened. The Hotel Buffalo (originally the Statler Hotel), built by August Esenwein and James A. Johnson, was the first hotel in the world to feature a private bath in each room, and it's currently being restored to reopen as an upscale hotel. The H. H. Richardson Complex (originally the New York State Asylum for the Insane) was the largest commission designed by architect Henry Hobson Richardson, and there are current plans to develop the space into a mixed use arts centre and boutique hotel. Buffalo City Hall is a spectacular art deco building designed by George Dietel and John J. Wade, and offers great city views from the upper deck. As well, there are several buildings designed by the renowned Frank Lloyd Wright, second in number only to Chicago. Architectural Walking Tour maps are available both online and in the offices of the Visit Buffalo tourism office. Joel runs Buffalo History Tours (www.buffalohistorytours.com) and is a great source of information on both architecture and brewing.

Since 2009, there's been a significant move to reclaim Buffalo's waterfront to be transformed into a focal point for social and recreational activity. One of the latest development announcements for the city is Buffalo RiverWorks, which will see a few of the skyline's iconic unused grain elevators



Pearl Street Dinner

converted into a large scale entertainment and recreation complex. Grain elevators were invented here in 1842, and remain the largest collection in the world, inspiring architects and painters from abroad. Located at 333 Ganson St, this prime waterfront attraction will house restaurants, a brewery, a performing arts venue, skating rinks, an artificial sand beach, and several bars including one high above, reachable only by the outside circular staircase. Future plans may also call for a 100-room hotel that would incorporate an L-shaped feed mill, which



would serve as sleeping quarters. RiverWorks will add to the nearby already established Silo City complex.

Another great outing is the Olmsted Park and Parkway System, created by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in the late 19th century. It was fashioned after a similar system in Paris, and remains the oldest coordinated park system in the country. This collection of inter-connecting public parks led to Buffalo being referred to as the "City of Trees." During the 20th century, the city began calling itself the "City of Light," both because of the plentiful abundance of hydroelectric power made possible by nearby Niagara Falls, and because it was the first city in America to have electric street lights.

Out and About

However, Buffalo's most common moniker, "The Queen City," is definitely akin to how things are shaping up at present. With New York being one of the earlier states to legalize gay marriage, the city has welcomed an increasing amount of LGBTQ tourists. Buffalo consists of 32 different neighborhoods, including the pedestrian-oriented, mixed use neighborhood of Elmwood Village (www.foreverelmwood.com), and the gay-friendly arts community of Allentown

(www.allentown.org). These two adjacent locales offer a plethora of nightlife options and also host their own annual street festivals: Elmwood Festival of the Arts and Allentown Art Festival. The legendary Cathode Ray has been a homo hangout for decades, and around the corner is Fugazi's, a smaller bar frequented by the younger set. Also recommended are The Underground on Delaware Avenue and Q on Allen Street, both friendly pub-style haunts popular with the locals. For the wee hours, Marcella's is the biggest of the gay bars with drag performances, DJ's, and dancing most nights.

Adding to the queer city vibe is Buffalo's magnificent arts community, home to over 50 private and public art galleries, and over 20 professional theatre companies. The Albright-Knox Museum is among the country's oldest public arts institutions, specializing in modern and contemporary art split



Lafayette Lobby Elevators

between two separate wings. Across the street is the Burchfield Penny Art Center, celebrating the works of Charles E. Burchfield, in addition to showcasing a variety of Western New York State and Ontario artists. A must see is Shea's Performing Arts Theater on Main Street, a stunning example of 1920s Neo-Spanish Baroque that remains a Buffalo landmark, Buffalo also has a significant

musical history, claiming fame to Rick James, The Goo Goo Dolls, and Spyro Gyra. As well, queer indie artist Ani DiFranco operates



PanAmerican Grill

her Righteous Babe record label here, along with Babeville, a mid-size concert hall located within a renovated church where up and emerging acts of various genres often perform. Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center is located around the back side of Babeville, and presents several queer themed art exhibitions and film screenings. The intimate quarters of Buffalo United Artists also has been presenting queer-slanted showcases of theatre, music, and other endeavours for 20 years at their downtown location.

Next time you're thinking of a getaway, why not shuffle off to Buffalo for a weekend of boys, babes, and brews!



Lafayette Bridal Suite

Getting There

orget about driving and catch the double-decker Megabus from downtown Toronto to downtown Buffalo in about three hours. It's a bit longer than driving, but a lot more relaxing. Once you're in Buffalo there's no real need for a vehicle as most everything is in easy reach by foot, transit, or a short cab ride. If driving, the Peace Bridge from Fort Erie is usually quicker than crossing at Niagara Falls, but you can also call 1-800-715-6722 to compare border crossing times.

Accommodations

Lafayette Hotel (www.thehotellafayette.com) offers two floors of luxurious hotel accommodations. The recently restored Lafayette was built for the Pan-American Exposition, and today emits that same aura of the past. The property contains a pub, fine dining restaurant, a boutique bar, and Butterwood Sweet and Savory, located in the basement that was once a speakeasy. Up the street Lofts on Pearl (www.loftsonpearl.com) is a boutique hotel featuring 31 very spacious loft style hotel suites. Both properties offer five-star luxury at two-star prices.

Information

Buffalo Tourism – www.visitbuffaloniagara.com Buffalo Nightlife – www.cityofnightbuffalo.com

Events

National Buffalo Wing Festival – www.buffalowing.com Taste of Buffalo – www.tasteofbuffalo.com

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio

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







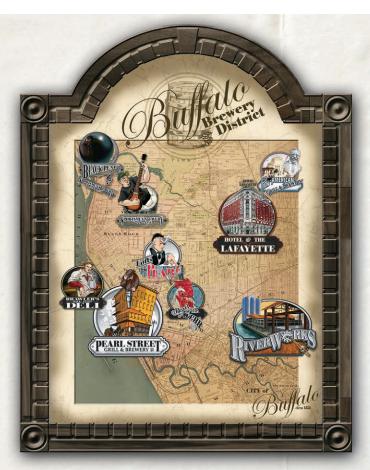


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Brossard



by cee sando

Nicole Brossard's body of work and numerous accolades definitely precede her. The French-Canadian poet, author, editor, screenwriter, director and publisher has over 30 books to her name, and has been awarded two Governor General's Awards for poetry, as well as le Prix Athanase-David for Lifetime Achievement and the Canada Council's Molson Prize. Most recently she was named Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of her contributions to literature, and is the first North American writer to receive the prestigious Prix International de la Littérature Francophone Benjamin Fondane.

hen asked about how it feels to be publicly acknowledged for her incredible accomplishments Brossard responds simply, "It is for sure pleasant and stimulating to see my work recognized, but as I always say, at the end of the day literature has to be the real winner because it is through literature that the pleasure of words and the questioning of reality can intertwine positively with the readers' own narrative. When this happens, it is the most gratifying reward for a writer."

Brossard has often been identified as a lesbian feminist poet and novelist, but when asked about such labels she calls out the limiting nature of such a title and discusses being informed by numerous outside factors, language and history. First and foremost Brossard is a poet: "It is interesting to notice that whenever the feminist or the lesbian in me could not find the proper words, the poet in me would." This identity distinction informs her work in fundamental ways—Brossard does not necessarily write about subject matter that is lesbian or feminist, but instead approaches her themes from her distinct perspective.

The Poetry Foundation remarks that
Brossard's work "explores feminism, desire, and their
connection to the structure and flexibility of language."
Explores is a perfect description for the way in which the
writer considers everyday objects and experiences in new
and unexpected ways. The beauty of her work is that nothing
is sacred—the writer leaves no stone unturned. The writer not
only questions current realities and systems within society,
she questions the very language, words and punctuation
she is using to question these realities. She specifically calls
out the French language in the way that it genders all, while
concurrently rendering the feminine invisible. It is in the
questioning that we find beauty in Brossad's work.

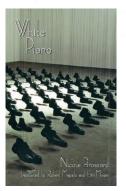
When asked about what feminist consciousness brought to her writing, she says, "Suddenly what seems obvious as tradition, habits and values becomes twisted, fictitious and meaning itself seems to shift in another existential spectrum. I have written poetry, novels and essays having in mind vital questions about the construction of reality and the double bind in which most of the women find themselves about values in a patriarchal system... I see myself as an explorer in language."

When she felt that there were not enough outlets for women to let their voices be heard, Brossard decided to found a newspaper specifically for feminist voices: Les Têtes de Pioche as well as a publishing house L'Intégrale, éditrice.

Says Brossard, "While Les Têtes de Pioche was created to make space for women's creativity and their version of reality (testimony, analysis, thoughts and ideas), the main objective for creating L'Intégrale, éditrice, was to publish short radical feminist essays that would deal with language, the imaginary and the symbolic."

In her review of *Believer*, Kate Zambreno describes the work as "lyrical descriptions of lesbian desire coupled

with a continued meditation on language. Brossard conflates writing with lovemaking [...] the poems forming a grammar of desire, like a diagrammed body." Brossard's work is just as boundary pushing today as it was in the '80s when she wrote fearlessly about lesbian desire at a time when such writing was deemed controversial. "I have never written about lesbian desire and energy with a fear of negative consequences. On the contrary, I felt that lesbian desire was so powerful, beautiful and subversive that it had to be shared as a vital dimension of consciousness and in a sense of integrity (*l'intégrale*)."



So what's next for this outstanding literary talent? Nicole Brossard is currently working on a novel and book of poetry concurrently. Of the novel centred around the notion of autobiography she says, "My relationship with prose is very special. Every five years I indulge in a novel. The need of prose wakes up in me and suddenly prose makes its way in my thoughts. Writing prose calls for time and duration, while poetry is radical present allowing for the encounter of thoughts, images and sensations in a few words. Strangely, I am now in both the extreme present and the long-term present if I might say."

While of the book of poetry she says she is "exploring words like crowd, breathing, archives, words which I try to displace and reincarnate in the ephemeral and virtual environment which are ours." From all that Brossard has already accomplished, one can only imagine what amazing work we have yet to encounter from this prolific experimental writer.

Arts & lifestyle writer, wardrobe stylist and unicorn, cee (@theartofwor) is inspired by international travel, the ocean, runner's high, sashimi and that perfectly put together outfit.



HYPER-CULTURE

by Jaime Woo

s kids, a snow day was a joyous thing. Skipping school meant not having to change out of pajamas, instead plopping in front of the television and watching cartoons until dark. It was a spontaneous holiday, even if all we were taking a break from were childhood responsibilities.

Now as adults, there isn't the equivalent of a snow day: yes, working from home is easier than ever, but most companies still prefer employees making the trek in. It's too bad, because the technology we use to communicate remotely has become so much better. For meetings, I love **Google Hangout** because it packs so many features in for free. Not only is there voice and

video communication, but participants can share their screens with one another and even let others control their computer remotely.

While these features make it perfect for online meetings, Google Hangout isn't just for business purposes: it's a great way to connect with friends and family too. I remember the days when a long-distance call meant keeping an eye on the clock to make

sure it didn't get too expensive, but as with any teleconferencing, Google Hangout collapses the space between people so touching base becomes easier. It can also be used for remote problemsolving when you can't be physically there to help. The ability to guide someone else's computer remotely is perfect, for example, in helping people confused by computers learn how to use programs if it can't be done in person.

Best of all, Hangout isn't chained to just your laptop or desktop: Google has rolled out app versions so you can join in using a smartphone or tablet. I really appreciate this because it follows the idea of fitting form and function. Sitting in a computer chair is uncomfortable and being able

to lay on the couch or walk around while chatting feels more natural. We're at our desks and chairs too long anyhow. It's funny reflecting upon how quickly technology has evolved: just a decade ago could any of us have foreseen having the "video phones" that have been imagined in the past? The iPhone isn't even a decade old!

If you are travelling in the winter, there are apps



Google Hangout, not just for business purposes.

available to support your travel. One of the popular weather-based apps is Swackett, a visual weather report. While most smartphones come with weather apps already, what makes **Swackett** different is its confident and cool design. The app will figure

you will need sunglasses today
short sleeves are OK
you should probably carry an umbrela

Swackett... fun and practical.

out based on weather whether or not, for instance, you need to wear a sweater, jacket, or coat—a mashof those words is what gives the app its name Swackett. fans infographics and graphic design, this app will be a welcome addition to your phone.

If you are

travelling far, you might want to consider **Winter Survival Kit**, an app that allows you to store local emergency numbers, provides reminders should you get stuck in a storm—such as how much time



Winter Survival Kit app.

your engine can run before you run out of gas or when to clear the exhaust fume to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning—and gives a list of ways to help survive if stranded. Although the chances of this might be low, it's often better to be safe than sorry, especially when the app is free.

Each holiday season, one



of the most amusing and playful things is the fireplace channel, a television channel that displays a vibrant, roasting fireplace. Sure, digital logs don't replace the real things—and you miss out on the great smell of a fire—but it's not a bad substitute if you can't get an actual fire going. A couple of apps have also come out to continuously show images of roaring fireplaces. Now, a 10" screen isn't exactly the perfect size for a fake fire, but at least the option is there.

Finally, I'll take this opportunity to remind you of one of my favourite ways to use tablets like the iPad or Kindle Fire. Get a set of **3M Control strips**, which allow you to easily hang things to the wall and just as easily remove them without damaging



3M Control Strips.

the paint. They use a two-part Velcro-like system and the other half goes onto your tablet. Then you can hang it anywhere in your house. It's perfect for hands-free mounting in the kitchen so that you can follow recipes, or watch YouTube while preparing a meal.

Technology, after all, is best when it's available

as you need it, but out of the way once you're done. It allows more time to sit by the window and watch the snow fall, reminiscing of snow days past.

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







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THE BEAST WITHIN

CHRISTIAN BAINES

An excerpt from the novel.

REYLAN IS HUNTING FOR A QUICK AND CONVENIENT MEAL AT BLAZE, ONE OF HIS PREFERRED NIGHTCLUB HAUNTS ON THE OXFORD STREET GAY STRIP. BUT GETTING HIS PREY HOME MAY BE MORE COMPLICATED—AND BLOODY—THAN THIS VAMPIRE'S TYPICAL NIGHT OUT.

f Fantasy was an over-priced showcase of Sydney's most precious 'see or be seen' crowd then Blaze was a stream of hedonistic delights, corrupted further by a tacky West Hollywood sheen, as imagined by a designer who'd had never been within a hundred miles of the place. The neon show was frightening more Hong Kong than California - turning its lobby into a maw of the throbbing techno-driven beast that lay beyond its doors. Still, there were the delicious beasts within that beast. The elite bodies of Blaze. The blood bags of Blaze. Shallow though it may have been, this was a club not without its advantages.

Flashing the bouncer a smile, I was admitted with a polite flourish. I'm pretty, after all, and pretty's good for business. In front of me, two epicene boys, barely old enough to enter, strutted around with... glitter. Glitter, plastered over their faces and arms, their hair styled up and cemented in place like ghastly exotic birds. Escapees from Fantasy, perhaps? Show cockatiels belong in cages, children.

I quickly turned my attention to the chiselled beauties of mankind that crowded the room. Physically flawless — the pesky confines of mortality notwithstanding. It was rare to find half

a brain between them, but for blood that sweet, I was willing to forgo intelligent conversation. Then, there was the everpresent smattering of fine looking women, mingled throughout the posers and their admirers.

Decisions, decisions.

Seduction remains, without doubt, one of the safest forms of feeding available to our kind. I have taken to my bed women, men, white, black, Asian, young, old, fat, thin, muscular... any creed, colour, sexuality or physical type you care to nominate. It is only the taste of the blood that varies.

For example, men taste harder, bolder and fuller in flavour than women. This doesn't necessarily make their blood better,

and I've nothing in the world against women. But over decades of hunting, I have found the blood of men much easier to attain. Men are confident to go home with a stranger for a night of rough passion while women tend to balk at the prospect – an unchanging observation for as long as I've depended on their blood. Women are perceptive. Men are dumb – many adorably so.

Like the one who caught my eye, leaning on the bar just a few metres away, swilling expensive beer from a thin bottle. His short blonde hair shone immaculately in the pulsing lights. His legs snugly filled out dark blue jeans and his black shirt was tucked into a leather belt, laying bare his muscular chest and strong back. I could tell by the bored, lazy expression in his eyes. An easy, tasty meal. A meal named Rory, as a smile and quick introduction soon revealed.

I take great pride in my ability to summarise people at a glance, and Rory was more or less as he appeared. He was twenty-seven, infatuated with the gym, loved to party and knew none of the authors, musicians, or artists that I longed to speak of.

On the bright side, our lack of common interests allowed me to hand out half answers

while I focused on what was important — the veins, rising deliciously from his forearm to his shoulder. As I looked deeper, I could almost feel the warmth of his blood, unpolluted with drugs, save the little beer he was drinking. That body, lean, athletic and well-kept, was a brilliant store of health. Enough to last me two nights, if I was careful.

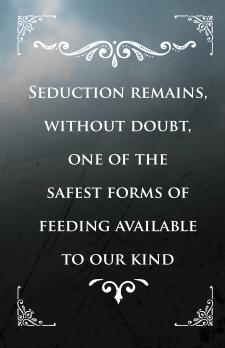
Now, do you understand why I love Blaze?

After a half hour's 'conversation', I was actually starting to enjoy Rory. He had a hearty laugh that matched his physical appeal and occasionally caught my attention with flashes of keen intelligence. A law graduate, completing his thesis at Macquarie,

he was trying hard not to bore me with details – despite the best pleas of my glazed over expression. Anything but the blow-by-blow description of some fitness class he taught. Please, I beg you. Make it stop!

Before the boxercise-induced aneurism could take hold completely, the blood flowing beneath his smooth flesh glowed hotter, and he put his beer down on the table. Before I could move – not that I tried – he leaned down and kissed me.

It is one thing to be kissed as a human, by someone gifted in the act. But for one of my kind, being kissed is a far more revealing experience. In that brief moment of intimacy, we can sample a mortal's blood without drawing a single drop. We can know their health, their quality and breeding,



their nature and mood - anything that may affect the blood's flavour, but remains invisible.

As long as his lips were against mine, Rory was happy to be explored. The aroma of his blood was so sweet I had to fight the temptation to bite his tongue right there and drain him. His hard, smooth body, damp with the sweat of dancing, slid over my lycra vest as he pushed deeper. He

put a hand on my back and worked his down, somehow forcing fingers inside unyielding pants, gently kneading the smooth cleft of my behind. Not wishing to seem frigid, I began a little exploration of my own, slipping a hand inside his belt.

"Ahem." The bartender winked at us. It was one of the modern club scene's elegant phrases summed up in a very simple act.

Time to get a room. Mine.

Rory made a striking figure, striding along Oxford Street towards my home, now wearing the black singlet that had hung from his belt inside the club.

I cut a nice figure myself, letting a little of my gifts pervade the air around us. In the pursuit of companions, one's appearance prior to the 'change' matters very little - a sly benefit brought on by centuries of rapid evolution. Once our predatory nature takes hold, it radiates with sexual magnetism. A lure, if you will. What's the use of eternal youth if you can't convince the world you're irresistible, after all?

As we weaved through the crowd at Taylor Square and met the privacy of Darlinghurst's darkened streets, I felt Rory throw a heavy arm over my shoulder. I hoped the man wasn't going to play clingy. I don't play well with clingy, no matter how beautiful - or drunk - it is.

My companion had no way to detect the sudden senses dulled by liquor. But I knew. I knew it was

I softened my steps, acute ears reaching out for anything nearby. Something accustomed to

didn't want to be seen.

Perhaps, something like

Rory towards a side street that took us off the main road and out of public view. I could partly cloak both of us, even from the prying eyes of another of my kind, but not for long. This enviable specimen of humanity was mine, damn it. I had seduced him, I would drink from him, and I was not inclined to share.

"Hey," my lunch called. I swear my fangs flashed

as I rounded on Rory with a furious glare. He was too drunk to notice. Idiot. You don't 'Hev' our kind when we're nervous. The consequences are typically... unpleasant.

'You want to have some

fun with me?" he teased.

"Yes, but we've got to keep moving." I sniffed the air. No scent - no sound anymore either. Had we lost whatever I thought I'd heard in the dark? I took Rory's hand again and tried to lead him away. But the man just smiled.

"Why not here?"

I stared at him. "What? No!" This was the last thing I needed - a drunken exhibitionist.

"Come on, man. There's nobody watching. It'll be hot."

I could barely contain my annoyance behind clenched teeth as Rory pawed at my shirt, his warm fingers dancing over the cool flesh of my waist. I tried to push him away, careful not to use my full preternatural strength. If I was already



I HAD SEDUCED HIM. I WOULD DRINK FROM HIM. AND I WAS NOT INCLINED TO SHARE.



facing some rival predator, lurking in the dark, I didn't need the complication of accidentally breaking my companion's ribs.

I gasped as Rory slid a hand inside my 'impenetrably' tight trousers and kissed me. I let him nuzzle me a moment, then forced him to break. "Not here. Not now."

Mumbling what sounded like an obscene description of precisely what he hoped to do to me 'here and now,' Rory grabbed my vest and yanked it up, his tongue cutting a slow, sensual dance down my chest. I shivered as cold air hit the pale, moistened skin. My companion lapped at my abs with warm, open kisses as he pulled open my belt and pants. He wasn't taking no for an answer.

I listened for the intruder once more, trying to shut out the mortal's lustful sighs as he explored me. Still nothing. Perhaps I'd imagined it, or 'it' had lost us. In any case, I'd soon lose my prey if I didn't get back into character. I closed my eyes and tried to relax.

"That's better," Rory grinned, as he took me in his mouth.

I wasn't convinced we were out of danger yet. With a sniff of the air, I was certain. Yes, something was out here now, and it was close. At least Rory was distracted. I shuddered as he yanked down my trousers, grabbing my backside with strong hands, pulling me deeper as his fingers teased me. I ran an appreciative caress over his biceps, shoulders and neck.

Then, in the dark, I saw the intruder's outline. He was roughly my height, but slouched, his manner almost tentative as he watched us. I tapped Rory's arm to get his attention, nodding at the intruder. "Excuse me, do you mind?"

No answer.

Rory quickly turned and shouted as I redressed, "Hey, are you deaf, mate? Piss off, will you?"

Still nothing.

Rory glanced back at me with a grin. "I think somebody wants to party with us."

This, I sincerely doubted.

My companion turned back to the figure with a cocky swagger. "Show us what you got, then."

A young man stepped tentatively from the darkness. The stench of cheap cigarettes hung from his clothes. His jeans were ripped, and he wore a stained and faded jacket that at one time had been blue. His hair was a mess of dark brown locks. The kid's face had been unshaven for just over a day, and his tongue bled from an accidental bite. I could smell it.

Rory shook his head, putting an arm around me again. "Jesus. You into rough trade, Rey?"

"Shut up!" the kid barked.

We startled as he waved a flick-knife at us.

Still, I was relieved. I'd had every nerve and fibre primed, ready to fight for my prey, yet my nemesis had turned out to be some unkempt delinquent too gutless to hold up a convenience store. He couldn't have been much more than twenty, probably still living with his parents in some suburban backwater in the outer west.

I almost pitied him.

"Your wallets, fags. Now!" He flashed the knife at Rory and tried to look intimidating. This was no easy feat, for while the mugger was almost six foot tall, Rory was several inches clear of that benchmark and almost as broad around the chest.

"Okay." Rory eased off of me and took out his wallet. Any trace of the drunk, muscle-bound horn dog, who moments before had been so focused on the worship of my flesh, was now gone as the situation sank in. "Just relax. It's okay, you can have it. Just be cool, alright?"

I had to admit, the man's calm confidence impressed me. Ego and alcohol were, just occasionally, a useful mix.

"I said now! You too." This time, the bastard pointed the knife at me.

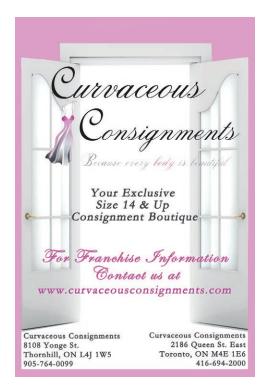
I slowly took out my wallet, the focus of my curiosity shifting from companion to thug. Surely, Rory wasn't intimidated? One swipe of those big hands and this discussion would be over. Hell, I wasn't bound by human limits. One punch from me would achieve the same outcome. But that was out of the question in front of the human. Plus, there was every chance the thief would remember it when he woke up. If he woke up.

But something was different now. Too different. The mugger was flinching, like a dog taking fright.

"Rory, get behind me and get ready to run..."

Christian Baines is a freelance writer with a love of fine fantasy, highbrow horror and sophisticated smut. Exiled from Sydney for not being named Bruce, he now lives and writes in Toronto.











Back in 1987 Patricia
Aldridge placed an ad in
the newspaper: "Take a
walk on the wildside. Who's
that girl? It could be you."

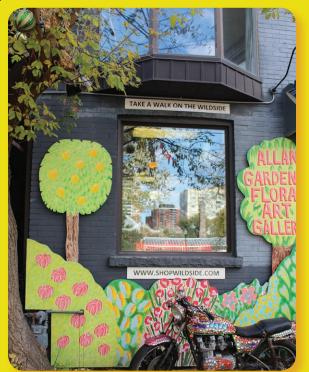


"I did it on a whim," says Aldridge. "And the phone rang off the hook."

Over twenty-six years later, Aldridge's business Take a Walk on the Wildside is still committed to servicing crossdressers, transvestites and transsexuals in a safe, sympathetic and fun environment.

But it wasn't easy back in the early days of her business when Aldridge could not get the larger newspapers in the city like *The Toronto Star* to run her ads. "They thought I was a dirty girl because I put makeup on men. And I was also a stripper," she says with a laugh. "I started in my living-room and I learned to be an entrepreneur as I went along. I was transforming four people a day for two hours each—that's makeup and women's clothes. Today I have a large selection of clothes, but back then I used my own clothes, which were my old stripper outfits, so I was making everyone into a stripper!"

Take a Walk on the Wildside has been at its current location on Gerrard Street East for the past twenty years, when Aldridge bought the charming Victorian building across from Allan Gardens. A bedazzled motorcycle sits out front to welcome visitors to the shop. There is also parking in the back for men who are too shy to use the front door. Aldridge once ran a hotel in the building but said she ultimately found the hotel too much work. "Back in the early



Patricia's store at 161 Gerrard Street East.

days when I had the hotel there were twenty-five guys here every Saturday night," she says. "But I got older—and nothing stays the same. Today I rent out four rooms, plus I have twenty-six lockers for rent so guys can store their female clothes. A lot of married men can't take their female clothes home."

Transformations, which include the makeup and clothes, start at \$300.00 for about an hour in the chair. "I used to charge one hundred and fifty dollars for makeup and renting the clothes," Aldridge says, "but now I just charge three hundred and you get to keep everything. I have a barber chair for makeup and when I sit them up and turn them around and they see themselves for the first time looking like a woman—I don't let them see themselves before I'm finished—they can't believe it."

And men who come in for a transformation can expect to be dressed by someone who knows what they are doing. "I graduated from The Ryerson Theatre School in Technical Production," says Aldridge, "so I know how to dress people. I know how to put on a corset. I take care of the whole experience."

Aldridge says that many of her customers are heterosexual men. "They can't tell their wife, so they dress up when no

one is around. Some have told me they do it while their family is at church." And many of these men have never told anyone about their crossdressing desires to anyone before coming into Take a Walk on the Wildside. "I try to give them the understanding they need," says Aldridge. "It was strange at first, without training I was suddenly a councilor to these men."

And many of the clothes Aldridge sells are only available at Take a Walk on the Wildside and through her website. "You can't get our clothes anywhere else because I design them," she says. "I have the clothes made with my pattern. And I make everything to fit me. I'm a big girl and a lot of customers are like me. This is a high specialty boutique—but not at Yorkville prices."

And after almost twenty-seven years, Aldridge has learned to make clothes that can weather the unique circumstances of her clientele. "See this shirt," she says, "it doesn't crease. You can bunch it up and hide it in glove compartment and it won't wrinkle."

However, Take a Walk on the Wildside is not just for men who want to dress like women. "A lot of women come into the store," says Aldridge. "Bigger women like me stop by because we

have larger sizes. And just the other day a woman who had cancer came in to look at our breast forms."

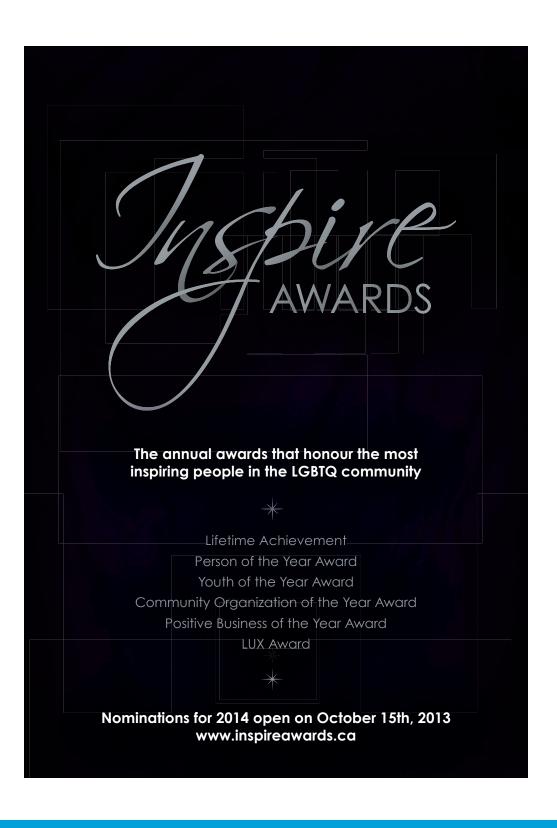
Is there anyone out there that Aldridge would like to get her hands on for one of her transformations? "I would love to transform Rob Ford," she says. "He could look just like Pamela Wallin, you know, they have the same round face."

Aldridge is not planning on retiring anytime soon. "I see twenty-five more years," Aldridge says, smiling. "That's not too unbelievable, is it? After all, I'm pretty happy doing what I'm doing. I used to think, what if people stop crossdressing? What would I do for a living? But I know that they're not going to stop."

Take a Walk on the Wildside, 161 Gerrard Street East, www.wildside.org.

Jeffrey Luscombe is a freelance writer and author of the novel Shirts and Skins. He is also the creator and author of The Gay Groom blog (www.jeffreyluscombe.com).







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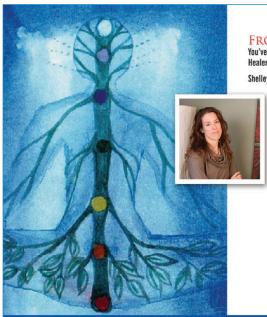
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WINTER

in the

CITY

by Ori Dagan

By the time this magazine comes out, the holiday season will be in full swing. May you all have a wonderful one and remember, don't drink and shop! Thinking beyond the festive season I've included some concerts and performances in January and February, as well as a few items that are worth discovering year-round. To begin, however, I cover the Waterfront! The Toronto Port Authority and the Waterfront BIA present Winterfest, featuring some seriously cool activities for pooches and their owners. Have a happy holiday season and all the best in 2014!



EVENTS

Winterfest

December 14, 15, 21, 22 Toronto's Waterfront 416-596-9821

www.waterfrontbia.com

Activities range from FREE to \$17

On December 14, 15, 21 and 22 between 11am and 5pm, **Have Your Pet's Photo Taken with Santa** (PawsWay, 245 Queens Quay West). Photos cost just \$10, with \$2 donated to the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. For those who do not have dogs but wish to be photographed with them, on the same dates there will be free





dancehall and more. Choreographers will include Winnipeg's Casimiro Nhussi, Ottawa's Yvon Sogolo and a handful of local choreographers including Bakari Lindsay, Patrick Parson and Shawn Byfield. There will be a facilitated talkback following each nightly performance.

TIP: For those who wish to learn some moves, there will be a contemporary African dance workshop with Casimiro Nhussi on Sunday, February 9 from 1:00pm-2:30pm at COBA Studios, 585 Dundas St. E., Suite 130.



dog sledding demos as well as a performance by the Woofjocks Canine All Stars, showcasing their singular brand of high-energy games and demonstrations of doggie agility and obedience.

Among other seasonal activities on the Waterfront, those who dig an ice rink and some cool beats ought to check out the DJ Skate Nights on Saturdays: December 14 is the season launch with music by Skratch Bastid and on Saturday December 21. I Love T.O. Holiday Skating Party, with music by DJ Dlux and Lissa Monet, Both events are free; the Natrel Rink is located right

behind the York Quay Centre (235 Queens Quay West) and there's a heated change room with lockers and washrooms. Tip: Don't have skates? No problem! They're available to rent at Natrel rink.

Celebrating Our Men in Dance

February 6 to 8 Enwave Theatre, 231 Queens Quay West 416-293-0666 (info) 416-973-4000 (tickets) www.danceimmersion.ca \$18 - \$50

As part of Black History Month, Dance Immersion presents a celebration of Canada's finest male choreographers in a showcase that highlights the many ideas and expressions by dance artists of African descent. An intergenerational cast of over 45 dancers will offer a variety of dance styles including contemporary African, break dancing,

FOOD

I Went to Philly

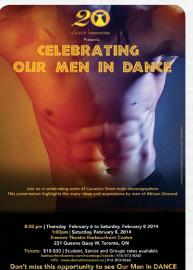
462 Yonge Street 416-927-9090

www.iwenttophilly.com

If you've been clubbing all night or maybe you happen to enjoy fast food, here's a joint that beats the golden arches any day. Specializing in American style Philadelphia cheese steak sandwiches (\$7.40 and

up depending on the fixins), this place also makes a killer cheese burger (\$5.25). While I personally would never order a Liberty Bell (\$9.75), you should know that it consists of "A mouth watering all beef burger cooked on a bed of onions topped with a Lesters hot dog and bacon strips, held together by flat top cooked grilled cheese." Wow! Sides include poutine steak fries (\$5.65) and (gasp!) several salads, as well as a deep friend blooming onion (\$5.65). Most impressive is that on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, I Went to Philly is open from 11am to 4am!

Tip: Desserts include deep fried peanut butter and jelly sandwiches! (\$3.65)



Sliced Gourmet

650 Bay Street 416-971-4000

www.slicedgourmet.com

Those who are looking for something new for lunch, read on. The friendly folks



at Sliced are passionate about food, a concept that is as simple and refreshing as their recipes. Proudly offering "Fresh Food and Fresh Thinking," the sandwich shop is unique find, balancing exotic recipes with local ingredients, innovative packaging with



genuine, friendly service. Fresh food: the famous Moroccan Lemon Chicken Sandwich (\$8.75 whole / \$4.50 half) is a masterpiece, as is the Lobster BLT (\$13.75) with steamed lobster,

crispy smoked bacon, bibb lettuce, cherry tomatoes and avocado salsa; a variety of

signature salads and freshly squeezed juices make this a haven for health nuts. There is also gourmet coffee here and gluten-free desserts worth writing home about. Fresh thinking: at the end of each day, the shop donates all remaining sandwiches to Second Harvest

TIP: Sliced Gourmet has recently embarked on a series of workshops, so join their mailing list.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Broadsway Live!

Saturday, January 25 Heart Lake United Church 85 Sandalwood Parkway, Brampton 905-846-7314 www.heartlakeunited.ca \$TBA

Friday, February 21 Milton Centre for the Arts 101 Main St. E., Milton 905-875-5399 www.miltoncentreforthearts.ca \$42 (general) / \$37(senior) Three brilliant performers in their own right, make one unforgettable trio: Broadsway combines Heather Bambrick's pure-as-honey soprano, Julie Michels' stunningly soulful alto, and genius musical director Diane Leah, who sings a bit and jokes a lot. These talented broads create a textured musical quilt that combines jazz, theatre, pop and everything in between. Yet what makes Broadsway truly stand out is not merely the music, but that which happens in between the songs; they truly are a cabaret outfit beyond compare, sewn together by the fabric of friendship. Be sure to reserve your tickets—all the info is available at www.thebroadswayshow.com

TIP: Broadsway's sensational debut recording, "Old Friends" is available to buy on iTunes, from their website, or best yet, get an autographed copy at a live show!

Donavon LeNabat & Friends

Tuesdays featuring Natasha Buckeridge 10pm - 2am Zipperz Cellblock 72 Carlton Street 416-921-0066 No Cover / Pay-What-You-Can

Thursdays: Open Mic with Jamie Bird Statlers Lounge 487 Church Street 416-922-0487 No Cover/ Pay-What-You-Can

Frequently sporting a fedora and always supplying a good time, Donavon LeNabat is a singing "Piano Man" like the one described in the Billy Joel epic. In demand as a performer, accompanist, musical director and singing coach, LeNabat is an approachable, friendly guy, as well as an extremely versatile musician.



Donavon LeNabat

"I love singing and playing Rock & Roll, R&B, disco, funk, soul, reggae and musical theatre," he says. "It's all music, and it's all beautiful. I've been exposed to so much music over my life, I

can't even narrow it down!"

Over the years, LeNabat has had enduring "love affairs" with the music of Alanis Morissette, Tool, Chick Corea, Van Halen, Stevie Wonder, and Oscar Peterson, to name a few. Which musical genre is his favourite?

"My favourite music to play is that which involves and unites my







Natasha Buckeridge

audience. Everyone comes from a different place, but when we hear the songs of yesteryear, we're instantly transported to a simpler time. There is no race, gender, or sexual orientation for good music. It simply is, and when you hear it you can't help but sing along."

Donavon can be found on the keys when the sensational Jennifer Walls hosts the musical theatre SINGular Sensation at Statlers on Monday nights (see SummerPlay! 2013). He also hosts an open mic at the same spot on Thursday evenings; as on Monday nights, he is joined by Jamie Bird on percussion, also a versatile, valued musician.

"Working with Jamie Bird is like having a percussionist live inside my brain. He's incredibly responsive to everything that is happening musically, and manages to provide the exact right element to the moment. He has amazing ears, has an expansive musical theatre repertoire, and adds an extra element to every song. He also has a beautiful voice to sing lead vocals as well as to add the perfect second (or third) harmony to any song. I've

gotten so used to performing with him that if he's absent from a Thursday night I feel as though I've lost a limb. Luckily, that doesn't happen too often!"

The Thursday night open mic at Statlers has been a great success so far:

"People from all walks of life come in and sing and play with us—professionals, novices, and everything in between— and they all get the same respect and attention, which I think everyone deserves...Statlers gave me my first opportunity to hone my piano entertaining skills and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity. Not only is the neighbourhood friendly and welcoming, but the establishment itself has an incredibly supportive climate that is difficult to find anywhere else."

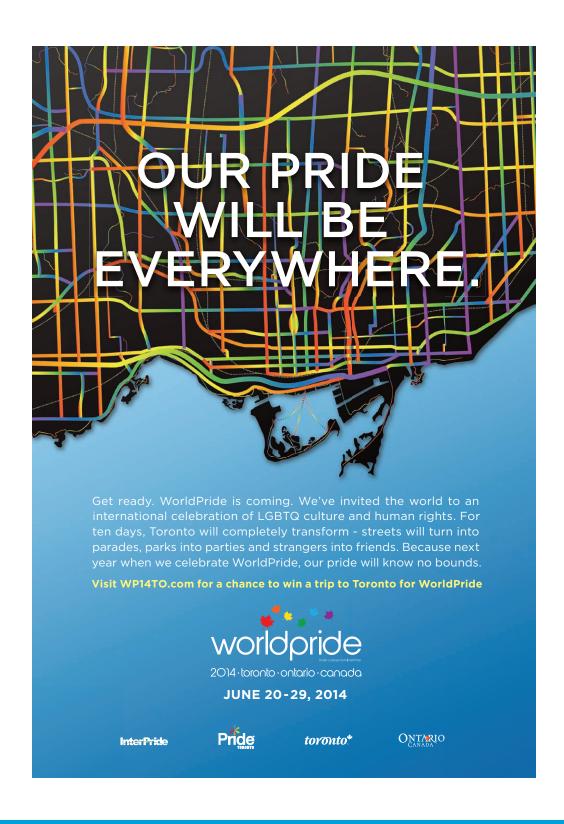
Recently Donavon has also started a weekly gig on Tuesday nights at Zipperz Cellblock where he shares the evening with a relative newcomer to the Toronto scene, Welsh vocalist Natasha Buckeridge.

"She has a beautiful voice and a sparkling and charming personality that could probably disarm nuclear warheads. From jazz standards to modern pop to funky disco tunes, I have yet to hear anything that she cannot blow the roof off of when she sings it. On top of it all, she is the sweetest, most genuine person I have ever met. Working with Natasha is an absolute pleasure in every possible way."

That pleasure is very much contagious, indeed! Both bubbly and brilliant, Buckeridge is a lovely match for LeNabat on Tuesday nights. Support live music and living musicians—make a night of it and always remember how much your support means—whether by way of a generous tip or a sweet compliment. If you truly enjoy the experience of live music, come again and bring a friend. There are not many venues that continue to support this art form, so your support is truly vital.

Ori Dagan is an award-winning jazz vocalist and freelance entertainment journalist (www.oridagan.com).





From the Heart, WATER ELEMENT

by Shelley A. Harrison



Be Still. Days are short, darkness falls. Freezing temperatures, cold winds. Nature is still. All has gone underground and stark branches frame a sheet of white. (Ok, it's not quite like that in downtown TO, more like slush, slush, slush...but you get the feeling!). Our final installment this year of "From the Heart" is here to tell you about your Water Element, as we finish our journey through the five elements represented in Classical Chinese 5 Element Medicine. Chinese Medicine addresses the harmony and balance of all flows of energy within us.

inter is the time to slow down and rest. During this time, Nature rests deeply, all of her energy pulled within, covered in snow and ice. Do not resist the darkness of this time of year, the expression of water energy. Let yourself sink down as though to the bottom of a lake, where it is dark, still, and quiet. Feel the water within your body. It is in your blood, the lymph that cleanses your tissues, sexual fluids, salty tears, sweat, and the flow of chi through the nervous system. You will feel calm and full when your waters flow in harmony. Peace, a sense of fullness, confidence and stamina are the blessings of water in balance.

When the water element is in balance in your mind, you will have ambition—just the right amount of push with the tide. Thoughts and ideas flow and your mind is able to grow and flourish. Within your spirit, when you feel your waters to be full, you will have determination, endurance, a deep well from which to draw.

When water becomes disturbed there are many ways you may sense this. It can overflow in excess, like a raging river within you. You experience restlessness, anxiety, you feel stirred up and cannot be still or steady. If your water truly overflows in excess, you may feel great fear, even like you are drowning and being washed away. It is the source of the emotion of fear within you. Healthy fear is good, it protects your life. But if fear has no reassurance to balance it, it can swell from a small eddy of disturbance to a great swell of panic.

If water becomes depleted within you, fear may reign. There is a great sense you do not have what you require to provide for your growth. Or there may be so much fear, like the waters in winter, you become frozen. There is not enough to provide for your survival over the long cold season. You may feel completely depleted, exhausted, unable to bring life to your actions. Mental illness can be an extreme expression of either excessive or deficient water. Without our water element in balance, we literally can't hold it together.

The servants that carry out water's work within your body, mind, and spirit are the Bladder and Kidney Officials. Listen to their wisdom.

The Bladder Official is "the Keeper of the Reservoir." He is the guardian of your holding tank for chi. On the physical dimension, he ensures you have the right level of hydration at all times, so there is neither swelling, nor parching. If you do not care for him, he can become stagnant, or toxic. Be careful not to deplete him too much, or fear will arise. He's like your bank account, when replete, you feel security, when empty, stress. How can you make "deposits" into this reservoir? Drink pure water. Allow creative thought to flow. Rest. Meditate. Go to the ocean. Take

a hot bath. Enjoy silence. Take refuge at a spa. Swim. Seek purity of spirit through spiritual practices.

Your Kidney Official is "the One Who Controls the Waterways." Yes, he's kind of like your plumber! His job is to purify the waters within by deciding what to excrete through urine and what to hold on to. If he fails, you will become toxic. He turns the taps on and off from the reservoir, helping to maintain the right levels of moisture. When this aspect of your body, mind and spirit gets sick, your waters might drain away, or get backed up. Your mind could become confused, your spirit overwhelmed. When balance is restored...ahh, suddenly everything comes back to the right level; there is flow and sparkle on the surface of your lake.

At your birth you are given a bowl of chi from your ancestors that the kidneys conserve. Beware of depleting this with excess, for it cannot be replenished. Drugs, overtaxing your resources, lack of rest, too much stimulation and hard living can empty your precious reserve of chi. If you have dark circles under your eyes, this is a sure sign of a struggling Kidney Official! When your ancestral chi runs out at the end of your life, it will be time to return to the great ocean. Aging is the natural expression of this waning resource.

As you learn to honour the waters within, honour also the greater waters outside—we all need pure water to flourish. Bring consciousness to polluting. Can you cease using toxic products so they do not contaminate the waters? Give thanks for the great abundance of waters we have in Canada. Conserve, protect, respect. This powerful resource within and without is the source of all life. We are conceived from the sexual fluids, born from the waters of the womb, spiritually baptized and cleansed in our deep spiritual experiences.

This concludes my series on the 5 Elements. If you have questions or comments, I would love to hear from you! (shelley@doveheart.ca) Have a wonderful holiday season, and don't forget Water's advice: balance the partying with the rest and replenish! Stir it up and settle it down. Shake it, stir it, then put it to bed.

Much love, Shelley.

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



Winter Horoscopes

by Joan Ann Evelyn

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)

If you have been ignoring a relationship problem, you must deal with it in January. Since your diplomatic skills are highlighted in February, you will find it easier to sell your ideas, products and services. Move forward with plans and projects after mid March.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Preserve team spirit by sharing the credit with co-workers in January. Enjoy an extremely social month in February, but double check dates and times of events. Think about what you would like to accomplish and set new imaginative goals in March.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

Gambling or speculative activities have the potential to bring money losses in January. In February, keep accurate financial records to avoid chaos at tax time. In late March, try to find a balance between work demands and home obligations.

Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)

Get home repairs done promptly or set up a home office in January. Settle an outstanding legal matter in February. Take a trip at the end of the month. In March, you will experience an abundant financial cycle. Apply for a loan or some other type of credit.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

Prepare to deal with a flurry of e-mails and text messages in January. If you do your part to improve harmony and teamwork in February, co-workers will be inspired to follow your example. Think things through and finalize the fine print before you sign anything in March.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)

Rather than blow the bundle in January, look for new sources of income. In February, a dating relationship can become more intense. Single Virgos may decide to set a wedding date in March. Married Virgos should renew their relationship.

Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22)

In January, stick up for your own rights, but try not to run roughshod over the rights of others. Start a new home improvement project in February. Since you will be more inclined to take chances in March, try not to gamble with money you cannot afford to lose.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

In January, reflect on your life and spend quiet time recharging your batteries. Deal with a career issue in February. Enjoy relaxing moments with your family in March, Start a new diet and exercise program at the end of the month.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Pursue personal and professional goals in January. If you make an effort to network, you will meet supportive mentors. In February, confirm travel arrangement prior to the 6th. Enjoy a whirlwind of social activity in March.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

In January, complete jobs that showcase your special talents. Enjoy an adventure with your significant other on Valentine's Day. In March, life will be good and everyday activities will be pleasant. Communicate your good feelings to everyone you meet.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Spend a relaxing weekend at a spa or resort in January. In February, look for ways to increase your savings account and build your bottom line. In March, you could attract a long distance romance.

Pisces (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Stay on top of debts, insurances and joint accounts in January. Do not co-sign a loan for anyone. You could be privy to a secret in February. If you feel a need to serve in March, do volunteer work for a charitable organization.

Passionate about Astrology, Joan Ann manages her own consulting business AstroConsultation. She is President of the Canadian Association for Astrological Education (www.thecaae.com) and teaches intermediate to advanced Astrology. Joan Ann gives presentations and workshops on her favorite subject Astrology. Visit her website at www.astroconsultation.com.



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Looking Back

grammar of echo round constellated of peoples in flight, city legs knees hurry up cited

then hope of superstition a comfort of the end of the world

INSIDE REVERSED

out there a rich foam of intimate life spelled sky that thunders right up to the pupils

too much love and not enough
afterward we say it's the North
and we go to bed with a woman
in the silence slow foliage
we sleep right through the night
without punctuation or sepulchre
in the machine to inundate the world

suddenly I'm where the wind begins
I'd like to understand
mammals, the humanity that runs
in the veins
the hand-to-hand combat of grief
the drowned world the images of farewell
how our lips
and the huge side of the sea

other times it's suspicious I become a generation a vine

a cascade of shadows and of dialogues

From White Piano by Nicole Brossard. Translated by Robert Majzels and Erin Moure © 2013 Coach House Books. Originally published in French as Piano blanc by Les Editions L'Hexagone





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Mississauga Dixie & Dundas

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EglintonNew

Eglinton Town Centre 905-750-7979

Brampton New Hwy 410 &

Queen St. 905-457-6565

Richmond HillNew

Yonge & Elgin Mills 905-884-8771

Markham

McCowan & Hwy 7 905-209-7474

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