25 YEARS OF DEEP DISH

Buzzing Quotes From Justin Trudeau, Margaret Atwood, Sir Ian McKellen, Vivica A Fox, Lady Gaga, Iman, Frankie Knuckles, Jack Layton & More!

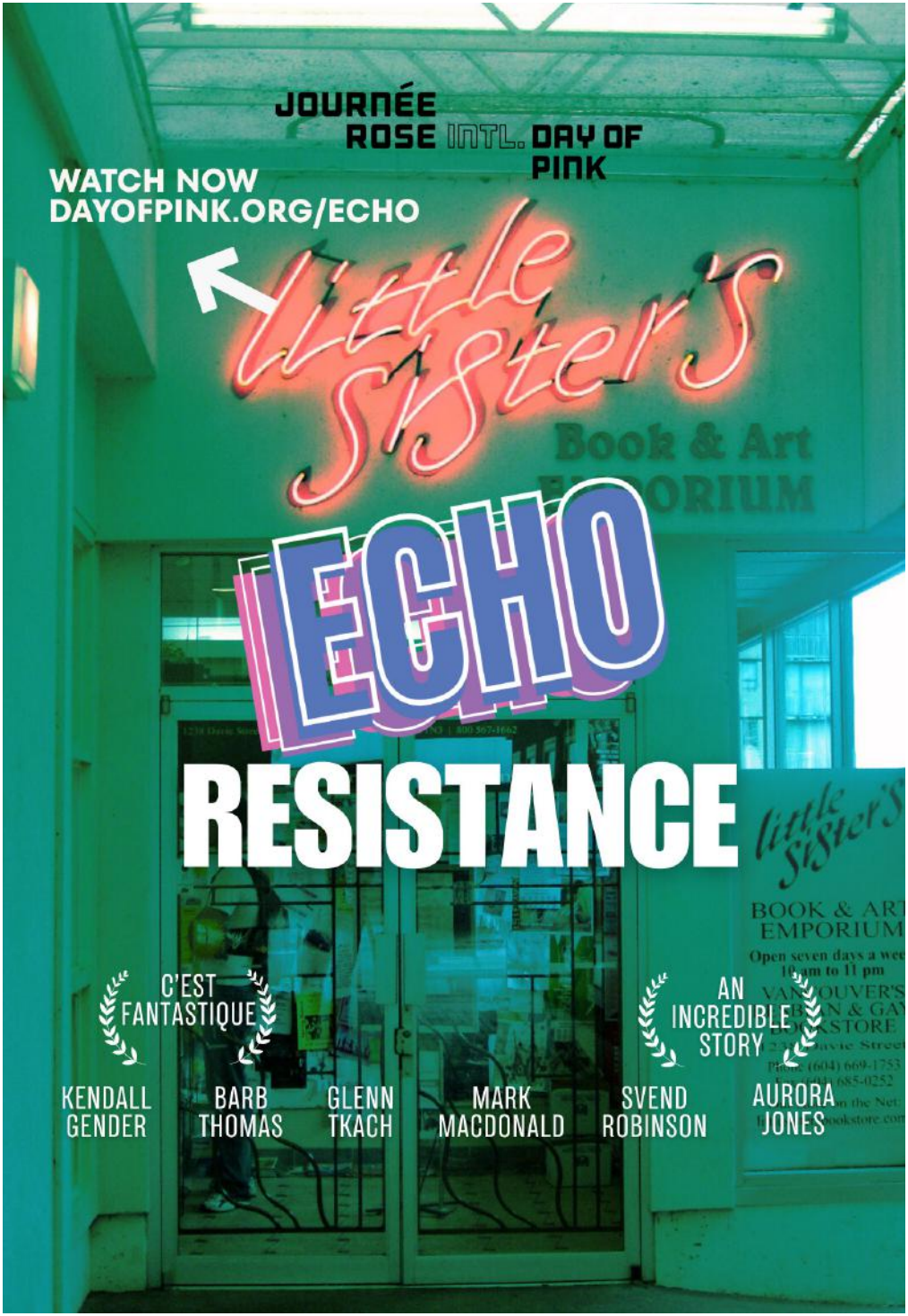


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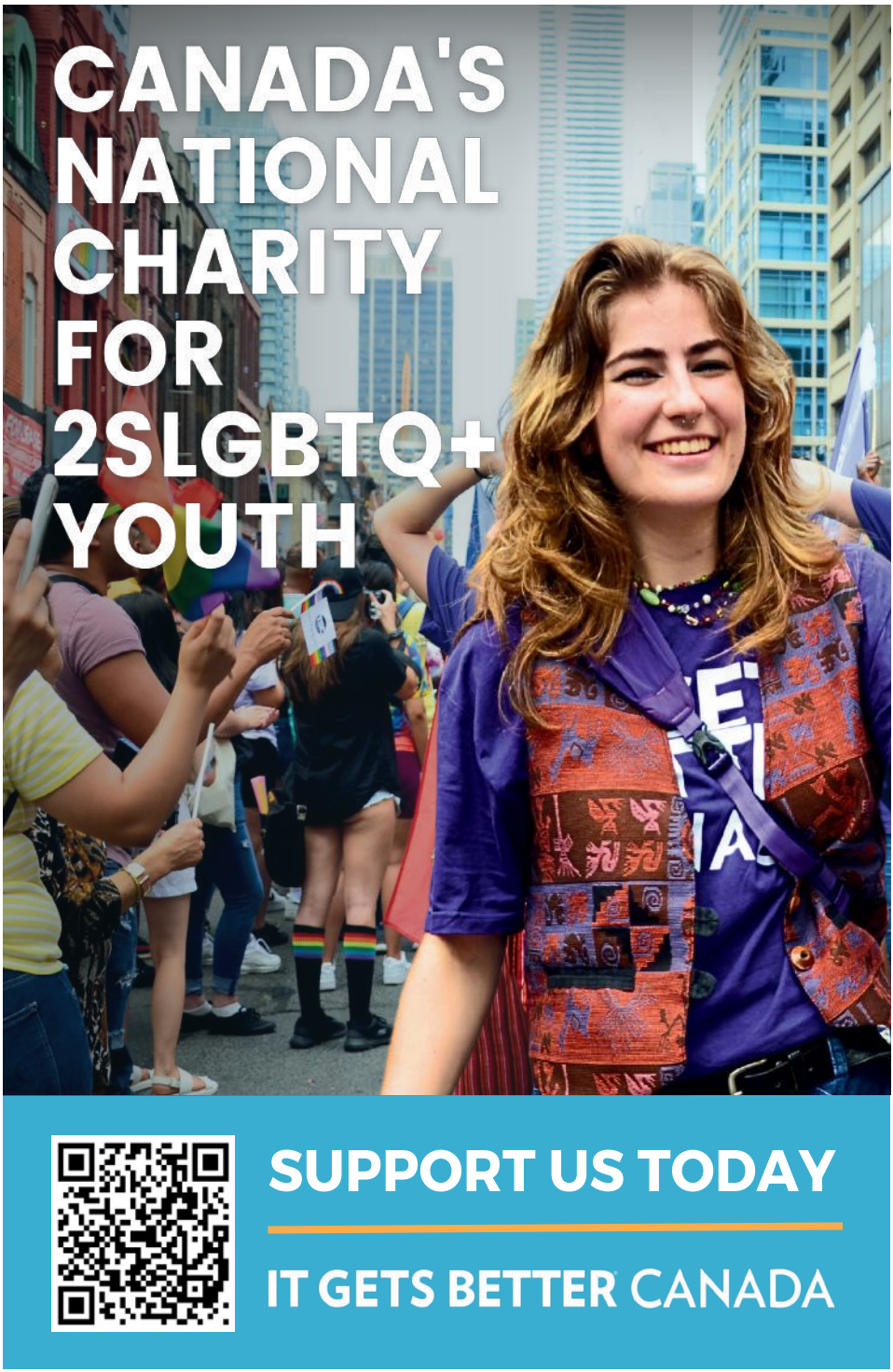


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Published by
INspired Media Inc.

Operating: INspired Creative, Publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Local Biz Magazine. Producers of On the Couch

www.theBUZZmag.ca

www.PinkPlayMags.com

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IN THIS ISSUE

08 25 Years of Deep Dish – Rolyn Chambers
14 Glenn Dixon – Antoine Elhashem
20 Deep Dish: Escape From NYE – Rolyn Chambers
24 Wigged Out: From Drag Race To WeHo – Scarlett BoBo
26 Her Space: Resolution Revolution – Menaka Skrypnyk
28 A Kodak Moment: Mirha-Soliel Ross – Boyd Kodak
33 Beyond the Village: Stardust Bar–Halifax – Sherry Sylvain
36 BUZZPicks – Sherry Sylvain

Buzz, buzz!

The new year is upon us, bringing a fresh start, along with a blanket of fresh snow. While the bees might be hibernating, we at theBUZZ are busy bringing you some sweet content while stocking our honeycombs with future features soon to be upon us.

In this issue, our cover story celebrates my own Deep Dish column's 25th anniversary. Deep Dish has allowed me to interview many famous people, and this feature presents some of my most memorable quotes from everyone from politicians to movie stars. While queen bees live on average for only two to five years (drones fair far worse at only six weeks to six months), I have been writing my saucy column for a quarter century. Though I did take a good five years off to concentrate on my design work, I feel like I've laid millions of literary eggs over the years. Yet I feel I'm nowhere near done. Our second feature explores the challenging professional and glamorous personal world of interior designer and TV personality Glenn Dixon (we featured his fashion designer brother David Dixon in our last issue). Our third, and final feature is a cute exposé on the live crowning of Van Goth, the villain queen of *Canada's Drag Race*, season six, which took palcce in Toronto.

Also in this issue, and also from *Canada's Drag Race,* (season one) runner-up Scarlett BoBo, our guest Wigged Out columnist, takes us on her journey from reality TV to living the dream in West Hollywood. Boyd Kodak's meanwhile chats with writer and trans-activist Mirha-Soliel Ross, discovering how time shifts priorities. Columnist Sherry Sylvain heads east to the land of lobster rolls to shine the light on Stardust Bar and Kitchen, Halifax's newest queer social spot. Deep Dish takes you to Prism, Pitbull, YumYum and GayStuff TO, the four biggest queer men's NYE parties and asks, is it all too much? And finally, in Her Space, Menaka Skrypnyk's re-examines the way we think about our need to make resolutions every year

Whatever resolution you made, or did not make, for this year, we hope you resolve to continue exploring the world with us at theBUZZ. Your 2026 will be that much better for it.



Rolyn Chambers
Interim Editor



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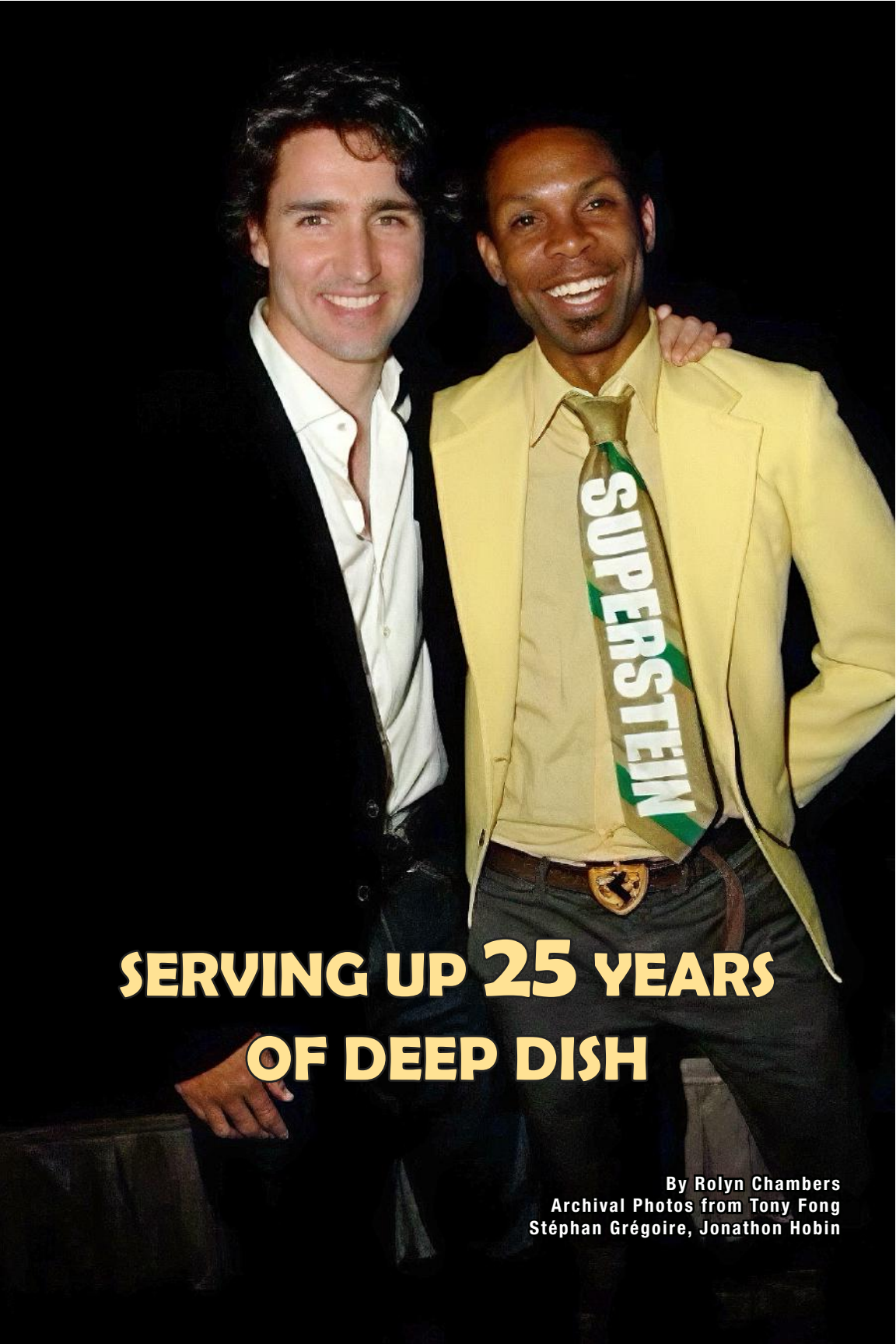
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SERVING UP 25 YEARS OF DEEP DISH

By Rolyn Chambers
Archival Photos from Tony Fong
Stéphan Grégoire, Jonathon Hobin



While studying at Ontario College of Art (now Ontario College of Art and Design University,) I discovered my love for writing and between classes I launched my own zine. Over two years this little photocopied tell-all called *YumEee!*, which explored Toronto's gay club scene, grew and attracted the attention of promotors, bar owners and eventually the new editor-in-chief of *fab*, Mitchel Raphael, who was intent on revamping the stagnant gay Toronto publication. I was brought on and Deep Dish was born. It would go on to be fab's longest running column until the magazine's demise in 2013. Deep Dish would then be published in two more magazines until I stopped writing in it 2017. But in 2021, during the stand still of the pandemic, theBuzz brought Deep Dish back to life. In the early days, while wearing some wild DIY outfits, Deep Dish allowed me to interview everyone from black-tied politicians at gala fundraisers to black leather-harnessed men at circuit parties. Sometimes on the same night! This year marks Deep Dish's 25th anniversary, and I present to you some of my most favourite quotes from famous people, caught on my Fisher Price kids tape recorder, served up on a silver platter.



With model Stacie McKenzie

Previous Page • With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

DECEMBER 2001

"*This is the illest fucking interview I'll ever do,"* model **Stacie Mackenzie** gushed into my Fisher Price kids tape recorder. We became instant gala-besties that night.

September 2002

"If people have issues with that, they should get on the internet and start writing letters and campaigning for it," Queer as Folk director **Jeremy Podeswa** told me when I asked if the show would feature more people of colour in the white-washed world of QAF. It never happened.

"It's the nature of the beast," Oscar winning actor **Hilary Swank** said with a smile when I asked, at the CityTV TIFF Festival Schmoose Party, if she had ever made a boy cry. This was the year Swank won the Oscar for the film Boys *Don't Cry* in which she played trans man Brandon Teena.

JUNE 2002

"It's important just to get through each day. It's easy to be looking in from the outside and thinking that I have everything. But I have demons that I have to deal with just like everyone. We are not the majority in this world," international DJ/Producer **Frankie Knuckles** (who died in 2014) told me during his set at Kool Haus (now closed). We, two black gay men in the house music scene, were chatting about his huge, straight (largely white) following, which was even larger than his gay (largely white) one.

"On film?' actor **Pamela Anderson** questioned when I asked if she would ever do a lesbian love scene. *"Well, if the moment presents itself."* Attending the annual MuchMusic Video Awards with her then fiancé, **Kid Rock**, he piped in, *"Let's talk money."* Thankfully she got rid of that rock that was weighing her down.

"You don't want [my underwear]. They're all musty," former model **Antonio Sabato Jr** admitted when I asked if he would every sell his used underwear online.

DECEMBER 2002

"I didn't know there were people who actually hated [Body Body Wear,]" **Stephen Sandler**, owner of the now defunct clothing label admitted to me when I told them there actually were, at the Bloor Street Entertains gala at The ROM. *"I know there are some people who can't get*

their fat asses into our clothes." [This quote almost got Fab magazine and I sued, until we proved that Sandler spoke directly into my Fisher Price kids tape recorder and clearly made the comment.]

April 2003

"Somehow I wound up with a family movie," filmmaker **John Waters** told me while discussing his hit movie, *Hairspray* at The Princess of Wales Theatre. *"I would love to have my other movies become musicals as well."* Can you image Kathleen Turner, who starred in his movie *Serial Mom* singing, "Let me check the zip code. Two one two fuck you," in the round?

May 2003

"It was like having sex all the time, every day, for 12 hours," playwright **Brad Fraser** told me. He was talking about his directorial debut of *Leaving Metropolis*, based on his acclaimed play, *Poor Superman*, at the Inside Out Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Launch Party at The Courthouse (now closed).

June 2003

"Yesssss. I'd go as a Spartan. No underwear of course," actor **Scott Thompson** said when asked during We're Funny That Way comedy festival if he would attend the annual Military Ball gay circuit party the next night with me.

"If Hilary Clinton were to run for president, I'd be her biggest supporter. I'd be all over her," comedian and actor **Lea DeLaria** said backstage at the annual We're Funny That Way comedy festival held at Buddies Theatre.



With actor Scott Thompson



With actor Gale Harold of Queer As Folk

July 2003

"Madonna is of course relevant. I think she just needs to take some time off," international DJ **Victor Calderone** told me when I asked about the queen of pop, after his set at Fly nightclub (now closed).

"*I really love coming back [to Toronto] in the summer. It's great to get out [cylcing] and see the people," Queer as Folk* actor **Gale Harold** told me at the MuchMusic Video Awards. We made plans to rent a tandem bike the next time he was in town. I'm still waiting.

August 2003

"We love a sporty boy," said **Dean** and/or **Dan Caten**, the identical twin designers behind DSquared2, while cruising the grounds of Montreal's Olympic Stadium. Both were back in Canada for Divers/Cité and the Gay Games.

September 2003

"I've never had crabs…on camera," TV host **Glen Baxter** assure me when I informed him that filmmaker Keith Cole had just premiered his film, 'I Think I'm Coming Down with



With Dean & Dan Caten of DSquared2

Something,' a mocumentary about his quest to discover who gave him crabs. Glen was mentioned in it.

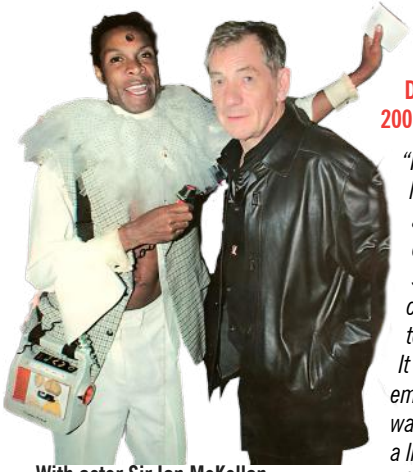
"The magazine is huge. It's gorgeous. But I'm not a size queen," the late **Chris Hydman** of The Designer Guys stressed while attending the launch party of Jeanne Beker's FQ magazine. Each page was 40 x 80 cm.



With media personality Jeanne Beker

"I never talk about my panties, because they may or may not exist," TV personality and editor of FQ magazine **Jeanne Beker** told me, after a couple glasses of celebratory champagne. I asked what she was wearing…. including her lingerie. This quote apparently raised some manicured eyebrows in the FQ office when published.

"Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, totally naked, painted blue, standing next to me all day. Totally wasted on me. I was eyeing Jeremy Marsden and Hugh Jackman who's such a pussycat," actor **Sir Ian McKellen** told me when I asked about X-Men. This was before he playfully pinched my ass walking up the stairs for chat session over afternoon cocktails. Ohhhh, Magneto!



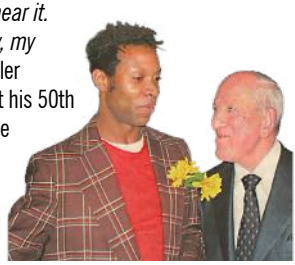
With actor Sir Ian McKellan

December 2003

"I did a show last night, and the entire ballet school came out to watch. It was very emotional. I was feeling a little verklempt," an annimnated **Rex Harrington** told me while wiping away an imaginary tear at the reopening of Byzantium bar (now closed). It was one of Harrington's last performances as the principal dancer of the National Ballet of Canada.

February 2004

"I really don't want to hear it. I want to be in my body, my sweat, my smell," retailer **Harry Rosen** told me at his 50th birthday party inside The Royal York Hotel's The Imperial Room. He was referring to people interrupting him at the gym to talk fashion.



With retailer Harry Rosen

March 2004

"No, but this is the Boy Scout handshake," former **Prime Minister Stephen Harper** said when I intentionally shook his left hand with my left hand for a photo, and asked if he was a leftie. Perhaps he caught on to my play on words.

"The closests I've ever gotten to glam is toga," admitted Canada's first openly gay politician **Svend Robinson**, at (the late) Jack Layton's NDP celebratory dinner at the Royal York Hotel.

April 2004

"The places I get to go. The people I get to meet. Of course, the dollars are not so bad either," international model **Yasim Warsame** told me when I asked what her favourite part of modelling was, as we smoked outside the Liberty Grande. In town briefly for Toronto Fashion Week she stole the spotlight before jetting off to Paris for the couture shows.

May 2004

"They're seven and a half carats, because seven and a half and up is what I like," philanthropist **Salah Bachir** informed me when I asked



With Prime Minister Stephen Harper

about the huge diamond stud earrings he was sporting at Maggie Casella's annual We're Funny That Way Comedy Festival.

June 2004

"I am the original drag queen," **Patti Labelle** proclaimed at the 18th annual Fashion Cares gala. When informed that another local Toronto magazine used the word "diva" to describe both her and the relatively new Avril Lavigne, in the same headline, Pattie said simply, *"Some should be described as divettes."*

June 2005

"They're serving up two things backstage. Cock and cake," actor **Pamela Anderson** said that the annual Fashion Cares gala. *"And they're all out of cake."*

"What? You're not going to ask me about my penis?" **Phillip Ing**, then Creative Director of Fashion Cares/MAC, joked. He just didnt want to answer my questions about art at the annual Power Ball gala at the Power Plant art gallery.

"I don't pose," former **Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson** quipped when I asked her to strike a fabulous pose for my photographer. Understood.



With Philip Ing, Artistic Director Fashion Cares/MAC

"I need a man who likes having a good time," actor **Vivica A Fox** admitted, while sporting a stylish Harry Winston watch at the MuchMusic Video Awards. She had just flown in from an AIDS benefit in Washington and added, *"The African American community has been so affected by HIV. I make sure I'm there every year to promote safe sex."*

"I've been getting a lot of slack about my new single, 'Red Hair.' All the redheads think I'm hating on them. Not true, I just had bad experience," singer **Sean Desmon** said as he arrived at the MuchMusic Video Awards with two redheaded women on each arm.

"You know I don't like that word," singer **Ciara** admitted when I asked if she was nervous because so many other celebrities said they had come specifically to see her perform at the MuchMusic Video Awards. *"If I don't think about it, it's fine. But if someone says that word, my knees begin to buckle, and I get to shakin'."* Oops.

September 2005

"When you meet Madonna, you understand why she is where she is today," electronic music duo **Deep Dish** (who partly inspired the name of my column) told me in between their DJ set at Ultra Supper Club (now closed). *"She is very hands on and meticulous."* The two were in town for a private Toronto International Film Festival party.

November 2005

"It is by observing the committed gay relationships of people like George that I learned about love," the late NDP Leader **Jack Layton** told me while attending activist George Hislop's Last Party, a celebration of his life held at Woody's, a month after he passed away.



With NDP Leader Jack Layton



With rapper Cazwell

March 2007

"Gurl, needs to put her pussy on ice," **Cazwell** said of the one crazed fan who kept screaming his love for the gay rapper who was in town for the D-List.com party at Lub Bar (now closed.)

November 2007

"Robin [Kay] has mortgaged her house for the last five years so that Fashion Week can take place. So, if one of those little fucking fashion designers wants to take it over, call her. She'll be thrilled," fashion designer **Chris Tyrell** of Hoax Couture said when asked about Fashion Week founder Robin Kay being accused of misconduct.

September 2008

"It's just easier to spell, really," supermodel and host of Project Runway Canada 1 & 2, **Iman** told me when I asked about being one of the few people in the world known simply by their first names. Her full name is Iman Mohamed Abdulmajid. In town attending the L'Oréal Toronto Fashion Week Pre-Party at Holt Renfrew, Iman is the only person I have ever been truly star struck by.



With supermodel & Project Runway Canada 1&2 host Iman

November 2008

"The sugar [in chocolate] can dry the voice out. But like most things in life, it's better to indulge and suffer the consequences later," internationally renowned opera singer **Measha Brueggergosman** said at the Cadbury Chocolate Couture Fashion Show at The Carlu.

August 2009

"Unfortunately, I never had [a romantic adventure with a dancer.] But I took ballet in 1951. Not for very long. I got dizzy when I twirled," author **Margaret Atwood** told me at the National Ballet School Gala. Atwood is of course most noted for her dystopian novel, The Handmaids Tale, which seems to be slowly coming to life in modern day America.

June 2011

"Oh god here we go," **Lady Gaga**, attending the MuchMusic Video Awards, began when I asked her thoughts of those in the queer community who were critical of her because they believed she had appointed herself the leader of the gays. *"I'm not. I'm here to support in any way I can."* I just wanted her to shut down the haters with an explanation. Accomplished

June 2017

"Your tie! I love it. Let's hug," former **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** said at the EAGLE Gala, before his team whisked him away and out of my needy arms.

The relaunch of Deep Dish, just over three years ago, has come with some changes. As I've aged slightly, I no longer travel with my attention-grabbing Fisher Price kids tape recorder. As I've matured in mind, I now focus less on international celebrities and the events they flock to, choosing instead to shine more light on our local Toronto queer community, and the heroes who work to keep the events we attend operating. For now. This might mean less quotes from famous people, but you'll still get the Deep Dish.

Rolyn Chambers grew up in the suburbs of Mississauga, before attending Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). Chambers is the author of, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, available on Amazon. IG @rahrahrolyn



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Photo: Glenn Dixon

Glenn Dixon

Does Design...Deliberately

By Antoine Elhasham

Change has never frightened Glenn Dixon — in fact, it has always felt like home.

Long before design became his profession, it was a way of living. As a child, he and his mother played a game they called "switch around the rooms," swapping living spaces simply to see how energy, light, and feeling would shift. That instinct — to rearrange, reimagine, and refuse stagnation — never left him. It explains why Dixon has never lived in one place longer than seven years, why repetition is his kryptonite, and why interior design remains the perfect creative language for someone wired to evolve.

"My love of design started early," he says, "and it was cultivated by my mother." That early encouragement set the foundation for a career that has never followed a straight line — and never wanted to.

A Career Built on Curiosity

Change has never frightened Glenn Dixon — in fact, it has always felt like home. Dixon describes his résumé as "diverse and a bit schizophrenic," and he means it as a compliment. Over nearly three decades, he has built success across marketing, event management, fashion, television, and design — often blending disciplines rather than choosing between them.

At fourteen, he dreamed of acting. The universe answered later. At thirty-eight, Dixon became a familiar face on W Network's Take This House and Sell It, starring for six seasons and combining interior design, humour, and performance into a role that felt like a natural extension of who he already was. He later hosted a daily live local talk show, further proving that creativity doesn't need to live in a single lane. Design, for Dixon, has always been about movement — emotional as much as physical.

From Barbie to Brand Legacy

Dixon is also a firm believer in manifestation. As a child, he and his younger brother David played endlessly with Barbies, building imagined lives and storylines. Their parents encouraged the creativity — something Dixon notes was far less common at the time, especially for boys.

"Barbie was a conduit for imagination," he says. "It was the birth of ideas."

Years later, that childhood play became full circle. In 2009, Dixon was commissioned by Mattel — one of the world's most tightly protected brands — to create a real-person

"MY KRYPTONITE IS STAYING THE SAME. INTERIOR DESIGN WORKS FOR ME BECAUSE IT'S ALWAYS EVOLVING — JUST LIKE LIFE."

home collection celebrating Barbie's 50th anniversary. The line was launched at Hudson's Bay with a dedicated pop-up store at its flagship Queen Street location in Toronto, a space Dixon also helped design.

He later launched a complete home line on The Shopping Channel, designing everything from area rugs, bedding, and furniture, to fully decorated "Glenn Dixon Christmas Trees," ornaments included. For Dixon, these moments weren't about novelty. They were about storytelling at scale.

A Canadian Design Perspective

Asked about the Canadian interior design scene, Dixon lights up. He believes Canada's greatest design strength lies in its cultural diversity — European, Asian, Indigenous, and global influences layered with a deep respect for nature and sustainability.

"We design from a well-travelled perspective," he explains. "Canadians care about global trends, sustainability, and function — and it shows."

But trends alone don't impress him. Dixon is far more interested in authenticity.

"A home should reflect someone's life," he says. "Not a furniture store. Not Pinterest. And definitely not an A.I. version of perfection."



Photo: Glenn Dixon

Glenn Dixon's Red Room for Valetine's 2025

“A HOME SHOULD REFLECT YOUR LIFE — NOT A FURNITURE STORE, NOT PINTEREST, AND DEFINITELY NOT AN A.I. VERSION OF PERFECTION.”

To him, the most compelling spaces feel like scrapbooks — layered with objects, memories, and meaning. Design should improve how people engage with their surroundings, not erase their stories.

Reinvention in a Global Pause

Like many creatives, Dixon’s world shifted abruptly in 2020. Retail projects halted. International work paused. After finishing a health-food grocery store in Oakville and putting final touches on a children’s store in China, everything stopped. So, he went to the cottage. For four months.

“I gained a bit of weight,” he laughs, “and realized it was time to change again.”

That moment sparked a pivot into hospitality design. A retail client asked for help with hotel properties, and Dixon — who had already designed restaurants, stores, residences, and condo buildings — leaned in. His first full hotel renovation in Maine was completed last spring, and it remains one of his proudest achievements. Since then, Dixon has worked on numerous hotel projects across Canada and internationally.

What draws him to hospitality is the immersive challenge — shaping an experience from the moment a guest enters the lobby. Colour, texture, lighting, even scent are carefully considered to create a sense of welcome and brand identity.

“I love bringing something unexpected to hotels,” he says. “A unique stamp. I’ve been lucky to work with hoteliers who trust me to do that.”

Giving Back, Always

Despite a career filled with high-profile collaborations and gala-filled calendars, Dixon is grounded by service. Volunteering has been a constant thread in his adult life — especially during times of personal loss and trauma.

“Helping others has always helped heal me,” he reflects.

Through Glenn Dixon Design, he supports numerous charities and non-profits, including Breast Cancer Support Fund, Casey House, CAMH, CANFAR, Hospital for Sick Kids, the Ovarian Cancer Society, Osteoporosis Canada, and the Toronto Fashion Incubator. In 2025 alone, Dixon sits on four boards and advisory boards. As Chair of the Breast Cancer Support Fund, he helped lead the organization to a milestone $1 million raised to support patients facing financial hardship during treatment. As a board member of Casey House's David's Disco, the 2025 event raised $545,000 for compassionate HIV/AIDS care. He also advises Couture for a Cause in support of CAMH and serves as an honorary board member for the Toronto Fashion Incubator. For Dixon, titles matter far less than impact.

Family, Truth, and Becoming Yourself

Dixon came out at eighteen — in a large Irish-Catholic family with six children and deep roots in sports culture. It wasn't easy. After being outed by someone he trusted, he faced his father's disbelief head-on.

"When he yelled, 'You are not gay,' I yelled back, 'YES, I AM.'"

"I'VE NEVER BUILT MY LIFE ON OTHER PEOPLE'S APPROVAL. I'VE EARNED WHERE I AM — AND I'M HAPPIER THAN I'VE EVER BEEN."

Silence followed — and then love. His parents became deeply supportive, especially during the height of the AIDS epidemic, when fear and loss were constant companions.

That honesty changed everything. "For the first time," he says, "I was being honest with myself."

His bond with his younger brother David, who is also gay, has only strengthened over time. The two have collaborated professionally, most notably on an installation for the Interior Design Show titled Sibling Revelry — a playful nod to their shared creative roots (and not that hit TV series.) There's no rivalry, just deep affection, and mutual respect.



Photo: Glenn Dixon

David Dixon, Susan Langdon and Glenn Dixon

Aging, Joy, and What Comes Next

Recently celebrating another birthday, Dixon is refreshingly unapologetic about aging — especially in a community often obsessed with youth.

"I've never built my life on approval," he says. "I've earned this stage of life."

He admits to sighing at a sagging jawline, but he's also happier than he's ever been — grounded in where he's been and clear about where he's going. As for the future? More change. More curiosity. More joy.

He laughs when asked about marriage. "That would require intervention from the gay gods," he jokes.

And if he could offer one piece of wisdom to his younger self? "Buy Apple stock in 1980," he says without missing a beat. "And never stop."

Antoine Elhashem is the Publisher of INspired Media and a lifelong storyteller who loves turning people, places, and everyday moments into engaging stories that celebrate connection, culture, and the vibrant spirit of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.





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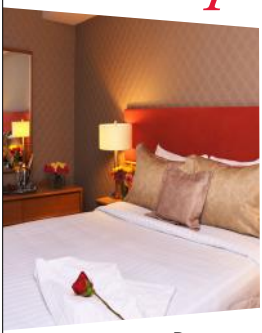
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By Rolyn Chambers

Every season has one: a queen we love to hate — or just plain hate. Whether it's the producer edit or their own doing, these queens leave a lasting impression, sometimes with a bit of a sour aftertaste.

Season One had Kyne (and judge Jeffrey Bowyer-Chapman).

Season Two had Eve 6000.

Season Three had Miss Fiercalicious.

Season Four had Aimee Yoncé Shennel and Denim.

Season Five had Xana.

And this season? Van Goth.

"Baby, it's time for the villain reign," Van proclaimed after being crowned live by Brooke Lynn Hytes at Pitbull's *Canada's Drag Race* finale viewing party in Toronto. For the first time ever, the season's villain walked away with the crown.

Over the course of the season on Crave, Brooke Lynn, resident judges Traci Melchor, guest judge Carson Kressley, and a rotating panel of guest judges narrowed the competition from twelve queens down to the final three: Van Goth, Eboni La'Belle, and PM. The prize? A crown, a sceptre, a sash — and $100,000.

Despite Toronto's first major snowstorm of the season, fans packed the Phoenix Concert Theatre for the live finale screening. Season Five runner-up Makayla Couture hosted, while reigning winner The Virgo Queen delivered her step-down performance. But all eyes were on the top two: Van Goth and Eboni La'Belle, seated nervously on stage as the final moments played out.

And the audience got their payoff.

Say what you will about that mouth of hers — Van is undeniably talented. She became the first queen in the franchise to win four maxi-challenges in a single season, and she swept every design challenge. Her skills as a seamstress clearly pushed her to the top.



Photo: IG @itsvangoth

Van Goth Gets Crowned Live at The Phoenix, Toronto

Not everyone loved that. Online critics were quick to point out, "This is Drag Race, not Project Runway."

But judge Traci Melchor offered a different perspective when she spoke with theBUZZ last December:

"Perfect your craft. Perform whenever you can, in person or online. Take a makeup class, take dance, take a sewing class."

Van clearly listened. Her design skills have been used by fellow queens, including some of Aurora Matrix's Season Four looks and Tara Nova's Season Five outfits. It makes sense — she's the drag sister of Aurora Matrix and Season Five contestant Perla. Together, they're known as the PowderPuff Girls.

Of course, her success also fed her confidence.

"I am the biggest competitor in the history of Canada's Drag Race," Van declared on the show. "Four challenges. No one has ever done that before. I'm not just the biggest competitor in that room — I'm the biggest competitor of all 70 girls who've been on Canada's Drag Race."

So was it the infamous villain edit, or is that just who she is?

In an Instagram interview with Joseph Shepard, Van offered some clarity:

"I had moments of being nice. I had moments of being a little bit of a bitch. I am all of those things, and I think we all are at times. If you can't own who you are, you probably shouldn't be on reality TV in the first place. I know who I am, and I'm not ashamed of it."

But she wasn't just sharp wit and a biting tongue. Showing a softer side, Van shared with viewers the moment she found out she was HIV positive. It became more than just an emotional storyline — it was also a reminder of the legal realities that still exist in Canada.

"If you don't disclose your status when you sleep with people, you can get charged with aggravated sexual assault," she said tearfully in the Werk Room. "Even if you're undetectable. It doesn't matter. When I found out, I felt guilty, but also sad. I felt like I did something wrong.

"Coming on Drag Race, I really wanted to show people a different side of it — that it's not everything you see in movies and TV shows. You don't get diagnosed one day and the next day you have AIDS and you're on your deathbed. I want to learn more about what being HIV positive means, and I want to break my own stigmas about it. If I could sit back at the end of my life or my career in drag and say I made a difference, that's the biggest prize."

Van would, of course, also win the biggest actual prize.

"I would not have wanted to do this with anyone else," she said on stage to runner-up Eboni La'Belle, who also represented Toronto and won an impressive three maxi-challenges. "Even though we fight like sisters, you're incredible and gave me a run for my money. I am so grateful to Crave and everyone at Drag Race around the world. Baby, it's time for the villain reign."

CLOCKING CANADA'S DRAG RACE

Trivia

Canada's Drag Race is the only franchise with the country name in front of the Drag Race franchise name because there is already an a car racing event called Drag Race Canada.

Season 6 Best Guest Judge

Standout guest judges this season included Glamzilla, Kiesza, Allison Russell, and Rufus Wainwright. But the brightest moment came from Paula Abdul, who helped kick off the season in episode one.

"Legendary pop icon, absolute sweetheart, generous with her time, and truly one of the kindest presences to ever step on our set. Icon. Full stop," resident judge Traci Melchor said of Abdul.

Van's Best Quote

"This is boring. If this was a talk show I'd be changing the channel by now."

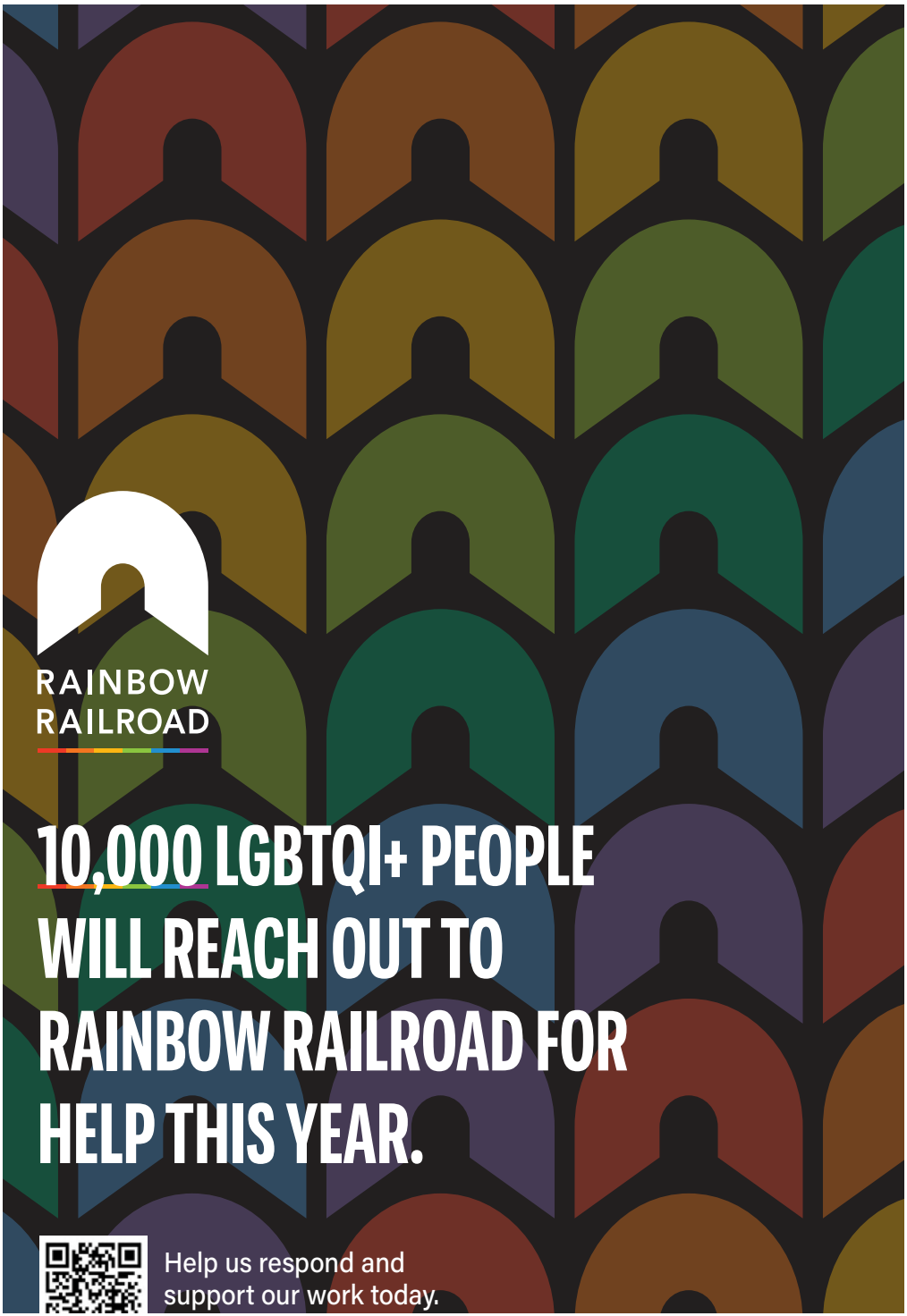
Van's Best Look

More Is More (below)



Rolyn Chambers knows way too many drag artists. Some of them are in his tell-all, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, available on Amazon. IG @rahrahrolyn




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WIGGED OUT

BY SCARLETT BOBO

FROM DRAG RACE TO HOLLYWOOD



Singer Adam Lambert with Scarlett BoBo in WeHo

I've always believed that drag is a passport. It lets you cross borders, bend rules, and reinvent yourself wherever you land. When I packed up my life and moved from Canada to Hollywood, I wasn't just chasing sunshine and palm trees, I was chasing my dream. Bigger rooms, louder opportunities, and the freedom to see just how far this drag thing could really go.

Coming off the first season of *Canada's Drag Race*, my life changed in ways I couldn't have predicted. Walking into that Werkroom was terrifying, exhilarating, and deeply affirming all at once. *Drag Race* didn't just put me on TV, it gave me language for my ambition. Being a finalist showed me that my drag, my voice, and my point of view mattered, really mattered. It cracked me open and asked me to level up, whether I was ready or not. Hollywood has a funny way of doing that too.

Moving to L.A. was humbling. Suddenly I was surrounded by performers who were just as hungry, just as talented, and just as delusional; and I mean that as a compliment. It forced me to redefine success. Here, it's not about being the biggest fish in the pond; it's about learning how to swim in an ocean. I've learned to hustle smarter, collaborate harder, and trust that my uniqueness is my currency.

What surprised me most about Hollywood is how much drag belongs here. Drag isn't just nightlife anymore; it's fashion, film, music, comedy, and culture. I've found myself DJing in drag, hosting, acting, creating characters, and stepping into rooms I never imagined I'd be invited into. Every gig feels like a remix of who I've been and who I'm becoming.

At its core, my drag has always been about joy, polish, and a little bit of chaos, and L.A. has given me space to stretch that without losing myself. I'm still the same Canadian queen who loves a sharp look and down a shot of tequila; I just happen to be doing it under brighter lights.

If *Drag Race* taught me anything, it's that visibility is powerful, BUT longevity is intentional. Moving to Hollywood wasn't an ending or a "made it" moment. It was a beginning. One where I get to write my own next chapter, heels first, head high, and always ready for the spotlight.

Because if there's one thing I know for sure: drag didn't bring me this far to play it safe. •

Scarttlett Bobo is the primary drag and performance persona of Matty Cameron, Canada's Drag Race season one runner-up, entertainment host, circus performer, and DJ performing on stages accross the world. Originally from Toronto, they are now based in Los Angeles.




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BY MENAKA SKRYPNYK

RESOLUTION REVOLUTION



Image: Calvin & Hobbes

Every December, the holidays bring with them a familiar excitement for the new year and, with it, a new list of resolutions. You may have noticed the topic of resolutions come up in casual conversation, and we see and hear the question everywhere - from TV shows and advertisements to well-meaning radio hosts. These in turn translate into steady streams of promises to ourselves. Save 50% of every paycheck. Stop ordering takeout. Lose a large amount of weight. Run the Toronto Marathon.

With a new year comes an opportunity to change course. What if we stepped away from larger resolutions with their history of quiet intimidation, and instead focus on smaller, more manageable intentions?

Let's approach resolutions differently by re-evaluating the kind of sweeping goals that often produce anxiety. There's no need to invite shame into the conversation when outcomes don't unfold as planned. Life tends to intervene when we least expect, and we certainly don't have an endless supply of motivation (though, wouldn't that be nice?). We can approach a new year, alternatively, with small, intentional commitments to ourselves that help us feel more present, more mindful, and more devoted, both to ourselves and those we care for. Instead of vowing to save 50% of your paycheck, start with 5%. Rather than setting a goal of 50 pounds, begin with five. Instead of giving up takeout cold turkey (or Tofurky), limit ordering to once a week. Sign up for that 5K run, and work your way toward the full marathon.

Entering a new stage in my life has made me want to focus on being present, rather than succumbing to the pressure that overwhelming resolutions can bring.

The goals I have set for myself this year are modest and within reach. When we focus on the small daily intentions, long-term ambitions seem less overwhelming. I want to stop scrolling on Instagram during playtime with my son, with the long-term goal of being less reliant on social media for any sort of validation. I want to listen more closely to my body to be more in sync with my nutritional needs. I want to give myself grace in moments of doubt and trust my instincts, especially when it comes to motherhood. I want to say "no" without guilt or feeling compelled to write a paragraph of explanation.

This all being said, focusing solely on small goals with the mindset of chipping away at them can sometimes mean we're always moving forward, but never quite arriving at our destination. From this year, alongside subtle intentions, I'm allowing myself to go big and bold where it matters. I will do that eight-hour road trip with my husband and son. I will succeed in nailing those pesky box jumps at the gym. I will say "no" when my cellphone provider offers a "better plan" with a million GB of data when it's not the one I want, and more gigabytes that I need.

So, if you're reading this and you didn't make a resolution (or you already let go of the one(s) you made), that's totally fine. Maybe this year the aim could simply be to be more honest. Let's be honest with ourselves about where our strengths and limitations are. Small resolutions aren't insignificant, they're more realistic. If that's all 2026 holds, it's more than enough. •

Menaka Skrypnyk is a Sri Lankan-Canadian Communications professional with an innate passion for writing and exploring the unfamiliar. She enjoys spending her free time with her husband and adorable Sheepadoodle, Oscar.




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Escape from New Year's Eve



Photo: Rolyn Chambers

Sofonda's Show at Prism at The Opera House

Are there enough gay men in Toronto to properly ring in New Year's loudly and queerly? In the past, NYE was dominated by Prism and Pitbull. The Double P – that penetrated the gay party scene hard, and as one, with tag team precision. Prism for the circuit boys, and Pitbull for the leather men. But in 2024, gay men in harnesses bore witness to the rise of The Lair, a sex-positive club, and then in 2025, the skillful surge of YumYum parties, and the return of Shawn Riker via his long-anticipated Bunker nightclub. This meant that last NYE, along with many other smaller queer parties at local bars, Toronto queer men were faced with a new dilemma. Which large party should they welcome in 2026?

Though many people were soured after YumYum's unfortunate Halloween party, **Krishawn Lubin**'s brand seems to have come out relatively unscathed, as their NYE pop-off was the most well attended. This siphoning off of men in jockstraps and "slip-gloss" however, resulted in less then stellar turnouts at the others. It split the night.

Example one; in the past, Prism always held its NYE blowout at Rebel. But for the last two years Owner/Creative Director **Gairy Brown**, has relocated to the smaller, but historically charming Opera House. The Opera House, in turn, was once the NYE domain of Pitbull, a welcome visual change from their usual home at Phoenix Concert Theatre. One wonders if Prism, with its much deep pockets, perhaps swooped in and snuck this venue out from under them. **Sofonda**'s performance is always eagerly anticapted at these events, and even after 30 years, Chicago's **DJ Ralphi Rosario** and Miami's **DJ Abel Aguilera,** who form the divine duo Rosabel, still draw a healthy crowd of men doing unhealthy things, to their evolving house music sound.

Example two: with Phoenix Concert Theatre still open even after five years of closure rumours, the Pitbull crew celebrated in their usual venue. But **Francis Gaudreault** and **Steve Palmer**'s party, which used to take up two full rooms and the second-floor balcony, was reduced to just one well decorated space. Sans balcony---which was always a great place to take a break with a cold one, or with a hottie in some dark corner.

Exampke three; Matt Kai's Nearly Naked party was the least well attended. Last year this was the party to be at, going until noon. Even Pitbull and Prism partiers who weren't there to witness men in the back spraying "confetti" in the air as the clock struck midnight, piled in after. With The Lair closed, this year the party was held in a huge space on Queen West. My bottom-bestie told me it was "good at first, but many people left after midnight," as did he, for other parties. It was the upside down, *Stranger Things* world of last year. Which begs the question; what'll happen this year? And, after 25 years of penning this colum, will I have the energy to care?

Rolyn Chambers attended *Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD University)*. Chambers is also the author of, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, available on Amazon. IG @rahrahrolyn



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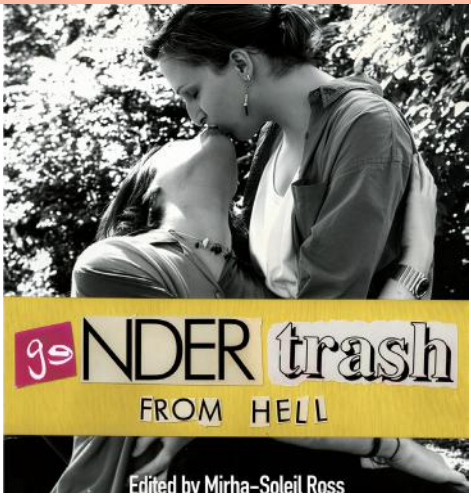
International Listing of 2SLGBTQIA+ Creatives

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Mirha-Soliel Ross Simplifies Life



"Trannies Speak Out" and "Hooker of the Year" were just two sections in Mirha-Soleil Ross's zine, *"Gender Trash From Hell."* Produced with Xanthra Phillippa MacKay, it was also filled with interviews with sex workers and prisoners, collages, soap operas and polemics, and has played a vital role in the growth and awareness of trans culture since the '90's. Just one part of her history focusing on transsexual rights, advocacy for sex workers and animal rights..

Mihra was also instrumental in starting Meal Trans at Toronto's 519 Community Center. It was the first publicly funded program providing a free hot meal for trans people and still runs every Tuesday, 5pm to 8pm. Also under Mirha's leadership, The Counting Past 2 Festival premiered in Toronto in 1997. It was the first festival recognizing and celebrating the work of trans people in film, video, performance and spoken word. In November 2025, her original zine created from 1993-1995, was rereleased and printed for the first time by LittlePuss Press. Queer press headlines have acclaimed it as "Never being more relevant". Mirha, a vibrant and beautiful person, was one of the first people that I met when I transitioned.

Boyd Kodak- What have you been doing over the last year?

Mirha-Soleil Ross- Well, I have been mainly dealing with family health crises. My Mother was hospitalized in a CHSLD for 5 months. During the same period, my roommate-companion was also hospitalized for almost three months. So, my head was not interested in art projects. I just want to simplify my life, and art and politics are no longer compatible with that desire of mine.

BK- That must be very stressful for you. Tell us about your recent exciting event?

MSR- I still managed to work with LittlePuss Press, a trans feminist publisher based in the US, to publish a facsimile of *Gendertrash from Hell*, the trans zine Xanthra Phillippa Mackay and I used to publish out of Toronto. I'm very proud of the book. See www.littlepuss.net.

BK- An amazing accomplishment. What are you looking forward to next year?

MSR- I want to stop smoking cigarettes.

BK- Any message you would like to put out there?

MSR- Don't let yourself be brought down by all the negativity that haunts and hunts us, as trans people. The world is scary, but it's possible to find a nest where we can feel safer and survive these times of torment.

BK- Finish these sentences: The last thing I do before I go to sleep is…

MSR- Make sure the cats have food and water and that the litter is clean.

BK- I lose control when…

MSR- I see animals being mistreated.

BK- If I could have 3 wishes...

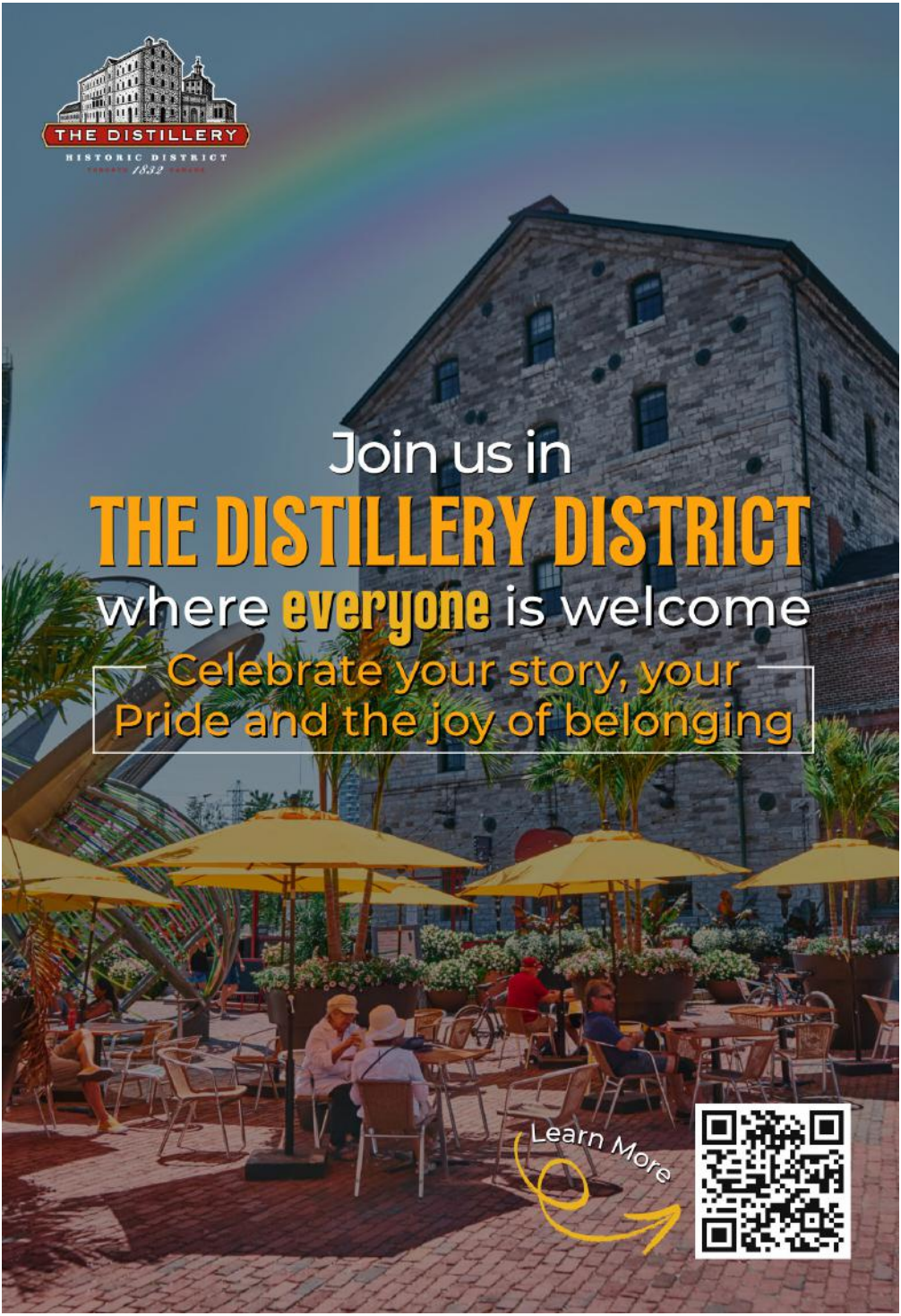
MSR- Blooming, thriving, and resting.

BK- Life wouldn't be the same without…

MSR- Cannabis tea.



Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.


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Stardust Bar and Kitchen – Halifax Nova Scotia

Photo: Instagram @stardustbarhalifax



Mya Foxx of Canada's Drag Race Season Six Hosts Drag Brunch

The intersection of Barrington and Prince Streets in Halifax is the heart of the vibrant Downtown/Waterfront area. Known for its lively nightlife, trendy boutiques, restaurants, and proximity to the waterfront, it is where you will find Stardust Bar and Kitchen. Voted Halifax's Best New Bar in *'The Best of Halifax 2025'*, this exciting Queer space, opened for just over a year, has already begun to make its mark.

With a packed calendar of 2SLGBTQIA+ events — from drag shows and dance parties to trivia, and karaoke, Stardust Bar and Kitchen brings the diversity of queer nightlife to Halifax. Plus, they also offer a lovely patio with views down Prince Street toward the waterfront. With nearby transit access, on-street parking, and several nearby parking garages, this space is not only easily accessed, but is a handicap accessible space.

And, it is not just a bar, its full kitchen offers a little something for all palates, diets, and lifestyles, including a selection of gluten-free and vegan options. The kitchen, open every day until 10PM, offers two different brunches on the weekend. Sunday is a traditional brunch, while Saturday is their Drag Brunch, hosted by Mya Foxx of *Canada's Drag Race* season 6, or Elle Noir, with a fresh cast of special guests each week. Enjoy a high-energy variety show featuring local kings and/or queens while indulging in your favourite brunch classics. Whether it's a date with your significant other(s), or a group celebration, it's the perfect way to spend your afternoon. This is a ticketed event (and tickets go quickly,) so be sure to book a table early; groups must be ticketed together to be seated together. Tickets are $10 and all attendees must be 19+ (unless event is specified as an "All-Ages" show). Doors open at 11AM, and show run from noon to 2PM. Plus, with Happy Hour specials on both food and drinks from 3PM to 6PM daily, the kitchen is always cooking up something good.

If you are in Halifax, or will be visiting the area, keep this venue on your list of places to visit, perhaps regularly. No matter if you pop in to belt out a karaoke tune, dance the night away or wake up with a drag brunch, we're sure you'll be raving about it as well.

Stardust Bar and Kitchen

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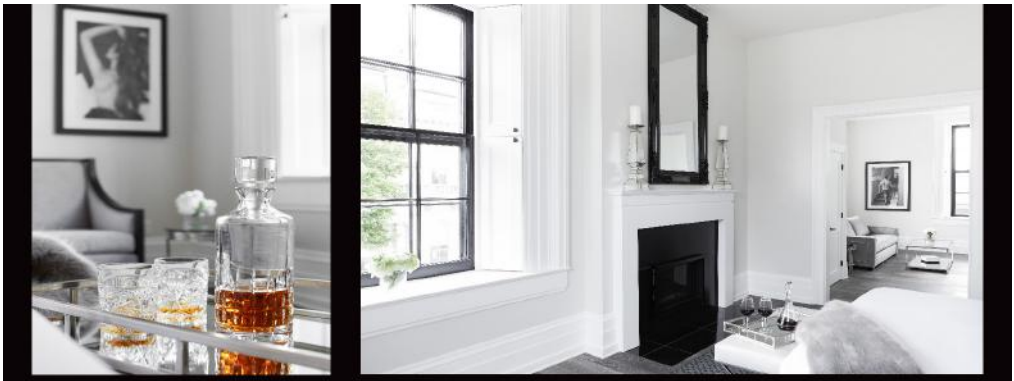
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Kitchen closes daily at 10PM



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



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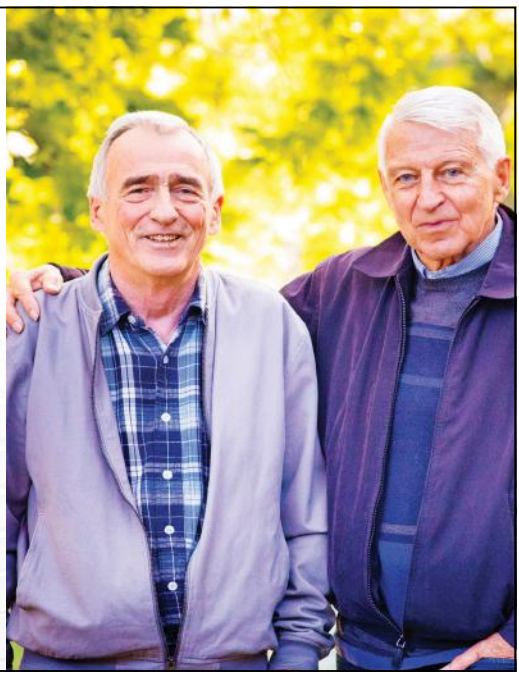
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By Sherry Sylvain

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

Woody's • 467 Church St., Toronto

instagram.com/woodysonchurch

Hump Night Honeys

Wednesdays from 10PM

Hosts Carlotta Carlisle and Katinka Kature welcome an array of special guest with DJ Chris Steinbach.

Woody's • 467 Church St., Toronto

instagram.com/woodysonchurch

Jock Night Thursdays

Thursdays from 7PM

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

CockBar • 461 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

flashonchurch.com

The Dmanda Show

Fridays from 9PM

Friday Night Drag Race viewing party and live Drag Show with Dmanda Tension and Vitality Black, plus some of Toronto's best performers.

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

beacons.ai/drinkatthedrink

The Motorcycle and Powersport Show

February 20 – 22

Canada's premier powersport event is back and set to deliver plenty of excitement, fun, information, and new discoveries for riders of all styles, ages, and experience levels.

Enercare Centre • 100 Princes' Blvd., Toronto

motocanada.com/shows/toronto/

TICOT Drag Brunch

February 22, March 29; 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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

The Well • 487 Church St., Toronto

theimperialcourtoftoronto.com

Rent in Concert

February 23 • 8PM

An ensemble of stellar vocalists and instrumentalists come together to share the iconic music of RENT like never before.

Roy Thomson Hall • 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

roythomsonhall.mhrth.com/tickets/rent-in-concert



Dominique Fils-Aime

February 25 • 8PM

Rising star in vocal jazz and double JUNO Award winner, Dominique Fils-Aimé is a Montreal singer-songwriter who puts the history of African-American musical culture into the heart of her work.

TD Music Hall • 178 Victoria St., Toronto

tdmusichall.mhrth.com/tickets/dominique-fils-aim



War On The Catwalk

March 6 • 8PM

Hosted by Alyssa Edwards. Get ready for your favourite queens performing live on stage. They've got Jewels Sparkles, Lexi, Lydia B. Kollins, Bosco, Suzie Toot and Daya Betty.

Elgin and Wintergarden Theatre • 189 Yonge St., Toronto

https://www.ticketmaster.ca



Classic Albums Live: Supertramp, Breakfast In America

March 6 • 8PM

Featuring a powerhouse lineup of A-list musicians from across the country, these unforgettable classics are brought to life exactly as you remember them — note for note, cut for cut.

Roy Thomson Hall • 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

roythomsonhall.mhrth.com/tickets/cal-supertramp

TICOT Charity Bingo

March 8 & April 12 • 3PM to 5PM

Hosted by Emperor 35 & 39 David Valois, and Empress 35 & 39 Rachelle Valois. Proceeds to Reign 39 Charities of Choice - PWA Food Essentials Market; Durham Alliance Outreach Food Pantry; Friends of Ruby

Flash On Church • 463 Church St., Toronto

theimperialcourtoftoronto.com

Nitzotzot

March 19 • 7PM

An unforgettable evening of live Israeli Jewish music featuring three outstanding performers, coming together for a powerful and uplifting concert experience.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

https://www.ticketmaster.ca

What You Won't Do For Love

March 23 • 8PM

Environmental icons David Suzuki and Tara Cullis join with theatre artists in a poetic, thought-provoking performance about love, legacy, and our shared responsibility to the planet.

The Rose Theatre • 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton

https://tickets.brampton.ca



Canadian Blues Music Awards

March 30 • 6PM

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

The Phoenix • 410 Sherbourne St., Toronto

ticketweb.ca/event/canadian-blues-music-awards





BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain



ROAD TRIPS

Karaoke

Thursdays from 8PM

Whether you're an award-winning vocalist, a show-tune afficionado, or just enjoy a great time, with great music, and great friends, this karaoke night is for you! Every Thursday; no cover.

Club 717 • 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa

club717.com

Spiritual Circle

The last Sunday of each month • 2PM to 4PM

The monthly Spiritual Circle invites people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences to gather, reflect, and explore their faith in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Club 717 • 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa

club717.com

Jully Black

February 20 • 7:30PM

A platinum-selling recording artist, Jully has achieved multiple Top 10 hits across pop, R&B, and dance charts.

Maxwell's Concerts and Events • 35 University Ave. E., Waterloo

ticketscene.ca/events/56882





BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain



The Rock Orchestra by Candlelight

March 13 • 8PM

Experience legendary rock and metal anthems — reimagined by a live orchestra under the glow of more than 1,000 flickering candles.

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

centreinthesquare.com/event

Chris de Burgh 50lo

March 14 • 7:30PM

This show celebrates the 50th career anniversary of legendary singer/songwriter Chris de Burgh who will be offering his fans a unique solo performance of all his hits.

FirstOntario Concert Hall • 10 McNab St. S., Hamilton

https://www.ticketmaster.ca

Marc-André Hamelin and Charles Richard-Hamelin: Duo Piano

March 20 • 8PM

Two of Canada's greatest pianists perform exquisite repertoire for two pianos by Mozart, Chopin, and Gershwin.

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

centreinthesquare.com/event




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www.theqmusicale.ca