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THE *Love*
& **SEX**
Vegas
Chocolate
ISSUE

CRAIG & BRANDON

BRAVO'S NEWLYWEDS WITH
FIT AND PHAB VALENTINE TIPS

HEXX CHOCOLATE FACTORY

AND OTHER COCOA CONFECTIONS

JENNIFER LOPEZ BRINGS IT

NEW RESIDENCY @ PLANET HOLLYWOOD A MUST-SEE SHOW

+PLUS: BARDOT BRASSERIE AND OTHER ROMANTIC DINING SPOTS



ON THE COVER

Jennifer Lopez debuts her must-see residency at Planet Hollywood.

Photos: Denise Truscello

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elton john

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It's that time of year again, where love is in the air, but this year feels different. It's the first Valentine's Day since marriage equality and that's something to celebrate!

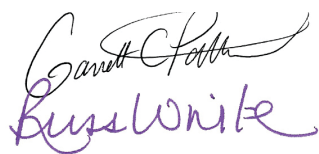
QVegas Magazine had the opportunity to cover the new JLo residency at Planet Hollywood. Her performance was so strong that everyone is talking about it. She really is giving it "all she has".

We also get an introduction to the cast of Bravos show "Newlyweds The First Year". We will be following the show's first gay couple Brandon Liberati and Craig Ramsay—and local queen Hot Chocolate (Larry Edwards)—in the next few issues but make sure to tune in to the show on Bravo or www.bravotv.com

Speaking of chocolate, what would February be without delicious chocolates? We take a tour at Hexx and their new in-house chocolate factory, and explore a few other cocoa-confections around town. Our food writer Michael Barbieri reviews Bardot Brasserie at Aria, and we have a few other suggestions on where to make reservations for a romantic dinner.

It's almost time for the Sin Sity Sisters Red Dress event happening at the new Rendezvous nightclub. Everyone **MUST** wear a red dress. It's all in the name of fun and goes to a great cause.

We hope you enjoy this issue, we know we found it **VERY** sweet.



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WHY I'M SUPPORTING HILLARY CLINTON

[by Melissa Morgan, HRC Governor, Las Vegas, NV]

This November, the stakes could not be higher for the LGBT community. Over the last seven years under President Obama's leadership, the nation has made substantial progress on LGBT equality -- from the end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," to his Executive Order protecting LGBT employees of federal contractors from discrimination, to his historic support for nationwide marriage equality, to signing landmark hate crimes legislation, speaking out against so-called "conversion therapy," and working to protect LGBT students.

While we have made quite a bit of progress, the fight for equality is far from over. In most states, LGBT people are still at risk of being fired, evicted or denied services simply because of who they are. Today, 63 percent of LGBT Americans report having experienced such discrimination, and we are seeing other troubling trends, from the onslaught of state and local anti-LGBT measures to the national scourge of anti-transgender violence to backsliding on HIV/AIDS prevention and youth homelessness.

Against that backdrop, the leading Republican candidates for president are threatening to halt progress as well as revoke, repeal, and overturn the gains made during President Obama's two terms. This is despite the fact that a majority of Republican and Independent voters today support full federal equality for LGBT Americans.

We've come too far to allow this to happen. This year, we need to mobilize and organize and elect another pro-equality champion to the White House who will fight for us each and every day.

I believe Hillary Clinton is that champion. She has proven that she will fight for us as president, and that she can defeat any one of the leading Republican candidates running on an anti-LGBT platform.

Secretary Clinton has made LGBT equality a pillar of her campaign and recently unveiled the most robust and ambitious LGBT plan any candidate for president has ever laid out. She has vowed to fight for the Equality Act, a bill that would finally offer explicit, clear, and permanent

non-discrimination protections for LGBT people at the federal level. And her detailed LGBT policy platform specifically calls for dropping the ban on open transgender military service, outlawing dangerous “conversion therapy” for minors, ending the epidemic of transgender violence, and supporting HIV prevention and affordable treatment.

I believe her record speaks to her commitment. As Secretary of State, Clinton became the first in her position to robustly advocate for LGBT equality throughout the world, making a historic and forceful speech to the United Nations declaring that “gay rights are human rights.” In the Senate, she was steadfast in her opposition to the Federal Marriage Amendment and she helped us ensure the Constitution would never be amended to deny rights rather than expand rights. And she helped lead on bills to protect LGBT workers from employment discrimination, and had a strong record on key votes and legislation that mattered to LGBT Americans.

With everything we are fighting for on the line, the LGBT community can and must play a decisive role in this election. According to the Human Rights Campaign, which is already working to mobilize the pro-equality vote, in the 2012 election, at least six million LGB Americans voted in an election decided by less than five million votes. And, in key states like Ohio, North Carolina, and Florida, the LGBT vote is double the margin of victory in the last three presidential elections—meaning we could play an outsize role in delivering electoral votes for a pro-equality candidate.

With nearly 80 percent of Americans in support of federal non-discrimination protections for LGBT people, equality could be a pivotal issue for the general electorate in 2016 as well. In fact, a 55 percent majority of Americans say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate opposed to marriage equality.

I believe Hillary Clinton is the candidate we can count on to defeat opponents of equality in November and every day she sits in the Oval Office.

ELECTION 2016

Pursuant to Nevada law, Nevada does not conduct Primary Elections to select Presidential candidates. Instead, major political parties hold caucuses in the beginning of 2016. Contact your party for information about caucuses, including registration requirements and deadlines.

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Democratic Party Presidential Caucus: Contact the Democratic Party for more information.

Clark County Democratic Party

E-Mail: info@clarkdems.com

Phone: (702) 586-6402

Nevada State Democratic Party

E-Mail: info@nvdems.com

Phone: (702) 737-8683

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

Republican Party Presidential Caucus: Contact the Republican Party for more information.

Clark County Republican Party

E-Mail: info@clarkgop.org

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Nevada State Republican Party

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What looks like a cute boutique cupcake shop in The District shops at MGM Grand will surprise you. These treats aren't edible, but there's plenty to share with your valentine.

Nectar Bath Treats sells locally hand-crafted bath soaps. Made from all-natural ingredients, the products are great for sensitive skin and come in a unique variety of colors and shapes, from the signature cupcakes, to seasonal hearts, donuts, and cheesecakes.



A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark t-shirt. He is holding a large, white, three-dimensional star in front of him. The background is dark.

STAR
RAPH SOLO

THE BRIGHTEST STAR

Raph Solo's Love Letter To His Mum This Valentine's Day

[by William Cooke]

As a child, my dad fell ill with cancer and was unable to work,” remembers out crooner Raph Solo. “Mum nursed him for thirteen years while working to earn an income in order to hold our family together.

“Even as I became a man, Mum has been incredibly supportive,” he continues. “She gave me money to help cover studio costs. She allowed me to stay in her home for years while I was getting my music career started, never once asking me to pay rent. I’ve always appreciated her, but now more than ever. She epitomizes the word ‘star’.”

Raph Solo's new single, "Star" is a song of gratitude to his Mum, the woman who he credits as shaping him into the man he is today. The song is the first release from his third full-length album, *THE ANONYMOUS ICON*.

"It's really a tribute to all the unsung heroes who do amazing things for other people," explains Solo. "People who do things, not for acclaim or acknowledgement, but simply out of love."

The song follows "Glass of Wine", Raph Solo's hit dance record from last spring. "It's interesting to hear how my music has evolved through the years," he says. "My songs reflect the experiences I am having at the time of recording. Over the years, as I've found more and more happiness in my self, my sound has gone from Latin/eastern flavoured ballads to up-tempo pop."

"I also get to the point more quickly in my songs," he adds. "Probably because life seems more fast paced than ever before."

Like many young people, Solo juggles multiple plates in order to get by. "I'm an independent artist with a forty hour per week day job, but nobody knows that!" he laughs. "At least they didn't until now. That's why I felt like *THE ANONYMOUS ICON* was an appropriate title for the album."

THE ANONYMOUS ICON includes many of Solo's previous releases, re-digitalized and re-mastered for the album.

Along with the release, Solo is unveiling a new music video that is as steamy and passionate as fans have come to expect from the young singer, but slightly different. "I usually take centre stage in my music videos. This is the first one I take a back seat in."

Solo is seen as a photographer, marvelling at the beauty of a female model, capturing her essence through images. The video ends with the female model hitting on him, and Solo revealing he is gay.

"It's meant to show that you can never judge by appearances. There is no one stereotype for gay men in 2016."





Today, Raph Solo is a proud gay man with nothing to hide, but it wasn't always that way. Just a few years ago, he fought his feelings for men and even underwent reparative therapy in an attempt to cure himself of his homosexuality. "Ultimately, it made me feel like a failure because no matter how hard I tried, I could not change my feelings.

"I strive to be 100% real, today. I love my self and I'm hiding."

Solo takes it a step further, proudly sporting his birthday suit in the video. Yes, in the scene where he is holding the bright star, Solo has nothing on

underneath.

"The filmmaker was straight so I'm not sure how comfortable he felt with me being naked under my star," he laughs. But there was a deeper meaning to the scene. "A star is symbolic of the soul and the light is symbolic of the love we hold in our soul. There can be no darkness in the presence of light," Solo says, adding:

"That's why it's important that we let all stars shine."

Visit <http://raphsolo.com>

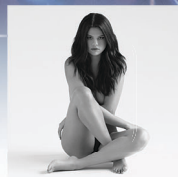
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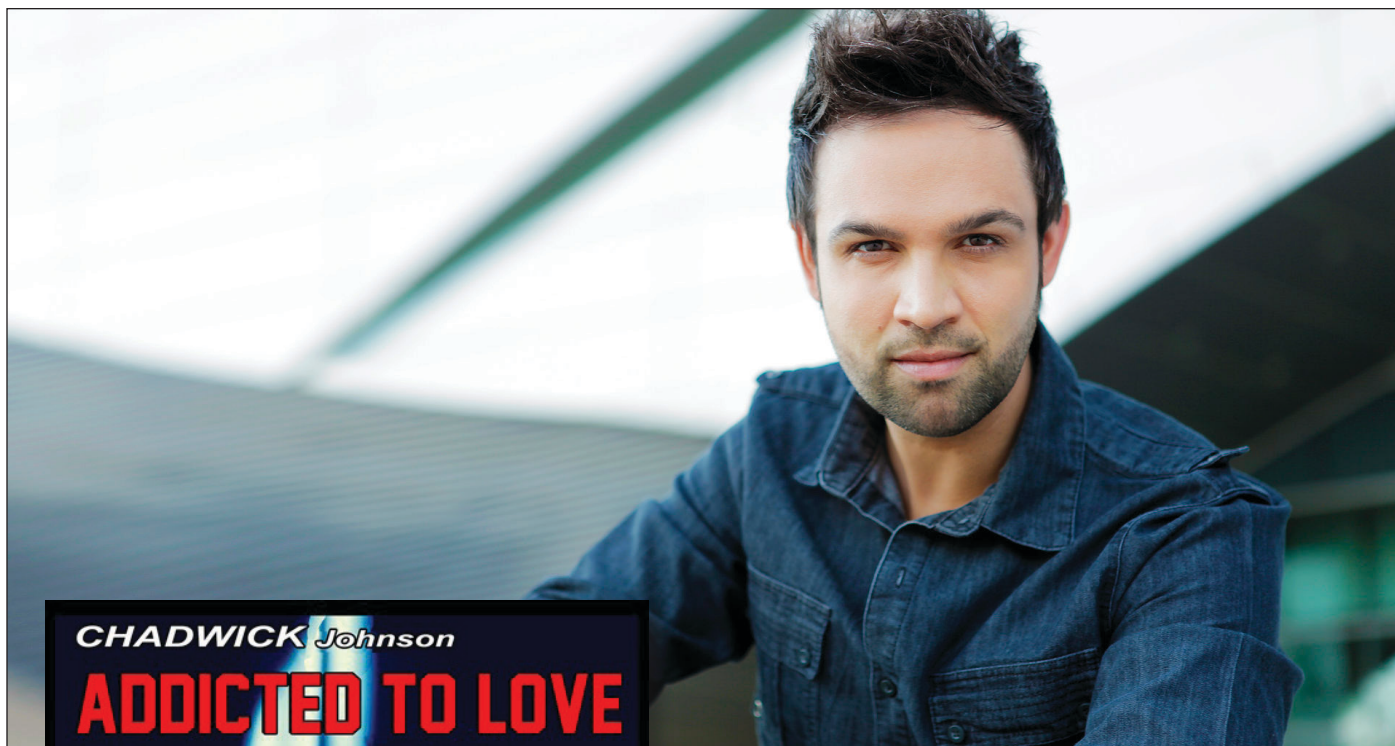


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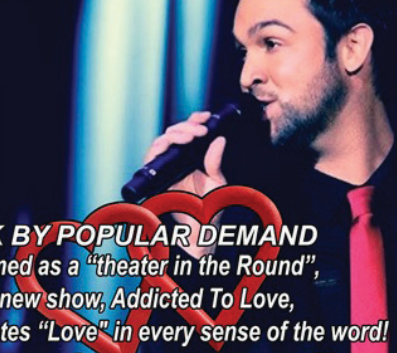
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Kick off Valentine's Weekend with heart throb Chadwick Johnson at the Italian American Club as he performs with his new show "Addicted to Love" with his new band, the "LV Retro Vibes."

Chadwick's velvety voice is a throwback to Old Vegas with a contemporary vibe. You can catch Chadwick at venues all over Vegas, but few will compare to the nostalgia of the Italian American Club.

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JENNIFER LOPEZ

Dance, Love and Repeat

[by Scott Matti]

You never know if a dream can come true, until you dare to dream."

Spoken with a sultry confidence, this opening line echoes within the walls of The Axis at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino. As the voice continues to capture the audience, a digital display pours down millions of diamonds upon the stage.

The voice is undeniable. It is certain and it is familiar. It belongs to none other than Jennifer Lopez herself. Suddenly, the curtains part to the left and right, the floor of the stage is lined with lights displaying "J.Lo" and just like that, we have entered into a dream. A dream gilded in metallic and dripping in crystals. A fantasy that seems too good to be true, too incredible for a Wednesday night. What a gift to witness a production that honors the glamour of this city's past and ushers in an ultra-new (and much-appreciated) Las Vegas.

"Jennifer Lopez: All I Have" is the brand-new residency show to grace our wonderful Strip and tickets are currently on sale. Up against some stiff competition, husband and wife team Napoleon and Tabitha Duno of Nappytabs, knew they must direct a spectacular show based around movement, fashion, and performance. A show that not only celebrates the career of such a talented artist, but also pays close attention to the desires of locals and tourists alike. A set design of about 75,000 crystals should do the trick, don't you think? Jennifer thinks so when she takes a pause as she declares, "there's a new girl in town."

However, aside from the draping crystals,

chandeliers and mirrored staircase, the technology of the show alone sets itself apart from the rest. Within nearly two hours, we are seamlessly transported from a jazzy ballroom, to the Bronx, to somewhere in Latin America, and even to a cosmic rave complete with a glittery, revolving crescent moon. We experience all of this and much more without ever once losing grip on the voice in our heads that remind us that this is actually happening.

Yet, even with such glitz, the show is packed with emotion, character, and talent. A five-piece band and 16 dancers accompany Lopez and shine many spotlights on her multi-faceted talent. Sexy, sensual, compassionate, motivational, nostalgic, cultured, eclectic; all of the things we knew and had no idea about Lopez are put on a state-of-the-art display. And if there is one thing you must do in life, it is to see J.Lo dance in person. In particular, dance on a chaise lounge, during a neon strip-tease, in turquoise velvet. Unbelievable.

Each tune is choreographed perfectly and sung with energy all while Lopez is dressed in looks by famed designers Michael Costello, Zuhair Murad, and Nicolas Jebran. Versace, a main



element for “All I Have”, created a gown that is reportedly covered in over 260,000 Swarovski crystals and took over 1,400 hours to hand apply. The incredible dancers bring even more life to the stage dressed in brightly-colored suits, larger-than-life feathers, bedazzled canes, and flowing fabrics.

The set list has been curated wonderfully as well. Her classics such as “If You Had My Love”, “I’m Real”, and “Waiting for Tonight” ricochet off of our lips. An insane EDM moment engages during “Dance Again” and “On the Floor” where lasers and a heavy beat feed us adrenaline. In a blink of an eye, we are willfully thrown into a Latin whirlwind where hits like “Quimbara” and “Quien Sera” have the crowd up and on its feet. Just as you begin to break a sweat, Lopez slows it down. She is raised to new heights (literally) in a dress displaying the galaxy, and shares a piece of her world with ours as she mentions her children, Max and Emme, then sings her heart out during a moving ballad.

All in all, this show is a dazzling necessity. If there is one thing that must be taken away from what you are now reading, it is that, without a doubt, “All I Have” is designed for whomever it is you are. It is a rarity in a city full of productions when a show is customized to people of all ages, gender, persuasions and preferences. To the little girl or boy who dares to dream, this show will add fuel to your fire. To the young couple who cannot stop dancing, J.Lo encourages you to never stop. To the older gentleman who took his wife out for a night on the town, the production awakens your inner concert-goer and lets you run free. To the group of friends who are afraid that they will not be able to handle being in the same space as the fabulous Jennifer Lopez, it becomes clear that fear has many sides and that with just the right movement, you can shine just like a diamond. Bottom line, Jennifer Lopez will find a way to make you dance, love, and dance again.



DOUBLE BARREL

[by Michael Barbieri
myvegasobsession.com]



If you haven't seen the Strip-side entrance to the Monte Carlo Resort lately, you might not recognize it.

Gone is much of the neo-classical statuary, and no trace remains of the ornate fountain that once marked the street entry to the megaresort. Instead, you'll find a modern courtyard, with angular water features, and evergreens in sleek, geometric slate planters. This is BLVD Plaza.

Flanking this outdoor hub, are curving structures housing several casual new eateries. One of the anchors of BLVD Plaza, is the bustling Double Barrel Roadhouse.

Opened a mere two years ago, Double Barrel Roadhouse has been serving up tasty barbecue, Tex-Mex favorites, burgers, and Southern-style fare, in an atmosphere reminiscent of a genuine, tin-roofed roadhouse...by way of Las Vegas, that is!

Beginning February 1st, the Roadhouse will introduce a slew of new menu items to their already mouth-watering selections, so Double Barrel's management reached out to me, suggesting I bring a couple of friends for a private tasting. The dishes were presented in a rather random fashion, and while there was no rhyme nor reason to the presentation, we all left full and very happy!

We started with two new cocktails, the Spiced Southern Peach, a smooth creamy combination of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Fire Whiskey, Rum



Chata, and peach puree. While I would've liked a stronger peach presence, the drink was still yummy, with a vaguely eggnog-like flavor. We also tried the Roadhouse Sidecar - Knob Creek Bourbon, Grand Marnier, lemon and orange juices, agave, and peach puree. With a strong, fruity depth of flavor, this Sidecar was the best I've tried!

Then the food started coming. And coming. And coming! The first wave included St. Louis Style Barbecued Ribs - short, meaty pork ribs that were fall-off-the-bone tender, had a deep smokiness and a nice amount of heat from the dry rub, with a tangy finish from the vinegar-based house made barbecue sauce, as well as Hot Link Sliders - meaty and satisfying, with Poblano-onion relish, and a mustard barbecue sauce. I didn't detect as much heat as I prefer in hot link sausages, but that's a minor quibble - at the end of the meal, there wasn't a single one left! A side dish of Creamed Corn was simple and subtly delicious, made with sweet corn, butter, a touch of heavy cream, and topped with a crispy mixture of Panko bread crumbs and Parmesan

cheese. Finally, the Loaded Potato Skins, stuffed full of white and yellow Cheddar cheese, pulled pork, and beef brisket, topped with a cilantro sour cream. The juicy pork and tender brisket, along with the herbal pop of the cilantro, created layers of texture and flavor that elevated this classic bar food to an extraordinary level.

Next came the Barbecued Brisket with Garlic Mashed Potatoes. The flavors here were just right, with the lightly garlicky potatoes complemented nicely by the signature Double Barrel BBQ Sauce on the brisket. The only criticism here, was that the meat wasn't as fall-apart tender as I had expected. It was explained, however, that they used a deeper, less marbled cut of the brisket, to stand up to the smoking process and the hearty flavors presented. With some minor tweaking, this good dish could be great.

During a brief pause between dishes, we sipped a few more of the potent, new cocktails: the Sazerac - rye whiskey, absinthe, simple syrup, and bitters, the Elixir - Absolut Elix Vodka, raspberry purée, sweet & sour mix, club soda, and Sierra Mist, and the Lynchburg Lemonade, with Jack Daniels, triple sec, sour mix, and lemon lime soda. All that was missing was a porch swing!

A "flight" of wings arrived next - the sampler included a traditional Buffalo Wing, with an excellent version of the spicy, tangy sauce that Americans know and love, a Honey Hot Wing, that deftly combined sweet, heat, and a lovely smokiness, and lastly, the Habanero Bourbon BBQ Wing had a deep Southern kick from the bourbon, with a strong habanero bite, which, while spicy, never overpowered the palate.

We also tried the Mac 'N' Cheese - hearty,

creamy, and cheesy, with a combination of American and yellow Cheddar cheese, and that same Panko-Parmesan crust. A great take on a classic American comfort food. The Candied Bacon was insanely good, prepared with just a touch of salt, pepper, and brown sugar, the sweetness of which balanced out the bacon's natural saltiness, making it absolutely irresistible. And although it wasn't a new dish, I asked to sample the Garlic Fries, which were addictive, with a good strong garlic flavor, and an aroma that I sensed the moment I walked into the Roadhouse!

Lastly, a sinful dessert - the Deep Fried Twinkie. In the Chef's hands, this simple "carnival food" was elevated by coating the Twinkies in a raspberry tempura batter. Dusted with powdered sugar and served with a dark chocolate dipping sauce, this tempting junk food treat had a lightly crispy crust, with just a hint of berry flavor, and warm vanilla sponge cake and melted creme on the inside - a comforting confection, that was so wrong, and yet so right!

Executive Chef David Mangual, with a background in French and Italian cuisine, clearly has a passion for this homey Southern style food. His dishes were packed with flavor, always striking the perfect balance of spicy, sweet, tangy, and smoky - all the best attributes of good barbecue!

The Double Barrel Roadhouse is a fun, often noisy and raucous eatery, with live bands some nights and Liquid Courage Karaoke on others, so if you're looking for hot music, strong drinks, and good, stick-to-your-ribs country cooking, come to the Double Barrel Roadhouse and have a down-home Southern night on the Vegas Strip!



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MARIAH RETURNS

#1 TO INFINITY



Conceptualized by Mariah, and directed by legendary Grammy Awards Producer Ken Ehrlich, “MARIAH #1 TO INFINITY”, embodies the true meaning of Vegas glitz and glamour. Designed exclusively for The Colosseum, the breathtaking production features 18 of Mariah’s timeless and beloved Number One Hits performed in chronological order taking fans on a spectacular journey through her life and career in an unforgettable evening. “Vision of Love,” “Hero,” “Fantasy,” “We Belong Together” and “Touch My Body” to name a few, are among Mariah’s 18 songs to reach #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 singles (17 self-penned), a feat that has not been achieved by any other solo artist in music history.

Mariah Carey is the best-selling female artist of all time with more than 200-million albums sold. Mariah is a singer, songwriter, and producer recognized with multiple Grammy Awards, 21 American Music Awards, Billboard’s “Artist of the Decade” Award, the World Music Award for “World’s Best Selling Female Artist of the Millennium,” and BMI’s “Icon Award” for her outstanding achievements in songwriting, to name a few. With her distinct five-octave vocal range, prolific songwriting, and producing talent, Mariah is truly the template of the modern pop performance.

Tickets are on sale now for the following shows:

Feb.: 2, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20

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The Color Run will brighten the streets of downtown Las Vegas with its Tropicolor themed run on Saturday, Feb. 27 at 8 a.m., with a portion of the proceeds benefiting Three Square Food Bank. Now in its fifth year, the "Happiest 5k on the Planet" invites runners to take a 5k vacation and combine the enjoyment of a fun run with the leisure of an island-style getaway - full of even more bright colors, lively sounds and memories to last a lifetime.

Runners, walkers or sprinters of all ages and athletic abilities will be bathed in a tropical array of colors and island scents as they cruise through a scene of serene palm trees, vibrant arches and festive music throughout. Upon finishing, Color Runners can let loose island-style at the Rainbow Beach during the Finish Festival with a massive color throw celebration, music, dancing and unforgettable photo opportunities. A new participation kit offers island-inspired items including a lei, snapback





hat and sunglasses, in addition to the t-shirt, headband, temporary tattoos and medal in the classic participant kit. Now with options for delivery to your doorstep, it's never been easier or more fun to participate in The Color Run.

"We are excited to share The Color Run Tropicolor World Tour with our runners and can't wait to bring this event to cities across the world" said Travis Snyder, founder of The Color Run. "We hope that all our Color Runners will be able to step into paradise with us and enjoy a 5k vacation that only The Color Run can create."

More than five million runners have crossed The Color Run's finish line since its inception in 2012, creating a global phenomenon that continues to grow and innovate the world-wide movement of the paint race genre, perfect for all fitness types. Since sweeping the U.S. in its first year with 53 events, The Color Run grew to host more than 230 events in 39 countries across the world. From first time runners to the seasoned athlete, The Color Run caters to everyone under the sun. For its fifth year anniversary, The Color Run is anticipated to hit more than 40 countries in 2016.





HELLO

We did the gayest mashup ever with Adele and Sia,” proclaimed Justin Mortelliti. Hello had just started playing on the radio when it caught the attention of Justin and his Rock of Ages leading lady Becca Kötte.

Justin returned to the Las Vegas cast for a four-month revival role after a year-long hiatus in New York. The on-stage romantic leads are also real-life roommates and close friends. I had a chance to visit with the duo one night just before their show re-opened at Rio All Suites Hotel & Casino.

ALIVE

[by Russ White]

Justin: We knew we wanted to record something together while I was here for four months.

Becca: Originally, we wanted to do Alive as a male and female duet. It was BANGIN! Justin sent it to me when he knew he was coming back to Vegas.

Both Justin and Becca released albums last year, and wanted to collaborate on a new project. One night, the roommates were watching The Voice on the couch in their pajamas when Regina Love



*Hello/Alive is
available on iTunes*

came on and sang Hello.

Justin: We started singing together and harmonizing. I don't know how it happened but we started singing Alive with it and it kinda worked. The next day we sat down at the kitchen table and worked it out in about a hour.

Becca: We pitched it to Andy Gerold. It's complicated with a lot of moving parts and a lot of layers and came on board to help produce it. Andy's a guitarist with us in Rock of Ages, but he's a man of many talents and played every instrument on this track.

Justin: We knew the songs were hot. Hello had just come out and Alive was getting popular.

Becca: When I heard Alive in Trader Joe's one day I knew we had to do it. It was time.

Rock of Ages closed at the Venetian at the beginning of January and Justin and Becca put the creative wheels in motion to produce the track while on break. The show was dark for about three weeks in preparation for the move to its new home at the Rio All Suites Hotel & Casino.



Justin came to Vegas as part of the original cast in January 2013 playing the role of Drew, and graced the cover of QVegas in March 2013 with co-star Mark Shunock. Justin stayed with the show for two years before returning to New York.

Becca joined the cast a few months later in April as part of the ensemble and understudied all the female roles, including the role of Sherrie, for a year. When Carrie St. Louis moved to Broadway, Becca re-auditioned for Sherrie and has played the lead for over a year and a half.

Justin returned to the cast in November.

Becca: My fiancé and I bought a house last year. Justin was only going to be here for four months, so we were excited to have company, so Justin and



Photo: Linda Quackenboss

Photo: Denise Truscello

his dog live with us, and I got a dog for Christmas. It's been fun.

Justin: It's nice being back with Becca on stage. We have such a good chemistry in life and on stage its awesome. It is hard to have that. I've worked with leading ladies where it wasn't that great and you have to pretend on stage as much as you can. With Carrie, we were so, so close and when she left and Becca came in and we became even closer. It's nice to come back and to be living together and do this song.

Becca: We want it to become an anthem song for gay bars everywhere!

Justin: We put these two song we love together and it turned out better than we expected. It would be awesome if it went viral and started playing at the gay clubs.

So what's next for this dynamic duo?

Becca: I wouldn't hate if we kept recording stuff together.

Justin: We had an idea of doing rock versions of Broadway songs.

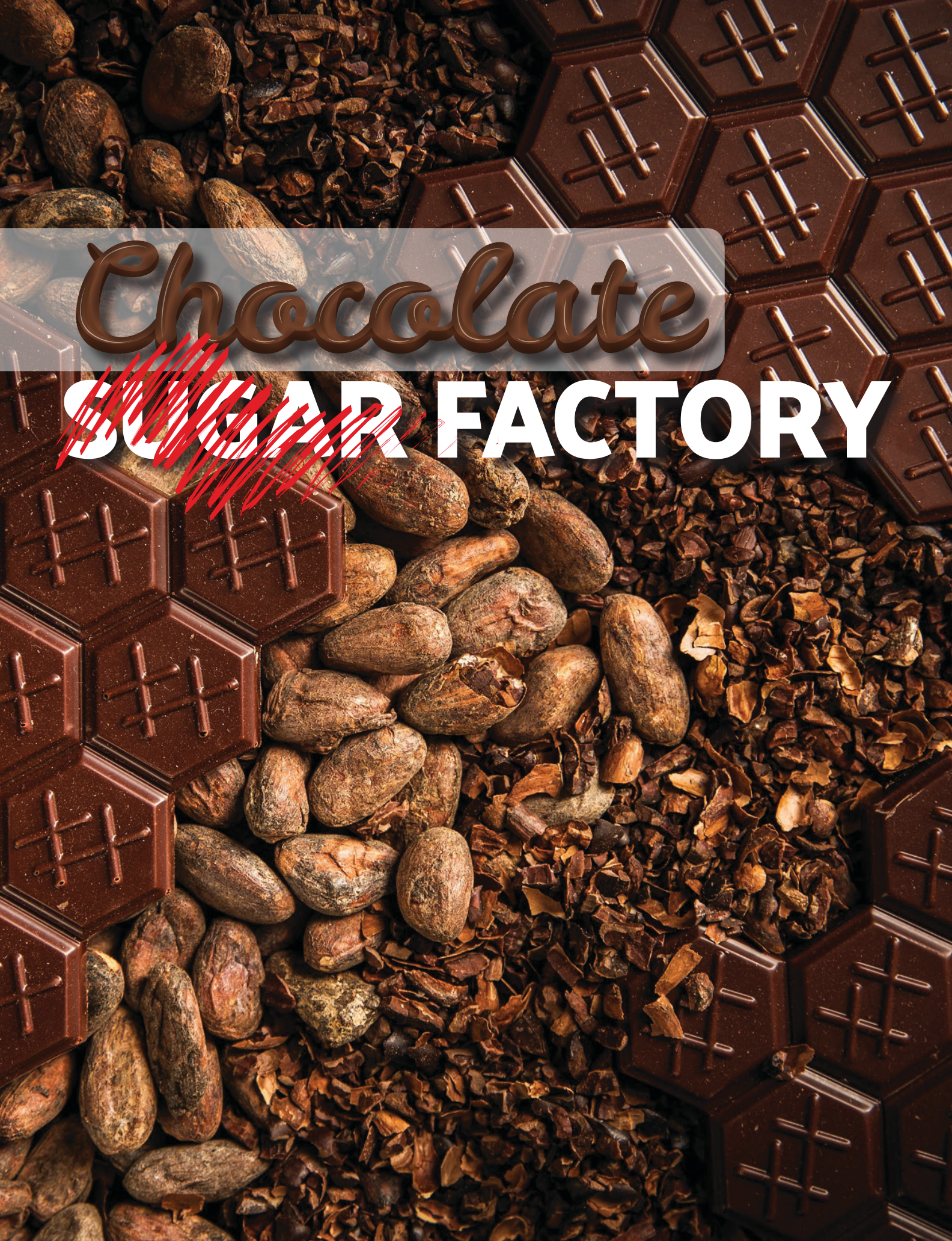
Justin: Last year I planted a lot of seeds, knocked on a lot of doors, did a lot of callbacks. Now I'm ready to go back to New York and keep truckin and wait for the next thing. You never know with new musicals what's going to hit.

Becca: I'm getting married this summer, so I'm not making any sudden moves. We're getting married in my home town of Fargo, North Dakota. I've been so blessed with this show and this cast. I've had so many awesome opportunities because of it. I'm floored by the support we have in this community.



The "Hello/Alive" single was released on iTunes at the end of January. Justin's album, "The Prince of April" and Becca's album, "Epic" are also available on iTunes. Rock of Ages plays seven nights a week at Rio All Suite Hotel & Casino.





Chocolate

~~SUGAR~~ FACTORY

Hexx kitchen + bar sits at the base of the Eiffel Tower in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Formerly Sugar Factory American Brasserie, Hexx emerged with a new name, a refreshed menu, and new emphasis on chocolate.

But not just an emphasis on chocolate, chocolate is at the heart of the restaurant—with a complete, end-to-end commercial chocolate factory inside.

HEXX offers free chocolate factory tours from their tasting bar, but we went behind the scenes with Executive Chef, chocolate maker (and *QVegas* cover model) Matthew Piekarski for the inside story on how to make chocolate.



1

Would you believe that chocolate starts with this alien egg? This cacao pod contains the fruit that eventually becomes chocolate. You think this looks weird? Wait for Step 2.



2

Inside the pod is a gelatinous mass that we can only describe as alien larvae. This is the cacao fruit. It has an interesting flavor, slightly tart. You can suck on the fruit, but in most cases, the outer fruit and liquid is discarded during the production process. At this point, the bean is very bitter. The cacao bean inside is fermented, sun dried, and shipped off for processing.



3

Cacao beans arrive stripped of their gel and fermented. The beans are sorted at the Hexx factory. It's a very manual process.



4

The beans are slow roasted in a modified coffee roaster. Roasting the bean reduces the bitterness.



5

The beans are cracked and the outer shell is blown away with a fan, leaving the 'nib' behind. The nib is the essential ingredient for chocolate.

The shells are discarded from the chocolate production process, but are still usable in other product. Because of the high grade bean used in Hexx chocolate, they sell their shells to cosmetic companies.



Cocoa mulch is another by product of the shells and is great for rose gardens because of the high acidity.

The nibs are denser and darker than the shells, and at this point have a distinct dark chocolate flavor, but still very bitter.



Cacao nibs are stone ground into a paste called chocolate liquor. Organic coconut palm sugar is added to thoroughly blend our two ingredients. This grinding takes at least three days around the clock to reach the proper consistency. You can smell the chocolate aroma as soon as you approach the chocolate counter.



The chocolate is formed into blocks and aged for about four weeks.



The aged chocolate blocks are then melted down and tempered through a cycle of warming and cooling. This process gives chocolate its "snap."

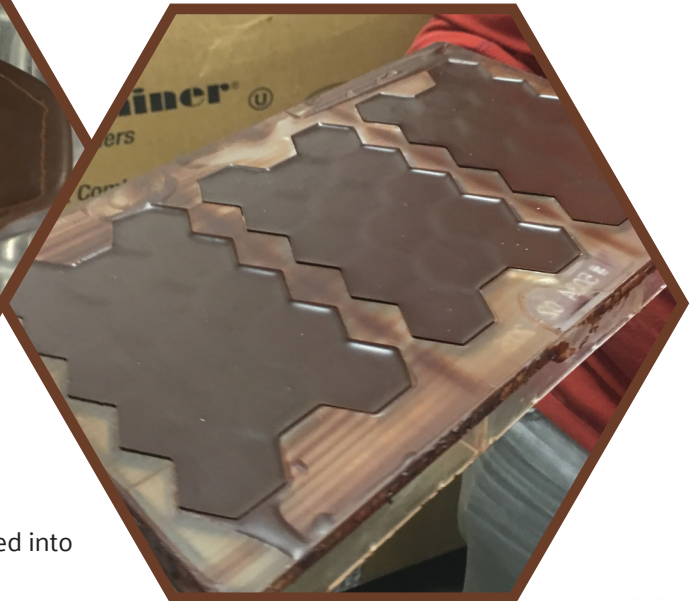


Remember When? Sexy ally Chef Matt Piekarski appeared on the cover of our first Foodie Issue in March 2014. Matt is the Executive Chef and chocolate maker at HEXX kitchen + bar and is responsible for overseeing the production and execution of all food and chocolate.



9

The melted chocolate is then poured into molds and cooled.



10

Once set, the chocolate is released from the mold and packaged by hand.

Hexx chocolates are available at the company's retail location at Paris Hotel & Casino and online at www.hexxchocolate.com.

You'll also find Hexx chocolate in several menu items at Hexx kitchen + bar.





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CALLING OUT INSENSITIVE, ANTI-SEMITIC PROTEST

[by Mark Segal]

When I was a boy of 13, my grandmother took me to my first civil-rights demonstration to teach me about racism and social justice. She knew those issues well: Our family fled from the pogroms in Russia, others in our family perished in the Holocaust and Grandmom even fought for women's rights.

On that day, I marched with Cecil B. Moore and Robert N.C. Nix. Five years later, in 1969, I'd be a member of New York's Gay Liberation Front and, in the name of justice, we'd march with The Black Panthers to free Angela Davis from her arrest and detention, chanting "Hey hey, ho ho, House of D [New York's Women's House of Detention] has to go." But last week, when I heard LGBT activists at the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference in Chicago using part of that slogan against our own community, it was a sad day. And it sickened me to the pit of my stomach.

Creating Change is the largest gathering of LGBT activists across the nation. Typically, all issues affecting our communities are discussed, with people being able to agree to disagree with respect. But a major controversy happened this year. And what usually is and should be a place for dialogue became unsafe. This incident was at the very least insincere, and at its worst anti-Semitic.

A Wider Bridge, which promotes ties between LGBT Americans and Israel, was scheduled to have a reception at Creating Change. But some conference participants complained about an event featuring a group with ties with Israel. Presto, the Task Force cancelled the event. This led to a debate about anti-Semitism, apartheid and political correctness. Eventually, conference organizers did the right thing and reinstated the session. After all, this conference was

about "creating change," and change occurs with communication. However, the event led opponents of Israel to protest; such protesters essentially urge people to boycott any LGBT event relating to Israel, not due to its LGBT laws, but because of how it treats Palestinians. They use terms like "apartheid" and "racism."

Here's what they don't state. While Israel is welcoming to LGBT people, Palestinian law criminalizes homosexuality. If you call the Palestinian Authority at the UN Office and ask about LGBT rights, as I did, you'll be treated to hang-ups (first call), laughter and a "Don't you understand our culture?" question (second call) and finally, "We don't talk about that." A fourth call offered a phone number in the Palestinian state for me to call.

The protesters want us to support people who laugh at and criminalize us. They don't explain that LGBT Palestinians escape to Israel for protection. It is so unsafe that the group fighting for Palestinian queer rights is located in Israel. Why? The Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip has declared homosexuality punishable by death. Hamas co-founder Mahmoud al-Zahar has said, "You in the West do not live like human beings. You do not even live like animals. You accept homosexuality. And now you criticize us?"

I've visited and written about the region on many occasions. In fact, I spent time with the first out LGBT organization in Beirut, writing about lesbian women in Jordan and the oppression in Egypt, among other topics. I know the people on both sides well. I was embraced in Beirut and spit on in Jerusalem.

I was at Creating Change to speak about my just-published memoir, which speaks of my numerous arrests and nickel rides fighting for social justice. In many of the cities on my book tour, a young LGBT person asks, "What can we do today to create activism?" So I appreciate many in that crowd at the protest who were there wanting to do something. Unfortunately, they

weren't given the facts. They were misled into what became an ugly anti-Semitic rally.

The first question we should ask protest organizers is: If you're suggesting a boycott of Israel because of non-LGBT issues, why not speak out about Palestine's antigay laws? Why not explain that many LGBT people have had to escape antigay violence in Palestine? If you were fair, the position should be boycott both, but instead you single out one. And that one place has become a safe haven for LGBT Palestinians. That is anti-Semitism, with a dose of self-hatred. Supporting those who wish LGBT people — us — dead is the definition of self-hatred.

The next question to ask protesters is even simpler: Why are you not protesting the anti-LGBT position of the Palestinian state? Do you approve of the draconian laws of Putin's Russia, or those of Uganda? Palestine is equally as, if not more so, antigay as those countries.

Then there's the issue of racism. That same term has been used to describe our country by the "Black Lives Matter" effort. Have you called for an international boycott of the United States? No, you single out one entity: Israel, the Jewish State. Yes, "Jewish." We all know why Israel was created, as a safe haven for Jews. We also know how Palestinians have fought Israel, at times suggesting it be wiped off the face of the earth, along with its people, the Jews. Yasser Arafat coined that into a slogan: "From the [Jordan] River to the Sea." To Jews, that slogan represents extermination. Now, imagine being a Jew in a room with 200 people outside banging on the doors yelling that slogan, or wrapping a Palestinian flag over the head of a Jew trying to make his way into the room. That is what happened in Chicago. Windy City Times did a great job of capturing most of the demonstration on video (ow.ly/XByz1).

Many of us would gladly protest Israeli treatment of Palestinians — I myself support a Palestinian state, the so-called "two-state

solution" — but that is different than supporting the Palestinian government that wants you put to death if you're LGBT and live on the Gaza Strip. But trapping Jews in a room yelling what is as close to a death slogan as there is ... Does that conjure something? Look up "Kristallnacht." Insensitive at the very least.

It's great to see this generation wanting to protest injustice, but they need to understand the issues and the lessons of our early fight for equality. Fight first for our community's rights, since if we do not, nobody else will. LGBT Palestinians can't speak out in their homeland, and your protests only embolden those who keep them from speaking out.

The Task Force acknowledged its mishandling of the situation and said it will work to prevent future incidents. While they may have been unprepared, protest organizers are the ones who need to apologize — not just to those in that room who were forced to leave through a back door for safety, but to the entire LGBT community for their insensitivity and for supporting those who support our oppression.

The term these individuals use is "pinkwashing." From this time on, pinkwashing equals self-hating anti-Semites.

We members of Gay Liberation Front have varied views on Israel and Palestine, but one thing we would never do is act with such insensitivity and suggest support for those who wish to put LGBT people to death or eradicate an entire race of people. Shame on you!

Mark Segal is the nation's most-award-winning commentator in LGBT media. His memoir "And Then I Danced, Traveling the Road to LGBT Equality is available online or at your favorite bookseller.



With the rapid development of Las Vegas' beer, wine and spirits scene, few companies have risen to challenge of honoring diversity quite like BACK BAR USA. The full-service marketing, consulting and design firm has developed an impressive portfolio in its 25+ years of experience, and uses its position to celebrate and empower a variety of groups around the valley.

Under the direction of Tim Haughinberry, the company's President and CEO, BACK BAR USA is dedicated to giving back to the community through support of causes including higher education, breast cancer research and the LGBTQ community.

"It's important that we use our role as a leader in Las Vegas hospitality to give back whenever possible," Haughinberry says. "We love supporting causes that we feel passionately about. It makes everything we do feel more important."

In particular, BACK BAR USA's most recent venture focuses on giving back to a community they know intimately: bartenders. The third

annual "For The Love Of Cocktails" festival, BACK BAR USA's largest event, returns to Las Vegas from Feb. 10 through Feb. 12 in a three-day festival celebrating the love of spirits. Throughout all of its events, including a Downtown Las Vegas bar crawl, cocktail seminars and Grand Gala, BACK BAR USA will be raising money to donate to the Helen David Relief Fund for Bartenders Affected by Breast Cancer.

Founded by "The Modern Mixologist," Tony Abou-Ganim, in honor of his late aunt, the Helen David Relief Fund assists women in the bar industry nationwide by providing pre-screening services for breast cancer.

"It's not always easy for women, particularly in the bartending world, to access preventive healthcare," Haughinberry says. "That's why the Helen David Relief Fund is so important. It could be the difference in saving the lives of the bartenders we often celebrate."

Beyond "For The Love Of Cocktails," BACK BAR USA has also been involved in the annual "Black & White Party" hosted by Aid for Aids of Nevada (AFAN) for several years now. As partners in the project, BACK BAR USA showcases liquor brands with elaborate display booths that feature hand-crafted cocktails and shots for guests. Furthermore, BACK BAR USA supplies promotional models, music acts and other visuals to convey the participating brands' messaging and social responsibility efforts within

Photo: Erik Kabik



the LGBTQ community.

BACK BAR USA's involvement in the "Black & White Party" comes from a genuine interest in matters relating to the LGBTQ community in Southern Nevada. Due to the support of companies like BACK BAR USA, the "Black & White Party" raised more than \$130,000 in 2015.

Although BACK BAR USA is often busy supporting various philanthropic causes, the company never forgets to empower the next generation of hospitality workers. The company is deeply involved with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, often assisting in the production UNLV Foundation Dinners. Moreover, the company has developed a relationship with the UNLV Honors College by offering internships to bright and enthusiastic students hoping to enter the world of hospitality, and it doesn't stop there.

In August 2015, BACK BAR USA hosted the "Las Vegas Beer & Barrel Project" at Mandalay Bay Beach, which donated a portion of the

proceeds to the Epicurean Charitable Foundation (ECF). The non-profit provides scholarships to hospitality students in Southern Nevada, making it an ideal fit for BACK BAR USA's vision of supporting young hospitality professionals.

As Las Vegas' beer, wine and spirits community develops a stronger identity, it is important for leaders like BACK BAR USA to set a precedent on what is possible. Haughinberry and his team demonstrate a commitment to giving back through their brand, which provides an image for other companies to follow, though Haughinberry remains humble.

"We don't give back for notoriety – we give back because we can and should," he said. "BACK BAR USA is very lucky to have the support we do in the community, so it only makes sense to provide that support to others, as well."

For more information and tickets for BACK BAR USA's "For The Love Of Cocktails," visit <http://www.fortheloveofcocktails.com/>.

Photo: David Becker



Located inside the Wynn Resort, Lakeside is a large, modern space, with a playful decor featuring bright red-orange hues, gold tones, and chocolate browns, combined with sleek white walls and furniture. It sits on the Lake Of Dreams, a three-acre, man-made lake surrounded by lush vegetation which hides it away from the Strip. Starting at 8:30, the lake comes alive with shows that feature music, LED lighting, projections, huge puppets and more. All of this, however, serves as a backdrop for Executive Chef David Walzog's take on popular American cuisine.

The menu at Lakeside focuses mostly on seafood and steaks, but includes a selection of vegetarian offerings as well. The combination of high-end ingredients and Walzog's relatively simple techniques - meat and fish dishes are either poached, braised, oven-roasted, grilled, or charbroiled - have resulted in a selection that should please foodies and everyday diners alike.

Read our full review of Lakeside in August 2013

Since debuting in 2005, *Le Rêve – The Dream* continues to provide an awe-inspiring experience for audiences through the use of comedy, acrobatics, dance, and artistic athleticism. Celebrating 10 years of performances in 2015, the show recently debuted a state-of-the-art scene that incorporates spectacular water, fire and projection technologies. Entitled the “Dénouement,” the \$3 million scene took more than 18 months to create and is part of the show's ongoing commitment to continually changing and enhancing the production.

Dinner and show packages are available to create the ultimate Valentine's Weekend experience.





Eiffel Tower Restaurant

Consistently named one of the most romantic restaurants in the country by Gayot, Travel & Leisure, USA Today and US News & World Report, nothing in Las Vegas says “Be My Valentine” quite like Eiffel Tower Restaurant. Enjoy Chef/proprietor J. Joho’s world-renowned cuisine in our romantic dining room which offers spectacular views from The Paris Hotel overlooking the famed fountains. Two seatings are available, including The Sunset Seating, and Gala Dinner. Add the Valentine’s Weekend VIP Package to the night, which includes a window table, a dozen roses, personalized photo in Eiffel Tower keepsake, choice of white wine, red wine or Champagne, Gala Dinner with caviar enhancement, two Eiffel Tower chocolate bars, and a helicopter Strip tour for two (or a Limousine Strip tour for two) with a Champagne toast. For more information or reservations, please call 702-948-6937.

Valentine’s Weekend Brunch

Chef/proprietor J. Joho’s elegant brunch menu is the perfect way to celebrate with your love in Las Vegas on Valentine’s Weekend. Join us from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a menu that includes dishes such as French Toast, Vanilla Cream, Caramelized Banana, Toasted Pecan; Baked Crepes, Artichokes, Roasted Tomato Coulis, Basil; Filet of Trout, Capers, Lemon, Meunière, Wild Rice; and New York Strip Steak, Cabernet Butter, Roasted Fingerling Potato, Vegetables. To make your reservation, call 702-948-6937.



Triple George Grill

Celebrates Valentine’s Day with a prix fixe menu featuring four courses of romance inspired dishes. The menu begins with a choice of Bisque De Amor, a lobster bisque with lobster meat and lemon crème or a Cupid’s Pear Salad with grapes, candied walnuts, Asian pear, blue cheese, mixed greens and a lemon vinaigrette.

The second course offers a choice of Courtship of Tuna Tartare with diced tuna, mango, siracha and wonton strips or Be Mine Rockefeller featuring Kushi oysters, spinach, bacon, Béarnaise sauce and pernod.

The third course, to be shared, includes the choice between the Main Squeeze, a 28 oz. Porter House served with mashed potatoes, asparagus and Foie Gras butter, Bow n Arrow seared scallops served on a bed of cream of corn, pork belly and tomato jam or Love Bird a roasted cornish hen complemented with fingerling potatoes, broccolini and truffle butter.

The fourth course is a choice between XXX featuring chocolate covered strawberries, lava cake and vanilla ice cream or Climax, a red velvet cake served with raspberries and Desiree chocolate dessert wine.

The drink special for the night is the Beso Beso specialty martini, priced at \$12, made with white Godiva chocolate liqueur, black cherry and vanilla vodka and white and dark chocolate garnish.

The full a la carte menu, with Triple George Grill’s classics, will also be offered.

BARDOT BRASSERIE



[by Michael Barbieri
myvegasobsession.com]

A romantic dinner for two. Certainly there's no shortage of romantic restaurants to be found in Las Vegas. But on the Mezzanine level of the Aria Resort and Casino, you'll find a sexy spot that will transport you to Paris, with its decor, its ambience, and especially with its food. What better place for an adult date night?

Bardot Brasserie is Chef Michael Mina's take on an idealized Parisian brasserie - tile floors, wood and brass accents, dark wood paneled walls, and soft, romantic lighting levels. The fare consists of refined presentations of traditional French comfort food - dishes like housemade paté, onion soup gratinée, Parisian gnocchi, mussels marnières, and more, along with an impressive selection of wines and champagnes, all served by a knowledgeable, friendly, yet unobtrusive staff.

Unfortunately, I was not at Bardot for a romantic meal. Fortunately, however, I was accompanied by a good friend, and once we had settled in at our table, we started off by ordering some cocktails. My friend chose the robust Snake In The Grass, sort of a French spin on a Manhattan, made with rye whiskey, Imbue Petal & Thorn Vermouth, and Yellow Chartreuse. I had the Baked Apple Milk Punch, a drink with a light, warming apple flavor, but surprisingly, no





milk. Instead, it was a mixture of vodka, Calvados apple brandy, apple cider syrup, walnut liqueur, and brown sugar.

Having spotted a number of my favorite French dishes on the menu, I was anxious to try as many as possible, within reason. My friend and I decided to split three appetizers and one of the salads before our main courses. We started with the Prime Steak Tartare, a true classic, made with freshly ground raw beef, sauce verte - an herbal mayonnaise-type sauce, raw egg yolk, and crispy, cross-hatched gaufrette potatoes on the side. The beef was full-bodied and flavorful, with the lemon juice in the sauce verte, and capers providing a nice acidic counterpoint. We also tried the Foie Gras Parfait - a glass parfait jar containing a layer of rich, silky smooth foie gras, topped with a

layer of Ruby Port gelée, served with cornichons and grilled, thick-cut country toast. The port's sweetness and the tart little cornichon pickles played nicely against the buttery, liver-y flavor of the foie. A stunning starter! Our final appetizer was the Escargots Bardot - six little gastropods encased in balls of puff pastry, topped with chartreuse butter and garnished with finely chopped toasted hazelnuts. This was a unique presentation for escargots, but no less delicious. They were lightly crispy, with just the right amount of chewiness, and a bright herbal pop from the chartreuse butter.

We then moved on to the salad; the Warm Beets And Caramelized Goat Cheese. This was another beautifully balanced dish, with a disc of tangy, slightly browned goat cheese sitting atop sweet,





earthy, warm beets. The dish was topped with a small bunch of naturally peppery wild arugula, and garnished with a scattering of toasted hazelnuts. The entire salad was dressed with a subtle cassis vinaigrette, which added the perfect acid note, bringing all of the flavors together.

Within a few moments, we were presented with our entrées. My friend had chosen the Loup De Mer Au Fenouil - roasted, skin-on Mediterranean sea bass, moist and flaky, on a bed of sautéed fennel, which imparted just the slightest anise-like flavor. Garnished with caramelized lemon, and served with fingerling potatoes on the side, this was a winning dish that allowed the natural taste of the fish to shine through. I had ordered one of the true staples of French brasserie fare, one of their Steak Frites. They offered a choice of cuts - Double Cut Prime Rib Eye, Angus Filet

Mignon, Prime Bone-In Rib Eye, or my selection, the Prime Flat Iron steak, pan seared and basted, with a beautifully browned exterior and a perfect degree of rareness inside. There were a number of sauces from which to choose, and although I love a good Béarnaise, I went with the au poivre sauce; one of my personal favorites. The sauce, usually prepared with cracked peppercorns, reduced cognac, and heavy cream, was smooth, subtle, and delicious, although I would have preferred a stronger peppercorn bite. Still, that was a minor quibble. The beef fat fries, with which all the steaks are served, were perfect - crispy and addictive, with a fabulous garlic aioli on the side. All in all, this was a most refined steak frites, and well worth trying!

Although we resisted, momentarily, we were finally presented with two of Bardot's lovely desserts: the crispy, creamy, chewy Chocolate Macaron - a light meringue cookie filled with a gorgeous chocolate mousse and drenched in a scrumptious dark chocolate sauce, and the Apple Tarte Tatin - a warm caramelized apple tart, made with puff pastry, and served with vanilla bean ice cream. With its airy pastry crust and perfectly baked, soft, cinnamon-y apples, the tart brought to mind an inside-out apple turnover, and like the macaron, was not overly sweet, making a perfect end to a delicious meal.

Of course, Bardot Brasserie would be a wonderful place for a meal with friends or family, but if you have that special someone, and are looking for an elegant, romantic eatery that conjures up the classic bistros of Paris, you could hardly do better than dinner at Bardot. C'est magnifique!



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Photos: Barry Peterson

[by Craig Ramsay and
Brandon Liberati]



Bravo TV's *Newlyweds The First Year*'s first gay couple, Brandon Liberati and Craig Ramsay provide us with their Fit and Phab Valentine Tips. The couple was recently in Vegas, so be on the lookout for an episode featuring *The Chippendales* and Larry Edwards (a.k.a. Hot Chocolate)!

Photos courtesy bravotv.com



Craig Ramsay

Internationally recognized fitness guru for his extensive experience, knowledge and diverse expertise of the human condition, Craig Ramsay has more than 15 years of documented success transforming the mind, body and spirit of people and communities across the world. Craig's own versatile physical abilities, honed through his work as a ballet dancer, hockey player, fitness model, Broadway/TV/film actor, and trained contortionist, have made him one of the most sought after fitness experts in the business.

Craig has been described as a perfect mix of Richard Simmons and Jillian Michaels and praised for his talents of delivering "undercover fitness" to the masses through his numerous entertaining fitness series and social media outlets.

Craig has transformed lives through his online training programs, his DVD "The Ultimate Perfect Workout" and as a successful author of two books, "The Anatomy of Muscle Building" and "The Anatomy of Stretching."

Photos: Jace Dean Photography

Brandon Liberati

Hair and make-up artist, Brandon Liberati has over 20 years of professional experience cutting and styling hair in addition to makeup application for the theatrical stage, photo editorials, movies and television. He has a vast celebrity clientele and his accomplishments in the field have taken him all over the world. He considers himself fortunate to have enjoyed success in the career he discovered so early in life. Brandon's axiom is "Beautiful Is A Feeling."

Brandon's celebrity clientele spans the television, film, stage, radio and publishing industries. He has been a platform artist and educator. His artistry includes work with Aveda, Bumble and Bumble, Makeup Forever, MAC Cosmetics, and Benefit Cosmetics, just to name a few. His work credits include; InStyle Magazine, Vogue, Glamour, Today Show, The Emmy's, The Tony's, The Academy Awards, The Golden Globes, Bravo, Fox, CNN, Ricki Lake Show, Entertainment Tonight, The Food Network, The Food Network's Next Food Network Star, a guest appearance on RuPaul's Drag U on the Logo Network, VH1, and many other makeover shows.

Give your lover an unPHorgettable “Fit and Phab” Valentines Experience

Pillow Talk

Fit Tip: Partners that stretch together, “FIT” together better in bed.

Partner Stretching helps you achieve a greater degree of flexibility and range of motion. The Desire to impress your partner can prove motivating, and this motivation challenges you to work through personal plateaus and inhibitions. It's the perfect time to combine fitness with dirty talk, allow this time to compliment your partner physically, bring up a sexual fantasy or two that might be on your mind in a playful way. A partner can help relieve the monotony of a repetitious program, making it stimulating and exciting.

If you like it rough, start a pillow fight and make sure it ends with makeup sex.

Phab Tip: Give a Valentine gift that keeps on giving (I'm not talking about one that needs antibiotics!)

Silk- A pillow case & boxers or pajamas- Silk not only feels sexy on the skin it also helps it stay looking younger longer! A silk pillow case can reduce split ends, bed head, skin irritations and leave both your hair and skin looking orgasmic! This is because it helps you retain moisture. It has the lowest absorption rate of any fabric, especially cotton. And that means less products like moisturizers and leave-in conditioners that you need to apply on your body. Cotton absorbs all those expensive moisturizers you put on your face and hair before bed. Silk is naturally hypo allergenic and is made of common amino acids found in your hair and skin. Which means less wrinkles and skin soft as a young boys bottom.

Essential Oils: SandalWood

Fit Tip: This essential oil can be used as a deodorant for those really hot times you need extra protection, great for those with a foot fetish. And if you happen to over indulge, Sandalwood has been know to help lower bad cholesterol.

Phab Tip: This sexy scent is a natural aphrodisiac! You can't spell Sandalwood with out the word “wood”! It tightens and smooths skin. This oil fights aging. Dilute a small amount in water and spray it on the sheets or mix it with your favorite oil or moisturizer for a sensual massage. You can order this love potion from <http://www.mydoterra.com/breelloyd/#/>

Chocolate (Dark Chocolate: 70 % cocoa)

Fit Tip: Cocoa will help ensure you can maintain your stamina for what's to come after the dinner and drinks.

This dark knight contains naturally occurring plant substances called flavonoids that help keep platelets less sticky, decreasing your risk for heart attack or stroke which is oh so sweet.

This go to Valentines Day treat is high in health promoting antioxidants and it's typically difficult to eat large quantities of it in one sitting. Eat Dark Chocolate with a glass of lemon water, this will not only fill up your stomach quicker- the lemon in the water will heighten the taste and satisfy that sweet tooth sooner!

Phab Tip: Here is a dark secret you will want to share with your lover... cocoa, 70% or darker!

It reduces stress hormones which means less collagen breakdown in the skin and fewer wrinkles. It also has antioxidants that help protect skin from uv damage, i.e. a “twink”ling dewey glow. Don't forget to leave one on their silk pillow.



Newlyweds The First Year airs on Bravo Wednesdays at 10pm. Full episodes are available online at bravotv.com, iTunes, Amazon, Google Play and Vudo.

Happy Valentines Day



*Love,
Hot Chocolate*



TABOO LOVE

Jill Jones is Ready To Reach For Forbidden Fruit

[by Mark Dawson]

Jill Jones was Prince's muse and Teena Marie's back-up singer.

This month, she steps up to the spotlight in "Forbidden Love", a pop anthem with a disco feel about indulging in sins of the heart.

"I have experienced forbidden love," reveals Jones. "I know the crazy high one gets when such tantalizing situations present themselves."

The high-energy track is the debut release from her new album, *I AM*. It showcases her wide vocal range and also encompasses the album's overall theme of human connection rising above all obstacles.

"In my case, it was the forbidden love between my best friend and boyfriend," continues Jones

from a recording studio in California. "I didn't know about the affair when I was writing the track. It was a premonition, some vibe, some energy I picked up on."

"The thing about those types of taboo romances is they usually come from an insecure place disguised as emotionally powerful and all consuming. It's fairytale bullshit that burns fast. They stem from broken hearts and so they are destined to devolve because they can never evolve."

The process of evolving plays heavily throughout Jones' new album, combining anthemic house beats with electronic textures and nuances. "*I AM* represents emotional healing provided by the universe. It's not about making

Photo: Karl Giant

excuses or offering apologies. It's about self love, optimism and cheekiness."

Many of the songs were co-written and co-produced by Brinsley Evans - a frequent collaborator best known as half of '90's club kids Uncanny Alliance ("I Got My Education," "I'm Beautiful Dammit") and the writer of such classics as "Make My World Go Around." Count DeMoney, WAWA, Funky Junction, Italy's Get Far and Mark Unthank provide the energetic, dance-fueled landscapes for Jill's versatile vocal skills.

"F*ck You Til You're Groovy" produced with Jochen Simms has a warm Arabic sweep to its melody, lined up against a dark, isolated, late-night, steel-cold backbeat. It is purely sexual and yin/yang in balance.

"This is How it Feels" is a love letter to those who make others feel alive and safe. "It's an amazing place to be in with someone; when you can trust they won't hurt you," says Jones.

Jill Jones was a key player in Prince's Paisley Park family during its heyday, providing vocals on Prince's "1999", "Lady Cab Driver", "It's Gonna Be A Beautiful Night," and "Hello". She sang back up on numerous productions, both credited and un-credited, including Sheila E.'s "The Belle Of St. Mark". She toured with Vanity 6 and appears in the films Graffiti Bridge and Purple Rain.

"Prince taught me the importance of dreaming," Jones explains. "Purple Rain was a dream he manifested through hard work and perseverance. He made people feel part of something. He created intrigue and fascination.

"I also learned what it's like to surrender total devotion to another person," she continues. Prince oversaw Jones' debut album on his label, Paisley Park. "In hindsight, it was too much responsibility to give to another person. But he had the best of intentions and I'm thankful for having had the chance to work with Prince and for playing a part in his very wonderful vision."

Jill Jones has worked with many talented artists in her career including Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards (on their CHIC "Live From Budhakan")



album and performance film), the esteemed Ryuichi Sakamoto and acid jazz guitarist Ronny Jordan.

Most notably, however, is her association with the late great R&B icon, Teena Marie. Teena was a mentor to the then 14-years-old Jill Jones, teaching her about harmonies and backing vocals. Teena took Jill to concerts and introduced her to Venice Beach, while also making sure Jill got to and from school safely every day. "She gave me the childhood I didn't have," Jones remembers.

She recorded backing vocals on several of Teena Marie's seminal Gordy/Motown albums including 'Lady T' ("Behind The Groove") and 'It Must Be Magic' ("Square Biz").

"I have loved having the opportunity to sing behind some of the greats," admits Jill Jones today. "It's empowering to feel that I can support someone and their dreams. It makes me happy.

"That said; there's nothing like the energy that radiates from the center stage spotlight. It's been turned from me long enough. I'm ready for some of that Forbidden Love," she laughs.

"Jill Jones' I AM releases to iTunes and all major online retailers this month. It is available for pre-order now on Amazon and Google Play.

[by Michael Barbieri
myvegasobsession.com]

Chocolate. Who doesn't love chocolate, to some degree or other? Dark or milk chocolate, fancy truffles or a candy bar from the corner store, chocolate is one of our favorite treats.

We give each other chocolate on Valentine's Day or drown our sorrows with it after a break-up because it releases endorphins and triggers the chemical associated with sexual arousal and pleasure! Chocolate is literally a love drug!

I've tried chocolate in many forms - baked goods, desserts, chocolate drops mixed with exotic spices and herbs like cayenne, jalapeño, rosemary, & lavender, savory Mexican chocolate mole, "branch" chocolate in an Alpine-style village in Argentina, and amazing hot chocolate in Uruguay. The point is, the beloved product of the humble cocoa bean is extremely versatile. Having said that, here are a few of the Vegas chocolate creations that have raised my endorphin levels:

Frozen Hot Chocolate

Serendipity 3 is a whimsical eatery with the feel of an old fashioned ice cream parlor, sitting on the Strip just in front of Caesar's Palace. Serving breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner, the menu is fairly extensive - big, sloppy burgers, foot long hot dogs, pizzas, pastas, and all manner of sinful sundaes. But the thing that keeps me coming back is the fabulous Frozen Hot Chocolate. Wait! Frozen hot chocolate?! How can they DO that?! Well, to be honest, I don't know, but imagine the best hot chocolate you've ever encountered, blended with ice, poured into a large glass goblet, and topped

with fresh whipped cream. This delicious, icy, chocolatey concoction will make your eyes roll back in your head with delight! It's a must-try! They're big enough for two, but order one all for yourself, and thank me later!

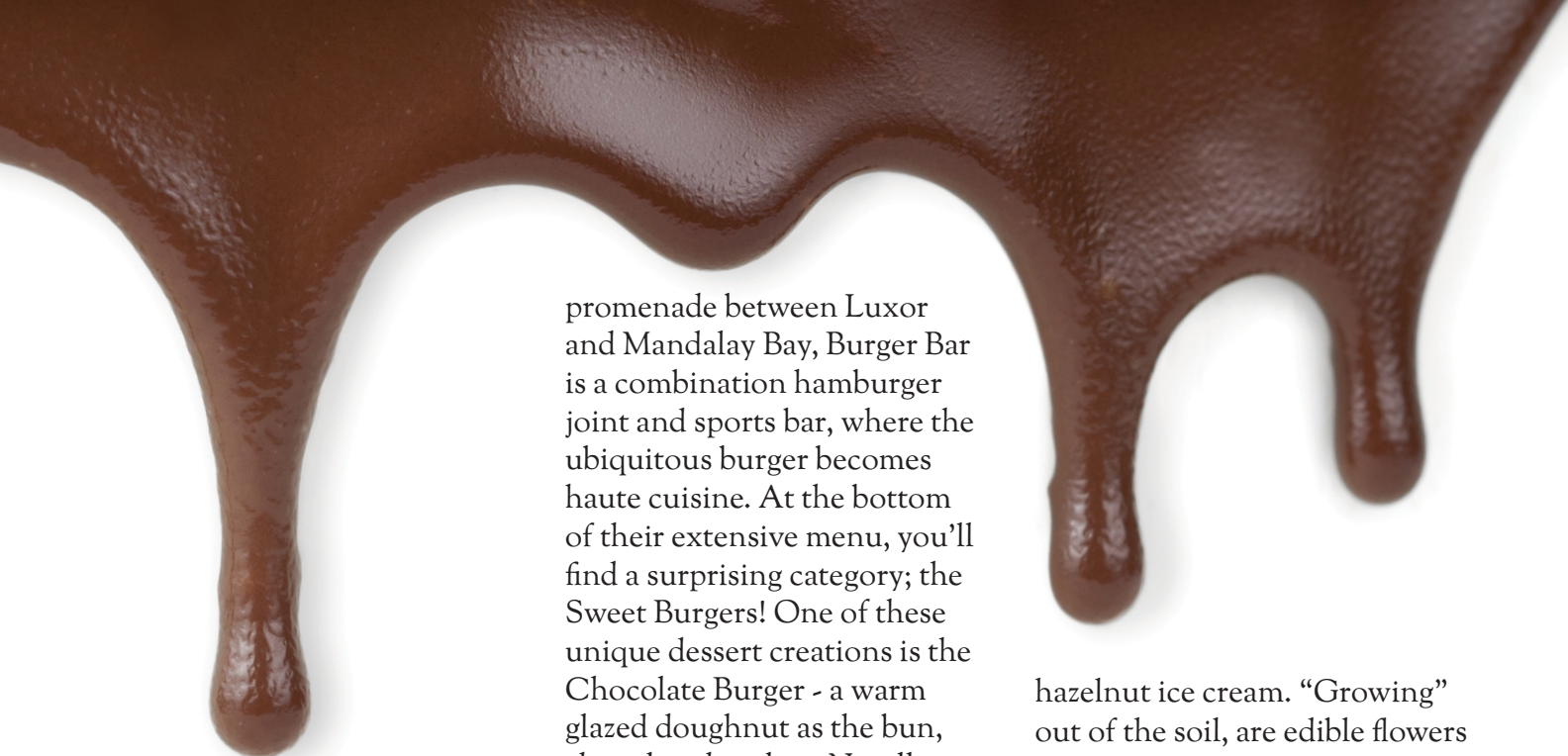
Giant Chocolate Macaron

Bardot Brasserie, at the Aria, has the ambience of a gorgeous Parisian bistro, and features classic brasserie fare like Escargots, Onion Soup Gratinée, and Steak Frites. The dessert menu, however, is where you can find a French-style treat that will make you say "Oh, la la!" - the Chocolate Macaron. With a crisp, meringue-based

cookie filled with a light, yet full-bodied chocolate mousse, this oversized macaron is a symphony of textures; rich, airy, crispy, creamy, and chewy, all at once. And just when you think it can't get any better, a lovely dark chocolate sauce is poured over it. This macaron est très bonne!

The Hexx Cocktail & Chocolate Pudding

Hexx Kitchen + Bar is a relatively new spot on the Strip, serving terrific comfort food in a stylish, casual setting. Hexx also has their own chocolate factory on the premises, creating amazing "confexxions" from their small-batch, single-origin



chocolates. Some of these delicious creations can be found on the menus, of course. Try the Hexx Cocktail - vanilla vodka, Licor 43 - a vanilla-citrus liqueur, dark creme de cacao, walnut/hazelnut liqueur, house made Peruvian chocolate syrup, and cream. Smooth, with a light orangey finish, it'll make a surprising start to your evening. If you do have a meal, leave room for dessert; the Chocolate Pudding, specifically. Made with Tanzanian chocolate, cocoa nib infused cream, and a banana bread crumble at the bottom, it's dark, creamy, extremely rich, and very much on the bittersweet side. If you're a fan of strong dark chocolate, this is the dessert for you!

Chocolate Burger

Ever eat a burger for dessert? Well, at Burger Bar, from Celebrity Chef Hubert Keller, you can! Located in the Mandalay Place shopping

promenade between Luxor and Mandalay Bay, Burger Bar is a combination hamburger joint and sports bar, where the ubiquitous burger becomes haute cuisine. At the bottom of their extensive menu, you'll find a surprising category; the Sweet Burgers! One of these unique dessert creations is the Chocolate Burger - a warm glazed doughnut as the bun, chocolate-hazelnut Nutella mousse as the hamburger patty, pressed passionfruit as the cheese, strawberries as the tomato, and kiwi as the lettuce. This decadent, irresistible goodie is served with a drizzle of raspberry sauce, looking much like ketchup. Your diet will be shot, but you'll leave Burger Bar very happy!

Chocolate Terrarium

Rose. Rabbit. Lie. at the Cosmopolitan, is one of the most inventive restaurants I've ever experienced, and they serve one of the most inventive chocolate desserts I've ever tried: The Chocolate Terrarium. A large glass dome is brought to your table, containing what looks like a mini garden, consisting of fluffy, shaved chocolate "soil", chocolate pudding "mud", boulders made from chunks of chocolate buttermilk cake, puffed wild rice pebbles, terrarium walls of crispy chocolate tuile, and

hazelnut ice cream. "Growing" out of the soil, are edible flowers and herbs. This is one of those dishes that you're afraid to eat, as it's just so pretty and intricate, but trust me and just dig in - pun definitely intended!

BLT Burger in the Mirage is known not only for their hamburgers, but also for their incredible milkshakes. The Chocolate Shake blends premium chocolate ice cream with milk, a touch of heavy cream, and chocolate syrup, after which fresh whipped cream is folded in. If you're lucky, Hash House A Go Go will be baking up their mountainous Chocolate Snickers Bread Pudding, which serves four! After all this, if you need more chocolate, you can always take a tour of the Hexx chocolate factory, or pick up some Ethel M Chocolates, whose factory is based in Las Vegas.

Chocoholics, start your engines!!



X Sin City Sisters Red Dress **TRAVAGANZA** A 10 YEAR CELEBRATION

LOCATION }

RENDEZVOUS
LAS VEGAS

\$50 VIP Reception : 8pm

\$30 Main Event : 10pm

TICKETS ON SALE AT
sinsitysisters.org/reddress

For more info or sponsor
opportunities contact Sister Loosy
at tskin702@aol.com



10th Annual RED DRESS XTRAVAGANZA!

[by Sister Loosy Lust Be A Lady]

The 10th Annual Red Dress Event is a fundraiser dedicated to creating HIV/AIDS awareness and visibility and raising funds to assist HIV+ people in Southern Nevada with their medications. All attendees are required to wear a red dress/skirt/kilt/toga/whatever in order to get in to show unity in our community. There will be changing rooms/coat check available for all guests. A costume contest will recognize the most creative and inspired outfits of the evening with cash and prizes awarded. There will also be a silent auction and lots of Sisterly fun all evening!

Special Guest Appearance by Chi Chi LaRue who will be DJing through the night. Chi Chi is an award-winning adult film producer and director. She is the co-owner to Channel 1 Releasing and Rascal Vide and has expanded her trademark name and image to everything from sex toys and candles to bottled water. All of Chi Chi's brands are sold at her novelty store, Chi Chi LaRue's, located on Santa Monica Blvd. in the heart of West Hollywood. In 2005, Chi Chi LaRue expanded her talents to DJing and now tours internationally with the porn stars from her movies, playing to sold-out clubs all over the world.

The Sin City Sisters have been a non-profit organization for over ten years. They exist as an order of 21st century nuns dedicated to the promulgation of universal joy and the expiation of stigmatic guilt. Our ministry is one of public manifestation and habitual perpetration. We work to raise money for our Sisters AIDS Drug Assistance Program (SADAP). We advocate for queer rights and visibility and conduct safer sex outreach. We work to affirm the value and beauty of all persons and particularly within the queer

community. We strive diligently to keep our sense of humor, never taking ourselves so seriously that we forget to have fun.

The event benefits SADAP which assists individuals in the community regardless of race, age or gender. Drug assistance services (co-pays and procurement) are available for individuals whose income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level. The program has distributed over \$600,000 in medication assistance since 2006, helping hundreds of HIV+ in Southern Nevada.

Saturday, February 27, 2016
Rendezvous Las Vegas Nightclub
4740 South Arville

VIP 7-10pm
Includes appetizers, champagne toast, drink
and ticket to main event
Ticket: \$50

Main Event 10-1pm
Tickets: \$30



Whether its a significant other, mom, dad, friend, or coworker Sprinkles Cupcakes is getting ready to "think outside the chocolate box" this Valentine's Day.

From custom sugar decorations (think sports team cupcakes for NFL lovers) to the Sprinkle XOX gift box - Sprinkles has a wide array of gifting options made easy for the anyone to show a little extra love to.

Sprinkles is open 10 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Wednesday and 10 a.m.-1 a.m. Thursday through Saturday at The LINQ.



Gay.Vegas /advertising



In August 2014, Gay.Vegas launched as one of the first .VEGAS domains, and quickly became one of the most popular destination LGBTQ websites in the Southwest. Through our partnership with QVegas Magazine, Gay.Vegas started hosting QVegas Magazine under the Gay.Vegas site.



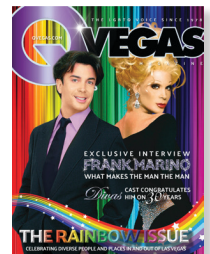
At the beginning of 2015, QVegas made a bold move and discontinued a 37-year history as a print publication, taking the social and digital media head-on. Powered by new online publishing capabilities of Gay.Vegas, the combined media forces have since propelled digital media impressions and engagements across web, mobile, email, and

12 Issues Per Year – Every Month

social media.

As an all-digital publication, we deliver QVegas to our readers in multiple formats. Without the cost and constraints of print, we provide advertisers with a lower cost and higher value opportunity that provides measurable impressions and engagement.

And we're just getting started. QVegas is the largest and oldest publication serving the LGBT community in Las Vegas, and Gay.Vegas brings new-media growth. As our digital platform grows, so will your opportunity to reach thousands of LGBTQ consumers every day.



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[by Locq Fortune]

TAROSCOPE FEBRUARY 2016

Your Monthly Taroscope

Locq Fortune is a local Las Vegas Psychic and the author of the brand new book: Vibeology: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/Locq> download it at Amazon or IBook! He is available for private readings, parties or public events and is the only psychic in Las Vegas who is licensed to come to you. His private readings have No Time Limits, he also records the reading for you to listen to again later! Check out his Fan Page to read reviews and for contact information: www.facebook.com/afortuneonwheels

Taroscope is a monthly reading for each Astrological sign based on the card pulled for it from my Tarot Deck: This Taroscope is for February 2016

Aries: The Page of Coins. Your pockets maybe feeling a bit lighter after celebrating the New Year. Either way you want to be careful not to over indulge this month as not to make money an issue. Try to be flexible with your partner when planning out a budget for the year to come, remember it's not always so important that you have your way! Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Taurus: The 5 of swords. This month you may find yourself wanting to take all of your toys and go home. Be certain this is what you want to do, you may be correct but is it really worth it making the point? Be certain that winning the day does not lose you the week, compromise is a trait you need to work at my stubborn friend, could this be the right time to start learning? Happy Valentine's Day!

Gemini: The Ace of Cups. Feeling the love? Is it making you itch? Sometimes you don't want all that emotion and just crave a nice logical conversation. Either way please try to take into account that the feelings you're dealing with from others are real. This can be a wonderful time for you and your loved one and even other family members if you can let go and let the feelings flow! Happy Valentine's Day!

Cancer: The 2 of Swords. This may not be the right time to make big choices, if you are feeling hesitant you may want to put things off until next month. Make sure you know everything you need to and have come to terms with and found proper aid if needed. Remember only fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Take your time and seek out sage advice! Happy Valentine's Day!

Leo: The Queen of Wands. That Lady you have your eye on could change your life (for better or worse) or maybe you're a bit tired of the status quo Ms. Thing and it's time to shake things up! Well there is no one better than you at doing this! The Queen of Fire in your house of fire is a very powerful card and agent for change. If you want to make them now is the time! Happy Valentine's Day!

Virgo: The Page of Cups. It hard to know how to act when a loved one lets you down, but acting

out is certainly not the answer. Maybe you just need some space and time off this emotional rollercoaster before you react to your feelings about the ride? Maybe you just need to nurture your inner child and spoil yourself, if he can't or won't do it for you. Either way be sure to have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Libra: The Change. This year is just starting and already it's had a profound effect on you! Feeling like you've been trapped in a cocoon? Well it's time to break out and let yourself fly! This is your month of transformation, time to embrace the next journey in your life! The New you is almost here, just be certain that she doesn't make the same old mistakes! Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Scorpio: The Queen of Cups. Love offered is a wonderful thing, but to be the vision of Love can be a bit overwhelming. You may be the apple in someone's eyes but are they in yours? This actually could be a match if you take things slow. Just be careful what you wish for because this could be it! Give love a chance and this could be romance! Happy Valentine's Day!

Sagittarius: The 4 of Wands. No one love a party like you my hoven friend, and yes you can handle all the attention but this month may find you craving to be a homebody or improve your living space in some way. Yes you love a party but your home is also your fortress so moving to a

better place or improving on the old one can bring great satisfaction. Happy Valentine's Day!

Capricorn: The 4 of Coins. This is not the month to leave things to chance, especially if you're on a budget. You don't want surprise expenses so be sure to try before you buy and ask questions. Just make sure you're not holding on to one thing so tightly that everything else slips through your fingers! Is what you value so much, worth losing others for? Happy Valentine's Day.

Aquarius: The 4 of Cups. You seem to be lost in a sea of emotions this month, are you so caught up in your own feelings that you're missing the big picture. Having trouble loving the one you're with because they're not the one you want? Maybe seeking a bit of advice could help you, if only you'd be willing to listen, brooding gets you know where, so lighten up and have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Pisces: The Tower. Expect the unexpected this month! Don't take anything for granted this month cause it could change in a heartbeat. Thought it was going to be a quite home alone, when suddenly you find you have a date on lover's day! Surprise visits or trips may appear suddenly on the horizon, either way be sure to buckle up and enjoy the ride! Oh, and have yourself a Happy Valentine's Day!

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