

nightspots

weekly nightlife section in

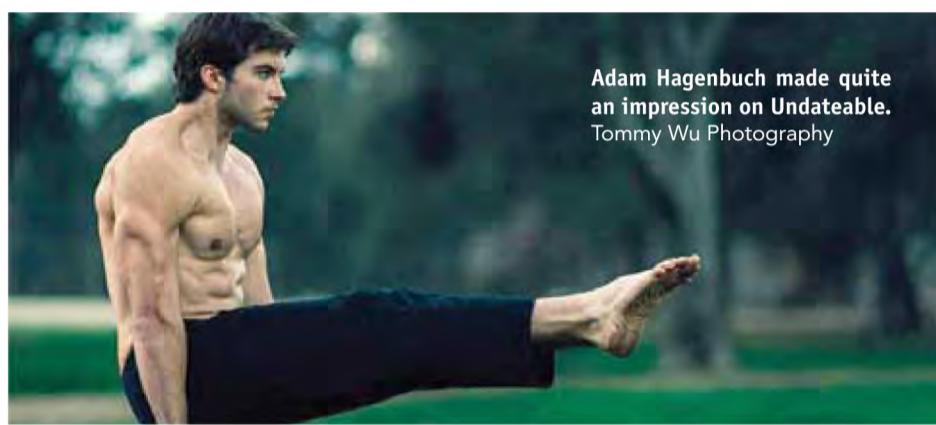
WINDY
CITY
TIMES





"Plus, who wants to watch a bunch of amateurs dancing on live TV?"—Julianne Hough as the newly named Sandy Young from Salt Lake City in FOX's Grease: LIVE. Just what we need—a Mormon Sandy!

Here's my opinion about remakes—if you're gonna bother, you better have a new take on the show or performers who blow you away. Neither was the case in this lackluster, joyless rendition. But one must give credit where credit is due—the technical achievements of this live production were astonishing. The sheer scope of the sock-hop scene alone was a marvel (marred by an audio glitch during the hand jive, where no one did the hand jive). But



Adam Hagenbuch made quite an impression on *Undateable*.
Tommy Wu Photography

the biggest misstep was this—if you are going to go to the trouble of having a live audience, use them! We never heard a peep from them, except for applause at the end of songs. This made all the jokes fall flat.

Happily, no one in the cast embarrassed themselves. But nobody covered themselves with glory, either. **Aaron Tveit** and Julianne Hough are attractive and capable performers—but they had almost no charisma and zero chemistry. Julianne lacks a winsome quality and you never really root for her Sandy, while Tveit was practically the antithesis of a successful Zuko. The most successful performance of the evening was that of **Vanessa Hudgens** as Rizzo. While it was pretty much a carbon copy of Stockard Channing's portrayal, at least she was interesting and authentically sassy—and kudos to her for pulling it off only hours after her dad lost his battle to cancer. What was left of the part of Kenickie was well played by that hot-ass, **Carlos PenaVega**. **Keke Palmer** made the most of her Marty, but someone should teach **Jordan Fisher** how to strum a guitar. The screen sparkled every time **Ana Gasteyer** came on as Principal McGee, alongside **Haneefah Wood** as her secretary, Blanche. Special mention must go to the film originals **Barry Pearl** and **Didi Cohn**, who brought some heart and pathos to her all-too-brief scenes as Vi.

Elizabeth Taylor, **Marlon Brando** and **Michael Jackson** get into a car together. It's not a joke—it's a film being made by the BBC. The premise is that these three BIG stars were trapped in New York City after 9/11. And since all flights were grounded, they decide to escape the island by driving cross country. It is true that Michael Jackson performed at Madison Square Garden on Sept. 10. And it's said that both Elizabeth Taylor and Marlon Brando went to that concert. While people close to Liz say she stayed in NYC until flights resumed, Jackson's former assistant claims that Michael rented a car, picked up Taylor and Brando, and they set off on a road trip. They allegedly took turns driving, but both Taylor and Jackson were annoyed that Marlon kept wanting to pull over at every KFC and Burger King!

Here's where it gets freaky—in case the rest of it seemed too normal for you. In the BBC film, Michael Jackson will be played by **Joseph**

Fiennes. Yes, Ralph's younger brother. Yes, the star of Shakespeare in Love. Yes, the WHITE actor! It only makes sense—if you want someone who looks like the Michael Jackson of 2001, are you gonna cast Idris Elba? You know who else was surprised by the casting? Joseph Fiennes! He said, "I'm a white, middle-class guy from London. I'm as shocked as you may be. He definitely had an issue—a pigmentation issue—and that's something I do believe. He was probably closer to my color than his original color." Wait till **Jada Pinkett Smith** hears about this!

Another big star might be memorialized in a more appropriate way. There is a movement in Baltimore to erect an eight-foot monument in tribute to **Divine**! The plan was spearheaded by Michal Makarovich, owner of an antique shop, who felt that such a tribute would appeal to fans of John Waters films. He proposes that the monument be on the corner of Read and Tyson Streets, across the street from where Divine (actor Harris Glenn Milstead) ate dog poop in "Pink Flamingos"—in fact, his proposal fea-

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MARDI GRAS TROPICALES
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SUNDAY FEB 7 DANCE FROM 9PM-2AM
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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Villains

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Boy, has Villains (730 S. Clark St.; Villainschicago.com) undergone a renovation.

Initially, Villains was, essentially, a dive bar. (Manager Marco Silva informed Savor that the establishment's name originated with its first location in 2007, saying it felt like the type of place where Villains would hang out because it was very unassuming.)

Now, it's a midscale restaurant with industrial decor, with Silva saying—and citing his fine-dining background—that there wasn't that type of business in the neighborhood.

However, the newest Villains (which reopened last May) has retained at least one aspect of the older incarnation: an impressive beer list. Forty are on tap, including New Holland Ichabod, Alpine Pure Hoppiness, Founders Imperial Stout 2014 and Southern Tier Pumking. However, there are also



Scallops(left) and pork belly at Villains.
Photos by Andrew Davis

some tasty cocktails, as the Sake To Me (gin, sake and lemon) and the Villains Punch (rum, grenadine and bitters) exemplified.

It would also be wise to check out the food. I genuinely enjoyed appetizers such as the beef tongue sandwich (but steer clear of those jalapeños if you're not a fan of heat), heirloom apple salad (endive, ricotta, hazelnuts, and cider vinaigrette—although a little vinaigrette goes a long way) and, my favorite, the grilled milk-braised pork belly (which melts in your mouth), accompanied by salted, roasted sweet potatoes and charred herb salsa.

The entrees are pretty enticing, too. Chef Dennis Stover merges roasted winter squash, crispy Brus-

sels sprouts and broth into a hearty and delicious melange. The pan-seared scallops were also done well and the Villains burger (the only burger hold-over from the older Villains) is one of the better I've had recently; it boasts North Country bacon, aged cheddar, B&B pickles, smoked red onion and beef-fat mayo.

Make room for dessert, though. There's only one item, but it's a doozy: Using his grandmother's recipe, Stover has a buttermilk pie that adds heirloom apples and beer "jam." This eight-dollar item is—as I like to say—worth the price of admission alone.

Note: Villains will institute a Sunday brunch starting on Easter, March 27.

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



LQOKS: Baduizm

Thu., Feb. 4, 10 pm

Berlin, 932 W. Belmont Ave.

Live sets and performances calling for a new Amerykah by JC Brooks, Angele-nah RapperChick, Shea Couleé, David, Po'Chop and mistress of ceremonies, Lucy Stoole. Audio Jack (Slo 'Mo) will be joining [X]P on the decks. Kater Jayne Photography.



Mardi Gras Masquerade

Sat., Feb. 6, 8 pm

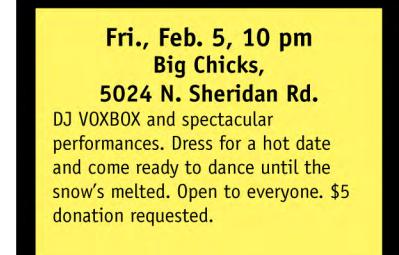
Sidetrack,

3349 N. Halsted St.

Complimentary body painting and fun masks. Mardi Gras specialty cocktails featuring Bacardi Rum, Effen Vodka, Jack Daniels Whiskey and Heineken Beer.



Jai Ho: Loveria



Fri., Feb. 5, 10 pm

Big Chicks,

5024 N. Sheridan Rd.

DJ VOXBOX and spectacular performances. Dress for a hot date and come ready to dance until the snow's melted. Open to everyone. \$5 donation requested.

Y'all betta work!

"Congradulations" to Chicago girls Kim Chi (left) and Naysha Lopez, who are both competing in RuPaul's Drag Race Season 8. The new season, which sees Kim and Naysha competing in a field of 12 contestants, kicks off Mon., March 7, on Logo TV, with premiere parties all over the city. Photo of Kim Chi by Kirk Williamson; photo of Naysha Lopez by Kristofer Reynolds

WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP

thanks
KIRK WILLIAMSON
on his 15th anniversary
with our company.

**THANK YOU,
KIRK!**

Kirk joined our company in 2001 as a sales representative. He has increased his responsibilities over the years, which now include being art director for the company, continuing his nightlife coverage for Nightspots, and lending a hand with social media. He has received awards and honors for his work from such local organizations as TPAN, IL Gay Rodeo Association and The Imperial Windy City Court of the Prairie State Empire.

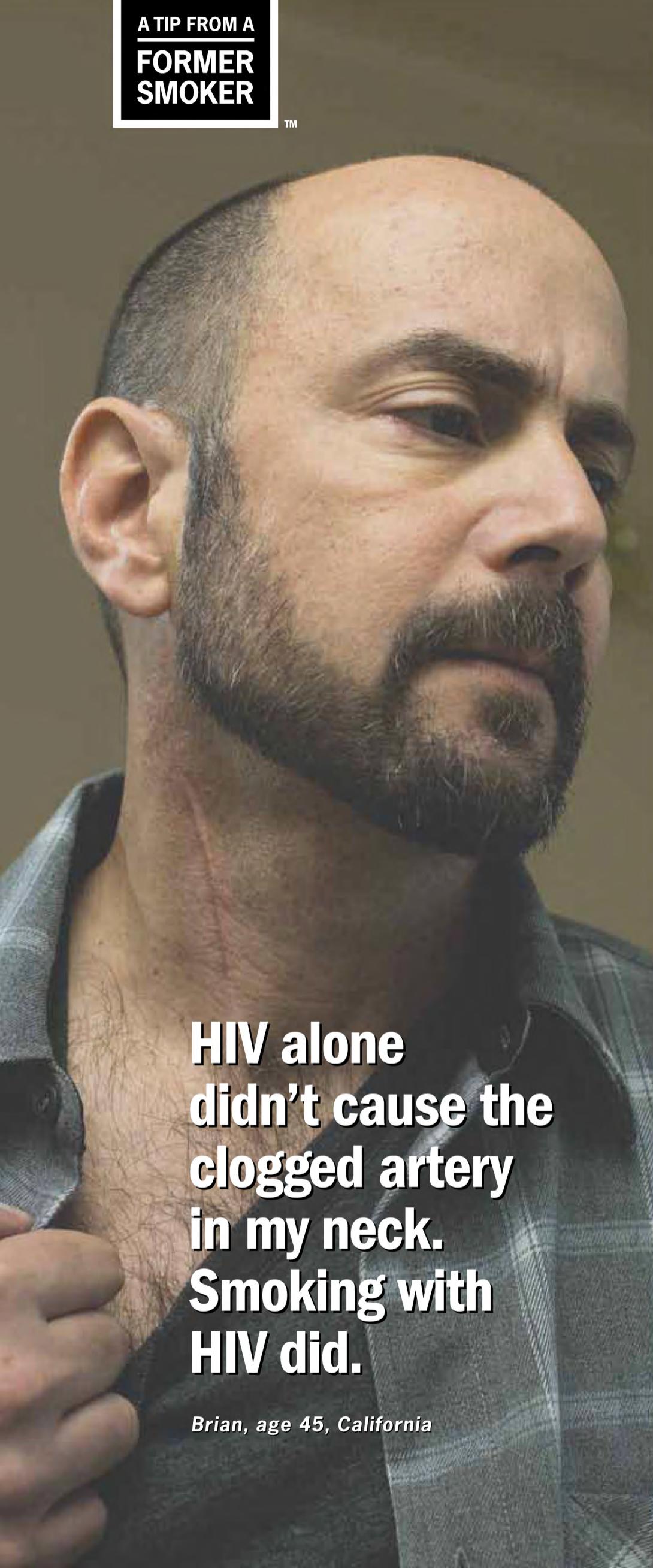


SIDETRACK

525,600 people celebrating the 20th anniversary of Rent, Monday, January 25.
Photos by Jed Dulanis

A TIP FROM A
**FORMER
SMOKER**

TM



**HIV alone
didn't cause the
clogged artery
in my neck.
Smoking with
HIV did.**

Brian, age 45, California

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