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weekly nightlife section in



the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Animale

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Animale (1904 N. Western Ave.; AnimaleChicago.com)—a restaurant owned by Aldo Zaninotto and Chef Cameron Grant—is definitely a non-traditional northern Italian spot.

It's also different than Osteria Langhe, a much-buzzed-about eatery that Zaninotto and Grant also own. The differences show up almost immediately regarding the location (right by the Western Blue Line stop, so it's more accessible than Osteria) and the splashy exterior.

Animale is also a less formal version of Osteria, so feel free to wear those jeans. The dishes, however, are given as much care as they are in Zaninotto and Grant's other place. (As for the restaurant's name, Zaninotto told Windy City Times



Plin (above) and the exterior of Animale.
PR photos



that it's about "satisfying the animal instinct of hunger.")

Every visit to Animale (or take-out order from there) should include plin, the restaurant's self-described signature dish that's basically small ravioli with parmesan, La Tur, thyme and butter; the items are simply heavenly pillows. Pasta dishes can be ordered by size/weight, type of noodle and sauce; examples of the latter include pesto, cacio e pepe (pecorino romano, black pepper, stock and butter) and the undeniably tasty

tartufo nero (fontina cream, sunny egg and black truffle).

More non-traditional dishes are huddled under the section of the menu labeled "Pezzi." For example, there's animelle (with bacon-wrapped sweetbreads) and cuore e cuore (sliced beef-heart pastrami). They're actually quite delicious, but may be for the more adventurous—and there are burgers as well.

However, one of the most popular items at Animale is under the "In Piu" section: ferocious

puppies. Basically a take on poutine, the dish incorporates French fries, peppered onions, chiles, arugula, fontina and a sunny-side-up egg.

Make it a New Year's resolution to try something different. Animale will fulfill that wish, deliciously.

Note: Restaurant profiles are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.



in the LIFE

Gerald Cernak

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
PHOTOS FROM CERNAK

- **Age**
40
- **Job title**
Manager; State Farm in Norwood Park
- **Neighborhood**
Rogers Park
- **Relation status**
Dating Jeffrey Basile for two years. Basile recently stepped down as Mr. International Rubber 19.
- **Hobbies**
Traveling, gardening, building terrariums, "and spotting guys in basketball shorts or with gray sweatpants on."
- **Favorite book**
And The Band Played On, by Randy Shilts
- **Little-known fact**
"I love eating Mac & Cheese with ketchup. I know it sounds gross, but tastes so good."



Over the past two years, Gerald Cernak has volunteered a combined 430 hours, mostly all within the LGBT community—such as for Equality Illinois, Center on Halsted, Gay for Good and the Chicago Leather Community Outreach.

"It's extremely important [to volunteer within the LGBT community], and given our current political environment, the need for more people to step up and lend a hand, I feel, will be what insures various organizations the ability to utilize funds towards the fight," Cernak said.

Cernak has been volunteering for almost 20 years.

"I've done a lot throughout the years, but the most powerful was being a part of the TPAN Ride for AIDS Chicago," said Cernak, who was a crew member on the Touché & Leather64TEN Team—and that team raised more than \$25,000.

Cernak is running for Mr. Chicago Leather, the annual contest that starts Jan. 28 at the Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave. The winner will represent Chicago's leather and kink community at the International Mr. Leather (IML) in late May, also held in Chicago.

The local leather community has been a fun-



filled adventure, he said, "with people who are very passionate."

So what attracts you to the leather community?

"The smell of leather, and how extremely sexy it makes you feel," he said.

Cernak's leather life dates back about 20 years, too. "On my 21st birthday, a guy who I had been talking to on AOL suggested we attend a party at Cellblock," said Cernak, who didn't own any leather at the time, thus, had to purchase his first-ever leather vest.

And the two went into the back bar area at Cellblock.

"A few hours later, after having a fun night, I emerged from the backroom covered in hickies. Let's just say it was one of the few times in my life I was happy to have a turtleneck in my wardrobe," he said, laughing.

Cernak has worked for the past 11 years in a small office on the city's Northwest side.

"My work-wife, as I call Angela, is very supportive; she's always willing to take a picture of me in my newest leather that arrives in the mail, jockstraps excluded," Cernak said. "My boss and the owner of our agency is as equally accepting and has attended many of my summer cookouts."



BILLY Masters

"I just got off the phone with Mariah Carey, and she thinks that Dick Clark Productions sabotaged my monologue."—Jimmy Fallon's quip after his TelePrompeter failed during the Golden Globes monologue.

Awards season is finally here. Popular opinion is that the Golden Globes are a barometer for the Oscars. If that's the case, then it should be a pretty cheery couple months for La La Land. Does anyone light up a room more than **Goldie Hawn**—whether or not she knows she's there? Did **John Travolta** have to leave early to go to work as a maitre d' at a gay restaurant? Shouldn't **Sofia Vergara** always be Miss Golden Globes? Am I the only one who wants to see My Life as a Zucchini? And, how do you call the three daughters of **Jennifer Flavin** talented?

I had a fun-filled night at the Globes schmoozing with friends, both old and new. I spent some time on the red carpet with the my twins—Gary and Larry Lane. Then I almost tripped over **Sylvester Stallone**—boy, is he short! **Ryan Gosling** was the first person to slip out moments after the awards ended. I caught up with King Cobra star **Garrett Clayton** in the lobby. At the fabulous HBO party, **Nicole Kidman** literally walked through the press line, got her photo taken and dashed out the other end; ditto **Sarah Jessica Parker** and **Reese Witherspoon**. **Lea Thompson** is always a breath of fresh air. **Niecy Nash** in red never disappoints. **Yvette Nicole Brown** was stunning in bronze. But I ditched all of them the moment **Dame Joan Collins** made her entrance.

I laughed with Project Runaway alum **Blake Patterson**. I shared a quiet moment of reflection with **Joely Fisher** (who was both "proud and sad" that the Golden Globes broke tradition and honored the passing of **Debbie Reynolds** and **Carrie Fisher**). Then I ran into sexy **Justin Hartley** and we somehow started talking about where we first met. For years, I have told people I met him in **Kathy Griffin's** kitchen (two houses ago). Justin said, "I don't think so—I've never been to her house." He thinks she may have been with us at some awards show or party.

I don't know why I don't watch **Wendy Williams** more often. Every time I tune in, I enjoy her—especially the Hot Topics. While she was talking about **Mariah Carey**, I noticed this awfully cute boy wearing a salmon sweater. He was sitting next to someone I assume was his boyfriend, who was wearing a sage sweater. Salmon and sage—I assume they're a gay couple. Plus, they were in the audience at **Wendy Williams**. How you doin', boys?!

British diver **Tom Daley** recently revealed that when he met now-fiance **Dustin Lance Black**, he had not seen the writer's 2009 Academy Award-winning film *Milk*. He said, "It was a good eight weeks after I met Lance that I watched *Milk*. He actually made me watch it on a train ride home from London to Plymouth the first time that he came over." Look, I'm all for being proud of your work. But I don't know it's a great way to start



Among the actors Billy caught up with at the Golden Globes was King Cobra's **Garrett Clayton** (left).

Photo by Jerry Nunn

a new relationship by making someone do anything—except for in bed, naturally. But DLB is all about making people do things. He recently told *Attitude* magazine, "I have no respect for someone who lies about their sexuality."

Olympic champion **Greg Louganis** made history as the first openly gay grand marshal of the Rose Parade on New Year's Day. But it didn't go off without incident. He said, "When I was introduced ... well, there were some boos. It actually made me feel proud, as I am who I am and will not back down from that or apologize for that." It should be added that during the parade, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation had a float remembering the victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting. At a certain point, they released 49 doves—one for each of the victims. I don't think anyone booed that.

No one is exempt from discrimination. But bon vivant **Bruce Vilanch** says that he's experienced it from an unlikely source—the writer of the Broadway hit *Hamilton*. After seeing the show, Vilanch had what he thought was a great idea—he could play the role of King George III! In the original cast, the role was played by our very own **Jonathan Groff**, but the conceit for the show is color-blind and non-traditional casting, so why not? Vilanch shared this anecdote on **RuPaul's** holiday podcast: "I went back and saw **Lin-Manuel** and said, 'I want to play the King. One costume, three songs that are all the same and no stairs to climb? I'm in.' He said, 'We have a casting concept.' And of course the casting concept is everybody is hot—everybody is young and hot! There's no old Ben Franklin wobbling across the stage." So I was curious about the real King George. During the American Revolution, he was actually in his 30s. Once he hit his 40s, George started exhibiting signs of the hereditary disorder porphyria. This led to him gaining weight, developing gout and, eventually, going mad. So there is a historical precedent for a somewhat plus-sized King George. And nowhere in my research

did I see him referred to as a KILF!

Vilanch might have better luck auditioning for "Magic Mike Live—Las Vegas." The casting breakdown calls for a "silver fox." Silver, blonde—close enough. Reading further, he's also described as 18+. I don't know any twentysomethings who qualify as a silver fox. But the rest of the breakdown is Vilanch to a T. "Handsome, sexy, athletic 'silver fox' type with a great personality who is comfortable with various styles of dance, including hip-hop and partnering; special skills a plus (including, but not limited to singing, drumming, piano, and guitar). Note: During portions of the show all roles will strip to briefs." I'll take a commission, and we'll make a fortune!

When it's an honor to simply be nominated, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I'd tell you more, but I'm exhausted, my feet are killing me and I still have to update BillyMasters.com—the site that never sleeps. If you'd like to reach out and touch me, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I figure out who I met in **Kathy Griffin's** kitchen! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.