

 /nightspots

 @nightspotschicago



# nightspots

weekly nightlife section in





RuPaul.  
Photo courtesy of LOGO

## Gentlemen, start your engines ...

Spring is never really sprung until the new crop of queens from **RuPaul's Drag Race** make their first showing. And March showers are gonna bring drag flowers this **Friday, March 24**, when season nine debuts at 7 pm on VH1.

Here is our breakdown of the best viewing parties, both for the premiere and the whole hot mess of a season. Start your engines!

Join hostess Dixie Lynn Cartwright and her pit crew at **Sidetrack**, 3349 N. Halsted St., for the first episode on one HUGE screen, plus dozens of smaller ones. This is Chicago's official RPDR viewing party and will take place each Friday throughout the season. Resident Sidetrack divas The Vixen and Drag Race alum DiDa Ritz will be serving up "Ru-formances" during the night. Start your engines with games, exclusive RuPaul's Drag Race swag and a bunch of fun surprises. Shantay, you stay after the show for Friday night fun with party music until 2 am.

Hometown girl Shea Coulee guest-hosts the premiere at **Roscoe's**, 3356 N. Halsted St., along with RPDR alums Shangela and Naomi Smalls, plus Chicago's very own Trannika Rex. Doors open at 5 and you can bolster your booze intake with the unlimited burger bar from 6-9 pm. Immediately following the episode, there will be a Q&A with the hosts. A them your Qs until 9, when a photo line will form. Stick around to see Shangela, Shea and Naomi performing live at 11 pm and 12:30 am.

Did you know that Hamburger Mary's is an official sponsor of this season's Untucked? Stop up to **Mary's Attic**, 5400 N. Clark St., for the premiere party and come back each week, as starting with the second week, each night's festivities will kick off with the airing of the previous week's Untucked, just to get you up to speed. Mary's has developed a special contest for viewers to win bar tabs, cash and other prizes. Doors open at 6:30 for the premiere party and will be open at 6 in following weeks, with the Untucked airing beginning at 6:30 to precede the main Ru-vent.

Kick back at **The Sofa Tap**, 4923 N. Clark St., and enjoy the show with host Thomas Andrews, \$7 Big Miller Lites, \$4 Fireball shots and \$2 PBR cans. And if the show gets you all hot and bothered, continue to heat up the night with their weekly bear party, GRRR, It's Friday, beginning at 9 pm.

**Big Chicks**, 5024 N. Sheridan Rd., has a party with food and drink specials fit for a queen. Strap on your heels and snatch that lacefront down from the shelf, because each week, a \$15 bar tab will go to the most creative look. At the season finale party, all winners will have a chance to come back and compete for the grand prize.

**D.S. Tequila Co.**, 3352 N. Halsted St., hosts a weekly viewing party which promises "all screens, full sound, some drama."

**Crew Bar + Grill**, 4804 N. Broadway, takes a brief break from the ball sports to gag you with eleganza on all screens with sound, \$5 Lagunitas drafts and bottles and \$4 select shots.

**Hydrate**, 3458 N. Halsted St., features a \$4 Belvedere cocktail from when the doors open at 6 until the end of the show at 8. You are encouraged to get there early, so as to snatch up a top space.



## Progress For Childhood Cancer Research show, Sun., March 26

**Progress Bar**, 3359 N. Halsted St., and **Vanité** will host Progress For Childhood Cancer Research, a special drag show and party, with all proceeds going to benefit the St. Baldrick's Foundation, Sunday, March 26, from 3 to 7 pm.

The party will feature raffles, cash giveaways and, of course, performances by local drag luminaries Mercedes Tyler, Mimi Marks, Whitney Gaytan and Birdy.

Windy City Times is a proud sponsor of this event, along with Ketel One Vodka, Grab Magazine, Cram Fashion, Captain Morgan, Pulp/Ink and the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce.

## Happy 48th anniversary, Baton Show Lounge!



A million thanks to special **Nightspots** enjoy Mercedes Tyler for snapping these few pics last weekend at the big 48th anniversary celebration for The Baton. Ya don't look a day over 30!

## the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

### SAVOR PR Italian Bistro

BY BRONSON PETTITT

Stefano Roman and Juliana Montebello-Roman love hosting parties—and it shows.

Visit the married duo's PR Italian Bistro (3908 N. Sheridan Rd.; PRItalianBistro.com) and it's as if you were going to their dinner party—a welcoming, friendly vibe where Juliana greets and seats you while chef Stefano prepares creative

#### The Porca Loca at PR Italian Bistro.

Photo by Bronson Pettitt



Mediterranean cuisine with international flavors.

Somewhere between casual, romantic and rustic, PR's expansive glass facade, full-service bar, exposed-brick walls and open kitchen make for a

tasty and tasteful experience.

With a blackboard menu that changes daily, Stefano "is out shopping four or five times a week," Juliana said.

Start off with a burrata: mozzarella and arugula doused in balsamic, pesto, red peppers and a side of crostini.

My dining companion and I recommend the ravioli costexine, stuffed with savory, tender-braised rib covered with butter sage sauce. Also recommended is the pizza Bistro, an intriguing-sounding mix of housemade Italian sausage, onion, wild cherries, goat cheese and fennel.

For vegetarians, pansotti pistacchio is beet-stuffed pasta topped with goat cheese and brown butter sauce. The orange zest was overwhelming at first, but we began to appreciate the earthy-citrus balance.

Wines, beers and cocktails abound, but try the Dancing Buffalo, with bourbon, prosecco, elderflower liqueur, lemon and sage.

Come dessert time and you're feeling decadent, order the salted caramel cake, or if you're on the brink of a food coma then go for the lemon-

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If you're anything like me (and I believe at least some of you are), you can never have enough **Tennessee Williams**. Recently, I dashed back to Boston to see *Night of the Iguana* with **Elizabeth Ashley**, **Amanda Plummer** and **James Earl Jones**. Last week, it was a play about Tennessee Williams at the Pasadena Playhouse starring **Al Pacino**, **Garrett Clayton** and **Judith Light**. This new play was billed as a "development production," but it sure seemed pretty polished, from the star-laden cast to the swanky set to the ticket prices. Mind you, I'm not complaining—the rare chance to see Al Pacino at work is worth every penny.

The play is a fascinating character study of the final years of Williams' life told through the eyes of one of his last beaux, playwright Dotson Rader. On stage, Rader was portrayed by **Miles Gaston Villanueva**, and if his name is not as familiar as his colleagues', he was no less talented (or, for that matter, hunky).

Garrett Clayton has been on quite a roll. He starred in *King Cobra* (based on gay-porn pup **Brent Corrigan**), he was a lead in *Hairspray: Live and now, he's holding his own opposite Al Pacino*. That he's holding his own clad in some skimpy undies only gilds the lily. I must note the breathtaking **Andrew Dits**, who makes the most of one brief scene. Judith Light, who never disappoints, tackles a character clearly based on the trustee of Williams' legacy, Lady Maria St. Just—who has been described as neither a lady, nor a saint, nor just! Light is one of those rare stage creatures who stalks rather than walks, who intones rather than recites, who becomes rather than acts. She is never less than riveting.

It would all be for naught without a galvanizing presence at the center, and Pacino (or "Mr. P" as Light calls him) is certainly that. In a masterful performance that could easily become a caricature, he etches a painfully nuanced portrait of an artist in decline. He even captures Williams' almost musical vocal cadence. The play has some rough edges, but it's a tantalizing morsel of things to come. Should anyone want my notes, all they have to do is ask. For once, I refrained from spouting my unsolicited opinions backstage.

In one weekend, I saw more Busch than I did in my 30s! The divine **Charles Busch** was touring California with two very different cabaret shows and, as a completist, I had to see both. The *Lady at the Mike* is his loving tribute to leading ladies he both worked with and admired. The material runs the gamut—from **Elaine Stritch** to **Joan Rivers**, from **Helen Morgan** to **Julie Wilson**. Like all great artists, he makes the material his own without ever imitating. "That Girl/That Boy" begins with Dolores Gray's "Thanks A Lot, But No Thanks" and doesn't let up until Lucille Ball's "Hey Look Me Over." His "Surabaya Johnny" was one of the more persuasive I've heard—more Lempert than Lenya—and makes a real argument for a full Weill/Brecht show. The audiences ate him up at Costa Mesa's Segerstrom Center, and



**Billy Masters (right) and Al Pacino.**  
Photo courtesy of Masters

there was near-pandemonium at Rockwell Table & Stage in Los Angeles. Nothing turns me on more than talent, and Busch has that in abundance. Should you be so fortunate to get to see him, go!

On March 9, Oklahoma **Sen. Ralph Shortey** was found in a motel room with an underage male. Yawn—another married politician found sleeping with a boy. But this Republican was Trump's campaign chair in Oklahoma! The details may make the situation worse for him, but I find them quite amusing. Police responded to a "check welfare" call from someone who saw the senator and youth enter a Super 8 motel—oh, the humanity. When the cops knocked on the door, Shortey said he was alone and refused to let them in. Once they threatened to enter with a pass key, he opened the door and police found him with a 17-year-old boy, who claimed to have known the senator for a year. "I used to sell weed to him," the lad said.

Uncovered texts show the tyke asking Shortey if he could help him make some money for spring break. The senator said, "I don't really have any legitimate things I need help with right now. Would you be interested in 'sexual' stuff?" The boy's dad says that his son "has a history of soliciting himself on Craigslist for sexual conduct." So I guess he's into "sexual stuff." And yet Shortey wasn't arrested—at least not for a week. He was eventually charged with three felonies—engaging in child prostitution, transporting a minor for prostitution, and engaging in prostitution within 1,000 feet of a church! Call me old fashioned, but I think we can drop that last charge if it's a Catholic church! Upon his arrest, the State Senate passed a resolution stripping Shortey's name from all legislation and barring him from using his office or parking spot. No—not the parking spot!!!

When I can almost see Garrett Clayton's "busch," it's definitely time to end yet another column. Remind me to tell you all about meeting Pacino—it's quite a story. You can read loads of other stories on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com)—the site that is into all kinds of "sexual stuff." Send your questions along to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before the GOP asks Super 8 for a corporate rate! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

## DISH from page 20

stuffed lemon sorbet: a frozen lemon carved and stuffed with light, refreshing sorbet.

PR is just south of the Sheridan Red Line station in the Sheridan Station Corridor, two bustling blocks of local businesses that will soon be home to a few high-rise developments.

Founded 12 years ago as Pizza Rustica, PR's clientele includes families, couples, neighborhood regulars, employees craving an after-work drink, and as of recently, weekend brunch-goers.

"We morphed into what we are today because we can cook. We never set out to own a restaurant, we never set out to move to a bigger space," said Juliana, who has a background in real estate. "None of this was planned. We built it and they came, and here we are."

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