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Congratulations to the new Miss Continental Elite, Fontasia LaMour (top left photo). She was joined in the top five by (above photo, left to center) Yosemin Burge Star, Ginger Manchester, Erika Norell, and (right) Amy DeMilo.

Photos by Jack Neilsen

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Big Jones

BY ANDREW DAVIS

As practically every Chicagoan knows, there are scores of Southern-themed restaurants in our fair city.

Some feature cuisines from specific parts of the South, like the South Carolina-based fare at Low-country, the Louisiana-themed items at Luella's Southern Kitchen or the Mississippi-oriented offerings at the forthcoming spot Delta.

Then there are more expansive places—like the (relatively) longtime Andersonville restaurant **Big Jones** (5347 N. Clark St.; [BigJonesChicago.com](#)), which has a website that says it's "inspired by the people, places and history of the American South."



The decor at the restaurant (that business/life partners Paul Fehribach and Mark Armantrout co-own) does not necessarily scream "Southern," although it does say "welcome." However, the looking at the items on the menu is pretty likely

to make one think of sultry summers, pleasantly twangy accents and mint juleps.

Cocktails make refreshing ways to start the meal, and I really liked the Jasper's Rum Punch, although there are plenty of other options, including the Chatham Artillery Punch (citrus, brandy, bourbon, rum, green tea and muscatel, topped off with cava).

Fried chicken at Big Jones.
Photo by Andrew Davis

The crawfish-and-cheese hush puppies were a solid culinary start to the meal, and my dining companion and I really took to the sweet-potato bisque. However, the wonderful boucherie board (in the "Starters and Snacks" section) might constitute an entire meal, with various breads, spreads, preserves and meats. (Potted duck and tete de cochon, anyone?)

I had heard about the fried chicken here, so I had to give that a whirl. The verdict? It's quite good, although the late, great Table Fifty-Two will always set the bar for me regarding fried chicken in Chicago. Big Jones' shrimp-and- grits dish is also worth savoring—as did the concluding rum bread pudding. (The only item that left me wanting was the skillet cornbread—and cornbread, interestingly, seems to be the Achilles' heel for several Southern-themed spots in this city.)

However, cornbread aside, this restaurant deserves your patronage—and I do plan on restaurant to try the scores of other dishes that remind me of my grandmother's home by a dusty road in the South.

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



BILLY Masters

"Yes, it was extremely surprising. I wouldn't have put myself in that position if I'd thought it would happen. I've been photographed a million times in a million ways. I have a good radar. We'd been completely alone for five days. Nothing around us. There was no way anyone could get anything. So I had a moment of feeling free."—Orlando Bloom opens up about those nude photos with ex, **Katy Perry**. Using his quote is a good excuse to once again share with you his impressive appendage on BillyMasters.com.

The world is going to hell in a handbasket—which, as it turns out, is the safest way to travel these days. Everyone is still in an uproar about the guy forcibly removed from a United Airlines flight. But practically nobody is talking about the deadly scorpion that dropped from an overhead compartment into one passenger's dinner. Frankly, I'm shocked. When did United start serving dinner??

On April 21, **Caitlyn Jenner** will sit down with **Diane Sawyer** for an interview on 20/20. This is actually a promotional piece for Cait's new book, *The Secrets of My Life*, which comes out four days later. In it, Caitlyn reveals that s/he has had gender-reassignment surgery. The reason may surprise you. "I am tired of tucking the damn thing in all the time," she said. Ah, the old tuck and roll.

Speaking of trans individuals, the big news of the week was **Zeke Smith** being outed as transsexual on *Survivor*. The person who committed the outing was **Jeff Varner**, who is gay. As someone who has never watched an episode of *Survivor*, I can't believe I actually have something to add to this story. When Varner was on *Survivor* the first time, he was not openly gay, but he had quite a strong gay following. Why? You may not believe this, but 15 years ago, he was quite a looker. Back then, I wrote that although my sources told me he was gay, "don't expect Jeff to come out or lead any Gay Pride parades." Days later, Varner wrote me personally. He particularly liked that I called him "deliciously bitchy." He also said, "I would absolutely lead a gay pride parade. A lot of my friends are gay and I think that would be a trip!!!" Of course, a few years later, he actually did come out—I'm not sure if he's done a parade, yet. In those intervening years, we've stayed in casual contact, and I've always found him delightful.

But, yes, he did out Zeke—and for someone who was on the other side of an outing situation, he really should have known the pitfalls. I may not watch *Survivor*, but I get how the game is played. If you wanted to prove someone wasn't being (dare I say) straight with their teammates, making this revelation would be quite a bombshell. Since the episode aired, Zeke has come out not only unscathed, but actually thriving with the support of the public and without the burden of a secret. Varner, on the other hand, has been vilified and has reportedly lost his real-estate job. He's explained his actions, apologized and



Billy says that Ricky Martin is "Living La Vida Loca."

Photo by Nino Muñoz

seems genuinely contrite.

With **Ricky Martin**, it's feast or famine—and right now, it's feast. The Latin superstar recently got engaged and he just started headlining a show in Las Vegas called "All In"—and, as I've mentioned, I'm in. VH1 announced it will be getting into bed with Martin, so to speak, for a reality series about his Vegas residency. As if that wasn't enough, Ricky will also star in the third season of **Ryan Murphy's** *American Crime Story* that will focus on the murder of Gianni Versace. Martin will play Versace's lover, **Edgar Ramirez** will play Gianni, **Darren Criss** will play Andrew Cunanan and **Penelope Cruz** will play Donatella. Damn—I was really hoping for **Maya Rudolph**!

I got this next story from one of the many employees at BillyMasters.com. Well, "employee" is probably the wrong term—that would imply money changed hands. There's payment, but it's a more fluid situation. Let's just say this story came from one of my more enthusiastic volunteers. It's the story of Navy Chief Special Warfare Officer Joseph John Schmidt III. This 42-year-old is a highly decorated Navy SEAL. And he's married. And he has kids. And, oh yes, he's also made at least 29 porn videos over the past seven years under the name **Jay Voom**. OK—my interest is officially piqued. It turns out the bulk of his body of work has been with his wife, porn megastar **Jewels Jade**. (Sidenote: In straight porn, nobody cares about the men. The women are the stars, and they call the shots. Thank you, Gloria Steinem.)

Although this story just broke in the mainstream press, it's old news in the Navy. **Jewels** claims that her husband's activities are well-known among the naval brass. In fact, the SEALs invited her to the commandos' Coronado campus to sign autographs after she was named 2011 Penthouse Pet of the Month. The issue seems to

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be that for a SEAL to have a side job, forms must be filled out. For instance, Schmidt filled out paperwork to sell herbal supplements. I dunno about you, but I know what's happened every time I've been alone with an Herbalife salesman. As for Schmidt, it's unclear if he actually broke any rules. According to **Jewels**, she "recruited her husband to help out as an unpaid performer." See? No money changed hands. There's an investigation going on, which could jeopardize Schmidt's retirement plans. In the interim, no reason you can't check out his volunteer work/community service on BillyMasters.com.

When SEALs are going commando, it's definitely time to end yet another column. With **Christ** rising from the dead and all, we ran a bit long. So be sure to check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's been known to raise more than just the dead. If you have a question for me, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Caitlyn shares a secret I'd actually be interested in. To the Albanians, **Krishti Ungjall**. To the Greeks, **Christos Anesti**. And to everyone else, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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