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# nightspots

weekly nightlife section in



# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR CH Distillery

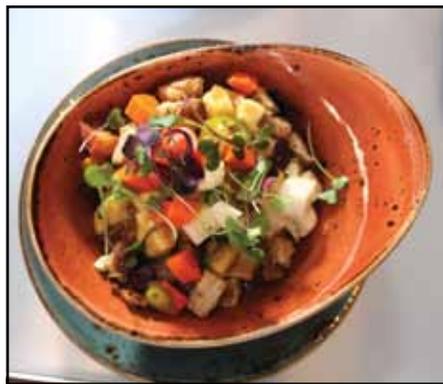
BY EMAGIN TANASCHUK

**CH Distillery** (564 W Randolph St.; CHDistillery.com)—called Chicago's first combination distillery, bar and restaurant—is situated in the West Loop, which is certainly the place to be after a long day of work at the office.

The vibe at CH Distillery is sophisticated, modern and filled with Chicago professionals looking to unwind with co-workers or friends. Upon entering, it is hard not to notice how aesthetically pleasing the location is with the dimly lit, sleek restaurant area on your left and the actual distillery on your right. (Tours of the distillery are every Tuesday and Saturday, and include free tastings.)

Once the first round of drinks arrived, I realized that the word "sleek" did not just describe the bar's physical appearance. To celebrate National Iced Tea Month, CH Distillery collaborated with Argo Tea to create three deliciously refreshing tea-based cocktails.

I ordered the "Makes Me Feel Fine," which is



**CH Distillery's braised pork belly poutine and Make Me Feel Fine cocktail.**

Photos by Emagin Tanaschuk



infused with cucumber, mint and lime. This gin cocktail tasted like summer (which is how it felt at CH, thanks to a broken air-conditioning system—that, thankfully was quickly fixed), and is exactly what I would love to be sipping on during a hot day at the beach.

The only thing that could make the cocktail better, however, was the grilled cheese with smoked bacon. Grilled-cheese sandwiches, of course, can be made a variety of ways—and I liked how CH Distillery makes it: juicy, smoky, and

burned just the right amount. My dining companion found the pork-belly poutine not quite as decadent as it sounded, and liked my sandwich a bit more.

Overall, CH Distillery is a sophisticated and fun experience. The menu is teeming with savory cocktails and food, and the search for original recipes is always a priority with this spot.

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

## Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: July's featured storytellers



Sonal Aggarwal



Mark Balakoohi



Erin Diamond



Patrick Dati



The Dutchman



Gabriel Gomez



Coya Paz

The July edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, July 11, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See [www.outspokenchicago.com](http://www.outspokenchicago.com) for more info.

—**Sonal Aggarwal** is a world traveling performer. Raised in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, she left the country after college to travel the world. In March of 2015 while living in India as an artist and emcee, her life took a dramatic turn with a motorcycle accident that led her back to Chicago. During her rehabilitation, she realized that she was meant to do stand up comedy. Now, her infectious energy is on stage all over Chicago.

—**Mark Balakoohi** was born alongside his twin brother in a refugee camp in Austria to a Polish Catholic mother and Iranian Muslim father. He immigrated to the US as a baby and has grown up in Chicago and the area. Mark graduated from UIC with a degree in business and spent his 20s married and climbing the corporate ladder. Now, in his 30s, Mark downsized to a small Chicago marketing company.

—**Patrick Dati** is an advocate and speaker for several organizations devoted to promoting LGBTQ rights and preventing childhood abuse and bullying. Dati sits on the board of directors for Break The Silence Foundation, a local domestic violence organization. He also is a national public speaker for The Elite Speakers Bureau in addition to these organizations: Center on Halsted, Teach Antibullying, Inc., Dreamcatchers for Abused Children, The National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and RAINN.

—**Erin Diamond** is a writer and comedian. She is a frequent contributor to The Paper Machete at The Green Mill. Erin also co-produces The Kiki, a Queer comedy variety show at The Laugh Factory. The Kiki will also take up a summer residency at Transistor in Andersonville beginning July. She is a devoted fan of the band Third Eye Blind.

—**The Dutchman** was born in this town and has lived here all his life. He was an out bisexual in high school and people just thought he was confused. Ever since he has been very strident about bisexual visibility. He is a leatherman, a family man (with three children), a Latin Mass Catholic and a communist.

—**Gabriel Gomez** is a Chicago native and significantly, a mutt, who has lived abroad and traveled widely. In the US, he has been politically active with ACT-UP, Queer Nation, The Legacy Project and the American Federation of Teachers. Since 1998, he has been at Chicago State University, a university committed to social justice, where he is a professor in Information Studies.

—**Coya Paz** is a writer, director and lip gloss connoisseur. She is the Artistic Director of Free Street Theater, a cofounder of the Proyecto Latina collective, and served as the founding co-Artistic Director of Teatro Luna for nine years. Coya is an Associate Professor at The Theatre School at DePaul University and holds a PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University.

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## More photos of Chuck Renslow from the book *Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow*.



The Chicago Eagle staff with Renslow in 1999.  
Courtesy of Leather Archives & Museum



2002 IML winner Stephen Weber with Renslow, first runner-up Borisz Mos (left) and second runner-up Herb Kaylor (right).  
Photo by Israel Wright



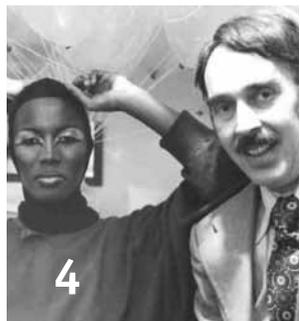
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EVERYONE HAS A STORY

SIDETRACK  
OUTSPOKEN!  
LGBTQ STORIES  
SIDETRACK

SECOND TUESDAY OF  
THE MONTH THIS JULY  
(DUE TO INDEPENDENCE DAY)

★★★★★  
TUESDAY, JULY 11  
LGBTQ STORYTELLING  
MAINBAR DOORS 6PM / STORIES 7PM  
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1. Chuck Renslow in the 1950s. 2. Renslow in his Masonic uniform, at a Masonic function. 3. Jim "Felicia" Flint with Renslow, judging a contest in Wisconsin. 4. Renslow and Grace Jones at Center Stage. 5. Renslow and the singer Sylvester promoting his planned show at Bistro Too. 6. Touché bar owner Chuck Rodocker with Renslow at IML. 7. Gold Coast float in a 1970s Pride Parade, with Dom Orejudos, Renslow, and Patrick Finnegan-Renslow up front.

Photo 1 and 2 courtesy of Renslow; photo 3 courtesy of Jim Flint; photos 4 and 5 courtesy of Ron Ehemann; photo 6 courtesy of Israel Wright; photo 7 courtesy of Gary Chichester



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