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Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Marchesa; LH on 21

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Some things (including restaurants) have to be experienced to be believed.

When I first read about **Marchesa** (535 N. Wells St.; <https://marchesachicago.com/>), it seemed too good to be true. Reports purported that the spot practically whisked patrons away to Europe—a bold claim other restaurants have made (some successfully, others not so much).

However, regarding Marchesa, one should believe those reports. The eatery features upscale Italian, Spanish and French dishes, and Executive Chef Mark Sabbe definitely knows what he's doing—and partners Jason Clark and Kathryn Sullivan Alvera (who worked together at Prosecco, which is just down the street) have struck gold (or oro) with this one.

Even the cheese and charcuterie are above the norm, with selections including cheese such as La Peral Blue and meats like jamon serrano and



Roasted chicken (left) and chocolate cake at LH on 21.
Photos by Andrew Davis

chorizo cantimpalo (and served with rosemary, peach and black pepper jams). Appetizers are inviting, to say the least; shrimp Jovan is pretty simple—shrimp, garlic, black pepper and butter sauce, with grilled sourdough bread—but taste much better than similar dishes I've tried. And a grand medallion of foie gras was just that (grand), although a little of the delicacy goes a long way. (In addition, Marchesa has a caviar menu—and there's even a caviar parfait, with roe, salmon, chopped egg and whipped creme fraiche.)

Sabbe's mastery continues onto the entrees, thanks to dishes such as orecchiette pomodoro e rapini, delicately served in tomato sauce; and steamed PEI mussels that are enticing enough to even get this non-fan to give them a try. However, the crowning achievement is the Iberico pork, served with beet puree, marinated baby beet escabeche and Iberico bacon. It's nothing less than stunning.

And as if all that isn't enough, there's the impressive decor as well as the chef's table (in a semi-private room away from the main area), an apartment above that will house chefs-in-residence and a space below (aptly called "The Cave") that can be rented. (See if the hostess can provide a tour.)

By the way, Marchesa starts lunch on Monday, March 19. Please check out this spot. (This may be a good time as well, as evening going on a Tuesday evening can have one witnessing bustling activity. Imagine how the weekends are.)

LH on 21

LH on 21 (85 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; <https://londonhousechicago.com/rooftop/>), located in the luxury hotel LondonHouse, oozes sophistication.

Low lights, fireplaces, sleek furniture and

impeccable service make for a place that one could easily spend hours talking, soaking up the atmosphere—and eating, of course. (You don't need to wear a suit here, but I'd leave the dingy jeans and Daisy Dukes home as well.)

Certainly, part of the reason for wanting to linger comes from Chef Jacob Verstegen, who provides dishes that are not only delicious—but they're so artfully presented you almost don't want to touch them.

The bison tartare almost looks like something from the Museum of Contemporary Art, accompanied by aerated egg, smoked tomato, toasted cassava and brioche. And the Honeycrisp apple and red beet salad looks nothing like a traditional dish—and tastes divine thanks to walnut, pecorino vinaigrette and red watercress.

The second round seems to up the ante even more, if that's possible. Dishes include sweet potato baked in ash and carrot roasted like meat—the most instructional dish names I've ever seen on a menu.

The third round (entrees) has items like butter-poached flounder and Arctic char (a wonderful item with braised kale, bacon, pumpernickel crumbs and caper leaf custard). Even the relatively plain-sounding roasted chicken is a step above what you might expect. And please make room for dessert—the chocolate cake is amazing.

However, if you're not in the mood for a sit-down dinner, LH on 21 (which has an outdoor space called—what else?—LH on 22) has bar snacks. Those are, no doubt, on an elevated level as well.



MR. LEATHER 64TEN

Congratulations to Kurt Allen, 2018 Mr. Leather 64TEN, chosen March 10 at Jackhammer.

Photos by Ed Negron



Dragapalooza at Sidetrack March 21

Dragapalooza, the annual drag extravaganza to benefit Equality Illinois, returns to Sidetrack on Wednesday, March 21. This year's theme is "Lead With Love." Leading the lovefest will be Sidetrack's perennial hostess, Dixie Lyn Cartwright. Expect performances from Alexis Bevels, Bambi Banks, Mikki Miraj, Jerfay, Debbie Fox, Dida Ritz, Joonage A Trois, Savannah Westbrooke and many more.

The show begins at 9 pm. Proceeds will go to benefit Equality Illinois.

Photo from 2017's Dragapalooza by Jed Dulanus



BILLY Masters

"I'm sorry. I recognized you, but I thought maybe from porn!"—A waiter in a restaurant in Italy to **Eric Bana**. After telling the story on *The Talk*, **Julie Chen** said, "Now we know what he does on his lunch break." Good one, Mrs. Moonves!

Since last week's column was filed moments after the Oscars ended (and from the event itself), there were a few stories I missed. For instance, most people didn't realize that **Daniela Vega** made Academy Awards history—she was the first transgender Oscar presenter. I feel it's important to add "that we know of" because ... well, who knows.

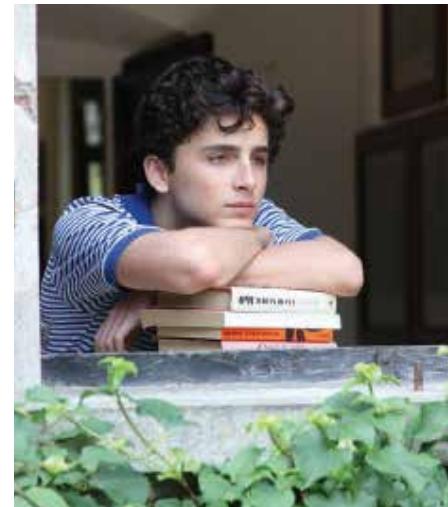
The "In Memoriam" sequence always manages to ruffle feathers by omitting people who should have made the cut. This year, many are complaining that **Mary Tyler Moore**, **Powers Boothe** and **Adam West** should have been included. Yes, all three are primarily known for television. But MTM was an Oscar nominee for *Ordinary People* in 1980. I realize that the Academy has to draw the line somewhere. But once you've included Zsa Zsa Gabor, it seems to me the bar has been lowered considerably.

Openly gay writer **James Ivory** is the oldest Oscar winner for penning *Call Me By Your Name*. And he made an announcement—there will be a sequel, saying, "I'm already conceiving the story with Andre Aciman," who wrote the novel the film is based on. Ivory has said, "It's gonna happen five or six years afterwards, so almost in the 1990s." That's a departure from the novel, where Elio visits Oliver in the States 15 years after that fateful summer. Be that as it may, Ivory also promised that both **Armie Hammer** and **Timothee Chalamet** will return to their roles. But here's something you'll only hear from moi: Since both guys were skittish about the sex scenes in the first film, they had a "no-penis clause" written into their contracts. Now I'm a little less excited...

Our gay Olympians were also at the Oscars. **Gus Kenworthy** was with his equally hot beau Matt Wilkas, while **Adam Rippon** was with his best friend, fellow figure skater Mirai Nagasu. In terms of Rippon, everyone focused on the fact that he was wearing a leather harness. Days later, **Andy Cohen** asked him what he looks for in a man. He said he wants someone who goes to the gym and has a job. Then **Brandi Glanville** piped in, "He needs a rough top." Adam quickly added, "Why not?" Something tells me they'll have to get in line behind Cohen.

Many people are wondering if Rippon will be invited to compete on the upcoming athletes-only edition of *Dancing with the Stars*. While we hear ABC really wants him, I suspect it is unlikely. The show starts April 30, and the dancers begin practicing two weeks before that. Adam is already scheduled to tour with "Stars on Ice" from April 6 through May 20. So, unless he's gonna commute back and forth, I highly doubt it.

Might I remind ABC that **Greg Louganis** has been begging to be on "DWTS" for years. If ever



Call Me By Your Name has a sequel, **Billy** says. Still of Timothee Chalamet from Sony Pictures Classics

there were a season where he'd fit in perfectly, it's this one. An Olympic champion, a legend, and gay—sign him up!

Meanwhile in lovely downtown Vatican City, the Holy See is being rocked by yet another sex scandal. At the center of the trial is Father Luca Morini, who is accused of corruption. It all started when he contacted **Francesco Mangiacapra**, a male escort. According to Mangiacapra, Morini spent hundreds of thousands of Euros which he got out of parishioners and superiors in the Catholic Church.

When Mangiacapra realized what was going on, he contacted the archdiocese, but nothing was done. Then he called the local news. Suddenly, Morini was removed from his church due to "sickness." Allegedly, the Church bought him an expensive villa, hired a maid and paid all his expenses. It's said that Morini blackmailed a bishop into taking care of him after he threatened "to expose to the public eye unpleasant facts about many diocesan priests." Mangiacapra has produced a 1,200-page dossier that names names, and provides additional documentation—including photos and videos of Morini snorting cocaine and cavorting with male hookers. It also includes evidence against 60 other priests. Mangiacapra said, "The goal isn't to hurt the people I've mentioned, but to help them understand that their double life isn't useful to them or to the people who rely on them for guidance." He also claimed that no minors were involved: "We're talking about sins, not crimes. I only want this out so that these people will stop preaching hatred towards gays."

Tom Daley and **Dustin Lance Black** are shocked by the negative comments they've read online regarding the impending birth of the spawn of at least one of their loins. "I can't believe people aren't happy for us," said an incredulous Tom. Isn't that sweet? He still doesn't get it.

You can't keep a good girl down. After repeatedly stating that her domestic career was decimated by Donald Trump, **Kathy Griffin** is about to embark on a United States tour! She already announced dates in San Francisco, Seattle and Boston. But on *Real Time* with Bill Maher, she said that she'll also be playing Carnegie Hall in

SIDETRACK PRESENTS

DRAGAPALOOZA

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

ALEX KAY ALEXIS BEVELS BAMBI BANKS BLONDE BENÉT COCO IMAN COCO SHO-NELL CORVETTA DEVILLE DEBBIE FOX DIDA RITZ DYMOND C. CALLOWAY EVA STYLE8 JADE JERFAY JO MCQUEEN JOONABE À TROIS KAYLA POLANCO KHLOE KRISSEY FEETFACE THE LADY IVORY MIKKI MIRAJ O'LAYSIA PRIME OPHELIA BULLETZ SASHA LOVE SAVANNAH WESTBROOKE SAYA NAOMI TENDERONI AND MORE...

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New York, and the Kennedy Center in DC. Something tells me she's back!

We have time for a very brief "Ask Billy" question. Roger in Chicago asks, "Did you see **Darren Criss**' ass on 'American Crime Story'? Isn't it perfect? Tell me you saved it and will post it."

I saw, I saved, I posted—on [BillyMasters.com](#).

When I'm quoting Julius Caesar (but not in the original Latin), it's definitely time to end yet another column. Speaking of "In Memoriam," we have another death to report. **Billy Herrington** was a HUGE porn star in the '90s. For years he had struggled with various addictions. About a year ago, he cleaned up his act and even just got his one-year chip. Life was great and then, bam, killed in a car accident last week. Rest in peace. For the latest gossip, be sure to check out [www.BillyMasters.com](#)—the site that doesn't have a "no-penis clause!" If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Mike Pence buys a ticket to see **Kathy Griffin** at the Kennedy Center! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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