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weekly nightlife section in



# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### The Fifty/50; Francesca's brunch; Baconfest Chicago

BY ANDREW DAVIS

**The Fifty/50** (2047 W. Division St.; <http://www.thefifty50.com/>), from—who else?—the Fifty/50 Restaurant Group, beat a lot of other places to the punch regarding sports bars kicking it up and serving patrons something more than plain burgers and corn chips.

For more than a decade, this casual spot has claimed that it's a sports bar that offers something more—and a recent has convinced me of that, at least for now.

The smoked pork-belly burnt ends are quite beguiling appetizers—maple-cured and applewood-smoked, and accompanied by honey-mustard dipping sauce. However, there are other apps such as tempura popcorn shrimp (addictive), beer-battered pickles, buffalo calamari and even tempura-battered cauliflower (reaching out to vegetarians, in another turn for a lot of sports bars).

The Fifty/50 is famed for its wings, and they come in three varieties: regular breaded, boneless breaded and applewood-smoked. (They



**The Fifty/50's smoked pork-belly burnt ends.**

Photo by Andrew Davis

like applewood here.) On the other end, there are several salads available, including the Wicker Park, appropriately (mixed greens, toasted pine nuts, goat cheese, cucumbers, vine tomatoes and roasted shallot vinaigrette).

And, of course, there are burgers and baby-back ribs galore. I actually found the burgers particularly fascinating, with varieties such as HELL (with habanero salsa, roasted jalapeños, Fifty/50 hot sauce and pepper jack cheese), The O-Face (Mercks cheddar, BBQ pulled pork, waffled mac'n'cheese on a pretzel bun) and the very tasty Big Hered, which is a bison-based concoction.

By the way, keep this place in mind for casual patio dining this summer if you're a dog owner, as that area of this spot is canine-friendly.

#### Francesca's on Chestnut brunch

**Francesca's on Chestnut** (200 E. Chestnut St.; <http://www.miafrancesca.com/locations/profile/francescas-on-chestnut-gold-coast>) has a brunch that measures up with its other meals.

That's wonderful for at least two reasons: great quality at fantastic prices (especially considering the restaurant is in the heart of Streeterville, one of the most most expensive neighborhoods in Chicago, if not the Midwest). Arancini



#### Francesca's French toast.

PR photo

Benedict (\$13) involves crispy risotto balls with prosciutto, poached egg, hollandaise and house potatoes—and could be a meal on its own. Ditto for the delicious brioche French toast (\$10), which is made simply and wonderfully.

However, practically everything is a hit here, including the Davanti burger (\$16; roasted tomatoes, crispy mozzarella, arugula, bacon jam, and roasted garlic aioli, served on a brioche bun—and, yes, it's served with fries). However, if that's not your style, other offerings at this particular Francesca's restaurant range from smoked salmon salad (\$14) to rigatoni alla paesana (\$13; rigatoni with roasted sausage, wild mushrooms and peas in a light tomato cream

sauce).

And with the money you save, you can hit the shops on nearby Michigan Avenue—maybe.

#### Baconfest: Meat-and-greet

Thousands of attendees got to “ham it up” April 6-7 at the UIC Forum, where **Baconfest Chicago** took place.

At Baconfest—where a portion of the proceeds go to the Greater Chicago Food Depository—Chicago and suburban chefs concoct and serve dishes to thousands of bacon lovers. Just a few of the restaurants present this year included The Heritage (which served bacon-and-red floriani cornmeal dumplings), Bites (Billionaire's BLT bao), Carnivale (maple-bacon pops), Inspiration Kitchen (bacon pistachio beet empanadas), Italian Village Restaurants (bacon BBQ truffle) and Edzo's Burger Shop (pancake-and-bacon milkshakes). In addition, there were alcoholic beverages and other products (such as Burton's Maple Syrups) that complemented the meats.

Keep up with the latest Baconfest news at <https://baconfestchicago.com/>.

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



**Burton's Maple Syrup's Bradley Kirouac at Baconfest.**

Photo by Liz Baudler



**SIDETRACK**

Just some general sexiness.

Photos by Jed Dulanias



## BILLY Masters

"I would let them both die."—Kathy Griffin answers **Howard Stern's** question, "If you had to save **Anderson Cooper's** life, or **Andy Cohen's** life, who do you choose at this point?" When pressed to choose one, she saved the Silver Fox. PHEW. Of Cohen, she said, "I hate him. I loathe him. I think he is a talentless piece of shit." That pretty much says it all.

**Adam Rippon** made a startling revelation about his love life. He just announced that he's been dating **Jussi-Pekka Kajaala**. And, despite all his talk about Grindr, they actually met on Tinder—so I guess Grindr is where you go to hook up, but Tinder is where you go to find a boyfriend. Adam met the Finnish realtor online about seven months ago. At first, it was just chatter. Rippon said they then "started to hang out a little bit more, because we were both really busy. Now that I'm even busier, I thought it was a better time to hang out." He went public with the news by posting a shirtless pic of the pair hiking in Runyon Canyon with the caption "Good boys Finnish first." Do they?

Adam's time is even more precious these days ... he'll be competing on *Dancing with the Stars*. Remember I told you that ABC was trying to woo the skater to join the "All Athletes" season, but Rippon was already committed to the Stars on Ice tour. We hear that Adam and his dancing partner (who has not been named) will be rehearsing on the road and then flying to Los Angeles for the competition. The "Stars on Ice" tour continues through May 20.

This special season of DWTS will be much shorter than usual. It starts on April 30 and will run for just four weeks—apparently ABC is only interested in airing it during May sweeps. Joining Rippon on the DWTS journey will be snowboarder **Jamie Anderson**, softball player **Jennie Finch**, and, thank the Lord above, skater **Tonya Harding**. Although the entire cast won't be announced until Friday, April 13, may I ask a question? Who does **Greg Louganis** have to whack before he's invited to compete?

Insiders tell me that **RuPaul's Drag Race** is trying to produce an abbreviated season of its own—dedicated to drag legends! If the buzz is correct, we could see people like **Coco Peru**, **Lady Bunny**, **Chi Chi La Rue**, **Lypsinka**, **Jackie Beat**, **Heklina** and oodles of others with varying degrees of talent battling on the catwalk. Frankly, I think they should just give the award to **Lypsinka** now and call it a day.

**Ryan Murphy** has been known for resuscitating the careers of many once-hot actors. He's bracing himself for one of the biggest challenges of his life. Murphy just announced that one of the stars of the next season of *American Horror Story* will be **Dame Joan Collins**! Now, I know what you're thinking—backstage footage of Joan without her wig and makeup could be a horror story on its own. But it should be noted she previously ditched all glamour for her last film, *The Time of Their Lives*, which was pretty good. We don't



Kathy Griffin has made her feelings about **Andy Cohen** known.

Photo from Bravo

know much about the next season of AHS, except that it will also star **Kathy Bates**, **Sarah Paulson**, **Evan Peters**, **Adina Porter**, **Billy Eichner**, **Leslie Grossman**, **Cheyenne Jackson** and possibly **Anjelica Houston**. We also know Evan Peters will play a hairstylist and that **Joan Collins** will be his grandmother. I bet she was angling to play his love interest!

A show which may not be returning is **Project Runway**. The franchise is owned by The Weinstein Company, which is currently in bankruptcy. A+E Networks cancelled the Weinstains' contract for the next two seasons due to the allegations and pending legal battle against Harvey. In fact, some outlets have claimed that Harvey used *Project Runway* as a "pipeline" to young female models. **Lantern Capital** has been angling to buy the Weinstein assets and if that happens, **Lifetime** is happy to work with them to keep "Project Runway" afloat.

One of the least-talked-about aspects of the Weinstein drama has been estranged wife **Georgina Chapman**. Rumors continue to swirl that a multi-pronged deal was made between Harvey and Georgie Girl that included bankrolling her design house and placing her on *Project Runway All-Stars* as a judge. In return, she turned a blind eye to Harvey's peccadilloes and enjoyed the favors of a certain dancing man who Harvey also promised to pay off in a tit-for-tat manner. People swear to me that everyone involved could be hauled in to testify should the legal battle get ugly.

**Darin** in **Houston** sent in this "Ask Billy" question: "I heard that **Harry Styles** performed somewhere in Europe with a cock ring. Is it true? Do you have videos or photos?"

While we don't know exactly what was going on under Harry's trousers, we can at least fill in a few gaps. First, it happened in **Munich, Germany**. Harry was wearing a snug purple suit and brandish-

ing flags in both arms—apparently he thought he was a gay man in a disco in 1985. (Were it 1975, he'd have had a tambourine.) As he arches his back, it does appear that a small cylindrical form pops from the front of his trousers. But, upon closer inspection, a similar shape pops from the side as well. This made me think it could be the pant pockets and the angle of the camera. So we did more investigating, found a video from a different angle and, well, let's just say you can see exactly what's happening on **BillyMasters.com**.

When **Dame Joan Collins** could compete on **RuPaul's Drag Race**, it's definitely time to end yet another column. One of the advantages of celebrating Orthodox Easter is that all the lilies and candies are half-price. But where, oh where, are my daffodils? While I look, check out **BillyMasters.com**—the site that's been known to raise more than the dead. If you have a question, send it to **Billy@BillyMasters.com**, and I promise to get back to you before I eat my weight in Peeps! To the Albanians, **Krishti u ngjall**. To the Greeks, **Christos Anesti**. And to everyone else, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.