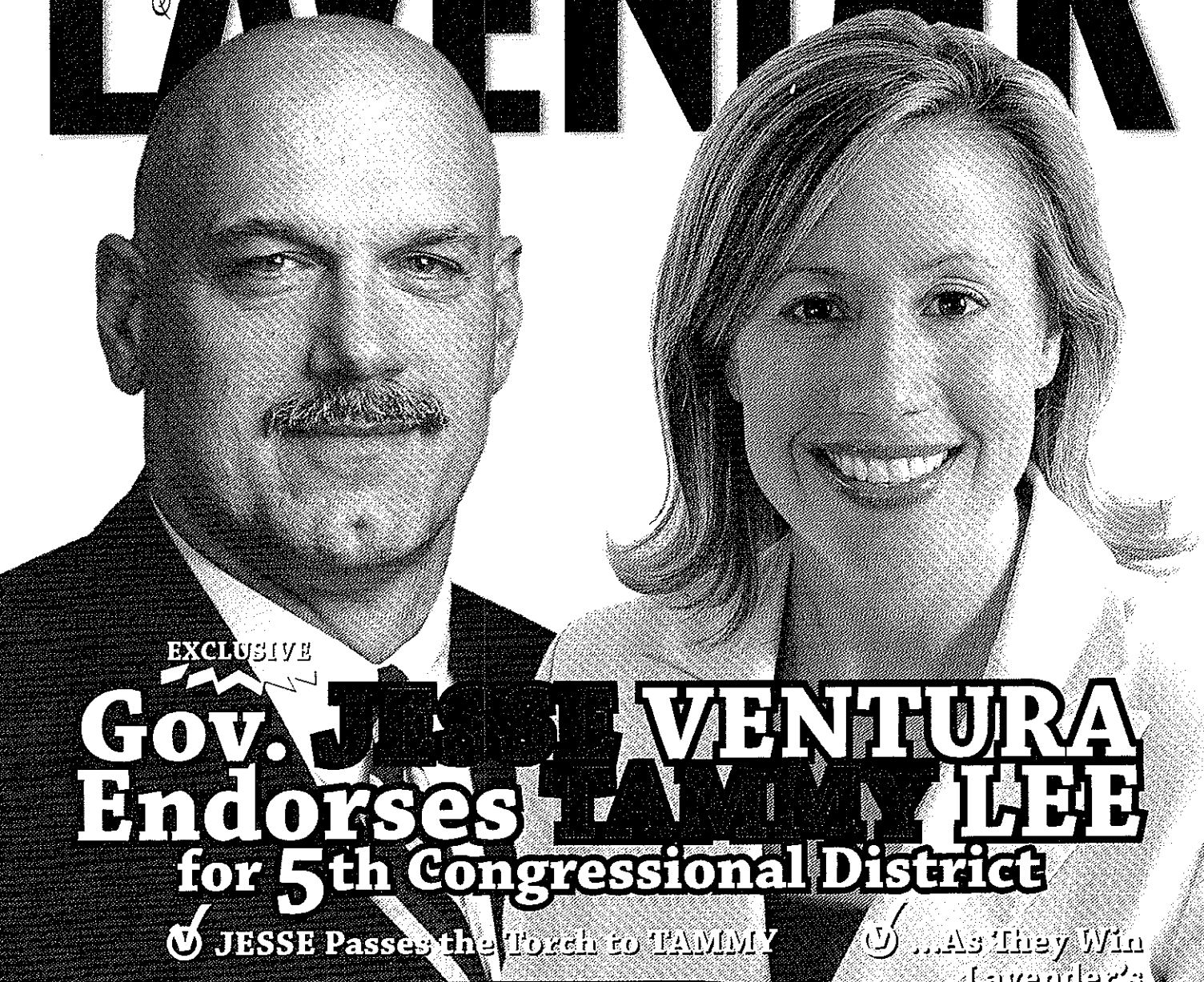


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Gov. **JESSE VENTURA** Endorses **TAMMY LEE** for 5th Congressional District

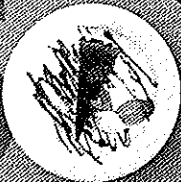
✓ **JESSE** Passes the Torch to **TAMMY**

✓ ...As They Win
Lavender's
Fab Award #51
For Best
Independent
Politicians

**+ 2006 Lavender
Fab 50 Awards**

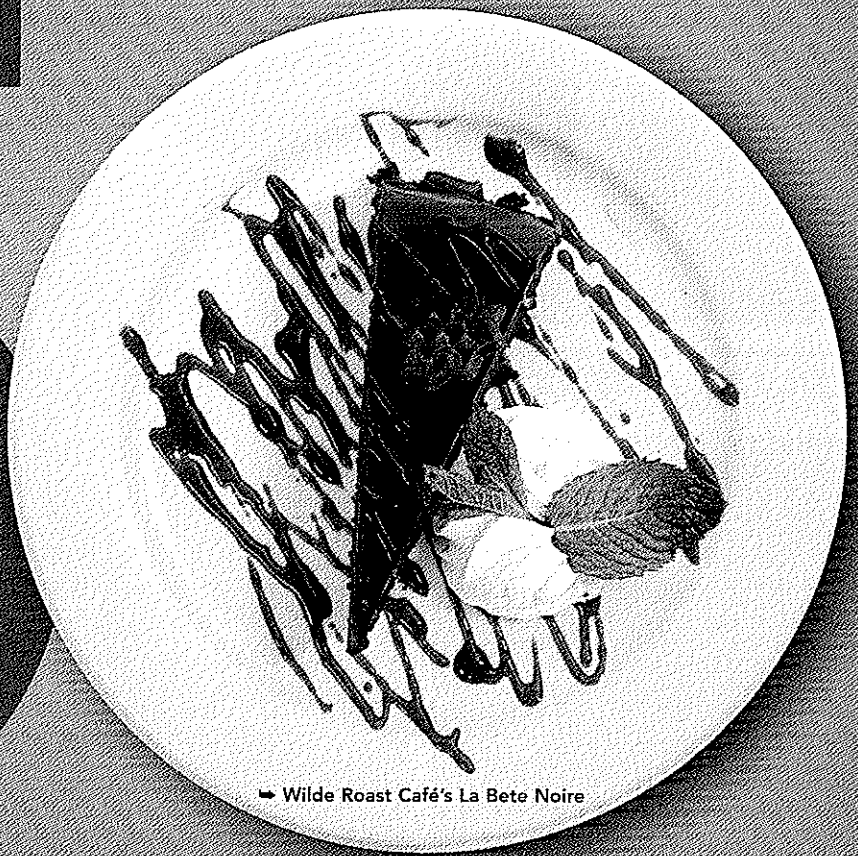
Minnesota's GLBT Magazine
Issue 298 October 27-November 9, 2006
lavendermagazine.com

The Fab



The Fab

50



► Wilde Roast Café's La Bete Noire

Photo by Hilbert Pommer

LAVENDER'S 2006 OUTSTANDING AWARDS

In a downloadable, sound-bite-happy world, instant gratification simply takes too long. But there's more to life than increasing its speed. So, *Lavender's* annual survey of all things fabulous will help you take a few minutes to appreciate the queer and queer-friendly people, places, organizations, and events that make the Twin Cities our kind of towns—and yours. Whether you're naughty or nice, it's a list you'll want to check twice.

► FAB 50 contributing writers: Rick Diggins, Heidi Fellner, Terrance Griep, Ed Huyck, Todd Park, Christopher Pommer, John Townsend, Jonah Winn-Lenetsky

1 Local Musician/Band THE GIRLS

With easygoing onstage banter, and a set list that mixes originals, pop classics, and standards, The Girls make music that you can't help but fall in love with—be it during a regular gig at a jazz club, at a benefit concert, or on one of the frequent exotic cruises (they're off in Mexico as this issue goes to print) they have made part of their itinerary. Whatever the venue, the quartet—Lori Dokken, Judi Donaghy, Patty Peterson, and Erin Schwab—create great music together. Their vocal harmonies are pure and clean, while their experience gives them an in-performance confidence few can match. "We want the music to be fun and happy and joyous—to be an extension of what we do," Dokken said in an interview this summer. "And it is really free." —EH

2

Theater Company GUTHRIE THEATER

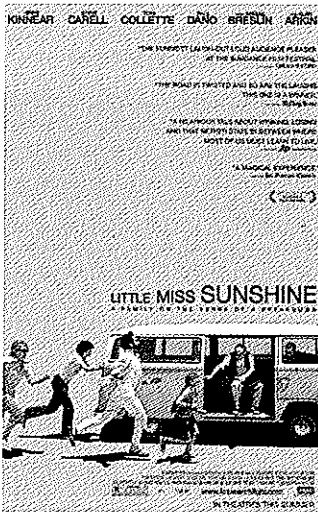


Queer folks are delighted with the Guthrie Theater's magnificent new world-class complex on the

bank of the Mississippi in Downtown Minneapolis. And what the heck if we have to wait in traffic because of the Vikings game! It's what's inside that counts. Designed by Jean Nouvel, the new facility sports three different theater spaces; chichi restaurants and bars; a shimmering river view; and giant exterior portraits of great American playwrights, with the conspicuous absence of Lillian Hellman. The interior, which some have likened to an airport terminal, is enhanced by artfully faded black-and-white images of various Guthrie shows from its 43-year-history on Vineland Place. By the way, the Big G's Board President is Northwest Airlines CEO, Douglas Steenland. As for actual productions, 2006's *The Real Thing* and *Lost in Yonkers* have been top-notch. And hard-hitting work has been outsourced locally! —JT

3

2006 Film LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE



If you somehow missed *Little Miss Sunshine* (for a few weeks, I had its title confused with that damn Robin Williams *RV* film), get thee to a cinema. No, it's not a renter, you cheap date, you. This charming dark comedy about family dysfunction, child beauty pageants, and America's obsession with winning got a standing ovation at Sundance. So

far, it has pulled in more than \$55 million at the box office. No wonder. The all-star cast of Toni Collette, Greg Kinnear, Steve Carell, Alan Arkin, Paul Giamatti, and Abigail Breslin (of *Signs* fame) makes an amazing ensemble, playing their characters with enthusiasm and honesty. It's a quirky kind of feel-good film. You'll laugh, and you'll cry. For a good hour-and-a-half, you'll stop trying to be so damn perfect, and start loving your sweet, unique, dysfunctional self. —HF

4

TV Show/Series GREY'S ANATOMY

We'll work really hard to avoid any jokes about "Gay's Anatomy," or any references to the sorts of sordid acts a porno with that title might include. Suffice it to say we were surprised to discover any single hour of television could contain all the drama, tension, angst, passion, blood, and dreamy medical staff that *Grey's Anatomy* manages to squeeze into every episode. Relationships within the ensemble cast form and rearrange themselves to entertain and delight viewers. The main cast is a group of first-year interns struggling to balance lives with the emotional and physical demands of the emergency room. The doctors in charge ramp up the tension more by trying to break the weak and guide the strong. Who will excel? Who will fail? Who will develop a drug addiction? Above all, who will hook up with whom? Tune in, and all will be revealed. —CP

5

GLBT Bar SALOON

Sometime after it opened in 1977, Y'All Come Back Saloon became known simply as *The Saloon*, and *Lavender's* readers seem to agree with the implication of that name, as this establishment easily won this year's Fab GLBT Bar award. The drinks, in the words of one patron, "are strong and cheap," and the kitchen fare is "excellent." Other, less-basic-needs-oriented enthu-

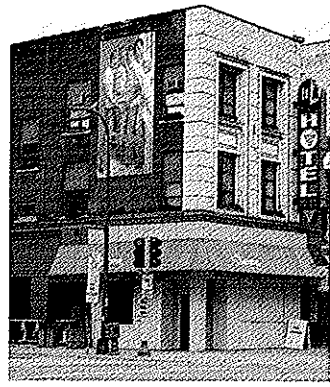


Photo by Mike Hinch

6

Bar To Meet Men SALOON

Combining friendly charm with sexy ambience, it's no wonder that the Saloon in Downtown Minneapolis reigns as the region's definitive GLBT bar. And those hot bartenders! For decades, the Saloon has been renowned as a place that corrals cute young dudes out for a hot time. Though that's still pleasantly the case, the establishment is very welcoming to older gay folks nowadays, much more than it was in yesteryear. Plus, the Saloon is hetero-friendly without sacrificing a trace of its gay identity. The customer base ranges from twinks to drag queens to older men to in-betweens—from urban goths to bi-curious jock types sneaking in from suburbia. You can nosh on a delish cheap burger while watching the Vikings or fabulous music videos on screens above eye level. And the Saloon's darkened dance floor is dynamically ideal for intimacy. —JT ▶

7

Bar To Meet Women TOWN HOUSE



Photo by George Holdgrafer

Truly this is a place primed to meet all your needs. Maybe you're meeting a couple compadres for a laid-back evening of playing pool and tossing darts. Or perhaps tonight is the night you finally want to nail that tricky combination of sultry and strong that sounds so easy when Joan Jett does it on "I Love Rock and Roll." Or maybe, just maybe, tonight is the night you saunter into the bar, and see *her*. You know the one. She's with her friends, but you can tell by the way she tilts her head and glances in your direction that she wants you to say hi. When you catch her eye, she shoots you a grin. And, well, the rest is up to you. Whatever your desire, the Town House in St. Paul is the place for no-nonsense fun. C'mon. \$4.50 pitchers after 8 PM on Thursdays. What are you waiting for? —CP

8

Happy Hour MINNEAPOLIS EAGLE

What makes the Minneapolis Eagle's happy hour such a great time? It's the people. Lots of people. "By 6 PM on a Friday, it is packed," according to Ed Hopkins, who started the Downtown Minneapolis nightclub eight years ago. Happy hour includes two-for-one drinks Mondays through Thursdays (4-6 PM) and three-for-ones Fridays

(4-7 PM). "Everyone comes out for happy hour," Hopkins says. "If you can name it, they are here." The Eagle is no stranger to the Fab 50 Awards, having picked up a number of nods in recent years. The club—encompassing two other spaces, the Bolt (which features a VJ playing videos all night long) and the Bolt Underground—features plenty of special events to go along with the weekday happy hours. These can range from parties around broadcasts of *Project Runway* to pig roasts. —EH

9

Bartender JESSE (TRIKKX)

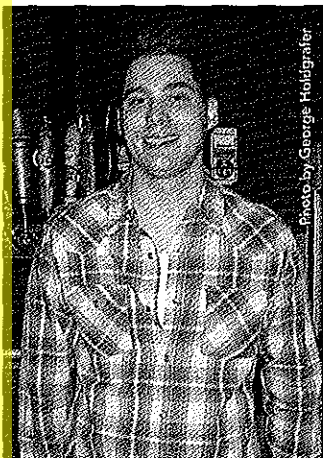


Photo by George Holdgrafer

When you belly up to the bar and order a drink from Jesse, you'll feel welcome. So many people have found this to be true from other places he has worked that he developed a loyal clientele. He has been tending bar for seven years, but has found a home for the last four at Trikkx after getting his fill of the run-of-the-mill straight bars. Jesse says, "I got sick and tired of the drama, and breaking up fights." Now, he's having fun and pouring libations for the faithful six nights a week. Comparing the St. Paul club to TV's *Cheers*, Jesse remarks, "We know each other here." He enjoys the accepting atmosphere at Trikkx, which is a good thing, because he's in the minority. Sorry, boys, he's straight. His signature drink is an Undercurrent, but his martinis are definitely chilled to kill! —TP

10

Sexiest Staff THE BOLT

Hang out here long enough, and you'll catch a glimpse of a toned tummy peaking out from a T and belted into a tight pair of jeans. Or a deltoid broad and strong enough to set your drink on. Not that we're advocating objectifying bartenders at the Bolt. Heavens, no! After all, they're people, too. With thoughts, feelings, killer smiles, and eyes that just make you want to melt into your dirty Stoli martini and...excuse us, we're doing it again. Well, the Bolt might offer specials every night of the week. And sure, things are going on during Bolt Underground's foam and blackout parties that would make your hairstylist blush. But what really draws the boys out? Other cute boys, of course. So come out, get an eyeful, and shake your groove thing in this exciting gay complex. But hands off the brunette. He's ours. —CP

11

DJ CHRIS (TRIKKX)

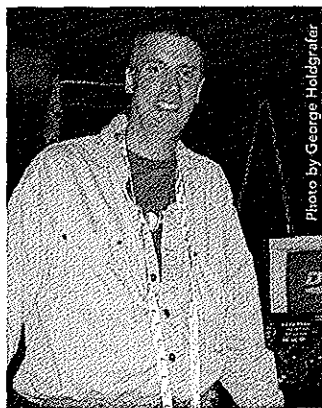


Photo by George Holdgrafer

Have you ever tried to contact a successful DJ and tell him...well, anything? These people live exciting, complicated lives, folks. So, DJ Chris at Trikkx, here's your official notification: You're number one in the Twin Cities for 2006! Along with your award goes a year's subscription to *The Saturday Evening Post* to start in 2030 and a preneered supply of Tums. But let's not worry about

the future. For now, you're slick and energetic, and you've got the enviable talent of pleasing even the most finicky party people of any vintage. So, get in that state-of-the-art booth, and make the magic happen. —RD

12

Local Hero ESERA TUAOLO

A lot of people came out of the closet in 2002, but only one was a retired NFL player with a redoubtable résumé that includes a Super Bowl appearance—and that one was Twin Cities resident Esera Tuaolo. He came out then, and he keeps coming out. In his recent autobiography *Alone in the Trenches*, he revealed himself as a victim—of poverty, racism, and appalling child abuse. These days, when not working on his upcoming album, Tuaolo injects tolerance into the infrastructure of his heaviest alma mater, the National Football League. Locally, he focuses on working with youth, both GLBT and straight, serving as a kind of ambassador between the two. And speaking of ambassadorship, he spent this summer serving as an ambassador for Gay Games VII. Whatever is next in Tuaolo's variegated future is sure to be met with the same unblinking honesty and unerring bravery that have transformed him from a 300-pound closet case to a tireless purveyor of goodwill. —TG

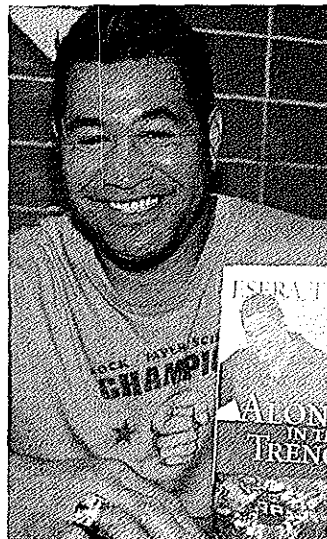
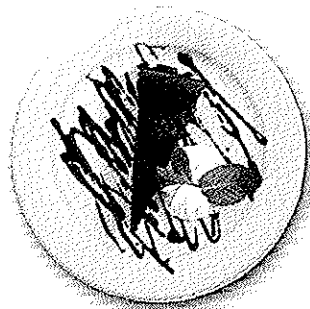


Photo by George Holdgrafer

22

**Coffee Shop
WILDE ROAST CAFÉ**

Photo by Hubert Bonnet



Wilde Roast Café (named for 19th-Century playwright Oscar Wilde) has much to boast about. Aside from being featured on the cover of *Bon Appetit* Magazine (for its flourless cake *La Bete Noire*), the café has garnered praise in *Spin* Magazine, as well as, locally, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and KARE 11 TV's "Minnesota Showcase." Wilde was a flamboyantly gay self-described genius, and his popular plays featured characters that typified his perception of the gay personality: smart, sophisticated, stylish—just like Wilde Roast Café. Wilde once remarked that the only way to be happy is to obsess over matters of style and taste, not "important" things. So, it's a safe bet that Wilde would have considered his namesake café to be of paramount importance. —RD

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**Ice Cream
GRAND OLE CREAMERY**

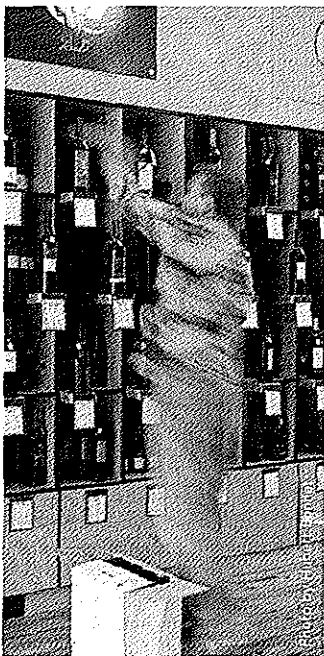
Since 1984, folks have been lining up outside this St. Paul landmark on humid summer days and evenings with an eye to enjoying award-winning ice cream in flavors ranging from chocolate to cinnamon. But ice cream knows no season, of course, and it's no surprise that this number-one-ranked purveyor of the frozen treat is busy year-round. Look for only the highest quality product, an eclectic clientele, and a great time. Oh, and don't forget to look for the malted milk ball at the bottom of your

fresh waffle cone—it's there so the ice cream won't run out before you're done. They've thought of everything. Just relax and enjoy. —RD

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**Liquor/Wine Store
THE WINE THIEF**

Katrina and Paul Wentzel envision a world in which the snobbery of oenology is replaced by a fun, breezy attitude toward the grape and all its alluring, fermented forms. Experiment, the Wentzels say! Let your taste buds travel the world. As winter tightens its icy fist around Minnesota, allow the warmth of the Spanish highlands or the Australian outback to settle in your belly. At *The Wine Thief*, you can find the perfect house wine that you'll return to again and again. Did we mention everything is available for less than 20 bucks? How's that for democratizing the wine experience? It's revolutionary! So, grab a glass (heck, at these prices, grab a bottle or two), and join the revolution. After the coup d'état, we happily would crown them the Queen and King of the bacchanal. When you stop by, tell Katrina her tiara is in the mail. —CP



25

**Grocery Store
KOWALSKI'S**

It may be morally wrong to love a grocery store with a singleness of mind and GI tract. But the passion we have for Kowalski's deli just won't be denied. Kowalski's single-handedly makes a trip to the grocery store less of an errand and more of an experience. From the cheerful gifts and cards that tempt the unsuspecting shopper to venture beyond his or lists to the artisan breads, imported cheeses, and sushi bar, Kowalski's has the charm of a European market styled for urban Minnesota. The company also seems to know what few other grocery store chains do: A friendly, knowledgeable staff is just as vital as the produce. Helping us out the door with our heavy bags may take a minute, but for us lightweights with a fondness for russet potatoes and bottled water, it is half the reason we come running back for more. Kowalski's, we wish we knew how to quit you. —HF

26

**Podcast
WANDA WISDOM**

Wisdom comes from many sources, but *Lavender's* readers didn't have to look far to find it—at least where it pertains to podcasts. Accoutered by topics that stretch from the profound to the proud, *Wanda Wisdom* favors cyberspace with insightful interviews and comedic commentaries, riding the cutting edge of this cutting-edge medium, and thus earning the fickle attentions of such national publications as *Out* and *Genre*. According to Wanda, "It's a conversation between me and people from crazily diverse backgrounds from all over the world." Since the Fab Ms. W began posting her unique blend of insolence and insight exclusively at <www.lavender-magazine.com>, the number of hits at that URL has increased by more than 50 percent. And with this self-described "single, sober, 31-year-old drag queen in the Edges of Insanity, Minnesota" calling the shots, we're guaranteed

that, no matter how many hits it takes, *Lavender's* Web site will remain one that hits back. —TG



Illustration by Mike Hricida

27

**Radio Station
89.3 THE CURRENT**

While making a trip to the Twin Cities early last year, I scanned the radio dial looking for something interesting. I came upon a station in the public radio range playing the Who's "5:15." Cool. Then, they played a hot artist not usually heard on the radio. Cool. Next followed a Booker T and the MG's song not called "Green Onions." Wow! In less than two years, *The Current* (89.3 FM) has moved into a top spot for lovers of music, bringing an eclectic mix of genres to listeners hungry for something different, be it a new bluegrass track or a song by an up-and-coming local act. A commitment to Minnesota is key for the station. Steve Nelson, the station's program director, says, "We try to play one local song an hour. The talent is already here in the Twin Cities. We feel like we have to do our part to make the local music scene stronger than it was before." That desire goes beyond music, which may help keep the station in the public's ears. Nelson adds, "We're always looking for new and different ways to serve the community." Reminding people that there's more to artists like Booker T is good enough for me. —EH

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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Local Radio Personality AL FRANKEN



and weather. They've got little tidbits that seem to indicate they're interested in the community they serve (such as stories on health as well as murders). They've got news personalities who exchange gentle banter in the morning, drawing you into a friendly, it's-too-early-for-reality state of mind. They've got lots of programs that will allow you to escape whatever the day's problems have been, if only for the evening. And of course, they've got advice on managing your money, and even more advice on how to spend it. In all, it's a business—but one with a heart, and an awareness of the need to make a positive influence on the popular mind it, in some ways, helps create. Watch avidly. —RD

Articulate, funny, and a wrestler? While that may sound like the ideal boyfriend, it's actually one of Minnesota's favorite native sons. Al Franken has forged a safe path through the minefield of talk radio. You'll remember Al Franken from the early days of *Saturday Night Live*, like when it was actually funny. He channeled his acerbic, razor-sharp wit into exposing the hypocrisy in self-proclaimed defenders of liberty with anything but subtlety. Like deer in the headlights, Franken exposes the "lying liars" on the conservative side of the aisle with a radio show that takes no prisoners. Tune in to the local Air America Radio affiliate KTNF 950 AM, and you'll find out why conservatives are either running for cover or lobbing mud bombs. Political satirist, comedian, author, and champion for the underdog, Franken hasn't been quiet about a prospective run to unseat US Senator Norm Coleman. Al Franken is without doubt someone to watch closely. —TP

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TV Station KARE 11

An NBC affiliate, Kare 11's got it all. They've got news, sports,

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Local TV Personality SVEN SUNDGAARD

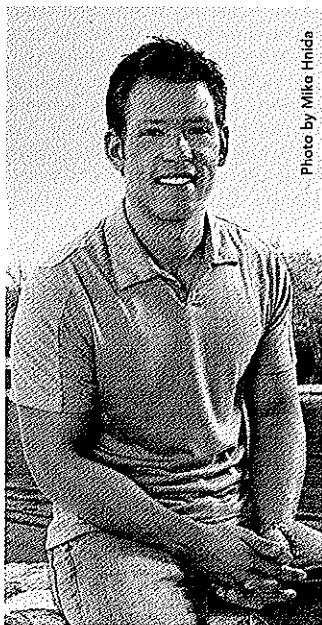


Photo by Mike Hinds

When Sven Sundgaard was a little guy, he knew he wanted to be a weatherman. In a state where people revel in complaining about the weather, being a meteorologist could be a bit dicey, but he seems to have generated a lot of positive buzz. He even has a hairstyle named after him: the Svengard. Sundgaard, a hometown Scandinavian Minnesotan, is, of course, pleas-

ing to the eyes. Did you really need another reason to tune into KARE 11's weekend weather broadcast? You betcha! Aside from his fun approach to delivering the weather news, Sundgaard has some serious experience with the National Weather Service. Before signing on at KARE 11, he was the chief meteorologist at KBJR-TV in Duluth. When he's not running marathons or camping, Sundgaard frequently is seen supporting a number of local educational programs, as well as charitable causes like The Aliveness Project at The Carnival of Life. He's Svensational! —TP

31

Place To Take Out-of-Town Guests MALL OF AMERICA

With the largest indoor amusement park in the country, a 300-foot aquarium, a dinosaur museum, a simulated NASCAR speedway, and a LEGO® play center—not to mention more than 520 stores—Bloomington's concrete colossus is much more than a mall. It's the United States unofficial monument to economic imperialism. In the extreme Minnesotan winter, it's also the ultimate multitasker. Walk the entire mall, at .57 miles per floor, with two new pairs of shoes under each arm, and you have yourself the perfect aerobic workout. However, with more than 50 restaurants and 36 specialty food stores, it's all too easy to blow your entire shopper-sizing on a frosted Cinnabon and cubed cheese samples. The mall is also easily accessible, thanks in part to Hiawatha Light Rail, which links the mall with the Minneapolis/St. Paul Lindbergh Terminal, and ultimately with Downtown Minneapolis. The only caveat (besides empor) is time: Be sure to plan on spending at least five hours for a family visit. —HF



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Place for a First Date AMORE VICTORIA

Remember the place where you two met? The easy laughter. The clink of silverware. The way your eyes met over the rim of a robust Chianti as deep and red as the single rose at your table. Soft light surrounded just the two of you, and somewhere, an accordion played. Ah, amore! Or, more precisely, ah Amore Victoria Ristorante! This perfect little gem of an Italian restaurant is just the right place for love to bloom. Quality and ambience are the watchwords here. The waitstaff is friendly, quick, and helpful. Whether you desire pasta draped in succulent sauces, crisp salads, or veggies, they've got you covered. And after the two of you finish desert, you can walk arm in arm to Lake Calhoun, only a couple blocks away. Why not lay your head on your partner's shoulder, and watch the lights of the city wink out one by one. —CP

33

Park To Check Out Eye Candy LAKE CALHOUN

Lavender's Fab Place To Check Out Eye Candy perhaps ironically is named after a 19th-Century US Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun. These days, the only battles waged at Lake Calhoun are perpetrated by cyclists and skaters, roamers and runners—all prettily vying for path space. Other chunks of optical succulence are visible in the protean forms of canoers and kayakers, yachtsfolk and fisherfolk, windsurfers and jet-skiers, all of whom float and foam across Calhoun's aqueous body—itsself a sweet reflection of the Minneapolis skyline. For those who go to the beach in order not to get wet, Lake Calhoun can provide via three beaches where picnickers fight turf wars with volleyball teams and sunbathers. If you like brains to accompany your beauty, you'll find the smart stunners bidding their time at the Bakken Museum, doing their own experiments in magnetism. —TG

40

**Clothing Store—Men's
SISLEY**

That well-lit and venerable repository of all things consumable, the Mall of America, is hiding a provocative, sultry secret. Think boys slouching through rain-slicked streets in the heart of some cavernous Gotham. Moody, dark, and youthful, the men's winter collection at Sisley is not for the timid. With sumptuous fabrics and exquisite detailing, calling it merely "fashion" demeans it. These are the clothes that French poet and enfant terrible Rimbaud would wear if he were being played by Kevin Zegers in a screenplay based loosely on the film *2046*. If that last sentence made you warm inside, then you've come to the right place, slugger. Or maybe you're thinking sure, but on this planet, winter is coming. Well, shag on down to Sisley at MOA, and perhaps you can find the perfect parka for that mottled flammé sweater and garment-dyed tartan trouser combination languishing in your closet. —CP



Photo by Mike Hinda

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**Clothing Store—Women's
CHRISTOPHER & BANKS**

How can you ignore a company that has been a fixture in Minneapolis since 1956, carries reasonably priced privately designed clothing for the busy professional woman, and also presents the MS Walk every spring? You can't, obviously! Not only that, but Christopher & Banks takes the guesswork out of matching your chinos to your cotton blend three-quarter sleeve beaded cardigan (and what kind

of a belt goes with that?) by providing coordinated ensembles. Voila! You just simplified your life. Every lesbian attorney and non-profit manager of a certain age will put their briefs down and take notice when you walk by. Looking for something roomier than the typical sizes 4 to 16? C.J. Banks stores have got you covered at 14W and up. This wholesome mix of local ownership, community responsibility, and reasonable prices on designer fashions doesn't come around often. With 649 retail outlets, we bet there's one near you. —CP

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**Garden Center/Florist
TANGLETOWN GARDENS**

Photo by Mike Hinda

It's a garden store, but so much more. The name conjures up a magical wonderland of entwined vines and bracken in which magical creatures frolic. One visit to the charming shop almost makes myth reality. With a focus on uncommon plants and unique garden sculpture, Tangletown Gardens brings a bit of the exotic to the urban Minnesotan garden. Owners Scott Endres and Dean Engelmann are as committed to plant science as they are to garden artistry, stocking only the best fertilizers, soils, and repellents. While it seems a bit of a cheat to talk about a garden center paradise now, after the first snow has fallen, Endres and Engelmann provide a wonderful way to get through the cruelest season by offering free seminars

from December through March. Their Web site at <www.tangle-towngardens.com>. —HF

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**Gift Store
BIBELOT**

Walk into any of the four Bibelot Shops in the Twin Cities, and you'll be barraged with choices, from holiday-specific items to stylish clothes to unique gifts to fit anyone's needs. And it has been that way since the first shop opened on Como Avenue in St. Paul in 1966. Owner Roxie Freese says, "Our buyers work very hard to find things that are current and things that speak to individual people. No matter who you are, you can find something at the Bibelot." The wide swath of goods includes items for the home (racks of kitchen goods and cookbooks), clothing, jewelry, stationary, and other gifts. When it started, Freese used museum stores as her inspiration. Since then, Freese notes, "Bibelot has continued to redefine itself to meet current tastes and our customer's needs." And those needs are met all the time. As Freese remarks, "Many people in the Twin Cities area do their holiday shopping at the Bibelot." —EH

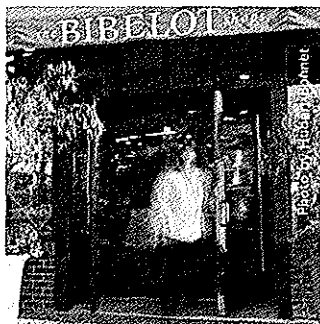


Photo by Mike Hinda

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**Home Furnishing Store
GABBERTS**

Redecorating is the sort of midwinter therapy that we all indulge in at some point. When one has sat on the same couch in the same spot in front of the same television, one's tuchas—and one's mind—can get pretty

numb. Sure, most gay guys think they have a sixth sense about interior design, but sometimes, we all can use a little help. Luckily, Gabberts is brimming with possibility. On hand you'll find designers and sales people with knowledge about the furnishing industry that will astonish you. Or, maybe you're not ready to talk to a live person. Try this: Go to the Gabberts Web site, and give the style-picking tool a whirl. It's like the perfect match-making service. Answer a few questions about your likes and dislikes, and out pops the perfect room. If only getting a date with a real person were this easy. —CP

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**Jewelry Store
T LEE**

Photo by Mike Hinda

T Lee's namesake jeweler and owner says, "My passion is weaving in 24 karat gold and pure platinum. Translating ancient textile techniques to metal bridges one craft to another, blurring the boundaries of what metal-smithing is. The Woven Collection's visually rich surfaces of repeated patterns create a textural harmony that mimics textiles." Her work even might be said to embody elements of the sacred. As Lee relates, "Recognizing structure and pattern in a gold crown ornament from the Sung Dynasty ties me to the universe in a bigger way, connecting me to other weavers and metal artists across the ages." We recommend this wearable art as more than decoration. It's a formidable jeweler's history in the making. —RD