

MINUTIAE

CHARMED PUOT



CHARMED PUOT

A Ken Boreanous Envisonment.

FOOD//11.14

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CHARMED PUOT (MINUTIAE #16)

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DEPARTMENT OF SALUTATIONS



Yo, I'm writing this on my iPhone because it's due tomorrow and I'm at a media event for the release of our new line of Cambodian-inspired Chef Boots For 35 Year Olds. Oh, yeah, I'm

Grant Koltkelly, head of PR for **Charmed Pluot**, the coolest food company. We started as a knocked over food cart in Bushwick four months ago, and since then we've opened up locations in all the eight boroughs (yeah, there are eight), JFK Airport, Miami Beach, Lisbon, Ibiza, plus our line of aprons, cookbooks, utensils and, yeah, boots. But, we're most excited about our purchasing of Minutiæ Publishing so we can turn it's premier magazine into the greatest food magazine there is. From this month on, Minutiæ is all about **Food**.

So, what can you expect from Charmed Pluot presents Minutiæ? Well, just yesterday, after we had signed the contracts from our phones (paperless, please, so we can save the planet because those in food are the most conscious and capable of saving the planet), we had a meeting on our motorcycles as we were doing donuts in the parking lot. Our founder, Ken Boreanous (the Korean-Chinese-Brazillian-Spanish-Vancouveran-Roman-Siberian 15 year old wunderkind) decided that we need to make the coolest food magazine ever. We're throwing out traditional recipes, photos and stories. You want to learn how to make meatloaf? Sure, if that meatloaf is at the same time low-brow (using canned ingredients from a struggling public school district) and high-brow (utilizing bacon made from a sow that only ever walked on two legs), but if you think there's going to be simple directions, think again. The recipe is going to be mixed in with a story of going out for a night of dragon-venom tasting in Taipei with a chef, a musician, a comedian and Ken's 4th grade substitute teacher, Doctoral Candidate Richard Agsworth!

But while we're bringing you insane nights out, we're going to also be bringing you the same amount of ground-breaking heart-breaking bone-breaking reporting that's tangentially related to food. Like, we'll start talking about the school lunches in Detroit, but then soon switch to just talking about the crumbling city, and then it'll just devolve into a series of stark photographs of old black married couples in front of dilapidated houses with the caption "Your Fault." We'll have our monthly column where we make you feel guilty about eating your favorite food (let's just say after reading what happens to North Korean work camp inmates after their dead, you won't want another bite of your burrito bowl). No one is getting left off the hook, grinder and vacuum sealer.

But, we're not just about grime and crime... we're also here to pat each other on the back. When we do something, anything, we're going to promote it. When Boreanous served a frozen poached egg, we flooded the internet with press releases, social media posts, and a phone game. When we decided to stop tipping at all of our Charmed Pluot Stoned Markets, we took out an ad in the New York Times that spanned the entire paper for an entire week (except the obits because, like, we are the most respectful out of anyone ever)(and if you're thinking "wait, I thought you were paperless," gotta respect the past, bro).

So we humbly present Charmed Pluot presents Minutiæ. If you don't read it, you're being willfully ignorant of the most important journalism to ever take place, written by people who have never used a pen. ♦

CHARMED PLUOT

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Burger Land, your favorite international fast food and theme park brand, has been feeding the world ever since Spence Waterduck opened up “Spence’s Spuds & Patties” back in Buena Park, CA in 1950. They’re the single largest purchaser of food worldwide, which has allowed them to maintain the highest level of control and quality. And now Burger Land is taking it a step further by reinventing food to bring you the best meal yet.

Starting in 2015, all North American Burger Land locations, including the Burgerland and Burgerland World theme parks, will be serving their delicious fries with potatoes that come out of the ground as fries. That’s right, the potatoes have been engineered to grow as single quarter-inch rectangles ready for frying. It’s better for everyone. Burger Land will save on shipping, by being able to pack more fries into a container, which is better for the environment. And no more frivolous lawsuits from their Potato Slicing Factories in Calgary. But they’re not stopping at fries!

Burger Land has been working with farmers in the heartland of America and shadow food researchers in Vitsebsk Voblast (that’s in Belarus), to hatch chickens that, when fully grown, will be made up of more than 100 chicken nugget-shaped muscles. No more worries of “what’s in these things?” Burger Land promises that each one of these nuggets are 100% pure white muscular meat. Makes you feel better already, right?

And, finally, no trip to one of the thousands of Burger Land restaurant and four Burgerland Parks is complete without one of those classic Super Thick Milkshakes. So the smarty pants at Burger Land HQ, along with the gentle eye-patched folks at Fire Portal Laboratories in Vitsebsk Voblast (that’s in Belarus), have some special cows where the milk is a milkshake! The result is the freshest, tastiest and thickest milkshake you’ve ever had. And, yeah, the cows are kept in a freezer, they’re alive, and they love it.

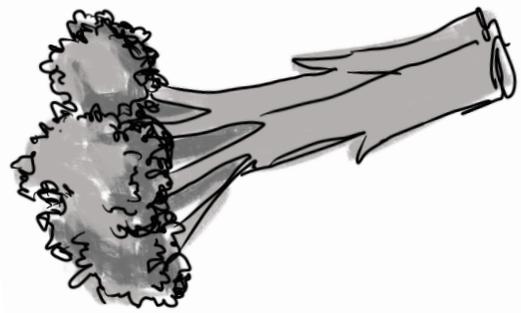
I can’t wait for these amazing changes to be fast tracked by the FDA and available at my local Burger Land. In fact, I’m getting in line right now. See ya there!

There are over 30,000 Burger Land Restaurants in over 100 countries in addition to the Burgerland World theme parks in Orlando, Shanghai, Dubai and Buena Park, CA. That means you’re never far from a tasty Burger Land Quad-Eighth Pounder or a tube of a Regal Golden Fries.



GUIDANCE & ADVICE

Susan Alan-Wenswick is a prolific *Life Specialist*, working in the metro Miami area. She has written several books, including most recently *These Hips Don't Lie: The Growing Pains of Aging*



Hi Susan, I am fed up with all of these additives and preservatives that are in my food. What are my options for eating truly natural food?

I'm right there with ya, sister. The things that we are putting in our bodies... more chemicals than real stuff, right sister? I was feeling the same thing, so I decided to ditch the supermarket sweep and look at the world around me. That's right: gardening. Though it takes a little bit of extra work, there is nothing like eating a tomato straight from the vine under the summer sun, sister.

Susan, I'm a busy career-woman with a job and a forgotten husband. I just don't have the time to lead a GMO-free lifestyle, but my doctor says if I don't, my blood pressure will go through the roof and my veins will pop!

Sister, I am here for you. When you just don't have the time to garden, take to foraging, sister. Foraging is the new Scandinavian craze that's hitting our shores where we find food that's been under our noses all along, such as wild berries and edible flowers. Sometimes you can forage on a restaurant's street-facing tables after the customers have left, but before the table has been cleared. There are tons of ways to forage, especially on your way home, sister!



Ms. Alan-Wenswick, this is the security team at the Flagami, Miami SaveMohr. After reviewing our footage, you are now banned from all SaveMohr locations for your excessive theft.

Theft? How? Sister? I know you suits can be behind the times, so let me explain: I was simply foraging. There is food all around us and we need to open our eyes to the forage-tunities. I was foraging through the self-serve trail mix and nuts. I was foraging through the bags of grapes. I was foraging the prepackaged sushi. I'll await your apology, sisters.

Ms. Alan-Wenswick, this is Donald Surling from the Miami-Dade County Homeless Shelters... We know it's you.

Donald? Oh, this? It's just a wig and a big hat and some sunglasses and a plastic mustache and an army uniform... I was simply introducing a new form of foraging into my repertoire because you guys are hung up on how many times a single person can go through the food lines. I needed more canned foods, so I foraged myself a disguise from the store and foraged my way for seconds, thirds, fifths and eighths. Is that so wrong, sister? Absolutely not! In fact, just last week I used the same disguise at a neighborhood BBQ I wasn't invited to, and no one said anything above a whisper when I was stuffing pork loins into my pockets. Get over yourself, sister! ♦

THE MODERN FOODIE :)

MEET THE MEAT

Patrick Brillo is a broad man, heavy set with a wiry tuft of red hair. At 51, he's equal parts man and myth. During the 48 hours I spent at Meat N' Greet, his cafe in Longmont, CO, he ate sixteen times. Yet Brillo was not devouring his restaurant's signature dish — his award-winning three dollar a twice grilled cheese with caramelized onions, a thick slice of bacon, and a cup of tomato basil soup with a squirt of lemon. Instead he was satisfying his appetite with dishes from the back page of his menu, where the top reads "human."

Brillo's taste for the rare and illegal cuisine of his fellow man started before he opened up his cafe, when he was working at an Annie's Pretzel at Denver International Airport; a job that highlighted how insignificant people saw each other. Everyone was in a rush, and presumed an air of superiority to the people around them. It made Patrick sick. He never saw anyone give up anything for anyone else. The selfishness tormented him. He lost sleep over it and would just watch late night movies.

It was at that time that he saw a B-movie knock-off I'm Eating Gilbert Grape. Patrick was intrigued, and satiated. He set out that night in his Nissan Pathfinder, looking for answers. To this day, Patrick can't say what he thought he was going to find. After driving around for 45 minutes, he pulled into a parking lot near some tennis courts. Staring off into the middle distance, Patrick noticed some rustling. He got out of his car to get a better look, and that's when he noticed crows circling over head.

"I'd remembered a cartoon from the early 70s where an animal died and birds circled the carcass."

A little worried, Patrick grabbed his phone, a flashlight, and a long two prong fork he had in his car from a BBQ and headed into the woods.

There in the dark, he found four coyotes feasting on the flesh of a deceased homeless man.

"At first I didn't know he was dead. I mean, I guess I did, because of the crows and the coyotes, but when you see a body your first thought isn't that it's dead."

Patrick bravely fended off the coyotes with his flashlight and fork and examined the body.

"There wasn't much left. Some rib meat and some tenderloin around the arms."

Patrick poked at the body, confirming what he already knew. The man was dead. When Patrick attempted to pull the fork away, it got caught on some of man's loose fat. Patrick tugged and tugged and finally the fork came loose, tossing with it a sliver of meat. Miraculously the meat flew directly into Patrick's mouth, and the fork, having been used at a BBQ earlier that week flavored the meat with some sauce residue.

"That was it. The moment that morsel hit my mouth, I had an awakening," says Brillo. "Eating people gives purpose and appreciation to one another. And since I had worked a long day and been pestered by a fat man from Des Moines, I don't know, his face popped into my head, and psychologically I convinced myself I was eating that slob. It was retribution and utilitarianism at the same time. From that moment on, I knew I would commit to the idea of creating the fantasy of eating people, but not really eating people, because legally speaking, right now at least, that's super illegal."

That story is on every menu in Mr. Brillo's small wooden shanty, not much bigger than a Lincoln Expedition, and I didn't meet a person who didn't know it by heart. "Sure it's a skin crawling tale to read during a meal," says Carol Wenwricky, a local resident, "But almost everyone will tell you it's a small price to pay for a great grilled cheese." She takes a bite of the legendary sandwich and smiles. "Also," says Wenwricky, "most people think Patrick killed that drifter and ate him."

"I'm not an idiot," Brillo says. "I know people like cheese and bacon, and to keep my doors open, I will happily cook sandwiches, but what I really love, what I

hope in my heart of hearts, is that my faux-flesh menu will take off.”

Faux-flesh is the brainchild cuisine of Brillo. It’s food designed to taste like a human. His “Cyborg-er” is a ham steak almost uncooked with a salted crispy ciabatta soaked in pig’s blood, and topped with hair-thin cold noodles. “Well, it almost doesn’t sell at all,” says Brillo, “but it looks and feels remarkably fleshy. Sometimes, if I close my eyes, it’s almost like the real thing.”

Another infamous item is his “brHead Pudding.” It’s a bread pudding toasted on the outside, creamy on the inside, with pockets of tapioca, and lightly soaked in pig’s blood.

“I pretty much add pig’s blood to all of it. People underestimate the almost hypnotic effect of a warm spread of pig blood. Plus, sweet human blood is illegal to buy.”

Patrick isn’t insane. In fact, he’s captivating, and given the right podium, his ideas might just gain traction.

“Look, I get it. It’s off-putting, sure. But once you consider that no person actually died to make this meal, once you get beyond that, you can fantasize that you’re biting into your intellectual equal. People don’t like the idea of imagining who their ‘Androidouille Sausage’ was, but I say, ‘imagine away!’”

Patrick Brillo admits on a purely sensory basis, the food is not particularly appetizing, but on a psychological level, “there’s nothing better than the feeling of devouring your biological equal.” ♦

FOOD TO THE FUTURE

This year, cooking is so passé. Who has the time to whip up fancy meals, let alone go to the grocery store, invite friends over and clean up afterwards? Instead, the nation’s elite are turning in droves to Corbeloaf, the high-protein, veg-packed, all-in-one food source that looks to end the nation’s obsession with bringing loved ones together over a well-cooked meal.

The pioneering idea is the work of – who else? – scientific megamind Marquis Corbel. A seemingly end-

less fount of ideas on how to perfect the human race, Corbel has been hard at work in his Virginia R&D laboratory, examining protein levels and nutritional values, in order to create Corbeloaf, a complete meal replacement footstuff meant to kick you out of the kitchen for good.

So far, Corbeloaf’s prohibitive price-point has made it all but impossible for the lower classes, but that’s about the change with the introduction of Loaf2Go, Corbel’s downmarket version of Corbeloaf that’s meant to be eaten throughout the day. The cheaper option came about after Corbel realized the limited market that he’d be working in if he kept his current pricing. So he tweaked the ‘recipe’, relying on less-than-animal protein sources and synthetic vitamins (which Corbel also makes) to achieve the necessary balance.

Now, there’s the original Corbeloaf, which arrives via private black hybrid motopeds to fancy doorsteps twice a month, and Loaf2Go, which is meant to be bought in bulk, shipped via old box truck and stored in any dry corner until another order is placed the following year.

Ready-packed into thick, mealy slices, a full serving of Loaf2Go (at five servings per day) provides exactly 20% of the body’s full nutritional needs, from vitamins, minerals and essential oils to proteins, fibers and antioxidants. Simply put, Corbel believes that there’s on reason for anyone to buy groceries ever again.

Not everyone gets the concept initially, though. The first week that Loaf2Go was available for trial in select markets, food bloggers began to post recipes on how to incorporate Corbeloaf as an ingredient. Though Corbel Systems passionately posted comments pleading that the food was itself an entire meal, the community spread to social media and podcasts. Many customers mistakenly began adding loaf slices to existing other meals, crumbling up the loafs into spaghetti sauce, baking off loafs for use as dense sandwich slices, and even freezing loafs with a touch of milk for use as some sort of savory ice cream replacement.

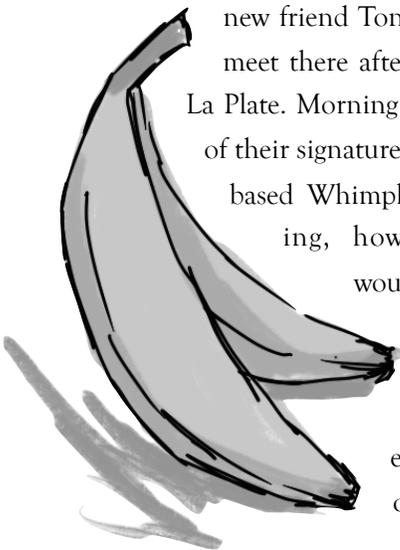
Still, the densely nutritional product holds a lot of promise for the future, especially in the wake of ever more distressing global news regarding the health of our own planet. Corbeloaf may not be the meal we need right now, but Corbel himself is likely to be the scientific savior of our future. ♦

ON THE MENU

The metro area has seen a handful of dining options open their doors these past few months. Minutiae senior food critic Patty Dole took a look to see which ones you should be checking out.

De La Plate is the latest Southern Italian eatery from chef Jermaine Marguzi in the newly revitalized Shoreline, so my hopes were high. So high I even scheduled a date there with a young lawyer I met online named Tony. While I waited for Tony to arrive, I got to experience De La Plate's excellent service. My waiter provided me with plenty of water and bread as 8pm became 9pm, 9 became 10, 10 became 11... and I began to worry that Tony was not going to come. As the wait staff began to place chairs on tabletops and the restaurant closed, I realized I never got around to trying the famed brushetta – or any of the other dishes for that matter. Next time, Chef Marguzi.

Morning Dew is a new brunch spot on the city's recently revitalized south side. It's also near my new friend Tony's work and we made plans to meet there after the scheduling mishap at De La Plate. Morning Dew's staff suggests trying one of their signature scrambles or a cup of Portland-based Whimple Roasters coffee. Upon arriving, however, I was worried Tony wouldn't see me sitting inside so I decided to wait out front. The restaurant's valet drivers were very friendly and even offered to bring me coffee or juice as I waited most of the



morning for Tony to arrive. Alas, Morning Dew stopped serving about 3pm and I never got to sample their trademark breakfast scones.

Mom's Sandwiches is a popular sub and salad shop in the recently revitalized Downtown Middle Core. While crowded on the weekends, drop by on a Wednesday or Thursday around lunchtime and you'll get a table right away. Come at the right time and you'll even see the man who's-promised-to-take-you-to-dinner-twice-and-stood-you-up-both-times having ice tea with another woman. I can't say that Mom's food is good, but their tables are easy to knock over and their drinks are perfect for throwing in people's faces. If you're a lying bastard, Mom's seems like the ideal place to meet your latest slut.

These will be Patty Dole's last reviews for Minutiae as she is now attempting to Eat, Pray, Love herself into giving her life meaning. ♦

STUFFING YOUR ROLL

One of last year's hottest restaurants, CHPMNK is back with an entirely new menu that's so photo-ready, it's practically impossible to eat.

Sensing the shortfall between food on the plate and food on the 'net, CHPMNK has taken to color correcting their dishes right from the kitchen. Eggs emerge with sunnier yolks, kale practically vibrates with its eye-popping green glow and sauces, all splashed in hot reds, are bright enough to warrant sunglasses. Even the space, formerly a tight, tile-lined box with one long communal table, has been redone. The room now sports 'filter zones' that alternate lighting and surrounding textures, making it easier than ever to evoke the perfect brunch photo.

Today's CHPMNK operates less like a restaurant than a modern monument to photo-stylized foods. While the front of house image is one of serenity, endless time and perfect latte art, the kitchen has been squeezed to give more room to the antique barn furniture and dropcloths, meaning harried support staff

must slip between hot steam pipes, an old cast iron boiler and some exposed electrical wiring just to run plates of saturated, colorized foods.

Bussed dishes (each with a cutesy flea market feel to them, naturally) return to the cramped wash station mostly uneaten, thanks to the heavy amount of acrylic dyes and synthetic polymers used to give the food its perfect gloss. What's more, dishes routinely become stained with impossible blues and orange hues, a by-product of the DayGlo meals being prepared. Dishes must be sanitized in nearly 100% bleach, leaving wash-

SECOND THOUGHT

I went to the store the other day to simply buy two eggs, and I was confronted with a dizzying surplus of choices. Did I want farm fresh? Organic? Jumbo? ENOUGH! Listen up, America the Groceryful, I just want my eggs in so much as that they are an equity to be had amongst the populous of, imagine this, Walker Texas (Free) Ranger being rerun every night for each of the time zones in America the Refrigeratedful (excluding Hawaii because, as well know, they have not, in the history of their state, become, and, will, forth hence be known as, and wait for it, I can't believe it either) when, and let's not forget the 19th amendment which was, and I double checked this, ratified and delivered around on a silver platter to each of the state's governors who, with relish in their eyes, signed on the dotted lines and now here we are, almost 300 years into this great democratic experiment we call the United States of the Union of American States of the Freezerful, and we're no further along than when we started.

Just take a step back and look at how we make our food! Everyday young men in trousers set off into the fields of Iowa to sow corn into the fields, using a machine made almost four millennia ago by a genetically similar but lingually-agnostic to the greatest nations of

ers with soft fingernails and cloudy eyes from the fumes.

Still, business is better than ever. The increased social presence has led to a run of writers, photographers, actors, bloggers, influencers, mavens, gurus and know-it-alls descending on the small restaurant, each looking for the perfect hashtag to match the photorealistic food in front of them. Eating the food at CHPMNK is not just an afterthought ~ it's not even the point. ♦

our time, and who is at the head of this table, ready to carve, cut up, and serve up a bill that we're just gonna have to stuff down our throats without any of that water that a state water board commissioner is oh so cleverly withholding until he gets his just desserts which, and I've run the numbers again and again and again and again, aren't anything more than a crock-pot full of liars, drive-bys and men taking dives, one after the other, in open court, none-the-less!

I haven't gone a single day since I turned 12 where I thought "oh, hey, this nationstate is on the right track, we're going to be okay, let's not worry, nothing to see here, on the up and up, how about that, the sun is shining all day lord, this gravy boat is floatin' down the ol' Missy Sip, take a drink, take a dip, lean back, have a bath, and don't worry 'bout nothing because OLD MISTER JEFFERSON and his comradery of well-meaning, do-nothing, teeth-shining, foot-swanking, buck-trattering, golf-pandering, berry-gracking, rice-tokling, ace in the hotel SHEEP are going to be leading us right into the big old wheat thrasher where we'll whip around and come out just a little worse for wear and this "Country" will continue to march on down the fields, and that's your **Second Thought**. ♦

GIANT HOLE FILLERS

from Karen Walton

Many famous foods are known for places: Chicago Deep Dish, New England Clam Chowder, Florida Coffee, and - of course - the Philly Cheesesteak. But sometimes you don't have time for a whole cheesesteak. You just have time for a small one. Preferably rolled into a ball. And eaten as a dessert instead of a main dish. That's why I created the Giant Hole Phillers to sell at my Sweet Teeth stores.

Based on a recipe I invented when I printed a Philly cheesesteak recipe on a piece of paper that already had a donut hole recipe printed on it - the Philler is the perfect combination of meat, cheese, and pastry, and has been one of my Brooklyn store's most popular items for months. They've been practically licked off the shelves! Sometimes even actually licked. And other times just purchased normally. Anyway, with this recipe, you can make your own from scratch. That is, except for the Sweet Teeth-brand Organic Cheese Juice. That's a secret recipe, and you'll have to purchase the mix either through our online store.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups of vegetable oil, for frying
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 more egg
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 4 mini teaspoons baking powder
- 3 small eggs
- ½ finger of unsalted butter
- 2 ½ pounds of strip loin, trimmed
- 1 mouthful of sautéed mushrooms
- 5 1/2 more large eggs
- 1 glass of caramelized onions
- ½ fist of grilled peppers
- 2 smells of vanilla yogurt
- 3 packets of *Sweet Teeth*-brand Organic Cheese Juice
- 1 final egg, any size, you choose (for decoration)

STEPS

Combine egg, milk, flour, sugar, egg, baking powder, salt, butter, egg, strip loin, mushrooms, onions, eggs, eggs, peppers, and vanilla yogurt in a plastic bag. Roll into balls. Place balls into boiling vegetable oil. As balls brown, pour in cheese juice. Top with egg and serve on moist paper towel.

Karen Walton is the owner and "Chief Candy Confectioner" of Sweet Teeth, the artisanal dessert shop with locations in Brooklyn, Austin, and the University of California at Berkley Dining Hall. Her new cookbook "Throatful of Sugar" will be available for digital download early next year.

GRAPHICAL INFO

At Charmed Pluot, we're astonished by the inequities in this world. It makes us feel real messed up inside. So we decided to find out how upside down this world is by tracking what the cost of a loaf of gluten-free bread is throughout the world:

CHARMED PLUOT

USA

\$10

CANADA

Free, because it's a medical thing.

MEXICO

Bread's not flat enough.

CUBA

[INFORMAITON NOT AVAILABLE]

NORTH KOREA ENGLAND

"Bread is not a real thing. END TRANSMISSION."

ENGLAND

"Oy, We don cawl i' bwead o'er'ere."

BRAZIL

Too busy with sex to eat.

MALI

"Hahahahahaha hahahahahaha"

TURKEY

"We're not up for a stupid sandwich joke."

ICELAND

"Let me check. It's... oh no, this isn't a loaf of bread, it's my baby... but that means..."

RUSSIA

"No one is allergic to gluten in Russia, but we all have terrible stomach pain all the time"

AUSTRALIA

"No idea. All we care about is Crush from *Finding Nemo*."

MADAGASCAR EGYPT

"No idea. All we care about is Chris Rock from *Madagascar*."

EGYPT

"No idea. All we care about is this *Finding Nemo/Madagascar* slash fan fic we wrote"

MOROCCO

"We can't charge anything for bread because these shirtless vest-wearing orphans keep on stealing it as soon as we put it in our market stalls!"

GREELAND

"We eat ice bread. It's so good."

2160 MINUTES IN... TOKYO

Tokyo: land of Godzilla, apex of global technology and home to a vibrant food culture that never sleeps. Hawker stalls fill side streets nightly and entire neighborhoods dedicate themselves to the world's cuisines, both high-brow and street smart. Yet for all its coverage and noted influences on culinary icons like David Chang, there is still an air of mystery surrounding Tokyo's tucked-away ramen shops, sushi stalls and fine dining enclaves. So for any copyeditor who's girlfriend recently broke up with him because she "had to move to Tokyo all of a sudden", we've made it our mission to demystify Japan's largest city, one bite at a time.

FRIDAY

4 P.M.

TWO WAY STREET

After cashing in your grandmother's life insurance policy in order to pay for a three-day layover, two-day flight from Tempe, Arizona to Tokyo, it's time to hit the streets. But first a watch, so you can catch your body's internal clock up to speed with the new timezone. Plus you don't want to accidentally call your ex-girlfriend at the wrong hour and spook her, because she has no idea you're in the city.

Head to BEST新宿本店 (3-17-12 Shinjuku, Tokyo 160-0022) in the Kabukicho neighborhood for a good deal on a middling watch. Then, since you're in Tokyo's Red Light district, make for Robot Restaurant, which serves reasonable bento boxes along with dancing ladies and actual robots! Or save what little money you have and get to Mott's Bar, which offers a cheap selection of hibachi options and a fully stocked sake collection.

8 P.M.

CALL GIRL

Now that you've gotten up enough liquid courage, check your wallet for that slip of paper that your ex

Brandy hastily wrote her Tokyo phone number on before leaving your apartment the night she broke up with you. Give her a call to let her know you're in Tokyo, and if the only reason she broke up with you was because she had to move away, you're ready to make the long distance thing work. She'll be surprised and hopefully a little charmed, which means it's time to turn up the heat.

Meet on Odaiba, the manmade island in Tokyo Bay that serves as a buzzy (very public, you assured her) hub of nightlife and food. Spice things up by pleading with the maitre d at Khazana Indian Restaurant (〒135-0091 Tokyo, Minato, Daiba) for a table along the waterfront, where the fiery food is sure to make Brandy—or any ex-girlfriend—sweat.

11 P.M.

THE RIGHT NIGHT

Pull out mom's borrowed credit card for a late-night turn at AgeHa (2-2-10 Shinkiba, Koto, Tokyo) in nearby Koto district. One of Japan's premiere nightclubs, the multi-level space plays home to international DJs and the young, pulsing crowds that follow. Plus, it's a great way to show Brandy that you're not just a guy who likes to play Forza 7 and eat frozen taquitos. In fact, this Tokyo thing might not be so bad.

SATURDAY

8 A.M.

SOMETHING FISHY

After Brandy uncertainly allows you to sleep in the foyer of her building, pound on her door until she wakes up and agrees to go with you to Tokyo's famed Tsukiji Fish Market. She'll claim that "she's got some stuff to do after this", but considering Tsukiji is the world's largest fish market, it'll be easy to keep stalling her.

Considering the location, one sure to keep her around is with a sushi breakfast. Wend through the market while looking for the worn green door marking Sushi Dai (〒104-0045 Tokyo, Chuo, Tsukiji, 5-2-1), the market's best sushi spot. Don't worry if she seems a bit squirmy, it's likely just the smell. Fuel up for a long day of recommitment with your lady.

10:30 A.M.

RAMENDING FENCES

Hop onto the train and head north to the Keiseiueno stop. Emerge to street level and make for Ameyoko (〒110-0005 東京都台東区 上野4), one of the city's most prominent daytime hawker stalls. Selling everything from leather phone cases to cheap blouses, Ameyoko is the perfect place to buy Brandy a trinket and bring up the possibility that you could maybe see yourself living in Tokyo too, you know, so that you two could still be together.

Don't let that silence linger! Rejoice in the sound of slurping noodles at nearby Junk Garage (〒100-0005 Tokyo, Chiyoda, Marunouchi, 1-9-1), one of Tokyo's hippest noodle shops. If you think upscale Japanese cuisine might make a better impression, slip into a table at Tonari (2-7-3 Marunouchi

Chiyoda, Tokyo 100-0005) instead.

3 P.M.

SHINJUKED

After Brandy complains that she needs to check in on the office (those intrepid Japanese never stop working!), fight off your overpowering jet lag with the bright lights of Shinjuku, Tokyo's glitzy, pulsing department store hub. There's no way you'll be sleeping here. Besides, Brandy said she'd be meet you soon, so relax with some simple yakitori bites at Hajimeya (1-26-7, Kabukicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0021).

7:30 P.M.

PLAYING IN WAIT

How do you find one person in a city of millions? Start by guessing at their email password until you're able to hack in, then search for clues. Score!

Head to Roppongi and fuel up with a burrito from Frijoles (Roppongi 6-6-9, Piramide Bldg. 1F.) while waiting for your "technically" ex-girlfriend to leave her friends' apartment, which you found in an email. Pro tip: wait until she's all the way out the door of the apartment building before jumping out to surprise her ~ that way she won't be able to accidentally run back upstairs!

8:15 P.M.

FOR SORROW'S SAKE

After being told, in no uncertain terms that Brandy stopped loving you a year and a half ago, and found a way to get transferred to Tokyo by her work just so she'd have a reason to leave without actually telling you the truth, and that she never wanted you to come to Tokyo and she hates Forza 7 and your mom, it's time for a drink! Make tracks towards the Ginza District, where beautiful beachwood walls and endless bottles of warm sake await at Sasahana (1-4-9 Ginza, Chuo, Tokyo 104-0061). Go to sleep whenever/wherever/who cares.

SUNDAY

6:00 A.M.

BEEF A HASTY RETREAT

It's time to make your way to Haneda Airport for the long, multi-stop journey back home. Readjust by throwing your watch in the toilet because it's the only souvenir you have from Tokyo and who wants to remember this trip anyway. From there, slide further back into your old ways with a steaming bowl of low-grade beef at the in-airport Yoshinoya (4F, EDO MARKET). It's just like the shitty Yoshinoya you have at home, and there's something comforting in that. ◆

WORTH THE SQUEEZE

If you ask Denis Armstrong, he'll tell you it was never about injecting a little flavor into the neighborhood's romantic life. "It was about lemonade."

It was the longest and hottest streak the city of Fontana, CA had seen in 75 years. The normally cordial town was at its wits end. Public complaints, traffic tickets, and even disorderly conduct was on the rise. The heat has a way of changing people, bringing out the worst in them, testing their patience, and in one case inspiring them.

Leslie Armstrong, 8, couldn't take the shouting any more. Her neighborhood had always been a safe haven from the torments of public school. But since the heatwave, Leslie began to watch her perfect cul de sac crack. She watched old man Bennett kick the tire of his truck, curse it, and throw a bag of garbage into the street. Shortly after that, she heard the Gundersons arguing about lowered expectations. And finally, she watched Mrs. Tiffany Tuft run a stop sign and murder the neighborhood cat. It was too much. So with permission from her parents, she purchased a glass pitcher, a card table, and 40 tumblers from Crate and Barrel. When they arrived, she did an internet search for delicious lemonade, and came across three recipes. Knowing now was not the time to take chances, she combined them all. The result was a thickly sour punch, best devoured with a fork.

"This would not do. Not do at all. I wanted to support my daughter. When you're able to have kids, you hope they'll grow up to be the kind of individual who wants to change the world." That's Denis Armstrong, Leslie's father, chemical engineer. "And you're not changing the world with a thick lemonade."

Denis Armstrong had been a chemical engineer for twenty years. He had concocted a formula for cleaner

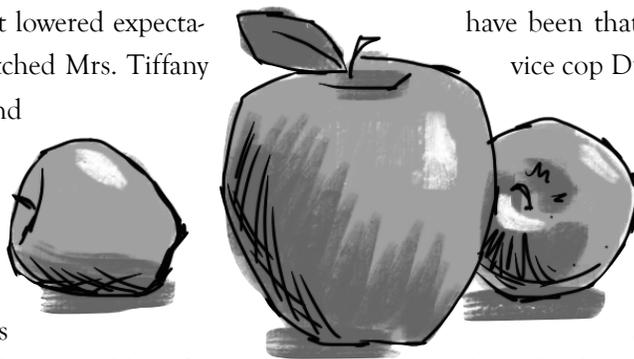
burning lawnmower fuel, a new car scent with ten times the potency in one-tenth the concentration, and a gas that would make enemy troops engage in feverish mutual masturbation so that they could be easily overtaken. He hadn't ever considered a formula for delicious lemonade, but figured it to be easier than shaming an entire platoon with video of them chugging on each other like fiends.

His first batch was thinner and sweeter than his daughter's. They sold out in 45 minutes, so Denis, the loving father that he is, made fifty more gallons. That would last Leslie through the summer, and he and her could both take comfort in knowing they made their neighborhood and the world just a little better — residents routinely cited the lemonade stand as a heat-beating for the community to come together and amiably resolve their differences. That probably would have been that end of it, were it not for retired vice cop Duke Nottz.

Duke moved in across the street from the Armstrongs and generally kept to himself. He spent 17 years in and out of undercover, running with and busting some of the biggest drug rings in the Inland Empire. He was proud of his work, and he was ready to retire, but some habits just don't quit.

It was probably a week into the Armstrong's new product that Duke started to take notice. People were forming lines a city block long, anxious (but polite) while waiting for their next fix of lemonade. Duke knew that dead-eyed intensity well; he'd seen it in plenty of junkies while on the force.

"I had to do something. I'd seen enough addicts to know that if you want to clean up the streets, you go to the source—the pushers. You bust em, you impound their property, and sometimes, sometimes you bury a .38 slug in the back of their head."



“The Armstrong’s weren’t pushers though. They were a family selling lemonade. They can’t be arrested.” That’s what the cops said when Duke reported their activity. So Duke took things into his own hands.

“I’d read a book once on Coke and Pepsi, and I remember it saying something about Pepsi winning the blind taste test because it was sweeter, but no one ever finished a Pepsi. So I thought, I’ll make a sweeter lemonade that will steal the customers away from the Armstrongs, but after more than a taste, these sad sacks will quit the stuff all together. I was basically cooking them up a hot dose; a hot cool sweet dose of lemonade that’d fry their tastebuds until they realized what they were doing to themselves.”

That’s exactly what Duke did. He wasn’t a chemical engineer, but he knew how to crush a lemon and add sugar and high fructose corn syrup. He also baked up some hot butter cake, because he’s taken up baking since he retired (unrelated).

The lemonade and hot cakes sold like hot cakes and lemonade. It appeared as if Duke had put the Armstrong’s out of business. That was until Denis got wind of the competition.

“What kind of father would I be if I let my little girl get her business crushed by some over-the-hill cop?” said Denis. That’s the reason he started tweaking the chemical compound using a basic gene splicer and an electromagnetic microscope.

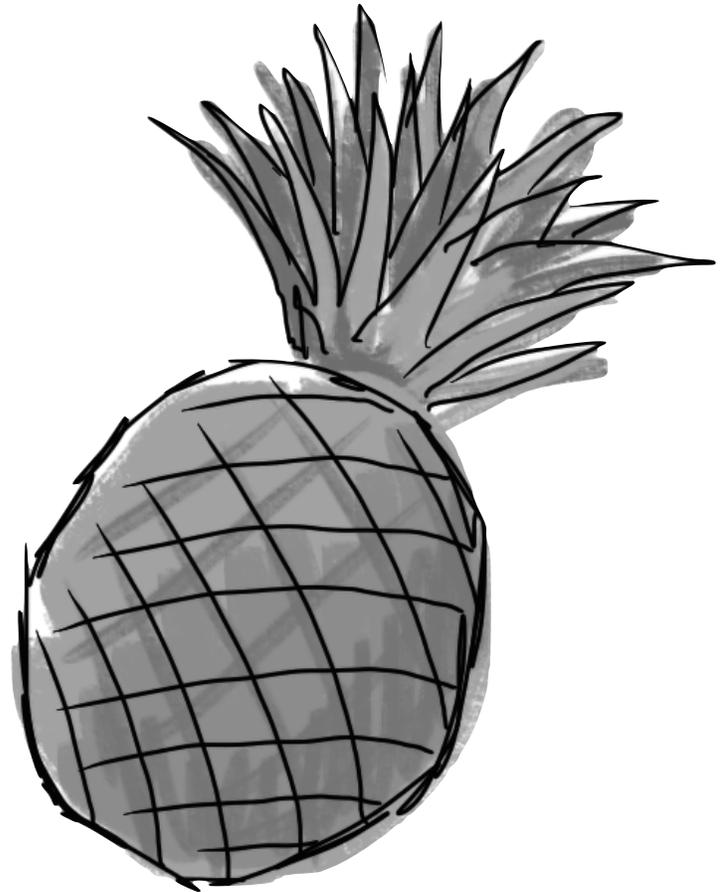
“People don’t realize you can basically alter the genetic make-up of anything with little more than a light reflector and a microwave,” remarks Denis. What Denis effectively did was amplify the tartness of the lemonade and counter it with a hybrid pineapple extract, essentially making a drink so tart, the only thing that could quench it, was itself. It was the fruit juice equivalent of a heroine-methadone cocktail with two noticeable side-effects: it made your urine purple, and it made a man’s seminal fluid taste like pineapple upside-down cake (VERY related).

In a fit of competition Duke, sure he would get the best of the pair, began actually putting a black market

anti-psychotic named Centurion inside his lemonade. Within a week, he’d effectively cornered the market, though the early onset of fall and the return of the school year for Leslie meant a dip in sales overall. Soon enough, Denis and Leslie were gone altogether, and that was left was Duke, pumping his highly addictive lemonade to the dead-eyed yet satiated junkie townspeople.

When word of the product’s potency made it’s way to Pfizer, the FDA investigated and banned all sale of lemonade in Fontana, and then the IRS came after Duke for the unpaid taxes. Duke, the only manufacturer left, kicked into his undercover mode and split in the middle of the night. Some say they’ve seen him at an Orange Julius (unrelated) in Betteravia, but the truth is no one knows.

As for Fontana’s townspeople, they’re left wandering the suburban streets as dead-eyed lemonade-fiends, looking for their next fix that won’t come. The methadone clinics cannot be built fast enough, and the fabric of this community is coming loose once more. ♦



FOOD

CHARMED PUOT