



Dining in, dining out?

The age-old question and thoughts on the subject from the Carolinas' LGBT community

by Donald Miller

Seems like almost every night of the week I'm faced with the same dilemma



One of the many talents queers excel in: cuisine with style.

when it comes to dinnertime with my partner. Are we preparing a meal at home or

are we going out somewhere?

Partner's first response: "I don't know. What do you feel like eating?"

My reply: "I don't know. I was thinking maybe you had something in mind."

Partner's second response: "I don't know. What do you want to do?"

How many of you have heard that dialogue before, or experienced it first hand?

There are so many options to choose from — especially in a city as large as Charlotte.

Just about every ethnic variation in cuisine can be found here — from French and Italian to multiple variations on Latin American, Asian, Ethiopian and Indian.

One option I hadn't thought about before was having your meals prepared for you by a personal chef. My partner works in the restaurant business and quite often doesn't feel like preparing a meal after having spent a day around food. I'm the first to admit I'm no culinary whiz, though I'm not half bad when it comes to fixing simple things quickly and well.

On those nights when you don't feel like lifting a finger the personal chef option seems particularly appealing. In Charlotte, Chef Melissa Woods offers just such a service.

"As a service, we plan a customized menu with meal options to meet your dietary needs and requirements," says

Woods. "You can come home after a hard day to a clean kitchen and meals specifically tailored for you and your family. We accommodate your schedule and needs to provide a personal service that allows you to enjoy your family meals in a stress-free environment."

As indicated, Woods offers meals tailored to your specifications, as well as her own specialty menu. You can get more details about her service at www.menubyme.com.

In this issue's Q-Style (pg. 23) Edward Norman offers recommendations for some of his favorite dining experiences around Charlotte.

For this story, Q-Notes reached out to gays and lesbians in both Carolinas for their take on interesting places to dine and their favorite food items.

Chapel Hill's openly gay town councilmember Mark Kleinschmidt, also a bust attorney for the Center for Death Penalty Litigation, had this to say: "I don't get to cook at home very much, but when we do, my partner and I enjoy a Caribbean marinated chicken and baked sweet potatoes.

"My favorite restaurant is the Lantern in Chapel Hill. Their coconut braised pork shank — when available — is indescribable. Although it's been open for a few years now, the Lantern is probably the hippest place to dine out. Not only are their dishes over the top in

terms of quality, they have the coolest bar in the back.

"Crooks in Chapel Hill and Acme in Carrboro are two long-standing town favorites. Crooks is the home to the original Shrimp 'N Grits and is quintessentially Chapel Hill."

From Columbia, S.C., partners Bert Easter and Ed Madden shared a wealth of knowledge about area restaurants and one of their own specialty items.

"One of our favorite places to go to is the Mediterranean Tea Room on Divine St.," says Woodard. "They serve a broiled shrimp cooked in a white wine sauce with garlic and jalapeno peppers. It's incredible.

Among other noteworthy dining spots popular with the LGBT set, Woodard points to The Alley Café, Hunter Gatherer, Panara Bakery Rising High, Yo Burrito and Casa Linda.

Woodard confirms Easter is the culinary brains in the family, though he confirms there are some items he can excel with, when called upon.

Easter's the kind of guy who will find something at a restaurant he enjoys so much — he'll go straight to the source to get the recipe.

"Ed and I visited a great Tapas restaurant called Terra Nostra while we were attending a conference in Chattanooga,"

see **DINING** on 24

Lily Tomlin's still a working girl

Tomlin talks about 'Nine to Five,' 'Working For The Man' and being out with Jane Wagner

by Lawrence Ferber

Most folks can't wait to punch out of their nine to five gig. Not Lily Tomlin — she's actually been waiting for an opportunity to clock back in. With the release of the all-new "Sexist, Egotistical, Hypocritical Bigot Edition" DVD of the 1980 comedy classic "Nine to Five," Tomlin was able to do just that, reuniting with co-stars Dolly Parton and Jane Fonda to whip up a basket of extras including a new documentary and commentary track sure to bring a smile to any fan of this camp classic. The over-the-top, exuberant performances by this dream team trio in "Nine to Five," not to mention its outlandish revenge fantasy plot, raised the film to gay icon status and made the women heroines to all of working-class America.

You probably know the plot by now: After they've endured enough verbal abuse and humiliation from their "sexist, egotistical, hypocritical bigot" of a boss Mr. Hart (Dabney Coleman) — Violet (Tomlin), office manager at Consolidated Inc.,

Doralee (Parton), the vice president's secretary, and Judy (Fonda), a recently divorced new employee, band together for revenge. After fantasizing gonzo ways of dispatching Hart (during a memorable pot-smoking scene) they enact a vengeful plot that leads to tons of complications involving rat poison, kidnapping and, of course, vindication for the ladies.

Empowering yet wonderfully screwball, the film launched an ABC TV series; a massive chart hit for Parton (the Oscar-nominated theme song, "9 to 5"); and even inspired the name for a real-life empowerment organization, 9to5 National Organization of Working Women. Yet while the corporate landscape has changed since "Nine to Five" played in theaters — a mere eight years later the film "Working Girl" depicted a despicable female boss — Tomlin feels the film remains relevant today.

"There's still not equal pay [for men and women]," Tomlin notes. "Some workplaces have daycare but it's not prevalent everywhere. There are still fewer female bosses."

Tomlin had her own days of working for the man to draw upon when cast in

"Nine to Five" — during the 1960s, while looking for employment as an actress, she temped in several offices and served a stint as waitress at the Howard Johnson's in Times Square. Yet, Tomlin reports that during this time she never had to wreak vengeance on a boss the way Violet and friends did. "No, they probably had to take out their frustration on me!" she laughs. "The only time I went off on a job...I used to work the Howard Johnson's breakfast shift a lot. Is there anything you hate more at breakfast than getting that little hard block of butter to put on your already cold toast? The cook had a great big tub of softened butter he would throw on the grill, and I'd try and sweet talk him into swiping my toast with it so I could serve it to my cus-



'We were so much more out than you can imagine.' — Tomlin on life for gays and lesbians in Hollywood in the 1970s.

tomers in a more appetizing, thoughtful way. He wouldn't do it, he was such a bastard, so I ripped off my apron and threw it down on the floor and jumped up and down yelling 'I quit! The cook won't even put soft butter on my toast!' That's the only time I ever lost it on a job like that."

Tomlin pauses to reflect for a moment, and then thinks better of her response. "Oh no, I did do lots of things," she adds, amused. "I could talk forever. But I didn't do it to the boss — only to the bossy women in the office like the secretaries who would run you to death."

Luckily, Tomlin found a way out of offices — except for those constructed on soundstages — when she found fame on TV's "Laugh-In" in 1969. There she created her enduring, obnoxious telephone operator character, Ernestine. By the 1970s, Tomlin was bringing home Emmy Awards for

see **TOMLIN** on 19