



richie's rendezvous
creative dating ideas



by Rich Whiting

A Circus For Grown-ups

I have somehow managed to finagle myself into a sweet situation: every issue I get to go out on a date with a beautiful girl and stick my boss with the tab. It's a cool gig, but there are some ground rules:

- 1) I have to take a NEW girl every time – no duplicates (even if I fall in love).*
- 2) My rendezvous must give our readers creative, informative and inspirational dating ideas that can be easily replicated.*
- 3) I can't run the tab up too much (yeah right;) Through extensive research I set myself up for awesome adventures. My ultimate goal is for you to duplicate my ideas when you are looking to add a little zing and romance to your relationship. We are in this together!*

There seems to be a new (or should I say old) art form making a big splash. It's not your typical theatre, but it's definitely a theatrical experience. It's a hopped-up form of entertainment that's both bawdy & bodacious. It's part performance art, part satire, part music, part adult entertainment and a 100% kick ass nightlife experience. Simply put, the word for this art form means "in an upside down style" What is it? It's BURLESQUE and it's back baby!

I would be completely out of my gourd if I didn't take advantage of this opportunity to choose a burlesque beauty to accompany me on my big night out. Enter Miss Melody Sweets, the gal with one of the most soulful & seductive voices that you will ever hear. I'm not kidding, this girl has a voice that will captivate you and send chills down your spine. Aside from being the hottest voice in the world of Burlesque Melody does modeling, designing, T.V and even video game appearances. Trust me, this girl is all that and a bag of chips. (www.melodysweets.com)

Our plan for this whirlwind of an evening is as follows:

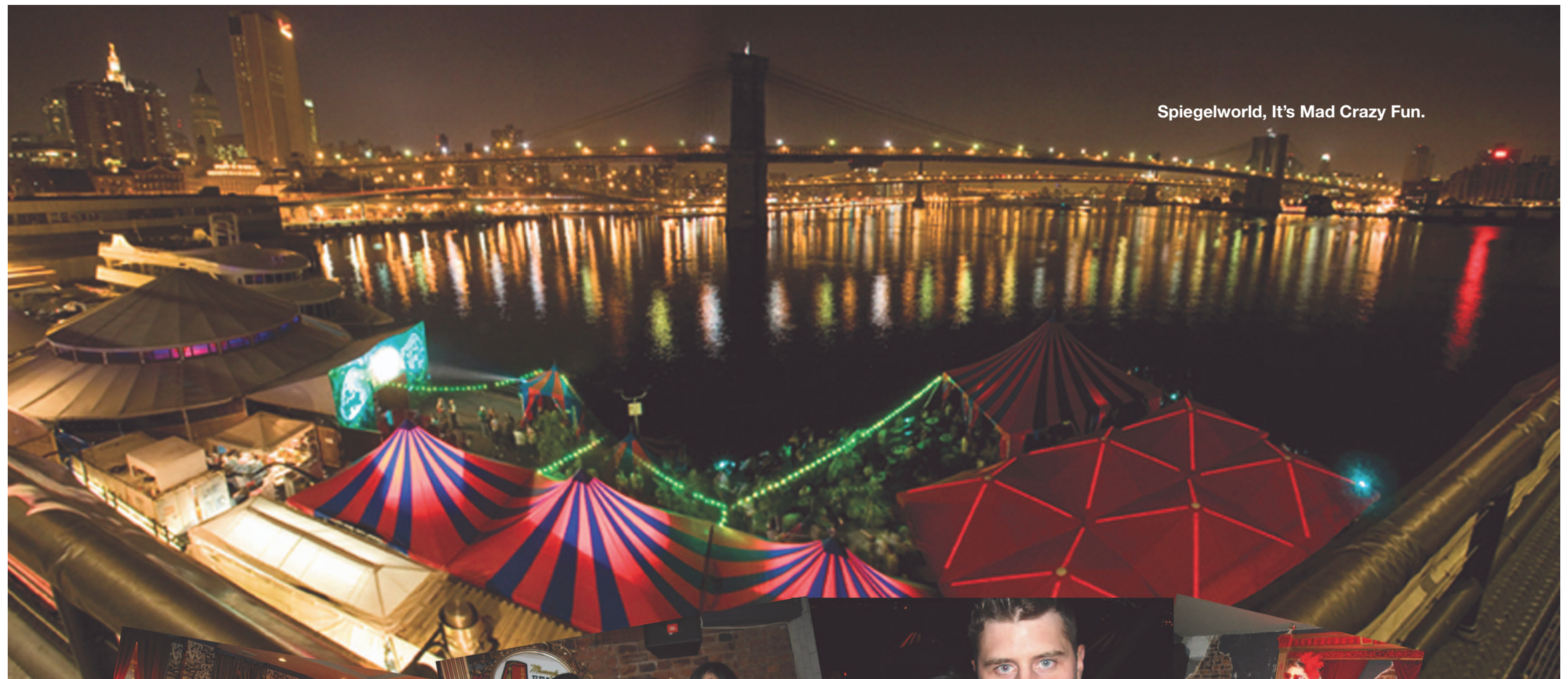
- Dinner & a show at **Corio** – home of *"This is Burlesque"*– one of the coolest gigs in Gotham.
- Exploring **Spiegelworld**- a nighttime saunter through the strangest, zaniest, adult circus you will ever encounter.

I meet up with my divine songstress outside of a place that is very familiar to her. It's called Corio and it's where she performs three times a week. Luckily for me, she's got the night off. At first glance I can tell she is far from ordinary. Melody Sweets has a serious sauciness to her; she is ridiculously stunning; the type of girl that makes you double, triple & quadruple take.

Walking into Corio is like taking a trip back in time to the Roaring Twenties. It's got that boozy speak-easy feel. Not at all your typical dining space, it's more like a hybrid restaurant slash lounge. The alluring space is adorned with vintage antique wallpaper, velvety curtains, plush maroon couches, exposed brick, romantic candlelight, and an intimate red lighting scheme. The sex appeal of this joint is through the roof.

Upon entering we are immediately escorted up the stairs to our front row seating. We order a bottle of champagne, some eats and before you know it, it's show time. The show starts with quite a bang as legendary host, renowned comic and savvy insult swinger, Murray Hill, takes the stage. He wastes no time killing the audience with his charming wit & quick improv skills. After Murray warms us up with his schtick, the Burlesque really starts.

One by one the "acts" come on stage and perform a slew of 5-minute skits. The routines leave my eyeballs on the floor; it's totally over the top & absolutely amazing. The star of the show is Angie Pontani, of the world famous Pontani sisters. She



Spiegelworld, It's Mad Crazy Fun.



Inside Corio

Chillin With The Cast

Me & My Songbird

Holy Hula Hoops!

is the feature act and dominates the stage with her classic style, contemporary edge, insane costuming & killer physique.

Angie headlines the show along with quite a cast of charismatic characters including: Helen Pontani, the tapping tornado; Peek-a-boo Pointe, the fastest tassel twirler from east to west; Miss Saturn, the Hula Hoop Goddess; and of course my songbird, Melody Sweets, who is taking the night off to chill with me.

The food served here is some seriously good grub. Chef Marion Maur has the knack for creating food that provokes intense reactions. It's Mediterranean fare loaded with freakishly unusual flavor. Melody & I split a special goat cheese hors d'oeuvre that dances it's way down our throats. Following our first appetizer is a phenomenally fresh fire roasted calamari dish showered with succulence. I'm telling you this squid is so alive with flavor that it could sting you with its tentacles. The calamari is by far our favorite dish of the night until we get to dessert. To finish off our meal, Melody & I split a "slice of heaven", otherwise known as Tuscan olive cake. This creation is sure to detonate your taste buds. It was the first time I have ever had olive cake but I can promise you that it will not be the last.

"This is Burlesque" is a full on extravaganza featuring great fare along with some of the loveliest talents in town. It's an energetic environment filled with stimulating performers and loads of glitz & glamour. If you're looking to explore a new scene, skip the opera in favor of this head over heels evening. Trust me, you won't regret it.

The show is over, our tummies are full, and it's time to bounce to the next hot spot.

It's called Spiegelworld, and it's without a doubt one of the most peculiar & provocative events you will ever encounter. Every summer through early fall, Pier 17 at South Street Seaport transforms into this magical world of smoke & mirrors. It's like Bourbon Street visits South Street. Spiegelworld is a wacky adult themed mix of music, theatre, dance, acrobatics and abnormal attractions. To put it simply, it's a 25,000 square foot outdoor extravaganza encompassing open-air tents, bars, a restaurant, cabanas, hammocks, and the wildest live entertainment you will ever see.

I can tell this crazy place is right up Melody's alley (and mine too); we must look like kids on a playground hopping from one tent to the other. You see Spiegelworld is made of absolutely absurd looking "spiegel tents". These pavilions are con-

structed with wood and canvas, but are built without nails. These titillating tents are decorated with teak, vibrant velvet, loads of sultry stained glass and an assortment of bizarre beveled mirrors.

Spiegelworld only runs for three months of the year so make sure to mark it on your calendar for next August. When you do go make sure to check out one of their two featured spicy cabaret shows:

- Absinthe- a fascinating offbeat European circus tripping on a heavy dose of acid- Melody & I loved every second of it.
- Desir- an erotically charged acrobatic & contortionist collaboration of craziness- we didn't catch this one but heard it's off the hook.

Absinthe & Desir are the bread & butter of Spiegelworld, but in addition to these two mainstay shows, there are all sorts of other funky forms of entertainment on a nightly basis. One night it could be the infuriatingly magical madness of Pinch-bottom; another night, the hypnotic paranormal displays of Norvak DeMente. Who knows what you will encounter? This place is a "koo koo for coco puffs" circus for adults. Daredevil jugglers, trapeze artists, hobo poets, sword swallows, fire-eaters, crazy clowns, shady characters, jazzy musicians, comical mischief or magical bedlam; you'll find it all at Spiegelworld.

Our evening has come to an end and on our journey home wouldn't you know that Melody has saved her best for last? The highlight of my year comes when, as we are driving back in the cab, Melody sings not one, but two, of her seductive songs in my ear. Her vocals are hypnotic, casting me into a state of spellbinding lyrical euphoria. Melody rocks my world! Mark my words "Sweets is sure to be a star"- I guarantee it.

Have any funky date ideas or someone you want to set me up with? Email rich@hometownquarterly.com

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Spiegelworld
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