

# GAY & LESBIAN



**WHAT'S IN THOSE FLIRTINIS?** A couple of In Good Company members enjoy a blissful moment of cocktails and closeness.

## Cupid goes pink

Will a new gay dating service change your love life? We test it out for you.

By Jason A. Heldemann

I received several huge punches to the ego this summer. Three different guys asked me out, then blew me off. The first guy was a neurotic actor who performs with one of our esteemed temples of improvisation, the second was a retail whore with an underwear fetish and the third was a flaky flight attendant for Southwest (all I wanted from him anyway was a

way to discreetly introduce gays and lesbians outside the bar scene. Rossi's goal is to create a traditional matchmaking service by getting to know each client personally—no computers involved.

Having decided to give it a go, I visit the IGC office on Michigan Avenue, which is marked by a locked, frosted glass door. I ring the buzzer and am greeted by

Emily, who ushers me into a simple room and hands me a questionnaire with basic personality questions. I check boxes in-

dicating my various likes: theater, film, swimming, etc. I also politely scrawl the words *NO CHILDREN* at the bottom of the page.

Emily returns and we spend an hour talking men. She asks about family, friends and past relationships. As a therapy enthusiast, I feel right at home. I'm surprised, however, that we don't discuss sexual habits—that seems a bit

optimistic on IGC's part. After all, the retail whore asked me point-blank if I was any good in bed, then rattled off his own sexual proclivities. At the end of our session, Emily informs me there are plenty of matches for me, and that I would make a good candidate for IGC. We then discuss pricing options. The most sensible (and most expensive) is a \$750 yearly membership that includes an unlimited number of introductions. I arch an eyebrow at the cost, but it's a small price to pay for the opportunity to meet my life partner—especially when I'm throwing down \$25 for a pair of CK briefs.

Two days later, a match has been made. Schedules are discussed and I'm given the first name of my date and a handful of details about him to whet my appetite, but no picture. IGC arranges the introduction (the business never says "date"). The location, determined by the company, is a "member" venue, a place working with IGC whose staff knows how to discreetly handle a first meeting between two gay people.

We meet on a Saturday at an Italian restaurant in Lakeview. It's obvious the host has been properly briefed and is relishing her minor role, as if she were pairing up her gay best friends. My date and I are both a little nervous at first and skillfully fill up awkward silences with obligatory menu talk ("I'm thinking about ordering the risotto, how about you?") and idle non sequiturs ("I'm so sick of Boystown!"). We eventually segue into more meaningful gay first-date chatter, like coming out working out and political stances (surfacing in the form of an anti-Bush statement).

Overall, we have a good time and round out the evening with a walk before calling it an early night and scheduling a second date. But I don't anticipate us picking out his and his bottles of lube anytime soon. As with any dating service or Friendster-esque connection, what looks great on paper doesn't always match up to what you see in real life. However, I can honestly say that for the first time all summer, I finally felt like I was in good company.

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half hour of Rapid Rewards time). So when In Good Company, a dating service for gay and lesbian professionals, launched in July, I was intrigued by the possibility of going out with someone who might actually show up.

Bill Rossi, a gay man with a background in heterosexual matchmaking, launched IGC over Pride weekend this summer as a

**To get matched up, contact IGC (360 N Michigan Ave, suite 1450, between Water St and Wacker Dr, 312-499-9900, [www.lgc-chicago.com](http://www.lgc-chicago.com)).**