



The PantoLoons spice up *Cinderella* at The Ghent Playhouse in 2006.

Acting Crazy

The sharp social satire, mournfully poor puns, damning double-entendres, and general lyrical ridiculousness of the very British spectacle known as a *panto* (as it is, essentially, a corrupted, quite musical *pantomime*) is just one way stressed-out citizens can cut loose and have a bloody good time. For three weekends following Thanksgiving, theatergoers in Ghent, New York, can also get in on the action via the **PantoLoons**, a troupe of shamelessly silly area performers led by London expat and former director of the Spencertown [New York] Academy, Judy Staber, whose original scripts skewer traditional fairy tales according to social currents. Last year, the ensemble presented a *Cinderella* remake that pokes fun at the fashion industry while exploring family values. In other words, a mash-up of evil dudes in outrageous ball gowns—perhaps the reason why *Hudson Valley Magazine* this year crowned PantoLoon performances as the “Best Place to See Men in Drag.”

“It’s really loosely a stepchild of commedia dell’arte,” Staber explains. “We take a fairy story and mix it up. There’s a lot of gender-bending, the dame is always played by a man, sometimes the ‘Uglies’ [standard characters in every *panto*] are played by men—it’s nuts!”

Somehow, Staber promises, the annual performance—this year titled *Hair Loom! Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin in Dis-Tress*, is fun for both adults and children. “Unless,” Staber quips, “you have no sense of humor!”—ARB

THE GOODS

Hair Loom! Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin in Dis-Tress
November 23–December 9
Fri & Sat at 8; Sun at 2
Ghent Playhouse
Off Route 66
Ghent, N.Y.
518.392.6264
www.ghentplayhouse.org

Designated Drink

For some, approaching the bar at a charity gala or wandering into the kitchen during a dinner party in search of a thirst-quencher can be a bit of a bummer: if you’re not knocking back Pinot or sipping on Scotch, the alternatives—club soda and lime, ice water—can be, well, pretty weak.

“There isn’t anything for adults,” Rhinebeck, New York-based entrepreneur Joe Faso opines, noting the clear gap in sophistication. “Pellegrino, maybe!?” He wrinkles his nose and proffers a frosted bottle of **Twelve**, the sparkling, non-alcoholic punch he created with the help of some top palates: Alfred Portale of Gotham Bar and Grill; another famed Manhattan chef, David Burke; and senior instructors at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.

The potion just might solve the dilemma of displeased designated drivers everywhere: it’s not too sweet, with notes of cardamom, coriander, and fennel rising from a base of organic white, green, and black teas. Also smacking of pineapple, peach, and white grape, the sixty-calorie beverage complements a broad range of cuisines—“noon to midnight.” Yet still, like other teetotaling-friendly quaffs including cranberry juice or ginger ale, Twelve can be spiked with the best of ‘em: hotshot bartenders in the Bay Area blend it with Square One organic vodka to make the to-die-for “Twelve Squared.”—ARB



THE GOODS

Twelve
www.twelvebeverage.com

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