

CAPTURING THE RHYTHM OF LATIN NEW YORK

EATS:

5 spots that will fire up your lover's appetite

GOSSIP:

The man behind the Web's most scandalicious site

RADIO:

Shock jock Star's secret Rican weapon

Special Valentine's Issue!

Looking for love

Meet 50 sexy Latino New Yorkers searching for a connection

COVER STORY

Story by MERCEDES SANCHEZ
Photos by VICTORIA WILL

"I break down walls, build cabinets, paint, tile — I'm an all around handyman. My dad taught me carpentry, my mom how to cook." The worst part about being single? "When you need sexual healing."

— William Castillo

50 SEXIEST SINGLE LATINOS



Rich Press



Corporate catches

(Left to right)

Jenny Garcia, 28,
Dominican
Job: Founder of Web site Musica360.com
Sign: Virgo

This single mother of two is all about family and music.

Max Ramirez, 28,
Dominican

Job: President of Max Media Worldwide
Sign: Gemini

Although this self-described *chulo* has been dating since his late teens, he can't seem to find his match.

Marco Villegas, 25, Ecuadorian
Job: Financial analyst

Sign: Scorpio
Traveling is his hobby, but his passion is helping teens achieve their dreams through education.

Yolanda Joyner, 36,
Mexican and Puerto Rican

Job: Quality control manager
Sign: Taurus

Dancing and Broadway shows are her passion. She wants a

man that can make her laugh.

Mariella Avenarius, 28,
Ecuadorian, German
Job: Advertising executive
Sign: Libra

She likes skiing and cooking, and speaks Spanish, German, French and Italian.

Marc Rodriguez, 36, Puerto Rican
Job: Financial consultant
Sign: Scorpio

Marc's woman would never have to wonder where he is because he's a self-described family man.

Others:

Soren Butler, 31, Venezuelan, Hungarian and Polish
Job: Wine import manager
Sign: Gemini

When not working in the wine industry, he focuses on his budding fashion line, called Zo-On.

Jocelyn Marrero, 29, Puerto Rican
Job: Marketing professional
Sign: Libra

This Bronx native buys and sells real

estate, works out and travels.



Fabian Castro, 26,
Ecuadorian
Job: Marketing manager
Sign: Aries

The perks alone are enticing — wining and dining with celebrities and awards shows.

Marilyn Marrero, 33, Puerto Rican
Job: Real estate agent
Sign: Libra

This laid-back Boricua, who loves smooth jazz, is searching for a successful, God-fearing man with a sense of humor.



Jocelyn (left) and Marilyn Marrero

Makeup by Karen Dupiche for Giorgio Armani Cosmetics. On Nelson Rodriguez (opposite page): Red blazer by Armani Collezioni, available at Saks, www.saksfifthavenue.com; Black T-shirt by Emporio Armani, available at Emporio Armani boutiques, www.emporioarmani.com. Shot on location at Show nightclub, 135 West 41st St., between Sixth Avenue and Broadway. Flowers by Butterflies & Zebras.

The Entertainers

(Left to right, from top row)

Top row:
Herbert Quiñones, 47,
 Puerto Rican
Job: Comedian, educator
Sign: Virgo
 Not only can this funnyman keep you laughing all day long, he can cook a full meal.

Maria Pulice, 36, Peruvian
Job: Record label marketing
Sign: Taurus/Gemini
 Our cover girl is a photography and travel buff, this marketing guru dreams of owning a gallery and opening a charity "in order to bring awareness of South American cultures to the world."

Nelson Rodriguez, 32,
 Puerto Rican
Job: Cofounder of Barrio Mobile, a ring-tone service catering to Latinos.
Sign: Leo
 This optimistic gentleman, a Wesleyan graduate, takes pride in his ability to communicate and articulate his feelings.

Michael Rodriguez, 26,
 Cuban, Ecuadorian
Job: Jazz musician
Sign: Cancer
 When not working out, you can catch this "Cubadorian" playing his beloved trumpet with the Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra and Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra.

Second row:
Bobbito Garcia, 39, Puerto Rican
Job: DJ, writer, TV host
Sign: Libra
 This indie film lover and underground icon knows music, sneakers and basketball (you can see him doing Knicks promos on MSG Network) but his biggest claim to fame is a new one to us: He can cook some mean pancakes!

James de la Vega, 34,
 Puerto Rican
Job: Artist
Sign: Capricorn
 Creates inspirational and quirky art on the streets of New York. And now you don't have to travel to El Barrio to see the father-of-two. The artist recently set up shop downtown on St. Marks Street.

Soldanela Rivera, 35,
 Puerto Rican
Profession: Producer, consultant and performer
Sign: Sagittarius
 This daughter of Puerto Rican icon Danny Rivera is a Columbia University grad. The former professional dancer has worked as a janitor, bike messenger, actress, researcher, waitress, receptionist, production coordinator, publicist and tour manager.

Tosha Makia, 25, Puerto Rican
Job: Singer, broadcaster
Sign: Leo
 This on-air personality, singer and model is already creating quite a buzz in the music industry. Her debut single "Be Yourself" garnered commercial radio play in over 60 stations in 35 markets.

Third row:
William Castillo, 28, Dominican



Job: Actor, writer, personal trainer
Sign: Pisces
 He loves music and says he can cook a delicious Latin meal, but what makes this sexy actor-writer a keeper is the fact that he's a certified carpenter. He might just build you that dream house!

Cassandra Cruz, 27, Puerto Rican
Job: Actress, receptionist
Sign: Scorpio
 This yoga lover is a filmmaker and may be one of roughly three Puerto Ricans from New Mexico. Since moving to the Big Apple, she landed a role in a film called "Ski Trip," which is the first full-length gay romantic comedy with a black and Latino cast (airing on MTV's gay-themed LOGO channel).

Anel Pla, 25,
 Dominican and Cuban
Job: Music industry management
Sign: Aries
 A real go-getter, this music industry insider landed herself a paid job at the tender age of 15 with Andre Harrell. She also worked as Puffy's assistant for three years. Today, she's the C.E.O. of Swap Management.

Ramon Rodriguez, 26,
 Puerto Rican
Job: Actor, writer
Sign: Virgo/Libra
 The Lower East Side native can play a serious game of b-ball but, even better, this up-and-coming actor is a serious salsa dancer. Catch him in the HBO drama

"The Wire" this season.

Bottom row:
Showboat, 30, Puerto Rican and African American
Job: WKTU Radio DJ, MC for the New Jersey Nets
Sign: Libra
 The real name of this he-man, who plays basketball, football and softball, doesn't matter. He's on his way to becoming New York's top model.



Others:
Jewelz Lopez, 27,
 Cuban, Spanish
Job: Radio personality
Sign: Cancer
 The popular DJ says her work

hours are what keep her single. And now, with her latest gig about to start (she will be Daddy Yankee's co-host on his ABC radio show), it will be even harder for Jewelz to find her soulmate.

Manny Perez, 35, Dominican
Job: Actor
Sign: Taurus
 Born tenth of eleven siblings, Manny is one of the few Dominican actors in Hollywood. He can be seen next in "El Cantante," starring opposite Marc Anthony and Jennifer Lopez.



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Do-Gooders

(Left to right, from top row)

Top row:

Eva Barahona, 33, Ecuadorian and Puerto Rican**Job:** Social worker**Sign:** Leo

Eva encourages at-risk youths to avidly pursue their academic and life goals. This passionate Latina has competed in mambo contests overseas and is still active in her Latin sorority, Sigma Iota Alpha.

Dania Matos, 24, Puerto Rican**Job:** Trade analyst by day, law student by night

Sign: Gemini
Dania says she's always helping others, whether it's assisting the woman at the deli with her immigration status or giving a homeless man her very last dollar.

Zoe Reyes, 30, Puerto Rican**Job:** Social worker

Sign: Virgo
Zoe works in a hospital counseling HIV patients and offering them resources and benefits. This family-oriented overachiever describes herself as "easy on the eyes."

Middle row:

Crystal Velasquez, 30, Puerto Rican**Job:** Production editor**Sign:** Libra

Crystal likes playing volleyball, writing, reading and traveling. And while she's been a bridesmaid a few times now, she's never walked down the aisle herself — though her mother continues to keep hope alive.

Jose Albino, 32, Dominican**Job:** Psychologist**Sign:** Cancer

He's the director of a non-profit agency that serves seniors through a meals-on-wheels division, as well as recreational and educational activities. He enjoys writing, dining out and "seeking self-awareness."

Joanna Medrano, 22, Dominican**Job:** College advisor**Sign:** Scorpio

Joanna, who likes reading and working out, may be looking for someone with whom to cuddle, but this sorority girl says she wants to put off having children until she skydives and travels to at least 25 of the 50 states.

Bottom row:

Jullian Arrington, 23, Puerto Rican**Job:** Account Manager**Sign:** Aries

Jullian enjoys helping others develop skills to succeed in school. Her potential mate must be versatile because, as much as Jullian likes the nightlife, she also likes spending time at home watching movies.

Others:

Cindy Peralta, 26, Dominican**Job:** Teacher**Sign:** Sagittarius

As a Spanish teacher in a dual-language program, Cindy helps students become adept in two languages. She's a young, successful Latina who enjoys dancing and drinking wine, and wants a man who appreciates her culture.

Steven Jimenez, 36, Puerto Rican**Job:** Business analyst**Sign:** Leo

He's dedicated to his community and began a youth touch-football league for inner-city kids. Steven is seeking his soul mate or partner-in-crime, and is looking forward to starting a family.



See SINGLES Page 54



Victoria Will

"I'm constantly seeking out ways to help others — whether it's helping the woman at the deli with her immigration status or giving a homeless man my very last dollar because he needs it more than me."

— Dania Matos

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SINGLES From Page 52

Smart and sexy

(Clockwise from top left)

Angel Audiffred, 28, Puerto Rican
Job: Aide for the Majority Leader of the New York City Council, Hon. Joel Rivera

Sign: Virgo
We cannot figure out why this self-described Yankees fan — who studied Economics at Harvard for a semester — is still single. More than 50 women recommended him for our list. "I want a woman who will be able to understand me so well that eventually she will be able to finish my sentences," he says.

Jeiry Filian, 29, Ecuadorian
Job: Toxicology scientist
Sign: Sagittarius

While confidentiality agreements keep her from sharing her exact duties in the lab, this salsa-dancing scientist, who once backpacked through Spain, did share that she plans to explore Ecuador's jungles later this year.

Cid Wilson, 35, Dominican
Job: Financial analyst
Sign: Aries
Wall Streeter by day and community leader by night, Cid co-founded Dominicans on Wall Street (DOWS), an organization that inspires Dominicans and Latinos to pursue executive careers in the stock market.

He's looking for "a healthy woman who believes her body is a temple. She should be into politics, given my strong civic participation, and she should enjoy going to receptions and banquets but not mind staying at home watching a movie, sporting event or my No. 1 favorite show on TV, '24.'" He says he's a keeper because he "has never smoked or done drugs."

Gisselina Yaport, 25, Dominican
Job: Test engineer
Sign: Aries
Playing piano and swimming are chief among the interests of this sorority girl — a Sigma Lambda Upsilon sister — who has a

peculiar fear of radiation. Her solution? She carries a radiation detector while at work.

Mauricio Paez, 35, Ecuadorian
Job: Corporate attorney
Sign: Leo
Lawyer by day, dancer and sports fanatic by night, he is the co-founder and national vice president of the Hispanic National Bar Association. He doesn't believe there are enough Latino esquires, so he mentors young legal eagles.

Others:
Chris Padilla, 23, Puerto Rican
Job: Public school teacher
Sign: Taurus
He's "funny, open-minded



and intelligent." As a teacher, Chris strives to serve the community and teach his students to take pride in their roots. He says he's looking for a lady with whom he can "play, play and play."

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"I don't dream big, I think big and I dress like someone who has a leadership mentality."

— Cid Wilson



Victoria Will

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SINGLES From Page 54

Creative minds

(Left to right, from top row)

Top row:
Jerry Rodriguez, 44, Puerto Rican
Job: Writer/director
Sign: Leo
 This salsa freak is currently working on a mambo documentary. And while he just signed a three-book deal with Kensington Books for a thriller series, he'll find the time for "an intelligent, strong, confident, sarcastic, passionate woman" who "looks good in stilettos and sneaks."

Marco Lau, 37, Cuban and Chinese
Job: Imaging specialist
Sign: Sagittarius
 If you don't mind being his muse, then this *chino-cubano* is for you. He loves to serve breakfast in bed and says he's a keeper because he works three days a week, allowing plenty of quality time for family.

Middle row:
Alexis Tirado, 25, Puerto Rican and Salvadoran
Job: Writer
Sign: Virgo
 This aspiring novelist loves to read, write, go on weekend trips and mentor Latina teenagers. The volunteer bug bit her when she did a

stint with AmeriCorps in Denver two years ago.

Paolo Rivera, 24, Mexican, Dutch and Irish
Job: Comic-book artist
Sign: Pisces
 He cooks, sculpts and has been painting comic books for three years, just finishing with the X-Men series. The Florida native wants a woman who can at least tolerate the comic book thing. His ideal mate "isn't frightened by dark eyebrows" and he believes he's a keeper because he can "cook, bake and enjoys... cleaning bathrooms."

Kisha Marshall, 27, Panamanian
Job: Fashion designer
Sign: Pisces
 Fashion, designing and vegetarian cooking are the passions of this clotheshorse, who started her own clothing line for girls, Tiki Denim, two years ago.

Bottom row:
Crystal Velasquez
 No, you're not seeing double. Crystal couldn't quite decide whether she was a do-gooder or a creative type so she posed with both groups. (For more on Crystal, see P. 52)



Victoria Will (2)

"My ideal woman isn't frightened by dark eyebrows."

— Paolo Rivera

MATING RITUALS

There are many ways to find a mate — from turning a statue of St. Anthony upside-down in water until he brings you a lover, to using honey as your daily lipstick.

But we figured we should test the more practical ways contemporary Latinas are finding love connections — club-hopping and speed dating.

These are the stories of two brave reporters:

JOIN THE CLUB

I never have a problem meeting guys at a bar, but picking up the right one can prove to be a "mission impossible."

I went out to two of the city's top nightclubs, PM and Stereo. I quickly learned that, oftentimes, men claiming to be single at a bar are anything but.

When I arrived at PM, I was ready to mingle all night long. The crowd was filled with twenty- and thirtysomethings from the outer boroughs. There was one particular group of guys who had that urban-preppy look I prefer. A blue-eyed Italian guy donning a spiffy sports jacket was zooming in on me when he saw a Post photographer, Graham, waiting to shoot us.

When I mentioned I was working on a story for The Post, he aggressively requested that we leave him alone. When I asked his friends why he changed his mind about speaking to us, they confessed that he (along with most of them) had girlfriends — if their faces appeared in the paper, they would've all turned into dumpster material.

Out of all the single men we came across, only two were Latino, and I had the most fun dancing with one man named Carlos.

Doing the wedding ring check doesn't provide enough certainty these days — a guy could just slipped it in his pocket. Unless you tell a man that his photo will be published in a major newspaper, I don't think there's any other legal way of finding out his relationship status.

— Mercedes Sánchez

IN THE FAST LANE

I'm much too shy to approach someone at a bar, so an assignment to road-test a speed-dating event seemed like the perfect challenge. I logged on to 8MinuteDating.com and selected an event catering to professional Hispanic women.

At the event, held at an uptown bar, we were given numbered nametags. Women were given scorecards and seated at tables. We had eight-minute "dates" with each of the nine men.

The biggest benefit of speed dating is obvious — if you're on a bad date, it'll soon be over. And, since everyone is there seeking a connection, the mood is comfortable.

Although I didn't find a match, speed dating proved suitable for me. When I'm asked out, I tend to dismiss my suitor — maybe it's the "don't talk to strangers" rule ingrained in me as a child. With speed dating, you're forced to break down those barriers — after all, it's what you paid for.

— Maria Salazar

Adventure-seekers

(Left to right, from top row)

Top row:
Jonathan Kreuter, 30, Mexican and Polish
Job: Hotelier
Sign: Scorpio
 Although he's traveled to over 25 countries in four continents and dated women of all nationalities — including a former Miss Puerto Rico — Jonathan still can't find his leading lady. The political junkie also plays the piano.

Rosalinda Alvira, 40, Puerto Rican
Job: Sales manager
Sign: Pisces
 Her self-described hobby — educating women on how to please themselves sexually — is also her job, but don't think she has men knocking down her door. She's been single since November 2001, and "that's when her business started growing!"

Cecilia Guerra, 34, Honduran
Job: Lawyer
Sign: Gemini
 While some people shy away from being looked at as role

models, this horseback-riding fanatic and lawyer loves being an inspiration for young Latino kids.

Bottom row:
Kathryn Garcia, 36, Dominican
Job: Sales
Sign: Libra
 What this saleswoman does for fun is a little on the edge — traveling to far-off places on the globe. Her last trip to a Costa Rican volcano had her running for her life from an indescribable animal (a *chupacabra*, perhaps?). For her next trip, Kathryn is going to Peru's Machu Pichu. The most memorable vacation so far? The Ecuadorian jungle where she had a panic attack in a cave.

Fred Feliciano, 28, Puerto Rican
Job: Human Resources manager
Sign: Gemini
 You would never know it from his shy and gentle demeanor, but this poetic muscle man, who mentors teenagers around the state, is covered in tattoos and has several exotic pets, including a five-foot snake.

"I've eaten a hot dog in 12 different baseball stadiums in the U.S., and ran for my life from a weird animal at the base of a cave in Costa Rica." — Kathryn Garcia

