



Wildflower

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- Shaken, Not Stirred
- Prana Coffee Bar Presents
- In Conversation with Kelley Armstrong

Shaken, Not Stirred

Three Toronto Writers Share a Liquid Lunch

Brandon Pitts is co-owner of a bar, so it seemed logical that his first interview as a bona fide author would take place at a venue entitled Liquid Lunch. And even though Prana Coffee Bar is not licensed to serve liquor, it was a very good fit.

Brandon, together with fellow authors Sharon Bernas and Sherry Isaac, brought the plight of the struggling writer to the masses.

And we do struggle, but we struggle in the company of others likes us. Once a month we

congregate at Prana Coffee Bar, drink copious amounts of caffeine, schmooze, laugh, greet friends, meet a few new contacts and most importantly, partake in our shared love of the written word. Sherry stressed the benefit of networking for emerging authors, as “it is from the writing community that we find our first fans”.

Aside from our addictions to coffee and literature, romance writer Sharon confessed to a slight obsession with Second Life, which, curiously enough,

has proven to be a place where she and writers like her can search for inspiration, settings, and even do a little research and promotional work. With charm and grace Sharon managed to get the name of host Hugh Reilly’s avatar, but not before she revealed her own avatar identity. See you in Second Life, Hugh!



Liquid Lunch Host Hugh Reilly
thatchannel.com

Inside this issue:

Shaken, not Stirred	1
Prana Coffee Bar Presents	1
In Conversation with Kelley Armstrong	2

Prana Coffee Bar Presents...



Prana Coffee Bar
4158 Dundas Street West
Etobicoke

There are many challenges in the life of a new writer. The first, of course, is to write something. The second is to finish it. A long To Do list follows: find a first reader, do some editing, take some good honest criticism, get an agent, re-write, re-write then re-write some more. And that is just the beginning. As daunt-

ing as this list may be, for many writers the most frightful task is sharing their work. To do so anonymously, over the internet or sitting at the back of a creative writing class, is one thing. To stand in front of an audience and receive on the spot, honest-to-goodness reactions takes nerves of steel. It takes

Prana Presents...

practice. It takes...Caffeine. And so, on a wintry eve in



Brandon Pitts, Author
The Watchtower

December, Brandon Pitts opened the doors of Prana Coffee Bar after hours to an armful of emerging talent.

Gathering new poets and authors from across the GTA is networking at its finest. Early in her career Margaret Laurence longed for a writing community. As Kelley Armstrong shares in her interview below, "so much of [a writer's] working time is solitary." Ms. Armstrong

continued from page 1

makes a valid point: you don't have to hang out in cafés to get published, but it is a great way to build your writing community. At Prana, there was community aplenty. New fans were found, new friendships formed, new connections made. And for those with audience jitters, rest assured, no one noticed. For January 19th's list of featured authors, visit sherryisaac.com



Saskia Maddock, Chair
Canadian Federation of Poets, Oakville

"...that's what it took for me to push past the doubts—the example of another author."

In Conversation with... Kelley Armstrong

If Oprah ever interviews me, I'll be ready. My writing career has been riddled with A-ha moments. One of them occurred about five years ago in one of Brian Henry's Saturday workshops. The guest speaker, a writer whose work I had just begun to enjoy, walked into the room. A wife and mother, she showed up in a sweater and blue jeans. She didn't wear tights or a super-hero cape and, as far as I could tell, she didn't have x-ray vision nor did she seem able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. That guest speaker was Kelley Armstrong.

I'd only recently admitted out loud that yes, I wanted to be a writer, not in the confines of my kitchen but out in the real world. For me, that moment was pivotal. Kelley's straightforwardness and ease, plus the fact that she was a *real person*, brought my dream to an imaginable level. What was once impossible made a seamless shift into the realm of the possible.

Kelley agreed to an online interview. Her frank answers to this new writer's questions impressed me as much as that first meeting.

SI: Is there an A-ha moment you'd like to share, a moment when realized this crazy dream of publication might come true?

KA: Like you, it took another writer to make me realize that. I'd grown up reading genre fiction that was all

written by Americans, and if it had anything to do with the supernatural, it was written by men. That reinforced something I often heard when I admitted that I wrote—that a Canadian woman was never going to get published in that sort of thing. Then I saw an author on the front page of *Chate-laine* magazine... a Canadian woman who'd written a paranormal suspense novel and not only got it published, but had received the biggest advance for a genre novel by a Canadian. That was Susie Moloney with *A Dry Spell* and that article made me realize it could be done and if I failed, then I failed because of my books, not because it was impossible for a Canadian woman to get published in paranormal fiction.

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Author of
The Otherworld Series and
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