

JOHN WATERS

The wickedly warped director gives bad taste a good name

ON A GRIM BALTIMORE SIDE STREET, THE RAM-shackle building has no sign to beckon would-be customers. In fact, you must ring the bell to gain entrance. Once your eyes adjust to the dimness, you can make out snakeskin wallpaper and creepy statues, the kind with eyes that seem to follow you. Not surprisingly, the notoriously unconventional director John Waters has made the offbeat Martick's Restaurant Français his hangout. "Outside it looks like an abandoned building," acknowledges the Baltimore-bred filmmaker. "That's what I've always loved about this place — there are no suburbanites, ever. People who are scared to come downtown, believe me, aren't here." Over the years, many of Waters' campy classics, which have included *Polyester*, *Hairspray* and *Serial Mom*, have been conceived here. Now, Waters, 51, celebrates the 25th-anniversary re-release of his ebulliently tasteless *Pink Flamingos* — infamous for a scene in which the late drag queen Divine eats dog do — over some decidedly more palatable fare.

Do you ever regret making Divine eat dog poop? No. If they did that scene today, they'd use computers and spend \$1 million to get that shot. Divine said, "That little thing?" and ate it. The first time I saw the movie with an audience, I knew it was going to work, because people were reeling coming out of the theater. Certainly I knew I would never, ever top that again.

What are some of the scenes that have been re-stored in 'Pink Flamingos'?



People say to me, "It's too bad you can't work with Divine anymore." Well, this was the closest I could get to still working with him. [In the new version] I come out at the end and say, "Hi. I'm John Waters. I'd like to show you some new footage in the film." I explain why these subplots were cut out and that kind of thing. It's mostly a joke on all these re-release movies coming out.

You mean like the 'Star Wars' trilogy.

You know, I've never seen *Star Wars*. I'm sure it's a great movie; I just have no interest in it. And I don't like seamless special effects — I like bad, cheesy ones.

You were recently on 'The Simpsons' as the voice of a gay antiques dealer. How did you feel about your character?

It was a little weird because I don't define myself by my sexuality, and the show was about that. I wasn't playing myself, but it looked like me and my name was John. It was weird to see myself as a cartoon, period.

You gave Ricki Lake her big break when you cast her as the lead in 'Hairspray.' What do you think of her talk show?

I was on her "Surprise Baby Shower" show! It was fun, except there were other guests there that I know she doesn't know. They were just there plugging their products, which I thought was weird.

You've always specialized in black humor. What's your earliest memory of shocking someone?

When I was 10 or 11, I went to a summer camp in Baltimore called Happy Hollow, and I wrote this incredibly gory story where everybody got cut up with chain saws. I read it to all these kids, and they totally freaked out and had nightmares. Their parents complained and called my parents. Also, until I was 13, I did puppet shows a lot at children's birthday parties. I put fake blood on the puppets, and the parents became alarmed. The kids were confused because it was *Cinderella*. — LAURA REILEY

SEAFOOD PASTA

2 tbs. butter	1 tsp. chopped fresh tarragon
1 clove garlic, minced	10 peeled, veined shrimp
½ green pepper, diced	18 bay scallops
2 tbs. diced celery	¾ cup fish stock
2 tbs. diced onion	2 tbs. tomato sauce
2 seeded, diced plum tomatoes	2 tbs. heavy cream
4 button mushrooms, sliced	½ lb. angel-hair pasta
	1 tbs. chopped parsley
	¼ cup grated Parmesan

Melt butter in medium-size sauté pan. Add garlic and sauté until translucent. Add vegetables, tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste. Sauté quickly over high heat. Add seafood and cook for 1 minute. Add fish stock, tomato sauce and cream. Cook for 2 minutes. Toss with cooked pasta; garnish with parsley and Parmesan cheese. Serves 2.