

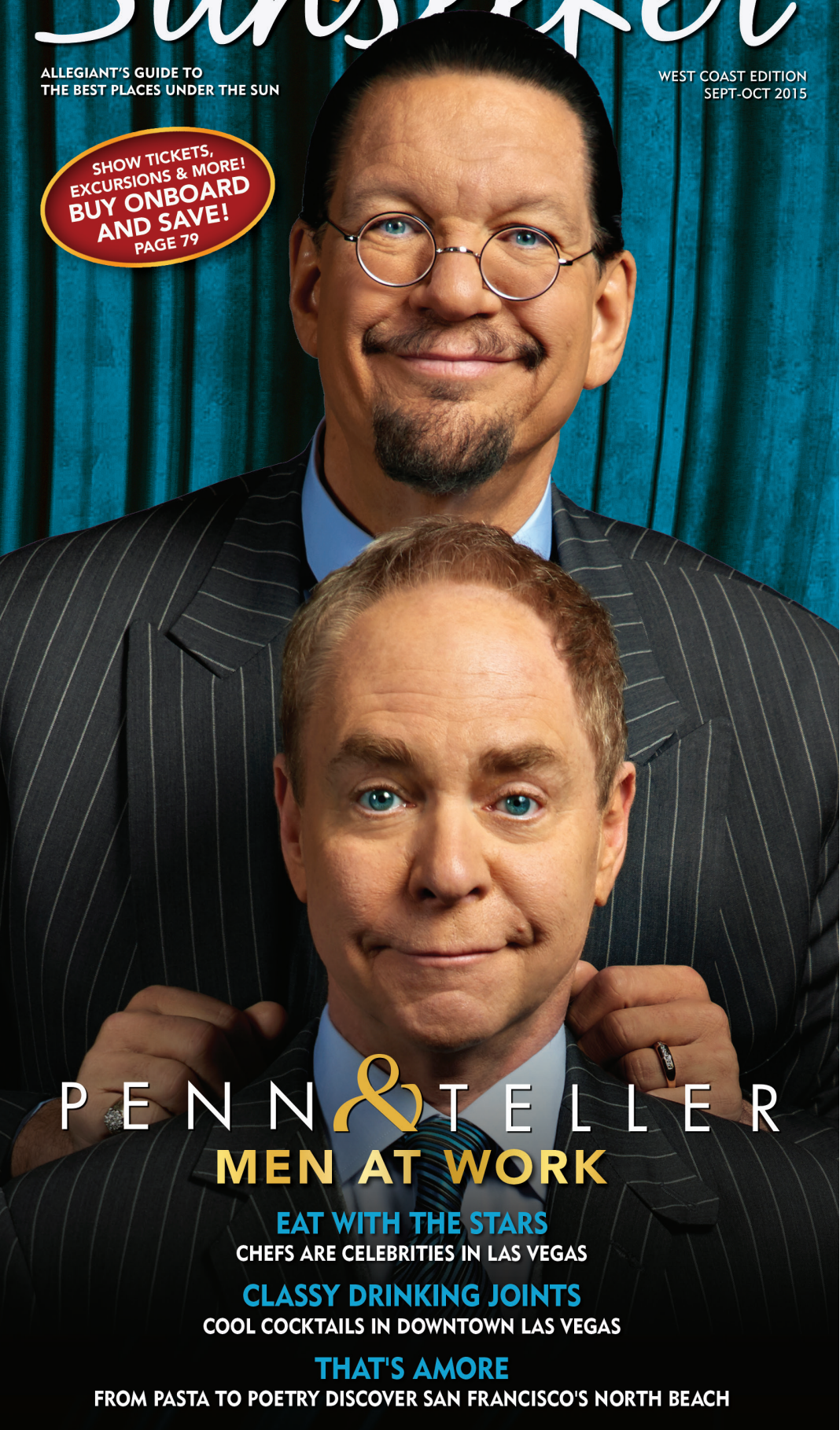
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WEST COAST EDITION
SEPT-OCT 2015



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PENN & TELLER MEN AT WORK

EAT WITH THE STARS
CHEFS ARE CELEBRITIES IN LAS VEGAS
CLASSY DRINKING JOINTS
COOL COCKTAILS IN DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS

THAT'S AMORE
FROM PASTA TO POETRY DISCOVER SAN FRANCISCO'S NORTH BEACH



From left to right, Jason Martinez as Nick Massi, Graham Fenton as Frankie Valli, Jason Kappus as Bob Gaudio and Daniel Robert Sullivan as Tommy DeVito in "Jersey Boys"

SEASONS CHANGE

LONGTIME "JERSEY BOYS" ACTOR FINALLY STEPS INTO THE ROLE HE ALWAYS WANTED TO PLAY

By Heather Turk

For six-and-a-half years, Jason Martinez played Four Season Tommy DeVito's loan shark, Norm Waxman, in the Las Vegas production of "Jersey Boys," the Tony Award-winning musical about Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. Last November, though, the talented actor took over as one of the show's four leads, Nick Massi.

A former Four Season himself having toured with the real Frankie Valli for five years, Martinez almost got the part of The Four Seasons' bassist when the Las Vegas show was first being cast.

"It was between the other guy (Jeff Leibow) and me," Martinez recalled. "I figured once the other guy left I would get a shot, but he ended up staying for seven years. I stuck with the role I got, though, and understudied for Nick, Tommy and some other parts to keep things fun."

Proving patience pays off, Martinez got called to audition for Nick again when Leibow left the show. While Martinez said he enjoyed occasionally playing Tommy, who was also being recast at the time, he always wanted to play Nick.

"I could see myself in him," he explained. "I'm totally Nick—very neat and organized. He wasn't so much of a stretch to play. But he's also a very complex character and one that can be easily overlooked. There's just so much going on in his head, and I have to figure out ways of conveying that onstage."

Although Martinez admitted to playing an "alternate reality Nick Massi" onstage ("In real life, Nick had this beaming smile, but [the show's creative team] wanted more of an introverted, curmudgeon Nick Massi."), he still wanted to do him justice in his portrayal.



Jason Martinez as Nick Massi in the Las Vegas production of "Jersey Boys"

Martinez said he watched old videos of Nick at Nick DeVito's (Tommy's brother) daughter's house and heard stories about him from Valli, Tommy and original Four Season Bob Gaudio. The result is a layered performance that captivates audiences just as much as the show's engaging storyline.

"We really bring the audience into the show," Martinez said when asked about the production's continued success in Las Vegas. "We include them in on the fun and put them behind the scenes."

As for whether or not he ever thinks about playing Tommy fulltime, Martinez said he's happy where he is.

"It was so much fun to play Tommy, but I'm not the Tommy the show needs," he stated. "If I had the choice again, I'd still want to be Nick."

"Jersey Boys" runs Tuesday through Sunday inside Paris Las Vegas. For show times and ticket information, visit jerseyboysvegas.com. 🌞

Photos by Joan Marcus

