

JUST CALL HIM Darcelle

LEGENDARY DRAG
PERFORMER SHIFTS GEARS
WITH A ONE-MAN
SHOW



Darcelle still regularly holds court on the stage of her namesake showplace, located in downtown Portland.

PHOTOS (3) COURTESY DARCELLE

BY TAMMY STONER

Being asked to interview Portland's fabulous and most renowned drag performer, Darcelle, at his home was a bit like being asked to interview the Wizard of Oz, behind the curtain—only with more pronoun confusion. Would I be speaking with "Walter" or does Darcelle prefer "Darcelle," even in street clothes? The title to his upcoming one-man show—*Just Call Me Darcelle*—answered my question.

Darcelle—78-year-old namesake ma/patriarch of Darcelle XV Showplace and recent Stonewall 40 Trans Heroes honoree—opens the door, his caddy in the driveway. He ushers me past unlit rooms of glamour—Victorian wallpaper with endless tschotskes (plates, pictures, paintings, and framed mementos) on the walls, a gorgeous, carved banister leading up a staircase highlighted

by a gold-framed mirror at least 10 feet tall, velvet settees, wigs on stands, and chandeliers—30 in all.

"Let's go sit in the kitchen," he says, his red t-shirt and tan shorts at odds with the surrounding glitz.

The kitchen is painted blue and orange and yellow, with a sink brought back from Mexico and Mexican tiles—cobalt blue and purple—on the counters and walls. A framed portrait of Princess Diana and Prince Charles celebrating their wedding hangs on the wall beside the door. Dozens of small plates cover the other walls.

A huge parrot in a cage near the table watches us sit down. An atrium lights up the bright eating area just off the kitchen, overlooking an adorable deck, complete with the old green awning that once graced the entryway into the Showplace.

I notice a painting of a duck taped to a wall on one of the blue cabinet doors.

"*Duck tape!*" Darcel exclaims. "Oh, I love this painting—the same person painted that one of the striped party zebra over there and the rooster wearing high heels up there. See the blue heels? I love these."

We sit at a table Darcelle painted himself. Familiar images from around the world—the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, a flamenco dancer, the Great Wall of China—appear on a blue sky with a green grass trim around the round edge.

"This is our travelogue," he explains, moving away bags of chips and red vines from a recent party. "Roxy, my partner, and I. We've been together for 40 years now. Together we visited all these places—Paris, Rome, Egypt—oh, and Spain. I love Spain."

Just Call Me Darcelle premieres September 27, with a second show September 28 and throughout November. Showtime at 8 p.m. \$20. Darcelle XV Showplace, 208 Northwest Third Ave., 503-222-5338 or www.darcellexv.com



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