

# The Gay Year in Soaps

BY  
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With its high drama, convoluted plots, beauty and brawn, gay men and women have followed daytime soap operas for years, but it was 2009 that truly changed the soap landscape for the LGBT community. Five network soaps featured same-sex storylines, and each in its own way brought the issues of equality, coming out, same-sex marriage and tolerance to the forefront:

**As the World Turns** continued with the relationship of Luke and Noah (the show comes to an end in September 2010, but there's plenty on the horizon).

**One Life to Live** told us the coming-out story of Officer Oliver Fish, with openly gay actor Scott Evans in the role. They also gave Fish a love interest, Kyle, and the duo became known as Kish (*One Life's* head writer, Ron Carlivati, says, "2009 was all about introducing this couple and getting them together. It will culminate by New Year's Eve, when they have sex!").

**The Young and the Restless** brought back Thom Bierdz 20 years later as Phillip Chancellor. Bierdz, also openly gay, returned to the series for the chance to play a gay version of Phillip, who returns home to confront family and friends with the truth of who he is after living in self-exile. The number one soap also introduced us to gay legal eagle Rafe Torres, who gets seduced by the machinations of a "straight" man.

**All My Children** wrapped up the misfired Bianca and Reese lesbian storyline, which at its center had featured soap's first same-sex wedding ceremony.

**Guiding Light** gave us Otaia—the duo played by Crystal Chappell and Jessica Leccia—who became the most popular soap couple of the decade until *Guiding Light* went off the air this past September.

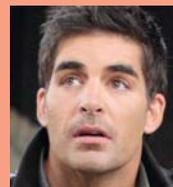
## HOTTEST MALE CAST IN DAYTIME

Last year at this time, **Days of our Lives** was facing cancellation, and a year later it's the comeback soap of the year! Here's a look at the studs who make it steamy in Salem.



### JAMES SCOTT

The dashing brit who has made EJ Dimeria everyone's favorite bad boy with a conscience.



### GALEN GERING

Who doesn't want their own knight in shining armor? As FBI agent Rafe Hernandez, he makes hearts go a-flutter.



### SHAWN CHRISTIAN

Everyone needs a hot surfer dude doctor in their life, right? As hottie Dr. Daniel, the doc spends more times showing off that six-pack than displaying his surgical skills!



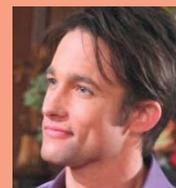
### ERIC MARTSOLF

Salem stud Brady Black has an addiction to relationships and drugs. Sound familiar, men?



### MARK HAPKA

Better known as "Marky Mark" Hapka. He plays Dr. Nathan Horton, the young doc who leaves patients and co-workers swooning.



### JAY KENNETH JOHNSON

If chiseled good looks are your order of the day, then Phillip Kiriakis is your guy. Ruthless businessman + sexy charmer = irresistible!

## Soap Newsmaker of the Year:

**Crystal Chappell**, knowing that the legions of gay fans she had cultivated were ripe for something more than one could show through daytime network television, created *Venice*, a web-soap which features a same-sex love story as its core. *Venice* premiered earlier this month and can be seen via subscription on the series website [venicetheseries.com](http://venicetheseries.com), with a new episode posted every Friday. *Venice* has over 24 million hits since September. It is because of her unwavering commitment to tell people our story, and her tremendous mainstream media profile that has brought awareness to same-sex issues, that Crystal deserves the award for Soap Newsmaker of the Year. Crystal previews *Venice* in 2010 and discusses her return to *Days of our Lives*, where she has stepped back into the part that made her soap-famous in the first place, Dr. Carly Manning.



**You play Gina on Venice. Going into the New Year, what can fans look forward to?**

Gina will meet somebody new—Kit from London. Then there is Ani [Leccia], who has met somebody, Lara. But the two of them are still connected, and still coming together and trying to figure out what their relationship is. They have not completely broken things off. Also, you will meet Gina's father, and you will be seeing the reason why Gina has the enormous intimacy issues that she has and the reason she can't be with Ani.

**What can we look forward to from Carly in 2010?**

Carly does get reconnected to a few people ... the father of her daughter, and she gets closer to Bo and that takes an interesting turn, and Vivian is still trying to kill her and make her pay!

**How is flip-flopping in the romance department; making out with a girl on Venice and being hot and heavy with a guy on Days? Any difficulty with that?**

I can kiss just about anything! [Laughs]

**You have been one of the celebrity newsmakers of the year for us. How do you feel about that, as the year is coming to an end?**

I have always considered this a privilege. I believe in love. I believe in equality, and to me it was a wonderful opportunity to show the world that we are all the same and to be able to do it in a creative way that is fulfilling. It's been amazing! I am happy to represent their voices, and it continues to be important to do that.

For more on the soaps, visit [michaelfairmansoaps.com](http://michaelfairmansoaps.com).