



October 3, 2008

Time to come out:

Numerous fundraisers during weekend of National Coming Out Day offer a diverse plate of delicious fun



THE COOL WEATHER AND CRISP days of fall have brought out the fundraisers in droves, with a cornucopia of gay-related causes and events slated during the weekend that includes National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11.

One of Atlanta's largest fundraisers of the year is a culmination of one of most active weekends in the city. **Dining by Design** will share the stage with more than a half-dozen events that raise funds and awareness for a number of gay and gay-inclusive organizations. The dinner, defined by artistic tabletops, hopes to raise \$300,000 or more for the **Design**

Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS.

"You walk in and see the design that is on the minds of designers," says John Williams, the DIFFA Atlanta Advisory Board chair. "One of the things we encourage is design for the sake of design. We're not selling anything. You can't buy any of the tables."

Atlanta Decorative Arts Center will host the event for the first time. The unofficial center of the city's design industry didn't have a space large

enough to host the event, so the tables designed by a mix of top national and Atlanta designers will be under tents. Tables come from such noted designers as David Stark, Vivienne Tam, Marc Blackwell as well as renowned local designers including Suzanne Kasler, Bob Brown and Chip Cheatham. (See related story, Page 31)

Cheatham is one of the local artists to have his work added to the national tour. His handcrafted memorial table features placemats where diners write about their own experiences with HIV and AIDS.

"It's also a way to remind people that AIDS isn't over yet because the perception in the mainstream is not that's cured, but that it's manageable," Williams says of Cheatham's table.

Tickets are available for the Sunday night Cocktail by Design, but Dining by Design has sold out. Hopeful diners might still get lucky.

"There may be a small number of tickets returned in the days right before the event," Williams says. He noted tickets will not be available through the website, but those hoping to score last minute seats can call the local DIFFA office.