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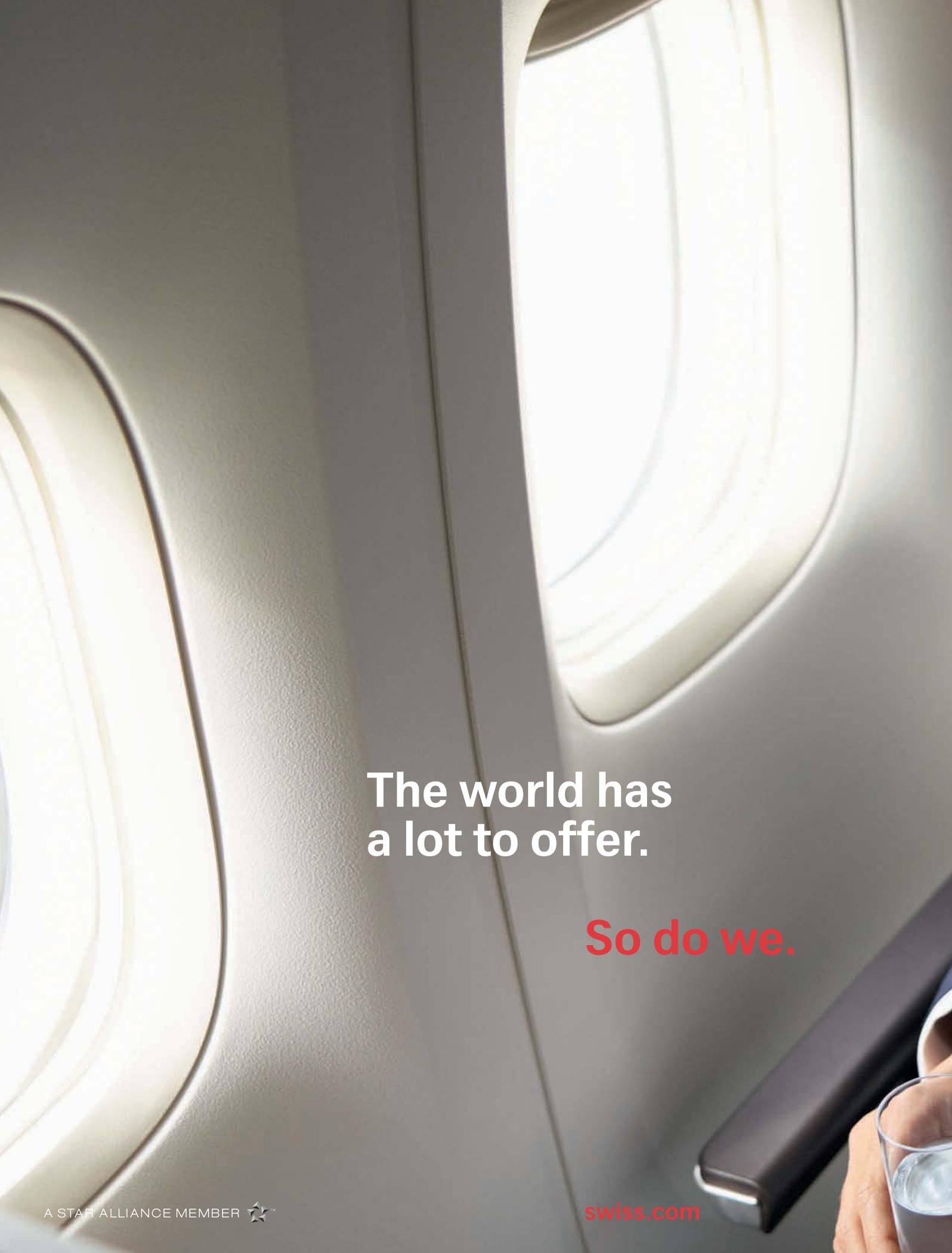


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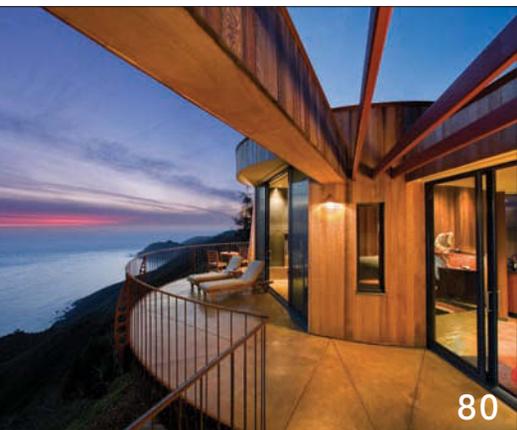
The image shows the interior of an airplane cabin. Two oval windows are visible, with bright light streaming through them. The cabin walls are a light grey color. In the bottom right corner, a person's hand is visible, holding a clear glass filled with water. The overall atmosphere is clean and modern.

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ON THE COVER: (L to R) **Aaron Mealhow** (@meal_how89) & **Louis Velasquez** (@Louis_Velasquez) • photographer **Andres Casallas** • location **Orlando, Florida**

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“All of us who are openly gay are living and writing the history of our movement. We are no more, and no less, heroic than the suffragists and abolitionists of the 19th century; and the labor organizers, Freedom Riders, Stonewall demonstrators, and environmentalists of the 20th century. We are ordinary people, living our lives, and trying as civil-rights activist Dorothy Cotton said, to ‘fix what ain’t right in our society.’”

— *Senator Tammy Baldwin*

In June, people from every continent will gather in New York to celebrate WorldPride and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. Numerous festivities and events will take place across New York City and the state, as highlighted in our article “50 Things To Do in New York During Stonewall 50 and WorldPride 2019.” This will be one of the most diverse and welcoming LGBTQ events ever held. It will also usher in a new era in the struggle for equality, and a renewed commitment to ensure that people in every country can live and love without fear of being imprisoned or killed because they are gay.

In this issue of *Passport* magazine, we feature a fascinating array of people, places, and events that are helping to make the world a better place for everyone. Come with us as we travel to Israel and discover an exciting selection of art, culinary options, cultural events, and outdoor adventures.

Join Lawrence Ferber as he explores Whistler and Vancouver, Canada, two of British Columbia’s most popular destinations. Experience the natural wonders, delectable food offerings, LGBTQ events, and more in this beautiful Canadian province.

Pack your bags for Kentucky’s largest city, Louisville, which has grown to be a beacon of sophistication and progressive values. This mid-Southern metropolis has also become a great place to fly the rainbow flag, as Mark Chesnut and his husband Angel discover while attending Kentuckiana Pride.

Also in this issue, find out what makes Florence, Italy good enough to eat; get an insider’s look at what’s hot and happening in Austin, Texas; head with us to Washington, D.C. for the latest developments in hospitality and entertainment; learn valuable money saving tips for your destination wedding; get up close and personal with Gregory G. Allen, actor, director, producer, songwriter, playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker, and award-winning author of ten books; and meet Brian Peterson-Roest the founder of Bees in the D, a non-profit that’s turning the yards and rooftops of Detroit into homespun apiaries.

Bon voyage!

— *Robert Adams*

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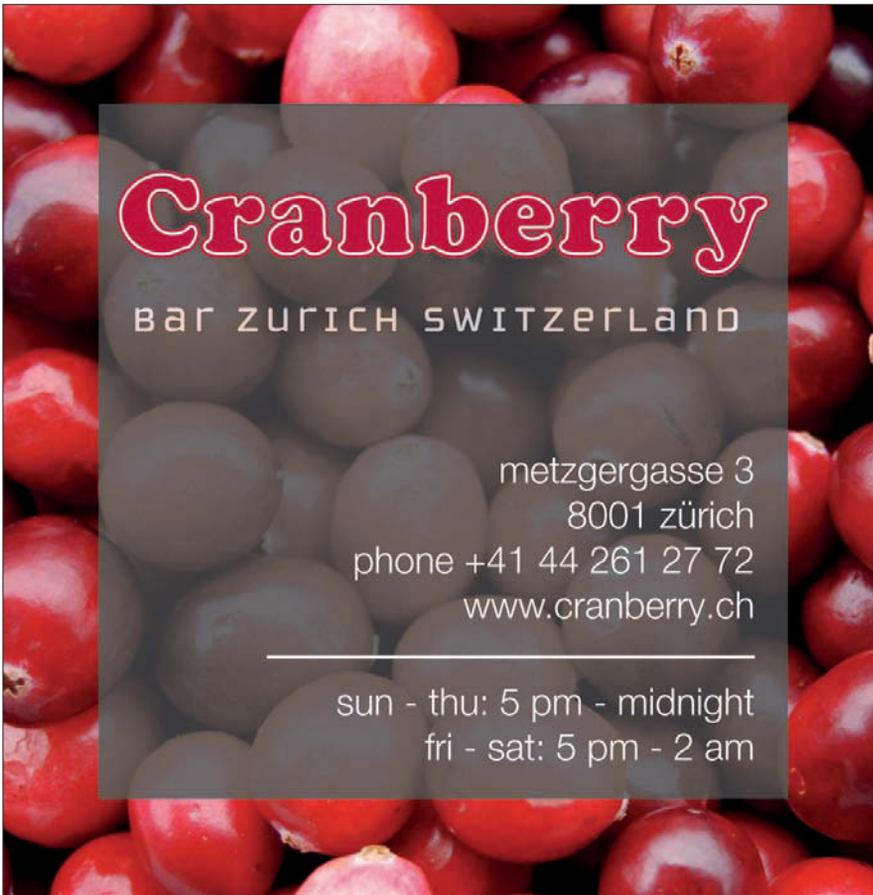
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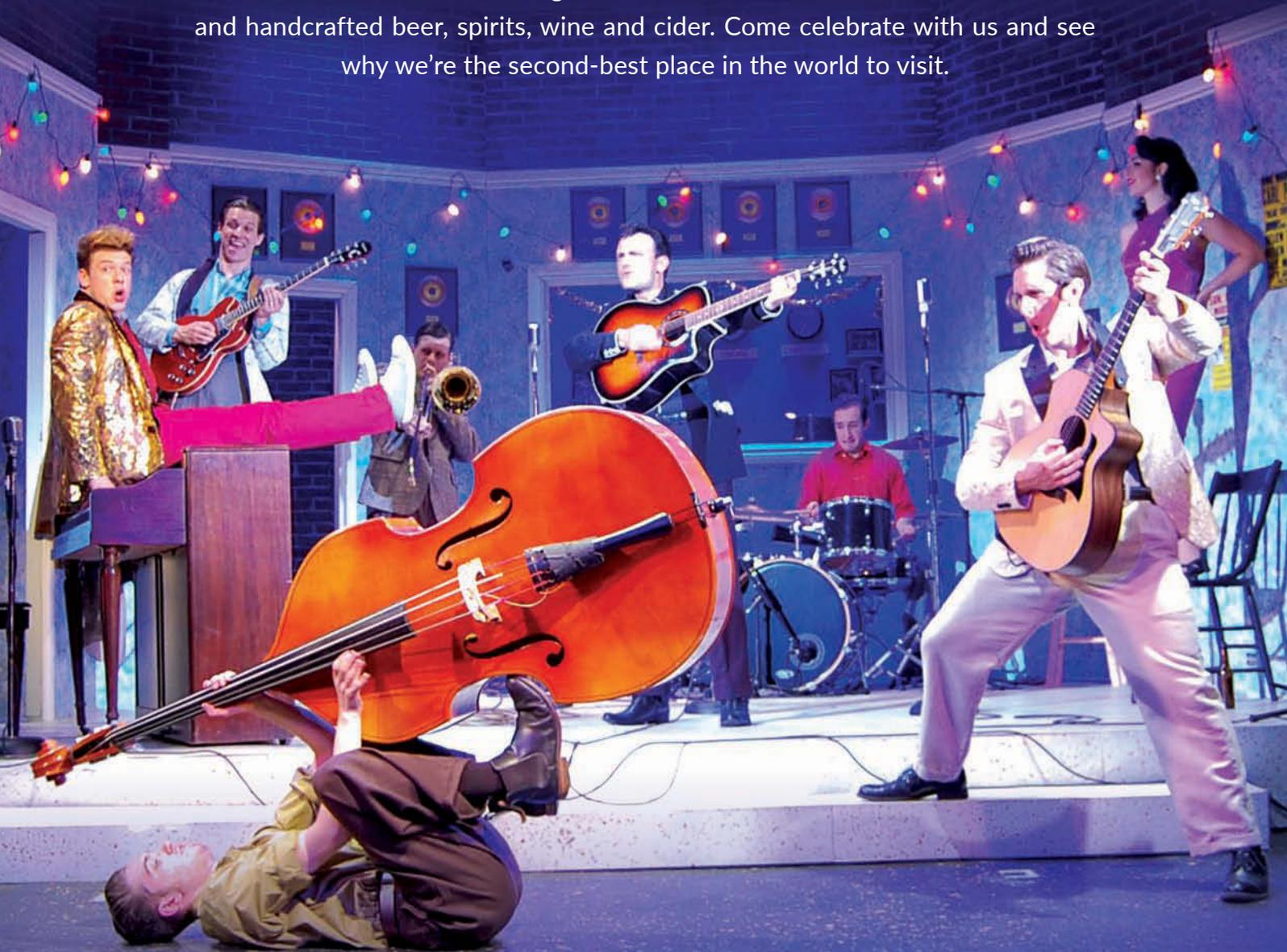


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Passport's Forum for Letters, Comments, Information, and Anecdotes

NEW VISA REQUIREMENTS TO VISIT EUROPE

What is this news we've been hearing that citizens of the United States of America may soon need a visa to visit Europe? When does this change in policy begin?

—John, Portland, ME

At the moment, there are no visa requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to Europe for short-stays for tourism or visiting relatives, due to previous agreements between the two world powers. Beginning in 2021, however, people traveling to Europe from the U.S. will be required to have a European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa waiver in order to gain entry to the Schengen Area. There will also be other regulations and restrictions to bear in mind when traveling to Europe from the U.S, which are similar to those in place at the moment, such as the right to carry weapons, importing and exporting large quantities of tobacco, alcohol, or perfume, and declaring large amounts of currency. Finally, it is also useful to remember that all U.S. citizens will be required to obtain an ETIAS to travel to Europe, including all minors who are able to travel with their normal passport.

VISA-FREE BRAZIL?

My partner and I plan on visiting Brazil next year for the Sao Paulo Gay Pride celebrations. Will we need to obtain a visa before we go?

—Michael, Tampa, FL.

The Brazilian Government announced on March 18th that Brazil would allow visa-free entry for citizens of The United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan, effective on June 17. Until then, the current e-visa will be required. Citizens of those countries wishing to visit Brazil will no longer need to apply or pay for a visa. They will be able to stay in Brazil for 90 days from the date of first entry in the country, extendable for an equal period, provided that it does not exceed one hundred and eighty days, every twelve months, counted from the date of the first



Photo: Infinity21

entry into Brazil. These changes come as part of a series of measures that Brazil has taken to facilitate visitor access to the country. Last year, the government launched an e-visa platform through which travelers could apply for visas with more efficiency and ease. Brazil has already seen extremely positive results with an increase of about 35% in the visa application in less than a year since implementing e-visa. These four countries are considered strategic for the development of tourism in Brazil. According to the Foreign Ministry, in 2017, 169,910 visas (either for business, tourism or transit) had been issued to citizens of the four countries. With the implementation of e-visa, the number rose in 2018 to 229,767.

STAR QUALITY

My mother is planning a trip to France, and even though money is not her primary concern, she's still very frugal and tries to save pennies wherever she can. She has declared, much to the consternation of my sister and I, that a two-star hotel is just fine for her. We are a little horrified at the prospect of mom staying in a hotel that may

not be safe or clean. What do the star ratings for European hotels actually mean?

—Morgan, Dallas, TX

The stars awarded to European hotels are judged on different criteria and by different standards in every country, and they do not automatically denote levels of quality of service and amenities. In many countries, stars (or other symbols) are given to a property based solely on the existence of certain features, no matter how good or bad. Some features for which star ratings are given include, room size, en suite bathrooms, elevator, concierge, air conditioning, etc. Someone could run the world's worst hotel, but as long as there is AC for the guests, they may have a star or two. A little Internet research to find comments from past guests can go a long way toward unraveling some of the mystery, and helping your mom find a nice place to stay

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FRANK EVERET

W AUSTIN, TEXAS

by Matthew Wexler

"If music be the food of love, play on," wrote William Shakespeare. He probably would have had a hell of a good time in modern day Austin, the live music capital of the world. And while there's no Globe Theater, there are more than 250 live music venues scattered throughout the city to catch headliners and up-and-comers. Of course, it always helps to have someone in the know pointing you in the right direction. Enter Frank Everett, W Insider at the **W Austin** (200 Lavaca St. Tel. 512-542-3600. www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/auswh-w-austin). An Austin native, Everett found familiarity with the W brand at its Dallas outpost but jumped at the chance to get back to his hometown, which he describes as "a place where labels matter less, and I can embrace comfortable fashion." Growing up as an openly gay son of a minister, Everett has been around music his entire life as part of the regional gospel circuit. Now back home, Everett is rediscovering all that Austin has to offer, from music and dining to the great outdoors.

Before a visitor ventures out to explore the city, what are some of your favorite in-house offerings?

Located in the center of the live music capital of the world, what would W Austin be if it didn't incorporate the fantastic sounds of great music? The Records Room is a section of the Living Room that features more than 8,000 vinyl records from a variety of artists, from Texas classics like Willie Nelson to more current finds. In the adjacent Secret Bar, there's a vintage McIntosh Sound System. Guest can pull vinyl off the shelves and play their choice while enjoying libations from the bar.

I suggest starting your day in our restaurant **TRACE** (www.traceaustin.com), which hosts some really great themed brunches. Our drag brunches are not to be missed. The menu draws inspiration from regional ingredients. Favorites include the Lavaca omelette with chile-braised beef, pastrami on rye benedict, and plenty of specialty cocktails such as the Ghost Fire (vanilla and espresso infused Texas whiskey with rumchata, cold brew, cream and chocolate. Definitely check out the WET Deck



during the summertime for our signature Sunday Soundwave pool parties. They are a perfect way to celebrate your weekend.

Austin has received many accolades as one of the country's best food cities (including two 2018 James Beard Award finalists). What is your "must eat and drink" list for first-time visitors?

There are several Austin essentials that you shouldn't miss, which include barbecue, breakfast tacos, and a terrific cocktail lounge. **LeRoy & Lewis** (Tel. 512-945-9882. www.leroyandlewis.com) is a "new school" BBQ truck that focuses on alternative cuts, whole animal utilization, and responsible sourcing. You'll find a revolving menu of some of the most unique barbecue in town, such as quail stuffed with mac and cheese and smoked beef cheeks. You can also find them at the **SFC Farmers' Market Downtown** (422 Guadalupe St.) every Saturday with a Korean-inspired menu in collaboration with Casper Fermentables. Any visit to Austin must include breakfast tacos. **Veracruz All Natural** (www.veracruzallnatural.com) was founded by sisters Reyna and Maritza Vazquez, and the duo now has five locations around town. I stick to the classics with the potato, egg, cheese, and avocado taco. But if I'm really hungry, I'll throw in their famous migas taco (egg,

tortilla chips, Monterey jack cheese, cilantro, tomato, onion, and avocado—it's the best! At the **Red Headed Stepchild** (Floppy Disk Repair Co. 119 East 5th St.) they have a hidden entrance tucked behind a fake storefront, and you'll need to have a code to get in. (Hint: head next door to Handlebar and order a drink. If you're nice, the bartender may provide the code. Alternately, stalk them on social media). Two of my favorites include Nobody Actually Liked Miranda (a twist on a Cosmopolitan), and my favorite after-dinner drink, My Trix are Not For Your Kids (rum with Trix-infused milk). You can never have too much barbecue in Austin, so make sure to visit **Lamberts** (401 West 2nd St. Tel. 512-494-1500. www.lambertsaustin.com). This gay-owned venue is a sleek downtown space, offering a fresh take on classics such as cold-smoked rainbow trout, country style pork ribs with a fennel and coriander rub, and brussels sprouts with bacon and brown butter.

"Keep Austin Weird" is Austin's take on supporting unique local businesses. What is your favorite spot to check out items that can only be found in Austin?

I love **Uncommon Objects** (1602 Fortview Rd. Tel. 512-442-4000. www.uncommonobjects.com), by far the most unique store in the city. Owner Steve Wiman fills the space with well-curated treasures and oddities, including vintage jewelry, antique furniture, and taxidermy. It's really someplace you have to see in person to fully understand how special it is.

Are there any walking or bike tours to get an immersive sense of the city?

The **Austin Visitor Center** (602 East 4th St. Tel. 866-GO-AUSTIN. www.austintexas.org) offers guided historical walking tours of Congress Avenue and East Sixth Street for free, and can also give suggestions for self-guided tours. **Austin Tour Company** (Tel. 512-ATC-TOUR. www.austintourcompany.com) offers a number of seasonal food tours, brewery and urban winery crawls, and boat parties, as well as monthly events at Deep Eddie Vodka's tasting room and an annual **Big Gay River Float** (typically held in June). Tech-savvy visitors can download the **Wander** app, which will take you



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So much live music, so little time! What's your short-list for can't miss venues?

Austin City Limits Live at The Moody Theater (310 Willie Nelson Blvd. Tel. 877-435-9849. www.acl-live.com). W Austin is connected to the famed venue, which also serves as the new home of the iconic Austin City Limits television show. It's a larger venue by Austin standards, but still feels incredibly intimate. Clifford Antone opened the legendary venue **Antone's** (305 East 5th St. www.antonenightclub.com) in 1975. Known for hosting blues greats like Muddy Water and Jimmy Vaughn, it closed a few years back, but Austin's own Gary Clark, Jr. decided that couldn't be. He teamed up with another local Austinite to resurrect the club and bring the

blues back to Austin. They have great shows most nights of the week, and the venue is walkable from W Austin. **Broken Spoke** (3201 S. Lamar Blvd. Tel. 512-442-6189. www.brokenspokeaustintx.net) is considered by many to be Austin's original honky-tonk bar. This place makes you feel like you stepped into a time machine and are enjoying the old Austin, before all of California moved here and no buildings downtown were taller than the Capital building. Be prepared: you'll end up two-stepping. And if you don't know how to, one of the cowboys will teach you.

Austin is also packed with cultural and historical activities. Do you have a favorite museum?

I love visiting **The Contemporary Austin – Laguna Gloria** (3809 W. 35th St. Tel. 512-458-8191. www.thecontemporaryaustin.org). It's

the former home of artist Clara Driscoll and site of a 1916 Italian style villa on the shores of Lake Austin. The grounds are beautiful and feature an outdoor sculpture park. Drop-in tours are offered on the first Sunday of every month at 1 PM.

Where do you steer people looking for outdoor activities throughout Hill Country?

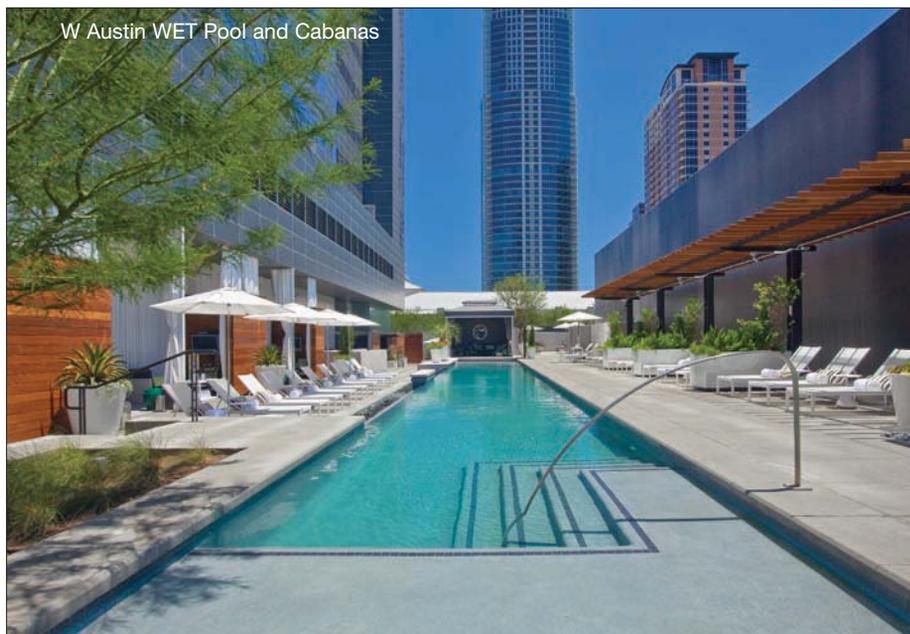
Pick a designated driver and enjoy the 30-minute drive to Dripping Springs and the breweries and distilleries along Fitzhugh Road. From the James Beard-nominated brewery **Jester King** (13187 Fitzhugh Rd. www.jesterking-brewery.com) offering farmhouse and barrel-aged ale to the mid-century modern tasting room at **Goodnight Loving Vodka** (12440 Trail Driver No. 103. Tel. 512-572-1139. www.goodnightlovingvodka.com), named for the Hill Country spring where the distillery gets its water, you can make an entire day of it. If you want to stay in town, I recommend a hike through **Barton Creek Greenbelt** (www.austinparks.org). In some sections, there are caves to explore, and if we've had a good rain, there are some watering holes to cool off in as well.

Where do you send guests who want to experience Austin's queer nightlife and what might they expect when they get there?

Austin's LGBTQ district is actually one block from W Austin where you'll find a cluster of bars where you can grab a drink and dance, including the multi-level **Highland Lounge** (404 Colorado St., Tel. 512-649-1212. www.highlandlounge.com), **Rain** (217 West 4th St. Tel. 512-494-1150. www.rainonfourth.com) and **The Iron Bear** (121 West 8th St. Tel. 512-482-8993. www.theironbear.com). For a final stop, head to **Dirty Bills** (511 Rio Grande St. www.dirtybill-saustin.com), a nearby dive bar that's self-proclaimed as the "worst gay bar in Austin."

What are some of Austin's signature LGBTQ events?

Austin has no shortage of events. Risking sounding like someone's dad, I have to go with the old saying, 'it's a marathon, not a sprint.' It's easy to go hard early on. Pack the right shoes, drink plenty of water and roll with what you might just happen to fall into. If you'd like to anchor your visit to a specific event, consider **Austin Pride** (www.austin-pride.org) held each August, and the **All Genders, Lifestyles, and Identities Film Festival** (www.agliff.com) in September. **SXSW** (www.sxsw.com) has also offered dedicated tracks to LGBTQIA+ programming, exploring topics such as activism, visibility, equality, and more. ■



W Austin WET Pool and Cabanas



Austin, Texas

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WASHINGTON D.C.

by Lawrence Ferber

Washington D.C.'s hottest ticket is free. Opened in September 2016, during the final months of President Obama's presidency, the Smithsonian's **National Museum of African American History & Culture** (1400 Constitution Ave. Tel: 202-633-1000. www.nmaahc.si.edu) requires a date and time-specific ticket for entry, which can be snapped up three months in advance during peak tourism season (March-August). If you don't plan ahead during this time, you may find yourself merely admiring its exterior.

So when a D.C. friend and I found ourselves with a free afternoon on Halloween, with a few hours to spare between early dinner and watching Dupont Circle's way-gay, ridiculously fun (unless you twist an ankle) **High Heel Race** (www.facebook.com/17threethighheelrace), which literally runs down 17th Street, she suggested we roll the dice and see if they had any walk-up tickets left at the door, which is possible during off-peak months. "Maybe fate will be on our side," she mused. Sure enough, staff members out front held a few unused tickets in hand, and in we went.

It was a spectacular, profound experience, functioning as a narrative that begins underground and works up towards the light. After taking an elevator beneath David Adjaye and Philip Freelon's strikingly designed building, the journey starts with the arrival of Africans to the USA via slave ships, to their struggles, and figureheads, and triumphs, during decades of bigotry, segregation (there's a full-sized train car with despicable "whites only" and "colored only" sections you can walk through), and violence.

There were sniffles, and sobs (my own, frankly), upon visiting the Emmett Till memorial section that contains the lynched 14-year-old boy's glass-topped casket. Strides and triumphs made by African Americans in more recent times emerge as one moves upward, including displays dedicated to Oprah Winfrey and President Barack Obama. The building's upper floors celebrate African American accomplish-



National Museum of African American History and Culture

Photo: Courtesy of Smithsonian

ments, and one of my favorite sections is dedicated to TV/film/music, chock full of iconic props, costumes, and multimedia, which includes Emmy-winning, trailblazing black gay filmmaker/writer/activist Marlon Riggs (*Tongues Untied*).

Good news for 2019 visitors: during off-peak months (September-February), walk-up tickets will be available on weekdays 10 A.M.-onward, with timed tickets only mandatory on weekends (some same-day tickets will also be released at 6:30 A.M. on Saturday and Sunday mornings). During peak months, weekday walk-up tickets will come available at 1 P.M., and some will be released online at 6:30 A.M. daily.

This year is a particularly exciting time to visit D.C., with freshly opened/renovated hotels, entirely revitalized new districts and neighborhoods, exciting food and drink spots (including distilleries and LGBT bars), and, first and foremost, a must-see LGBTQ exhibition at the more-timely-than-ever **Newseum** (555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Tel: 202-292-6100. www.newseum.org).

Commemorating Stonewall's 50th

anniversary, "*Rise Up: Stonewall and the LGBTQ Movement*," runs from now until December 31, 2019. The exhibition boasts artifacts, images, publications, and coverage related to key moments (and some under the radar) in gay rights, including the fused wedding rings of Jim Obergefell and his late husband, John Arthur (the 2015 SCOTUS ruling on Obergefell's case resulted in national marriage equality). Newseum is one of the few major D.C. cultural attractions separate from the Smithsonian (yes, there's an admission, but well worth it), and traces the past and future of news reporting and the free press, with artifacts including a section of the Berlin Wall.

Complementing the exhibition, **Hamilton Hotel** (1001 14th St. NW. Tel: (202) 682-0111. www.hamiltonhoteldc.com) partnered with Newseum and commissioned Alan Cumming to curate a 12th floor signature room, The Newsroom: Rise Up Suite, with artifacts and items that include a souvenir program from the inaugural 1982 Gay Games, the script for 1997's watershed "coming out" episode of *Ellen*, and numerous LGBTQ-related newspaper and magazine clippings.

Spring 2019 saw the grand opening of a brand-new, permanent 140,000 square foot **Spy Museum** (700 L'Enfant Plaza. Tel: 202-393-7798. www.spymuseum.org), which had previously been housed on F Street. In May, after being closed to the public for 8 years due to damage incurred by a 5.8 earthquake, the mall's 555-foot tall, iconic **Washington Monument** (www.nps.gov/wamo/index.htm) reopened to the public, with a new elevator and security system.

One of the most exciting 2019 debuts, especially for arts lovers, will be **The REACH** (www.reach.kennedy-center.org), Kennedy Center's first-ever expansion. Described as "a living theater where diverse art forms collide," and scheduled for an opening celebration in September, it will encompass three pavilions, outdoor spaces, a pedestrian bridge to the waterfront, and will be host to arts education, incubation, performances, film, festivals, and even picnicking. Plus, it will be accessibility-friendly, and so expansive that one can spot it from an airplane.

If skylines are your thing, cross the water to Virginia and take in a 360-degree cinematic view of D.C. (and Maryland and Virginia!) from the 31st-floor **Observation Deck at CEB Tower** (1201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA. Tel: 703-423-0600. www.theviewofdc.com) that opened in mid-2018.

One of the biggest new developments in D.C. itself, however, is **The Wharf** (www.wharfdc.com). Just ten minutes by

foot from the Tidal Basin's prime Cherry Blossoms trail, and a few minutes more to the Holocaust Museum, this once grubby, mile-long waterfront strip along the Potomac River has been transformed into a \$2.5 billion, sleek leisure and office district and boardwalk featuring hotels, restaurants, bars, and shops.

Lesbian Chef Jamie Leeds' beloved **Hank's Oyster Bar** (701 Wharf St. Tel: 202-817-3055. hanksoysterbar.com/the-wharf) boasts a location smack dab on the boardwalk, so you can scarf down lobster rolls, crab cakes, and oysters with a side order of views and prime people watching. The Wharf is peppered with a mix of deeply local and prestige national storefronts, including Blue Bottle Coffee, Shake Shack, Milk Bar, and multi-story tiki bar and distillery, **Potomac Distilling Company** (1130 Main Ave. NW. Tel: 202-900-4786. www.tikitnt.com), from local rum distiller, Thrasher's. During warmer months, concerts are held on floating stages and piers, and we'd be remiss not to mention The Wharf arrival of America's oldest, still running open-air seafood market, Maine Avenue Fish Market (it dates back to the 1800s).

Conveniently, Hank's is located just underneath one of The Wharf's sleek, fresh hotels, the 175-room **Canopy by Hilton Washington D.C. The Wharf** (975 7th St. SW. Tel: 202-488-2500. www.canopy3.hilton.com), which opened in early 2018. Functional, modern, and comfy, the boutique styled brand is Canopy's first USA property and it embraces local-centric twists including art, food, and the

artisanal products stocked in its minibars and lobby shop. Rooms with Potomac views are particularly bright and crisp, and guest perks include free bicycles (another Canopy opened in 2018 in North Bethesda's equally buzzy Pike & Rose neighborhood).

The Wharf is also home to a 278-room **InterContinental** (801 Wharf St. Tel: 202-800-0844. www.wharintercontinentaldc.com) that opened in late 2017. Its historic grande dame sister property, located just a block or so from the White House, **Willard InterContinental Hotel** (1401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Tel: 202-628-9100. washington.intercontinental.com), unveiled an \$18 million renovation in June 2018 to commemorate its 200th birthday. Many of the 335-room hotel's iconic guests and moments, including Martin Luther King, Jr., who reportedly worked on his "I Have A Dream" speech here, are chronicled in a small museum.

Another quintessentially D.C. property, **The Watergate Hotel** (2650 Virginia Ave. Tel: 855-256-3966. www.thewatergate-hotel.com), debuted a major, clubby-chic facelift and rebirth in 2016, with cheeky and by no means coy reverence paid to its infamous place in history and politics. Although there are 348 rooms, they purposely try to leave the "Scandal Room"—used during the 1972 Watergate break-in—unoccupied and viewable to the public, since it's decked out with memorabilia and retro items. It's well worth a stop, as is the delicious, spacious, and slickly appointed Kingbird restaurant.

Other hotels of note include the February 2019 opening of **Conrad Washington D.C.** (950 New York Ave NW. Tel: 202-844-5900. conradhotels3.hilton.com); the late 2018 debut of trendy **Moxy** (1011 K Street. Tel: 202-922-7400. moxy-hotels.marriott.com/en/hotels/washington-dc); and much-buzzed-about, uber-progressive 2018 arrival **Eaton DC** (1201 K Street. Tel: 202-289-7600. www.eatonworkshop.com/hotel/dc), billed as "the world's first activist hotel."

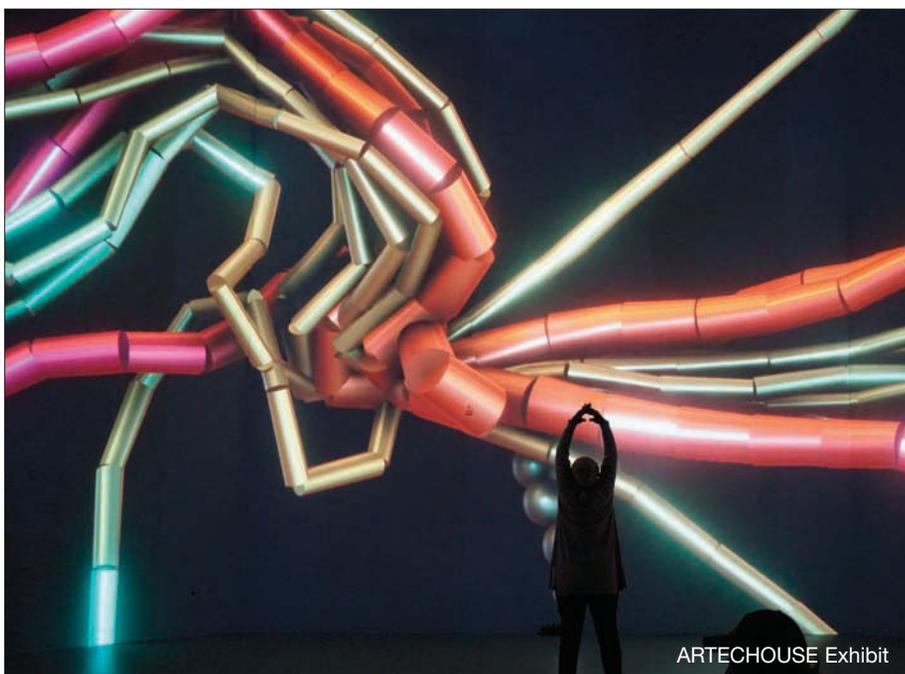
For LGBTQ visitors who plan to spend time around Dupont Circle, chic and contemporary **St. Gregory Hotel** (2033 M St. NW. Tel: 202-530-3600. www.stgregory-hotelwdc.com) renovated its 156 rooms in 2018, and the ones with fireplaces and patios are utterly divine. Meanwhile, a his-



The Wharf from Recreation Pier

Photo: Courtesy Hoffman-Madison Waterfront

Photo: Lawrence Ferber



toric Adams Morgan church was transformed into the **Line** (1770 Euclid St. Tel: 202-588-0525. www.thelinehotel.com), which opened in December 2017.

The Adams Morgan district saw the opening of a 10,000-square-foot LGBTQ sports bar **Pitchers** (2317 18th St. Tel: 202-733-2568. www.pitchersbardc.com) in mid-2018. It features five different areas and includes flat-screens galore, a dedicated lesbian space called A League of Her Own, and plenty of events (including speed dating and bingo!).

Barracks Row received a jolt of upscale 1920s-inspired glamor in its new LGBTQ bar and lounge, **Orchid** (520 8th St. SE. Tel: 202-544-1168. www.orchidonthehill.com), which opened in May 2018. Here you'll find a 40-foot-long white and grey-veined marble bar that stands out among the retro wood décor. There's also a food menu as well as proper cocktails and dancing.

Bears, meanwhile, celebrated the third anniversary of **Uproar Lounge and Restaurant** (639 Florida Ave NW. Tel: 202-462-4464. www.uproarlounge.com) in February 2019.

Gay-owned restaurant **The Bird** closed in mid-January 2019, but reopened just ten days later as **Frenchy's Naturel** (1337 11th St. NW. Tel: 212-518-3609. www.frenchysnaturel.com), with a tagline of "steak, eggs & wine."

Just nearby, **Supra** (1205 11th Street NW. Tel: 202-789-1205. www.supradc.com).

com) is D.C.'s first Georgian restaurant, and utterly delicious and well-designed; the 2019 Michelin Guide bestowed it with a Bib Gormand. Supra's *ikhbi*, a thin-sliced duck breast, is mind-blowing tasty, while the *khinkali* is Georgia's hearty answer to Shanghainese soup dumplings.

One emerging hotspot for foodies is the NoMa neighborhood (short for North of Massachusetts Ave.) and its anchor of **Union Market** (1309 5th St. NE. union-marketdc.com). The indoor urban market's vendors include Gorsha, "the Chipotle of Ethiopian food," as one local described it; **La Petite Lou Lou** creperie, old timey NYC soda shop-inspired **Buffalo & Bergen**; and Venezuelan food truck spin-off **Arepa Zone**.

Also nearby, there's a location of the outstanding indie bookstore **Politics & Prose** (1270 5th St. NE. Tel: (202) 544-4452. www.politics-prose.com/union-market), and bar/distillery **Cotton & Reed** (www.cottonandreed.com), DC's first rum distillery and it is run by two former NASA scientists, produces bottles of white rum, dry spiced rum, mellow gold rum, all-spice dram, and limited batches, while their entirely rum-based cocktails are absolutely addictive.

If you can't manage to snag a reservation at chef Nick Stefanelli's prix fixe Italian restaurant **Masseria** (1340 4th St. NE. Tel: 202-608-1330. www.masseria-dc.com), do sidle up to their bar for equally tasty libations and an a la carte bar menu. Close

by is Japanese restaurant **O-Ku** (1274 5th Street NE. Tel: www.o-kusushidc.com), which has a fun, urban-industrial look and serves up mighty tasty sushi, sashimi, and izakaya delights.

Also unique to the district is **Starbucks' "Signing Store"** (625 H Street NE. Tel: 202-807-8439. www.starbucks.com). With a staff fluent in American Sign Language, it's the country's first Starbucks of its kind, and you'll spot plenty of students from nearby Gallaudet University, a trail-blazing college for the deaf and hearing impaired. Customers who can't sign may communicate with the baristas via digital pads, while completed orders are announced via a TV screen (they even have an exclusive mug, designed by deaf artist Jena Floyd, but luck will need to be on your side since they sell out almost as fast as new stock arrives).

Craft coffee and design lovers should be sure to visit Smithsonian's **Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden** (Independence Ave. and 7th St. hirshhorn.si.edu). Opened in 2018, its café was designed by Japanese artist Hiroshi Sugimoto, with tables fashioned from Japanese nutmeg tree roots, and serves superb java and seasonal gelatos from the Georgetown-born **Dolcezza** (www.dolcezzagelato.com).

Cocktails get an interactive "augmented reality" treatment via iPad and iPhones at independent art gallery **ARTECHOUSE** (1238 Maryland Ave. SW. www.dc.artechouse.com), which opened during summer 2017. Specializing in edgy new media installations, including a sort of interactive "aquarium" containing evolving digital creatures that respond to one's touch and hand motions. If you're big on social media posts, this attraction is like chum in the water!

As far as LGBTQ events to keep in mind when timing a visit, 2019's edition of **Capital Pride** (www.capitalpride.org) will take place May 31-June 9; **Capital Trans Pride** (www.capitalpride.org/events/trans-pride-2019) from May 17-19; **DC Black Pride** (www.dcblackpride.org) over Memorial Day weekend; and the 26th edition of LGBTQ film festival **Reel Affirmations** (www.facebook.com/reelaffirmation) will take place in the Fall, specific dates TBC. For even more up-to-the-minute D.C. updates, be sure to check **Destination D.C.** (www.washington.org). ■

ANA Inspiration of JAPAN

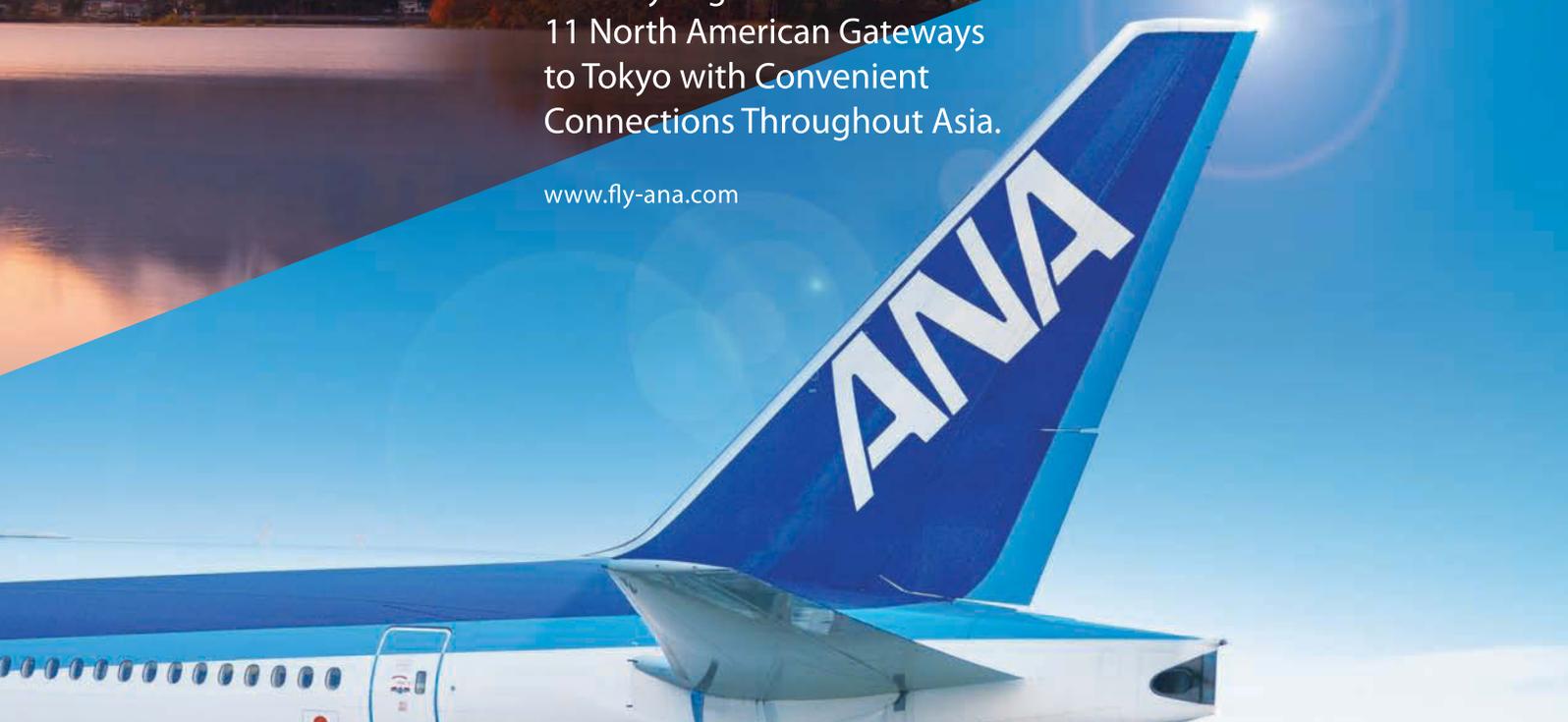
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INTERCONTINENTAL LONDON PARK LANE

by Robert Adams



InterContinental London Park Lane and Wellington Arch

On a recent business trip to London, my husband and I were looking for accommodations in central London where we could meet with clients during the day, and then enjoy shows in the West End and meals with friends in Soho at night. We had stayed at a wonderful InterContinental hotel in Boston in the past, so we decided to try the **InterContinental London Park Lane** (One Hamilton Place, Park Lane, London. Tel: +020 7409 3131. www.parklane.intercontinental.com).

The hotel is located in the heart of Mayfair overlooking the Royal Parks (Hyde, Green, and St. James), and is within walking distance to Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly, and the gay

nightlife of Soho.

Guests have a choice of 387 elegant Rooms and 60 expansive designer suites (including a few smoking rooms). The suites here provide great views of some of the most well known areas in the city. From contemporary to regal, opulent to modern, each suite has been designed to satisfy a range of guests' preferences, and all come with a private butler.

Our junior suite featured two large screen TVs, a king bed, a large bathroom, and a living room with a writing desk. It provided just the right amount of space for two people to relax and work without getting in each other's way. As part of our stay, we made sure that our accommoda-

tions included access to the Club InterContinental. Located on the seventh floor of the hotel with stunning views across London from the floor-to-ceiling windows, Club InterContinental is a must for both business and leisure travelers. After a day exploring the city, or meeting with clients, stop in for Afternoon Tea and an array of sandwiches, scones, and cake, which are accompanied by an international selection of teas. In the evening, canapés and champagne are served. Club membership is complimentary to guests staying in any Luxury or Signature suite, while non-suite guests have the opportunity to upgrade to Club membership.

We would start our day with a wonderful

complimentary breakfast at the Club InterContinental overlooking the Wellington Arch between the corners of Hyde Park and Green Park. With inspiration like this, it is hard not to feel like you can accomplish anything you put your mind to. Add to this a full buffet of assorted cold and hot items, as well as a made-to-order menu, and you may start to understand the phrase “breakfast of champions.”

Now that you’re ready to face the day, and any challenges that may come your way, it’s the perfect time to get situated in the hotel’s business center, which is open 24 hours and is staffed from 7 A.M. – 7 P.M. Monday to Friday and 10 A.M. – 6 P.M. Saturday and Sunday. It is equipped to offer administrative support and everything else you need to stay connected. Services include: copying, fax, email, high speed internet, Wi-Fi, mobile phone rental, computers, printers, courier service, a technical concierge, and private limousine. With perks like these, you have no excuse not to get your work done, sign a lucrative deal, and be downstairs at 6 P.M. to sample one of the 40 British gins served in The Arch Bar.

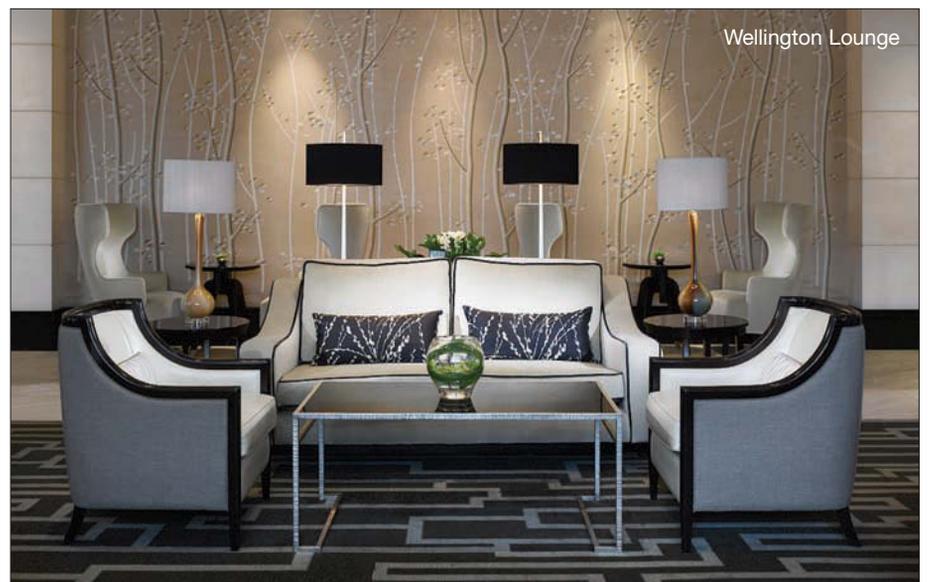
If your company is looking for a large space to hold a conference, seminar, or awards ceremony, The Ballroom here can accommodate up to 750 for a dinner and 1000 for a cocktail reception. The hotel also has 11 other event suites that can accommodate up to 300 people. But all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, so let’s explore some of the culinary joys that the InterContinental London Park Lane has to offer.

When it comes to dining, guests of the hotel have many options from which to choose. If you want to impress one of your clients, treat them to High Coffee in The Wellington Lounge, situated on the site of Queen Elizabeth II former residence (145 Piccadilly). This innovative take on afternoon tea with different coffees accompanying each course, including an espresso martini, is a perfect way to begin your night.

For dinner before or after the theatre, Celebrated Chef Theo Randall offers rustic Italian fare with the finest seasonal ingredients in Theo Randall at the InterContinental, while Ella Canta, the David Collins Studio designed restaurant



Club InterContinental



Wellington Lounge



High Coffee



Ella Canta Interior



Ella Canta Coa de Jima Cocktail

by acclaimed Chef Martha Ortiz delivers the beauty, vibrancy, and the spirit of modern Mexico through exquisite food and exotic cocktails.

We spent an evening at Ella Canta, and it was truly a night to remember. We were seated in a large alcove with just three tables. My husband and I were on the right, a man and woman who appeared to be regulars were in the mid-

dle, and an older man with a young boyfriend were at a table on the left.

To begin, we ordered one of their signature cocktails, a margarita called Coa de Jima, made with Patron Reposado Tequila, Huana Guanabana Rum liqueur, homemade spiced pineapple purée, aloe vera, vanilla syrup, lime, passion fruit and champagne foam. The flavors melded perfectly and the presentation set the tone for a festive and romantic night.

As we enjoyed our drinks, we watch as the older gentleman to our left handed his companion a beautifully wrapped gift. The younger man smiled profusely and gave him a kiss. Their love for each other was apparent, and it seemed to grow deeper and more expressive as the night went on.

Our first course was the Guacamole Nacionalista, las joyas Mexicanas: guacamole, fresh cheese, pomegranate and a grasshopper in gold leaf. The guacamole was tasty and fresh, but we could not bring ourselves to eat the grasshopper. We tried to hide it underneath some chips, so as not to disappoint our server who thought the once hopping insect added a very special touch.

As we laughed and finished our drinks, the older man presented another gift to his

friend who was so delighted he could barely contain himself.

During our next course of delicious shrimps with guajillo chile, lime leaves and oregano mayonnaise, two more gifts were presented to the younger man who grew more and more affectionate, both above and below the table.

“A couple of gifts would have been enough!” I said to my amused husband, who called our server over and ordered another round of drinks.

For our entrées, we went surf and turf: one order of the Tikin-xick fish with white rice and pico de gallo, and one order of a perfectly prepared and seasoned rib eye steak with spring onion, tortillas, red sauce.

While we finished our meal, the owner of Ella Canta, Martha Ortiz, stopped by our table to say hello. The same passion and love she puts into her restaurant and the food she serves is expressed in her joyful, inquisitive eyes and the way she greets her guests.

As we finished our drinks and got up to leave, more gifts were being presented at the next table to even more joyful looks and loving caresses.

“He’s going to spoil that boy.” I said with a smile.



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With only one business meeting scheduled for the next morning, we asked the concierge at the InterContinental London Park Lane to help us plan an afternoon and evening to remember. First up was a trip to the **National Portrait Gallery** for the *Eye to I: Self-Portraits from 1900 to Today*, that features more than 75 works by artists such as Josef Albers, Patricia Cronin, Imogen Cunningham, Elaine de Kooning, Edward Hopper, Joan Jonas, Jacob Lawrence, Alice Neel, Louise Nevelson, Diego Rivera, and many others. Treat yourself to the ultimate “selfie” exhibit in London, now through August 18, 2019.

Afterwards, we headed for **Vertigo 42**, located at the top of Tower 42, one of the city’s highest buildings. The bar provides spectacular panoramic views overlooking London’s most iconic landmarks, and offers a unique collection of Champagnes, wines, and cocktails, as well as a global ‘tapas’ style menu.

This was perfect for us as we had tickets to see Broadway legend Patti LuPone in a new gender-reversed production of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth’s 1970 musical *Company*. This version is definitely one to see when it comes to New York, hopefully bringing with it the actress Rosalie Craig who played Bobbie in the London production.

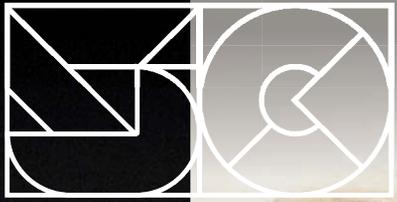
We were so impressed with the show and the cast members that we hung out at the stage door afterwards. It didn’t hurt that we could enjoy drinks outside at the gay Rupert’s Street Bar just across the street from the theatre as we waited for the actors to greet their fans.

When Patti LuPone came out of the theatre she talked to the people who had lined up and she signed autographs. Two of her ardent fans had traveled a long distance to see her. “Where are you from?” she asked. “We came from Panama.” they answered.

Handing them back a signed playbill she proceeded to the next person in line, then did a double take: “Panama? The Country? Thank you, thank you!”

To say this was a memorable trip to London is an understatement. There is inspiration to be found around every corner of this fascinating and engaging city. The people here make you feel at home, and they want to share their history, art, culture, and creativity with everyone who comes here, whether it is for business or pleasure. ■

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ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

by Rich Rubin

Damn, St. Louis has changed. That's the thought that keeps occurring to me whenever I visit the city where I grew up. Whether it's changes in the city, in me, or both, visiting St. Louis now is like traveling to a new destination. There's a huge dining scene here, tons of attractions, an LGBT-friendliness reflected in (but not limited to) the nightlife scene, and a sense of pride in the growth, the newly cosmopolitan nature, the burgeoning neighborhoods, and the history transformed into the future.

Okay, it's been a few years (I'm not in my first blush of youth). Still, though, I would say well over half of the places we're going to visit didn't exist when I was a kid. Hell, even the iconic symbol of the city, the Gateway Arch, has only been there since 1965 (I remember my grade school being called into the auditorium to watch the final piece being laid). One thing that hasn't changed, though, is that St. Louis is very much a city of distinctive neighborhoods. We'll go "downtown"—i.e. to the actual city of St. Louis, which for reasons too complicated to go into here is actually not part of St. Louis County but an entity on its own. Then, we'll venture into some of the most interesting suburbs ("the county"), which are pretty much just considered "St. Louis" and often have a feel that's just about as urban as the city itself. Confused? Stick with me. It will make sense when we go out exploring, I promise. And if not, well that's as St. Louis as it gets anyway.

First, let's find a hotel. If you want to be within a stone's throw of the Gateway Arch and other downtown attractions, I strongly suggest the **Four Seasons St. Louis** (999 N. 2nd St. Tel: 314-881-5800. www.fourseasons.com/stlouis), where the rooms are a study in muted elegance, some with walls of windows overlooking spectacular views of the Gateway Arch, the Mississippi River, and a fab restaurant (more on that later). Best of all is its perfect downtown location, just blocks from the Arch and the riverfront, as well as the ballpark and many other attractions. The culturally minded might want



St. Louis

Photo: f11photo

to check in at the new **Angad Arts Hotel** (3550 Samuel Shepard Dr. Tel: 314-561-0033. www.angadartshotel.com), which just opened last fall at the heart of the Grand Center Arts District. You'll choose your room based on your color preference (they offer red, blue, yellow, and green) in the hippest of new boutique hotels to open for quite some time. Visit their terrace for more incredible views of the skyline and arch.

All checked in? Let's explore some of St. Louis' neighborhoods. We'll start downtown, at the city's most prominent attraction, the **Gateway Arch** (11 N. 4th St. Tel: 877-982-1410. www.gatewayarch.com). Inside is a fascinating museum, newly revamped, telling the story of this city, located at the confluence of three rivers and at the brink of the "new" Western half of the country. You can ride in a claustrophobic little car to the top if you want to say you've done it, but it's missable, and the view's better at many other places. Do enjoy the museum, though, and the experience of walking through the lovely park to this instantly recognizable riverfront landmark as tourist boats ply the waters and the

1874 Eads Bridge stretches gloriously across the Mississippi.

Another great attraction, just a short drive away, is **City Museum** (750 N. 16th St. Tel: 314-231-2489. www.citymuseum.org), where you'll careen down a multi-story Monster Slide, or check out the tree house in this museum, once a shoe factory, that's dedicated to reclaimed materials—if this doesn't bring out your inner child (and inner preservationist), nothing will!

Slightly west of here, the **Grand Center Arts District** (www.grandcenter.org) houses some of the city's most important cultural attractions, from **Powell Symphony Hall** (718 N. Grand Blvd. Tel: 314-534-1700. www.slso.org), home of the city's well-regarded orchestra, to the **Fox Theatre** (527 N. Grand Blvd. Tel: 314-534-1678. www.fabulousfox.com), a stunningly restored 1929 theater that hosts musicals, ballets, and more, and also offers backstage tours showcasing the building's history and grandeur. I'm well familiar with these two institutions (a friend of mine was on the renovation crew for the Fox), but others are new to me, such as **ZACK** (3224 Locust St. Tel: 314-533-0367. www.kranzbergartsfoundation.org/zack), a

performing arts incubator in a former Cadillac showroom that now holds a 200-seat theater, shared resources for various new companies, and a restaurant serving creative and locally sourced food.

In Grand Center, you'll also find the **Contemporary Art Museum** (3750 Washington Blvd. Tel: 314-535-4660. www.camstl.org), with a spectacular set of revolving exhibitions, and the **Pulitzer Arts Foundation** (3716 Washington Blvd. Tel: 314-754-1850. www.pulitzerarts.org), both are devoted to contemporary exhibits, and the **Harold and Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz** (3536 Washington Ave. Tel: 314-571-6000. www.jazzstl.org) that hosts the latest upcomers and seasoned musical veterans (Wynton Marsalis, Al Jarreau, and Diana Krall have all performed here). While most of these spots have been around for a while, the emergence of the area as a "district" has solidified its spot in the city as the go-to destination for the arts.

While many of the museums and cultural institutions can be found in the aforementioned two neighborhoods, they're by no means limited to here. Five cultural institutions make their home in **Forest Park** (Visitors' Center: 5595 Grand Dr. Tel: 314-367-7275. www.forestparkforever.org). If there's a more precious jewel in the St. Louis crown than Forest Park, I don't know what it is. It actually borders a wide array of neighborhoods, straddling city and county with a bounty of nature and culture. Let's start with the culture. **St. Louis Art Museum** (One Fine Arts Dr. Tel: 314-621-0072. www.slam.org), perhaps the prime destination for culture in the city, offers such master modern artists as Picasso, Monet, and Van Gogh, great collections from African and Asian to Native American, and a sculpture garden that opened in 2013. I remember as a teen marveling at the inscription over the door, "Dedicated to art, and free to all," and that remains the case. In fact, all the culture spots within the park are free, which is a pretty amazing thing. So check out the **Missouri History Museum** (4700 Lindell Blvd. 746-4599. www.mohistory.org/museum), where upcoming exhibits include The Mighty Mississippi and Flores Mexicanas, as well as a continuing exhibit on the 1904 World's Fair (which occurred in Forest park).

Also, don't Miss the **St. Louis Zoo** (1 Government Dr. Tel: 314-781-0900. www.stlzoo.org), one of the best zoos in the country, and the **St. Louis Science Center** (5050 Oakland Ave. Tel: 314-289-4400.

www.slsoc.org), with its adjacent Planetarium. At the Municipal Opera, or **The Muny** (1 Theatre Dr. Tel: 314-361-1900. www.muny.org), almost 1,500 seats are offered free each night for the outdoor musicals (if I say I saw Pearl Bailey here, am I dating myself?).

Then there's the park itself. Some of its pleasures are long-familiar, like the Grand Basin, a gorgeous fountain with a stunning view up "Art Hill" to the Art Museum. With its 30 miles of trails, however, it's a constant discovery process. I love the John F. Kennedy Memorial Forest, with its six-mile looping trail, and the Healing Garden, full of black-eyed Susans and the monarch butterflies that love them. I stroll for hours past lakes (some plied by canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats), past streams surrounded by wildflowers, with the distant car sounds overwhelmed by the chirping of birds (there are 200 native species in the park). Set foot in Forest Park, and you're likely to spend the entire day (or several days) exploring all the indoor and outdoor riches, perhaps listening to a summer concert on Art Hill, taking a (free) wildflower walk or skating in Steinberg Rink in winter. It's easy to lose track of time in this urban oasis that at 1,300 acres is bigger than New York's Central Park.

One of the neighborhoods bordering the park is **The Grove**, the main LGBTQ neighborhood of the city, on the edge of the suburb of Maplewood. In perhaps the biggest change since I lived here, St. Louis has become super LGBTQ-friendly, and even the tourism website (www.explorestlouis.com) has an LGBT section—unthinkable back in the day! In The Grove, rainbow flags fly prominently, and most of the LGBTQ nightlife is centered here. Predominant among the night spots is **Just John Nightclub** (4112 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-371-1333. www.justjohnclub.com), and whether you head here for karaoke, Sunday show tunes, dancing to local bands, or just chilling out with one of their many nightly drink specials, it's definitely one you should catch.

So, too, is **Rehab** (4054 Choteau Ave. Tel: 314-652-3700. www.rehabstl.com), where dance parties, a great happy hour, and events like Divas of the Grove make it a popular spot for a diverse crowd. Your evening at the speakeasy-styled **The Monocle and Emerald Room** (4510 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-932-7003. www.themonoclestl.com) begins in The Monocle, an "all-inclusive, classy dive bar." Have a hand-crafted cocktail or two at the bar, then hit The Emerald Room for a show that

could be drag, comedy, cabaret, or even "burlyeoke" ("You Sing, We Strip"). Open about four years, it's a welcome addition among all the perennially popular spots. Speaking of dive bars (and entertainment), you might want to pay a visit to **Attitudes** (4100 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-534-0444. www.facebook.com/attitudesnightclubstl), where drag shows, a dance floor, and a fun, mixed crowd have kept this place going since 1988.

Of course, a little morning-after recovery might be needed, and I suggest **Rise Coffee** (4176 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-405-8171. www.risecoffeeestl.com), the area's major (non-alcoholic) gathering place. It's bright, colorful, and comfortable, and after you're done admiring the mural of reindeer and mountains, check out the sign that proclaims: "Compassion is the radicalism of our time."

Duly caffeinated, I head down Manchester to the west side of Maplewood. As I step in **Foundation Grounds Coffeehouse** (7928 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-833-6460. www.foundationgrounds.com), the guy behind the counter is wearing a t-shirt for the **St. Louis Gay Men's Chorus** (Tel: 314-287-5669. www.gmcstl.org). As I order my espresso, I ask him about what the chorus is up to, and he's thrilled that they've just performed at the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team's Pride Night. A few steps away, I stop in **Kakao Chocolate** (7272 Manchester Ave. Tel: 314-645-4446. www.kakaochocolate.com), my go-to spot not only for amazing truffles and comfy setting, but for take-home treats like their homemade mole sauce or cocoa spice rub.

Back in the "city," I stroll through the **Central West End**, one of the first City neighborhoods to be revitalized (spearheaded, of course, by an LGBTQ influx). I love coming here for a meal, some shopping, or just a stroll among the brick buildings of this classic neighborhood now filled with boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and bars. It's a great way to appreciate some of the grandeur that St. Louis once held and see urban renewal in action. After all, Tennessee Williams lived here, as did T.S. Eliot, and William S. Burroughs. How's that for an eclectic collection of artistic neighborhood sons?

In the area known as The Loop you'll find all three, and many more St. Louis celebrities, on the **St. Louis Walk of Fame**

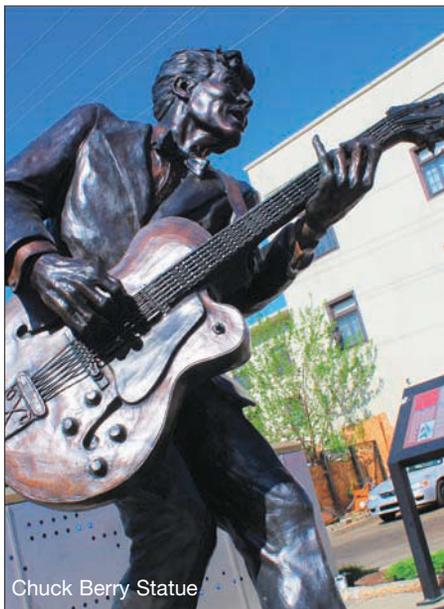
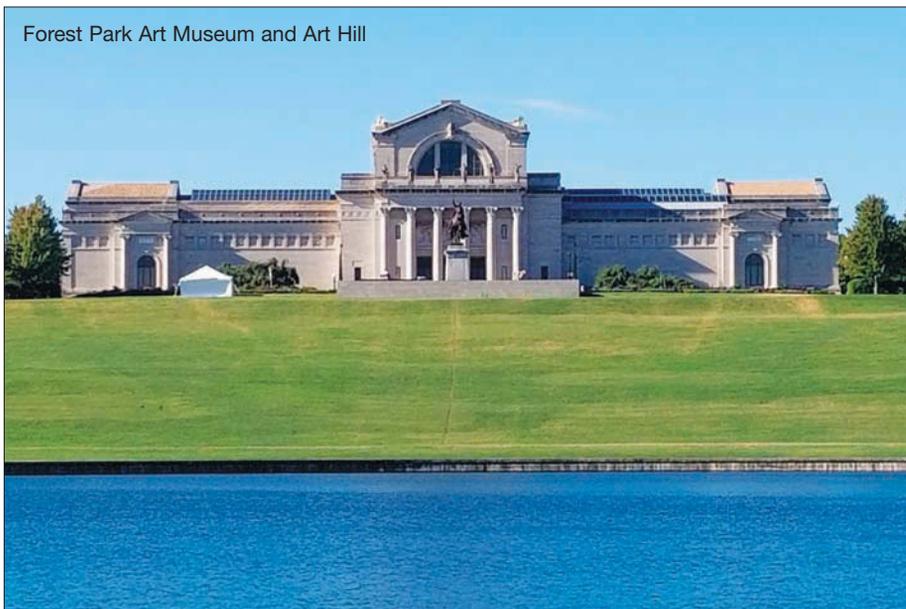


Photo: Pamela Brick

Chuck Berry Statue



Forest Park Art Museum and Art Hill

Photo: Rich Rubin



Union Station

Photo: aceshot1

(www.stlouiswalkoffame.org) on Delmar Blvd. Here you'll find tributes to a roster of local luminaries from Chuck Berry (there's also a statue of him) and Scott Joplin to Maya Angelou, Tina Turner, Vincent Price, and The Rockettes (yes, they began in St. Louis). While you're at it, stop in **Blueprint Coffee** (6225 Delmar Blvd. Tel: 314-266-6808. www.blueprintcoffee.com) for the absolute best coffee in St. Louis.

For flora fans, Forest Park isn't the only major spot: there's also **Tower Grove Park** (4256 Magnolia Ave. Tel: 314-771-2679. www.towergrovepark.org), and the next-door **Missouri Botanical Garden** (4344 Shaw Blvd. Tel: 314-5770-5100. www.missouribotanicalgarden.org). In

Tower Grove, I wander through acres of ponds covered with lily pads, gliding geese, low stonewalls, and pathways past Victorian pergolas.

In the Botanical Garden, I roam past the many environments of this wonder that's been open since 1859: Japanese, English Woodland, Ottoman, and Chinese gardens, camelias, azalea, and lotus gardens. I visit the Climatron, a 1960 geodesic dome that holds plants from a variety of tropical locales, where I stroll among ginger lilies, baobab, palm, and banyan trees, past glass flamingoes reposing among the water lettuce. It's one of my favorite spots in the city, and always has been.

I don't know about you, but all this walking makes me hungry, and luckily, some of the best dining is on South Grand, on the southeastern edge of Tower Grove Park. Here you'll find a diverse array of offerings, from the Vietnamese food at **Pho Grande** (3195 S. Grand Blvd. Tel: 314-664-7435. www.phogrand.com), to the winning **Guerrilla Street Food** (3559 Arsenal St. Tel: 314-529-1328. www.guerrillastreetfood.com), at the corner of Arsenal and Grand, where Filipino street food is given a lift in such classics as lumpia, chicken adobo, and their specialty, *The Flying Pig* (pulled pork seasoned with Sriracha, hoisin, and calamansi). They began life as a food truck and with the great food, reasonable prices, and amazingly nice staff, it's easy to see why they've become a hit.

For Sunday brunch or coffee any day, LGBT-friendly **MoKaBe's Coffeehouse** (3606 Arsenal St. Tel: 314-865-2009. www.mokabes-coffeehouse.squarespace.com), diagonally across the street from Guerrilla Street Food, is always fun, whether your order a "Big Al's Buttery Nipple" (butterscotch/caramel latte), strawberry lemonade, or plain-old coffee. Enjoy them on two floors with signs that proclaim "Gender is a lie," "Darwin loves you," and (my favorite) "Read a f**king book."

Just five minutes from South Grand, **Egg Restaurant** (2200 Gravois Ave. Tel: 314-202-8244. www.eggstl.com) offers a breakfast/brunch menu that spans the globe, from Benedicts made with their fantastic cornbread to breakfast tacos or (my favorite) chakchouka, a spicy vegetable or beef stew that hails from Tunisia, as does the gracious and welcoming owner. It's

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worth the slight detour from some of the downtown sites for a breakfast that will get you ready to start the day satisfied. Note: just upstairs from Egg, **Shock City Studios** (2200 Gravois Ave. Tel: 314-771-3099. www.shockcitystudios.com), a recording studio that's hosted everyone from Diddy to *The Voice*, is quickly becoming St. Louis' leading recording studio. Give them a call and see if you can arrange a tour.

But I digress. Let's keep on with our gourmandizing. One major change since my youth is that St. Louis now has a great, and varied, dining scene. Be sure to visit prominent favorites as **Sidney Street Café** (2000 Sidney St. Tel: 314-771-5777. www.sidneystreet-cafestl.com), where James Beard-award-winning chef Kevin Nashan dishes up constantly

surprising and creative cuisine. Another James Beard-winner, Gerard Craft, recently opened **Cinder House** (999 North 2nd St. Tel: 314-881-5759. www.cinderhousetl.com) in the Four Seasons, with a focus on grilling and a Latin and international menu from piri piri chicken to Moqueca seafood stew (and the best fries in history, just sayin'), along with glorious views over the city.

In the Cortex, a high-tech development near Washington University, **Vicia** (4260 Forest Park Ave. Tel: 314-553-9239. www.viciarestaurant.com) beckons with an inventive menu, and my lunch is an amazing wheatberry salad and tartine that are as beautiful as the wide-open, gorgeous space. In the Central West End I enjoy **Scape** (48 Maryland Plaza. Tel: 314-

361-7227. www.scapestl.com) for its casual bistro atmosphere that's great for brunch or dinner. In Clayton lies **Revel Kitchen** (7447 Forsyth Blvd. Tel: 314-597-1199. www.eatrevelkitchen.com), where you'll order at the counter, building your dish from base (bowl, wrap, salad, eggs) to protein (chicken, pulled pork, "mofu tofu," etc.) and a variety of seasonings from southern to Asian to Latin to Mediterranean. Toss in an order of fabulous "cauliflower tots," and a few minutes later they'll bring the fresh and amazing food, overseen by the former team chef for the St. Louis Cardinals.

Anyone eating their way through St. Louis will want to visit The Hill, the city's Italian neighborhood. Here, **Gian-Tony's Ristorante** (5653 Daggett Ave. Tel: 314-772-4893. www.giantonys.com) has a comfy atmosphere and great Italian food, including toasted ravioli, which is ravioli coated in breadcrumbs and deep-fried, a St. Louis specialty. Another local favorite is Goey Butter Cake, a rich, buttery cake with a top layer that's even richer, more buttery, and, well, goey. It's possibly my favorite caloric splurge in the world, and you can find a wide variety of flavors at **Park Avenue Coffee** (1919 Park Avenue. Tel: 314-621-4020. www.parkavenuecoffee.com), both to enjoy by the slice or ship home.

Of course, no visit to St. Louis is complete without a trip to the one-and-only **Ted Drewes Frozen Custard** (6726 Chippewa St. Tel: 314-481-2652. www.tedrewes.com), where your "concrete" will be handed to you upside-down to show that it's so thick it won't dribble out of the cup.

These are St. Louis traditions that, like many, keep on going even as new ones pop up. If St. Louis has changed immensely since I grew up here, it's also stayed the same in some important ways. Places grow out of what was already here, in a kind of architectural recycling that builds on a legendary past without remaining stuck in it. So every time I'm tempted to say "wow, this is like a different city," I remind myself, well, it's not really. Every time I savor a meal at an amazingly good restaurant, or see rainbow flags flying, or walk down once-empty streets now vibrant with life, I think, it really has gotten better, hasn't it? Which is followed, inevitably by the thought, well, maybe I'm the one who's gotten better. With any luck, both are true. ■



Gateway Arch

Photo: Lane V. Erickson

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MONEY SAVING TIPS FOR YOUR DESTINATION WEDDING

by H. Luiz Martinez

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all state bans on same-sex marriage, legalized it in all fifty states, and required states to honor out-of-state same-sex marriage licenses. Hooray for us! These days, we're getting married in droves, and since I'm a renowned savvy spender, everyone comes to me for budget advice on travel, hotels, parties, and weddings, especially destination weddings. Now, I am not an official wedding planner (nor do I aspire to be one), but I have helped many close friends and countless family members plan their Special Day—all who were on strict budgets. That being said, if you can afford an official wedding planner, you should go right ahead and use one. Keep in mind that property wedding planners for destination weddings are usually included with your wedding booking. Wedding planners can really manage your budget, and stress levels, better than anyone else can. Just be sure to be completely honest about your budget from your initial conversation, expect some mark ups, and to spend a little more than anticipated. Here are my money saving tips to help you as you plan your destination wedding.

Manage Stress, Time, and Expectations

My number one tip, hands down, is to realistically manage your stress, time, and expectations. There is nothing more stressful than planning a wedding on your own, and if you're planning a *destination* wedding, that stress may rise to even higher levels. How you handle yourself will make all the difference on your special day. There are things that are just out of your control, but if you're realistic you will find that there are also things within your control that you can manage.

For instance, you cannot control the weather but you can make sure not to have your destination wedding during the hurricane season. Although it would be cheaper to have your day during hurricane season, expect to shell out some big bucks for tents if you're having it outdoors.

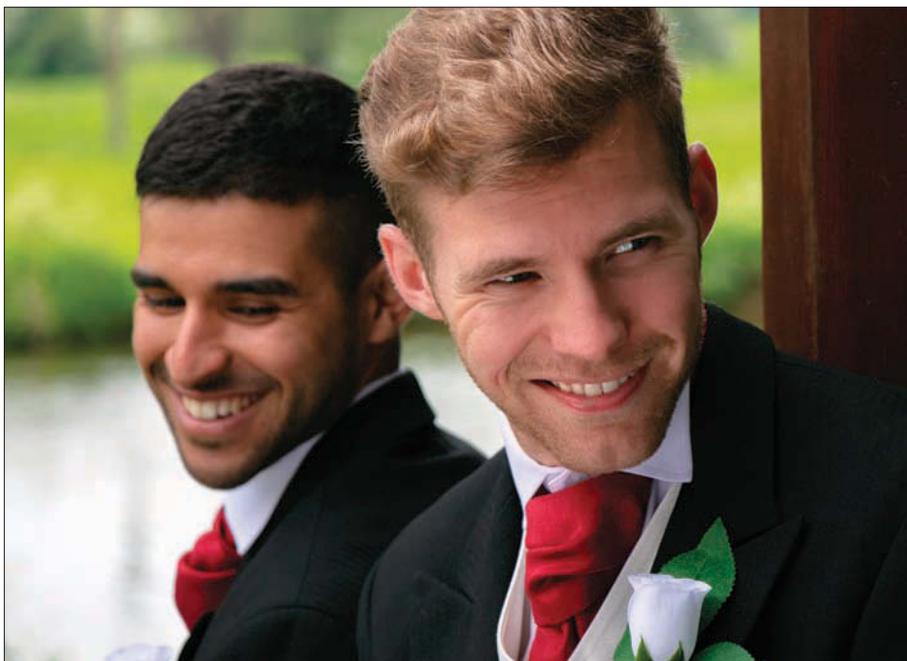


Photo: Tony Marturano

Also, you need to know that you are not going to have a luxurious destination wedding for 100 guests on a small budget. However, your destination property may be able to offer a tasteful Champagne or Prosecco party with light fares for around 30 guests, or have a beautiful brunch or barbeque grill party for less.

Managing your time during your destination wedding can be tricky. You need time with your property wedding planner, vendors if any, your wedding guests, and with the person you will be marrying (before and after your wedding day). I always suggest to the couple that they have breakfast in their hotel room. This way you have some alone time with each other away from the hustle and bustle.

Set up must-attend appointments for roughly the same time every day and as early as possible, preferably before noon. This way you have time to join your guests on excursions, spa treatments, and lunch or dinner. There's no need to go through the expense of a rehearsal dinner either. Also, tell your guests to not call you on your mobile phone

unless it's an emergency. Chronic phone calls, rings, pings, and alerts can escalate already stressed levels.

I think Latino and Latin American cultures have wedding expenses all figured out. They have "Godfathers" and "Godmothers" *paying* for almost everything. There's usually the *Godfather of the Cake* or the *Godmother of the Flowers* and so on. I've been the *Godfather of the Wedding Hall* a few times in my day. The people for these roles are usually close family members and friends. Now, that's a financial stress reliever if there ever was one!

Keep in mind that when planning your special day, everything with the word "wedding" in front of it (wedding cake, wedding dress, wedding ceremony, etc.) is going to be marked up 3-5 times more than what you would normally pay. Either you can afford it or you can't, but try not to stress over it. At the last destination wedding I attended in the Caribbean, the wedding cake was priced at \$1,500 for 3-tier cake, but the grooms had no idea until I pointed it out in the fine print. They thought it was included, but the jargon on their contract said that it would be additional



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to the cost of the food served at the reception. They were really on a tight budget, so the property allowed them to nix the cake.

Luckily, I tracked down a bakery in the area and asked them if they could make three dozen cupcakes (we had 30 in the wedding party). They said that it would be easy for them to do it, but why the urgency? After I explained, they laughed and told me to come pick up the cupcakes the morning of the wedding and not to give it a second thought. I asked for the price and said it would be \$100. I was floored and agreed to pick up the cupcakes three days later. When I arrived at the bakery, there were three boxes of 36 beautiful cupcakes where the tops looked like mini 3-tier wedding cake.

On top of each one was a beautiful sugar white flower. The Baker even threw in a larger cupcake that was topped by 2 intertwined white-chocolate hearts for the grooms to share. They even loaned me a white 3-tiered cake stand to display the cupcakes. I was so amazed I gave them \$150 instead of \$100. The grooms were ecstatic and the rest of the guests thought it was such a great-tasting alternative to the traditional wedding cake.

Wedding Traditions

A lot of traditions for weddings are heteronormative so do not get hung up on them. In fact use it to your advantage. For the men, a couple of tailored suits you may already have will do just fine. However, for destination

weddings in tropical weather conditions, I see a lot of linen shorts on men, unconstructed lightweight blazers, crisp shirts (even tee shirts) and sandals, so you can save a lot on your wedding wardrobe. There are no expensive wedding dresses to buy either. The average wedding dress in the US costs an average of \$1,630 according to studies and can reach a price of up to \$8,000 easily. However, women can save here too: the “white wedding dress” does not have to be a wedding dress, or even a dress, nor does it have to be white.

You get to make your own traditions so don't stress over it. Do you really need a couple of Best Men or a pair of Maids of Honor? Groomsmen? Bridesmaids? Please! Let your family and friends just attend and don't give them the pressure, stress, and sometimes additional expenses associated with those roles. Your Besties can/may just give you a heart-felt toast on your special day.

And don't get caught up in gender-role traditions. Do not worry about who's going to be the one walking down the aisle or who is going to be waiting. You both can walk down the aisle or it will be just as lovely if you're both already standing at the alter. The sooner we can get to the champagne the better.

Cut Out Costly Extras

There are many costly extras for weddings that can eat into your budget. You should be aware that guests are not really interested in these “extras” as much as you may think.

The average cost of printed wedding invitations start at about \$450, and the price climbs when you add Save the Date Cards, RSVP Cards, mailing stamps (to and fro), and the more guests you have, the more it'll cost. The price climbs even higher if you want embossing, raised lettering, velum sheets, bows, bells and all the whistles. Some planners tell me that their clients have spent up to \$1,200 dollars on invitations; not to mention the time spent on choosing the right paper, the perfect font, the best format, beautiful colors, and everything else too. I'm hesitant to admit that although many invitations I have received were very beautiful, it ended up in the trash after a couple of days and I know that's what others do too.

Destination wedding invitations should be sent 9 to 12 months before the date so that intended guests have enough time to plan. Since these types of weddings are usually



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WickedtheMusical.com



Photo: Africa Studio.

smaller, I suggest that you make a beautiful printed-from-home invitation that includes a social media link to your wedding page or closed group on social media. On the invitation, have instructions on how they can access your wedding page and grant them more information there. On the webpage is where you can place all pertinent information. RSVPs, travel information, group hotel rates, maps, things to do, and airport information. Another helpful detail to include is the ceremony's specific location (beach, lawn, pool, hall, etc.) so guests know how to properly dress for the occasion.

Update guests via this webpage as well. With the money you'll save by not purchasing expensive traditional invitations, you can purchase nice welcome gifts for your guests. One of the best welcome gifts I've received was a small canvas beach bag. Inside I found a large bottle of water, a big tube of sunscreen, great sunglasses, a package of trail mix, and a bright pink beach towel rolled up and held together with raffia. Attached to the raffia was a lovely note. It was so cute, and when I went down to the beach I saw the same bright pink towels everywhere. I thought that was so clever! What an easy way to spot other wedding guests before the big day. I introduced myself and met many hunks on the beach, all thanks to my bright pink towel.

Program pamphlets and guest books are huge wastes of money. I've seen programs pamphlets blowing onto the beautiful sands of oceanfront ceremonies at almost every

destination wedding I've attended or witnessed from my balcony. Your guests leave them on the chairs or fold them in a pockets or purses to later discard them in the trash. Your guests are smart enough to catch on to the festivities without reading what comes next, so save the expense. The same goes for your guest book. I've seen people line up for guest books because either a bridesmaid or maid of honor insisted on making guest sign it. But you know what eventually happens? People get tired of waiting in line and they head for the bar instead. So save some money and ditch the guest book.

As far as wedding favors go, no one is really going to keep them, except maybe your parents and new in-laws. Everyone else is just going to toss it so save yourself the expense of having these made. If you must have a wedding favor at your destination wedding, let it be small for easy packing. One of the wedding favors I have kept was a small message in a bottle filled with local sand, a couple of tiny shells and a little sheet of velum with my name on it and the number 2 (it also doubled as my place card). The two brides later told me that one of their sisters brought the tiny bottles (20 total that came with cork stoppers), a package of tiny shells, a pre-printed page with all the guests names, onto the plane with her. Once she arrived on the property, she collected sand from the very beach where the celebration was to be held. She put them together and had them ready for the seating chart. I was so

enamored with the cute bottles that the sister told me she paid about \$15 for the materials—and the sand was free!

Invest in Food & Drink

Guests really just want to see the happy grooms or brides in wedded bliss, so be sure to keep your ceremony short—around 30 minutes is perfect. I once attended a destination wedding that lasted over 2 hours. No one was comfortable or happy, and half the guests were asleep underneath the Caribbean sun. Invest your time in keeping the ceremony short and the good vibes will continue to roll.

The food and drinks are where you should really invest your money. Know your guests. If they are wine drinkers, have a couple of bottles of reds and a couple of whites on ice at each table. Have sparkling water for those guests who do not drink alcohol. That's a great way to save on bar costs as great-tasting bottles of wines need not be so expensive. Now, if you have guests who prefer cocktails, a cocktail bar with 2 to 3 signature drinks named after the happy couple and destination is always fun. Just be sure to offer rum, vodka and/or tequila varieties differentiating the cocktails. That'll be way less expensive than paying for a completely open bar.

An incredible meal is what's really memorable about a wedding. Guests will forgive almost anything if the food is wonderful. Be sure to have great tasting vegetarian and vegan selections, and to offer options for those with common allergies, like gluten and nuts. Ask on your webpage who has any dietary restrictions and relay that message to your property wedding planner, or directly to the Chef. Just be sure to tell them to make those meals just as spectacular as the rest. I once saw a friend, who is vegetarian, get served a bowl of broccoli as her meal. She was stunned. I silently scooped up her plate and headed to the kitchen. I explained to the Sous Chef what had happened and he apologized (one of the prep cooks sent the broccoli out and even the Sous Chef couldn't believe it). He said that he would take care of it. About 15 minutes later, the very same Sous Chef came to the table with a beautiful plate. My friend was excited to see a large grilled Portobello mushroom cap, roasted beet slices, a fresh avocado with delicately sautéed rapini (broccoli rabe) on top of a citrus-scented quinoa. It looked so amazing I said to myself: where's my vegetarian plate!? ■

A close-up photograph of two men smiling warmly at the camera. They are wearing a red, blue, and white plaid shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a bright sky. The text 'ASK A LOCAL' is in white, and 'SULLIVAN CATSKILLS' is in large green letters, both overlaid on the top half of the image.

ASK A LOCAL

SULLIVAN CATSKILLS

If you want to know what makes Sullivan Catskills such a special place to visit, ask a local—and that's just what we did. Join us as we explore this beautiful and exciting part of New York State with three LGBTQ individuals who live, work, play, and create here. The Sullivan Catskills are filled with many wonderful things just waiting to be experienced and enjoyed. From unique local business to art galleries, museums, theatre, scenic tours, farm to fork restaurants, and spectacular adventures in nature, there is truly something for everyone in this fascinating part of the USA.

ask a local **sullivan catskills****Tell us about yourself and what you do for a living?**

I'm the Executive Chef and Catering Director at **The Neversink General Store**, a local company based in the tiny town of Neversink, New York. Our mission is to serve the community and visitors with a combination of homemade food and sophisticated dishes that one usually finds in bigger cities. We often work with local farmers and suppliers to enrich our menus. My education is based on French culinary, so I tend to prepare my dishes with big flair, lots of visual impact and out of the ordinary flavors. Before I moved permanently to the Catskill Mountains, I worked for legendary Chef Jean George, in Manhattan, and mastered the essence of great food and a total respect for the ingredients.

How long have you been living in Sullivan Catskills?

I've been in Neversink for almost three years, and the rest of Sullivan County for 20 years. My husband Paul and I purchased our first weekend home here in 1999, when we were considered the exotic Prada-wearing gays that everybody fantasized had caviar brunches by candlelight.

If you moved from somewhere else, what influenced your decision to move here?

I was brought in from Manhattan with the freedom to explore a whole range of food experiences. I was born in the Czech Republic and grew up in Brazil. Having lived most of my life in big cities, the opportunity to make a difference in a small community is very gratifying to me.

What are your favorite places to go for a cocktail and/or dinner?

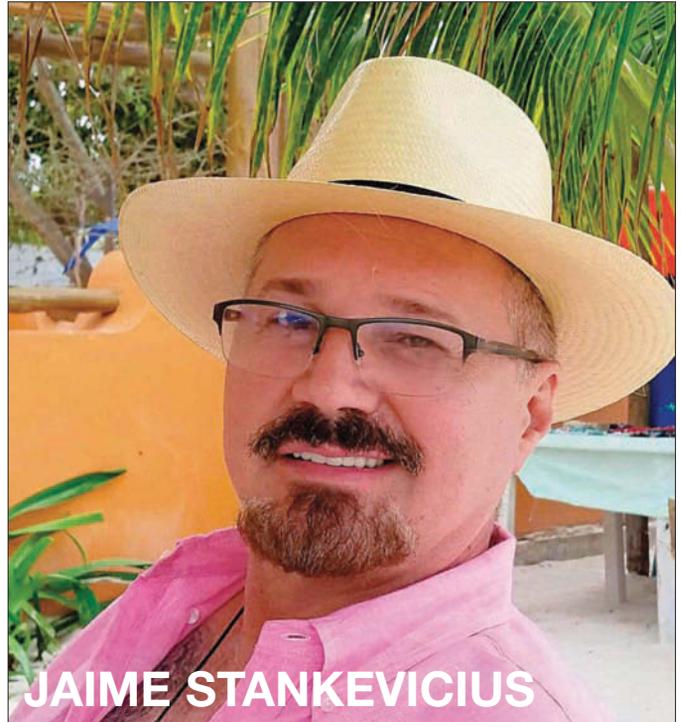
My favorite places in the area for cocktails and dinners, besides my own house are **Henning's Local** and **The Catskill Brewery**. There is also a very charming place in Callicoon called **The Wine Merchant**, which has a great wine selection for sale and a small tapas restaurant next to it. Once a week the chef offers a one-dish meal, usually an amazing pasta. Quite charming!

What cultural attractions are a must see for visitors?

Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is our anchoring cultural space here in Sullivan County, with concerts all summer long and lots of special events. Right now, in partnership with Bethel Woods, we are planning a Brazilian Carnival event for later this year, with typical Brazilian food and a group of samba musicians and dancers. This year, Bethel Woods is organizing a fantastic line-up of events to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Woodstock Festival that happened in the very land where Bethel Woods is.

A friend is coming to Sullivan Catskills for the first time... Please describe the perfect weekend.

I would start my weekend with kayaking at **Neversink Reservoir**, one of the main sources of drinking water for New York City. If you're hungry after all the exercise, I would drive a quick mile to the cute BBQ Shack at **The Neversink General Store** to try the

**JAIME STANKEVICIUS**

best brisket and other smoked meats in all of upstate New York! After a nice-relaxing siesta contemplating the Catskill Mountains, I would go for a relaxing swim at the famous **Blue Hole**, on Peakmoose Road.

The next day should start as a brunch with friends (we do cook at home a lot around here and almost everybody grows a vegetable garden), then a great hike to the **Giant Ledge** on Frost Valley Road. Some antiquing in Ulster County is the best way to end a perfect weekend.

What are the best places to truly enjoy the natural beauty of the area?

A drive on **Route 97** along the **Delaware River**, which is breathtaking all the way. My first country house was in Delaware County. Nobody thinks New York State can be so green and exuberant!

What is your favorite time of year in Sullivan Catskills and why?

For me it is summer, with all the outdoor activities, farmers markets, antiquing, yard sales, BBQs, Bethel Wood's shows, long hikes, biking, and swimming... But our Autumns are also a spectacular feast for the eyes. The change of colors in the foliage is something you'll never forget.

What's one souvenir to bring back for friends or family?

We are in maple country. Our maple syrup is unbelievable and I've never presented anyone with it who didn't go cuckoo for the sweet treat.

Please finish this sentence: Don't leave Sullivan Catskills without...

...planning your next trip back!



FRANKLIN TRAPP

Tell us about yourself and what you do for a living?

I am the owner and Producing Artistic Director of **The Forestburgh Playhouse**. In my past life I worked as an actor out of NYC, working regionally and touring nationally. After about 6 years in that business, I decided to leave the theatre and went to law school at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. I then moved to Atlanta, GA and practiced law for a corporate law firm for 6 years. In my 5th year of practice, I received a phone call from the former owner of the Forestburgh Playhouse (where I had worked as a young actor) and he mentioned that he was selling the theatre and thought I might be interested in taking over the business. After much thought, and thanks to the encouragement of my husband John, the call of the theatre and the Catskills proved irresistible and here I am today! In addition to running the Playhouse, I am also the owner of the **Forestburgh Tavern**, which is adjacent to the Playhouse and is a restaurant/bar/event space where we perform cabarets, host events, and hold our annual Fall Series which includes live music, drag shows, comedy, and our annual production *The Rocky Horror Show* live!

How long have you been living in Sullivan Catskills?

I moved in 2014 to the Sullivan Catskills when I became owner/Producer of the Forestburgh Playhouse.

If you moved from somewhere else, what influenced your decision to move here?

I moved to the Sullivan Catskills from Atlanta, Georgia and was drawn here because of the opportunity to become a small business owner and live in a gorgeous area.

What are your favorite places to go for a cocktail and/or dinner?

We love to go to **Cochecton Fire Station** for craft cocktails and wonderful food. In addition, we love **Henning's Local**, which is a farm to table restaurant, and **The Heron**, which is a fabulous restaurant right on the Delaware River. For a fun night out, it is always a blast to go to the bar at the **Stickett Inn** in Barryville. We are extremely lucky up here as the list of great eateries is pretty long. More of our favorites include **The DeBruce**, and **Solaia**, which is a charming Italian restaurant. Of course, one of our favorite spots is the Forestburgh Tavern, but we are a little bit biased!

What cultural attractions are a must see for visitors?

Visitors to Sullivan County should make sure to visit **Bethel Woods Center for the Arts** to enjoy the site of the Woodstock Concert (the Woodstock museum is a gem); enjoying the natural beauty of the Delaware River and our gorgeous lakes; and bald eagle watching is a must. We have a plethora of distilleries and small craft businesses to explore as well.

A friend is coming to Sullivan Catskills for the first time... Please describe the perfect weekend.

Drive along the scenic by-way of the Delaware River to one of our charming Catskills bed and breakfasts; **Ecce** is a marvelous B&B nestled high on a cliff above the river with unparalleled views. An afternoon floating down the river, followed by a delightful meal at one of our many farm to table restaurants, and of course a show and cabaret at the Forestburgh Playhouse. On Sunday, enjoying one of our many farmer's markets is a great way to start the day, followed by brunch and a hike or a zip line adventure.

What are the best places to truly enjoy the natural beauty of the area?

Scenic-byway of **Delaware River**, **Swinging Bridge Lake** for eagle watching and boating, **Roscoe** and **Livingston Manor** for incredible fly fishing and mountain views.

What is your favorite time of year in Sullivan Catskills and why?

Fall. The magic of the vibrant leaves and crisp cool weather makes Sullivan County an ideal destination.

What's one souvenir to bring back for friends or family?

A spirit from **Prohibition Distillery**—the bourbon is amazing.

ask a local **sullivan catskills**

CLAIRE MARIN



Photo: David White Studio NYC

Tell us about yourself and what you do for a living?

I am a serial entrepreneur. After a 15-year career in publishing in NYC I started a business called **Catskill Provisions** in 2010 based in Long Eddy NY. The pillar at CP is honey. I am an avid beekeeper and want to do all I can to bring awareness to the environmental plight afflicting all pollinators today. They are crucial to our survival and are amazing beings. I also have been training in distilling spirits and right now as I write this I am opening my own distillery in Long Eddy. With a second branch to open late Summer 2019 in Callicoon NY, which will be open to the public! We will make our NY Honey Rye Whiskey, Pollinator Vodka, and Pollinator Gin from locally sourced non-GMO grains. This past Fall we planted our own rye wheat so this Spring we will harvest that and truly be grain to glass!

How long have you been living in Sullivan Catskills?

I came here for the first time 15 years ago. My girlfriend at the time, now my wife, had a house here she had bought 5 years prior to my arrival. I feel in love with it all!

If you moved from somewhere else, what influenced your decision to move here?

I didn't actually move here full time. I still have an apartment in NYC, but I spend more and more time here, which was my goal all along. I feel much more inspired here by the space we have and the closeness to nature. If you have something you do that you are passionate about and can do it here in Sullivan County, it is an ideal place to do it. It is affordable and gorgeous!

What are your favorite places to go for a cocktail and/or dinner?

Well there are a few amazing spots here! **Cochection Fire Station** is a wonderful new spot for cocktails and inventive food, located in Cochection NY. **The Heron** in Narrowsburg NY is awesome for cocktails and food along the Delaware River. Get a table outside if you can and sit high above a gorgeous spot of the river. For a bigger group, **Henning's Local** in Cochection serves up some of the best trout dishes in the area. In Callicoon, NY there is a wonderful spot called **Callicoon Wine Merchant**. Robin the proprietor chef delights with his inventive delicious tapas and he selects affordable delicious wines to go along with them. For brunch, lunch or dinner the **North Branch Inn** located in North Branch NY is a must. It's a small, quaint hotel with a restaurant that currently has one of my favorite chefs in the area, Chef Jay. Then in Livingston Manor there are a couple of spots I love. **Main Street Farm** for casual breakfast and lunch served in a local food market is one. **The Kaatskeller** is across the street for awesome pizza and cocktails. Right outside of Livingston Manor, the **DeBruce** has a bar room for casual fare and great cocktails which is fab, and they also serve a multi course more formal dinner upstairs. If you find yourself in Shandeleer, NY go to the **Arnold House** for cocktails lunch or dinner. If you're in the mood for a little Vegas style casino action the new **Resorts World Catskills** is your place with several dining options, a great pool and spa and hotel as well.

What cultural attractions are a must see for visitors?

There are so many! I'm going to list a few you must see...There are many great hikes in Sullivan county of course and kayaking down the Delaware is an amazing experience. But let's get cultural: At **Bethel Woods Center for the Arts** you can explore the museum focusing on the impact Woodstock music festival had on many aspects of our lives. The actual music festival in 1969 was staged at Yasgur Farm in Bethel NY. The **Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum** in Livingston Manor is great. This area boasts having invented fly fishing in the USA! The **Fort Delaware Museum** depicts life in colonial times in the area. **Forestburgh Playhouse** is a great spot to catch some Summer theater. The **Delaware Valley Arts Alliance** always has wonderful exhibits by really good local artists and it is located in Narrowsburg, NY. If you're into catching a good current film the **Callicoon Theater** built in 1948 is the oldest continuously operated movie theater in Sullivan County and it's awesome. Check out what the **Tusten Theater** in Narrowsburg has going on when you're planning to visit. The **Callicoon Art Walk** held each October is pretty amazing and only getting better every year.

A friend is coming to Sullivan Catskills for the first time...Please describe the perfect weekend.

Kayaking is a must if you are into being outdoors with nature. You will see eagles, hawks, and the peaceful nature of the area is at its best. Go for lunch at one of the spots I mentioned above as they are all really, really good. Walk the town you find yourself in during the day and do some shopping, then for dinner head to another town I mention above as they are all between 20 and 45 minutes away from each other. Try to schedule a nature walk with Laura Silverman of the **Outside Institute** as she knows more about every indigenous plant and wildlife than anyone else I know. Head to your hotel or AirBnB and reflect on all your experience for the day. Get up the next day and do it again!

What is your favorite time of year in Sullivan Catskills and why?

I have always said that I don't come here for the weather! All seasons are amazing, but if you make me choose then I would say I love Summer here because nothing is better than the slow hours of a beautiful Summer day. Cooking and eating outside is one of my very favorite things to do with friends and family. But in the Fall, around the first to second week in October, you are absolutely wowed by the colors exhibited here by every tree changing from its Summer green to vibrant oranges, reds, and yellows.

What's one souvenir to bring back for friends or family?

The honey, apple cider vinegar, and maple syrup here are exceptional. I can't help but suggest our own of course, but there are many producers in the area that are wonderful.

Please finish this sentence: Don't leave Sullivan Catskills without...

Getting close to the Delaware River for a while and spotting a pair of bald eagles!



Out & About in British Columbia

Whistler and Vancouver, Canada

by Lawrence Ferber



Photo: Simona Koz

Alta Lake in Whistler, BC, Canada

The seaplane jerks, spasms, and plunges. I'm the only passenger in this seaplane, flying from Vancouver to Whistler, British Columbia on a cloudy September day, and the pilot grabs a handle thingee in the plane's lower center (I'm aviation illiterate) and shifts it around. My neurotic mind races. *What will that do? What is the strategy?? Are there parachutes???* I remember what a flight attendant friend once told me: treat turbulence like a crazy theme park thrill ride, and enjoy it! Thing is, *I LOATHE THRILL RIDES!!!*

To distract myself, I fixate on the utterly gorgeous scenery surrounding the compact, shuddering aircraft. Green mountains rich with splotches of bright orange, red, and yellow autumn leaves, the sea-to-sky highway, and glittering water below. Finally, things calm down, the previously grey sky gives way to a near cobalt blue, and upon landing on Green Lake, my pilot from **Harbour Air Seaplanes** (1055 Canada Place. Tel: (604) 274-1277. www.harbourair.com) smiles and says, "Have a great time in Whistler."

This was my first encounter with choppy air when taking a seaplane, which honestly is the most fabulous, timesaving, smooth (with rare exceptions) method to travel if you're not luggage-heavy.

This ski resort town that played host to the 2010 Winter Olympics games and athletes, Whistler and Blackcomb Mountain is now a popular recreation destination all year, and it's exceptionally LGBTQ-friendly, with a dedicated tourism website for LGBTQ visitors (www.whistler.com/gay-friendly-whistler), and the annual **Whistler Pride and Ski Festival** (www.whistlerpride.com).

"It's a very athletic place, and there's a lot of eye candy to be had!" adds Pride's Dean Nelson. "It has one of the world's best mountain bike parks, and [during summer] these hot half-naked guys come off and hose themselves down at the end of the day! We also have this cute little lake called Lost Lake, and a lot of beautiful gay 'wildlife' to be seen there. If you're into that kind of thing!"

The next edition of Whistler Pride is scheduled for January 26th to February 2nd, 2020. Annual attendance is around 3,000, and programming includes daily guided skiing and snowboarding groups, après ski sessions, an indoor pool party, dances, entertainment, and jubilant rainbow flag-waving march down the slopes and through Whistler village. Ski gear is readily available for rental, and Nelson recommends taking ski lessons in advance for an edge on the slopes.

My visit is during a September weekend, and even with no special events on the calendar, Whistler is buzzing with visitors, including loads of LGBTQ couples, some holding hands romantically while strolling the well-designed, shop-lined side-



Harbour Air Seaplane Taking Off From Vancouver

Photo: Alex, JW Robinson

walks of Whistler Village.

I check into the 528-room **Fairmont Chateau Whistler** (4599 Chateau Blvd. Whistler. Tel: (604) 938-8000. www.fairmont.com/whistler), head to its casual Portobello Market and bakery for a really tasty, made-to-order porchetta sandwich with as much pork crackling as I'm legally allowed, fresh pastry, and a craft beverage. I'm impressed by the selection of local edibles on offer in the market, which includes small batch chocolate bars from the Fairmont's own pastry chef, Anup Chaubal, including the blonde-toned 35-percent cacao Honeybear, created with the property's rooftop apiary honey.

Come evening, I'll savor mixology that incorporates house-infused spirits at The Mallard Lounge bar, where BC craft spirits and wines, many of which are hard to find beyond their respective distilleries and wineries, can be found just across from the Fairmont at **Blackcomb Liquor Store** (1-4573 Chateau Blvd. Tel: (604) 932-9795. www.blackcombliquorstore.com), which hosts tastings on Fridays and Saturdays.

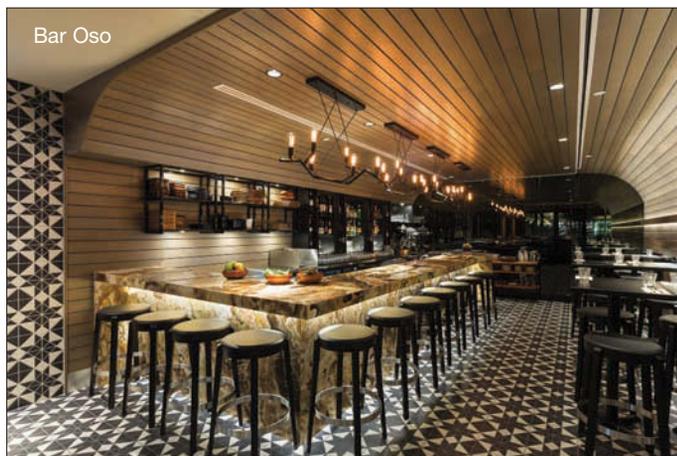
I also swing by the warm and woody, all-suite, lakeside **Nita Lake Lodge** (2131 Lake Placid Rd. Tel: (604) 966-5700. www.nitalakelodge.com) for a treatment at its organic spa. A sign in the lobby announces that a juvenile black bear has been spotted around the area and offers "tips on being bear smart: "If the bear does not flee, make yourself appear very large." Fortunately, I enjoy my spa and tasty lunch at the Cure Lounge & Patio without ursine intervention, and if you happen to be a resident of Washington state or BC, you're entitled to a 20% PNW resident discount stays at Nita Lodge.

Although I had no interest in staying at the Japanese capsule style **Pangea Pod Hotel** (4333 Sunrise Alley. Tel: (844) 726-4329. www.pangeapod.com), which opened in 2018 and is budget-friendly (\$44-\$127 per night), I did enjoy a near perfect Eggs Benedict breakfast with village view there en route to my favorite non-sports related Whistler attraction, the Audain Art Museum (4350 Blackcomb Way, Whistler. Tel: (604) 962-0413. www.audainartmuseum.com).

Founded by philanthropist Michael Audain and opened in 2016, its permanent collection represents a world-class survey of BC art, from the 18th Century to present, including LGBTQ and cutting edge First Nations' work.

Take in more First Nations perspective, knowledge, and creativity at **First Nations Museum at Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre** (4584 Blackcomb Way, Whistler. Tel: (604) 964-0990. www.slcc.ca).

When it comes to dining, BC's outstanding Toptable Group of restaurants has two Whistler venues I adored and gained weight in. **Bar Oso** (150-4222 Village Square. Tel: (604) 962-4540. www.baroso.ca), is where handsome Madrid-born chef Jorge Munoz Santos prepares inventive, crazily yummy tapas alongside craft cocktails in cozily slick retro-modern surroundings.



Bar Oso

Photo: Erna Peter



Photo: Tourism Whistler, Justa Jeskova

Whistler Pride includes daily guided skiing and snowboarding groups, après ski sessions, an indoor pool party, dances, entertainment, and a jubilant rainbow flag-waving march down the slopes and through Whistler village.

The more formal, spacious Italian venue, **Il Caminetto** (4242 Village Stroll. Tel: (604) 932-4442. www.ilcaminetto.ca) features a fresh, contemporary style of dining where Executive Chef James Walt's regionally focused menu melds Italian and local flavors with artisanal flair.

Returning to Vancouver (by bus), I checked into the brand new 281-room and 48-suite **JW Marriott** (39 Smithe St. Tel: (604) 676-0888. www.marriott.com) located in the gleaming Parq Vancouver (39 Smithe St. Tel: (604) 683-7277. www.parqvancouver.com) casino complex, which opened in late 2017.

Parq is also home to a second hotel, **The Douglas** (45 Smithe St. Tel: (604) 676-0889. www.thedouglasvancouver.com), an Autograph Collection Hotel, which at 188 rooms is more boutiquey with a blend of industrial (lots of bare cement in the rooms) and natural wood accents. The hotel's name is taken from a giant Douglas tree that serves as the front desk, while local Yaletown Distilling Co. provides an exclusive Douglas Fir-infused gin for the room's minibars and the lobby's D/6 Bar cocktails.

I loved the Parq's **Honey Salt** (Tel: (778) 370-8200. www.parqvancouver.com/restaurants/honey-salt) restaurant, a sole Las Vegas carry-over, and the **Lotus Whiskey/Tea Lounge**, serving Singapore's TWG teas and tea-based original cocktails.

The next day I couldn't wait to get on a bicycle and explore nearby False Creek and the city. This has nothing to do with fitness, mind you, but rather the city's 279 miles' worth of bike routes, including protected lanes and scenic public parks and seawall trails. Bike rental company **Spokes** (1798 Georgia St. W. Tel: (604) 688-5141. www.spokesbicyclerentals.com) is a well-oiled machine, guaranteed to always have an array of models available (they stock about 700 bikes), plus helmets (it's the law) and locks. It's located just near an entrance to the seawall trail and must-do Stanley Park route. You can also rent from downtown's **Cycle City Tours** (648 Hornby St. Tel: (604) 618-8826. www.cyclevancouver.com/tours), which includes a fleet of e-bikes and conducts guided tours.

Some notable LGBTQ-friendly hotels offer complimentary bike rentals for guests during daylight hours: **The Loden** (1177 Melville St. Tel: (604) 669-5060. www.theloden.com), **OPUS Vancouver** (322 Davie St. Tel: (604) 642-6787. www.vancouver.opushotel.com), and **Fairmont Pacific Rim** (1038 Canada Place. Tel: (604) 695-5300. www.fairmont.com/pacific-rim-vancouver).

Last year, Fairmont recruited Vancouver drag personality Kendall Gender (www.instagram.com/kendallgender) as its Pride ambassador. Quite the local star, Kendall appears on Thursdays at gay bar and restaurant, **The Junction** (1138 Davie St. Tel: (604) 669-2013. www.junctionpub.com). The



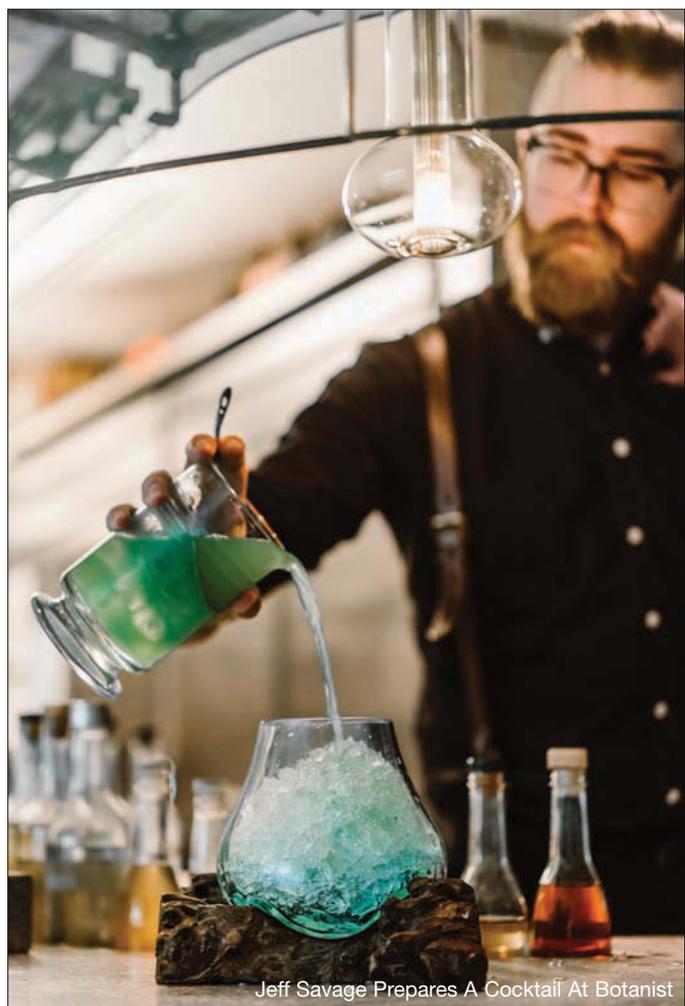
Honey Salt Room at Parq Vancouver

Photo: Bill Milne



Vancouver Really Gay History Tour

Photo: Kirr Marr Photography



Jeff Savage Prepares A Cocktail At Botanist

Junction is located in Vancouver's gayborhood, Davie Village, the history of which is literally traversed during **Forbidden Vancouver's Really Gay History Tour** (www.forbiddenvancouver.ca/really-gay-history-tour).

July 2018 saw the launch of this new walking tour, led by erstwhile Edmonton native, Glenn Tkach. "Forbidden Vancouver deals with histories not included in the history books like prohibition," Tkach told me, "and I thought the city's queer history was a perfect candidate for this treatment and I created this tour." Tkach conducts the tour in a

hard-to-miss pink fedora and delves deep, drawing from research and conversations with people who lived through and witnessed significant chapters in Vancouver's LGBTQ history.

"It covers a broad spectrum of history, from before Vancouver was here, the fur trade, to the present day," Tkach elaborated. "It's almost entirely history you wouldn't otherwise know, including the bombings in the 1980s along Davie. The queer bookstore Little Sisters opened in 1983, just off Davie, and it was bombed multiple times and the perpetrators were never caught or identified. This started in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, and the store was also targeted by customs (officials) in Canada. The only queer bookstore in West Canada! They fought back through the courts, and the store is still there."

Little Sisters (1238 Davie St. Tel: (604) 669-1753. www.littlesisters.ca) is a stop on the tour, plus early clandestine gay cruising spots, bars (aka "beer parlours"), a church, and First Nations "two-spirit" culture is also discussed. "I do the tour in head to toe in pink!" he added. "It's pretty clear some kind of queer event is going on and people don't bat an eye."

One district that isn't included during the downtown and village-focused walk, but Tkach recommends to LGBTQ visitors, is Commercial Drive, which he describes as "a secondary or shadow gay village." "It's very lesbian friendly," he shared. "It's not really a 'gay village' because it doesn't have gay bars, but it's where lesbians found themselves congregating in the 1970s onward, and it was built more on the basis of community, backyard parties and barbecues, and it still remains so. There's no need to be as underground, and there's a more visible lesbian presence."

Tourism Vancouver (www.tourismvancouver.com/plan-your-trip/gay-friendly-vancouver) launched a "meet the locals" campaign last year that spotlights its impressive breadth of LGBTQ diversity represented via its denizens, including First Nations two-spirit fashion designer and dancer Tyler Alan Jacobs; former Syrian refugee and author Danny Ramadan; non-binary artist and Out On Screen (www.outonscreen.com) film festival program coordinator Gavin Kade Somers; and longtime couple and Gayvan.com co-founders Angus Praught and Daichon Nakagawa.

I'm already planning to return this summer for **Vancouver Pride** (www.vancouverpride.ca)—the parade is scheduled for August 4—and to check out "Alternative Pride" from **Vancouver Art and Leisure** (www.vanartleisure.com), which produces a five-day, artist-run event divorced from corporate sponsors and commerciality. While at it, I'll get my hands on the Royal Canadian Mint's newly issued one-dollar coin, aka

loonie, commemorating the 1969 decriminalization of homosexuality.

Also worth adding to your short list for a Vancouver visit: the 202-room **EXchange Hotel Vancouver** (475 Howe St. Tel: (604) 563-4693. www.exchangehotelvan.com). It opened in late 2018 in the former stock exchange building and is the city's first LEED Platinum Heritage Conversion project.

While in Vancouver, make sure to stop by the Fairmont Pacific Rim hotel and dine at its destination-worthy restaurant, **Botanist** (1038 Canada Place. Tel: (604) 695-5500. www.botanistrestaurant.com). Here you will enjoy vibrant flavors and textures from Chef Hector Laguna Pacific Northwest-centric menu and pastry guru Jeffry Kahl's addictive breads, plus an experimental cocktail lab.

Over in Gastown, you'll find buzzy seafood spot **Coquille** (181 Carrall St. Tel: (604) 559-6009. www.coquillefineseafood.com), courtesy L'Abbattoir's Lee Cooper and Jack Chen. The room is just colorful and casual enough, with a menu ranging from raw bar and seafood platters featuring BC and Prince Edward Island-sourced oysters, to grilled fish and pasta plates to fish and chips.

Incoming foodies should make reservations, like now, for Chinatown's Italian-meets-Japanese **Kissa Tanto** (263 E. Pender St. Tel: (778) 379-8078. www.kissatanto.com); and the Kitsilano neighborhood's **Cacao Vancouver** (898 West 1st St. Tel: (604) 731-5370. www.cacaovancouver.com), where passionate Venezuela-born chef Jefferson Alvarez concocts one-of-a-kind, nobody-else-is-doing-this-here Latin American spins on Pacific Northwest ingredients. The adventurous can play guinea pig on "Test Kitchen Tuesdays," when a 10-course tasting menu of new and experimental plates costs just \$49. It's like a culinary thrill ride...with no turbulence! ■

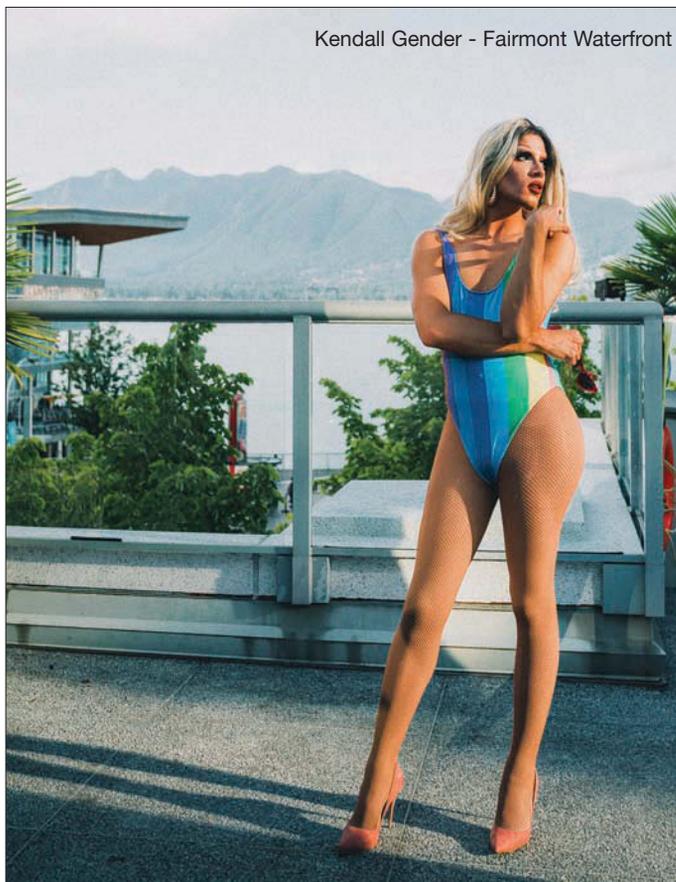


Photo: Fairmont Hotels, Pacific Northwest



Photo: iArtXp



Sophisticated & Progressive

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

by Mark Chesnut



Photo: Courtesy of Louisville CVB

They say that places you visited as a child seem smaller when you see them again as an adult. In the case of Louisville, that's not quite true. In the years since my childhood visits to my mother's hometown, Kentucky's largest city has grown to be a beacon of big-city sophistication and progressive values. This mid-Southern metropolis has also become a welcoming place to fly the rainbow flag, as my husband Angel and I discovered while attending Kentuckiana Pride, one of the city's two LGBTQ pride celebrations.

As a kid visiting with family, I spent my days in Louisville shopping for school clothes at sprawling malls, sipping frothy Orange Julius drinks, overeating at chain restaurants and visiting Cave Hill, the historic cemetery where my father was buried. At night, I'd camp out on the guest room floor at my Uncle Ed and Aunt Agnes's house in the Highlands, a leafy, middle-class neighborhood.

During a recent visit to Louisville, my first in about a decade, things were decidedly different. I discovered far more sophisticated beverages (especially in the city's burgeoning bourbon scene) as well as mouthwatering food that blend the best of southern and international cuisine. Angel and I also checked out world-class cultural institutions, and stylish accommodation. Plus, I was thrilled to learn that the neighborhood that my uncle and aunt once called home, the Highlands, is now one of the gayest places to stay and visit in the entire city. Indeed, Louisville has evolved.

For this visit, I relied on resources like the **Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau** (Tel: 1-888-LOUISVILLE. www.gotolouisville.com) the city's tourism office, which maintains an impressive "LGBTQ Louisville" section on its site that touts the destination's gay-friendliness, as evidenced by its perfect 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index for three years in a row.

Our first stop after landing in the morning (Louisville International Airport is a rather quick flight from most cities in the eastern and Midwestern United States) was a place that I'd never visited in all my years here: **Churchill Downs** (700 Central Avenue. Tel: 502-636-4400. www.churchilldowns.com), the racetrack that hosts the legendary Kentucky Derby. My family may have already been slinking out of its Southern Baptist roots by the time I was born, but the traditional disapproval of supposed sins like gambling lingered for a few decades more, preventing me from ever stepping foot on these hallowed grounds (or sampling Kentucky bourbon, for that matter). But this visit was different.

Even if you can't visit on the first Saturday in May, which is when the Kentucky Derby takes place, you can still tap into some of the excitement. The recently expanded **Kentucky Derby Museum** (704 Central Ave. Tel: 502-637-1111. www.derbymuseum.org) offers guided tours of the entire facility, and the extensive exhibits highlight memorable moments in what is often called the "most exciting two minutes in sports." Unfortunately, we didn't time our visit right, otherwise we could have also attended Downs After Dark, which stages events at Churchill Downs that include live music, DJs, cocktails, and nighttime racing.

Next, Angel and I drove downtown to check into our apartment. We opted to rent from Airbnb as we wanted the flexibility and space that an apartment affords.

If you prefer hotel life, there are some noteworthy hotel options, including the brand-new **Omni Louisville** (400 S. 2nd St. Tel: 502-313-6664. www.omnihotels.com/hotels/louisville), which opened in 2018, and the **21C Museum Hotel** (700 West Main St. Tel: 502-217-6300. www.21c-museumhotels.com/louisville), a cutting-edge, arts-infused property that spawned a growing portfolio of hotels around the nation.

That night, we retired early because the next day, **National Bourbon**



Photo: Mark Chesnut @Mundera



Churchill Downs

Photo: Thomas Kelley

In the years since my childhood visits to my mother's hometown, Kentucky's largest city has grown to be a beacon of big-city sophistication and progressive values.

Day (www.nationalbourbonday.com), would be jam-packed with activities. The uniquely American whiskey known as bourbon has been closely associated with the state of Kentucky for more than a century, and, in recent years, Louisville has reaped the rewards as the spirit has gained cache and recognition from a growing audience of fans.

We began the next day by attend the grand opening of the 70,000-square-foot **Old Forester Distillery** (119 West Main St. Tel: 502-779-2222. www.oldforester.com/distillery) that offers bourbon-making tours and tastings. The new attraction is located in a historic building on Whiskey Row, a downtown Louisville neighborhood that's so hot it's slated to get two new hotels in a few months: Hotel Distil, part of Marriott's Autograph Collection and Moxy Louisville, which is also part of Marriott International.

Whiskey Row is an ideal complement to the city's **Urban Bourbon Trail** (www.gotolouisville.com/restaurants/urban-bourbon-trail1), and the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau distributes free "passports" with information about nearly 30 bars, restaurants, and hotels that specialize in bourbon.

After touring Old Forester (where just the aroma of bourbon was enough to give me a buzz), Angel and I emerged famished on Whiskey

Row, ready to explore the neighborhood's atmospheric bars and restaurants.

For lunch, we refueled at **Doc Crow's** (127 West Main Street. Tel: 502-587-1626. www.doccrows.com), a casual eatery that combines Southern cuisine with raw oyster bar favorites and, not surprisingly, lots of whiskey options.

Afterward, we spent the afternoon in a nearby neighborhood called Museum Row, where cultural attractions are a big draw. We stopped first at **Frazier Kentucky History Museum** (829 West Main Street. Tel: 502-753-5663. www.fraziermuseum.org), where we admired the "Magnificent Mona Bismarck," an exhibit of photos and clothing of one of Louisville's leading 20th-century socialites (sorry to tell you that was a temporary exhibit, but the museum hosts interesting historical and cultural exhibits throughout the year). In addition, the Frazier is now home to a new Kentucky Bourbon Trail Welcome Center, which debuted in 2018 as the first stop in the **Kentucky Bourbon Trail** (www.kybourbontrail.com), a self-guided route that highlights distilleries around the state.

We also strolled down Main Street for a must-do selfie in front of the 120-foot baseball bat that soars above the **Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory** (800 West Main Street. Tel: 877-775-8443. www.slugger-museum.com). We didn't have time to take one of the factory tours that showcase the birthplace of Major League baseball's official bat (and, to

be honest, we personally weren't heartbroken about missing the experience). We had other pressing matters to attend to: it was time for cocktails at **Proof on Main** (702 West Main Street. Tel: 502-217-6360. www.proofonmain.com), a hip restaurant and bar located at the equally hip 21C Museum Hotel. Two representatives from the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau, Rosanne Mastin and Christa Ritchie, joined us, and they were as excited as we were about the upcoming Kentuckiana Pride event. "It's just a lot of fun, and it keeps growing every year," Ritchie told us.

For dinner that night, Angel and I visited the Highlands, the old stomping grounds of my beloved Uncle Ed and Aunt Agnes, but tonight would be a far cry from the Big Boy cuisine that I used to eat. Instead, we met with Anne, one of my childhood friends, and her husband at **The Fat Lamb Modern Kitchen & Bar** (2011 Grinstead Drive. Tel: 502-409-7499. www.fatlamblouisville.com), a sophisticated venue that blends Mediterranean and Southern flavors, with delectable results. "Louisville is an oasis of progressiveness in Kentucky," Anne said over dinner, and I believe it.

The following day was filled with culture, shopping, and pride. We started our morning with a visit to the **Muhammad Ali Center** (144 North Sixth Street. Tel: 502-992-5301. www.alicenter.org), located near Museum Row. This fascinating venue goes way beyond the champ's boxing accomplishments, with detailed multimedia exhibits about spirituality, civil rights, and human rights. We stopped for a quick lunch at **Dizzy Whizz** (217 West Saint Catherine Street. Tel: 502-583-3828. www.dizzywhizz.com), a decidedly downscale fab hamburger joint that's been in business for more than 60 years.

Next up was an afternoon of shopping in **NuLu** (www.nulu.org), a fast-rising downtown neighborhood (also called the East Market District), where we browsed the coolly-casual clothing at **BloFish** (714

East Market Street. Tel: 502-727-2007. www.blofish.com), handmade jewelry and art at **Revelry Gallery** (742 East Market Street. Tel: 502-414-1278. www.revelrygallery.com), and thoughtfully curated home décor and accessories at the gay-owned **Scout** (720 East Market Street. Tel: 502-584-8969; www.scoutonmarket.com).

The next day, it was time to celebrate pride, Kentuckiana style! The term "Kentuckiana," by the way, refers to the region that includes northwestern Kentucky and southern Indiana, which it borders. The first day of **Kentuckiana Pride** (www.kypride.com) usually takes place on a Friday evening in June, the parade perfectly timed to take advantage of cooler evening temperatures. If you attend, be sure to keep your phone fully charged, because there are lots of photo opportunities. Louisville is, after all, home to what is likely the only pride parade with a Colonel Sanders lookalike among the participants.

The vibrant parade snaked through the streets and ended at an attractive waterfront park along the banks of the Ohio River. The well-organized festival featured food and merchandise vendors, and the reasonably priced VIP tent provided us with free snacks and a great vantage point for the live entertainment.

The second day during the Kentuckiana Pride Festival, the park was packed from noon until 11 P.M. It was also the day with the most live entertainment, including a brilliant performance by Cece Peniston.

In case you can't make Kentuckiana Pride in June, the city hosts another annual celebration, **Louisville Pride** (www.louisvillepride.com) that takes place in September and includes a street festival in the Highlands neighborhood.

After pride, you may want to go to **Play** (1101 East Washington Street. Tel: 502-882-3615. www.playdancebar.com) a large-scale dance club that hosts multiple themed events every month, including drag performances.

Belle of Louisville



Photo: Louisville CVB

We surveyed a bunch of gay nightlife that night, including **Tryangles** (209 South Preston Street. Tel: 502-583-6395. www.facebook.com/mytryangles) a basic, old-school gay bar with multiple pool tables and a pricey juke box. The largest concentration of LGBTQ nightlife is on Bardstown Road in the Highlands, where many bars offer indoor and outdoor seating during the warmer months. Our favorite spots include **Chill Bar** (1117 Bardstown Road. Tel: 859-913-8679. www.chillbarlouisville.com), which is set in a former house, with a small bar and tiny dance floor graced with heavy doses of pop dance music.

Also fun are **Nowhere** (1133 Bardstown Road. Tel: 502-451-0466. www.facebook.com/nowherelouisville), a gay-friendly nightspot that packs people of all genders and orientations onto its dance floor, and **Big Bar** (1202 Bardstown Road. Tel: 502-618-2237), a tiny and delightfully misnamed gay bar where two giant chandeliers are the only things “big.”

Sunday was recovery day from the festivities of Kentuckiana Pride and bar hopping in the Highlands. Unfortunately we overslept and missed the weekly drag brunch at **Le Moo** (2300 Lexington Road. Tel: 502-458-8888. www.lemoorestaurant.com), so that will have to go on our “must-do” list for the next visit.

In the afternoon, we visited **Cave Hill Cemetery** (701 Baxter Avenue. Tel: 502-451-5630. www.cavehillcemetery.com), a gorgeous, Victorian-era cemetery that covers 300 acres. Its ornate sculptures and tombs helped place this park-like attraction on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors most often head to the final resting places of Mohammad Ali and Colonel Harland Sanders, the man who brought the world Kentucky Fried Chicken.

For lunch, we dived into hearty servings of the Hot Brown, a satisfyingly filling local dish that consists of toasted bread, thickly sliced turkey, bacon strips, and Mornay sauce. We headed to the historic Brown Hotel, where the dish was invented, and dined at **J. Graham’s Café** (www.brownhotel.com), a casual-yet-elegant eatery on the hotel’s first floor.

The Brown Hotel sits on Fourth Street, a downtown retail artery where, many decades ago, my mother used to wear high heels, a beautiful dress and gloves to go shopping. Today, the Brown and the equally historic Seelbach Hilton hotel (which served as inspiration for F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*) are bookends to a sparsely populated pedestrian strip with a handful of noteworthy and unique shops, including **Regalo** (562 South Fourth Street. Tel: 502-583-1798. www.regaloart.com), which sells cool T-shirt designs and home décor; **Craft(s) Gallery & Mercantile** (572 South Fourth Street. Tel: 502-584-7636. www.craftslouisville.com), which stocks contemporary art and décor with a vintage twist; and the Mysterious Rack (558 South Fourth Street. Tel: 502-653-9440. www.mysteriousrack.com), which creates elaborate, custom-made hats and “fascinators,” designed to attract attention at the derby or while out on the town.

We also accidentally found another great source of custom hats while wandering around a Kroger supermarket just before our departure. Angel and I were looking for bourbon balls, a popular Kentucky treat made with bourbon and dark chocolate. A uniformed woman wearing a nametag that said “Margie” offered to help us look, but when I mentioned that I was writing a travel article about Louisville, she lit up. “My daughter makes hats for the Kentucky Derby, you’ve got to see her work!” she exclaimed, giving me a card for the **Hat Girls** (Norton Commons, 10708 Meeting St. Tel: 502-619-3460. www.the-hatgirls.com), a locally based duo that designs fanciful hats and fascinators. In Louisville, you never know where a bit of Southern friendliness and hospitality might take you. ■



Kentuckiana Pride



Kentuckiana Pride

A man with dark hair, wearing a red jacket over a black and white patterned shirt, is shown from the chest up on the right side of the frame. He is holding a red flag with both hands. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees. The text is overlaid on the left and center of the image.

50 THINGS

TO DO IN NEW YORK DURING

STONEWALL 50

& *WORLDPRIDE* 2019

by Kelsy Chauvin



Photo by Gustavo Frazao

New York is the place to be this June when the LGBTQ community marks a half-century since the Stonewall uprising. The City and State of New York are showing their full support with an extraordinary lineup for Stonewall 50 and WorldPride 2019, together serving as this year's NYC Pride extravaganza. Here's a rundown of the top 50 events not to miss, sorted by celebrations, community, culture, parties, and sports. *Please note that at press time, some event details were not available. Be sure to check out the city's www.nycpride.org and the state's www.iloveny.com/lgbt for locations, exact times, ticket info, and other updates.*

CELEBRATIONS

PRIDE AT THE BEACH (June 21-23)

Long Island, the birthplace of Harvey Milk, will join in the WorldPride fun with the three-day "destination weekend." Tens of thousands are expected to hit the sandy shores and join an incredible array of LGBTQ events, including the 29th-annual Long Island Pride Parade on June 23. (FYI, Long Island Pride's official dates are June 15-26.) For specific times and locations, visit prideonthebeach.org

WORLDPRIDE 2019 OPENING CEREMONY (June 26)

WorldPride 2019 celebrations are happening across New York state throughout the year, but the event's official start is timed to kick off the big weekend (June 26 -30), and welcomes all to join the ceremony. Expect to find local officials, queer luminaries, and an enthusiastic global audience. For specific time and location, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/opening-ceremony.

STONEWALL 50 COMMEMORATION & RALLY (June 28)

You don't need a ticket to join community activists, organizers, politicians, and more at this rally, which honors the first "Gay Power" demonstration, held back in June 1969. Along with LGBTQIA+ rights, this rally will be a chance to show up in force and speak out for human rights overall. (The event will be ASL interpreted, as will many others.) Christopher St. & Waverly Pl. 6-9 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/stonewall-50th-commemoration

PRIDE ISLAND (June 29-30)

What once was the annual Dance-on-the-Pier party is today the Pride Island weekend-long live-music event, which doubles as a fundraiser for a slew of free annual NYC-Pride events. Taking over Pier 97 in Hells Kitchen, the showcase lines up some of the biggest performers of any Pride event—past headliners include Cher and Janet Jackson. This year look for singer-songwriter Grace Jones, and entertainers Teyana Taylor, Pablo Vittar, Amara La Negra, and Johnny Dynell. Pier 97. June 29, 2-10 P.M.; June 30, 2-11 P.M. www.nycpride.org

NYC PRIDE MARCH (June 30)

The first Stonewall-uprising commemoration march, then called Christopher Street Liberation Day, took place June 28, 1970. Known today as Heritage of Pride, 2019's march returns bigger than ever, with hundreds of thousands of proud, colorful, and vocal people parading their way through Manhattan in a show of commemoration, solidarity, and celebration. Starting point: 26th St. & 5th Ave. Ending point: 23rd St. & 7th Ave. Step off: 12 noon. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/nyc-pride-march

PRIDEFEST (June 30)

Follow the march to the annual PrideFest street fair, where local business owners, restaurants, community leaders, and other exhibitors will join in the LGBTQIA+ community spirit. The free fair will host a variety of entertainers and family-friendly activities. 12-6 P.M. For specific location, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/pridefest

WORLDPRIDE CLOSING CEREMONY (June 30)

For the grand finale of WorldPride 2019, Times Square will become the gayest place on earth. Major speakers and musical talents from across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum will take center stage to commemorate and celebrate Stonewall50. This year it will be headlined by Grammy-Award winning singer-songwriter Melissa Etheridge. 42nd St. & Broadway. 7-10 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/closing-ceremony



Photo: Steve Edreff

New York Pride



Dykes on Bikes

Photo: Kobby Degan

New York is the place to be this June when the LGBTQ community marks a half-century since the Stonewall uprising.

PRIDE AT THE FALLS (July 5)

New York State welcomes revelers to the Buffalo and Niagara Falls area the week after NYC's Pride bash for Pride at the Falls. On Friday, July 5th, Niagara Falls State Park (America's oldest state park) will be lit in rainbow colors as the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra performs a free concert. For specific times, visit www.iloveny.com/event/pride-at-the-falls/50341

COMMUNITY

THE CENTER

It doesn't need to be Pride month to feel proud of The Center. Opened in 1983, NYC's LGBTQIA+ community hub is open 365 days a year, during which it hosts more than 12,000 events in its West Village HQ. Head there for resources and programs, plus an outstanding library, archive, and art collection, including that legendary 1989 Keith Haring restroom mural, Once Upon a Time. 208 W. 13th St. www.gaycenter.org

LGBT WEEK (June 17-21)

Business will be on topic for this annual educational and networking event hosted by Community Marketing, Inc. and Pink Banana Media. Held at various venues, LGBT Week presents workshops, meetings and events on a variety of topics, from marketing strategies to LGBTQ-related programming and content. For specific times and locations, visit www.lgbtweek.nyc

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT (June 21)

Leading up to the big weekend, Heritage of Pride will screen a family flick under the stars on Pier 45 in Hudson River Park. The event will serve as a fundraiser for host organizations, and as a celebration "of families for all families." Pier 45. 6:30-10 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/family-movie-night

PRIDE LUMINARIES BRUNCH (June 23)

Now in its eighth year, this annual upscale brunch is hosted by NYC Pride and the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce to honor inspiring LGBTQIA+ business leaders that continue to work toward equality in the workplace. The ticketed event includes a four-hour open bar, VIP gift bag, and brunch buffet, and welcomes industry insiders, queer media, and proud politicians. 12-4 P.M. For specific location, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/pride-luminaries-brunch

HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE (June 24-25)

A key part of WorldPride is the enlightening Human Rights Conference, held over two days at New York Law School in Tribeca. In a unique global dialogue, the conference will bring together activists, artists, educators, journalists, policymakers, and students engaged in LGBTQIA+ human rights around the world. Advance tickets recommended. New York Law School, 185 West Broadway. 9 A.M.-5 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/human-rights-conference

Photo: Gustavo Frazzo



Photo: Lev Radin



Governor Cuomo Celebrates Pride



Photo: Kobby Dagan

KEEPING FAITH IN A CHANGING WORLD (June 25)

WorldPride will bring a conversation with the Rt. Rev. Mary Glasspool, who was the first open lesbian to be consecrated bishop in the Anglican Communion. Taking place at the Upper East Side's Church of the Holy Trinity, Bishop Glasspool will talk about her life's challenges, and the sources for the faith and love that sustains her and enables her to lead others. Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. For specific time, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/Trinity

SAVOR PRIDE (June 28)

This second annual "immersive culinary fundraiser" benefiting God's Love We Deliver returns for a day of in-depth cooking demonstrations, discussions, and tastings. The event will draw LGBTQIA+ and ally chefs to kick off the big weekend with mingling over bites, all happening on the terraces of the non-profit's Midtown headquarters. God's Love We Deliver, 166 6th Ave. 6-10 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/SavorPride

YOUTH PRIDE (June 29) NYC Pride's free event for teens returns with a Saturday roster of fun interactive experiences, games, and entertainment for LGBTQIA+ and ally teens. (It's open to the public, but registration is required.) SummerStage, Central Park, 5th Ave. at 69th St. 12-6 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/youth-pride

GAY & SOBER PRIDE EVENTS (June 27-30)

The annual Gay and Sober Men's Conference gathers over four days at the Westin Times Square for wellness workshops, speakers, meetings, and other sober socializing. It culminates on Sunday evening with the Dance on the River cruise, a drug- and alcohol-free soiree that's open to all. (Advance tickets recommended.) For specific times and locations, visit www.gayandsober.org/nycmeetings.

CULTURE

ALEGRIA WORLDPRIDE 2019

Billed as two events (one day, one night) on June 30, Alegria will lead off its WorldPride blowout with its new outdoor spectacular, WOW. Next up is the ALEGRIA CIRCUS for all-night dancing across Bushwick's massive Brooklyn Mirage open-air event venue. Brooklyn Mirage|Avant Gardner, 140 Stewart Ave., Brooklyn. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/alegria-worldpride-2019



Photo: Steve Edeff

BLUESTOCKINGS

This Lower East Side mainstay still operates as a bookstore and café, and serves as an endangered space where the LGBTQIA+ community can safely gather. Bluestockings's busy events calendar includes everything from comedy and yoga, to area walking tours, to self-defense workshops and niche-interest book talks. 172 Allen St., www.bluestockings.com

BROADWAY BARES

The unforgettable evening of Broadway burlesque returns to Hammerstein Ballroom for Pride month, with more than 150 talented, sexy performers baring it all (or at least most) in scantily clad musical-theater numbers. The wildly successful pair of shows sell out fast, fundraising millions of dollars for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. June 16 at 9:30 P.M. & 12 A.M. broadwaycares.org/pre-event/broadway-bares-2019

THE CHER SHOW

It's New York, it's Pride season, it's time for live musical entertainment! Fab Broadway productions abound, but one needn't look farther than The Cher Show for a proper dose of diva worship. The production bowed in December 2018 and has been going strong ever since, telling Cher's story of life, love, songs, and, of course, her unforgettable fashion. (Remember to book your tickets well in advance.) Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. www.thechershowbroadway.com

CHRISTOPHER PARK

Conveniently located among some of the city's legendary gay bars, this sweet little triangle is a place of rest and reflection, enclosed by shady trees and lined with park benches. It's also home to George Segal's iconic Gay Liberation sculptures of two same-sex couples. Created in 1980, they represent some of the world's first (and remain the city's only) public art dedicated to LGBTQ rights. Christopher St. at W. 4th St. www.nps.gov/ston/learn/index.htm

FORESTBURGH PLAYHOUSE

Beautiful Sullivan Catskills in upstate New York is home to the Forestburgh Playhouse, aka "Broadway in the Catskills." Celebrate Pride with pre- and post-show cabarets featuring Just Judy: The Songs of Judy Garland and Divas: A celebration of iconic Divas and Pride at the Playhouse! If you plan on being in New York later this summer make sure to book tickets to see their production of Priscilla Queen of the Desert (July 30 through August 11. 39 Forestburgh Rd., Forestburgh, NY. www.fbplayhouse.org



Photo: A. Katz

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES

The world's largest collection of materials by and about lesbians fills an historic townhome in Park Slope (once better known as "Dyke Slope"). The archives span an astounding array of books, audio and visual recordings, music, interviews, correspondence, and more. Visitors are welcome during designated open hours or by appointment. 484 14th St., Brooklyn. www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org

LESLIE-LOHMAN MUSEUM

Back in 1969, Charles Leslie and Fritz Lohman began preserving artwork that speaks about the LGBTQ experience. Their endeavor coincided with a global movement for equality, and today their namesake museum is a leading art gallery and community archive. For Pride season, the museum's expansive SoHo space will show "Art After Stonewall," the first major exhibition to examine the impact of the LGBTQ civil-rights movement on the art world (April 24-July 1). 26 Wooster St., www.leslielohman.org

NYC LGBT HISTORIC SITES PROJECT

Since 2015, this educational resource has helped memorialize key NYC sites that represent LGBT history beyond Stonewall. The project exists as an interactive online map with detailed entries about the five boroughs' queer points of interest, which aims to "make an invisible history visible." www.nyclgbtsites.org

OSCAR WILDE TOURS

Professor and historian Andrew Lear leads an assortment of tours in NYC under the guise Oscar Wilde Tours. You can request a private or customized tour, or pick up fascinating insights by joining his "Shady Ladies" (www.shadyladiestours.com) or Gay Secrets of the Metropolitan Museum tours. www.oscarwildetours.com

OUTCINEMA

In collaboration with NewFest, and hosted by the SVA Theatre, cinephiles will love this three-day film festival featuring specially curated movies representing queer experiences. Advance tickets are recommended for screenings, some of which will be followed by filmmaker Q&As and open-bar after parties. SVA Theatre, 333 W. 23rd St. June 17-19. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/outcinema

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

He's one of America's most acclaimed and controversial artists, and the Guggenheim will honor him during this special NYC anniversary with its Implicit Tensions show (January 25-July 10). Guests will view highlights from the museum's prized Mapplethorpe holdings, from his classically styled portraits to his explicit S&M depictions. This will be part one of two, with the Implicit Tensions part two planned for July 24-January 5, 2020. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. www.guggenheim.org

ROSS WATSON - HOMINUS UNIFORMIS

Head to this Chelsea gallery June 17-30 to peek at Ross Watson's Hominus Uniformis show. Watson, a gay artist from Australia, will exhibit his realist paintings of uniformed and nude men. His work is renowned for its highly detailed male forms, and this show will be a rare NYC exhibit with the artist in residence for the duration. Rogue Space, 508 W. 26th St., 9th Fl. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/ross-watson-hominus-uniformis

SING OUT, NEW YORK

A series of free upstate-New York outdoor concerts will ring out as part of "Sing Out, New York" national music festival, led by the Albany Symphony. The festival will honor social-justice movements related to

LGBTQIA+ equality and women's suffrage, which grew roots in Seneca Falls, NY, with new music inspired by American revolutions of the last century. May 28-June 9. www.albanysymphony.com/singoutny

STONEWALL NATIONAL MONUMENT

America's first (and so far, only) national monument commemorating LGBTQ history is one of NYC's greatest points of pride. The Stonewall National Monument's 7.7 acres encompass the areas where the uprising took place 50 years ago, stretching from Greenwich Avenue to W. 4th Street, and W. 10th Street to Waverly Place. During WorldPride, it'll be impossible not to end up at this queer crossroads to enjoy all the fabulous Village events. www.nps.gov/places/stonewall-national-monument.htm

STONEWALL (THE OPERA)

New York City Opera's first-ever commissioned work is Stonewall, based on the 1969 rebellion, which debuts during Pride month and the company's 75th anniversary season. Written by Ian Bell and librettist Mark Campbell, the opera continues New York City Opera's "Pride Initiative" of producing an LGBT-focused work each June in commemoration of Pride Month. This is one culture buff's won't want to miss! June 19. www.stonewalopera.com

PARTIES

COSPLAY & PRIDE (June 21)

Break out your favorite cosplay costumes for this special event. The party is hosted by NYC Pride, together with Geeks OUT, the LGBTQIA+ nonprofit that founded FlameCon, the world's largest queer comic con. Pier 40. 6-10 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/cosplay-and-pride

FOLSOM STREET EAST FESTIVAL (JUNE 20-23)

Raise your kink to the next level with this four-day fetish festival, happening on W. 27th Street (between 10th and 11th aves.) in Chelsea. For more than two decades, FSE has maximized the erotic, with the 2019's fete coming out as the "S.L.U.T.S Fantasies Fulfilled Fetish Weekend." For specific times and locations, visit www.folsomstreeteast.com

GARDEN PARTY (June 24)

Descending on Pier 97 before it transforms into Pride Island, this annual culinary affair entices foodie guests with bites from several NYC restaurants and chefs. Proceeds will support The Center's programs and vital services, so plan to book your ticket in advance. Pier 97. For specific time, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/garden-party

SOLIDARITY: HUSTLABALL WORLDPRIDE (June 27)

Part one of three for the Solidarity party Pride series is Hustlaball, sure to be one of WorldPride's most hedonistic gay dance parties. Brooklyn's 3 Dollar Bill club will welcome house and techno fans who will turn out in sexy droves to dance in this massive raw warehouse space. Expect to find an erotic mix of kinks and fantasies to rule the night. 3 Dollar Bill, 260 Meserole St. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/hustlaball

FOREVER TEL AVIV: ONEWORLD OPENING (June 28)

Kick off the weekend party with this blowout by Forever Tel Aviv. Taking over the giant Hammerstein Ballroom, the throwdown will bring 4,000 guys front and center under the spell of superstar DJs. Book your general ticket in advance, or snag a VIP weekend pass to Masterbeat's four OneWorld events. Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/oneworld-opening

SOLIDARITY: DIES3L MAIN EVENT (June 28)

The world's largest muscle-bear party is headed to the recently overhauled Webster Hall over Pride weekend. Building on its epic success at WorldPride Madrid in 2017, DIES3L will blast its house and techno across all three stories of the East Village's famous party venue, with world-famous DJs playing for thousands of burly fans. Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/solidarity-die3l-main-event

USS MASTERBEAT: ONEWORLD DAYTIME (June 29)

Part two of the OneWorld series is this exclusive daytime event at Terminal 5's indoor/outdoor spaces. Dancing will rule the day and into the night here, with thousands of proud dudes taking over one of Manhattan's last mega clubs. Terminal 5, 610 W. 56th St. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/oneworld-teadance

VIP ROOFTOP (June 29)

Happening at a sleek indoor/outdoor space in Hells Kitchen, join this ninth-annual rooftop party on Saturday afternoon of Pride weekend. It's also a fundraising event, so you can feel extra proud about attending such a swanky soiree. Your VIP status comes with the ticket, so get yours early. Hudson Terrace, 621 W. 46th St. 2-10 P.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/vip-rooftop

BROOKLYN ULTRA DAY PARTY (June 29)

Cross to the other side (Brooklyn) with the Ultra Day party. The frolic invades the massive Brooklyn Warehouse in Bedford-Stuyvesant starting at 2 P.M., with DJs on point from Ibiza, Brazil, the U.K., and beyond. The Brooklyn Warehouse, 1260 Atlantic Ave. 2-11 P.M. www.eventbrite.com/e/brooklyn-ultra-day-party-world-pride-new-york-city-2019-tickets-49208357522

TEAZE (June 29)

In NYC, "fitting in" often just means finding the right party. Head to The DL on the Lower East Side to join this inclusive queer party that proudly welcomes all proud bodies (21 and older). Bonus: Teaze is also a fundraiser for NYC's many free events. The DL, 95 Delancey St. 5 P.M.-12 A.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/teaze

SOLIDARITY: BRÜT WORLDPRIDE (June 29)

The finale of Solidarity WorldPride's party trio is NYC's largest underground leather/fetish party of the year. Descending on the gigantic, high-tech (and rather innocent-sounding) Playstation Theatre in Times Square, expect international DJs to unleash an unforgettable night on a mix of like-minded women and men. Playstation Theatre, 1515 Broadway. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/solidarity-closing-party

MATINEE PERVERT: ONEWORLD CLOSING (June 30)

The party ends with WorldPride's Matinee party, injecting European house sounds and sensibilities into Terminal 5. Expect a raucous night of dancing and debauchery (to say the least) at this take on one of the world's most infamous dance parties. Terminal 5, 610 W. 56th St. For specific times, visit 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/oneworld-closing-party

FEMME FATALE (June 30)

Lesbians: Save some strength for the official rooftop party for women that caps off the weekend's Pride festivities. More than a thousand ladies will join the lofty event for drinks, food, dancing, and mingling (and advance tickets are recommended). Hudson Terrace, 621 W. 46th St. 4 P.M.-12 A.M. 2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/femme-fatale



Photo: Andrei Orlov

Celebrating Pride in NYC



Photo: Redswept

BUSHWIG (September 2019)

Celebrate Pride all year long! If you happen to be visiting New York in September, make sure to attend the annual Bushwig Festival. The extravaganza of “drag, music and love” returns to Bushwick, Brooklyn with its shiny, sassy lineup of non-stop gender-bending virtuosos. For specific times and locations, visit www.bushwig.com

SPORTS

5K PRIDE RUN (June 9)

Join fellow fit LGBTQIA+ runners for this fun run through scenic Prospect Park to celebrate Pride, diversity, and inclusion. The run once again kicks off Brooklyn Pride Saturday, and participants are welcome register under the gender-identity category they prefer (female, male, transgender/gender non-conforming). Prospect Park, Brooklyn. 10 A.M. For specific starting point, visit www.nycgo.com/events/brooklyn-pride-lgbt-5k-run

CHELSEA CHALLENGE 2019 (June 21-23)

Just because it's June doesn't mean you should retire your ice skates yet. For the 19th annual Chelsea Challenge, international adult LGBTQIA+ hockey players and their pals can join this tournament at the Sky Rink in Chelsea Piers. Participants of (nearly) all skill levels are welcome, from a drop-in beginners to team-based competitive players. 62 Chelsea Piers. For specific times, visit www.nycgha.org/cc

NEW YORK LIBERTY

Every May through September, basketball fans are primed for the action of one of NYC's pro sports teams: the New York Liberty. One of the most exciting clubs in the WNBA, this year's team plays at the Westchester County Center, just a short Metro-North Railroad jaunt up to White Plains, NY. There are plenty of home games to choose from, with the big Pride game on Friday, June 28 versus the Dallas Wings. Go Liberty! 198 Central Ave, White Plains. www.liberty.wnba.com ■

BUSINESS CLASS

A photograph of two men in formal attire kissing. The man on the left is wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie. He has a white boutonniere on his lapel. The man on the right is wearing a dark blue tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a dark blue bow tie. He also has a white boutonniere on his lapel. They are standing under a large, colorful rainbow umbrella. The background is a blurred city street with buildings.

GREGORY G. ALLEN
THE ACCIDENTAL ACTIVIST

SPECIAL EFFECTS
GADGETS & GIFTS

WORLD EATS
FLORENCE, ITALY

TRAVELING GOURMET
SWEET DREAMS ARE
MADE OF THIS

BRIAN PETERSON-ROEST
BEES IN THE D

DREAMSCAPE
BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA

special effects

great stuff for the
**consummate
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FLORENCE, ITALY

by Arthur Wooten

What is it about Florence, the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy, that makes it a worldwide star within the culinary universe? I think it's their seasonally fresh and local ingredients in conjunction with time-honored recipes, often handed down from one generation to the next.

When I travel, I love to do pre-trip restaurant planning. I'll bug friends for suggestions, scour the internet, make lists, bookmark websites, and then ultimately, once I get to my destination, I opt to trust my instincts instead. Sometimes a highly rated establishment, upon looking at it, might not seem right. Maybe it's because of the menu or the décor or even the people dining there. I've learned to trust my gut.

The 5 criteria that I look for in a great restaurant experience are: quality, creativity, dependability, ambiance, and friendliness. All of the restaurants I've featured here exude all these attributes, plus they're reasonably priced.

OSTERIA DELL ENOTECA

Across the Arno River in the Oltrarno district and very close to the Pitti Palace, Chef Nicola Chiappi helms this establishment joined by owners Edoardo Fioravanti, Manuele Giovanelli, Lorenzo Ricci, Zeno Fioravanti, and the very charming Shannon Fioravanti, the wine



Photo: Daniel Chetroni

club director. In conjunction with their sister restaurant, **Enoteca Pitti Gola e Cantina** (www.pittigolaecantina.com/wine-club), they offer the Wine Club which as they state, "...was created to suit the needs of our valued clients and friends throughout the globe and to offer access to this selection of extraordinary and limited production of wines to all."

Shannon recently shared with me that they're now exhibiting an art installation within the Osteria. "It is the artwork of Deva Manfredo. The *Pilgrim of Now* is the exposition and it's these very interesting rock pieces. They're for sale as well."

I always feel welcomed when I enter Osteria dell Enoteca. The elegant tables are covered in fresh white linen, laid out with beautiful cutlery and glassware. The front room is classic and airy, whereas the back-room's walls and archways are covered in ancient exposed brick evoking a feeling that the

space is wrapping its arms around you, in a warm and soothing embrace.

Instead of a wine list from which to choose, the sommelier will guide you to their extensive wine wall and help you pick just the right libation for the evening's dining experience. Their Chianti Classico is excellent!

For a starter, I highly recommend the Selezione di Salumi di Maiale Grigio del Casentino; their selection of charcuterie salami from the gray pig of the Casentino area. These ribbons of sweet, salty, and savory cured meat will melt in your mouth. Enjoy it with a crust of their fresh Tuscan bread. Or you can try the Cantabrian anchovy fillets preserved in olive oil and served with pink Hawaiian salted butter.

For a first course, I loved their light and refreshing cream of Tuscan bean soup, topped with marinated shrimp and sage. Also, don't miss their large tortellini filled with pumpkin in a sauce of aged pecorino, thyme, and hazelnuts. Truly delectable pockets of perfection.

For second courses, I suggest the braised wild boar with olives. Having



Anchovies at Osteria Dell Enoteca

Photo: Olga Makarova

never eaten boar before, I anticipated a gamier type of meat, but not so. This dish was tender and rich with a very sophisticated sauce. Or better yet, splurge and order their bistecca dell'Osteria, the house specialty bone in steak. This perfectly dry aged steak is cooked on an open flame and served rare to medium rare. If you must have your steak cooked medium or well-done, I suggest you order something else.

The cheese board or their traditional Cantucci cookies served with Vin Santo (a delicate dessert wine) are both delicious ways to end a great meal. *Via Romana 70r. Tel: +39-055-228-6018. www.osteriadellenoteca.com*

CUCULIA RISTORANTE LIBRERIA

Also in the Oltrarno district you'll discover Cuculia, which, when translated, refers to the twittering sound the cuckoo bird makes. The restaurant is also a bookstore, which gives the space a quaint and homey feel.

Cuculia is the love child of Chef Oliver Bentancourt and his wife, Roberta. This dining experience was exceptional, from the innovative culinary creations, to Rosa, our smart and entertaining server. It was a dinner I will never forget.

Our evening started off with an unexpected "on the house" soup of pumpkin and carrot with cauliflower, beet foam, spinach and croutons. Simply delicious and gorgeous to look at.

For starters I enjoyed their chard roll

served on a bed of pesto with beet foam but I fell in love with their winter salad with fennel, avocado, winter melon, pumpkins seeds and pomegranate on a bed of chickpea humus.

For mains, the sunflower pasta made with organic hulled wheat stuffed with goat cheese and honey on a bed of chestnut purée that was thyme scented was exceptional. It was sweet, tangy and aromatic, all in one bite.

The delicate cod fish perfumed with a saffron rose infusion was extraordinary. I was concerned about a saffron rose combination being overpowering but it was very subtle.

For dessert, experience their chocolate fondue with raspberries, strawberries, and bananas, or enjoy one of their fruit sorbets. All of the dishes were stunning artistic creations; like paintings for your palette. *Via dei Serragli, 3r. Tel: +39-349-434-4518. www.cuculia.it*

BORGO ANTICO

A short stroll from Cuculia you'll discover Piazza Santo Spirito. It's named after the 15th century Basilica di Santo Spirito, which sits grandly on the north end of the piazza. Here you'll find a plethora of restaurants standing shoulder-to-shoulder vying for your attention within this charming and lively plaza. But it's Borgo Antico that I keep returning to again and again.

"Chef Marco Cabras from the island of Sardinia and Chef Olmo Gozzi, work side

by side creating the fantastic dishes at Borgo Antico. Chef Marco is also quite famous for his desserts. Restaurant Manager Andrea Melani shared with me, "People come from all over the world to try his cheesecake."

The interior of the restaurant is warm and cozy, but when possible I prefer to sit outside. Even in colder weather it's comfortable with the help of their special overhead heaters.

For starters I recommend their amazing selection of country homemade salami, crostini and pickled veggies. Or try their liver paté on crostini with capers, which is served with a semi-hard cheese, dipping bowl of honey, pickled hot peppers, pickled onions, and a smear of mustard.

Moving on to first plates, you'll love their gnocchi with a rich gorgonzola sauce, or my favorite: the spaghetti carbonara topped with pancetta and black truffles. The sauce is smooth and silky while the pancetta is crunchy and salty, and to top it off the truffles give it an earthiness. This is absolute comfort food. I've dreamt about this dish more than once.

Two more of my favorite main dishes are the beef stew made with red wine, and the warm seafood antipasto with prawns piled high on top of mussels, clams, calamari, and more. It's enough food for 4 to 6 people! And why not finish off your meal with Chef Marco's world-renowned cheesecake? *Piazza Santo Spirito, 6r. Tel: +39-055-210-437. www.borgoanticofirenze.com*



Cod with Saffron Rose Infusion at Cuculia



Salami Antipasto at Borgo Antico



Beef Filet at Osteria Del Fagioli

Photo: Francesca Marucci

OSTERIA DEL FAGIOLI

I have the tremendous good fortune of being friends with a true Florentine and qualified tour guide, Francesca Marucci (www.mytripintuscany.com). Francesca and I first met when she took me on an exceptional Cicchetti tour through Venice, several years ago. Now living back in her home city of Florence, every trip I take to this part of the world, we manage to meet up for a smart cocktail, if not a meal.

Every restaurant she has suggested has been exceptional and Osteria Del Fagioli is one of her favorites. It's a casual and friendly, family run business that's always booked with locals as well as tourists. (Reservations are a must and it's cash only!) Del Fagioli has a small menu offering old-style Tuscan cuisine. As Francesca says, "It's very close to Santa Croce and affordable considering the central location."

Osteria del Fagioli translates to "Restaurant of the Beans". And one such dish that they offer is the ribollita soup, comprised of black cabbage and beans. Ribollita means twice boiled; you make it one day and then reheat the next, giving it more depth of flavor. Other great choices are their pappa al pomodoro (a thick

Photo: Hard Rock Café

Tuscan bread soup) and the zuppa di contadino verdure (a farmer's vegetable soup.) For main courses their veal bracciole is praised by many as is their ossobuco. And of course, there is the famous Bistecca Fiorentina. Make sure you arrive hungry.

On Francesca's most recent visit she enjoyed their pici all'aglione, which is a hand-rolled, thicker type of spaghetti. A typical dish from the Siena area, it's served with a rich sauce made of tomato, garlic, and parmesan cheese. For a main course, she ordered their beef filet. "My filet was super tender. The best!" she exclaimed. "Best filet ever!" I think she liked it. *Corso dei tintori, 47r. Tel: +39-055-244-285. www.facebook.com/pages/Ristorante-del-Fagioli/128531613884673*

HARD ROCK CAFÉ FLORENCE

I know what you're thinking. Bear with me. Years ago, a classy world-traveler lady friend of mine gave me some advice prior to my first trip to Europe. "At some point, you're going to want to take a break from trying to decide where to eat. You'll get weary of deciphering menus and struggling with language barriers." So, she gave me a list of places she sug-

gested that were great tasting and very American friendly with menus in English. I've since lost her list and in fact, the restaurants may not even exist anymore. But during a recent, visit and after an exhausting day of museums, churches, and crowds, I heeded her advice when I stumbled upon the Hard Rock Café.

Like in Venice, the Hard Rock in Florence is housed in an ancient and historic building. Set on the edge of the Piazza della Repubblica it is surrounded by bookstores and museums, as well as other restaurants. Originally, it started out as a high society Florentine café and then transitioned into the famous Gambirinus Cinema in 1922. Inside the décor is pretty much the Hard Rock brand, but happily, on a weekday lunch visit, it was pretty subdued and not too crazy or crowded.

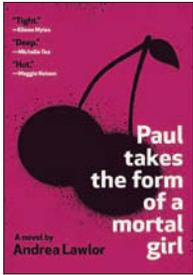
I was craving a good old-fashioned hamburger. They offered regular beef or their special Tuscan burger derived from the Chianina cattle. This is one of the oldest breeds in the world. In fact, the famous bistecca alla Fiorentina is made from its meat. I ordered it as a bacon cheeseburger. You can go all out and have their Flocal legendary burger which is topped with crispy rigatino, (pancetta) and Galaverna cheese, with a Chianti red onion compote. But I kept it simple.

Pause, as I recall my first bite...it was rich, juicy, flavorful, and messy in the best of all possible ways. This was the tastiest burger I had ever eaten in my life. Seriously. It was so good, I was tempted to order another one to go, but I didn't. I'll just make sure that during my next visit to Florence, I'll order the Flocal with the works. Plus, one to go! *Via De' Brunelleschi 1. Piazza della Repubblica Tel: +39-055-277-841. www.hardrock.com/cafes/florence*

When I asked Florentine friend and chef, Luca Brozzi, co-owner of **Love x Food - The Cooking Class of the Chianti Hills**, (www.lovetfood.com) why Tuscan food is so unique and delicious, he replied, "The traditional Tuscan cuisine is considered peasant cooking; the most enjoyable part is the simplicity of the recipes using fresh local ingredients and the love of the people to prepare simply delicious meals ready to feed your soul." I can't agree more. Buon appetito! ■

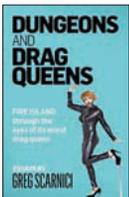
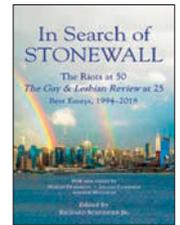
travelbound

Hot Type for Savvy Travelers by Jim Gladstone



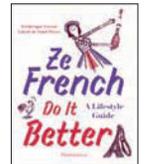
Andrea Lawlor's wildly inventive novel *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* (Vintage, \$16.95. www.andrealawlor.com) is a Niagara Falls of gender fluidity. Paul Polydoris, the protagonist in this frothy rush of queer theory and magic realism, is a shapeshifter, able to transmogrify his body parts and carnal appetites as the spirit moves him (Lawlor opts to use male pronouns for the character). He can shrink his penis and grow C-cup breasts with a concentrated stare, or massage away his adam's apple on a moment's notice: "It was like that TV show, *Manimal*, only that guy couldn't control himself"). Paul speeds from tryst to tryst and city to city in a restless early-1990s identity quest, submerging himself in a panoply of queer communities, from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival to ACT UP in New York to the back room of the San Francisco Eagle. Lawlor's greatest accomplishment is rendering Paul with a consistent psyche: whether his genitals are male or female, whether he's having straight or gay or lesbian sex, there's never a Jekyll and Hyde aspect to his character. We don't perceive Paul as switching from one persona to another; we feel him flowing among aspects of a single self. While vivid sex scenes and jaunty prose keep the pages turning, Lawlor's plotting is loose and picaresque. Like the varieties of sexual and gender expression it explores—and like the books of William S. Burroughs, which it evokes—"Paul" is perhaps best dipped in and out of, rather than rushed through in hope of resolution. Originally published by small independent Rebel Press in 2017, the very fact that this book has been acquired and reissued for the mass market by a division of Penguin/Random House suggests that cultural attitudes about nonbinary sexuality may be as capable of transformation as Paul is.

This June's WorldPride celebration in Manhattan coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, widely considered to mark the start of the modern American gay rights movement. *In Search of Stonewall* (G&LR Books, edited by Richard Scheider, Jr. \$19.95. www.greview.org) a selection of essays from the estimable but underappreciated *Gay & Lesbian Review* (itself celebrating a 25th anniversary this year) provides a prismatic view of the uprising, its forbears, its repercussions, and its symbolism. In his essay, Michael Denny points out that "the shot heard 'round the world" may not have been the riots themselves, but the world's first Gay Pride March, organized to commemorate their first anniversary. During the intervening year, he writes, those five days of localized upheaval "had become an idea, the idea that gay people would fight back, would stand up for their rights." Among the volume's luminary contributors are Felice Picano, Larry Kramer, John Rechy, Lillian Faderman, and Jewelle Gomez.



Given its legendary status as a gay getaway, it's surprising how few books have been published about Fire Island. So, even before you start snorting vodka tonics out your nostrils from laughter, special welcome is due to *Dungeons and Drag Queens* (Amazon, \$9.99. www.gregscarnici.com) by Greg Scarnici (aka Levonina Jenkins), an associate producer at Saturday Night Live. This scrappy, scrapbooky self-published volume exudes earnest affection for bohemian Cherry Grove and begrudging affection for the bougier Pines: "In the Pines, they pump Truvada into the tap water and the entire beach is air-conditioned." While full of no-holds (or holes) barred anecdotes about the author's own wild times on the island—where he's spent portions of the last 28 summers—the book also incorporates occasional historical nuggets about the island's development as a safe space for gays dating back to the 1930s.

While hardcore Francophiles will delight in its humorous cultural anthropology, *Ze French Do It Better* (Flammarion, \$29.95. www.riz-zoliusa.com) can also be highly recommended as an itinerary planner and people-watching primer for your next trip to Paris. "Next trip", because this book skips all of a first timer's must-see museums and monuments to dig into more specialized sites, tailored to specific Parisian personalities. The authors have created a cheeky taxonomy eight style-driven types: Classic Frenchy, Aristo Chic, Vintage Bourgeois, Modern Bourgeois, Intellectual, Eco-warrior, Bohemian, and Foodie. Quizzes at the start of each chapter will help you finding the tribes you belong to. Then, there's custom-tailored advice on where like-minded souls choose to stroll, shop, and dine around town.



AIRPLANE READ OF THE MONTH



Sex and violence snuggle up between the covers of *Todd Sweeney: The Fiend of Fleet High*, a discomfitingly delicious new novel by David Pratt (Hosta Press, \$12.50. www.hostapress.com) that reads like a lost John Waters movie. This *grand guignol* comedy serves up ample helpings of cannibalism, onanism, blood-soaked sex, and conversion therapy. It's an over-the-top spin on "Sweeney Todd," cast with contemporary small town high school students. Think "Riverdale" with raunch (and pan-drippings). Strapping young Todd has just been released from reform school and returned for senior year when he learns his widowed mother has been preyed upon in his absence. The culprit? Lascivious Ashford Squeers, the very same wicked guidance counselor (and "Nicholas Nickelby" reference) who framed Todd and arranged his incarceration. And now, Squeers is planning to have Toby, Todd's little queer sidekick, shipped off to Saint Bonaventure's Home for Effeminate Boys. Its enough to make Todd want to kill the bastard, then join forces with his best gal-pal Nellie(!) to chop up the corpse and bake it into savory empanadas. The kids' #meat-too movement gets quickly out of hand, leading to distinctly unsavory scenes like the one in which the racist mother of one nasty classmate unwittingly nibbles "a warm golden packet of her son's flesh." Pratt lards his intentionally overbaked prose with campy pop cultural morsels: a film shown to shock the homosexuality out of teen queens juxtaposes images of Julie Andrews, Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel with the slaughter of pigs and wartime atrocities. Amidst all the comedic mayhem, there's also a surprisingly effective eroticism at play; the soft-porn allure of Todd's masturbation fantasies, accounts of cellmate sex and naked baking sessions is hard to deny. There's not much literary nutrition to be found here, but as a guilty pleasure, "The Fiend of Fleet High" is as tasty as a Twinkie.

BRIAN PETERSON-ROEST

FOUNDER BEES IN THE D

by **Kelsy Chauvin**



Brian Roest-Peterson (beard) & Brian Peterson-Roest

Photo: Bees in the D

Honeybees are magical. Through their natural instincts, they pollinate our food sources, as well as crops like cotton and hemp. They help flowers grow more flowers. They give us delicious, versatile honey. By just doing their thing, bees' tiny duties are vital to life itself.

And for Brian Peterson-Roest, honeybees can be very good friends. Peterson-Roest is the founder of **Bees in the D** (www.beesinthed.com), a non-profit that's turning the yards and rooftops of Detroit into homespun apiaries.

Since 2016, the organization has enlightened the local community about the necessity and benefits of the mighty, simple honeybee. Then he began turning volunteer residents and local workers into beekeepers, setting up beehives and training sessions citywide.

Three years and more than 100 hives and six million new bees later, Bees in the D is generating major Motor City buzz. "We can't keep up with all of the emails and the phone calls," says Peterson-Roest. "It's unbelievable."

Teaching, Learning, and Beekeeping

The Michigan native is, first and foremost, a devoted fifth-grade science teacher. Peterson-Roest is distinguished in his field, serving as president of Michigan Science Teachers Association and as district science coordinator. Along with several teaching honors, he was personally honored by President Barack Obama with the 2014 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Peterson-Roest's first exposure to beekeeping, however, "came because of the generosity of others." Back in 2009, he was invited as a special educational guest for a two-week course on beekeeping at a biological center on Lake Michigan's Beaver Island.

"I just fell in love with beekeeping," he says. "I joke with people that I 'caught the bug,' but it was like somebody was looking out for me right when I needed it. [At the time] I was struggling with my identity. I grew up in a home that was extremely conservative, and felt like I was not supposed to be who I was. I was supposed to be what everybody else wanted me to be. I was really wrestling

within myself, and the bees were a sanctuary for me. They were an escape, and they got me through some hard times.”

Cut to New York City, where a few years ago Peterson-Roest strolled through busy lower Manhattan. There he noticed group of hives in a small area of Battery Park.

“I didn’t think you could keep bees in a more urban setting,” he says. “I thought people would fight it; that it just wouldn’t work. But I saw the **Honeybee Conservancy** (www.thehoneybeeconservancy.org) hives right there, and like, millions of people were walking by it—no big deal. And I thought, wait a second, if they can do it, why can’t Detroit?”

Around the same time, he met the man he calls “the most important ‘B’ in my life, my husband”—whose very similar name is Brian Roest-Peterson. Roest-Peterson is an event planner who co-operates Bees in the D. Instantly nicknamed “the Bs,” the couple soon moved to Detroit, where fate intervened.

“When we moved to the city, number one, I missed the bees,” says Peterson-Roest. “Number two, I was reading about all of this colony-collapse disorder [that’s harmed the bee population], and about honeybee diseases and destructive pathogens. And I’m like, wait a second, the bees were there for me, and my hardship. So maybe it’s time for me to step up and be there for them during their hardship.”

That synthesis gave way to Bees in the D. Driven by its mission for education and conservation, the non-profit has several functions, from workshops and fundraising, to community organizing and corporate partnerships.

Swarms of Local Support

At its core, the organization exists to cultivate the honeybee population. Peterson-Roest explains that he works with Detroiters interested in hosting hives that the Bees in the D will manage; or who, once trained, will manage their own beehives. Each hive site is scouted in advance, and could be in a back yard, community garden, residential or commercial rooftop, or virtually anywhere that’s legally allowed.

Along with hobbyist beekeepers, Bees in the D collaborates with many Detroit-based businesses small and large, including sustainability teams of the big-three automakers, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors. Several more companies and institutions even make the hives essential parts of their own environmental programs,

including the Cobo Center’s “living green roof.” Whether through financial support, or materials, talent, and or space donations, Peterson-Roest says it’s encouraging that local companies “care about pollinators in our ecosystem.”

Bees in the D is diligent about training and hive management, so Peterson-Roest is actively involved in overseeing the hives, a duty he relishes despite being a “minimalist” when it comes to the hives.

He explains, “If my hives are fine when I inspect them, and I see signs of a well-producing queen bee and no signs of disease or parasites, I just let them go. They’re nature and they know what they’re doing. Unfortunately, there are a lot of pathogens and diseases that bring down honeybees and colonies, and that’s one reason why their populations are declining. So I may have to do different treatments to the hives, manipulate a hive, or get a healthier queen.”

He adds, “But really my role is just about visiting the hives, which is such a pleasure—because I’m a guest in their house. I consider it my yoga. When I open up a hive it’s this calming nature. I’m telling you, what they have going on in there is just a miracle. It’s unbelievable. And to be part of that is quite a pleasure.”

Where there are bees, there is honey. Peterson-Roest is quick to note that Bees in the D is not in the honey business, so his team has never measured how much honey their hives produce. (Though as both beekeeping and honey harvesting grows in popularity that may soon change.) Rather,

he says, “All of the honey we harvest is done for educational purposes.” For him, it amounts to free labor, plus the fun lesson of extracting honey from a hive’s frame.

Even better, local makers are finding delightful ways to use that uber-local honey and wax in their products. You can find lip balm, soap, and lotions made with the wax. Detroit’s boutique confectioner **Bon Bon Bon** (719 Griswold St. Tel: 313-316-1430. www.bonbonbon.com) flavors its chocolates and other treats with the honey. You’ll find it served in some local restaurants’ food and cocktail menus. And several beverage producers work it into specialty bottles, including **Eastern Market Brewing Co.** (2515 Riopelle St. Tel: 313-502-5165. www.easternmarket.beer), and **Detroit City Distillery** (2462 Riopelle St. Tel: 313-338-3760. www.detroitcitydistillery.com).

Meanwhile, fans also enjoy Bees in the D joint events with area partners like **Blakes Hard Cider Co. & Tasting Room** (17985 Armada Center Rd, Armada. Tel: 586-784-9463. www.blakeshardcider.com), and **B. Nektar Meadery & Taproom** (1511 Jarvis St., Ferndale. Tel: 313-744-6323. www.bnektar.com). Those gatherings are among the many year-round tastings and fundraisers for the organization, like the annual summer Bee-Bee-Q. Coming this fall, Peterson-Roest also tells of the upcoming party of the year, the “Beehive Ball” fundraising gala and avant-garde fashion show inspired by honeybees and beekeeping suits. Expect unforgettable beehive hairstyles, some of which may even be edible.



Photo: Darkdiamon467

Detroit's Green Culture

Bees in the D is part of the green wave that's flooding Detroit with smart environmental solutions. Along with other non-profits like **Detroit Dirt** (www.detroitdirt.org), a zero-waste composting and educational organization, Peterson-Roest thinks his hometown is in a second Renaissance.

"I think the city and its residents are thirsting for anything that's unique and collaborative, and actually it's turning into a lot about sustainability, which is really cool," he says, adding that the city is naturally LGBTQ-friendly too. "Our sustainability programs are setting high bars, they're so incredible. And there's such an entrepreneurial vibe here that I think people are a little bit more involved, and they're excited to be a part of something. In Detroit, people want to help out and be a part of something that they believe in."

Even better, the city has a distinct advantage to build sustainably because of what was once a liability: empty lots. Abandoned real estate was long considered detrimental, but today, open spaces are being transformed into urban gardens with diverse foliage—and yes, beehives.

In a tree-filled town like Detroit, green space is abundant. Peterson-Roest calls out Campus Martius Park for its summer "beach" scene and winter ice-skating, plus Capitol Park, Beacon Park, and other pocket parks that form a grassy chain through downtown. They're complemented by bigger urban oases like Belle Isle Park, which occupies the entire 982-acre island in the Detroit River.

With help from Bees in the D, those parks serve as part of the "Detroit Bee Highway," a series of safe havens across the greater region where pollinators can stop for food, water, and shelter during their daily high-mileage travels. The highway concept has been a great success thanks to businesses and residences looking to help protect and sustain bees. Between smaller contributions, and greater commitments like hosting a hive and learning how to keep bees, Peterson-Roest is optimistic about the future.

He notes that Bees in the D has grown much faster than expected, and this summer it will add around 50 new hives. Also likely is the creation of a honeybee educational center, the result of donated urban-garden space, a retired shipping container to be converted, and a volunteer architect keen to bring the project to fruition.

"I think people are starting to get it," he says. "I think people are starting to realize that [honeybee sustainability] is important,



Brian Tending to His Bees

and if we don't do something about it, it's going to be too late." Throughout all his pursuits, Peterson-Roest always keeps his sight on serving his beloved bees.

"Beekeeping is of interest to all communities," he says. "The thing about bees is that they don't see orientation, they don't see race, they don't ethnicity. They just see you as a human, and they are so completely into their hive."

In a way, Bees in the D operates similarly, with one common pursuit by a diverse board of directors who, Brian proudly notes, consists of people of different ethnicities, ages, and sexual orientations. Assembling a personality mix was a big factor behind launching the company in downtown Detroit, where it can foster inclusiveness and invite different perspectives. Likewise,

the Bs are themselves in a symbiotic relationship too, with Roest-Peterson operating mostly behind the scenes. "He sets the stage, I get to shine," says Peterson-Roest. Such community-building in the human realm, it seems, correlates to the working world of honeybees.

"I know this sounds a little weird, but I honestly believe that the bees know we are there to help them. It's kind of like if you get a rescue dog—those dogs know that you're helping them, and that's all that matters. That's also why I love working with children, they don't put people into categories like we do so often as adults. And it's what I love about Detroit too. It just feels like the whole city is welcoming towards differences. We've found nothing but open arms here." ■

GREGORY G. ALLEN THE ACCIDENTAL ACTIVIST

by Arthur Wooten

Gregory G. Allen has been in the entertainment business for over thirty years. He's an actor, director, producer, songwriter, playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker, and theatre manager. He's also the award-winning author of ten books, which include four novels, one nonfiction memoir, two shorts, and three children's books, including *Chicken Boy: The Amazing Adventures of a Super Hero with Autism*. (www.gregorygallen.com).

And now he can add activist to the plethora of hats that he wears. His most recent project is a play and short film titled, *Hiding In Daylight* (www.gregorygallen.com/hiding-in-daylight). It combines his love of the arts with his desire to be vocal about LGBT rights in America today. As Allen says, "This project is a movement to get the LGBT community & our straight allies to pay attention to what is happening with equality and human rights today. What marginalized group will be next?"

I recently had the opportunity to catch-up with this renaissance man and ask him some probing questions

Greg, as long as I've known you, you've been a cheerleader for the underdog. In fact, your website is titled *Adversity & Diversity*. But what happened that shifted you into becoming this very unexpected activist?

I think I've always had this need to share stories of an underdog. Even my first musical I wrote when I was 14, it was about monsters who were sad that they had to live in a basement and only come out one day a year on Halloween when they could be accepted. Oh yes...I was basically writing about being in the closet back then! I think the shift really happened when my children's book on autism awareness came out. Suddenly schools were reaching out to me to come and talk, and for the past 6 years now, I've been an advocate for



autism. What I find interesting is when my advocacy changes. Not everyone is going to agree on all things, but I think human rights are pretty basic. I'm still shocked when I lose a follower on social media because I post something about LGBT.

What inspired you to create your latest film, *Hiding In Daylight*?

After 2016 I was upset and frightened. I ate my way through the Trump administration's first year and getting upset watching LGBT rights being chipped away. I saw *1984* on Broadway and was shook to the core. I told myself it was time to turn my pen into a sword, put down the ice cream, and see what I could do as a writer to try and create a way to get people to think about what's going on. I chose to set the story in the future after a gay purge, pointing at all the 'little things' that are happening now...because I don't believe they are little. The story was written as a play and a film simply because I wanted it out there in as many forms as possible. There were a few readings of the play around the country where people would have conversations afterwards

about the state of the LGBT community. Then I started working with Cheryl Allison, an incredible lesbian filmmaker and advocate, and WOW Films to do the story as a short film. I also did it as a one man show. I feel there are many possibilities in 2019 to get this story told: an important year since it's the 50th anniversary of Stonewall. This truly has become my "art as activism" movement and I don't plan to slow down until the story is told to many.

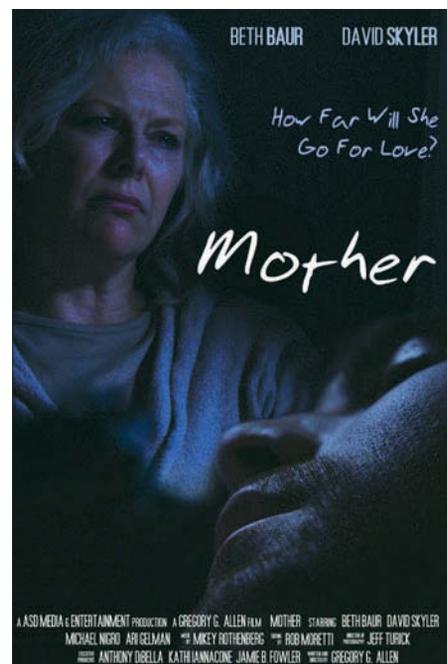
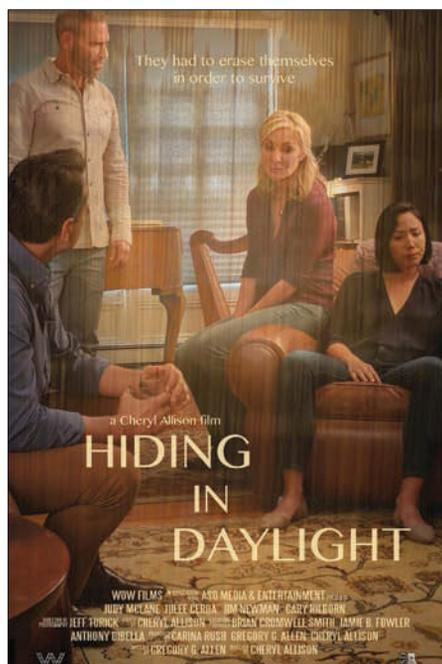
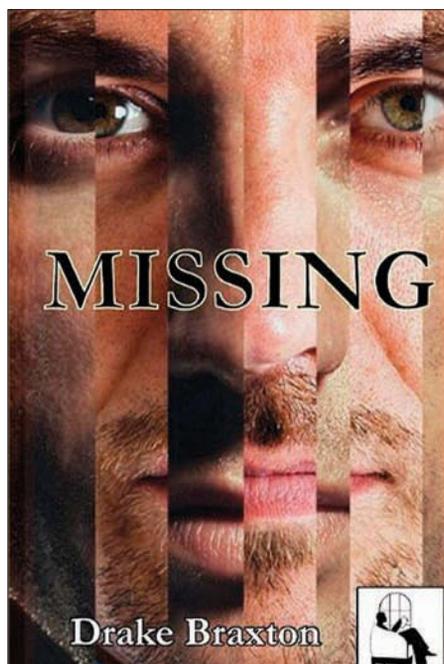
Now that the film is finished and being sent out to festivals and competitions, can the public view it?

Unfortunately, not yet. There are many rules with film festivals about making sure a film hasn't been distributed or posted online. However, if people follow us on social media

(www.instagram.com/hidingindaylight-film and www.facebook.com/HidingIn-DaylightFilm) we will let them know when there is a festival near them. And then after a year of that circuit, we'll make sure people can see it.

You wrote and directed your first film, the award winning *Mother*. Was it challenging to hand over directing of *Hiding In Daylight* to Cheryl Allison?

I think art is at its best when it's a collaboration. Writing is a lonely art form. The more people behind something, the more ideas you have. So being a producer/screenwriter on *Hiding in Daylight* was all I ever intended to be. I honestly couldn't see myself directing. The funny story is, Cheryl Allison was going to be a producer and actress in the film, but in our pre-production meetings she kept talking about her vision for the film. I kept stopping her telling her that would be a director's decision. Finally, the other producer and myself both went to Cheryl separately and told her she needed to direct the film and not be in it. Best decision we ever made. What she brought to this piece was magical. She



honed in on a piece of opera music that she knew she wanted to use and this mini-opera, which is our story, grew from that small gem. I feel very lucky that she was at the helm of our ship.

What have you learned from writing and producing this second film?

I loved my first film and we did it professionally, but looking back it was a little Mickey & Judy doing a show in the barn on a shoestring. Everything about this (including the budget) was heightened. I learned about working with unions. I learned that a producer who isn't directing does whatever is needed on set...sometimes that means watching how much actors are drinking to refill drinks. I learned a director can come to you in the middle of a shoot and ask you to rewrite a line to fix a transition right on the spot and then a day later ask you to cut a few pages instead of waiting to cut them during the editing process. I learned that incredible things can happen when truly artistic people come together all trying to tell a powerful and important story the best way they possible can.

You recently went on a river cruise along the Danube. Will this journey appear in any of your upcoming projects?

When I'm not off being an advocate for something, my husband and I love to travel. We have our happy place in Puerto Vallarta, but we also love traveling to Europe, Cape Cod, on cruises...these travels tend

to show up in my writing. The play version of *Hiding in Daylight* actual talks about trips we've taken with a lesbian couple and at times we had to pretend to be male/female couples in Russia. I also wrote several LGBT themed books under the pen name Drake Braxton and one of those, *Vacation From Hell*, was inspired by a trip I was on in the Caribbean. When I wrote the novel *Missing*, all of my Provincetown trips ended up in that book as well as a trip to Amsterdam. So, travel plays an important part in my writing.

What's up next on your creative slate?

We recently returned from a river cruise through Germany, Austria, and Hungary and while there my creative juices started flowing again after visiting two concentration camps. I thought much about the purge I discuss in *Hiding in Daylight* and it made me want to add some changes to the play version. It also got me thinking about another project I want to do after I finish writing a feature screenplay of *Hiding in Daylight*. Yes...after doing the short, I'm now writing the feature length film.

Greg, what advice would you offer to any wannabe filmmakers?

If you want to be a filmmaker, just go for it. Don't do like I did and wait for all the stars to align and for everything to be perfect. Sometimes I'm my own worst critic. I really admire people that just go for it and they

don't wait to raise tons of money. Each film makes you better. Each script makes you better. You could waste too much time waiting for the perfect producer or the right match of film company: grab a team of people you trust and go for it!

I think naming you the Accidental Activist is very appropriate.

I hope that I continue to advocate for many things in my writing. For now, the most important is my livelihood as a gay man. I don't want to see our rights taken away. I sort of hid in the closet the past 6 years writing under the pen name of Drake Braxton because I was touring to schools, talking about my kids books and I didn't feel the two would ever coexist. Because of *Hiding in Daylight*, I knew it was time to come out of that closet and let the world know that I was Drake. Nothing has been published in a few years under that name, but some of my best work was written as Drake. HE won some awards and I couldn't enjoy any of that because it was all so secretive. I think being an advocate means being authentically YOU and I'm glad that I can share ALL of me with everyone. That same gay guy who loves to cruise the Mediterranean is the same gay guy telling kids at school that it's ok to be different. Someone has to advocate for the underdog. ■

View the trailer for *Hiding In Daylight* here <https://vimeo.com/298756990>



Photo: Yuh Turkov

10 Must Visit Places and Events in Israel for LGBTQ Travelers

by Bill Strubbe

For such a small country, Israel is flush with antiquities and historical sites, world-class museums, outdoor adventures in the vast Negev Desert or Galilean Hills, endless culinary options, cultural events, and unique boutique hotels for visitors to choose from. Here is a curated list of ten attractions of special interest to judicious LGBTQ visitors.

THE NORMAN TEL AVIV (Old Tel Aviv)



Arguably the city’s most elegant boutique property, The Norman plays homage to Tel Aviv’s 1920s elegance. There’s thirty individually designed rooms, twenty suites in an adjacent building, and a Penthouse Duplex where you can enjoy a glass of cabernet in a Jacuzzi with a view of the shimmering Mediterranean. (One room and one suite are adapted for guests with mobility issues.) The avant-garde art pieces on display throughout the hotel are all for sale. After a day visiting museums and galleries, chill out in their spa and rooftop infinity pool with a 360-degree view of Tel Aviv’s skyline. On the third floor, Dinings restaurant offers both Japanese-style tapas and contemporary European cuisine. The high-end Alena with a menu of European and Mediterranean cuisine is a great choice, and their buffet breakfast is sumptuous and delicious, as are the waiters in the form-fitting suspender britches. Our favorite breakfast choice is their legendary French toast with bananas encrusted with caramelized sugar, tart raspberry sauce, and crème fraîche on a divinely silky *halalah*. www.thenorman.com

ELEMENTO DESIGN (Old Jaffa)

Established in 1998 by designer Yossi Goldberg, Elemento is a unique furniture and homewares atelier tucked away in Old Jaffa that will scintillate your visual and tactile senses. Liberating design from mass-manufactured industry, the brand’s distinctive, one-of-a-kind pieces combine a collection of vibrant, luscious textiles and cutting-edge craftsmanship with a 1960s and ’70s inspired aesthetic to create personalized décor for homes, hotels, and restaurants. While the prices in this designer’s Disneyland wet-dream delight may cause you to gasp, don’t shy away from a visit to their shop, which will leave you agog with ideas and inspiration.

URI BURI RESTAURANT (Akko)

The proprietor, 75-year-old, Uri Yeramias, a larger

than life man with a bushy beard spent much of his boyhood in the sea, fishing and diving for shellfish as a salve against bad grades and boredom. Decades later, his iconic waterfront institution in Akko, Uri Buri, is famed for its fresh seafood guaranteed to bewitch your taste buds. Seared shrimp in a lemon, butter and turmeric sauce on black rice noodles; sashimi salmon with a dollop of wasabi sorbet; raw anchovies in olive oil that melts in your mouth; a delicious seabass caldron with coconut milk, apples, and chili. You can order ala carte, but to get the Full Monty, then go for the chef’s “tasting menu” with one sublime course following another—no dish has more than eight ingredients—until you exclaim “basta!” The fun is that you haven’t a clue what will arrive next, and by meal’s end you’ll have experienced a culinary symphony of flavors and textures that you’ll be ruminating over for days to come. Guaranteed to be one of the best meals of your lifetime! www.facebook.com/pages/Uri-Buri/197362996940734

THE EFENDI HOTEL (Akko)

Amongst the warren of stone alleys and markets of the Old City of Akko (a UNESCO World Heritage site) rises the enchanting Efendi Hotel overlooking the Crusader Wall and the Mediterranean Sea. With only twelve rooms, you’ll feel as though you’re an honored guest in an opulent, 19th-century sultan’s manse, which it indeed once was. Each suite’s 22-foot high ceilings are graced with hand-painted moldings and rosettes, and the rooms feature modern bathrooms and free-standing tubs. Archaeologists, preservationists, and Italian artisans spent eight years restoring this diamond in the rough, including a four century-old hammam, an ancient chapel-cum-dining room, and wine tasting cellar. The elegant, airy, almost minimalist lounges are wonders of glass and light, and the rooftop deck is the perfect place to watch the sun slip into the sea with cocktail in hand. www.efendi-hotel.com

ALQAWS PALESTINIAN QUEER PARTY (Jerusalem)

No chance to hear Beyonce or Drake here...the DJ exclusively spins Lebanese and Egyptian pop hits by Wael Kfoury, Maya Nasri, and Amir Diab, while strobe lights flash to the bass beat, buff studs show off on stage, and drag queens in skirts and heels, some in burka-like veils, strut their stuff. This unique monthly Palestinian Queer Party is organized by alQaws, which promotes sexual and gender diversity throughout Israel and the Palestinian territories. Israeli Jewish queers join hundreds of





Photo: Ross Helen

Israel is flush with antiquities and historical sites, world-class museums, outdoor adventures, endless culinary options, cultural events, and unique boutique hotels.

Palestinians who travel from the Golan Heights, Arab villages in the north, East Jerusalem, and even Ramallah to escape the restraints of their conservative communities to celebrate their mixed identities of being gay and Palestinian. www.alqaws.org/siteEn/index/language/en

TMOL SHILSHOM (Jerusalem)

Since Tmol Shilshom, named for the famous book *Only Yesterday* by Nobel Prize laureate, S. Y. Agnon, opened 20 years ago, this bookstore and eatery has been an integral part of the Jerusalem literary scene, and a favorite hangout for gays and lesbians, young religious Jews, and tourists alike. Several times a week it hosts famous writers (including the late Amos Oz, David Grossman, and Orly Castel-Bloom) who read aloud and discuss their work. The decor is bohemian chic, the walls hung with carpets, and there are cushy armchairs and wooden tables. If you get hungry while perusing the books, pause and enjoy the food. The delicious Kerem Focaccia with pears, blue cheese, nuts, honey and thyme is truly amazing, while the Sweet Corn Polenta, a rich dish made with fresh corn, mushroom, truffle puree, thyme, poached egg and a shaving of manchego cheese is divinely delicious. *Lonely Planet* named their shakshuka one of the 10 best breakfasts in the world! Tmol Shilshom is found in a picturesque alleyway of Nachalat Shiva whose archways and hidden niches make for intriguing wanderings after your dinner. www.tmol-shilshom.co.il

GAASH NUDE BEACH (Ga’ash)

While the very gay Hilton Beach in Tel Aviv is famous, about 25-minutes north is the lesser known Ga’ash, Israel’s unofficial nude beach. As with most gay/nude enclaves, there’s a short hike down a cliff where men of all ages and shapes parade their God-given glories in naked freedom. No need to be shy here: liaisons commence hot and heavy atop the cliffs, amidst the



Tmol Shilshom

boulders, or unabashed in the breakers. By car or public transport on Route 2 to the gas station at Yakum Intersection. Traverse the foot bridge, walk through the field, turn left and up the hill, then down the cliff to the sea. You won't miss where the boys are. There's no shade, so be sure to bring a beach umbrella, hat, sunscreen, and lots of water!

VILLA BROWN (Jerusalem)

One of the Brown boutique collection (two in Jerusalem, six in Tel Aviv), Villa Brown is located smack dab in the center of Jerusalem, a ten minute walk from Damascus Gate and Machane Yehuda street market. History exudes from the historic, stone mansion built in 1890 by Russian-born Dr. Isaac D'Arbela, and it became the social center for Jerusalem's elite. (The villa makes a brief cameo in the 1960 film *Exodus* when Sal Mineo's character flees past to hide in the nearby Ethiopian Church after bombing the King David Hotel.) The black, white, and red interior dazzles with quirky Brown touches and the trademark Brown library book exchange. Two floors were added and there is a Jacuzzi and spa on the roof. The villa offers 24 rooms with rain-showers, and the attic suite has a private terrace and Jacuzzi. A leisurely breakfast on their patio is not to be missed, with exquisite salads, rich cheeses, and baked treats, along with your main dish. There's also free bikes, though riding in Jerusalem could be a risky venture, so you might want to stick to your feet and the efficient public transport. www.brownhotels.com

TEL AVIV PRIDE WEEK (Tel Aviv)

Kicking off last year's pride week, Tel Aviv's Mayor Ron Huldai, exclaimed to

the crowd: "We will continue to break through the walls of hatred and reach a time when all people are equal in Israel..." Despite some setbacks, in recent decades Israel has made huge legislative strides in advancing parity for its LGBTQ citizens, and Tel Aviv, which now ranks as among the most gay-friendly cities in the world, plays host to their 21st Tel Aviv Pride from June 9th to the 15th. Tens of thousands of tourists are expected to swell the streets to over a quarter million revelers for a week of sizzling events. The festivities culminate on the 14th with the parade that winds through old Tel Aviv to Charles Clore Beach, with dancing on the sand and in the surf until dusk. Consider purchasing a TLV19 bracelet that will give you easy and swift entry into the biggest parties without the long queues. www.gaytelavivguide.com

SHPGAT (Tel Aviv)

Popular throughout the week, Shpagat doubles as a chill restaurant by day and a popular and buzzing bar by night. Located on trendy Nahalat Binyamin Street, the terraced indoor/outdoor seating area spills down onto the sidewalk and is a cool place to escape the summer heat, or get in out of the rain (contrary to popular belief, Israel can be cold and damp in winter). Though it attracts a predominantly mature, gay crowd, straights are welcome, and there's a special night for lesbians. Shpagat also hosts record release parties, art exhibitions, and DJs playing everything from electronica, pop, hip hop, reggae, and Middle Eastern music. And if you happened to wonder, shpagat means "the splits" in Hebrew, taken from the shape of the bar, or on a lucky evening some hottie showing off his agile moves atop of the bar. Entrance is usually free though they make up for it with pricey drinks. www.facebook.com/shpagatlv

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SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS

by Rich Rubin

Sometimes you're just in the mood for a mid-day treat, or you're planning to skip dinner entirely and just eat dessert! This is when you need a special place devoted to satisfying your craving for something sweet, without bothering with all that appetizer/main course stuff. Yes, you're allowed to jump right into dessert, and the places I explore below are perfectly suited to helping you do that. I set two ground rules here, 1.) They have to specialize in dessert. They're not just a restaurant that serves great desserts. You might find the occasional savory or sandwich, but at all these places, sweets are the main thing on the bill of fare. 2.) They must have a place to sit. You're on the road, you don't want to be schlepping your treats back to your hotel room. (Well, after tasting some of these you probably WILL get a few to take back, but first we're going to enjoy them in situ.) So let's go on a sweet journey that will take us from ice cream to butter tarts to donuts to matcha cakes, with anything and everything in between. Happy indulging! You deserve it.

KREEM

Palm Springs, California

Opened about a year ago, Kreem is an ice cream and coffee place—can you imagine a better combination? Yes, the coffee is terrific, but it's the house-made, small batch ice creams that are a revelation. It's creative without being fussy, and you can choose from an array of unique flavors such as lemon meringue pie, cranberry/cinnamon, or strawberry/rose. More traditional types can always select vanilla bean or mint chip, but let's throw caution to the wind and splurge on Vietnamese coffee, s'mores, or the unique "Funky Cold Medina" (orange blossom ice cream with pistachios and halvah. I hear you say, "Oh, but my boyfriend is a vegan, so we don't go to



Photo: Bianca Simonian

ice cream places." Well, guess again: they offer a wide variety of vegan flavors, from turmeric/ginger to piña colada to chocolate cacao nib. The seats in the jaunty interior are likely to be full with devoted customers, and it's easy to see why Kreem has so quickly built a following. With the staff behind the counter offering tastes and clearly in love with the job they're doing, it's as pleasant (and delicious) a spot as you're likely to find in Palm Springs—or anywhere. 170 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs CA. Tel: 760-699-8129. www.ilovekreem.com

HOT CAKES

MOLTEN CHOCOLATE CAKERY

Seattle, Washington

With its chewy outside and runny interior, molten chocolate cake is possibly my favorite thing in the world, and to find a place dedicated to this spectacular dessert is a pleasure indeed. While their original branch is in the Ballard neighborhood, I love the Capitol Hill location at the heart of the gayborhood. Take your place in the humongous lines (that never seems to change), confident that it will

move quickly and a fabulous treat awaits you at the end. My favorite here is their original "Dark Decadence." This aptly-named delicacy is delivered in a little dish on a wooden board with a scoop of ice cream. Cut into the thin nest of cake crust till you arrive at the splendid gooeyness that oozes out. If you want to check out some other flavors the cakes are relatively small, saving you from really going overboard. There are such flavors here as milk chocolate/hazelnut and peanut butter cup, as well as a "molten cake of the month," which when I visit is wild elderberry. There are dessert drinks (butter beer, anyone?), shakes, and such treats



Photo: Rich Rubin



Butter Tarts at 13th Street Bakery

Photo: Denis Cahill

as sourdough cobbler and bread pudding, but trust me, you want to go with the choice that gave this place its name. 1650 E. Olive Way, Seattle WA. Tel: 206-258-2591. www.getyourhotcakes.com

13TH STREET BAKERY
St. Catherine's, Ontario

"A bakery within a winery?" I hear you ask. My answer: "well, why the hell not?" The two are, after all, perfectly complementary. Not only does this spot in the heart of Canada's Niagara Wine Region offer great wines, they also have a top-notch bakery featuring a variety of wonderful creations. They're best known for their butter tarts, an Ontario specialty that's basically butter, sugar and eggs baked in a pastry shell and is every bit as sweet, sinful, and astounding as it sounds (the 13th Street version took home the "best butter tarts" award from a Canadian food magazine). Cast an eye over their cases, though, and you'll find a wealth of ever-changing delights from cookies and fruit pies to scones, carrot cake, and brownies. I'm betting, though, that it's those butter tarts that catch your eye! Take a seat in the lovely interior among shelves full of jams and jellies, locally-produced cheese, 13th Street wine, and other goodies, or take your baked goods to a bench among the spectacular art works of their outdoor sculpture garden. You'll soon come to realize that fine wine and mouthwatering baked goods are the perfect combina-

tion. 1776 Fourth Ave., St. Catherine's Ontario, Canada. Tel: 904-984-8444. www.13thstreetwinery.com/13th-street-bakery

TED DREWES
St. Louis, Missouri

It's not really ice cream, it's frozen custard. For those who care, frozen custard is lower in fat and calories than ice cream, since it's made with a combination of whole and non-fat milk. It also has eggs in it, which accounts for the "custard" name. Most of all, though, it's delicious. My nephew Zach first brought me to Ted Drewes' Chippewa Street location (they have another on South

Grand) and I've been a devotee ever since. I'm obviously not alone, since they've thrived for almost ninety years. While you can get a malt or sundae, my recommendation is a "concrete," which is pure unadulterated frozen custard, soft and creamy but so solid they serve your little dish upside down to prove it won't run out of the cup. Choose flavors from brownie to butterscotch, raspberry to graham cracker, pretzel to (my favorite) cookie dough. You could do chocolate, strawberry, or mint, but with such a wide range of exotic flavors, why not go with Scotch Oatmeal Cookie or Abaco Mocha? Take a seat at one of the outdoor tables and watch the traffic go by on the street, part of the original Route 66. On a steamy St. Louis summer night, there's nowhere I'd rather be. 6726 Chippewa St., St. Louis MO. Tel: 314-481-2652. www.teddrewes.com

SWEET DEE'S
Scottsdale, Arizona

This new spot in the heart of Old Town Scottsdale is a welcome addition to the foodie scene: French-inspired and contemporary, with a wide range of pleasures from traditional to unexpected. Stop in for a morning treat or afternoon enhancement, enjoying your baked goods at a long counter along the wall or at an outdoor table in sunny weather (which is pretty much almost always in Scottsdale). Macarons are a favorite here, in such cre-



Ted Drewes Strawberry Concrete

Photo: Courtesy Explore St. Louis



Assorted Cupcakes at Sweet Freedom Bakery

Photo: Courtesy Sweet Freedom Bakery

ative flavors as vanilla/prickly pear or champagne. Donuts, too, are a standard, and you might find a chocolate sprinkled or maple-glazed variety when you visit. No-bake/gluten-free brownies are a joy, and the “cruffins” (a cross between croissants and muffins) combine the flakiness of the former with the moistness of the latter. The baked goods look as good as they taste: a mango/kiwi strawberry mousse tart is an extravagant mound, with a light creamy filling in the center of a round wall of strawberries, while matcha cake is a series of elaborate swirls and shapes in cream, gold, and the singular hue of this green tea powder.



Sweet Dee's Matcha Cake

Photo: Rich Rudin

7350 E. Stetson Dr., Scottsdale AZ. Tel: 480-994-6733. www.sweetdeesaz.com

SWEET FREEDOM BAKERY Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sweet Freedom Bakery is a place you might have considered unthinkable: a bakery that’s vegan, kosher, and uses no gluten, soy, corn, peanuts, or refined sugar. Best of all, it’s amazing. When I lived in Philadelphia, I was a regular, and I don’t have any of these restrictions. That’s because the baked goods here are just so damn good. Cupcakes range from carrot to banana chocolate chip or lemon/raspberry. Chocolate chip cookies are heavenly, but why not give yourself a little extra boost with Double Mint chocolate chip cookies? Loaves from zucchini to banana to cinnamon/sugar are rich and moist with the perfect amount of sweetness balancing the ultra-fresh flavor. Brownies, blondies, muffins (cinnamon/apple, lemon/poppy-seed, orange cranberry), donuts (chocolate, lemon/coconut, pumpkin, apple cider): the selections are downright endless, and served from behind the glass counters at this cozy spot right on Philadelphia’s well-known South Street. Deliciousness and healthy eating are not mutually exclusive. At Sweet Freedom, they go hand in hand. 1424 South St., Philadelphia PA. Tel: 215-545-1899. www.sweetfreedombakery.com

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High atop the cliffs of Big Sur, 1,200 feet above the Pacific Ocean, the romantic **Post Ranch Inn** has 40 architecturally innovative guest rooms and suites placed along a ridge that parallels the Pacific Ocean. Each guest accommodation offers a unique, luxurious experience with views of either the ocean or mountain scenery. Room designs use earth tones with an emphasis on natural and sustainable materials, with custom furniture and rugs, hand-woven by indigenous weavers. Spend the day at two therapeutically heated basking pools, each with an infinity edge overlooking the ocean, or enjoying holistic treatments like the famous Shaman Journey session at the spa. Afterwards, dine at Sierra Mar Restaurant under the helm of Executive Head Chef Elizabeth Murray who presents guests with an unconventional fine dining experience, showcasing unique and inquisitive food creations. Rates from \$1,175. 47900 Highway 1, Big Sur, CA. Tel: 831-667-2200.www.postranchinn.com

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keywestpride.org

Fifty years after the Stonewall uprising, few places celebrate LGBTQ diversity and pride as openly as Key West. Then again, *One Human Family* isn't our official town motto for nothing. Truth is, with everything from gay tours and clothing optional resorts to risqué cabaret, an eclectic art scene and abundant natural wonders, you might say that Key West was out before it was in.

fla-keys.com/gaykeywest 305.294.4603

