



MAY 20 - JUNE 2, 2026

Q VEGAS

20th
Anniversary

Piranha
NIGHTCLUB

Piranha Celebrates Twenty Years



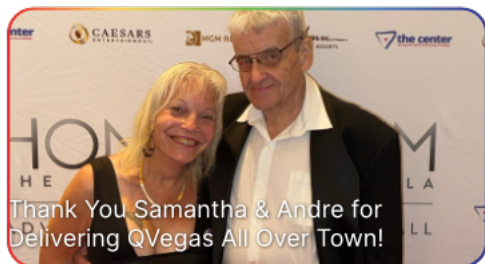


Photo: Jacob Lopez

With a proud publishing legacy that dates back to 1978, QVegas has been at the heart of Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ community for over four decades. What began as a grassroots newsletter has evolved into a dynamic weekly publication that informs, celebrates, and amplifies queer voices across Southern Nevada. QVegas is available in print at over 30 LGBTQ+ establishments, community nonprofits, and partner advertiser locations, making it a vital part of the local scene.

Beyond the printed page, QVegas connects with readers through a robust digital presence—on the web, across all major social media platforms, in our dedicated iOS app, and through weekly email blasts that keep the community in the know. Our coverage spans nightlife, entertainment, politics, health, advocacy, and the everyday stories that make up the diverse LGBTQ+ experience in Las Vegas.

As an advertiser-supported publication, QVegas is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ+ locals and visitors alike—offering unparalleled access to one of the city's most loyal and engaged audiences. In an era where equality rights are under attack nationwide, QVegas stands as a strong and unwavering community partner, committed to visibility, representation, and celebrating the power of queer voices.



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Twenty years.

In a city that turns over restaurants in eighteen months and clubs in twelve, twenty consecutive years on the corner of Paradise and Naples is not a milestone — it's a small miracle. This issue belongs to Piranha Nightclub, which marks two decades of holding open the doors on May 29 and 30 with Anniversary WKND 2026: 20 Years in Our Platinum Era. Friday brings international DJ Ben Bakson. Saturday brings RuPaul's Drag Race Season 16 winner Nymphia Wind. But every night belongs to the staff, the cast, the dancers, the queens, and the leadership team that built something genuinely rare here.

Our cover story this issue walks through two decades — from the 2006 grand opening to the 2008 recession to COVID to the 2025 passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, which finally put the Fruit Loop on the state map as an LGBTQ+ historical landmark.

But the numbers and the legislation tell only half the story. The other half lives in the dancers who call this place a chosen home, the regulars whose first kiss happened on that dance floor, and the mothers who walked their kids in on a 21st birthday and walked back out reassured. Congratulations, Piranha. Twenty was the warm-up.

Inside the magazine, we also catch you up on QVegas Wellness, the LGBTQ+ health and medication feature in the QVegas App we revamped one month ago. We've added

comprehensive medication tracking for PrEP, PEP, HRT, ART, mental health prescriptions, and more — with Live Activities on iPhone, an Apple Watch companion, and an AI-assisted dosing layer that flags interactions in plain language. Privacy remains the product. We built this because no one else was going to build it for us. Lab tracking and testing reminders ship later this summer.

And because we know not every moment of community has to be a meeting or a march — sometimes it's a couch, a cocktail, and a kiss five seasons in the making — our What We're Watching column digs into the Hacks finale arc. Deborah Vance and Ava Daniels finally lock lips in Episode 7, "Montecito," and the sapphic internet has not recovered. Jean Smart and Hannah Einbinder are turning in the best work of their careers. The series finale lands May 28.

Thank you, as always, for reading. Thank you to Piranha for two decades of being exactly, unapologetically itself. And thank you to a community that keeps proving, issue after issue, that we are still here.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media

HOROSCOPES ARE A DRAG™



Gemini
May 21 - Jun 20
May 2026

Honey, May's got you serving LOOKS in every room, darling! Venus is painting your love life in hot pink—whether you're coupled up or flying solo, you're STUNNING. Career-wise, strut that confidence; promotions are calling! But listen, sis, pace yourself —Mercury says slow down before you burn out those gorgeous heels. Journal those feelings, meditate, and remember: you're not just fabulous, you're FIERCE. This month, let your light sparkle, not sizzle. Own it, babe!

via QVegas







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Piranha + GIPSY NIGHTCLUB

RuPaul's DRAG RACE

FRI MAY 8 | MORPHINE LOVE DION

VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY + 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY

FRI MAY 15 | MORGAN MCMICHAELS

VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY + 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY

SAT MAY 16 | MORGAN MCMICHAELS

SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY + 1:30 AM at PIRANHA

FRI MAY 22 A'KERIA C DAVENPORT

VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY

SAT MAY 23 JEWELS SPARKLES

SHOWTIME | 1:30 AM PIRANHA

RuPaul's
DRAG RACE
LIVE

SAT MAY 30 | NYMPHIA WIND

SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY + 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY

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- Community-Based, Culturally Competent Mental Health
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QVegas Wellness: Building the LGBTQ+ Community's Most Trusted Health App

When we launched QVegas Wellness, our promise was simple: the LGBTQ+ community deserves a health app built by people who understand them, not retrofitted from a mainstream product that treats us as an afterthought. Just one month in, that promise has only deepened — and the app has grown in ways we're proud to share.

Medication Management That Actually Reflects Our Lives

The biggest expansion has been around medication. QVegas Wellness now tracks every medication category that matters to our community: PrEP and PEP, antiretroviral therapy, hormone replacement therapy, mental health medications, supplements, and general prescriptions — alongside the over-the-counter regimens many of us rely on every day. Each medication carries its own schedule, dosage form, pharmacy details, and prescriber notes, and the app now supports the full range of delivery forms our readers actually use: tablets, capsules, injections, patches, topicals, inhalers, drops, and devices.

Notifications were the most-requested feature after launch, and we delivered them properly. QVegas Wellness now sends push reminders at every scheduled dose time, and on iPhone they show up as Live Activities — persistent, glanceable reminders on the Lock Screen and in the Dynamic Island that follow you through the day until you log a dose taken, skipped, or missed. For people on time-sensitive regimens like PrEP or HRT, never having to dig through a notification tray is more than convenience; it's adherence.

AI That Knows Our Medications

We also built in an AI-assisted dosing and contraindication layer. When you add a new medication, QVegas Wellness checks it against your existing regimen and flags potential interactions and dosing concerns in plain language. The system is trained with our community's prescriptions in mind — PrEP-recreational-drug interactions, HRT-and-antidepressant timing, ART-and-supplement absorption — the conversations our community has with affirming pharmacists, brought into the app you already carry.

Just as critically, the AI never sees who you are. Queries are stripped of every piece of personally identifiable information before they leave your device

— no name, no email, no user ID, no device identifier, no location. Only the medication names and dosages required to answer the question are sent, fully anonymized, and nothing about your queries is retained, logged, or used to train any model. The AI knows medications. It does not know you, and it never will.

Apple Watch, Always With You

The new Apple Watch companion app brings dose logging, mood check-ins, and quick-glance wellness data straight to your wrist. The Watch mirrors the iPhone's Live Activity reminders, vibrates gently when a dose is due, and lets you respond with a single tap — no unlocking a phone, no awkward moments at dinner or at the bar. For trans readers tracking HRT, for anyone on daily PrEP, for community members navigating mental health medications, the Watch makes the most personal part of self-care quietly automatic.

Coming Soon: Labs and Testing Reminders

The next wave of QVegas Wellness features is already in development, and we want to share where we're heading. Lab result tracking is coming — a private, encrypted log for your HIV viral loads, CD4 counts, hormone panels, lipid and metabolic results, and routine bloodwork — so you can see the trend lines that matter to your care without depending on a patient portal you have to log into through three different clinics. Pair that with testing reminders built around the cadence our community actually follows: every three months for STI screening if you're on PrEP, every six months otherwise, plus tailored prompts for HIV, hepatitis, and the routine wellness checks that often slip when life gets busy. Reminders will respect the same privacy guarantees as everything else in the app — local notifications, no third-party trackers, no leakage of what you're being reminded about. We'll have more to share as these features ship later this summer.

No One Else Is Building This

QVegas Wellness is the only health and medication app produced by an LGBTQ+ magazine, anywhere. Other publications write about our health; we built the tool to help you live it. The LGBTQ+ community has spent decades being told to fit our health needs into apps designed for someone else — apps that misgender us in their onboarding, apps that don't



recognize the medications we take, apps that treat sexual health as an afterthought, apps run by companies that quietly monetize our data. We rejected that model from day one. We've been part of this community since 1978, and earning that kind of trust means we don't get to outsource it.

Privacy Is the Product

Every wellness record — every dose, every mood entry, every screening result — is protected by AES-256-GCM field-level encryption before it ever touches our servers. Our infrastructure exceeds HIPAA-level security requirements: encrypted in transit, encrypted at rest, isolated inside a private cloud network, and never, ever sold, shared with advertisers, or used to train outside models. Your health data belongs to you. That's not marketing — it's how the app is built.

QVegas Wellness is available free on the App Store as part of the QVegas app.

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Twenty Years in the Platinum Era:

Piranha Nightclub Marks Two Decades in the Fruit Loop

When Piranha Nightclub opened its doors in 2006, the corner of Paradise Road and Naples Drive was already legendary — but it was a legend mostly whispered among locals. The Fruit Loop, as the cluster of LGBTQ+ businesses had been informally called for decades, had been a refuge since the 1950s, when Club Black Magic first opened its doors and quietly became a gathering place for a community that had nowhere else to go. By the time Piranha cut the ribbon twenty years ago this month, generations of queer Las Vegas had already laid the foundation with legends like Kenny Kerr. What Piranha brought to the block was scale, swagger, and a sound system that could be felt three rooms away — and a promise to honor what came before by going harder, louder, and prouder.

This Memorial Day weekend, on Friday, May 29 and Saturday, May 30, Piranha and its sister club Gypsy mark the occasion with Anniversary WKND 2026: 20 Years in Our Platinum Era. Friday night belongs to international DJ Ben Bakson, whose signature uplifting house remixes have become a staple of Pride circuits worldwide. Saturday brings Nymphia Wind, the Taiwanese-American powerhouse who in 2024 became the first East Asian queen ever crowned on RuPaul's Drag Race, the reigning Banana Buddha herself. Nymphia performs the Gypsy stage at 11:30 PM with a meet-and-greet at 12:30 AM, then takes Piranha's back room at 1:30 AM. And of course, the legendary Piranha dancers and resident queens will be out in force—or fierce.

But before the bottles pop and the lights

drop, it's worth pausing to consider how a 10,000-square-foot club on Paradise Road became a Las Vegas institution.

The Build

In the mid-2000s, Vegas nightlife was at an inflection point. The megaclubs were beginning their reign on the Strip, and the city was rapidly becoming a global destination for nightlife tourism. What it conspicuously lacked was a queer venue built to the same scale. The Fruit Loop's existing bars and lounges were beloved, but none of them were engineered to host the kind of high-production drag spectacles, internationally booked DJs, and weekend crowds that Vegas was suddenly capable of attracting.

The Paradise Road address that would become Piranha had been queer-adjacent property for years — its front room having lived an earlier life as an ultra-lounge called 8 1/2 (a name that probably needs no explanation), with the larger space cycling through identities including Angles & Lace, and Icon. When Icon's owner passed away and the lease became available, Paul San Filippo and the team at Gypsy saw an opportunity to expand on Gypsy's success with something at an entirely different scale. They took the lease.

What they took possession of was a fifty-year-old building — original construction dating to the 1960s — and inside it, essentially, a black box: a basic front room with a bar, and a dark back room with another bar. Before breaking ground on the buildout, the team scouted clubs around the country. A multi-room venue in Miami — cozy front room with a fireplace

and bar, dance club in the back, more rooms upstairs — confirmed the multi-room concept they had already been imagining. Combined with an aesthetic inspiration lifted straight from the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland — dark, dramatic, gothic, theatrical — the design started taking shape: a queer Vegas nightclub refracted through Imagineering.

The renovation was a full rebuild. New roof. New HVAC. New plumbing. Walls and ceilings opened up and reskinned. And then, two weeks before the planned grand opening — invitations already in the mail — the county arrived for its final inspection and discovered that the licensed electrician on the project had not filed his permits. Every wall and ceiling that had just been finished had to be opened back up so the electrical work could be properly inspected. Grand opening was pushed back roughly six months.

The delay turned out to be a gift. The back room of the venue had a second floor above it — an apartment, of all things, that had at various previous lives been a bookstore and a clothing store. With the construction timeline already blown, the team made an audacious call: open up the second floor too. They cut into the floor, added a railing, and created the balcony that now overlooks the back-room dance floor, with three private rooms, a bar, and table seating up top. The name came easily enough — people, after all, can be piranhas. The original build even included a live tank stocked with the real fish, eventually retired at the request of Nevada wildlife regulators.

Opening night in 2006 looked nothing like the Piranha of 2026. The front room was carpeted. There were chaise lounges. A softer aesthetic that has since evolved into the harder, brighter, more cinematic club the room is today. Among the queens who set the tone early on was Hot Chocolate, the club's longtime Mood Director, who has been part of the family for 19 of the 20 years. She remembers the early headliner nights: Janet Jackson, Carrot Top, and a steady parade of celebrities who used Piranha as the after-hours spot to actually let loose. "There's so many fabulous memories," she says of the run, the kind of casual understatement that only somebody who has truly seen it all can pull off.

The Empire Grew

Piranha did not open at over 10,000 square feet. It grew there.

Adjacent to the original venue, in the same strip of buildings, were a video store and an Ethiopian restaurant. As those leases turned over, the club absorbed them, room by room. The footprint expanded outward until it encompassed four distinct rooms inside and two interconnected outdoor patio spaces. By the time the dust settled, Piranha had become one of the largest dedicated LGBTQ+ nightclubs in the western United States — a venue that could legitimately function as four clubs in a single shell, each with its own DJ, its own crowd, its own personality.

The Celebrities and the Spectacle

The list of stars who've been spotted on Piranha's dance floor over twenty years reads like a Billboard chart and a tabloid index combined: Britney Spears, Paula Abdul, Lance Bass, Sam Smith, Andy Cohen and Anderson Cooper together, Kathy Griffin, Carson Kressley and most of the original and new Queer Eye for the Straight Guy casts. Dance and pop royalty has come through the room as both performers and patrons — Tiffany, CeCe Peniston, Erika Jayne. The Real Housewives franchise has filmed there, and a long list of Housewives across multiple cities have walked the door. Janet Jackson still drops in when she's in town — because at Piranha she can disappear into the crowd. The club's reputation as a place where A-listers could blend in unbothered became part of its mythology — the staff, then as now, treats privacy as a sacred trust. Nobody gets photographed without consent. Everybody gets to dance.

Beyond the celebrity sightings, the drag programming has been the connective tissue. The cast has become a launching pad and a homecoming, hosting Drag Race alumni and local legends in equal rotation. "My first memory of Piranha is a night with Willam, Detox, and Vicki Vox," says Russ White, co-publisher of QVegas. "That's the night Piranha locked itself into me — and twenty years later, the cast still

hits that hard." Most regulars have a version of that night — the headliner, the dance floor, the after-after, the friend they made in line.

Surviving the Hits

Twenty consecutive years in business — in Las Vegas, in nightlife — is not a survival statistic anyone should take for granted. The Piranha story has terrain in it that nearly took the club out.

The first hit was the 2008 financial crisis. Las Vegas was ground zero for foreclosures, household budgets vaporized overnight, and the discretionary spending that nightlife depends on cratered city-wide. The clubs survived by adapting fast — lowering drink prices, watching the market move, responding before the bottom dropped further. Competition arrived around the same time. Krave, a large new venue that opened in the late 2000s, drew real attention and forced Piranha to sharpen everything from talent to programming to bar economics.

The second hit was COVID. The county shut Piranha and Gipsy down with the same order that closed major Strip resorts. The only path back to operating was to install a working commercial kitchen and space every table six feet apart — even across the dance floor. The team installed the kitchen. They set up the tables. They opened with a chair sitting on the dance floor where a body usually goes. And they made it through.

Each crisis produced a stronger club on the other side. The version of Piranha that exists today is the result of twenty years of pressure-tested decisions and a leadership team that has been around long enough to know which storms to ride out and which ones to remodel for. And not every loss across twenty years has been an economic one. The Piranha family has also buried coworkers and friends along the way — absences that leave permanent marks on a place this tightly woven, and that the staff carry with them every shift.

The Family Business

Ask anyone on the current Piranha and Gipsy team what makes the room different and you'll get some version of the same answer: it's the leadership. The clubs have long been guided by owner Jerry Masini, whose hand-picked team has stayed remarkably consistent through nightlife's most volatile decades. Hot Chocolate is hardly the only long-haul name on the call sheet — Vegas drag legend and longtime cast fixture Shannel crossed over from Gipsy and never really left, and bar manager Ramiro Lopez has anchored the operation behind the bar for years. Tenure at Piranha has effectively become its own credential. Sunshine, who hosts shows at Gipsy and discovered Piranha after moving to Vegas in 2011, credits Jerry directly. The longevity, she



notes, comes from the team: management, entertainers, bartenders, security, custodians — every role treated as essential, every person treated like family.

Among the longest tenures of all belongs to Chris Adams, whose work across the Gipsy and Piranha world stretches back twenty-five years — covering the entire Piranha run from the chaotic construction-delay months in early 2006 onward, with a Gipsy chapter before that. Adams offers a portrait of the owner that captures the operation in a single image: even after twenty years, Jerry still personally fluffs the pillows before opening each night, and personally guides his management team through every hard call the room has had to make. That level of attention to detail, Adams notes, sets the tone for everything else.

"At the heart of Piranha is our team. They are the soul of this club. Without the bartenders, DJs, AV, VIP, security, performers, barbacks, managers, servers, daytime ops, and every person working behind the scenes, Piranha would simply not be what it is today," said Adams.

Nico Martinez plays a critical role in the daily upkeep and overall functionality of the venue, ensuring the space is clean, organized, and fully prepared for nightly operations. During the day, he is responsible for maintaining the venue and keeping the bar properly stocked, allowing the evening staff to operate efficiently without interruption. Nico's dedication of 17 years behind the scenes is essential to the venue's success and smooth day-to-day operation.

That family extends well beyond payroll. Amadeus Luevanos, a Piranha go-go dancer for three years now, points to Curtis Goodman — known in the house simply as MUVA — as the icon and father figure who shaped his Vegas. Amadeus's first time in the club wasn't as a guest at all. He stepped foot in Piranha for the first time at his go-go audition, climbed onto the box, and never really climbed back down. For him and for many of the entertainers who came up through Piranha's stages, the club has been less a workplace than a chosen home.

Anthony Vacanti, who danced as a guest at Piranha for a decade before joining the staff a year ago, puts it more bluntly: he had his first kiss here. He's hardly the only one. Two decades into the run, Piranha has become a place that holds a staggering number of firsts — first nights out, first kisses, first drag shows, first times feeling, as Tony Astor describes it, completely safe to be yourself in Las Vegas. Astor, who has been coming to Piranha since the day he turned 21 and is now part of the AtmosFIERCE family at sister-program Derek Daniels Productions, calls the club the absolute highlight of his thirty years in Las Vegas.

For the international dancers who call

Piranha their artistic home, the sentiment is the same. Jorge Luis Rodríguez, who joined the cast in December 2024, puts it this way:

"Desde que llegué a Las Vegas, fue el primer club que creyó en mí, en mi talento y me brindó un lugar en esta increíble familia Piraña y Gipsy. Son un ícono entre la comunidad LGBT en Las Vegas y en el mundo, ya que recibimos visitantes de muchos países. Agradezco mucho a la parte administrativa, desde el dueño hasta el seguridad, los cuales hacen posible el funcionamiento y la magia de la cual disfrutamos cada noche. Les agradezco mucho la oportunidad y por hacerme parte de esta gran familia. Muchas gracias."

Since arriving in Las Vegas, Rodríguez says, Piranha was the first club to believe in him and his talent and to give him a place in the Piranha and Gipsy family — clubs he calls an icon for the LGBTQ+ community both in Las Vegas and around the world, drawing visitors from many countries. He thanks everyone who keeps the operation and the magic running, from ownership down to security, and closes with gratitude for the opportunity and for being welcomed into the family.

Yordan Marquez Fonseca, two years into the cast, says it more simply: "To me, Piranha is like family." Beyond the lights and the choreography, what the dancers describe is something rarer than a paycheck: a stage that takes them seriously as artists and a community that takes them seriously as people.

Piranha has prepared many queens to step onto RuPaul's Drag Race, including the very first Drag Queen to ever set foot in the workroom — Shannel. It's home to Alexis Mateo, India Ferrah, Anetra, Mirage, and Yara Sofia.

The Next Chapter

Three years ago, when Gipsy was preparing to reopen after its renovation, Garrett Pattiani — co-publisher of QVegas and owner of Synergy Haus — approached Jerry with a proposal. His consulting firm would help bring Gipsy back into the spotlight, strengthen the venues' partnerships with the city, and build deeper relationships with the LGBTQ+ nonprofits serving the community around them. The pitch landed. Pattiani has since become one of the most public faces of the Piranha-Gipsy enterprise, and the partnership has produced some of the most significant civic wins the Fruit Loop has ever seen.

The biggest of those wins came in May 2025, when the Nevada Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 — championed by State Senator Fabian Doñate — formally recognizing the Fruit Loop as an LGBTQ+ historical landmark. Piranha, Gipsy, Quadz, Get Booked, and the surrounding businesses are now part of a state-recognized cultural district,

1954 — Club Black Magic opens near Paradise Road and Naples Drive, planting the first flag of what would become the Fruit Loop. Over the next half-century, a cluster of LGBTQ+-friendly bars, bookstores, and businesses takes root around the intersection.

1960s — The building at 4633 Paradise Road is constructed, with an apartment on the second floor above what would later become Piranha's back room.

1980s–early 2000s — The building cycles through identities: a bookstore, a clothing store, a residential apartment upstairs, and eventually an ultra-lounge in the front called 8½ (a name that lived a knowing double life). The larger space later becomes the bar Angles & Lace, then a club called Icon.

Mid-2000s — Icon's owner passes away. The team operating Gipsy next door, led by owner Jerry Masini, takes over the lease and decides to build out an entirely new club at scale.

2006 — The Doors Open

A roughly \$5 million renovation transforms the fifty-year-old building from the studs up: new roof, new HVAC, new plumbing, every wall and ceiling reskinned. Design inspiration is lifted from Disneyland's Haunted Mansion and from a multi-room nightclub in Miami that the team scouts during a national research tour.

Two weeks before the planned grand opening — invitations already in the mail — Clark County inspectors discover that the licensed electrician on the project never filed his permits. Every wall and ceiling has to be opened back up. The grand opening is pushed back roughly six months.

The team uses the delay to expand the project: the second-floor apartment above the back room is gutted and opened up, creating the balcony, three private rooms, a bar, and table seating that overlook the dance floor today.

May 2006 — Piranha Nightclub opens. Velvet curtains, marble-topped bar, gigantic live piranha aquariums (eventually retired at the request of Nevada wildlife regulators), and a still-connected 8½ Lounge out front. Multi-room layout from day one.

2007

Hot Chocolate joins the cast as Mood Director — beginning what is now a 19-year tenure. (Trivia: she'd previously appeared in Miss Congeniality 2.)

2008

The Great Recession lands in Las Vegas harder than in almost any other American city. The Vegas Strip absorbs body blows; foreclosure rates set national records. Piranha adapts to survive — drink prices come down, programming gets sharpened, and a new competitor, Krave opens nearby, intensifying the fight for the gay-nightlife market.

2009

Piranha establishes its Twitter presence (@PiranhaVegas), one of the earlier Vegas nightlife venues to embrace direct social.

2010–2015

The footprint grows. Adjacent leases turn over — first an Ethiopian restaurant, then a video store — and the club absorbs them, room by room, until the venue stretches to over 10,000 square feet with four interior rooms and two interconnected outdoor patios.

The drag programming becomes a national draw. RPDR Season 3's Yara Sofia joins the resident cast alongside Hot Chocolate. Touring queens including Roxxy Andrews and April Carrion rotate through. Janet Jackson begins what becomes her tradition of low-key Wednesday-night drop-ins in the front room.

2016

Piranha wins Gold for Best Gay Bar/Club in the Las Vegas Review-Journal's "Best of Las Vegas" awards — the first of nine consecutive years as either Gold or Silver medalist in the category.

In June, the Pulse nightclub massacre in Orlando reshapes the LGBTQ+ nightlife landscape nationwide. Piranha is among the Las Vegas venues anchoring the community response.

2017

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club again. Time Out Las Vegas profiles Piranha and the connected 8½ Lounge

as "gay Vegas's most beautiful nightlife palace," highlighting the velvet curtains, marble-topped bar, piranha tanks, and Skybox VIP rooms.

2018

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club. RPDR Season 10 winner Aquaria performs at the Piranha anniversary that summer.

2019

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club — fourth Gold in a row. RPDR programming intensifies; weekend headliners become the norm.

2020

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club — fifth Gold in a row.

March — Clark County shuts Piranha down under the same emergency order that closes the Strip resorts. The only path to reopening is to install a commercial kitchen and space every table six feet apart, including across the dance floor. The team installs both.

2021

Wins Silver Best Gay Bar/Club + Bronze Best Nightclub. The post-COVID rebuild begins.

Independence Day weekend — Piranha hosts "INDEPEN-DANCE WEEKEND" with RPDR Season 13 finalists Gottmik and Denali Foxx.

2022

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club — fully back on top. Vegas nightlife stabilizes, drag tourism rebounds.

2023

Wins Silver Best Gay Bar/Club + Silver Best Nightclub.

2024

Wins Gold Best Gay Bar/Club + Bronze Best Nightclub — the strongest two-category showing in years.

Gipsy reopens after complete demolition. Sister-club programming, shared cast, and shared civic strategy reach new heights.

Across the country, Nymphia Wind wins RuPaul's Drag Race Season 16 — the first East Asian queen ever crowned. She'll headline Piranha's 20th-anniversary weekend two years later.

2025

February 20 — State Senator Fabian Doñate introduces Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, recognizing the Fruit Loop as a historical LGBTQ+ landmark in Clark County.

March 17 — Senate Government Affairs Committee hearing in Carson City. Garrett Pattiani testifies on behalf of the Fruit Loop businesses, alongside Las Vegas Spectrum publisher Rob Schlegel and Quadz Video Bar manager Billy Pilesky. Lambda Business Association commits to funding signage along the district.

April 17 — The Nevada Senate adopts SCR 2.

May 9–11 — Piranha and Gipsy host The Legacy Ball, a 19th-anniversary weekend honoring trailblazing Las Vegas drag queens. Headliners include Alexis Mateo (RPDR S3, AS1, AS5, Canada's Drag Race: Canada vs. The World) and Fantasia Royale Gaga (Boulet Brothers' Dragula S5). Piranha and Gipsy entertainment director Collin Haire publicly frames the weekend as a thank-you to the community that made Las Vegas a drag capital.

May 22 — The full Nevada Legislature passes SCR 2. The Fruit Loop is formally recognized as Clark County's newest historical landmark, with directional signage, LVCVA marketing inclusion, and infrastructure improvements set in motion.

Wins Silver Best Gay Bar/Club — extending the unbroken decade of "Best of Las Vegas" recognition.

2026

May 29–30 — Anniversary WKND 2026: 20 Years in Our Platinum Era. Piranha and Gipsy celebrate two decades with DJ Ben Bakson on Friday and Nymphia Wind on Saturday. Doors open at 9 PM at Gipsy and 10 PM at Piranha.

Planned for the next chapter: a new Vegas Loop station near the Fruit Loop, a renovated street behind the clubs, a reconstructed Piranha facade, and continued club expansion.



with planned directional signage, marketing support, and infrastructure improvements that include a long-overdue crosswalk at Paradise and Naples. Piranha creative director Collin Haire, a UNLV classmate of Sen. Doñate's, was one of the public faces of the crosswalk push, framing it as a long-overdue safety win for the district — and a step toward eventually painting it in rainbow. Hanna Barbeara, a member of the Gipsy and Piranha drag cast for nearly two years, puts it plainly: plenty of business owners around town say they're allies. Jerry and the leadership at Gipsy and Piranha actually do the work. They walked the legislation through Carson City. They got the district on the map.

More Than a Club

What Piranha has built over twenty years is bigger than a nightclub.

It is tourism infrastructure: people fly to Las Vegas expecting a gay scene, and Piranha and Gipsy are how the city delivers on that expectation. Visitors stay in hotel rooms. Eat in restaurants. See shows. Take cabs and Ubers across town to get to and from the Fruit Loop. The economic ripple from a single LGBTQ+ tourism weekend reaches well past Paradise Road.

It is an employer at scale, supporting drag performers, dancers, bartenders, security, hosts, PR firms, graphic designers, magazine editors — a creative economy that touches a remarkable number of independent contractors and small businesses. (This very magazine is part of that ecosystem.) It is the venue of choice for community balls, nonprofit fundraisers, sports-tourism activations, and private events across the calendar year. It is, in many practical respects, where the Las Vegas LGBTQ+ social calendar actually happens.

"It is a Cheers-style locale for an entire generation of Vegas queers who count it as a second living room — including, on more than one memorable occasion, kids walking through the doors for the first

time on their 21st birthday with their mothers in tow, and mothers walking back out reassured that their kid had just found somewhere safe," says Masini.

Twenty More

Vegas does not give institutions easily. The city eats venues alive, swaps owners every two years, repurposes square footage faster than most cities can permit it. For a nightclub — let alone a queer nightclub — to clock twenty consecutive years in this town, hosting the world's biggest pop stars on Tuesday and a baby gay's first drag brunch on Saturday, is genuinely rare. Piranha is now one of the few legacy LGBTQ+ nightlife venues in the country still thriving — and, by any honest measure, still growing. It has done it by being consistently, unapologetically itself: a place where the music is loud, the drag is fierce, the lights are bright, and the door is open.

The next twenty are already in motion. A new station on the Boring Company's expanding Vegas Loop is planned for nearby, set to drop arrivals at the Fruit Loop's doorstep. The street behind the clubs is being renovated. The Piranha facade itself is in line for reconstruction. The neighborhood is being beautified. And the club itself is set to expand further.

After twenty years on the corner of Paradise and Naples, if Piranha's walls could talk, they would echo what the club has been saying without interruption since 2006: we're here, we're queer, we're not going anywhere. And the walls would add what they have absorbed from twenty years of holding the community inside them — I've got you. You're safe here. I'm not letting go.

Anniversary WKND 2026 — Friday, May 29 with Ben Bakson, and Saturday, May 30 with Nymphia Wind — is both a celebration and a promise. Twenty years was the warm-up. Doors open at 9 PM at Gipsy and 10 PM at Piranha.

Tickets at piranhavegas.com and gipsylasvegas.com.



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What We're Watching: Deborah Kissed Ava and Nothing Else Matters



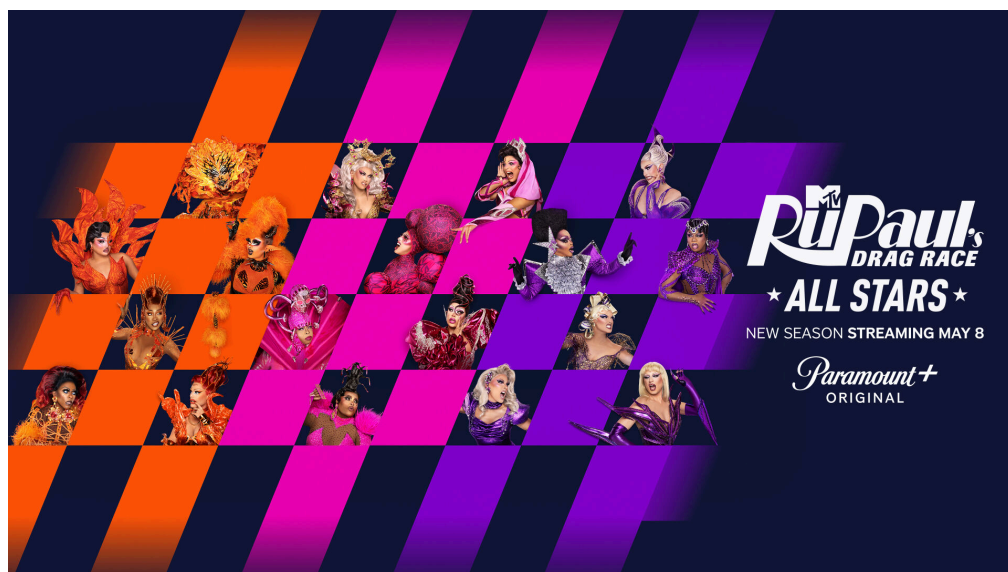
Pour something cold, queue something up, and let us guide you through the gayest stretch of streaming we've had in months.

After five seasons of will-they-won't-they, **Hacks** finally gave us what every sapphic Reddit thread has begged for: Deborah Vance and Ava Daniels lock lips. Episode 7, "Montecito," sends our favorite codependent comedy duo to a lesbian power-couple's Montecito estate — played to perfection by Cherry Jones and Leslie Bibb — where Deborah convinces Ava to fake-date her in exchange for a Carol Burnett original gown. What follows is the show at its sharpest: a masterclass in fake-dating tropes, queer subtext made text, and Jean Smart and Hannah Einbinder reminding everyone why this is the best comedy on television. The series finale lands May 28.

Baby Reindeer creator Richard Gadd is back, and the man does not do light. **Half Man** is a six-episode descent into toxic masculinity, repressed sexuality, and the lifelong wreckage of two boys raised as brothers — Niall (Jamie Bell) and Ruben (Gadd himself) — after their mothers fall in love and build a life together. It is brutal, beautifully shot, and unflinching about the gay panic defense and the violence that fuels homophobia. Critics are calling it the best new show of 2026. Watch it with someone you trust. Talk about it after.

The Tournament of **All Stars** is back, and 18 queens are throwing down for \$200,000, an Anastasia Beverly Hills collab, and a Drag Race Hall of Fame spot. New episodes drop every Friday — and there's only one place in town to watch them: Gipsy hosts All Stars viewing parties every Friday night. Show up early, order something pink, cheer too loud. This season's brackets feature returning legends and a few queens who've been waiting a decade for redemption, and the room at Gipsy gasps, screams, and reads along with the queens in real time. Drag Race is always good. Drag Race in a room full of people who get it is better.

Canadian air-ambulance drama **SkyMed** returns May 21, and the queer characters are back in force — Lexi, Crystal, and Stef are all returning, with The L Word's Lauren Lee Smith joining the cast for Season 4. If you've slept on this one, the premise sells itself: rescue medics flying into Canada's most isolated terrain, sharp ensemble writing, multiple queer leads who aren't there to be tragic, and stakes that earn every tear. Worth the binge.





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LGBTQ+ Resources

THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
thecenterlv.org

ACLU
aclunv.org

ADL
lasvegas.adl.org

ALCOHOLICS TOGETHER
alcoholicstogetherlasvegas.com

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bearslv.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
hendersonpride.org

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
hrc.org

IMPERIAL ROYALE SOVEREIGN COURT OF THE DESERT EMPIRE
ircsdei.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
lambdalv.com

LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenschorus.org

LAS VEGAS PRIME TIMERS
lasvegasprimetimers.com

LEATHER UNIFORM CLUB OF LAS VEGAS (LUC OF LV)
thelucoflv.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetreelv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org

Wellness Resources

THE GAVIN J. GOORJIAN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AFFINIDERM
affiniderm.com

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
cccfsn.org

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hplv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

PARCS DENTISTRY
parcsdentistry.com

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com

STI/HIV/AIDS Resources

THE ARLENE COOPER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA (AFAN)
afanlv.org

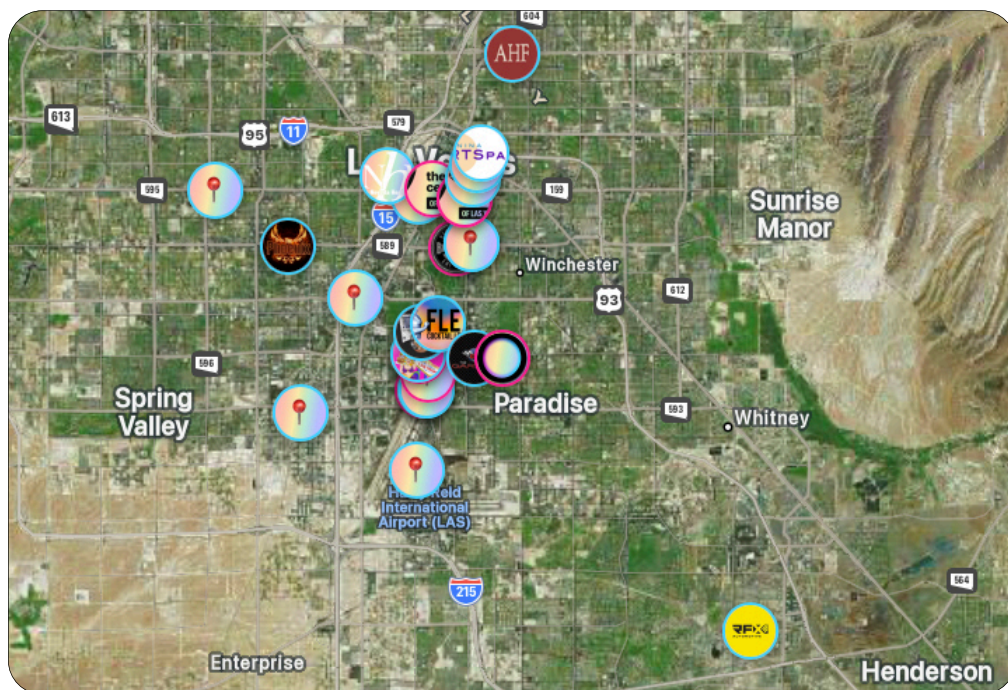
AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

CAN COMMUNITY HEALTH
cancommunityhealth.org/las-vegas

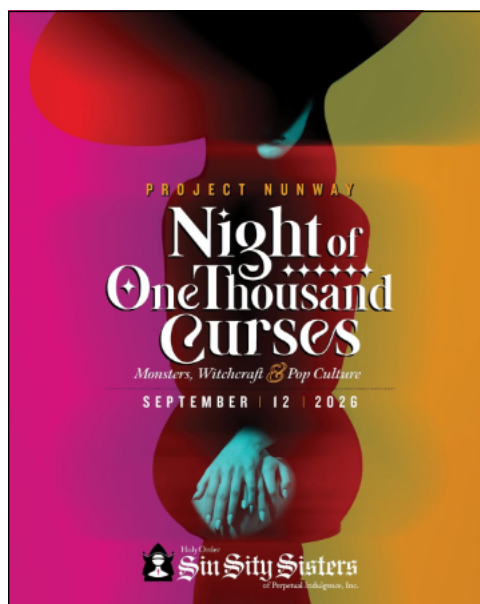
GOLDEN RAINBOW
goldenrainbow.org

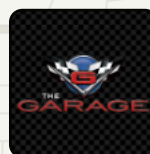
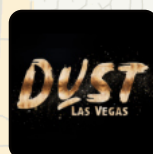
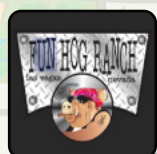
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