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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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Beyoncé Brought the Beat—Now It's Time to Bring the Ballot

This week, we turn the spotlight on a moment that electrified our city and echoed through every queer heart that's ever danced under a disco ball or wept through "Halo." Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter Tour didn't just roll into Vegas—it rode in like a rhinestone-studded revolution. With a record-breaking finale at Allegiant Stadium and jaw-dropping surprise guests (hello, Destiny's Child reunion!), Queen Bey gave the LGBTQ+ community everything: glamor, power, and a heaping dose of affirmation.

The afterparties were equally legendary. At Gipsy and Piranha, drag queens and DJs kept the stampede going until the desert sun came up. But make no mistake—this was more than a party. It was a statement. In a time when queer joy is still seen as a threat in many corners of the country, Las Vegas showed the world what it looks like when we refuse to shrink.

Still, we can't ignore what's happening outside the glow of the Strip.

Across the nation, LGBTQ+ rights remain under siege:

- In Florida, educational censorship continues to deepen, now extending to college-level health courses that include trans-inclusive content.
- In Texas, state officials are again targeting parents of trans youth under the guise of "child abuse" investigations.
- And in over 30 states, proposed anti-drag, anti-healthcare, and anti-trans laws are advancing, even as courts push back.

While Nevada enjoys a rare breather with no statewide elections in 2025, the political groundwork for 2026 is already taking shape. Attorney General Aaron Ford—longtime ally and fierce defender of civil rights—has announced his candidacy for governor. As we gear up for the 2026 midterms, the stakes couldn't be higher. If we want a future where drag is not criminalized, healthcare is not politicized, and queer youth are protected instead of persecuted, we have to get loud now—not later.

Here at QVegas, we're not just observers of the culture—we're caretakers of it. This issue is a love letter to queer brilliance. From Beyoncé's Vegas takeover to the story of Las Vegas Distillery's reinvention, we're celebrating what happens when creativity, resilience, and a little rebellion come together.

To our readers: you are the spirit of this city. You make the shows worth seeing, the bars worth dancing in, and the change worth fighting for. Stay tuned, stay bold, and stay involved.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media



View this week's horoscopes at qvegas.com/horoscopes-are-a-drag.



CANCER AUGUST 2025

Oh honey, gather 'round and let Mama serve you some fabulous tea in just 75 words, darling! Picture this: your month is about to be as dazzling as a rhinestone tiara under the spotlight, darling! Expect surprises popping up like confetti at a pride parade! Love? It's gonna be spicier than a queen's secret blend of hot sauce, sugar! And those dreams? They ain't just dreams, baby, they're strutting down the runway, ready to werk! Can you handle all that glam, gorgeous?



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A close-up photograph of two men kissing. The man on the left has a beard and is wearing a white shirt. The man on the right is shirtless. They are both looking down and smiling.

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Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter Finale Conquers Las Vegas and the LGBTQ+ Heart

On the sultry desert nights of July 25 and 26, Las Vegas was more than just the Entertainment Capital of the World—it became the spiritual heart of the Beyhive. Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, global icon and undisputed queen of the genre-bending, gender-defying, soul-stirring spectacle, brought her monumental Cowboy Carter Tour to a triumphant, high-voltage close at Allegiant Stadium.

Over two unforgettable nights, Beyoncé delivered a dreamscape of music, fashion, and cultural revolution to more than 120,000 fans. The tour finale wasn't just a concert—it was a coronation, a reunion, and for many in the LGBTQ+ community, a radiant celebration of belonging, authenticity, and power. And yes, Destiny's Child surprised the crowd on the final night, because Beyoncé never just ends—she ascends.

Vegas Was Ready—and So Was the Hive

Even by Las Vegas standards, the energy leading into Beyoncé's final shows was electric. Glitter-dusted cowboy hats, rhinestone fringe, custom boots, and hand-crafted rainbow western couture spilled from every rideshare and resort lobby onto the Strip. Fans—many LGBTQ+—traveled from across the globe for the final ride of the Cowboy Carter era.

Allegiant Stadium, larger and more cavernous than nearby T-Mobile Arena, saw one of its biggest crowds to date. The

venue was a deliberate choice by Parkwood Entertainment—this wasn't just a show, it was a cultural thunderclap. With the capacity to house over 60,000 fans per night, it allowed Beyoncé to shatter yet another record while giving the LGBTQ+ community the space to show up, show out, and shine.

A Tour Rooted in Reinvention and Resistance

From the moment Cowboy Carter dropped in March 2024, critics and fans knew Beyoncé was once again rewriting the rules. A reclamation of American music traditions—particularly country and Americana—from a Black woman's perspective, the album made history by earning Beyoncé her first Grammy for Best Country Album and another for Album of the Year. No Black woman had done that since Lauryn Hill in 1999.

The tour echoed the album's ambitious themes: a reimagining of American identity through the lens of a Black Southern woman—who also happens to be one of the most powerful artists in music history. She blended rock, soul, gospel, folk, country, and R&B, and gave voice to emerging Black country artists like Tanner Adell, Tiera Kennedy, Reyna Roberts, and Brittney Spencer. Her shoutout to Kennedy during Night 1 in Vegas was met with roaring approval, reinforcing how deeply the community values representation.

Glamour, Grit, and a Touch of Gayspirational Fabulousness

Of course, it wouldn't be a Beyoncé tour without jaw-dropping visuals and couture that makes the Met Gala look like amateur hour. With over 25 fashion designers contributing looks to the tour—including Mugler, Schiaparelli, Vivienne Westwood, TELFAR, and Gucci—the stage was as much a runway as it was a rodeo.

For the Vegas shows, Beyoncé debuted new pieces, including a matching cowhide ensemble worn with her 8-year-old daughter Rumi Carter. On Night 2, she sported a "Deja Blue" shirt in homage to her 13-year-old daughter and lead dancer, Blue Ivy, who performed with unwavering confidence alongside her mother. Fans—particularly queer parents and chosen families—felt the resonance: this was legacy-building in real time.

Hairstyling was helmed by Neal Farinah using products from Cécred, Beyoncé's haircare line. Makeup artist Rokaël Lizama delivered looks worthy of divas and drag legends alike. The glam was unapologetically queer-coded, intentionally so.

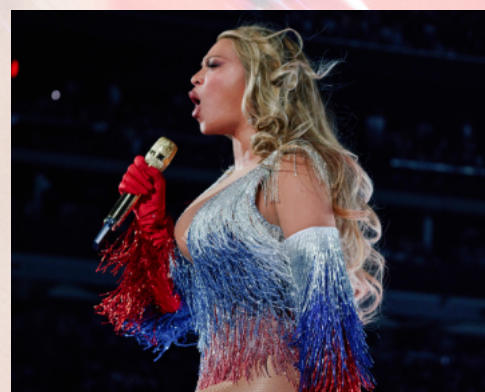
The Queen's Court: JAY-Z, Destiny's Child & Shaboozey

On Night 1, Beyoncé teased emotion, telling fans: "When we were writing this album, I imagined this night... ending the tour in Las Vegas. Y'all are making my



By the Numbers: A Monumental Tour

- 32 sold-out stadiums across North America and Europe
- 1.5+ million fans in attendance
- \$400+ million gross revenue, making it the highest-grossing country tour ever
- Beyoncé becomes the highest-grossing Black artist and highest-grossing R&B artist of all time
- 30+ venue records broken at iconic stadiums like SoFi (LA), Stade de France (Paris), and Tottenham Hotspur (London)
- 3 flying stage props (golden horse, red horseshoe, convertible lowrider)
- 42-song setlist with a nearly 3-hour runtime
- 350+ crew and performers, including both of her daughters



dreams come true." But what happened on Night 2 turned dreams into legacy.

Fans were already basking in the glory of surprise guest Shaboozey, who joined her onstage for their chart-topping anthem "Sweet Honey Buckin'." Then came the power couple moment—JAY-Z appeared, suited up and suave, to perform "Crazy in Love" with Beyoncé, followed by his solo hit "Ni\as in Paris." They sealed the duet with a kiss, sending shockwaves through the crowd.

And then came the real gag.

As the stage lights dimmed and the crowd murmured in anticipation, three silhouettes emerged in shimmering gold. Destiny's Child had arrived. Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland joined Beyoncé to perform "Lose My Breath," followed by a mashup with "Energy" from Renaissance—complete with a stadium-wide "mute challenge" that Vegas nailed. They ended with "Bootylicious," a true mic-drop moment that sent Allegiant Stadium into euphoric chaos.

It was the first time Destiny's Child had reunited since Coachella 2018—and only the second time they've performed "Bootylicious" together since the 2013 Super Bowl halftime show.

A Queer Celebration from Start to Finish

For Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ nightlife scene, the

party didn't end at Allegiant. It migrated—like a sequin-studded stampede—to the afterparties at Gipsy and Piranha Nightclub, where the queens kept the Beyoncé fever alive well into the early morning hours.

Gipsy, the iconic queer nightclub known for its world-class drag and bold production, hosted a Cowboy Carter-themed bash with Beyoncé impersonators, live vocals, and DJ sets remixing everything from "Texas Hold 'Em" to "Partition." Meanwhile, over at Piranha, drag divas like Vanity Jones, Miss Chanel, and Arya Snatched strutted and lip-synched in elaborate Beyoncé homages, including one audacious recreation of the robotic horse entrance.

Club managers confirmed record attendance at both venues, with Allegiant's unprecedented crowd size driving post-show foot traffic to levels not seen since EDC weekend.

Cowboy Couture, Rodeo Royalty, and the BeyGOOD Legacy

Beyond music and fashion, Beyoncé's tour once again highlighted her philanthropic power. Through her BeyGOOD Foundation, more than \$3 million was invested directly into communities visited during the tour, including disaster relief for wildfire victims in Los Angeles and entrepreneurship support programs for marginalized youth.

She also crowned 64 fans "Rodeo Royalty"

during the tour for their extraordinary and authentic Cowboy Carter-inspired fashion. Many of the winners—queer creatives, non-binary style icons, and drag performers—shared their experiences online, noting how empowering it felt to be seen by Beyoncé not just as fans, but as muses.

An Anthem for the Ages

As the final notes rang out and Beyoncé told the crowd, "Don't ever ask permission for something that already belongs to you," the message landed deep in the bones of everyone watching—especially the LGBTQ+ fans who've loved and championed her since the beginning.

She wasn't just wrapping up a tour; she was etching an era into history.

Final Thoughts: What Happens in Vegas Doesn't Stay in Vegas—It Echoes Around the World

For many queer fans, Beyoncé is more than a performer—she's a symbol of survival, resilience, and radical joy. With Cowboy Carter, she didn't just take us on a journey across genres; she brought us home to ourselves.

From stadium anthems to glitter-drenched afterparties, Beyoncé's finale weekend in Vegas reminded us all what it means to own your truth, ride your legacy, and leave your glitter hoofprint in the dust.

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The Spirit of Las Vegas: From Mash to Magic at the Las Vegas Distillery

By Russ White & Ward Billieisen for QVegas Magazine

Tucked away in an unassuming industrial corner of Henderson—just minutes from the razzle of the Las Vegas Strip—sits one of Nevada's best-kept secrets: the Las Vegas Distillery. While tourists flock to mega-resorts and mixology bars, locals in the know slip past the glitter to this unpretentious temple of booze, where history, chemistry, and unapologetic creativity come together in every bottle.

But this isn't just a place to sip a good cocktail. It's a living, breathing laboratory of flavor and passion. It's also a lesson in Nevada's rebellious, spirited past—and the future of local hospitality. We visited for a full tour and tasting, and let's just say: we came thirsty and left obsessed.

Where It All Began

The Las Vegas Distillery was founded in 2011 by George Racz, a visionary who didn't just want to make spirits—he wanted to legalize the making of spirits. Before his efforts, Nevada had no framework for craft distilling. It was the Wild West in all the wrong ways. Racz lobbied state legislators, changed laws, and opened the state's first legal distillery since Prohibition.

He also released Nevada's first legal bourbon—earning a quiet but significant place in state history.

Although Racz passed away in 2018, his legacy is woven into every wall, barrel, and bottle. His family kept the business afloat through the pandemic before new ownership stepped in and gave the space a thoughtful facelift in 2024. They added a

sleek new tasting room, redesigned tour experience, and an approach to hospitality that balances warmth with education.

The result? A boutique distillery that's as serious about the story as it is about the spirit.

Let's Talk Fermentation and Fire

Our tour guide, Sam, greets guests with a smile, a sharp wit, and a degree in Distillation Sass with a minor in Yeast Behavior. As we gather around towering copper stills with names like Swan and Rose, Sam explains the fermentation process.

Imagine yeast at EDC. They've got all-you-can-eat sugar, spa temps, and no supervision. They go wild, reproduce like crazy, make alcohol... and eventually die of alcohol poisoning.

She points to the bubbling fermentation tanks, where orn, hard winter wheat, and malted barley are breaking down into mash. It's science, sure—but it feels like art.

The stills operate in two modes: pot distillation for flavor-rich spirits like rum and whiskey, and column distillation for cleaner, high-proof neutral spirits like vodka and gin. But what truly elevates this operation is the obsessive attention to "cuts"—the removal of heads and tails from the distillation run, leaving only the coveted "hearts." These hearts are the clean, smooth, aromatic middle cuts that make for spirits you can sip straight without regret.

Distilling the Spirit of Vegas

Inside the production facility, you learn quickly that nothing is accidental. The white rum? It's half cane sugar, half molasses—giving it the right balance of sweetness and structure. The overproof version? 100% blackstrap molasses, double pot-stilled, and bursting with earthy depth.

Even their vodka—typically the least expressive of spirits—has character. Made from hard winter wheat and cane sugar, it finishes mellow and round, with subtle vanilla and banana notes.

Their gin is a London dry style on paper, but much more flirtatious in practice. The core botanicals—juniper, coriander, licorice root—are softened with vapor-extracted grapefruit and lemon peel, giving it a fresh, almost floral dimension. It's the kind of gin that could do black-tie martinis or poolside cocktails with equal flair.

And then there's the coffee liqueur: a complex, bourbon barrel-aged potion brewed with beans from local roaster Dark Moon. It's earthy, toasty, and deeply satisfying—less sugary than your average café cordial and far more grown-up.

Barrels, Bourbon, and the Magic of Nevada Aging

The final leg of the tour took us into the barrel room, where hundreds of toasted, charred oak barrels rest under ambient lights. The scent is divine—vanilla, toasted coconut, campfire smoke, and memory.

Due to the harsh desert climate, spirits age differently here. The hot-cold cycles



accelerate extraction from the wood, often aging whiskey in two years what might take four elsewhere. But it also means the team must taste constantly to avoid over-oaking and preserve balance.

And get this: because of Vegas' dry air, the water evaporates faster than the alcohol. The result? Stronger booze. "Reverse angel share," they call it. We call it divine intervention.

Enter the Tasting Room

After the factory floor tour, we were escorted into the gleaming new tasting room—an inviting space with matte black fixtures, burnished wood details, and a vibe somewhere between a speakeasy and a science lab.

Sam handed us a welcome drink: a custom QVegas Cocktail, emblazoned with the QVegas logo printed in foam using a cocktail printer. "We can print anything on it," she said. "Logos, slogans, faces... you name it."

Signature Cocktails Worth the Hype

The bar menu is anything but basic. Here are just a few of our favorites:

The Sack Lunch

Ward's first choice of the night combines vodka, lemon, strawberry jam, and peanut butter foam. Served with a dad joke stapled to a brown paper bag. It's childish, nostalgic, and genius. It tasted like childhood memories and midlife crises in one sip!

Eastgate Tour

Russ's pick of the night. Prickly pear, lemon, and matcha foam with a raspberry dust rim. Bright, botanical, and stunning in the glass.

Miss Bee-Havin'

A gin-based cocktail that flirts with floral and citrus notes. Elegant, complex, and just a little naughty. We bought the gin on the spot.

Smoked Old Fashioned

Bourbon, maple, smoked pecan wood. Off-menu and unforgettable. The kind of drink that makes you want to quote Sinatra.

Let's Eat, Too

Expecting standard bar fare? Think again. The food was just as impressive as the spirits.

Charcuterie Board

An eclectic, delicious spread of cheeses, cured meats, and pickled veg—perfectly paired with spirits and designed to prep your palate.

The Cuban Sandwich

Crispy, melty, savory perfection. Everything balanced, nothing overwhelming.

Pizzas

Two half pizzas – supreme-style combo with peppers, sausage, and spice, and a sweet-spicy pineapple and jalapeño blend drizzled with something magical.

"Two gay men walk into a bar and see a pizza named after Ann-Margret. You know how that ends," we joked.

Why We Didn't Have a Hangover

We asked Sam how we could drink so much (five cocktails, a flight of spirits) and wake up the next morning feeling great. Her answer: clean distillation and zero additives.

"There's nothing in here that doesn't belong," she said. "We cut deep into the heads to make sure you enjoy your night—and your morning."

We believe her. We've had mimosas that hurt more.

5 Fun Facts You'll Learn on the Tour

1. Nevada had no legal distilleries until 2011.
2. The distillery stills are named Swan and Rose.

3. Their yeast "parties" until the alcohol they create kills them.

4. Every spirit starts as a clear liquid—color comes from barrels.

5. Their coffee liqueur uses locally roasted beans and bourbon barrels.

Upcoming Releases & Events

Expect big things in the coming months. Their dark rum debuts for World Rum Day on August 16, complete with New Orleans-style jazz and food. Bourbon lovers can look forward to a two-year barrel release in the fall. Each limited run is bottled and sold on-site—until it's gone.

And with new cocktails rotating seasonally, this isn't just a one-and-done visit. It's a place you'll want to bring friends back to—especially when they say, "I want to try something new."

Final Thoughts

The Las Vegas Distillery doesn't feel like a business. It feels like a love letter—to spirits, to history, to community, and to the city of sin and reinvention.

It's part speakeasy, part classroom, part lounge—and completely unforgettable.

If you haven't taken the tour yet, book it. If you've only been once, go back. Whether you're a cocktail nerd, a history buff, or just looking for a fabulous date night that ends with banana notes and zero regrets, this is the spot.

Tours run daily. Cocktails are handcrafted. Spirits are for sale on-site. And hangovers? Optional.

For more information, visit lasvegasdistillery.com and follow @lasvegasdistillery. Las Vegas Distillery is located at 7330 Eastgate Rd. Suite 100 in Henderson.

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\$6 \$10 COCKTAILS + \$10 IMPORT BEER BUCKETS

FRIDAYS + SATURDAYS

LATIN CALIENTE

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
MUSIC BY DJ V
SHOWTIME
2 AM IN THE DREAM LOUNGE
FREE BUCKET OF BEER W/ PURCHASE OF BUCHANAN'S BOTTLE

SUNDAYS

SUNDAY SERVE

SHOWTIME
1 AM FRONT ROOM
\$6 \$10 COCKTAILS + \$10 IMPORT BEER BUCKETS

Piranha NIGHTCLUB PRESENTS

LATIN SUNDAYS

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
MUSIC BY DJ V
SHOWTIME
1:30 AM IN THE MAIN ROOM
\$20 DOMESTIC + \$25 IMPORT BUCKETS | 10 PM TO CLOSE
\$6 \$10 COCKTAILS + \$10 IMPORT BEER BUCKETS