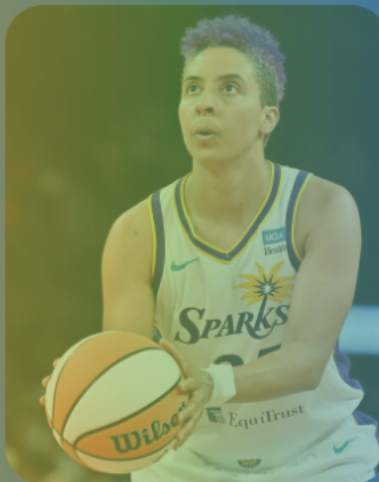


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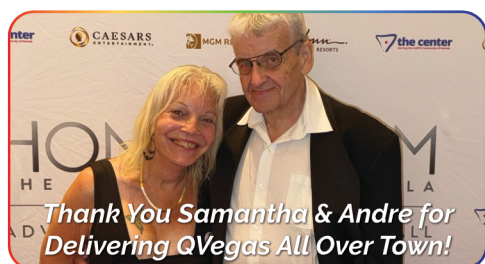


Photos: Courtesy Sports Equality Foundation

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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The Gays Are Winning: A Sports Hall of Fame Relaunch, a Boy Band Revival, and a Mediterranean Takeover

As the cultural current of late summer builds momentum, the LGBTQ+ community finds itself at the intersection of legacy, luxury, and unapologetic visibility. Whether you're poolside in Vegas, cruising the Aegean, or screaming "I Want It That Way" inside a glowing spaceship at Sphere, one thing's certain: we're not just watching the moment—we're shaping it.

LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame Relaunches—From the Sports Capital of the Nation

This week, Las Vegas adds another jewel to its growing sports crown with the official announcement of the LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame relaunch, hosted by the Sports Equality Foundation. Yet another reason Vegas has become a national powerhouse in professional sports, from the Aces to the Raiders to the Golden Knights.

The announcement is part of the "Stronger Together" LGBTQ+ Sports Forum, a timely gathering of athletes, advocates, and organizers uniting around inclusion in athletics. At a time when anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and legislation—particularly targeting trans athletes—is escalating, the forum and Hall of Fame reassert the community's rightful place on the field, the court, the rink, and beyond.

Out to Sea: OUTbound's Greek Isles Cruise Sells Out with Pride

Meanwhile, OUTbound's Greek Isles Cruise (Aug. 31–Sept. 7) is shaping up to be the queer travel event of the season, hosted

aboard the Azamara Pursuit. We interview OUTbound's own "Julie the Cruise Director" Eric Hodgson. The itinerary is an ambitious blend of mythology, drag, and Mediterranean indulgence—with stops in Athens, Santorini, Crete, Rhodes, Ephesus, and Mykonos.

But don't mistake this for a floating dance party (though there will be plenty of those). OUTbound has partnered with queer historians and LGBTQ-led tour guides to spotlight ancient same-sex love stories, Dionysian rituals, and the queer roots of classical civilization—bringing depth and perspective to a sun-drenched itinerary.

The Backstreet Boys' Sphere Residency Hits Harder Than Expected

If you haven't yet surrendered to the nostalgia tsunami at Sphere, there's still time. The Backstreet Boys' "Into the Millennium" residency is a full-blown pop opera wrapped in lasers, tearjerkers, and choreography that still slaps two decades later.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media



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



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AUGUST 2025

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MY ~~BIG FAT~~ BODY POSITIVE GREEK GAY ~~LGBTQ+~~ CRUISE

There are few places more drenched in myth, mystery, and Mediterranean sunlight than the Greek Isles—and few ways to explore them more authentically, more joyfully, and more unapologetically queer than aboard an OUTbound cruise.

This August 31 to September 7, a shipful of LGBTQ+ adventurers will embark on a journey through ancient civilizations, volcano-sculpted islands, drag-studded nights, and sun-kissed beach days aboard the Azamara Pursuit—hosted and curated by the always effervescent Eric Hodgson, founder of OUTbound. But this isn't your typical party cruise. It's not about escaping the world. It's about connecting with it—intimately, joyfully, and together.

"Don't get me wrong, we know how to have fun," Eric says with a grin. "But we also want to go deeper. There's so much queer history in the places we visit—so many stories that are part of our legacy. This cruise is about being part of those stories."

Athens: Before the Sail

While the cruise officially departs on August 31, many guests will arrive days earlier to take full advantage of the OUTbound pre-cruise experience in Athens. That includes lodging at the Royal Olympic Hotel, just a five-minute stroll from both the Acropolis Museum and the historic Plaka District—where cobblestone alleys lead to ouzo-scented cafés, Greek crafts, and ancient ruins.

"We always recommend people come in early," Eric says. "It's a kind of jet lag insurance—but it's also about giving yourself time to fall in love with Athens."

OUTbound has partnered with an LGBTQ-led tour company whose guides—each a member of the queer community—offer cultural tours that center not just antiquity, but queerness in antiquity. From Apollo and his male lover Cyparissus to Dionysian cult

rituals, these tours offer a refreshingly honest lens through which to view Greek myth and legacy.

And before guests even set foot on the ship, OUTbound is throwing a pre-boarding welcome party in collaboration with a local Athens queer nightclub, giving travelers a chance to mingle with the local LGBTQ+ community and each other.

Bon Voyage: Boarding the Azamara Pursuit

On Sunday, August 31, guests will be transferred by shuttle from the hotel to the port in Piraeus in organized waves. As the Azamara Pursuit welcomes travelers aboard, bags go straight to the staterooms, and the buffet opens with champagne and ocean views.

At 5:00 pm, as the ship pulls away from Athens, the sail-away party kicks off on deck with live music, cocktails, and a special celebration: the Five Timers Jacket Ceremony, honoring guests who've sailed with OUTbound five or more times.

"There's a community that comes back again and again," Eric says. "And we honor that. Whether it's your fifth cruise or your first, we want you to feel like you're coming home."

Later that evening, solo travelers are invited to the first mixer in the ship's "Living Room" lounge, ensuring no one starts the journey alone. "We're big on connections," Eric adds. "Especially for solo travelers. These mixers make it easy to make friends from the start."

That night's onboard entertainment is light—live music, cocktails, and introductions to the staff, including host Jose, Azamara's cruise director Grace, and of course, Eric himself. "The first night is about easing in, finding your cabin, sipping something cold, and watching the sea go by."

Crete: Minoan Majesty

The first port is Heraklion, capital of Crete—the largest island in the Aegean. Guests can choose from several excursions, including walking tours, cooking classes, or visits to the Palace of Knossos, once the heart of the Minoan civilization. "We offer multiple options at every stop," Eric notes. "You can go immersive with a guided historical tour, or just wander and shop at your own pace."

Crete's food scene is legendary—don't miss Peskesi, a Cretan farm-to-table spot in Heraklion's old town, or Ippokambos for fresh seafood and seafront views.

That evening, the ship sets sail, and onboard nightlife begins to bloom—with performers like drag legend Paige Turner, magicians Jay and Joss, and the sultry classical-pop trio Brandon and James (joined by vocalist Effie Passero) scheduled throughout the week.

Santorini: Postcard Perfect

On September 2, the Azamara docks in Santorini—perhaps the most iconic of the Greek isles. "When you first see it from the ship, it looks like snow on a mountain," Eric recalls. "But it's not snow—it's whitewashed homes perched on volcanic cliffs."

Excursion options here include the best-of-Santorini scenic overview, local vineyard and distillery tastings, and a spa-like dip in the island's hot mineral springs—still bubbling in the center of the dormant caldera.

Santorini is also one of the few ports where the ship lingers late. "We made sure guests would be there for sunset," Eric says. "It's unlike anywhere else on Earth. The whole sky turns to fire, and everyone just pauses and takes it in."

For dinner, don't miss the chance to try Metaxi Mas, a taverna tucked into the hills near Kamari that locals rave about.



Rhodes: Castles and Knights

Next comes Rhodes, known for its medieval Old Town and towering stone fortifications. As the ship pulls in on September 3, guests can step back into a world of knights, myths, and architectural grandeur.

Excursions include guided tours of the Palace of the Grand Master, the ancient streets of Lindos, and a visit to the former site of the Colossus of Rhodes—one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

"Rhodes is probably our most photogenic stop," Eric says. "The Old Town feels like a movie set. And it's one of the few places where you feel both Greek and medieval European vibes."

For lunch, the courtyard restaurant Marco Polo is a favorite among foodies and locals alike.

Ephesus: Crossing into Turkey

On September 4, the ship makes its only non-Greek stop: the ancient city of Ephesus, now part of modern-day Turkey. This detour isn't just legal necessity—it's also a cultural treasure.

"Ephesus is mind-blowing," Eric says. "It's like walking through a fully intact Roman city. You see the amphitheater, the Temple of Artemis, and the Library of Celsus—it's stunning."

And for the architecture nerds: "You've seen it in textbooks. But standing in front of that four-story library façade? It's something else."

This is a half-day stop, but there's time to explore, shop in nearby Kusadasi, or relax with Turkish coffee or sweets before returning to the ship.

Mykonos: The Queer Capital of the Aegean

Then comes the crown jewel: two full days and one overnight in Mykonos, the most famously LGBTQ+ friendly island in the Mediterranean. "We actually built the entire itinerary around being in Mykonos on a Friday and Saturday," Eric admits. "That's how special it is."

By day, guests can lounge at Elia Beach,

take a shuttle to JackieO's Beach Club at Super Paradise, or join excursions to nearby Delos, an archaeological treasure trove. There are also food and walking tours for those who want to explore Mykonos Town's iconic windmills, labyrinth alleys, and boutiques.

By night, the island turns electric. Though the ship remains the main party hub, guests are encouraged to explore Mykonos' nightlife—including 54 SkyBar, Porta Bar, and JackieO' Town Bar, all welcoming and thriving during daylight and beyond.

For dining, Kiki's Tavern near Agios Sostis is a must—but go early, as they don't take reservations.

Dining, Wellness, and Community Onboard

Throughout the cruise, food is a centerpiece. Discoveries Restaurant offers complimentary seated meals with changing menus, while Windows Café (the ship's buffet) hosts themed nights—Greek, Italian, Indian—complete with terrace seating under the stars.

For those looking to indulge, Prime C (steakhouse) and Aqualina (seafood/Italian) are elevated options available with reservations for a small fee—or included with suites or veranda-plus cabins.

Wellness options abound too. The Sanctum Spa features massages, facials, and even acupuncture. Steam rooms, fitness classes, and a private saltwater whirlpool on the ship's bow offer restorative options for every type of traveler.

And for those with dietary needs, Eric is quick to reassure: "We build your profile in advance. Allergies, preferences, vegan, gluten-free—it's all accounted for before you even board."

An LGBTQ+ Experience Without Barriers

More than the ports, performances, or parties, what sets OUTbound apart is its spirit of inclusion. "We're not a circuit cruise. We're also not a monastic retreat," Eric says. "We're somewhere in the middle. A Pride festival at sea."

That balance is reflected in the crowd: solo

travelers, longtime couples, chosen families, and allies—all spanning a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and body types. There are no VIP tiers, no body expectations, no dress codes. Just community.

And accessibility isn't just emotional—it's financial too. Staterooms start around \$1,600 per person, with interest-free payment plans available to make the experience approachable for teachers, students, and retirees alike.

"We don't think your bank account should determine whether you feel like you belong," Eric says. "So we make it possible, whether you pay all at once or in monthly chunks."

Returning to Athens

On the final morning, September 7, the ship returns to Athens by dawn. Guests disembark between 7 and 10 a.m., with options for hotel transfers or airport shuttles. OUTbound recommends scheduling flights no earlier than noon to avoid stress.

But for many, the cruise doesn't truly end at the dock. "You meet people on this trip that stay in your life," Eric reflects. "That's the real magic."

Whether it's your first time in Greece or your fifth time with Outbound, this journey offers more than a tour of the Aegean. It's a celebration of self, history, and community—with sunsets, string quartets, and drag queens along the way.

As Eric puts it, "You're not just going on vacation. You're joining something bigger."

Note: QVegas has partnered with OUTbound to create the official OUTbound app for iPhone. Concept and development started on the Springtime in Paris river cruise and will make its debut in a limited beta trial during the Greek Isles Cruise. We hope to officially launch on the Danube River Christmas Market Cruise this December.



Stronger Together

Sports Equality Foundation Revives LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame and Unites Change-Makers in Las Vegas

This August, Las Vegas plays host to a powerful convergence of history, progress, and pride as the Sports Equality Foundation (SEF) relaunches the LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame and convenes its first-ever Stronger Together LGBTQ+ Sports Forum. For Board Chair Robert Goman and Vice Chair Shigeo Iwamiya, the week-long event is more than a celebration—it's a call to action, born from necessity in a political climate growing increasingly hostile toward LGBTQ+ visibility, particularly in sports.

The event begins with a landmark moment: the long-overdue revival of the LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame, formerly known as the Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame. Founded in 2013 by Chicago activist Bill Gubrud, the Hall of Fame inducted notable figures for three years before going dormant. Now, a decade later, Goman and Iwamiya are breathing new life into it—with a new name, a broader vision, and a deeper commitment to honoring the full spectrum of queer contributions to sports.

"We've been working on this for a while," says Goman. "The LGBTQ+ community—and especially trans athletes—are under constant, accelerating attack. That makes now the right time. We knew we had to come together, to organize, to speak with one voice. That's why we called the forum Stronger Together. It's not just a slogan—it's the strategy."

Rebuilding from the Pandemic and Political Whiplash

The Sports Equality Foundation itself began to take shape during the early days of the pandemic—what Goman describes as "picking up the pieces" after the 2016 election. While the organization had roots stretching back over four years, it wasn't until 2020 that it truly galvanized into its current mission: to foster visibility, equality, and belonging for LGBTQ+ individuals

across the entire sports ecosystem.

Goman doesn't shy away from political reality. "We're a 501(c)(3), so we can't get too partisan—but we all know the impacts of policy and rhetoric," he says. "You look at what's happening now in state legislatures and in schools. The culture wars are playing out on fields and courts across the country. It's frightening—but it also means the work we do is more vital than ever."

A Forum with Purpose

Stronger Together is a two-day forum that brings together athletes, administrators, nonprofit leaders, and industry professionals for conversations that are as urgent as they are varied. From the changing rules around trans participation in youth sports to the pathways for LGBTQ+ professionals in the sports industry, the forum aims to be dynamic, inclusive, and, above all, action-oriented.

"We didn't want this to be just another panel of talking heads," Goman explains. "We wanted meaningful conversations led by people with lived experience—people who represent the full LGBTQ+ spectrum."

To that end, the forum's topics were crafted with flexibility and intersectionality in mind. One panel, The State of the Climate in LGBTQ+ Sports, will offer real-time discussion on evolving political and cultural challenges. Another, Game Planning Your Career, explores how queer professionals—from athletes to accountants—can build sustainable careers in the sports world while living authentically. A third panel tackles LGBTQ+ sports in education, with a sharp focus on K-12 spaces where policies are shifting rapidly and often harmfully.

"Sports is not just about athletes," adds Iwamiya. "You can be in accounting, marketing, or hospitality and still be part of this ecosystem. Part of our mission is to help people see that their identities belong

in sports spaces—and in doing so, help those spaces become safer and more inclusive."

A Historic Hall of Fame Reawakens

Before the forum kicks off, however, comes the weekend's centerpiece: the official relaunch of the LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame. The updated Hall will induct 12 individuals, one organization, and honor one extraordinary figure from the broader sports community.

The selection process was, fittingly, communal. "We started collecting names at the Sin City Classic," says Goman. "We asked people: who would you put in a Hall of Fame? The responses were overwhelming—and surprisingly consistent."

The inductees come from all levels of sport: retired pros, trailblazing coaches, current administrators, and even superfans who've created enduring impact. Some helped carve space for queer athletes decades ago; others are reshaping the sports world right now. The Hall aims to honor that spectrum—past, present, and future.

"There's some catch-up to do," admits Goman. "We had a ten-year gap. We're looking at ways to circle back and highlight people who were overlooked during the hiatus. And we're not stopping at 2025. We want this to be an ongoing, evolving project."

Storytelling as Legacy

What elevates the Hall of Fame beyond plaques and press releases is the Foundation's commitment to deep, human storytelling. Goman shares a powerful example: Glenn Burke, the first Major League Baseball player to come out as gay after retirement, was among the original inductees in 2013. SEF has now been in touch with Burke's sister, Lutha, who has



SPORTS EQUALITY FOUNDATION

For Your **LOVE** of Sports

shared intimate stories about his early life—how he loved baseball as a boy, how his family navigated his identity.

"Those stories matter," says Goman. "They help a young queer kid today see themselves not just in the achievement, but in the journey. It's not just, 'He was a pro ballplayer.' It's: 'He had dreams. He faced challenges. He pushed through. And he made space for you.'"

This narrative approach is central to SEF's work. Alongside the Hall, they'll also mark the ten-year anniversary of Fearless, a photo project by Jeff Sheng that documented out college athletes. Many of Sheng's subjects have since become coaches, trainers, and leaders in the sports world—a full-circle moment SEF plans to highlight.

Representation with Intention

One of SEF's core values is ensuring that representation is not just visible—but intentional and accurate. For that reason, the forum's panels are curated to ensure that the voices leading each conversation reflect the communities they're speaking about.

"As a white, cisgender gay man, I can't speak for the trans community," Goman says plainly. "But we have trans folks in the sports world who can—and will. That's who we want on stage."

It's a vital distinction. LGBTQ+ isn't a monolith, and SEF is committed to ensuring that all the letters of the rainbow alphabet are respected, represented, and given the mic.

A Network of Allies

The event is already drawing powerful support. The NBA, WNBA, and Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers and San Francisco Giants have all signed on as sponsors or partners. SEF is in

conversations with the Las Vegas Aces and other local teams as well.

"Women's sports, in particular, are having a moment," notes Goman. "The WNBA is crushing it. Women's soccer is huge. We're excited to have those leagues at the table—and they've been incredibly receptive."

These partnerships go beyond branding. They offer access, visibility, and potential career pathways for queer professionals across the spectrum. From league offices to locker rooms, the presence of LGBTQ+ leadership is both a symbol and a strategy for long-term culture change.

Meanwhile, SEF is also deeply engaged with amateur and recreational sports organizations like the Gay Softball World Series and the Gay Bowl, helping ensure that the grassroots level is just as empowered as the professional tier.

What Comes Next?

For all the events and accolades, Stronger Together is ultimately about sustainability. SEF doesn't want attendees to walk away with swag—they want them to leave with a plan, a network, and a renewed sense of purpose.

"The biggest tool we can give people is each other," says Goman. "When that next awful headline hits—when another trans ban is passed, or a school yanks funding—we want people to know who to call, how to respond, and that they're not alone."

Iwamiya agrees, emphasizing the forum's focus on recalibration and renewal. "It's a chance to remind people why they do this work. To hear different perspectives. To get inspired again."

It's also a chance to build relationships that transcend zip codes. "We don't want people to feel like they're on an island," Goman says. "We've got folks from

Portland, LA, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, everywhere. This is about building bridges. A queer Rolodex, if you will."

A Hall of Honor and a Call to Action

In the end, the week in Las Vegas is both a celebration and a challenge. The relaunch of the LGBTQ+ Sports Hall of Fame honors the giants on whose shoulders we stand. The Stronger Together forum challenges the current generation to use that foundation as a launching pad—not just to talk, but to act.

"Every community has its drama," Goman laughs. "But what we all share is this: we want to make sports better, safer, and more inclusive. We want to make sure every queer kid knows there's a place for them on the field, in the stands, and in the boardroom."

With cranes rising at the future stadium for the relocated Oakland A's and major league teams already planting rainbow flags, Las Vegas is becoming not just a sports town—but a queer sports capital.

Whether you're a pro athlete, a high school coach, or a fan who never misses a Pride Night, Stronger Together is your invitation to be part of the next chapter. It's a reminder that the work is ongoing—but so is the progress.

And, if Goman gets his way, it's also a reminder to stop by Piranha and Gypsy while you're in town. "Believe it or not," he laughs, "I've never been. But that's about to change."

Stronger Together LGBTQ+ Sports Forum & Hall of Fame

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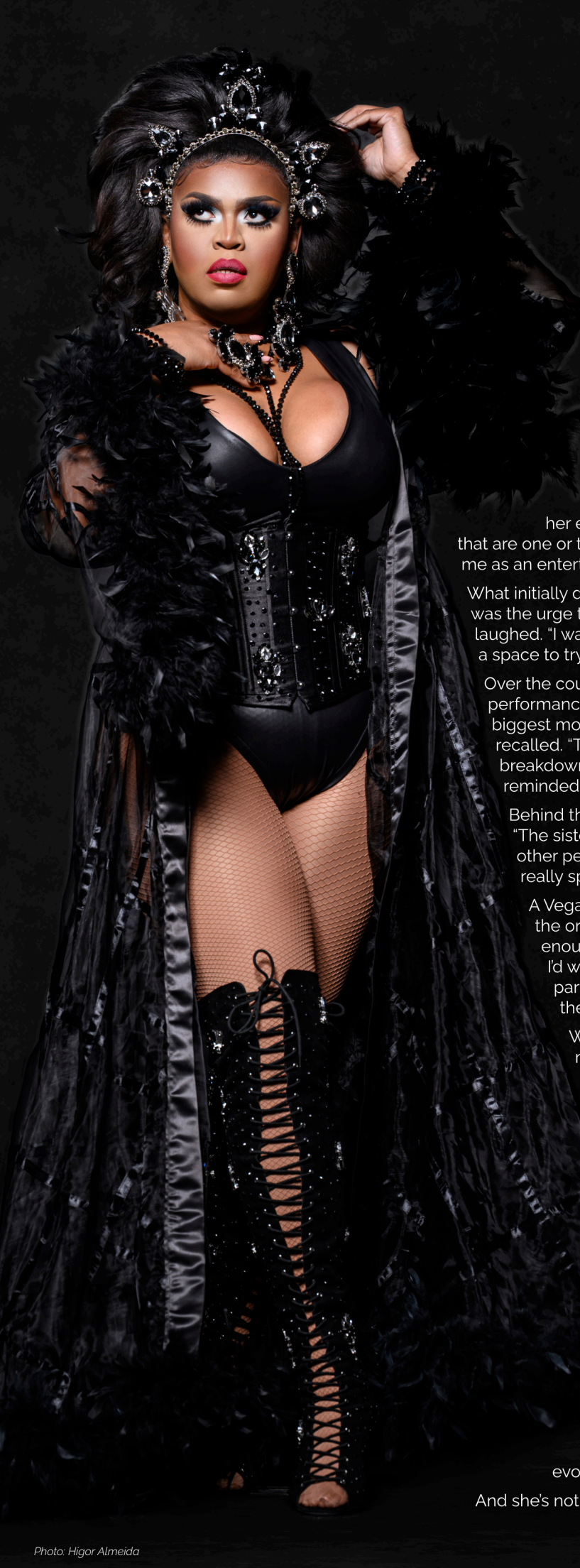


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JAYDE VANCARTIER

DRAG *Royale*

For Jayde VanCartier, drag has always been about glamour, poise, and polish. As a seasoned pageant queen with over 15 years of performance experience, she's no stranger to big hair, bigger gowns, and turning heads the moment she hits the stage. But stepping into Drag Royale—Gipsy Nightclub's high-stakes weekly drag competition—meant stepping outside her rhinestone-studded comfort zone. And she did it with grace, grit, and a whole lot of glitter.

"This was a totally different experience for me," Jayde said following her elimination. "I'm a pageant girl at heart, so I'm used to competitions that are one or two nights. Drag Royale was week after week, and that really tested me as an entertainer."

What initially drew Jayde to the competition wasn't a desire for a crown or clout—it was the urge to shake things up. "Honestly, life just got a little too predictable," she laughed. "I wanted to spice things up and challenge myself. Drag Royale gave me a space to try new things and get out of my own box."

Over the course of the season, Jayde showcased a dazzling array of looks and performances that ranged from classic glam to conceptual club kid. "One of my biggest moments was definitely the week I did the bearded lady fantasy," she recalled. "That was something I never thought I'd do. I nearly had an emotional breakdown backstage! But I pushed through—and I actually won that night. It reminded me how much more there is to explore within my drag."

Behind the sequins and spotlight, Jayde found something deeper: community. "The sisterhood backstage was incredible," she said. "Spending time with the other performers, getting to know them beyond the wigs and makeup—it was really special. That fellowship reminded me why I love drag in the first place."

A Vegas native, Jayde has a long history with Gipsy Nightclub. "I remember the original Gipsy, before the renovations," she said fondly. "I was barely old enough to be in there—probably shouldn't have been, to be honest—but I'd watch legends take that stage and just be mesmerized. To now be a part of that legacy, especially in the first season of Drag Royale, means the world to me."

When asked what's next, Jayde says she's taking a short breather—but not disappearing. "I'll be performing and judging at the next Miss Ultimate Entertainer pageant, which I won in 2023. After a little rest, I'll be back on stage. You're not getting rid of me that easily."

And to the queens still in the competition—and the baby queens just starting out—Jayde offers this advice: "Everyone says 'be yourself,' and that's true, but more than anything—have fun. Be present. Soak up everything. There's so much you can learn from the people around you, whether they've been doing drag for 20 years or they just started. Be a sponge. Enjoy every second."

As for the fans who've supported her through this journey, Jayde is full of gratitude. "The love has been overwhelming. People I've never met would come up and say they remembered me from years ago. I've gotten videos, photos, messages—just so much support. It's been humbling and beautiful."

Jayde VanCartier may have exited Drag Royale, but her presence lingers like the shimmer of a well-placed highlighter. With heart, humor, and haute couture, she reminded us that drag isn't just about performance—it's about evolution.

And she's not done evolving yet.



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A WALK IN THE PARCS



Backstreet's Back—and Blasting Off: Inside the Larger-Than-Life Spectacle of Sphere's First Boy Band Residency

It's a strange thing, being abducted by a boy band. But at Sphere—Las Vegas' futuristic eye of the pop culture hurricane—that's exactly what happens. You're sitting in your seat one moment, sipping a cocktail the color of artificial nostalgia, and the next you're caught in a tractor beam of harmonies, lasers, and Millennium-era emotion, soaring through space with five men who soundtracked your adolescence.

Welcome to Into the Millennium—the Backstreet Boys' thunderous, tear-jerking, body-shaking, tech-drenched residency at the most advanced concert venue on Earth. It's not a revival. It's not a cash grab. It's a full-scale galactic voyage into boy band mythology—with enough heart to melt even the most jaded millennial, and enough campy sci-fi visuals to make Star Wars blush.

We saw it after the opening weekend crowds had dispersed just slightly—when the crew had settled into their spaceship and the lasers knew exactly when to strike. And we're here to report: this is not just the best show the Backstreet Boys have ever done. It's one of the most unforgettable nights of live pop music Las Vegas has seen in decades.

A Pop Odyssey That Starts in Outer Space

The show begins, as all great queer adventures do, with drama.

Sphere's massive 16K resolution LED

Photos: Rich Fury

ceiling morphs into a sky of ominous clouds as an enormous alien spacecraft descends from above, à la Independence Day—only instead of Will Smith, we get five of the best-selling pop vocalists of all time.

Then the beat drops.

"Larger Than Life." The platform rises. The crowd erupts. The Backstreet Boys are here, and they're not easing in gently.

In fact, the first few songs are a full-throttle trip through Y2K perfection. "It's Gotta Be You" turns Sphere into a galactic nightclub. "As Long As You Love Me" and "More Than That" bring out the lighters—well, the phone flashlights—and a collective swell of emotion from an audience whose muscle memory remembers every word, every sway, every move.

But this isn't just a nostalgia act.

A Story Told in Stars, Screens & Sincerity

Into the Millennium isn't just a concert. It's a conceptual spectacle that unites three decades of pop history with Sphere's bleeding-edge technology and a surprising amount of narrative heart. Over 25 songs, the show weaves together cosmic adventure and grounded emotion, taking fans on a journey that's as visual as it is visceral.

You're not just watching a setlist play out. You're watching the Backstreet Boys move through time and space, propelled by Sphere's completely immersive LED screen and seat-shaking haptics.

At one point, the screen becomes a lonely ice planet, whizzing past the audience with such realism that several people literally ducked. Later, it blossoms into a digital flower garden during "More Than That," melts into a cathedral of stars during "Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely," and explodes into a mirrorball cosmos for "Get Down (You're the One for Me)."

Each visual beat is paired with a song from the group's massive catalog, including deep cuts like "Siberia," "Spanish Eyes," and "No One Else Comes Close," which gave diehard fans the chance to sob openly (and often).

The Brotherhood, The Ballads & The Queer Catharsis

Here's the thing that hits hardest: the emotional intimacy. Even as Sphere overwhelms your senses, the Backstreet Boys deliver a show rooted in vulnerability. They're not posturing anymore. They're letting you in.

During a mid-show acoustic medley, the Boys gather near the front of the stage, stripped of glitz, to sing ballads like "Back to Your Heart" and "The Perfect Fan." Childhood photos of their families and kids flash across the Sphere's wraparound sky. Brian Littrell gets choked up. Kevin Richardson dabs his eyes. AJ McLean—who admits he's cried "at least four times tonight"—smiles through it.

You can feel the brotherhood between

them. And you can feel the connection with the crowd, especially with those of us who grew up loving this music in secret, waiting for a day when it was safe to sing it out loud.

Well, that day is here. And the Sphere is the temple.

The LGBTQ+ community has always had a deep, sometimes unspoken love affair with the Backstreet Boys. They were the soundtrack to our early crushes, our heartbreaks, our queer awakenings. Into the Millennium honors that history, even if the band never says it outright.

Because when 18,000 fans—many of them proudly queer—are standing beneath a laser-filled sky, screaming the chorus to “I Want It That Way” with glitter on their cheeks and tears in their eyes, you don’t need a speech. You just need the music.

Choreo, Confidence & Camp

Even after 30 years, the Backstreet Boys’ moves are still crisp. They may not drop to their knees quite as quickly, but they’ve lost none of the polish—and they’ve added a little dad-joke sass that makes the whole thing even more charming.

Their stage presence is undeniable. Nick Carter, sleeveless and swaggering, still brings that boyish charisma. Howie Dorough stuns with buttery vocals and skin so dewy it deserves its own skincare line. AJ commands the stage like a queer-coded rock star with perfect eyeliner and painted nails. Kevin, the elegant giraffe of the group, exudes stoic warmth. And Brian, despite vocal strain from a past condition, sings with such conviction you feel every note in your chest.

And yes, they still do the “Everybody” choreography. And yes, it still SLAPS.

The Setlist: Bangers Only

With a career that spans over 30 years and 130 million records sold, narrowing it down to 25 songs wasn’t easy. But the setlist reads like a Max Martin–approved fever dream:

- Larger Than Life
- It’s Gotta Be You
- As Long As You Love Me
- More Than That
- I Need You Tonight
- Siberia
- Don’t Want You Back
- Get Another Boyfriend
- Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely
- Don’t Want to Lose You Now
- Hey (new single)
- The One
- Back to Your Heart
- Spanish Eyes
- No One Else Comes Close
- The Perfect Fan
- All I Have to Give
- Drowning
- Quit Playing Games with My Heart

- Shape of My Heart
- I Want It That Way
- Get Down (You’re the One for Me)
- We’ve Got It Goin’ On
- The Call
- Everybody (Backstreet’s Back)

No skips. No filler. Just wall-to-wall emotional landmines.

💎 Backstreet, Reframed for 2025

Let’s talk legacy. The Backstreet Boys were once dismissed as bubblegum. Teen fodder. Guilty pleasures. But not anymore.

By headlining Sphere—following acts like U2 and Dead & Company—the Boys have proven that pop belongs on the big stage, and that their music wasn’t a phase. It was a cultural imprint.

They’ve come full circle. From mall tours to world tours to the Strip and now Sphere, the Backstreet Boys are no longer riding a wave of nostalgia—they’re steering the ship.

And for a generation that’s finally learned to love itself out loud, there’s something profoundly satisfying about watching them do the same.

If there were ever a time to say it: Backstreet’s back, baby—and they’re ours now.

Final Verdict

Is Into the Millennium the best show in Vegas right now?

If you’re a millennial with unresolved emotions, a queer person with a boy band wound to heal, or just a human being who enjoys cathartic pop magic with world-class visuals: Yes. Unquestionably.

This is not just a concert. It’s a time machine, a love letter, and an emotional exorcism, all soundtracked by the biggest boy band in history—and delivered inside a Death Star full of feelings.

You don’t just see it.

You feel it. You live it. You remember who you were—and who you are now.

And you leave knowing one truth:

Backstreet’s back. Forever.

How to Go (Again)

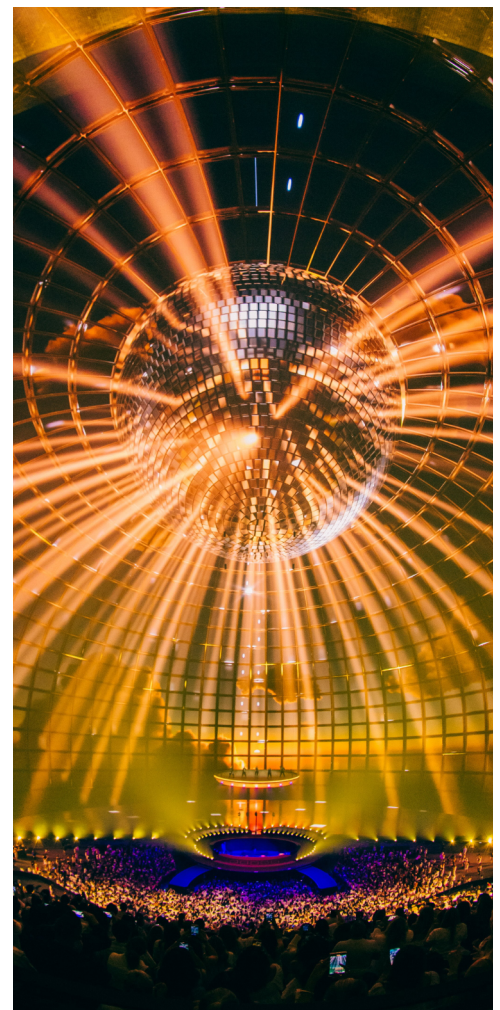
You’ve got a few more weekends left::

Remaining Dates:

August 9–11, 16–18, 23–24

Sphere, Las Vegas

Tickets available at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com)





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SOUTHERN NEVADA
thecenterlv.org

ACLU
aclunv.org

ADL
lasvegas.adl.org

ALCOHOLICS TOGETHER
alcoholics-together-las-vegas.com

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bears-lv.org

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF
SOUTHERN NEVADA
cccfsn.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
hendersonpride.org

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
hrc.org

IMPERIAL ROYALE SOVEREIGN COURT OF
THE DESERT EMPIRE
irscdei.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)
lucoflv.com

LEGACY COUNSELING
legacycounselingandworkforceconnections.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetree.lv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC
ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org



HIV Resources

AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA (AFAN)
afanlv.org

AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

CAN COMMUNITY HEALTH
cancommunityhealth.org/las-vegas

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hpvlv.com

GOLDEN RAINBOW
goldenrainbow.org

HORIZON RIDGE WELLNESS CLINIC
hrc.lv

SIN SITY SISTERS OF PERPETUAL
INDULGENCE
sinsitysisters.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

2025 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
LAS VEGAS GALA
AUGUST 23, 2025 | PARIS LAS VEGAS

 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

5:00 PM RECEPTION
6:30 PM DINNER & PROGRAM

I WILL BE PROUD • BE VISIBLE
SHOW UP • VOLUNTEER
TELL MY STORY • LIVE
MY TRUTH • CELEBRATE MY COMMUNITY • GET A
TICKET • EDUCATE OTHERS • UPLIFT VOICES
ADVOCATE AT WORK • MENTOR • INCLUDE
AMPLIFY • PROTECT • ORGANIZE • CHALLENGE
DISCRIMINATION • ADVOCATE • BE A TABLE
CAPTAIN • STAND WITH YOU • SPEAK TRUTH TO
POWER • REFLECT • SUPPORT A SPONSOR
VOTE • RESIST • SHOW UP • LISTEN • EDUCATE
MYSELF • SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE
CHALLENGE INJUSTICE • DONATE A TICKET
USE MY PLATFORM • STAY ENGAGED • INVEST IN
JOY • LEARN • HONOR • NOT BE SILENCED • BE
ACCOUNTABLE • DONATE A TABLE • SUPPORT
THE SILENT AUCTION • CELEBRATE LOVE • RESIST
SPEAK UP • **SHOW UP**
BE AN ALLY • CALL OUT HATE • PROTEST • RE-ENGAGE
BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

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HONORARIUM
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2025

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SinSity Sisters
of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc.

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STI Testing

THE ARLENE COOPER COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

CAN COMMUNITY HEALTH
cancommunityhealth.org/las-vegas

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hpvlv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com

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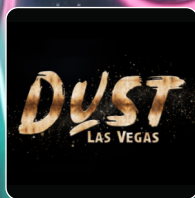
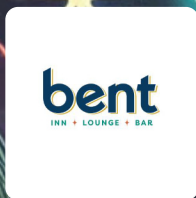
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Q VEGAS BAR & NIGHTCLUB GUIDE

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MONDAYS

SURRENDER MONDAYS

HOSTED BY LACHERRY WILD
\$100 CASH HOT BODY CONTEST + SHOWTIME @ 1 AM
MUSIC BY DJ V
\$7 TITOS COCKTAILS + \$6 DOMESTIC BEERS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

TUESDAYS

VAQUERO VAQUERO

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
SHOWTIME @ 1:30 AM FRONT ROOM
MUSIC BY DJ V / DJ VAGO
\$6 HOUSE MARGARITAS + \$20 DOMESTIC
\$5 IMPORT BEER BUCKETS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

WEDNESDAYS

WET

HOSTED BY SAGE O'HARA ANDREWS
SHOWTIME @ 1:00 AM FRONT ROOM
MUSIC BY DJ VAGO
\$5 SPECIALTY COCKTAILS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

THURSDAYS

REPLAY

HOSTED BY ROMAN TAJOUR + ASIA KING ADOR
SOUNDS BY DJ CHYLO + DJ V

SHOWTIME
12:30 AM FRONT ROOM
+ 1:30 AM MAIN ROOM
\$5 WELL COCKTAILS BEFORE MIDNIGHT

FRIDAY AUGUST 08

YVIE ODDLY

WINNER OF RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE S11

SHOWTIME
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM

MEET & GREET
12:30 AT GIPSY

SATURDAY AUGUST 09

ROXXXY ANDREWS

FROM RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE S5 + ALL STARS 2 & 9

SHOWTIME
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM

MEET & GREET
12:30 AT GIPSY

FRIDAY AUGUST 15

UTICA

FROM RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE S13 + PROJECT RUNWAY S21

SHOWTIME
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM

MEET & GREET
12:30 AT GIPSY

FRIDAYS

FETISH

HOSTED BY DEMI 007 + SHANNEL
SHOWTIME AT 12 AM FRONT ROOM + 1:30 AM MAIN ROOM
W @ #PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM
#PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM

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
W @ #PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM
#PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM

Piranha NIGHTCLUB PRESENTS

LATIN SUNDAYS

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
BY DJ V
SHOWTIME
1:30 AM IN THE MAIN ROOM
\$20 DOMESTIC + \$25 IMPORT BUCKETS | 10 PM TO CLOSE
W @ #PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM
#PINKHERRINGLAS - PINKHERRING.COM