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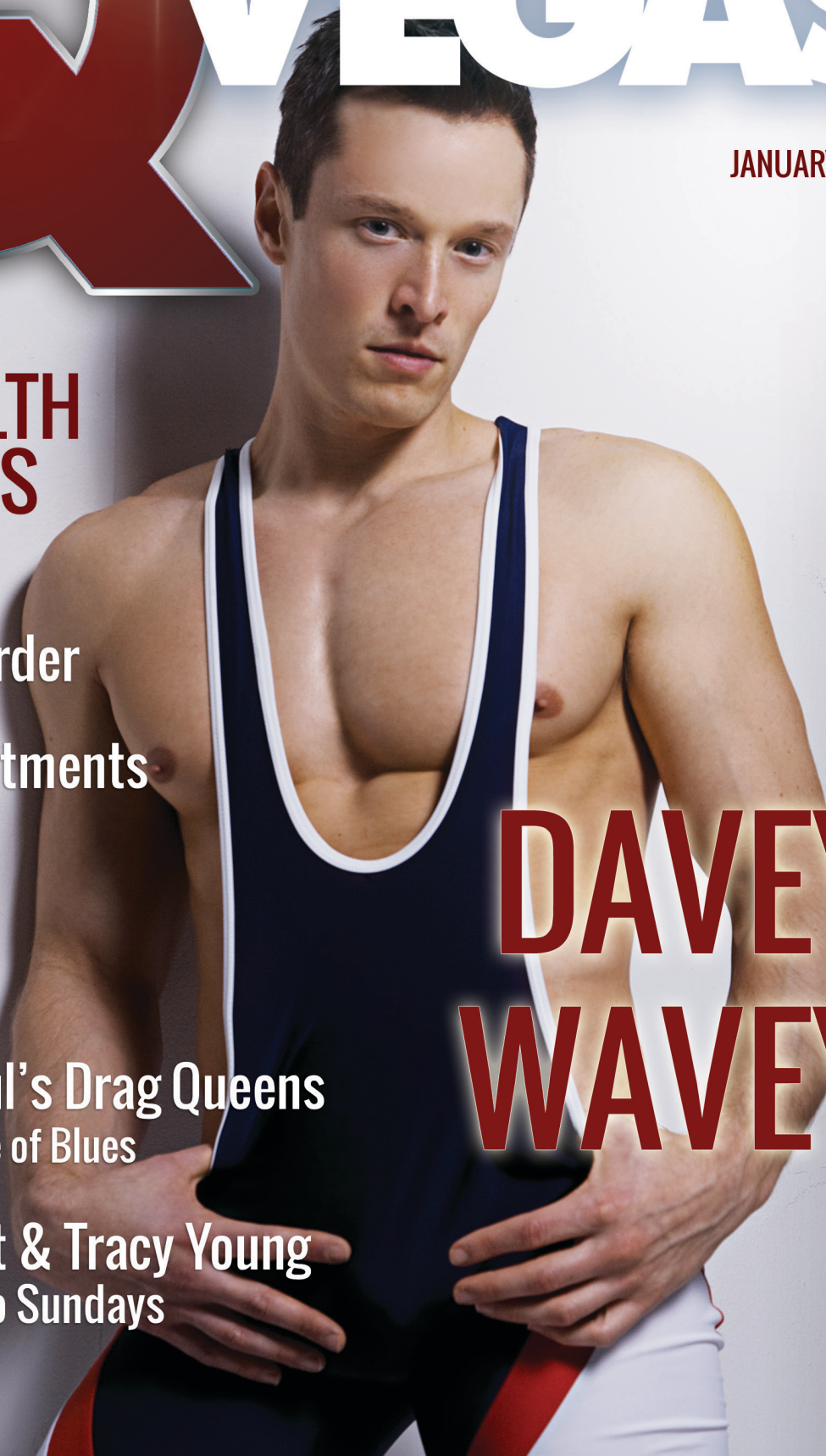
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## Editor's Note

# YASSSS!

The new year is here and I am ready to make it better than the last. I don't typically make resolutions because I always seem to abandon them before the month is through.

According to University of Scranton, last New Year's 45% of Americans made New Year's resolutions, losing weight and staying fit were in the top five. In this Health & Fitness issue our cover model is the YouTube sensation and certified personal trainer, Davey Wavey. This hunky but humble beefcake says the best way to stick to your fitness resolution goals is to work out because you love your body, not because you hate it.

Aside from fitness resolutions, many will seek to improve their health by minimizing risks. One of the greatest threats to one's health is being exposed to HIV. Condoms can break, poor decisions are made, and unfortunate events can happen beyond our control. PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), known also by the name of the medication itself, Truvada is an anti-HIV medication developed to keep HIV negative people from becoming infected. Take a look at this FDA approved drug and its pros and cons in our PrEP 101 feature by Cameron Catton.



Great strides were made toward equality in 2014. Nevadans enter the new year celebrating the victory of marriage equality, but there are still many more steps we must take to achieve full equality for the entire LGBTQ community.

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Janise "Noah" Henderson  
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Do you have something to say about an article in QVegas or any topic of interest to our readers?

Do you have an idea for a future story?



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Red Rock Fertility®  
features



*Isabelle & Lukas*

Photographer: J and J Photography

Isabelle and Lukas' moms have known for years that they wanted to be parents, but being in a same-sex relationship they knew they had to explore their options to achieve this dream. When friends told them about their own experience at Red Rock Fertility Center and how the center helped them add to their family, the couple didn't hesitate to book an appointment. After meeting with Dr. Littman, they chose to pursue the intrauterine insemination (IUI) procedure, involving in vitro insemination from a random sperm donor. One of the moms underwent the procedure in February. On Valentine's Day, they received the happy call that the procedure worked. In September, one of the moms gave birth to a twin boy and girl. Congratulations to Isabelle, Lukas and their moms!

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# PREP 101

## CAN A PILL A DAY PREVENT HIV?

[ By Cameron Catton ]

There is much to be said about PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), known also by the name of the medication itself, Truvada. Simply put, PrEP is the use of anti-HIV medication that keeps HIV negative people from becoming infected. PrEP is approved by the FDA as a single pill taken once daily. The medication interferes with HIV's ability to copy itself in your body after a person has been exposed. This prevents it from establishing an infection. Much like birth control pills, PrEP is taken every day, even if a person is not planning to engage in sexual behaviors.

The treatment regime, which is growing in popularity, recently took fire from actor and LGBTQ activist Zachary Quinto, who linked PrEP with the words, "laziness" and "irresponsibility." The backlash and interest in the drug has prompted many individuals to ask if it is right for them.

Although anyone can get a prescription for PrEP, it was designed with a specific intent in mind: As a potential option for two kinds of people—those who cannot protect themselves by other means, and those who have a track record of not protecting themselves by other means. These highly at-risk individuals are more likely, according to studies, to take a pill every day than to use condoms, dental dams or other prevention methods. It should be noted, however, that condoms are readily available for free throughout Las Vegas and Southern Nevada at agencies like Planned Parenthood and The Center.

### THE PROS

- Along with safer sex practices, various studies have shown that PrEP decreased the chance of contracting HIV-1 between 45% and 75% in men who have sex with men.
- Along with safer sex practices, various studies have shown that the use of PrEP in one partner decreased the chance of contracting HIV-1 by around 75% in couples in which one individual was HIV-1 positive.
- Assuming that both partners are using prophylaxis treatment, it is possible that the risk of exposure





and infection can be reduced to a statistical improbability much like being hit by lightning on a clear day.

- PrEP is a once-a-day regime, meaning it is as simple as taking a vitamin.
- With sex workers, and in other relationships that may include power imbalances, the use of condoms may not be negotiable, and PrEP can be essential in maintaining health.

### THE CONS

- Although well-known, it is frequently forgotten that PrEP is not a cure for HIV/AIDS.
- Because of misinformation and eagerness to think of PrEP as a complete sexual health solution, many people on PrEP do not use condoms at all, resulting in high risk for other STDs/STIs. In other words, without the use of condoms, skin will still likely come into contact with other areas of potential infection. PrEP does not prevent the transmission of other sexually transmitted infections, such as herpes and syphilis. Conversely, condoms, when used correctly, are over 90% effective in protecting against both HIV/AIDS and other STDs/STIs.
- Some serious side-effects

have been reported among PrEP users. These include lactic acidosis, or too much lactic acid in the bloodstream. Other possible side-effects include serious liver problems, from increase in size and softening of the liver to the formation of fat in the organ. Kidney damage has also been reported in some cases, leading up to complete kidney failure in some of these instances. In some PrEP users, pain and thinning of the bones has been reported.

- Insurance providers do not have a universal rate for PrEP regimes, and many patients find themselves facing bills between \$15, \$700 and \$3,000 at the pharmacy counter. It is important to know how much your insurance will cover.

It is up to each individual to plan for sexual encounters that are considered lower risk. PrEP is an option that opens many doors, but may not be the choice for all people. Consulting a medical professional as well as researching PrEP in detail will help you to decide if this option is best for you.

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# RuPaul's DRAG RACE

## MICHELLE VISAGE

### What's been your favorite season of RPDR?

Season 3 has always had a special place in my heart since it was my first season. I had to overcome some hurdles in order to even get on the show, which made that day even more sweet. I'm excited for Season 7, though I can't talk about much. It's a very exciting season. Dynamic. Every season I look at RuPaul and ask, "How are we going to top this next time? I mean we just had Bianca, Courtney and Adore" and then somehow it always seems to happen.

### This new season has a lot of younger queens.

You know when you are young, you know everything... and a lot of these kids grew up learning drag via social media, youtube, etc. So they are very fierce and they came to play!

### How do you think that access to Drag via technology as opposed to just being able to see drag in a bar has impacted people?

There's an upside and a downside. The upside is that the kids that are obsessed with the show that are under the drinking age who have drag in their hearts can't go see the performers in a bar. YouTube and TV are an escape for them. It's a place for anyone straight or gay as a safe place. The "freaks" are Ru's people. The great thing about some of the stops on Battle of the Seasons is that some venues are all ages and some are 18+. *[The House of Blues performance in Las Vegas is 18+]*

Michelle has a career that started at the age of 19 and her record company was a success. She has co-hosted with RuPaul on a previous TV show and even a radio host for 17 years. She has a book coming out in 2015 named "Even Divas need Day Jobs" and hopes to get her own show.





# MANILA LUZON

## **Tell us about working Vegas?**

Vegas is a tough city because there are so many shows and people are bombarded with options. We hope that the die hard fans come out to support us, especially the locals. But I love Las Vegas. It's one of the most fabulous cities to perform in. Every time I sit down to paint myself, I image I'm Celine, Cher, or Tom Jones... whichever one is the prettiest. I'm the Bitch headlining in Vegas.

## **What have you been up to?**

I just got back from touring with Raja and we were talking about doing a duo / collaboration this time in BOTS. Us Season 3 Queens need to stick together. Raja and I are really close friends and we have had very similar schedules.

## **Why are you excited about BOTS this year?**

I'm excited for this bus ride. Last year we had some exciting moments on the road. Our bus caught on fire. It was a very Priscilla Queen of the Desert moment.

## **Any favorites in Season 7?**

I know a few of the Queens (Miss Fame and Max) and I'm looking forward to Kennedy Davenport, the sister to Sharah Davenport. She's an amazing performer and I like her sass. I'm looking forward to seeing her on TV.







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# COURTNEY ACT

## Are you excited about coming to Vegas?

Las Vegas is always fun, It's like the drag queen of cities.... Glitized and glamoured up, sparkly and comes to life at night time.

## What's your favorite part of Vegas?

My favorite place to stay is the Cosmopolitan / City Center. It's so trendy, glitzy, glamorous and diverse.

## What are you looking forward to in BOTS this year?

I'm excited for a bus tour and have always dreamed of doing a US tour this way. So it's kind of a dream come true. I'm looking forward to the

camaraderie with the girls and the experience. It's a new experience for me, and I'm looking forward to being surrounded by all that talent. I want to catch up and swap stories. I get to take larger costumes during the tour because it's on a bus and there is more space.

*Courtney Act will be performing in Las Vegas on January 4 at Revo Sundays and at RuPaul's Battle of the Season on February 1 at House of Blues. Visit Gay.Vegas for details on both events.*







# SHARON NEEDLES

## **Are you ready for Vegas?**

I performed in Vegas several times, and one of the best things about it is that a large amount of the crowd is on vacation and are already prepped for a really great time. Vegas is 2 times the liquor, 2 times the fun, 2 times the glamour... 10 times the liquor.

## **You are known as the Scariest of queens**

*[quickly interrupts]*

I think Nicole Page Brooks takes that title...I'm second!

## **Shade!**

## **Give us some background on your style of drag.**

"Horror drag is my heart and my passion. Drag exaggerates

Western concepts of female beauty, so I love to really twist that on its tail and tell a much deeper and darker story.

## **How do you like the very popular TV Show American Horror Story? Are you watching it?**

Of course I'm watching it, and I don't want to give away too much but definitely have some influence in my acts.

## **What are you looking forward to most about the BOTS tour?**

We, as a RuPaul Drag Race family, have been touring the world for years allowing fans to walk into their favorite TV show and get a glimpse of each character. The great

thing about the BOTS tour is you get to see all the beauty, singing, comedy, performance arts, etc. live on one stage. It's a very rare opportunity and a great time in poplar culture that the show even exists. How cool it is we live in a time when drag queens who were once considered campy and filled nightclubs are now filling giant venues! I think it speaks volumes.

## **Tell us what to expect from BOTS this year.**

It's like a Beyonce concert at half the ticket price. Actually it's like a Britney Spears concert. Half the price and the same amount of lip syncing.



# BIANCA DEL RIO

**You are the current reigning champion of Season 6 RPDR. How do you keep up to date with the other queens?**

It's insane. I was never that queen with the technology. The younger queens seem to know everything going on with one another through use of social media, etc. And to tell you what... the last thing I want to look at when I get home is a bunch of drag queens. We all have a stage persona, but behind the scenes when you are just hanging out and shooting the shit, you get to know each other on a personal level.

**Give us a Vegas shout-out!**

Well, I recently starred in a Vegas TV show for LVCVA that helps with tourism. Any city that supports Drag, we love it and put us to work!

**What's next?**

I have a solo tour called "Rolodex of Hate."

**Other than Vegas, what's your favorite city to visit?** Amsterdam.





# IVY WINTERS

Ivy never really had a chance to showcase all of her talents when she was on the show, but last year at BOTS, she literally impressed the hell out of the crowd. Her performances really were full on productions, like a one person circus show!

**Vegas is the first stop on this year's BOTS tour. What are you looking forward to most?**

I'm excited to have Vegas as the very first stop of the tour. What better place to kick it off? This year I want to top what I did last year, make it bigger and better! What makes this special is that we rarely get to be together as a large group, and this tour gives us a chance to do that. It's something really special."

**What excites you most about your BOTS performance?**

The big stage allows us to put on bigger numbers and that extra space gives us the opportunity to wow the fans as opposed to performing in bars.

**How did you get started?**

When I was 8 years old I saw a clown juggle and I picked up 3 tennis balls and started to practice. Over the years I've learned other things and my mom suggested I dressed up as a clown and start making money. I then saw my first drag show when I was 18 and fell in love with it. It wasn't until my good friend Josh told me to combine the two that I realized how unique of a performer this makes me.

**So what dream do you have if you weren't so busy with bookings and the show?**

I have been dabbling in the world of stop-motion film (taking a real object moving it slightly and photographing it. A very time consuming thing and hard practice). My big dream would be to have a runway show with real models doing a show and behind them on a screen miniature versions wearing the same outfits in stop frame.





# ALASKA 5000

## **Why the shortening of the name to Alaska 5000?**

I like being everywhere that I can be and "You can call me he, call me she, call me Regis Kathy Lee, but just call me". I want to reach as many audiences as possible. If people want to dig further they can find the full name then.

## **What do you love about BOTS?**

I am an original in the BOTS tour. I have been traveling, touring and meeting people all over the world. It's a pretty cool job. I love BOTS because we get to play large concert venues.

## **What is your special talent?**

I'm sort of like Mae West: you just prop me up and I just stand there and do my thing. I can command a stage large or small.

## **Are you looking forward to House of Blues?**

I love big places because you can fit more people, and more people means a better party!

## **What else are you up to?**

I'm really excited about my new album in 2015. I've been working hard. Every moment I have in LA is in studio recording.

## **Favorite Queen? Favorite Season?**

Anyone that's been on Drag Race is a superhero to me. So I get starstruck and tongue tied. All seasons. But when you watch RPDR with friends no one shuts up so you can't hear. I have to watch them alone. I consider myself an "analyst" of the show and create videos with commentary as a "superfan."

## **You have a new song out?**

Nails is available on iTunes and YouTube. If you're not wearing nails you're not doing drag. It's a good way of knowing if you wake up somewhere and look at your hand and you have nails on, you are still in drag.







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## SLEEPING AROUND

[ by Michael Barbieri ]  
[myvegasobsession.com](http://myvegasobsession.com)

**T**he Aria is currently one of my favorite Las Vegas resorts. It's only been open a little more than six years, and I joke with friends that it still has "that new hotel smell". It's impressive, immense, modern, elegant, luxurious and quite comfortable. The service and surroundings are impeccable and the staff is knowledgeable and helpful in every way. I've never had a bad stay at the Aria and I recommend it very highly!

The Aria Resort and Casino is the centerpiece of the Vegas mega-property called City Center, which has something for everyone - the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, a non-gaming condo hotel called Vdara, the Veer Towers - two cantilevered condominium buildings, The Crystals - an upscale shopping mall featuring shops from Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Prada, as well as several impressive restaurants. And then there is the Aria.



# Aria Resort & Casino

As you enter the Aria's main lobby, there's a large atrium, and a seemingly miles-long check-in desk behind which is an enormous window and a long, twisted silver piece of art: a modern representation of the path of the Colorado River. Check-in can occasionally get quite crowded, but there are helpful staff members roaming the lobby with iPads, ready to help out or point you in the direction of an open check-in position you may not have spotted.

Once checked in, you maneuver your way through the casino to the guest elevators, where security is tight - you have to show your card key to access the elevators. It can seem an inconvenience to some, but it makes me feel good to know that only hotel guests and their friends and family are allowed past security.

The standard rooms seem to me to be huge - about 520 square feet. That's bigger than my apartment in New York! They're as modern and state-of-the-art as I've ever seen, yet plush and comfortable, never coming off as too cold. As you walk

in, you'll find a marbled entryway, a bureau bookended by two spacious closets and the entrance to the bathroom. The rooms sport a rich, dark color scheme, with the exception of the bedspreads which are generally a crisp, stark white, often with a chocolate brown throw blanket. There are low, modern chairs and a small table for magazines and such, positioned in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows. Opposite the bed is a desk/wall unit, featuring a mini-bar, some custom knick-knacks and a connectivity panel, to which you can hook up most any form of mobile technology you have.

Above the desk is the flat screen TV. Oh, and everything in the room; the temperature, the curtains, the sound system, the television and even the lighting, can be controlled though the TV or through a nifty touch screen panel at the side of the bed! As I said, state-of-the-art!

The bathrooms are done in sleek black and white, but have an interesting glassed-in shower/soaking tub combo, made with a warm amber-colored marble. In the suites, there are modern toilets

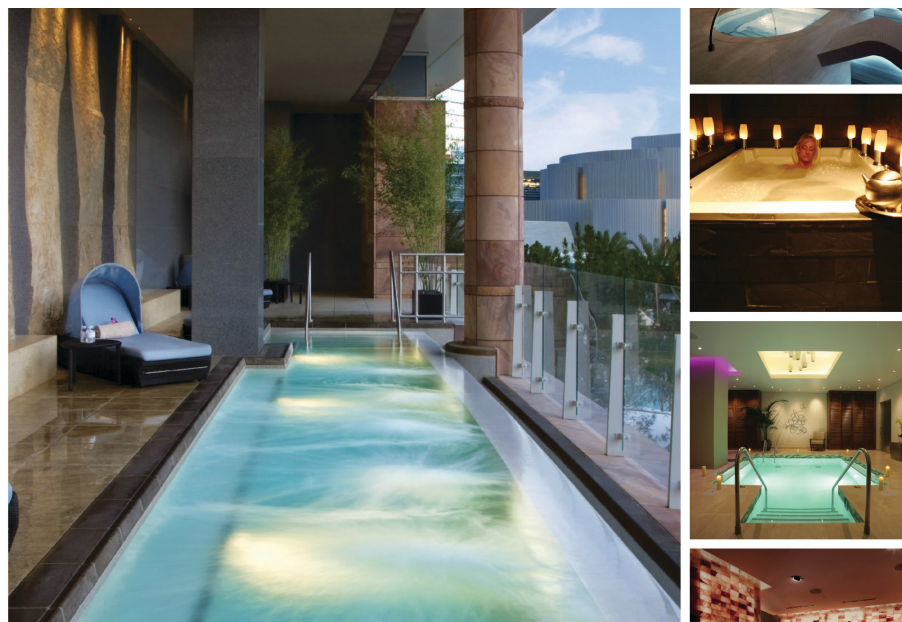


which eliminate the need for toilet tissue by providing a tiny jet to squirt you from beneath with warm water and then a little jet of warm air to dry you afterward!

As comfortable as the rooms are, however, the casino and promenade offer just as much to tempt and pamper you.

My first impression of the casino was that it was too dark. After several visits to the Aria, however, I realized that the dark colors used in the decor - rich, chocolate browns and slate grays, and the darker, recessed lighting in the casino, simply makes the place feel more calm and comfortable. Even when the casino is busy and bustling, it never feels too crowded, and with 150,000 square feet of gaming space, it still feels elegant and restrained. I'm not much of a gambler, but the plush atmosphere in the Aria casino makes me feel like a high roller.

On the casino level, you'll also find various lounges and restaurants, including Lemongrass - the Strip's first Thai eatery, Sage - an amazing restaurant serving contemporary American fare with global touches, the Lift Bar - a cocktail lounge located at the edge of the gaming floor, featuring live entertainment, Jean-Phillipe Patisserie - where you can get a quick sandwich, pastry or coffee as well as incredible



chocolates, and The Deuce - an elegant lounge with high stakes gaming.

Upstairs on the Promenade level are more restaurants - Jean Georges Steakhouse, Michael Mina's Brasserie Bardot and the Aria's incredible buffet. There's the Zarkana theater, where Cirque du Soleil present a fantastical acrobatic extravaganza, and further in, the entrance to the pool deck, the amazing spa, and the beautiful, bright, well equipped fitness center.

To my mind, the 6,000 square foot Fitness Center at the Aria is the best on the Strip! The state-of-the-art equipment includes 44 cardio pieces, 5 recumbent bikes, 3 upright bikes, spin bikes, full-body and lower-body Arc cross trainers,

a rope-climber, and a battalion of treadmills facing the floor to ceiling windows that look out onto the pool deck. The wonderful view gives your workouts a bright, uncrowded feel not found in many other hotel gyms. You'll also find top-of-the-line free weights, strength equipment and even group exercise studios! The staff are friendly, non-judgmental, and eager to help. During a recent workout, I was pedaling away on a recumbent bike, not paying much attention to what was playing on the built-in monitor. One of the trainers came up beside me, tapped the screen, and I found myself riding virtually through some of California's most beautiful National Forests. If you enjoy taking fitness classes, there's something for everyone - boxing, cycling, strength training, even yoga and Pilates, or if you prefer a one-on-one workout, personal training is available.

There's so much to do at the Aria, you'll never be bored. Treat yourself to this wonderful hotel if you can. It's definitely worth it!

On one of my visits, I was waiting for a cab at their taxi stand, and I looked up at the sleek, silver Aria hotel, the monorail that runs through the property, and the ultra-modern glass and metal awnings of their porte-cochere, and thought to myself THIS is the future of Vegas!





After some time off from the scene, DJ Tracy Young knows how to make a comeback. Last month she DJ'd the wedding reception for Lance Bass and Michael Turchin.

"It was a magical, magical night. It was a beautiful thing. That was my first gay wedding. I wasn't sure if it would be GAY GAY SUPER GAY, but it was perfect," said Young. "I think they represented what a wedding—gay or straight—should be because they are so in love with each other. It's part of history now."

The Bass-Turchin wedding puts Tracy back in the DJ booth after some time away.

"I needed a rest. I needed to spend some time with myself. We all need a hiatus in the mountains," said Young. "I don't think I really know who I was and now I can't wait to get back in the DJ booth."

Music is a changing constant. Having played for over 20 years, Tracy has seen the definition of pop change. "Dance music today is pop music," says Young. "It's not underground anymore. It's controversial. When everything is underground, you have a culture. When I was growing up, the club and the music and the culture was the place where we would go to meet our own kind."

Tracy has seen the change in equality evolve over the years. "When I was in high school, if you were gay you'd get kicked out of the house, beaten, bullied. There are gay people out in high school. I know that still goes on today, but you have gays on TV, I just DJ'd the first gay wedding that will be broadcast on TV."

"I saw it all growing up. People were bullied, committed suicide. I got kicked out of my own house,"

she recalls. "It's very different now. Growing up, getting married wasn't even a thought in our mind. Now I look at who I date much differently. I was passing time because there was a sense of no future. Now I'm a little more choosy."

Gay culture has always been drawn to dance music, but that music changes with society. "I'm grateful that I grew up in the underground time of clubs and music. I miss certain aspects of that," recalls Young.

"There was only one type of hip-hop when that came out and that was controversial. But now it's opening up," Young said of the diversity in music. Now you have Calvin Harris, David Guetta, Kaiza, it's getting deeper."

Tracy believes that more genres of house music on the radio are allowing that genre to open up.

"Change is good and bad, but it's inevitable," commented Young. "The gays that are younger now go to these festivals. They don't know what it's like to be in a club, to go out every Saturday night, listen for that first track that nobody has heard yet."

Social media and the Internet has affected music so much that new songs and new mixes appear online first. "Now they know more than I do!"

"When I started out, we would grab the gay rag in the gay section of town when touring and we'd look for the gay restaurant and the bookstore. When I would get to a town the first stop for me would be the record store. Every market had different music and I would go to the record store and ask questions," recalls Young.

Now everything is online. "We sit at home, we order our food, we order our clothes, lip gloss,

books—they don't even make books anymore. We sit at home and watch TV and everything comes to us." Young misses walking around the town, asking questions, getting to know people. "The politics of where we are in gay culture today and the Internet have changed things," she added.

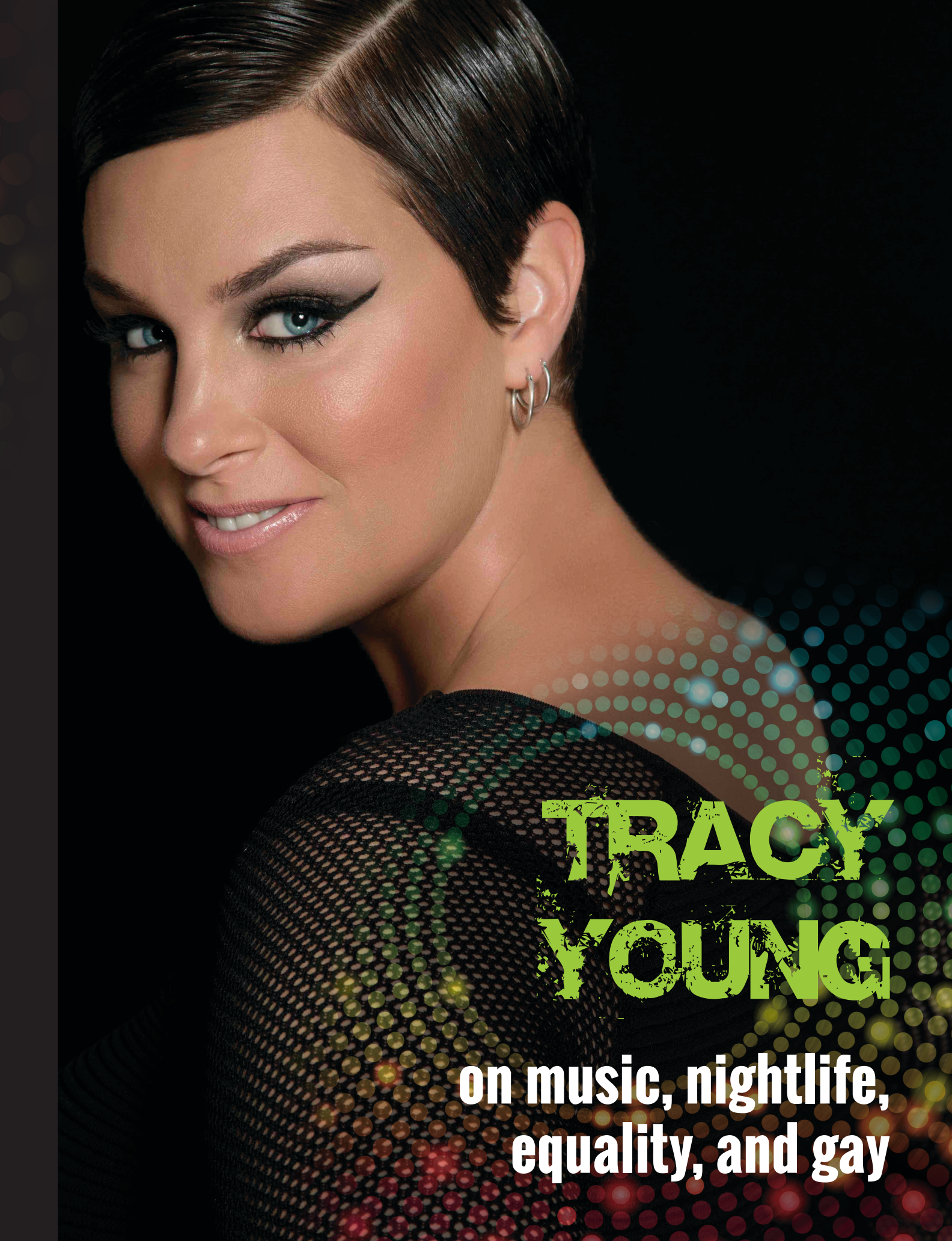
While there's no doubt that progress in equality and civil rights is a good thing, holding on to the root of gay culture presents some challenges. "The strides we are making in equality are tremendous, But I hear complaints like 'There were too many straight people in a gay bar!' This is what we've been fighting for. You can't have it both ways. You can't go to the straight bar and not have the straight girls come to the gay bar," said Young. "You want equality, equality is just that."

"There's a consequence. We have equality. We can get married now. Gays nightlife is shrinking. Gays can now go anywhere," said Young, a trend we have observed in Las Vegas as more and more tourists seek out mega-nightclubs.

Tracy returns to Las Vegas this month for MLK Weekend. "I was a bit nervous when I played last year because it had been awhile. It was a great night. People were beautiful. I loved the DJ booth right on the floor so I could feel everything," Tracy said of her first Revo Sundays. "The space is a perfect size. I can't wait to get back. It's going to be fun. It will have lots of surprises."

*Tracy plays MLK Weekend at Revo Sundays on January 18th inside the Mirage Hotel & Casino.*





# TRACY YOUNG

on music, nightlife,  
equality, and gay





# Running REDUX

[ by Frank Del Toro ]

**A** year ago, I started running—something I'd not done since high school. Not because I wanted to eat what I wanted. Nor because I wanted to lose weight. I'm in my forties, so winning a race—though improbable rather than impossible, wasn't a goal either. There was no goal. I met a guy who did it, so I just did it.

In the next few months, though, I found myself getting really good at it, running a variety of races and even a marathon. I'm generally in a better mood and make better decisions when it comes to work and personal relationships. If that isn't endorsement enough, I've found there are A LOT of fit attractive and "dateable" types that run, the kind you aren't afraid to take home to mom.

What's better than the health benefits, camaraderie and self awareness you will experience running? The discovery of some of the most beautiful trails you've never even heard about in the very parts of the city you always hear about! Here are some trails worth running, even if to only embed the scenery into your memory.

## **MORE THAN JUST ROCKS: THE 12-MILE LOOP AT RED ROCK CANYON**

I'll admit it. I used to go here to kill half-a-day when guests were in town. Load up the car, drive over, come home. Easy in, easy out. What a difference when you get out to run and explore the trails within the park! The famous red rocks are awesome, but so

are the various desert cacti and fauna all around you. You will find yourself becoming better at noticing the most minute details of your surroundings. Trail signage isn't in perfect shape, so stay alert. You will see bighorn sheep and once in a while a tortoise. Maybe a coyote, but I've never stuck around to find one. Have yet to encounter any snakes. Trails tend to be less crowded later in the afternoon until dusk.

## **DAM IT: THE 32-MILE LOOP TRAIL AROUND LAKE MEAD AND HOOVER DAM**

As a trained architect, excursions to Hoover Dam never disappoint me. The surrounding Lake Mead Recreation pushes the experience over the top. Running or walking the 32-mile loop is a commitment, regardless of season. Definitely a day's effort of taking-in the lakeshore on foot. Many runners wear swimwear in the summertime to take interval dips while running the course. A trail for more frequent running is the 7-mile Railroad Tunnel Trail portion, which descends onto Hoover Dam, and is host to the annual Turkey Trot and St. Patrick's Day fun runs and the Hoover Dam Marathon. Other than those events, crowds are pretty much non-existent, except for large numbers of servicemen who run on the weekends.

## **NEON FLUX: URBAN RUNNING ON THE STRIP AND BEYOND**

The most repeated comment I hear from fellow Las Vegas'ers is how much they avoid the Strip at all costs. If anyone has to drive down Las Vegas Boulevard at 1PM on any day, then yes, I agree with the

sentiment. Experiencing it on a run is quite another story. The breadth of the Strip allows you to run a variety of distances—1, 5, even 10 mile runs, experiencing the city up close and personal. Incorporating the Las Vegas sign into the run makes this customizable urban run enjoyable and unique. It's also mostly flat and never gets old. My favorite (and least crowded) time to run it is just before sunrise—and I pick a different stretch depending on my mood. Train along Las Vegas Boulevard and work up to what is probably the best time to run the Strip and participate in the nighttime Las Vegas Rock-and-Roll Marathon, either in the half-marathon or the Zappos.com Half-of-the Half Marathon in November.

## **A MOUNTAIN HIGH: FLETCHER PEAK TRAIL, MT. CHARLESTON**

Since moving here in 2005, I'd always been told Mt. Charleston was for hiking, skiing and bird watching. So I rarely went. What a mistake! The trail itself is only a mile long, but you have to trek 2.5 miles to get to it, so take a knapsack to hold water, snacks and switching between hiking boots and sneakers. The hike runs one mile from the North Loop. In terms of course condition, the actual Fletcher stretch is the only one you can really run. It is surrounded by the ponderosa pines and mountain shrubs, with obstacles on the trail. It's worth it for an unobstructed view of the Mummy's Toes and Mt. Charleston. There are a couple more people on this trail now because the South Loop is still closed from the Kyle Canyon fire, but still a great weekend run most of the year.



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# MEET

# Davey Wavey

**Founded in 2005, YouTube was originally a place to upload your personal videos, catch the latest music video from your favorite artist, or get lost in clips from TV, movies and Broadway.**

Since then, however, the massive video site has become an environment where people are becoming stars in the YouTube pantheon based on their own creativity and personalities.

One of the most popular YouTube celebs in the LGBT space is the hunky, handsome and often nearly-naked Davey Wavey. With almost 800,000 subscribers to his channel and over 207 million views, Davey inspires viewers to come back week after week for fun, fitness and his infectious smile.

A certified personal trainer, Davey shares with his audience his expertise on wellness, plus his thoughts on a host of topics from coming out to straight guys to gay pride to dating tips and more.

**QVegas: What inspired you to post your first video?**

Davey Wavey: At the risk of sounding like a grandpa (which I am in YouTube years), nowadays many kids start creating YouTube videos to become famous or to make it their career. Seven years ago, there were no famous YouTubers and there really wasn't

the possibility of making it your job. When I started making videos, there was no master plan. I just looked at it as a diary. I figured that it would be fun to look back and see what I was doing once I was all grown up.

**Were you surprised that your videos began racking up millions of views?**

Initially, I was actually really put off by the number of people watching my videos. I was even more taken aback by the comments. In fact, early on, I disabled the comments on my channel because I didn't want viewers weighing in on my videos. Of course, things are much different now and I've really come to appreciate my audience as an incredible community. And I value the voices of the people who watch my videos. It just took me a little while to make the mental shift.

**Was there a particular video that really took off for you?**

Of course! The video that put me on the map was one about my masturbating neighbor. When I was living in Toronto, a hot guy was enjoying himself next door. I could see it from my apartment, and I obviously made a video about it. The rest is history.

**What is your favorite video you've ever posted and why?**

My favorite video is one that I posted earlier this year. It's women seeing their vaginas for the first time. It's moving, funny, insightful--it's the magic

intersection of everything you'd want for a YouTube video. As silly as my videos sometimes are, I try to put a message in most of them. This is one of those times when it worked.

**Do you have a favorite YouTube celebrity whose videos you never miss?**

There are a lot of YouTubers that I look up to, for different reasons. I admire Tyler Oakley for his hustle and for being so socially conscious. Instead of birthday presents, he raised more than a half million dollars for the Trevor Project. I admire Todrick Hall for his talent and creativity. When you look at the long list of YouTube personalities, there's a lot to love.

**As a certified fitness trainer, do you still have clients you train or does the YouTube channel take all your time?**

I'm certified as a personal trainer, and part of my online presence is a fitness blog called Davey Wavey Fitness. Each week, I post content to the blog and create fitness and nutrition plans that viewers can download. Fitness is a passion of mine and it's something that I enjoy sharing with my audience. At the end of the day, our bodies are the vehicle through which we experience life. So honoring your body is really just an extension of honoring life.

**It's a new year. You're the fitness guru. Can you give QVegas readers any tips to**





***“..honoring your body is really just an extension of honoring life.”***

self. It's funny that people make such a big deal about it. After all, we're all born naked. I think the more interesting question isn't why is Davey naked... it's why are you not?

**Since you are the shirtless video hottie - What's your favorite brand of underwear?**

My favorite brand of underwear is obviously DirtyFit underwear. It's a brand that I created with my team and launched last month through a Kickstarter. It's truly the best underwear in the world, and I can say that because I've worn every single brand. We wanted to create an underwear that's sexy, comfortable and high quality. And I think we accomplished that. If you missed out on the Kickstarter, you won't be able to get a pair until we launch our website next month. So stay tuned!

You can follow Davey Wavey on his YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/wickydkewl](http://www.youtube.com/wickydkewl).

*Randy Slovacek is the author of The Randy Report, covering entertainment & political news of interest to the LGBT community. Follow Randy online at [www.therandyreport.com](http://www.therandyreport.com)*

**change up our approach to staying/getting in shape?**

I'll say this. Losing weight is the most common New Year's resolution. But if losing weight was really as easy as just moving more and eating smarter, we'd all be at our goal weight. Clearly, there is a huge psychological component. I think a step in the direction of releasing excess body fat is

addressing--  
-and improving--the relationship that you have with your body. Working out because you love your body, rather than working out because you hate your body, is a very powerful (and much more sustainable) thing.

**Lucky for your viewers, you usually make videos wearing very little clothing. Was that a conscious choice from the beginning?**

I just don't wear clothes. I'm only wearing underwear right now. I don't like the way shirts feel and I especially dislike sleeves. For me, being shirtless is really just me authentically expressing my naked



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# BOTTOMS UP MINUS 5°

[ by Nicky Canyon ]



Finding a new place to drink can be as hard as figuring out what shade of lip stick to use or what pair of shoes I'm going to wear. You think and think and wonder how did you ever become this indecisive?

It's finally the weekend and you want to be turned up like you're "drunk in love." Imagine yourself in a bar having a kiki with your friends-drinks, laughter, music and ICE. Yes hunty, ICE. Minus5 is not your typical bar. Minus5's décor is literally all ICE! From the sofas, to the tables, to the walls and even the actual bar is composed entirely of ICE! Living up to its name, Minus5 is serving you Arctic temperature realness. I met with bar manager, Rupert King of the Monte Carlo location. Rupert gave me the full access tour of Minus5 and showed me why Minus5 is the "king" of all ice bars. No other ice bars compare to Minus5. Rupert tells me, "It's all about your experience." When



he asked me what color fur coat I want to wear inside, I knew I was in for an experience like no other. I'll take the black fur please.

The freezing air slammed my lips as soon as I walked in from the holding room. My eyes immediately locked onto the main bar, which sits on a huge sculpted block of ice. An array of liquors sat behind the bar on an ice sculpted shelf. My eyes wondered and found the Las Vegas sign frozen in ice, next to that the Game of Thrones flags frozen as well. I turned to the stand-up bar which had the World Cup jerseys frozen into the bar and behind that a little sculpture saying, "Will you marry

me?" I never realized so much detail could go into ice sculpting. From the lines of the fish net stalking on the lamp ice sculpture to the rivets of the stack of tires sculpture, no detail is left behind. The walls and sculptures change from month to month all depending on upcoming events.

I was led to the V "ICE" P room, secluded to the side of the bar. The ice sofas and ice tables immediately caught my eyes. Holly Madison and Carrot Top are celebrities who've had V "ICE" P room parties. The V "ICE" P room is great to host anything from a birthday to a bachelor/bachelorette party. Men are often doing the "Boxer Challenge" where they only wear their boxers until there's only one man left. I wouldn't mind being the judge for that. With all the ice surrounding me, I wanted to try some of Minus5's specialty drinks. Rupert being a bartender by trade, whipped up the Michael Gotterer and the Snowflake for me to try. The Michael Gotterer was savory and the Snowflake was sweet. It's always an experience trying something new to drink, but when you try it out of a cup made of ice, that's unheard of. Rupert told me when you visit Minus5, "The memories will stick, not your tongue." Guests are encouraged to take their ice cups when they leave, only to have them slowly melt in 20 minutes.

Minus5 captures you and gives you something new to experience. with locations in New York, Orlando, Las Vegas and recently, The Cayman Islands. Then finally the light bulb in your head clicks on. I'm going to use Angel lip stick by MAC and wear my nude colored heels. Many bars come and go, but the world famous Minus5 Ice Bar seems to be the place where you can "party your ice off!" ■



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# More Same-Sex Couples Building Families with Fertility Treatments

[ by Red Rock Fertility Center ]

Dr. Eva Littman used to observe a common pattern among same-sex couples seeking fertility treatments.

Many of them wouldn't divulge their orientation during their appointments. Typically, one partner sought assistance as an individual, revealing only after a successful outcome that he or she was in a same-sex relationship.

Littman even still occasionally sees patients who choose not to share that they are part of a same-sex couple, she admits.

"I think sometimes they're nervous that fertility clinics are not going to take them on as patients," says Littman, founder and practice director of Red Rock Fertility Center.

That attitude isn't as common these days, though.

Littman is seeing a new trend emerge at Red Rock Fertility Center's two locations in Southern Nevada. Significantly more same-sex couples have come through the clinic doors in recent years seeking help with building their families, many of them open about their status as a couple.

The rising number of same-sex couples at Red Rock Fertility has been very noticeable, Littman says. While same-sex couples comprised approximately 5 percent of the center's patients several years ago, they have now doubled to represent 10 percent.

This trend isn't unique to Southern Nevada. Fertility experts across the U.S. report that same-sex couples are increasingly seeking fertility treatments to have children.

There is good reason for same-sex couples to pursue fertility treatments, Littman says, as there is a strong likelihood that they will achieve success in having children.

"The success rate among same-sex couples is very high, because most of the time these aren't infertile couples. They just can't conceive through traditional intercourse," Littman says. "We had upward of 25 same-sex couples as patients this past year, and they all had success after receiving fertility treatments."

Red Rock Fertility sees both female and male same-sex couples becoming patients, she reports. This uptick in

patients isn't due to any advances in technology that make fertility treatments more effective for same-sex couples, she says. The fertility treatments these couples utilize have existed for many years. Instead, Littman credits the change to an evolution occurring on a larger, societal scale.

Most fertility clinics across the country are now accepting of all lifestyles, she notes, including Red Rock Fertility. This makes it easier for same-sex couples to seek treatment.

"The hang ups are few and far between today, as far as seeking fertility treatment," she says.

In addition, the general public is more accepting of same-sex couples, she adds, bolstering couples' enthusiasm for becoming parents like their heterosexual counterparts.

"Same-sex couples seem to be much more comfortable with seeking fertility services," Littman says. "They seem very confident."

These optimistic couples include Las Vegas couple Karla Jimenez and Brittney Burton.

Having a baby was a natural progression in the love story of Jimenez and Burton, both civil engineers with the U.S. Air Force. They quickly developed a close relationship and married in Massachusetts in the summer of 2013.

"It was love at first sight," Jimenez recalls of first meeting her wife.

After they had been together for two years, both were eager to pursue an addition to their family. Jimenez had known for years that she wanted to become a parent, she said, eager to provide love and guidance for a child of her own.

"As I grew older, I felt there has to be something more to life,



Dr. Eva Littman  
Founder and Practice  
Director of Red Rock  
Fertility Center



something more meaningful,” the 28-year-old says.

Burton shared her vision. When they discussed their plans for the future and raising children, fertility treatments were the preferred option early on, Jimenez says, as adoption didn’t fulfill her dreams of experiencing pregnancy and raising a child she had carried.

Like many same-sex couples Littman sees, the couple was referred to the clinic by friends who had gone through treatments themselves. Jimenez admits that before their first visit, she wasn’t sure what to expect.

“I was optimistic, and I was a little scared too,” she says.

The clinic was fully supportive of their life plans and provided helpful information about their options. The couple chose to pursue the intrauterine insemination (IUI) procedure, involving intrauterine insemination from a sperm donor.

Preparation for the procedure was highly involved, Jimenez recalls, requiring regular blood testing and ultrasounds, taking fertility medications and making lifestyle changes to improve her body’s overall wellness and promote a positive outcome.

The efforts paid off. The couple received the news on Valentine’s Day of 2014 that their procedure had been successful, and that Jimenez was pregnant. On Sept. 20, 2014, she gave birth to a twin boy and girl.

“The outcome was amazing,” Jimenez says. “It was all worth it.”

Jimenez and Burton are examples of just one method same-sex couples can pursue to have children. There are a variety of fertility treatment options available, Littman says.

Male couples can utilize an egg donor and gestational carrier. Some of these couples provide



Karla Jimenez (left), and her wife Brittney Burton

sperm from both men to fertilize a donor’s eggs.

Female couples can use donor sperm to impregnate one woman through in vitro insemination, and she can then carry the child. It is also an option to take the eggs from one partner, fertilize them with donor sperm and inject them into the other partner to carry the child, allowing both women to be involved in the process.

There are some treatment methods Littman prefers not to practice, she says, not because they don’t work, but because they can raise unnecessary complications. Although fertility treatments for same-sex couples are often successful, the legality around the results can raise unique challenges.

Littman prefers not to utilize the same egg donor to also carry a child for a male same-sex couple. If the couple is unmarried, there can be legal complications concerning who has legal rights to parent the child, especially if the carrier chooses not to honor the surrogacy agreement to return the child.

“When you can’t enforce the gestational carrier contract, that’s where it gets complicated,” she says.

There are numerous legal issues that same-sex couples should consider if they pursue fertility treatments, Littman says. For instance, if a female partner uses her eggs and personally carries the child, her partner will likely have to adopt the baby to have any rights as a parent, she says.

In spite of these obstacles, Littman predicts that the number of same-sex couples pursuing fertility treatments will only continue to rise, especially if more states across the U.S. loosen their legal restrictions on rights for same-sex parents.

She offers simple recommendations for same-sex couples considering fertility treatments. Visit a fertility clinic, she says, and the professionals there will offer counsel on every step of the process. This includes guidance on how to find sperm donors and gestational carriers, as well as recommendations for attorneys who can provide expert advice to ensure both partners have parenting rights.

“It’s wonderful to play a role in helping same-sex couples have children they will love and care for over the rest of their lives,” Littman says.

*\*A version of this article ran in a recent issue of VEGAS INC Health Care Quarterly*



# ROAD TRIP

## LOS ANGELES

[ by Russ White & Garrett Pattiani ]



It's hard to call them tourists when they're here so often, but every weekend I-15 fills up with the lifeblood of Vegas—the “feeder market” from Southern California. Last month we decided to reverse directions and take a road trip in our new Fiat 500 from Findlay Fiat. We were able to make it to LA on just a single tank of gas.

Two gay guys on the road requires appropriate tunage, so Russ downloads the soundtrack from IF/THEN. It's not a vacation, so Garrett hops on Facebook to work on social media.

After a quick stop in Barstow for a snack and a break, we arrive in Beverly Hills just after sunset. Our first night we decide to stay at Maison 140,

a small boutique hotel that started out in the 1930s as the home of Hollywood actresses Lillian and Dorothy Gish. Steps away from Rodeo Drive and just off Santa Monica Boulevard, this mansion turned hotel provides guests with a charming escape from the de rigueur five star hotels.

The front desk is nothing more than an large, ornate desk and we are greeted with a complimentary glass of



*Maison 140  
Beverly Hills*

*Findlay Fiat  
Fiat 500 Abarth*





champagne while we check in.

The lobby is warm and inviting, decorated with dark reds and blacks against contrasting whites. We'll discover later that evening the hospitality of the bar, but first we're off to unpack, shower and change for a much needed dinner.

With room enough in the elevator for 2 people plus bags, we're quickly reminded that this isn't a Vegas resort. We've left spacious elevators, rooms, and bathrooms behind in favor of a piece of history and coziness that set the tone for the rest of our trip.

Free WiFi and a comfy bed were all that was necessary. Like everything else, the bathroom was small, but also clean and well appointed. Quite the surprise was the Neil George amenities, providing an invigorating shower. Unlike most lodging that provides travel sizes that we're both compelled to take home where ever we stay, these are bulk sizes with a note attached letting us know that product is available for purchase and can be conveniently

charged to your room if you want to take one of the bottles.

By now, hunger had set in (a recurring theme of this trip), and we set off on foot for dinner at small Italian restaurant nearby. It had been a long day, so rather than seek out a night time adventure, we returned to the hotel bar for a nightcap.

Consistent with our reception, the bartender provided the same great service we had already come to expect from Maison 140. Our Vegas nightlife experience has us in tune with most liquors, but the bartender was still able to make recommendations that involved great stories about the different offerings. A great way to end our first day in LA.

Saturday morning comes and so does the pang for breakfast. We have plans that afternoon downtown, so we check out of Maison 140 and head to 9th and Figueroa. Russ recalls a popular breakfast spot called the Original Pantry Cafe and Garrett is easily swayed. Known

for a line outside, we don't wait very long and once seated, coffee, French toast, pancakes, hash browns, eggs, and bacon quickly cover the small diner table. Service is fast and the food is great. Open 24 hours a day, the iconic cafe claims to have never closed since 1924.

We chose LA this particular weekend for two reasons: birthday weekend for Russ and the 3D film festival organized by our friend Chris Crescitelli. After breakfast we checked in to the Hotel Figueroa, a Moroccan themed hotel, just across the street from the Pantry and next door to LA Live.

The hotel has a rustic feel. It's comfortable, but the beds can't compare to Maison 140. We settle in and head over to the film



Wolfgang Puck  
Hotel Bel Air





*Wolfgang Puck  
Hotel Bel Air*

festival. Even though this was a 3D film festival, we opted for a 2D movie with 4D effects. This 4D theater engages the viewer with interactive seats that pitch, roll, and vibrate alongside action in the movie. Other effects are integrated into the theater, including flashes of light, smoke effects, and even odors. Bursts of air brush past your ear as if grazed by a bullet.

After the movie we attended a panel discussion about the latest technology advances in the film industry.

Then it was back into the

Fiat and off to Beverly Hills for dinner at Wolfgang Puck at the Hotel Bel Air.

Upon our arrival, it took a few moments to get our bearings and find the restaurant amid the sprawling compound of the hotel. The grounds were decorated for the holidays in simple and elegant white lights.

Cocktails were first on the list. Russ chose the "Help! Save the Bees," a concoction of Kettle One Citroen vodka, Luxardo Limoncello, thyme & lavender honey, lemon juice and lemon bitters. Garrett

opted for Pepino's Revenge, a mix of Patrón Silver tequila, Japanese cucumber, fresh basil, and lime juice.

On reviewing the menu, we opted for the 7-Course Chef's Tasting Menu with wine pairings—a choice we would both enjoy immensely and regret by the sixth course.

Though tasting menus vary based on the chef's desires, most of the items are available a la carte from the menu, but the tasting menu serves smaller portions and wider variety; a great choice for those that have a hard time



*Hotel Figueroa*



making a decision from the menu and another option from sharing entrées.

The Japanese hamachi sashimi was served aside a Fuyu persimmon salad, wasabi aioli, young Shiso, and yuzu citrus.

The Maine diver scallop was seared perfectly and served with fennel, Satsuma mandarin, herbs and fresh horseradish.

We both agreed the heirloom baby beet salad is a must-have. The goat cheese mousse and sunflower seed brittle added interesting textures.

With a menu offering a choice of pasta, risotto, or pizza, the season Alba white truffles is the menu item not to miss. At \$95 for the entrée, this makes the tasting menu a bargain. The white truffles are deep and earthy in flavor. The smaller portion from the tasting menu tempts the palette, but isn't overbearing.

Finally we move to the meatier courses. The "Butcher's Butter" is one of the most tender cuts. Simply seasoned with a Szechuan salt and grilled to perfection, this choice cut often trimmed for

the butcher rarely makes it to a commercial kitchen. Wolfgang Puck collects several of these tips of beef each day. Beef lovers order this one early in the evening, because they do run out.

After the beef we are served the most perfect lamb chops. These delicate portions are served medium rare and are devoured in a single bite.

Each course was paired with an appropriate wine—four whites and three reds. A bonus to tasting menus are the desserts. Instead of ordering a single dessert a la carte, the dessert course often contains an abundance of pastries and other delectables beyond what you could choose from.

And if you happen to be celebrating a birthday, excusing yourself to the washroom after the handling the lamb chops gives your dining partner a chance to alert the waiter of your celebration. The chocolate ganache cake with strawberries can't be described adequately.

After dinner we return to downtown and head

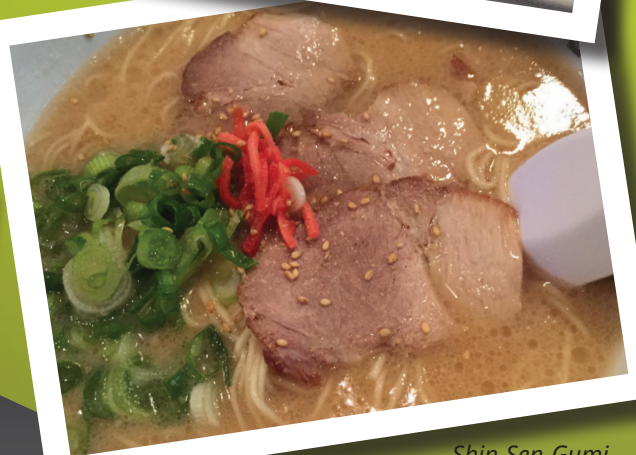
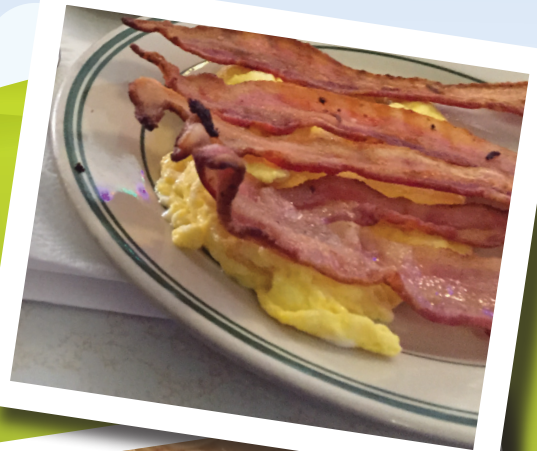
straight to bed. Apparently our bodies only function in Vegas nightlife.

The next day we take some time to relax by the pool, take in some Vitamin D, and recharge our batteries. It's a Sunday so we still have some work obligations back in Vegas, but we wrap up our chores and enjoy our time away from home.

That evening we were craving Pho, but it was late and we couldn't find anything open late. We're not in Vegas after all. We stumbled across Shin-Sen-Gumi Hakata Ramen Restaurant and enjoyed a seared ahi appetizer, fried rice, and two bowls of ramen.

After a good night of rest we pack our bags and start our journey home, re-invigorated from our nomadic venture to LA.

*The Original  
Pantry Cafe*



*Shin-Sen-Gumi  
Hakata Ramen*





# What is Bipolar Disorder?

[ by Guy Calderon Cooper, MS, LCPC ]

The most common answer given says it is a major affective disorder in which an individual alternates between states of deep depression (sadness) and extreme elation (happiness). This is misleading in that Bipolar Disorder - sometimes still known as manic depression or manic-depressive illness - is much more complicated than just alternating between depression and elation.

The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* says that bipolar I disorder is characterized by the occurrence of one or more manic episodes often accompanied by depressive episodes. So even if you're depressed 99% of the time, going through just a *single* manic episode qualifies you for a diagnosis of bipolar I disorder according to this definition. Bipolar II Disorder is defined as having one or more hypomanic episodes along with depressive episodes. But these cut-and-dried definitions leave out a lot of what manic depression *truly* is.

Let's look at Bipolar Disorder in everyday language and see if it can be put into terms of everyday life. Bipolar Disorder is an illness that affects thoughts, feelings,

perceptions and behavior ... even how a person feels physically. It is usually (but not always) found in people whose families have a history of one or more mental illnesses.

While we're at it, let's be clear about something: a mental illness is one that *affects* the mind, not one that is *in* the mind.

Most often, a person with Bipolar Disorder experiences moods that shift from high to low and back again in varying degrees of severity, generally with more or less stable periods in between.

The two poles of Bipolar I Disorder are mania and depression, and of Bipolar II, hypomania and depression.

## **But, what is mania?**

Mania might include:

- Feeling like you can do anything, even something unsafe or illegal
- Needing very little sleep, yet never feeling tired
- Dressing flamboyantly, spending money extravagantly, living recklessly
- Having increased sexual desires, perhaps even indulging in risky sexual behaviors
- Hallucinations or delusions

- Feeling filled with energy

## **What is hypomania?**

Hypomania - a less extreme form of manic episode - and could include:

- Having utter confidence
- Hyperfocus
- Feeling extra creative or innovative
- Being able to brush off problems that would usually paralyze you during depression
- Feeling "on top of the world" but without going over the top.

Hypomania does not include hallucinations or delusions, but a hypomanic person still might exhibit some reckless or inappropriate behavior.

## **What is depression?**

Depression might be identified by:

- Sleeping much more than usual
- Being tired all the time but unable to sleep
- Uncontrollable crying
- Becoming entirely uninterested in things you once enjoyed
- Neglecting daily responsibilities
- Feeling hopeless, helpless or worthless for a sustained period



of time

- Wanting to die
- Some people think that they are just “over their depression” when they become manic, and don’t realize this exaggerated state is part of the illness - part of Bipolar Disorder.

There has been a great deal of research in what Bipolar Disorder is and what the most common characteristics that lead to developing this mental illness are. The answer is very complicated and deals with a vast amount of information on genetics, heredity and DNA. For the purposes of this article, let’s simply look at the most common factor, which is usually “stress triggers”.

For mental, emotional and environmental issues, stressful life events are thought to be the main element in the development of Bipolar Disorder. These can range from a death in the family to the loss of a job, from the birth of a child to a move, from coming out to being rejected by family and friends. It can be anything, but it cannot be precisely defined, since one person’s stress may be another person’s comfort. With that in mind, research has found that stressful life events can lead to the onset of symptoms in Bipolar Disorder. However, once the disorder is triggered and progresses, “it seems to develop a life of its own.” Once the cycle begins, psychological and/or biological processes take over and keep the illness active.

As a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LCPC) and being gay myself, I have been doing a lot of thinking about depression and Bipolar Disorder in our community. As is the case with other cultural minorities, there has not been a lot of work done to consider the impact of the illnesses on our community—for example, special

treatment needs and culturally effective outreach.

For LGBTQ individuals diagnosed with serious mental illness, homophobic attitudes among providers of mental health services and programs continue to create barriers to recovery and detract from the effectiveness of treatment and support services. Many mental health profession in and out of the LGBTQ community strive to find ways to offer hope, help and support. I think about the millions of people who have to overcome even higher obstacles to care because of their “sexual minority status” and how much work still has to be done.

While we have made rapid progress in the areas of civil rights within the LGBTQ community over the last few months, we continue to fall short in the areas of access to consistent and culturally sensitive mental healthcare. We continue to see issues like:

- LGBTQ consumers reporting frequent harassment and belittlement from others attending the same programs.
- Some mental health programs may be reluctant to embrace LGBTQ consumers given that, up until 1973, LGBTQ identities were considered a mental illness.
- Some LGBTQ consumers describe that some mental health providers are still fearful and don’t understand or don’t feel that they know how to properly treat LGBTQ consumers and are unwilling or unable deal with relevant issues associated with sexual orientation.
- Many mental health providers continue to hold stereotypes that LGBTQ people are all HIV positive and are all sexual predators but thankfully these numbers continue to diminish.
- Although we have seen great

strides in the knowledge and respect for the LGBTQ community as of late, it is still not covered enough in mental health staff trainings on cultural competency or in program policies.

There continues to be a significant stigma associated with mental illness in general and possibly even more within the LGBTQ community. Many mental health providers are becoming more accepting and knowledgeable about sexual orientation issues, and hence, therapy is improving by dealing more appropriately with the core issues that the consumer presents with. Consumers say that providers are beginning to address the sexual orientation of consumers in order to specifically meet the needs of the consumers. They report feeling much safer in revealing and expressing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in treatment.

Let’s try to put it all together. In its simplest terms, for many of us a physical condition exists that makes a person more than usually susceptible to certain diseases. Each person inherits certain physical vulnerabilities to problems that may or may not appear depending on what stresses occur our lives. So the bottom line, according to today’s thinking, is that if you have been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, you were born with the possibility of developing this disorder, and something in your life set it off. But scientists could refine that theory tomorrow. The one sure thing is that we won’t give up looking for answers and improving treatment modalities in all aspects of mental illness. If you feel that you are suffering from Bipolar Disorder or any other mental illness, the first step is getting better is asking for help and seeking the help you need as soon as possible.



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## GOING DIGITAL

[ by Russ White ]

This issue of QVegas marks a milestone in the publication's history, as we embark on a bold new course for the magazine. This is the first 100% digital issue of QVegas.

We see a growing trend in both advertiser and reader preference for online, so over the past few months, we've made great strides in becoming a comprehensive digital publication with downloadable PDFs, web content on Gay.Vegas, a social media edition on Facebook, and an iPhone® and iPad® app.

One of the reasons I acquired QVegas in 2012 was to steward a transition to digital format. I've been doing digital publishing most of my career, and the time is right to re-think what digital publishing means to both advertisers and consumers.

Starting with our first issue in 2015, we have made the decision to no longer print QVegas. Instead, we have decided to focus all of our efforts on digital distribution. We believe this is the right direction for our readers, our advertisers, and our environment.

Over the past year alone, QVegas consumed over 11.5 million pages to produce the magazine. That's over 24 tons of paper each year.

More and more of our advertisers are choosing digital media over print media. Our technology offerings provide advertisers with more choices to reach the LGBTQ consumer.

Our digital offerings will continue to grow, offering advertisers

greater reach and readers more options in how they view content with an innovative emphasis on mobile technologies.

Since launching QVegas Magazine on the all new Gay.Vegas website, online readership of our original content continues to increase. The combined readership of QVegas and Gay.Vegas websites surpass our competitors and show strong growth, while other publications are seeing a decline in online readership.

In the coming months, you'll continue to see more original content for QVegas. With the physical limitation of paper gone, we have the ability to publish more online content. We will also introduce more changes as we continue to make improvements to our technology.

Always a community partner, QVegas and Gay.Vegas will continue to support local charities and organizations, including The Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada, Aid for AIDS Nevada, Golden Rainbow, The Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Human Rights Campaign, and Mondays Dark.

The most rewarding part of this venture are the events we produce and the lives we change. When people think of QVegas, we want them to think of more than just a printed magazine. QVegas

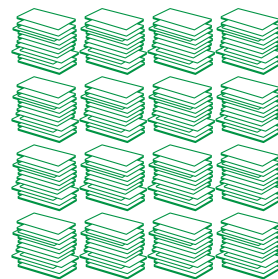
represents friendships and a lifestyle of the community that surrounds it. I can't tell you how great it has been to see our events facilitating friendships, creating an emotional bond to our brands, and just getting to know people.

Social Tuesdays returns this month from the holiday break. We look forward to working with Hakkasan Group through the acquisition of Light Group and Revo Sundays, plus we have a few more events in the works for 2015.

While we expect many readers to transition to our digital distribution quickly, we realize that some readers simply prefer the feel of paper. We've partnered with MagCloud to offer digital print on demand. You can order a copy of QVegas online and have it mailed to you each month.

I want to extend a huge thank you to our advertisers who have committed to supporting the LGBTQ community. Please be sure to thank them as well with your patronage.

*Going Green: Digital publishing reduces our carbon footprint. Not only do we conserve paper, but we also conserve fuel in distribution costs.*



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