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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
FRANK MARINO
WHAT MAKES THE MAN THE MAN

Divas

CAST CONGRATULATES
HIM ON 30 YEARS

THE RAINBOW ISSUE

CELEBRATING DIVERSE PEOPLE AND PLACES IN AND OUT OF LAS VEGAS



ON THE COVER

Exclusive Interview: Frank Marino talk about the man behind the dress and the true meaning of performing.

For more info visit gay.vegas/divas

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Welcome to the Rainbow Issue of QVegas Magazine. September is PRIDE month in Las Vegas, and we decided to cover all things that we should be proud of—nationwide. This is a very colorful issue, starting with Frank Marino—a Las Vegas icon and brilliant activist celebrating thirty amazing years performing on the world famous strip! The interview is quite magical as he opens up like never before, exposing the person behind the name and glitz.

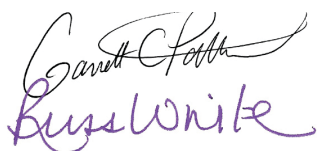
We decided to highlight cities and articles that represent the variety and beauty that our community and allies represent.

Scott Matti takes us through the FABULOUS things Las Vegas has to offer for the LGBT scene as well as the entire city that everyone enjoys! Unity Nightclub revives the Fruit Loop area. Christopher Logan brings back coffee table books

Brihony Dawson is turning heads with her unique approach to gender fluidity. Michael Barbieri find amazing food at Peppermill and Hash House a Go-Go.

Dr. Betty L. Sullivan and Jennifer L. Viegas of the San Francisco bay times show us why SF still remains the gayest city on the planet! Hot Spots media tells us about the beauty and beaches all throughout the Florida, and Deon Brown talks about the wonders of Arizona. Lavender Magazine shows us many facets Minnesota and Portland's PQ Monthly magazine educates us on the native ideas based on the two spirit collective, Portland's growing scene and surrounding areas.

... And just for fun, we throw in an article that talks about the real life Magic Mike's that earn their livelihood as guys that strip for cash!



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FABULOUS LAS VEGAS



[by Scott Matti]

Welcome to fabulous Las Vegas. Here, you will find a city where fantasy is a reality and your reality is quite twisted.

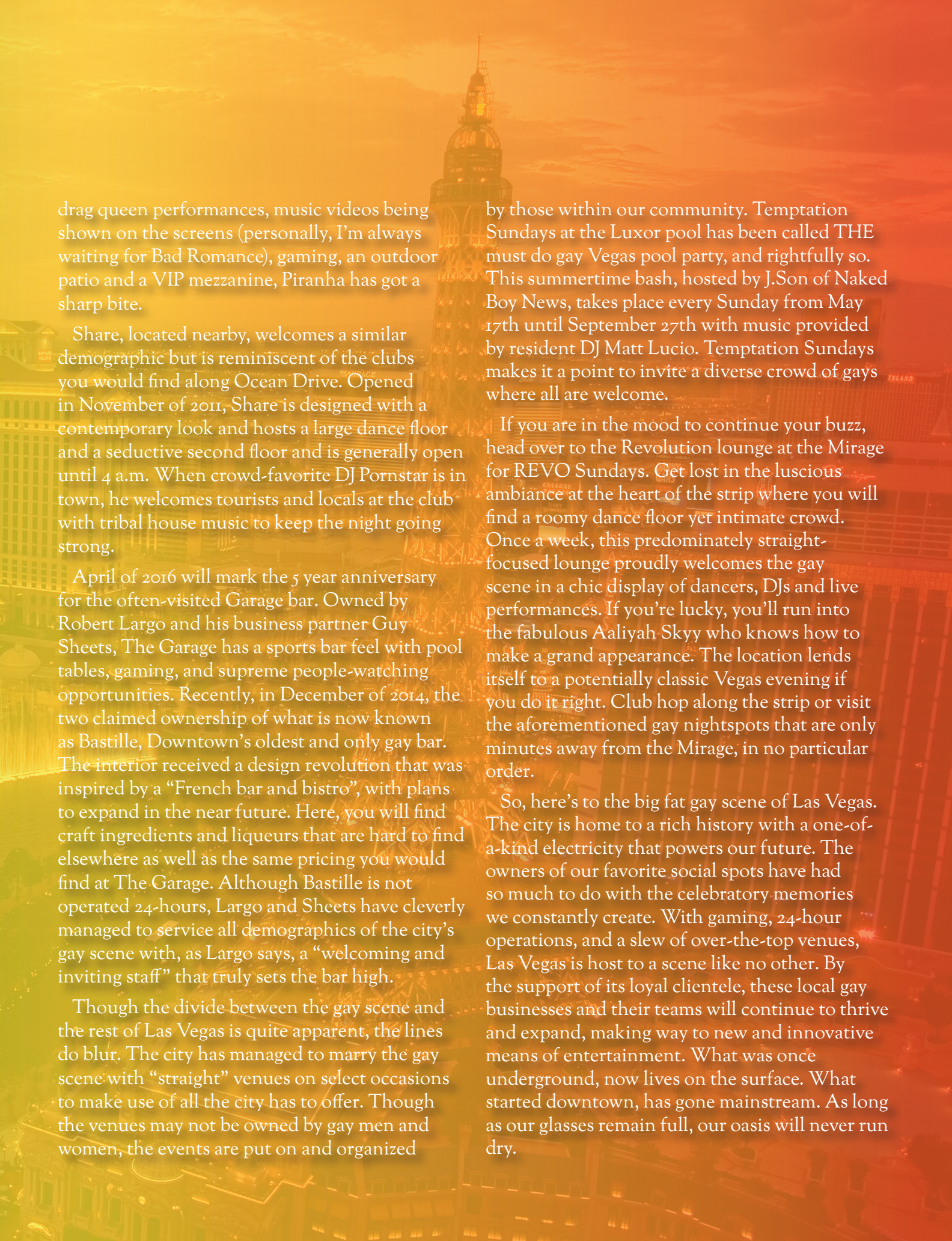
It is a unique metropolis in that it houses an eclectic mix of corporate heavyweights and mom-and-pop favorites that capitalize on a distinct irreverent opulence. This radiant vibe is what attracts locals and visitors from all walks of life to a wide array of bars, lounges, nightclubs and beloved Drag Queens. We celebrate the night, and the hazy morning right after.

Somewhere in this sea of nightlife-centric businesses is an island that not only caters to our fabulous gay scene, but is also owned by the like. These hard-working owners are responsible for bringing together the LGBT community to celebrate our culture nightly (Faded on a Wednesday? No judgement here). Through economic tides, these local gay bars and nightclubs have seen the best and worst of times. Some of these establishments have maintained a solid presence from the start, some have come

into new management, and others are fresh faces in town. Join me as we take a look at some of these wonderful hotspots that we have all come to know and love.

All along the part of town known as “The Fruit Loop”, you will find gay-owned bars and clubs that capture the essence of our gay scene. QUADZ Video Bar, with it’s gaming, pool tables, and darts, is open 24-hours and hosts liquor busts and trivia depending on the day of the week. Freezone is home to a laid-back social scene with ladies night and karaoke on the calendar. If fetish wear is your thing, head over to The Fun Hog Ranch where this sort of attire is “strongly encouraged” in a causal and rustic setting. And then, of course, we have Charlie’s - away from “the fruit loop” but not by much. Also open 24-hours, Charlie’s is where the bears come out to play. With an array of scheduled events and liquor busts, this dynamic bar has remained a local favorite.

Piranha Nightclub and Share Nightclub stand as the only two gay nightclubs in Las Vegas, although their differing qualities give them each a unique character. Piranha, open 24 hours, is what appears to be a bar and nightclub hybrid. With



drag queen performances, music videos being shown on the screens (personally, I'm always waiting for *Bad Romance*), gaming, an outdoor patio and a VIP mezzanine, Piranha has got a sharp bite.

Share, located nearby, welcomes a similar demographic but is reminiscent of the clubs you would find along Ocean Drive. Opened in November of 2011, Share is designed with a contemporary look and hosts a large dance floor and a seductive second floor and is generally open until 4 a.m. When crowd-favorite DJ Pornstar is in town, he welcomes tourists and locals at the club with tribal house music to keep the night going strong.

April of 2016 will mark the 5 year anniversary for the often-visited Garage bar. Owned by Robert Largo and his business partner Guy Sheets, The Garage has a sports bar feel with pool tables, gaming, and supreme people-watching opportunities. Recently, in December of 2014, the two claimed ownership of what is now known as Bastille, Downtown's oldest and only gay bar. The interior received a design revolution that was inspired by a "French bar and bistro", with plans to expand in the near future. Here, you will find craft ingredients and liqueurs that are hard to find elsewhere as well as the same pricing you would find at The Garage. Although Bastille is not operated 24-hours, Largo and Sheets have cleverly managed to service all demographics of the city's gay scene with, as Largo says, a "welcoming and inviting staff" that truly sets the bar high.

Though the divide between the gay scene and the rest of Las Vegas is quite apparent, the lines do blur. The city has managed to marry the gay scene with "straight" venues on select occasions to make use of all the city has to offer. Though the venues may not be owned by gay men and women, the events are put on and organized

by those within our community. Temptation Sundays at the Luxor pool has been called THE must do gay Vegas pool party, and rightfully so. This summertime bash, hosted by J.Son of Naked Boy News, takes place every Sunday from May 17th until September 27th with music provided by resident DJ Matt Lucio. Temptation Sundays makes it a point to invite a diverse crowd of gays where all are welcome.

If you are in the mood to continue your buzz, head over to the Revolution lounge at the Mirage for REVO Sundays. Get lost in the luscious ambiance at the heart of the strip where you will find a roomy dance floor yet intimate crowd. Once a week, this predominately straight-focused lounge proudly welcomes the gay scene in a chic display of dancers, DJs and live performances. If you're lucky, you'll run into the fabulous Aaliyah Skyy who knows how to make a grand appearance. The location lends itself to a potentially classic Vegas evening if you do it right. Club hop along the strip or visit the aforementioned gay nightspots that are only minutes away from the Mirage, in no particular order.

So, here's to the big fat gay scene of Las Vegas. The city is home to a rich history with a one-of-a-kind electricity that powers our future. The owners of our favorite social spots have had so much to do with the celebratory memories we constantly create. With gaming, 24-hour operations, and a slew of over-the-top venues, Las Vegas is host to a scene like no other. By the support of its loyal clientele, these local gay businesses and their teams will continue to thrive and expand, making way to new and innovative means of entertainment. What was once underground, now lives on the surface. What started downtown, has gone mainstream. As long as our glasses remain full, our oasis will never run dry.



LAVENDER MAGAZINE Painting Minnesota Light Purple for 20 Years



[by Andy Lien]

Lavender magazine is a publication for the GLBT audience of Minnesota, as well as its allies. Whereas some people might have a rather monolithic view of the rainbow community, Lavender strives to present it as multifaceted as it is, in one of the “gayest” metropolitan areas of the country.

Lavender is a biweekly, glossy magazine that is free to our readers in the Twin Cities as well as other more densely populated areas of Minnesota: Duluth, Mankato, St. Cloud. It’s available online as a digital reproduction of the print magazine on our website and is widely read around the globe, as is the rest of our website with more material than fits into the print version. We strive to cover topics relevant to our local community as well as

have great breadth with our online Big Gay News presence, with its Big Gay News podcast, which was the first gay podcast.

To suit the interest of our readership, the magazine and website are organized in different categories, including Our Scene, Our Lives, Our Affairs, and Our Homes. Within each of these categories we talk about various topics as they are relevant to the citizens within our geographical area whether or not they are part of the rainbow community, as well as specific topics that are relevant to people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. It’s a rather holistic way of organizing both a magazine as well as the website for a community that both uses it as a resource as well as the larger community to become more familiar with the people and issues that are relevant to the GLBT audience. Much of what we do is present examples of what people are doing in their lives. And, by showing what they’re doing, we can have them vouch for who they’ve worked with and how their experiences

were. Whether it's something to do with having children or going to a show or remodeling their kitchen, each of our stories carries weight for the community, which is a mutually beneficial relationship between the advertisers and the audience.

Our Scene covers a wide variety of topics in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area: food and dining, arts and culture, clubs and music, style and entertaining, sports, travel and recreation, as well as fashion. Not only do we have a number of bars for the rainbow community, but our restaurant and coffee shops include a number of queer-owned and -oriented options. The arts scene is rich in featuring gay people not only as the performers, but also the patrons. Our talent runs deep and our attention is wide. Drag, burlesque, cabaret, and rainbow choral, band, and orchestra organizations keep our people front and center, in the wings, and in the seats.

Because the community tends to be upwardly mobile and outwardly interested, the queer scene is hopping, as are our athletes. With hundreds of gay softball players (including men, women, and trans athletes), nearly as many bowlers, rugby teams, soccer teams, roller derby, tennis, volleyball, women's football teams, runners, hikers, climbers, basketball players, rodeo, and the WNBA champions, the Minnesota Lynx, our community is active and engaged. The Land of 10,000 Lakes gives us plenty of opportunities to run, walk, bike, strut, swim, and play in various hot spots in the metro area. We take road trips to Duluth and up the North Shore to the very gay-

friendly Grand Marais on Lake Superior, and we hop in and out of our own international airport with ease, as it connects to Minneapolis and St. Paul efficiently via light rail and bus routes.

Our Lives includes dating and relationships, health and wellness, family and friends, pets, lifestyles and communities, and faith. Minnesota was the first state to defeat a ballot measure to ban same-sex marriage in 2012. Then, after a challenging legislative session, marriage equality came to Minnesota in 2013. Lavender has published wedding issues celebrating the

love and relationships of our readers for years, so when they became legal, it only bolstered our already-there readership. We celebrate our partners, our engagements, our spouses, our children. We look ahead to our friends and family members growing older and we reflect on our history together.

Also central to Our Lives are the topics of health and wellness. Not only is the state of Minnesota rich in recreational opportunities, but it also has a long history

of health and innovation. The Mayo Clinic is headquartered in Rochester, but also has a sports-centered facility in Minneapolis. Our hospitals are cutting edge as trauma and teaching centers. We have a growing number of housing and health resources for people living with HIV/AIDS as well as rainbow-centric chemical dependency centers, clinics that include trans health with hormone therapy along sliding-scale fee structures, and GLBTQ homeless youth programs.



Our Lives are multi-faceted, as is our community. Minnesotans also seek membership in a number of organizations that match their chosen demographics. There are options for joining all sorts of groups whether you're interested in bears, leather, kink, elderly fellowship, spirituality, recovery, motorcycles, books, the Imperial Court, fundraising, foam, dancing, or any other such interest. Places to look to find connections tend to be on Lavender's online calendar and on Facebook on pages like Gay Twin Cities and Queer Exchange Mpls/St. Paul.

Our Affairs involves politics, causes, workplace, law and finance, books, and education. Lavender has been covering the rainbow community in Minnesota for 20 years, but the community has been out, proud, and fighting for its rights long before then. We've hosted more than 40 years of Twin Cities Pride. Our college campuses rank on the Campus Pride Index. Lavender's devoted pages of editorial content and space to covering the causes that are near and dear to this community's heart over the years. And, until the other magazines in the world start covering the issues of this community as a matter of course, Lavender is, by definition, an activist magazine.

Our homes include recipes and cooking, home and yard, gadgets and technology, crafting and home arts, vehicles and rides. Minneapolis and

St. Paul don't have what are formally considered "gayborhoods," but we have wonderful neighborhoods that tend to draw members of the community: Uptown, Powderhorn Park, Loring

Park, Downtown Minneapolis, Golden Valley, and Bryn Mawr, to name some specific Minneapolis locales. St. Paul draws people to Cathedral Hill and Lowertown as well as Grand Avenue, for both living and strolling.

In addition to our biweekly magazine, Lavender's website (www.lavendermagazine.com) also has popular aspects such as the calendar, which is where local and national groups and people can publish their events for free.

Especially as this community becomes less dependent on gay-specific spaces, it's nice for people to be able to find a gay-specific place to find events for the community. Big Gay News is hosted here, as are

web-only special sections like a Sports Page, contests and giveaways, our Friends of Community Map, the Online Magazine, and many more event photos than we could ever publish in our print issue. Find us online, find us in Minnesota, just find us.



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THERE WILL BE BOOKS

[by Christopher Logan]

For a time, I thought printed books were on the way out, with the shift to downloadable, quick-access, Kindle and iPad ready stories at everyone's fingertips...but I was wrong.

There's been a resurgence of the books that rely on the quality of the art paper and deeply printed inks to bring photos and art richly to life. I'm glad to be part of that.

My first book "dr.a.g." (for dressed as girl) has sold in stores across the US and Canada and in 17 countries in Europe, was a VIP gift at the Sundance Film Festival and we received commendations from the Nevada Governor and a nod from QVegas Magazine who chose me as one of their 'People of Pride'. The book is a true celebration of the art of drag, showcasing every one from the recently departed legend Jim Bailey, master storyteller Coco Peru, Drag icons Jackie Beat and Lady Bunny and our favourite Vegas Icons Larry Edwards, Mr. Kenneth Blake and this issue's cover star Frank Marino.

We're launching the second book in the series in late Fall, this time focusing on the world of

BURLESQUE

Burlesque. Drag is too many clothes for one gender, while Burlesque leaves it all on the floor. The ladies, and some men, of the Burlesque world are showcased in all their glory, and once again we have a stellar cast that shows how diverse burlesque can be. Everyone from the reigning UK Burlesque queen Immodesty Blaize to Vegas' own Kalani Kokonuts is here....and we end with the most recognized face of burlesque: Miss Dita Von Teese.

A good book can tell a story....but a good coffee table book, starts one. It starts a conversation and draws everyone in. It teaches us. Drag teaches us to be bigger than we are, to embrace life fully and to stand out: loudly and proudly. Burlesque teaches us to embrace our bodies and our sensuality, and to give as much of ourselves as we like. These performers teach us how to live fuller lives, how to express hidden desires, and how to be ourselves completely and unapologetically.

All in a simple book. Photos and pages bound together to become a reminder that we can be anything we want.

Christopher Logan is an actor (Connie and Carla, Tron Legacy, XFiles 2016) who produces books that celebrate diversity and inclusion to raise funding for independent film projects. Burlesque will be the second book from his company Bookthefilm Publishing, and next year they will embark on their first film project: a documentary on the gay dialect Polari. For information on their books and film projects, please visit www.bookthefilm.com

UNITY

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CHAMPAGNE KISSES AND CAVIAR DREAMS

[by Chris Boutté]

Whether you're a Las Vegas local or just in town for a thrilling weekend of fun, there's a hot new Venue in town that you have to check out. Club UNITY is located in the World Famous Fruit Loop and It's the home of Las Vegas's only Drag Queen Brunch.

The magnificent Miss Conception has returned to Las Vegas after a three-year hiatus in Los Angeles, California, where she moved when Krave closed and Lucky Cheng's Dinner Theatre went dark. We had the pleasure of sitting down with her to get the lowdown about the show, and she told us that this is more than a show; it's an experience.

Miss Conception told us she's "30ish something years old," and she's been doing drag for over 15 years. We asked why people should come down to Drag Queen Brunch when there's so much going on in Vegas already. "I've been doing brunches for five years and

dine and drag shows for over 10 years," Miss Conception stated, "It's all about laughter, love and EQUALITY."

If you're a local, you'll be able to make the Drag Queen Brunch your new Sunday morning routine because there will always be something new. Even if you're just visiting, you'll be sure to want to come back for a second taste. Miss Conception has made a lot of friends in the drag scene, so we can expect to see big names from Los Angeles and RuPaul's Drag Race like Tammie Brown and LaGanja Estranja. Miss Conception promises this ensemble will also include transsexual woman, live singers and even Drag Kings because she believes "drag is whatever the entertainer wants to bring to life."

Drag Queen Brunch kicks off Sunday, September 6th. As long as you have a valid ID and 21+, entry is absolutely free. You'll be treated to bottomless mimosas for \$17, Bloody Mary's and Waffle n' Syrup shots for \$5 and there's a complete food menu too. The doors open at 11am, and the show starts at noon, so skip church and come cure your hangover with a fabulous time every Sunday with the Champagne Queens at Club UNITY.

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Portland's LGBTQ history likely goes back to the first human inhabitants of the area.

According to the First Nations Two-Spirit Collective, native people have celebrated gender and sexual minorities for millennia. Explorers

Meriwether Lewis and William Clarke noted a number of encounters with such individuals in Oregon. While some tribes have struggled to keep these traditions alive in the face of colonial influences, the Portland Two-Spirit Society is evidence of the resurgence of Two-Spirit pride.

LGBTQ Portlanders first found widespread visibility, and

later organization, through the local media. In 1970, not long after the riots at Stonewall, John Wilkinson and Holly Hart wrote articles about gay life in the Willamette Bridge. They called for gays and lesbians to organize, and the Portland Gay Liberation Front (PGLF) was born.

After the formation of the PGLF, advances in gay rights began to mount. Two years later, in 1972, Oregon became the fourth state to repeal its sodomy laws (enacted in 1853). By 1973, Rep. Vera Katz (who later became Portland's mayor) had introduced the state's first gay rights bill, which failed to pass by just two votes. There were even enough gay rights groups to hold an Oregon Gay Political Caucus. The following year, the Portland City Council adopted a resolution barring employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Portland's first LGBTQ pride celebration took the form of indoor events such as dances, sponsored by the Second Foundation. The first outdoor public pride festival was held in 1975.

Portland saw its first AIDS-related death in 1982, and by 1983, Cascade AIDS Project and



PALS (Personal Active Listeners) were formed. The 1980s also saw the beginnings of still-vibrant community institutions such as Esther's Pantry, Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Portland Lesbian Choir, Peacock in the Park and Equity Foundation.

In 1988, the Oregon LGBTQ community met a foe that would provide impetus for the next decade of activism. The Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), a conservative Christian group, sponsored Measure 8, which ultimately succeeded in repealing Gov. Goldschmidt's executive order prohibiting the executive branch from discriminating based on sexual orientation in employment. The measure was overruled by the Oregon Supreme Court in 1992.

Still, the OCA tried again to fight LGBTQ rights with 1992's Measure 9, which sought to prevent "special rights" for gay, lesbian and bisexual people. This became a galvanizing battle for the community and led to the creation of the state's primary LGBTQ rights organization, Basic Rights Oregon (BRO), in 1996.

In 2006, Q Center — Portland's first LGBTQ community center since 1978 — opened its doors. The following year, the Oregon legislature passed bills banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, public accommodations and employment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Portland voters took that

sentiment to heart in 2008 when they elected Sam Adams, the first openly gay mayor of a major U.S. city.

Adams led the Portland City Council in 2011 to unanimously make the health insurance policy for city employees transgender-inclusive. The state continues to be a leader in trans healthcare with a case currently in court challenging the policy for state employees.



In 2014, a U.S. District Court judge made marriage legal for all couples in the state after overturning Oregon's ban on same-sex marriage. The Oregon district attorney declined to defend the law when it was challenged in a federal lawsuit, and the decision went into effect immediately. Read more about same-sex marriage in Oregon.

In February 2015, Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown made history as the nation's first openly bisexual governor when she was appointed to the position upon then Governor John Kitzhaber's resignation. Brown, the 37th governor of Oregon, has long been a vocal advocate for LGBTQ rights and organizations throughout the state.



This article was produced in collaboration with Travel Portland & PQ Monthly, dedicated to serving the LGBTQ communities of Oregon, Washington and the Bay Area.



[by Michael Barbieri
myvegasobsession.com]

Because Vegas Has No Last Call...



THE PEPPERMILL & HASH HOUSE A GO-GO

By now, most travelers know that Las Vegas is one of the foremost food destinations on the planet. Everywhere you turn, you can find celebrity chef-owned restaurants, cutting edge cuisine, and amazing offerings from around the world.

Much of this deliciousness can come at quite a price, however, and for the uninitiated, just looking at the menus can result in a terrible case of sticker shock!

But never fear! If you want to eat well in Vegas, but don't want to mortgage your homes to do so, I'm here to help! On my most recent culinary jaunt, I tried two eateries known for large portions and reasonable prices - The Peppermill and Hash House A Go-Go.

The Peppermill, a Vegas landmark of sorts, opened in 1972, and hasn't changed much since! The decor is classic 70's from the mirrored accents to the plush, blue modular seats, and the softly glowing red, pink and blue neon throughout the dining room and Fireside Lounge. Imitation Tiffany lamps bearing images of flamingoes hang over the booths, and

large artificial cherry trees with pink blossoms overhang the dining area. It's all fabulously cheese-tastic, and harkens back to a Vegas of long ago.

Along with its groovy look, The Peppermill is known for hearty dishes, enormous portions, and reasonable prices. Whether it's breakfast at any hour, or a full meal, there's a wide selection. In fact, out of approximately 108 items on their menu, many are priced under \$15.00 (Entrées run about \$16-\$28, steaks are in the \$28-\$31 range.)

I was shown to a booth where I checked out the menu - with so much from which to choose, it took a while to decide. I started with the Tomato Stack Caprese Style - an antipasto of tomato, fresh Mozzarella cheese, and basil, with olive oil and a balsamic reduction. The tomatoes were ripe

and flavorful, the Mozzarella had a firm texture and a light saltiness, while the basil added a fresh, herbaceous pop and the balsamic provided a bite of acidity. My entrée included a small Caesar Salad, which could've used anchovies, but was garlicky and tasty nonetheless. My main course, the Chicken and Red Pepper Pasta was mountainous! Two chicken breast cutlets stuffed with herbs and cream cheese, alongside a huge portion of penne pasta in a tomato based red pepper cream sauce. The chicken was perfectly cooked;



the melted cheese oozing out with every cut, and the pasta had a bright tomato flavor, with the red pepper flakes adding a nice kick. Delicious, but way too much - I had to pack three-quarters of it to go. I thought I could get away with dessert, and chose the Mud Pie, but when it arrived, I knew I was in trouble! Coffee ice cream in a chocolate cookie crust, topped with fudge, whipped topping and sprinkles; my portion looked like 1/4 of a pie! Though it was sinfully good, I had to quit after a few bites.

I had wanted to try Hash House A Go-Go for quite some time, and the following evening, I finally took the chance! I was staying at The Linq, and with one of their many locations just downstairs, it couldn't have been more convenient.

Originally opened in San Diego nearly 15 years ago, founders Johnny Rivera and Executive Chef Craig Beardslee, created a restaurant where food could be fun and the dining experience entertaining, yet professional. This is the home of Twisted Farm Food - comfort food like meatloaf, chicken pot pie, and 24 hour breakfast items like their signature Sage Fried Chicken Benedict!

I came late, with no reservation. No problem! Hash House is open 24 hours and there were no long lines often found during breakfast and lunch. I took a seat at the bar in the rustic-looking dining room, where the extremely friendly bartender took my order. First, the Kiwi Watermelon Cooler - a refreshing cocktail so big it's served in a pint glass, with a huge slice of fresh watermelon as a garnish! My appetizer was the Crispy Cornmeal Fried Tiger Prawns - three colossal prawns, lightly fried, crisp, and tasty, with a yummy chili mayo drizzle. Uniquely Hash House, they were presented on skewers stuck into another large piece of watermelon! Next, one of the Twisted Stuffed Burgers - mine with fresh mushrooms and Swiss cheese. This behemoth of a burger was juicy and delicious, with the earthy



mushrooms and nutty cheese standing up to the robust flavor of the beef. Oh! And it was so big, it came impaled by a large steak knife! I could only eat half! Once again, I thought I should try dessert, deciding to sample Andy's Famous Bread Pudding - chocolate/Snickers bread pudding, to be exact, made to order. Of course, it was gargantuan - warm and chocolatey, topped with a huge scoop of vanilla ice cream. As before, I was only able to manage 4 or 5 bites, and along with half my burger, packed the rest to go. I should've checked the menu...it said "Feeds Four!!!!"

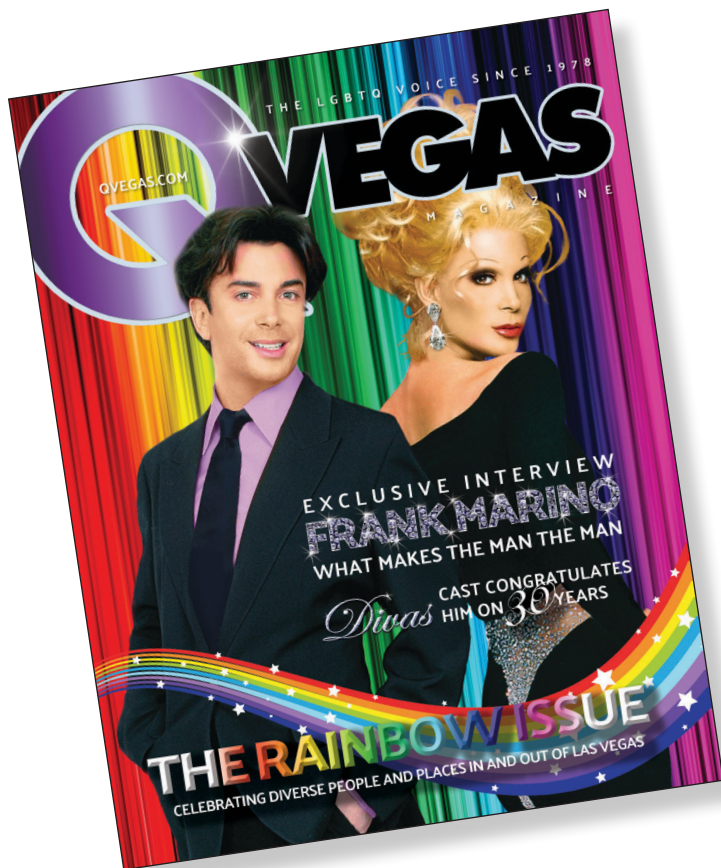
Clearly, we're not talking about haute cuisine here. This is real-people food, without the sticker shock prices found at high-end restaurants elsewhere on the Strip. So forget the foie-gras and say toodle-oo to truffles. Say hello to The Peppermill and Hash House A Go-Go!



*Celebrating 30 years of
Frank Marino*

WHAT MAKES THE MAN THE MAN

[by Garrett Pattiani and Russ White]



Divas

STARRING
FRANK MARINO
AND A CAST OF CELEBRITY FEMALE IMPERSONATORS

There has been someone in Las Vegas that has been literally changing the world—one audience at time. QVegas had the opportunity to talk to Frank Marino, the famous Las Vegas headliner, about his career spanning the past 30 years. What we discovered is that the man behind the woman is also worth celebrating.

Frank Marino has been interviewed thousands of times, and yet somehow this talk seemed different, more reflective, and very thought provoking.

Of course we talked about the hair, the makeup (ahem—surgeries), the dresses, the celebrities that are represented on stage, and how they have changed over the years. But one thing that hasn't changed is Frank. He uses laughter to get his message across. Because after all, laughter is the best medicine.

Frank opens up, saying that he lived in an ivory tower for so many years. The star of “La Cage” performed 3 shows a night for 25 years at The Riviera. Now his own show “Divas” opened to a newly remodeled showroom at the also remodeled

LINQ Hotel and Casino right on the Las Vegas strip. Frank's determination and the demand for equality has finally earned him the respect he deserves.

The younger LGBTQ generations often don't know the LGBT history like they should, and have no idea of the amount of effort previous generations had to endure. Equality comes at a cost, and Frank paid his dues and paved the way for many of us to have the rights we enjoy today.

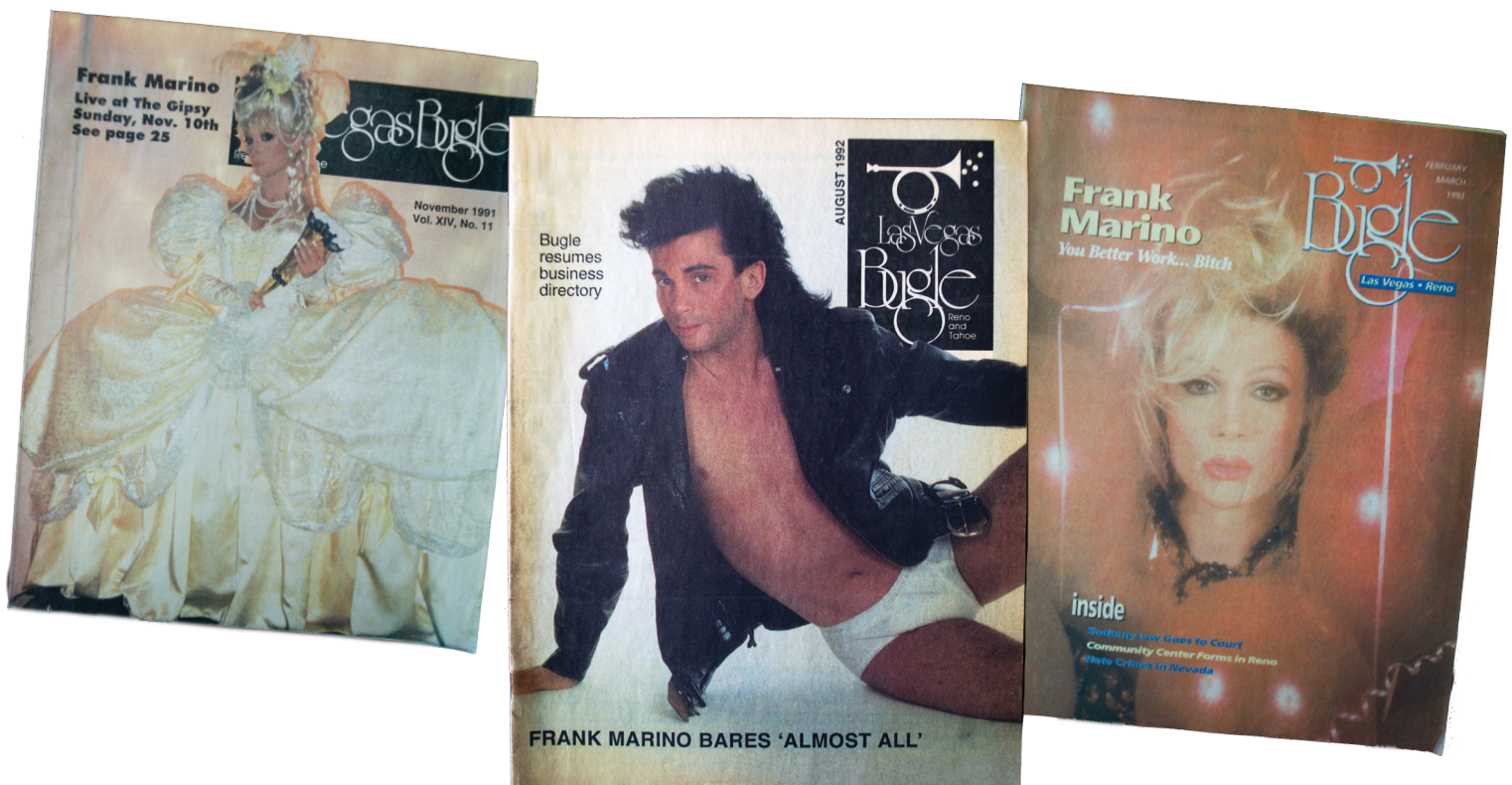
Just a few months ago, marriage equality became law of the land and same sex couples could finally enjoy rights, but it didn't happen over night. There are a long list of people who were imperative to educating the masses about things and people that they may not understand.

They say you can never really understand what someone's been through until you've walked a mile in their shoes. Here's Frank's account of 30 years walking the Las Vegas Strip in heels.



1985

It was the height of the AIDS epidemic. Frank's show has a high percentage of gay cast, and was around their friends who were gay. "I lost many, many, many friends," recalls Marino. Gay millennials cannot even imagine times like living through the AIDS epidemic.





1995

Ten years later, HRC and other LGBT organizations started pushing for equality. Domestic partnerships emerged as the community started having more publicly recognized relationships. “The best thing that ever happened to us is that Liza Minnelli put it out there that she had been marrying gay guys for years,” Frank quipped.





Who Wore It Better?



Frank Marino was surprised during his performance at The LINQ Resort & Casino with a marriage proposal from his longtime partner and associate producer Alex Schechter who surprised Marino by popping the question during his stage show, while the cast of Divas cheered on in support.



Even today, Frank sometimes feels like he still faces forms of discrimination. He says that he's often the last to be invited to events. What the people at these events don't see is the behind the scenes conversations and struggles he had in order to get in. The public sees his picture on the red carpet and the same holds true for his show business. The public loves it, but it's sometimes looked at as risky to have someone like him around from the corporate perspective.

He uses the example of Sammy Davis, Jr. and how he had to enter the casinos through a separate, often back entrance, while Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin entered through the front, until one day, Sinatra said "either Sammy comes in the front with us, or we aren't doing the show".

So much has changed, but it takes bold support from allies like that. "It's people doing that—taking a stance—that makes things different," said Frank.

The ones that take the risk are now reaping the reward, because Frank Marino is the longest running headliner on the strip with nearly sold out audiences nightly! It would be no surprise if some of those same companies that gave

Frank such creative ways to say that the show "isn't the right fit" for their properties, would now be reconsidering. We chuckle as we think about the large LED screen bearing his cast of impersonators over 100 feet high on the Las Vegas Strip, adjacent to major properties and nightclubs.

Originally Frank wanted to be a doctor (the irony is not lost on his plastic surgeon) and then he realized "I wanted to do that for the financial gain, but if you are wanting to be in that field you have to want to be a healer." When he fell into female impersonation, which led into comedy... "If I can make you laugh if someone isn't feeling good... we are all better off." Laughter really is the best medicine.

Frank recalled an event at Mandalay Bay just

after 9/11. Their was a tribute show and everyone besides him and Carrot Top did somber, sad numbers... while they told dirty jokes and brought up the audience.

"If you can't laugh at yourself, how are you going to make things light and easy going for other people?"

Frank is always so scared at new events, but every time they laugh!

"I always colored outside the box and I think that's why I got noticed. And I didn't do it be controversial, I just did it to be me." A powerful message from someone who has spent most of his career being someone else.

2005

Prop 8 was heading into the news. "I'm in a 12 year relationship and I know when people are fighting for equal rights it's not just about getting married... it's all the rights and access to things like insurance, etc. I was lucky enough that financially



I didn't have to worry about insurance. I was sheltered from the struggles somewhat and had to have people like you guys educate me on that. I have to be honest and say that it wasn't until later on until I knew... I was in the dark. Even though it was all around me, I didn't get it."

"Don't Ask Don't Tell" was also in the headlines. "Look I am happy to let gays in the Military—we might not win any more wars, but let's face it, the place would look fabulous!"

2015

Marriage Equality headlines were quickly displaced by Caitlyn headlines when Olympic Gold Medalist Bruce Jenner announced that he would become Caitlyn.

Frank Identifies as a celebrity female impersonator, which is a sub category of Drag Queen. His schtick is impersonating Joan Rivers, but also a glamorous version of himself. But at the end of the day he goes home as Frank in male form. He uses humor just like Joan, breaking boundaries through laughter.

"I've been watching the show and I see similarities in our stories. I'm noticing how Caitlyn is striving to understand the struggles that other transgender people are going through on a daily basis. And until I watched that, I also realized that I didn't understand."

Frank takes a moment to stop the interview to say "By the way I have never done this kind of interview. It's such a deeper conversation this time around and I'm loving it."

"Usually people that I idolize are those that reached that comfortability at an earlier age in life. Sadly, people don't often reach a comfort like that until a later age (If it comes at all) ... I hope that those that achieve it early in life realize how lucky they are because they have something very special."





In addition to Frank, there is one number in the show that spans the 30 year history. It's magical. The song is "What Makes a Man a Man" where the audience watches as one of the impersonators comes on stage and literally transforms into a man right in front of their eyes. The lyrics are so powerful that it really leaves us asking exactly that... Is the social norms that we believe to be true—really true, and if so... why? There is nothing "normal" about wearing clothes at all or women wearing make-up... so why is it any less normal for a man to wear make-up and gowns. Frank's dedication to equality finally needs to be recognized with utmost respect (along with all the trailblazers and activists) that have given younger generations the opportunities we have.

Frank found the ability to recognize his talents (and weaknesses) to become secure with his feminine side, impersonate a woman and be proud. It's all of these things that make Frank The Man AND Woman the inspiring PERSON we have all grown to respect and love. It is important to remember that It's not just in him, it's in everyone - So find out your talents and use them to inspire the world around you —TODAY.

The message of Caitlyn's show is a message that Frank has been doing for thirty years. Don't live in fear. Frank has been so comfortable in his own skin that he took back that power and it allowed people in the audience to love him. Frank Marino

is living proof that changing the world around you happens at the same rate and degree in which you become comfortable in your own skin.

The Diva's showroom has undergone a beautiful renovation in the LINQ hotel just as Frank celebrates his 30 year anniversary as the longest headliner in Vegas.



Divas Las Vegas features an all-male cast. Most of them dress up as women. Frank's cast of dancers are also visually stunning.



KENNETH REX

as Pink!



RYAN ZINK

as Reba McEntire



It's such an honor to celebrate a Happy 30th Anniversary in ShowBiz with Frank Marino. 25 of those years I spent performing with Frank on the Strip. What an incredible journey it's been to perform with such an iconic Las Vegas figure. Hats off to Frank Marino. Happy 30th Anniversary!

LARRY EDWARDS

as Tina Turner and Beyonce



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*D*ivas has been not only my career but also my creative outlet and my extended family. We spend more time together with each other than we do with our own families and we have a special bond in a unique show that only exists here. Frank selected us to represent his dream of having the greatest drag show in the world in the entertainment capitol of the world. We love what we do and it doesn't feel like work. Every night we get to share our passion and energy with a diverse audience from around the world. It just doesn't get any better than this. Frank took a chance on me as a young unknown impersonator and I will be forever thankful for the opportunity and the support for all these years. Congratulations Frank on 30 Wonderful Years and Cheers to many more!



ANDREW RYAN

as Katy Perry and Shania Twain

A full-body photograph of Ricky Martin. He is wearing a grey V-neck t-shirt and dark pants. He has a black leather jacket slung over his right shoulder and is holding it with his right hand. He has tattoos on his arms and chest. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

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I first met Frank Marino in 1995 during the 10 year anniversary celebration of LaCage. As a young (well younger) up and coming, and wide eyed female impersonator, I was mesmerized when he walked into the main room of Angles. Dressed in typical Frank Marino style—which included a gorgeous silver beaded sports coat, you could not help but take notice. I said to myself “I will work with him one day.” That day came in March of 2004 when I was asked to join the LaCage cast as Madonna and Dolly Parton. I had finally made it! This is what I had worked so hard for, for so many years. It was always my dream to be a part of that show. I was on cloud nine. Then in 2009 my dream was shattered when LaCage closed. Devastated, I packed my things, waved goodbye, and drove home not knowing what I was going to do next. Well, it didn’t take long before Frank called me and told me about his new show Divas Las Vegas and asked me to join. Without hesitation I said yes! We once again were working on the Las Vegas Strip and doing what we loved most—entertaining! I haven’t looked back. I’ve known Frank Marino for 20 years and we are about to celebrate his 30 year anniversary as “the longest running headliner in Las Vegas.” How do you get that title and do it in the best designer drag outfits the world has to offer? Hard work, determination, and a lot of lip gloss—that’s how! In this business, you can’t make it with out all three. So to Frank I say, “Thank you.” Thank you for introducing me to Vegas in true Marino style. Thank you for your continued commitment to the art of celebrity female impersonation. And thank you for allowing me to continue to live my dream. By the way, do you still have that jacket? :)

KENNETH BLAKE

as Madonna and Dolly Parton

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The chance to impersonate Janet Jackson on the Las Vegas strip was a dream come true. So when strip icon and headliner Frank Marino said he wanted me in his show 5 years ago, it was unbelievable. Many entertainers would love to be in my shoes. I was just flabbergasted when offered the chance. I can truly say years later that what I enjoy the most about performing in his show is the audience and their reaction to everything we present. It's not only humbling, but legendary. 30 years is something to be proud of and celebrate. Thank you Frank for being an icon and a role model.

MARTIN COOPER

as Janet Jackson and Rihanna



I remember watching Frank Marino and the cast of La Cage on talk shows like Maury, Sally Jesse Raphael, and Phil Donahue back in the 80's and 90's. I always thought "Wow, I would love to do that!" Fast forward 30 years, and here I am! Performing with Frank Marino as Cher and Celine Dion on the Las Vegas Strip! I worked with Frank in "An Evening at La Cage" at the Riviera Hotel and Casino for nearly 10 years, and I have been with Divas since it opened in 2009. Earlier in 2009, the show La Cage closed without notice to the cast. Just like that, we were out of a job. For the next several months, Frank and his partner Alex worked night and day to find us a new venue, which they did, at the hottest spot in Las Vegas – The Linq! I have been working with Frank for over 16 years now, and I could not imagine a having job that is more fun. I mean, my job description is: "CHER AND CELINE DION." I am truly living my dream. Working for Frank Marino allows me to have a creative outlet while exploring my "feminine side." I am thankful to have this magnificent venue which allows me to do what I love to do – perform. Congratulations to Frank Marino for a fabulous 30 years and thank you for all you have done for me!



STEVEN WAYNE

as Cher and Celine Dion



I've been performing as Britney Spears on The Las Vegas Strip since I was only 20 years old. I remember seeing Frank Marino's face all over the casino the day I auditioned. It was easy to idolize his career before we even met. One of my favorite memories with Frank was trying on his signature blonde updo and heavy crystal earrings. As we looked in the mirror together, he said "You're looking at your future". I recently had the honor to pay tribute to Frank during his iconic roast where I impersonated him as I "sang" and danced on stage. It was my chance to impress him and show him how much he truly means to me. Frank continues to make me proud to be a Diva in every sense of the word. From his hilarious wit, attention to detail and evolving business sense, Frank has kept my dream alive of being a Las Vegas Showgirl. Cheers Mr. Frank Marino and congratulations on 30 years of applause, laughs and standing ovations. I'm thrilled to be a part of your story and a piece of your legacy. Just think, you only have 30 years left to match Joan Rivers' career. "Now get to Work Bitch!"



DERRICK BARRY

as Britney Spears and Lady Gaga



CHRIS WOODS

as Diana Ross and Whitney Houston

JOSEPH SANTELLANA

as Bette Midler and Shirley Bassey



*A*fter working in Kenny Kerr's Boylesque for 3 years then having the opportunity to work for the amazing Debbie Reynolds, I knew this was why I left my small home town. I worked with Debbie for 10 years, and she taught me everything I really know today. After living out of a suitcase, I got a call from Frank Marino to become "Liza." The show has been an evolution, constantly changing, and only getting better and better as time goes on. It's no surprise why Frank has been in showbiz for 30 years, and probably will for another 30! Frank is my friend first, then my boss. Thank you Frank Marino for rescuing me when I needed to be rescued. For that I will always love you my friend. Congratulations!

SAMMY GONZALES

as Liza Minnelli and Mariah Carey

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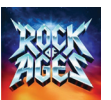


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A Primer on the SUNSHINE STATE for the LGBT Visitor

[by Mike Halterman, Editor, Hotspots Magazine]

Ah, Florida...it's sunny year-round, the weather is beautiful, there's hundreds of miles of gorgeous, sandy beaches, and it's home to a large and thriving LGBT community. Did you know that out of the 19 million people who live in Florida, nearly a million identify as LGBT?

Then, on top of that, four million LGBT people vacation here every year. There's so much in the Sunshine State that will appeal to the LGBT traveler. Let me tell you about the state's biggest LGBT events and our hot bar and club scene.

SOUTH FLORIDA

South Florida has perhaps the biggest gay scene in all of Florida. Much of the action is centered around Miami Beach as well as Fort Lauderdale and Wilton Manors. Wilton Manors in particular has one of the highest percentages of LGBT people out of all the cities in the United States.

Miami Beach is one of the most glamorous parts of Florida, and the venues put on elaborate events to match. There are two nightclubs that you just can't miss: Twist and Score. The Palace offers great food and equally fabulous drag shows; you must stop by for their Sunday brunch. In Miami proper, one of the sexiest nightclubs is Club Bailo. The Floppy Rooster touts itself as having Miami's "only gay all-nude male revue." Club Aqua Miami is a well-known gay sauna.

If your trip takes you to Broward County, you'll find that many of the LGBT bars and nightclubs there are located along Wilton Drive in Wilton Manors. If you're looking for a larger-than-life nightclub experience, visit Hunters Nightclub or The Manor. GYM

Sportsbar is the newest sports bar in South Florida. Rumors and Village Pub are local favorite watering holes, where you can have a drink and make new friends. If you're looking for great food with your drinks, try Georgie's

Alibi/Monkey Bar and Rosie's Bar and Grill. (Rumors also has a restaurant, Hobo Grill.) Just off Wilton Drive there's a country/western bar, Scandals Saloon.

In Fort Lauderdale proper the options are limitless. If you want to grab a bite to eat and see a drag show, go to Lips. Ramrod is a popular spot for the leather community. Boardwalk Bar employs over 40 male dancers, and you can see all 40 of them on the weekends! If you want to see



and be seen, go to Le Boy. There are also two gay saunas in the area: The Club Fort Lauderdale and The Clubhouse II.

Palm Beach County's scene is more spread out than in Broward or Miami-Dade. If you're in West Palm Beach, drop by a few of these bars: Fort Dix, Roosters, and Camelot. If you like karaoke, you'll love Shout! Karaoke. In south Palm Beach County, The Mad Hatter is open seven days a week, and Blue Front BBQ Bar & Grill currently operates an LGBT night on Wednesdays; both are in Lake Worth.



Sometimes overlooked, Key West, three hours away from Miami by car, has perhaps one of the most laid-back of any gay

vibes scene in Florida. Nearly all the LGBT bars and clubs are situated on Duval Street. If you're strolling down Duval Street, you'll encounter Aqua Nightclub, Bourbon Street Pub and 801 Bourbon, Saloon One, and La Te Da.

CENTRAL FLORIDA

There are three large LGBT communities in Central Florida: one in Orlando, one in Tampa and one in St. Petersburg. There are also smaller communities in areas like Sarasota, an hour south of Tampa; Lakeland, between Tampa and Orlando; and in Brevard and Volusia Counties on the Atlantic coast.

Many of Tampa's nightclubs are situated in an area close to downtown called Ybor City. The LGBT section spans 7th Avenue from Centro Ybor to 14th Street. Here you can find Hamburger Mary's Tampa, which serves dinner as well as fierce drag (there is also



a Hamburger Mary's in Clearwater); Bradley's on 7th, a laid-back bar with a happening dance floor; and Southern Nights Tampa, a fusion of neighborhood bar and sexy ultra-lounge.

In the EDGE District of St. Petersburg, you can find Epsilon, which features a large wrap-around

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Early March - Winter Party, a circuit party and fundraiser for the National LGBTQ Task Force, Miami Beach

Late March - Palm Beach Pride in Lake Worth; Florida AIDS Walk and Music Festival in Fort Lauderdale; Tampa Pride; Orlando AIDS Walk

Early April - Miami Beach Gay Pride

Third Weekend in April - Tallahassee Pridefest

Late April - AIDS Walk Miami

Early June - Gay Days and One Magical Weekend, both in Orlando

Second Weekend in June - Key West Pride

Third Weekend in June - Wilton Manors Stonewall Parade and Festival; Pensacola Pride

Last Weekend in June - St. Pete Pride, St. Petersburg; Panama City Pride

Last Weekend in September - Space Coast Pride, Melbourne

First Weekend in October - Celebrate Orgullo Hispanic LGBT Pride Festival, Miami Beach; River City Pride in Jacksonville

Second Weekend in October - Orlando Pride; Pride Fort Lauderdale

Third Weekend in October - Volusia Pride, New Smyrna Beach; Gainesville Pride

Halloween - Wicked Manors, Wilton Manors

November - Gay Days Fort Lauderdale

Last Weekend in November - White Party, a circuit party fundraiser for Care Resource, Miami Beach

Second Week in December - AIDS Walk Tampa Bay



bar and two smaller bar areas (one of which serves customers outside). If you're looking for a place to stay, the Flamingo Resort not only offers hotel rooms, but also six different bars and daily entertainment.

A trip to Orlando for the LGBT traveler would be incomplete without a stop at Parliament House Resort. It operates as a hotel and a large nightclub complex, with five different bars and a theater for live entertainment. Other venues are scattered throughout the city: there's Hamburger Mary's Orlando at Church Street Station; Stonewall Bar Orlando, also on Church Street, about half a mile down the road; Southern Nights Orlando, a popular nightclub with a slick ambience and a legendary drag theater, located on Bumby Avenue; SAVOY Orlando, an expansive neighborhood bar with friendly staff, near Lake Ivanhoe; and two bars that cater to a local crowd, Hank's and BarCodes, both on Edgewater Avenue. The Club Orlando is a gay sauna that recently underwent an extensive year-long renovation.



NORTHEAST FLORIDA

The vast majority of LGBT-friendly venues in Northeast Florida are located in Jacksonville, Florida's largest city. Hamburger Mary's Jacksonville is very popular with the community; Miss Florida F.I. 2014, Brittany Moore, is the show director there. There is also a sister location in Daytona Beach. Metro is the largest venue in Jacksonville, consisting of seven different bars. Stop by these bars as well: Park Place, InCahoots, Norm's Alibi and The Boot Rack Saloon. Bo's Coral Reef is the only gay bar on Jacksonville Beach and it packs out every weekend.

FLORIDA PANHANDLE

The Florida Panhandle is perhaps the most conservative part of the state but it is still home to a sizable LGBT community. While there are no gay bars in Tallahassee, there are gay nights at normally straight venues. Panama City is home to two gay bars:



the Fiesta
La Royale
and Splash
Bar Florida.

Pensacola, the westernmost city in Florida, is home to three: the nightclub Emerald City; The Cabaret, low-key and upscale; and The Roundup, geared toward the leather set.

This is just a sampling of venues in the LGBT scene in Florida. If you'd like to read more about Florida, see Hotspots' "Discover Gay Florida" series at hotspots.lgbt. Also, check out our comprehensive business directory, featuring nearly 2,000 LGBT-owned and friendly businesses from all over Florida.



B R I H O N Y D A W S O N

INSIDE LADYHOOD

[by Alexandra Gray]

Photo: Shannon Morris

Since Brihony Dawson of LadyHood hit the US, women all over the country have become bona fide Bisexuals. The Australian vocalist is traveling between LA and Vegas to write and produce music, while spreading a message of feminism, equal love and LGBT community empowerment.

So why Vegas?

'I love Vegas! It's an entertainment mecca. There's an amazing underground rock scene here and the musicians are incredibly talented. Americans are so open and willing to help you out. Most people have got to where they are through help from other people and they're generous about paying it forward. I love that.'

There's no doubt about the caliber of music Dawson is producing, but what really sets her apart from other rock chicks is her androgenic style. Pushing the boundaries of gender stereotyping, Dawson has a message to send and

she's not messing around with it.

'I don't want people who are exploring who they are to feel alone or experience shame. I think of myself as gender fluid and it's taken me a long time to be okay with that. There are a lot of people who are still struggling to accept themselves because they think they have to be one way or another. You see the extremes in the media like Caitlyn Jenner or Andrej Pejic, who, of course I fully support, but what about the people in the middle who can't really relate to that kind of role model?

What about the people who aren't transgender, but might identify as gender queer, bi-gender or gender fluid? These people still struggle to be heard. I want to give them support.'

Listening to LadyHood's new EP is like sleeping with your ex. We left pop rock music in the 80's didn't we? Then why does it feel so damn good to let those lusty guitar licks wash over you again? Long-limbed, blonde rock goddess Dawson commands her all girl band in the femme fueled 80's fantasy that is Finger on the Pulse. The EP is made up of five gutsy, original tracks, reminiscent of those rock hymns that were the sound track to your coming of age, but with a modern pop



Photo: Gillian Perry Photo



Photo: Kayzar Bhatti/Unlila

edge. It's Queen meets Alannis Morissette. It's the love child of Rita Ora and Joe Elliot. It's fucking awesome music that sticks in your mind and dances on the tip of your tongue. Standouts are the first release single, *Naked*, a sexy power ballad with a deeper meaning, and *Bad Girl*, a surprisingly grisly, pumped up track, full of anticipation. Dawson's lyrics motivate and inspire as she propels through a captivating arrangement in the catchy, classic anthem *Stand and Deliver*, while the meaty chords of the ultimate love song *Do It All Again* will surely have you pulling out your air guitar to play along. Finally *Playing With*

Fire seduces with rock roots and a pop tune. Altogether, sublime.

Dawson is particularly keen to speak about the imminent release of the music video for *Naked* and the story behind it.

"The clip shows a couple in the early stages of their relationship. They don't know each other very well yet. One of them is hiding both physical and emotional parts of herself from the other. She strips back the layers and becomes more emotionally naked and real as the clip goes on. Ultimately she realizes that she didn't have anything to hide as her partner fully accepts her.

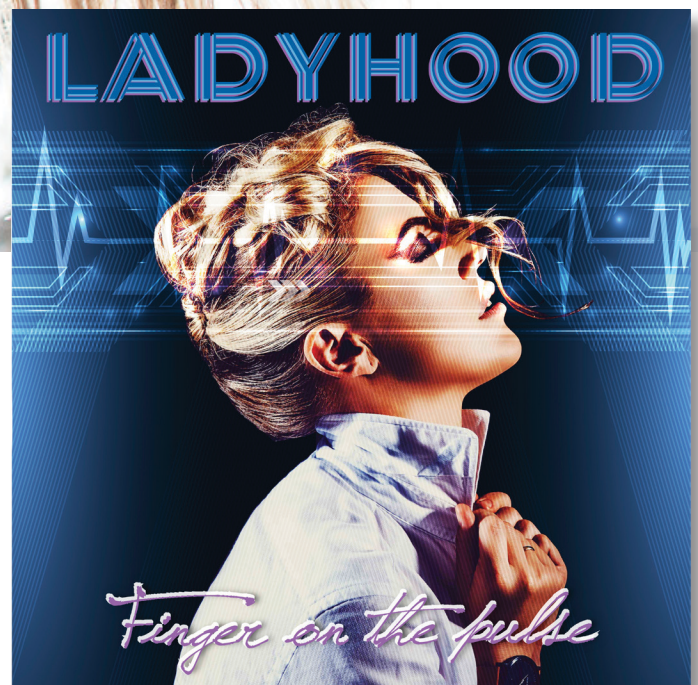


'I love Vegas! It's an entertainment mecca.

There's an amazing underground rock scene here and the musicians are incredibly talented.

The other character portrays a woman totally owning her own sexuality and sexual desires without shame. These are two things I really wanted to show, shamelessness and acceptance'.

So it seems the pulse isn't the only thing Dawson has her finger on. Poised to smash the international music scene, Ladyhood is the toughest, roughest diamond in rock. Brihony sweats charisma and sex appeal and more than makes up for the lack of genuine rock chicks on the world music stage in recent times. Keep a look out for LadyHood and the new music video Naked, coming out soon!



LadyHood's debut EP *Finger on the Pulse* is available on iTunes or through their website www.ladyhoodband.com

Photo: Gillian Perry Photo





With the sequel to blockbuster film Magic Mike filling hearts and trousers in Summer 2015 – it’s the perfect time to pull back the curtain and explore the lives of the real life magic men who pay the bills by going the full Monty. Border2Border Entertainment launches the 5-part miniseries “I’m a Stripper” today on multiple digital platforms.

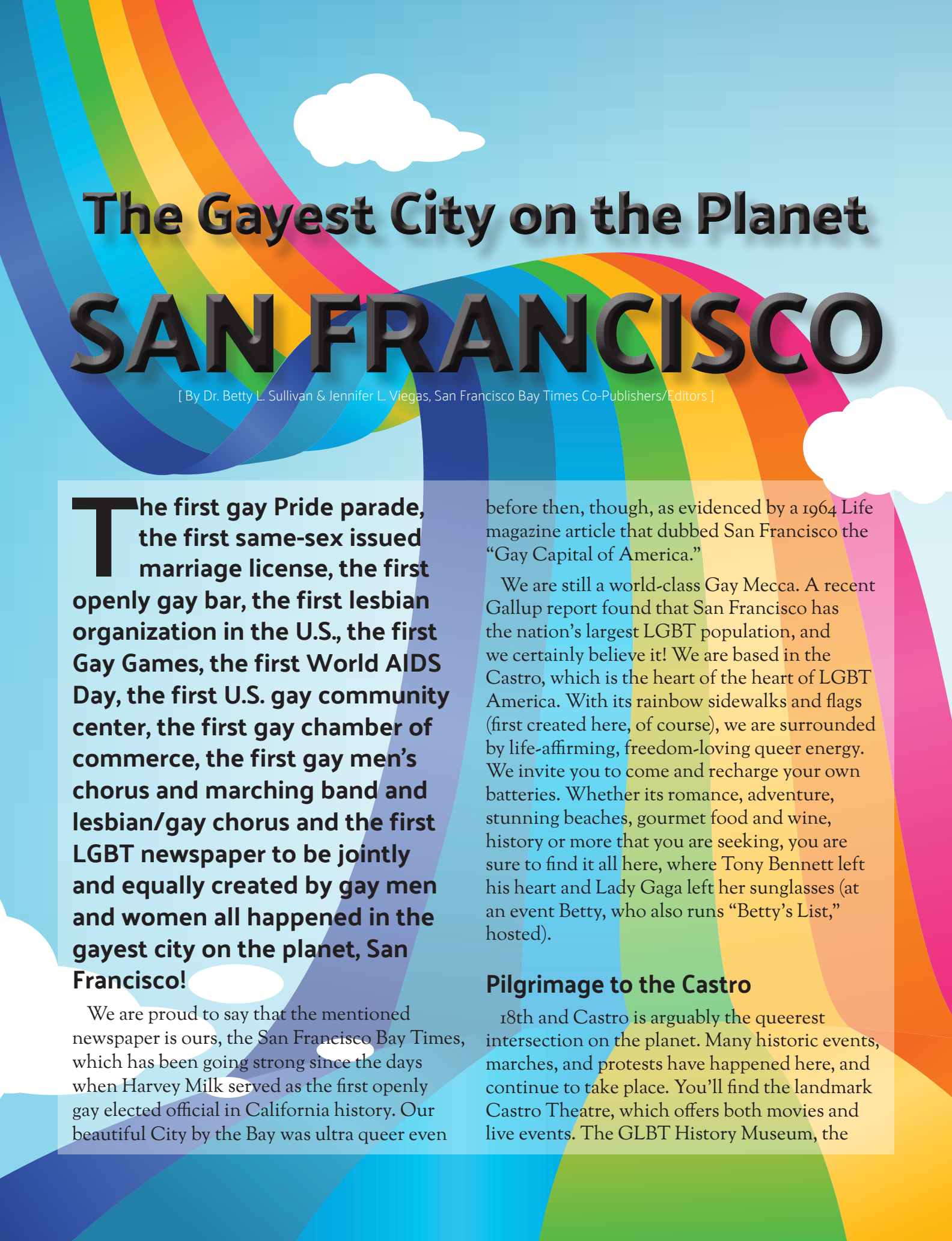
“With the ratings success of our documentary film, I’m a Stripper, the obvious next step was to expand upon the brand,” said the series’ director, Charlie David. “Building upon the insight gained into this taboo industry in episode 1, successive episodes in the series delve into the fascinating niches existing within it such as burlesque,

webcam modeling, super troupes, gender drag, and Go-Go guys.”

“I’m a Stripper” is produced by Charlie David and Nico Stagias for Border2Border Entertainment. The series is distributed by Cineflix Rights internationally. Syndicado is handling digital sales.

“After our collaboration and success internationally on the digital launch of I’m a Stripper, we were delighted to expand on the initial success with Border2Border Entertainment’s release of 5 new episodes in the season.” said Greg Rubidge, founder of Syndicado, the digital VOD aggregator. “We’ve worked with Charlie David for a few years now and he continues to capture and showcase the more scintillating aspects around the male performance entertainment industry, for both broadcasters and the major VOD outlets.”

The series launched worldwide on Vimeo, Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, Google Play, Xbox and DotStudioz.



The Gayest City on the Planet

SAN FRANCISCO

[By Dr. Betty L. Sullivan & Jennifer L. Viegas, San Francisco Bay Times Co-Publishers/Editors]

The first gay Pride parade, the first same-sex issued marriage license, the first openly gay bar, the first lesbian organization in the U.S., the first Gay Games, the first World AIDS Day, the first U.S. gay community center, the first gay chamber of commerce, the first gay men's chorus and marching band and lesbian/gay chorus and the first LGBT newspaper to be jointly and equally created by gay men and women all happened in the gayest city on the planet, San Francisco!

We are proud to say that the mentioned newspaper is ours, the San Francisco Bay Times, which has been going strong since the days when Harvey Milk served as the first openly gay elected official in California history. Our beautiful City by the Bay was ultra queer even

before then, though, as evidenced by a 1964 Life magazine article that dubbed San Francisco the "Gay Capital of America."

We are still a world-class Gay Mecca. A recent Gallup report found that San Francisco has the nation's largest LGBT population, and we certainly believe it! We are based in the Castro, which is the heart of the heart of LGBT America. With its rainbow sidewalks and flags (first created here, of course), we are surrounded by life-affirming, freedom-loving queer energy. We invite you to come and recharge your own batteries. Whether its romance, adventure, stunning beaches, gourmet food and wine, history or more that you are seeking, you are sure to find it all here, where Tony Bennett left his heart and Lady Gaga left her sunglasses (at an event Betty, who also runs "Betty's List," hosted).

Pilgrimage to the Castro

18th and Castro is arguably the queerest intersection on the planet. Many historic events, marches, and protests have happened here, and continue to take place. You'll find the landmark Castro Theatre, which offers both movies and live events. The GLBT History Museum, the

first full-scale stand-alone museum of LGBT history in the U.S., is also worth a visit.

Have a drink at Harvey's, which was formerly the Elephant Walk, where the White Night Riots began. Twin Peaks Tavern, at the intersection of Market and Castro streets, is believed to have been the first gay bar with open plate glass windows where patrons could look out and passersby could look in. Some of our bravest, outest predecessors visited Twin Peaks during a time when being gay was still ostracized.

From Harvey Milk Plaza, across the street from Twin Peaks, you'll see another one of our faves, Orphan Andy's, which dishes out burgers, malts and other classic fare 24/7. Café Flore is another great eatery plus bar. Its shaded tables spill out onto the often-sunny sidewalk, perfect for people watching. People watching is also easy at the Lookout, with its balcony overlooking Market and Noe Streets.

The queerest hardware store in the world has to be Cliff's, which sells everything from bolts to boas. If you can't find what you want there, it probably wasn't worth having in the first place. Cliff's was established decades ago with the idea in mind to have a bit of everything and anything needed by a gay man setting up his home in the Castro. It's a visual feast now for both LGBT men and women.

The restaurant Catch on Market Street serves delicious meals, and is a historic spot too. This address was the original home of the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

More About Gay Bars

There are over 50 in San Francisco, depending on your definition, and Yelp is the best place to look for a comprehensive status check. Some have been open for decades and some are almost brand new.

In addition to those already mentioned, we recommend Martuni's for a cocktail and its classic piano bar experience. Other bars in the Castro and beyond are famous for something, such as drag, leather, boy's night, ladies night, go go's



© 1978 Rink Foto

in cages, Throwback Thursdays, transgender waiters who dance on the bar, a view of the street below, or you name it. We are so blessed with gay bars that you'll need several years to find them all. What you think of them depends on your interests.

Drag is a major theme in San Francisco and your first stop should be the Sunday's a Drag brunch, hosted by Donna Sachet, at the Starlight Ballroom in the Sir Francis Drake Hotel at Union Square. Yes, it's every Sunday and we might be there.

Are You a Foodie?

Two restaurants in the Castro continually receive high marks: Frances, where Chef Melissa Perello's daily changing menu is making the Top 100 List among restaurants around the world, and Poesia, a cozy, romantic and highly rated Italian restaurant where Oprah Winfrey decided



Photo Copyright Phyllis Costa.

to dine on a recent trip to SF. On the edge of the Castro, directly across from the SF LGBT Community Center, you'll find the gay-owned Peruvian restaurant Destino and its connected Latin Lounge Pisco. Check out the casual menu offerings at the lesbian-owned Park Café group's Dolores Park Café and Duboce Park Café, and try the full menu offerings at Presita Park Café.

Have a Car?

Be sure to drive up to the top of Twin Peaks, the two big hills just above the Castro, where the big tower is that everybody loves, or hates. Up there is a lookout point that has an almost 360 degree view of the city, across the Bay and out to the Golden Gate and beyond.

Accommodations

The Parker Guest House and the Inn on Castro are well rated. Many visitors now use Airbnb, as there are several options in the Castro and

surrounding areas. If you're a purist, the historic Hotel Whitcomb, located in the Civic Center, has the gayest cred, since it serves as a home base for many LGBT events and occasions.

Joie de Vivre is a gay-owned hotel group with a large choice of properties with styles ranging from luxurious to funky to economy. Taj Campton Hotel at Union Square and its Michelin starred restaurant got huge raves from a famous lesbian singer who recently stayed there after an event where she was our special guest.

In the not specifically "gay" category, the top of our list includes the venerable Fairmont and Mark Hopkins hotels located in the swank Nob Hill neighborhood. You can ride up to them on one of San Francisco's cable cars. At the Fairmont, you have to check out the hotel's famous Tonga Room, where bands perform on a stage in the middle of a makeshift lagoon! The Top of the Mark is a romantic stop, with spectacular views and cocktails.

Performing Arts

Consider building your trip around a San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus performance. They are that good. The Christmas Eve shows at the Castro Theatre are particularly queer, memorable and have literally saved lives, as they provide a place for chosen family. Other groups to watch out for are the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band, Theatre Rhinoceros, A.C.T. (American Conservatory Theater) and variety show productions by REAF (Richmond-Ermet Aid Foundation).

Gala Benefits & Key Events

Whenever you arrive in San Francisco, it is likely that some gala benefit will be coming up and probably happening while you are here. Many are excellent and provide opportunities to party with a cause. Take a look at key groups, such as Horizons Foundations, Human Rights Campaign San Francisco, Openhouse, Project Open Hand, Positive Resources, San Francisco LGBT Community Center, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, AIDS Memorial Grove and the Imperial Court of San Francisco. The Golden Gate Business association offers a variety of business networking events in several formats.

Special Interest

Check out the lists of groups on the website OurTownSF.org with the following categories: African American, Asian, Athletic, Bears,



Photo Copyright Chloe Jackman Photography



Four guys on Castro Street searching for a fifth, in 1984.

Photo: © Rink

Bisexual, Business, Latino, Leather, Middle Eastern, Native American, Senior, Service, Transgender, Women and Youth. The clientele of some gay bars is specific to these categories. The Athletic or Sports category, for example, includes the following: SF Softball League, SF Gay Basketball Association, SF Fog Rugby Football Association, G/L Tennis Association of SF, Cheer SF, SF Tsunami Swim Team and more. Hi Tops is a popular sports bar in the Castro, and both the San Francisco Giants and Oakland Athletics host LGBT Night Out games each year.

Calendar Events

Pride Month in June features a busy schedule of both public and private activities leading up to Pride Weekend at the month's end. The Frameline Film Festival attracts thousands of film enthusiasts. During Pride Weekend, Pink Saturday begins with the installation ceremony of the Pink Triangle atop Twin Peaks, followed by the annual Pride Brunch, Dyke March Festival and March, and Pink Party in the Castro. Plus, the Pride Festival area at Civic Center is also open throughout the day. On Pride Sunday, special events and after parties surround the actual Pride Parade, which itself can go on for five and more hours. If you've never experienced Pride in San Francisco, then you've never experienced Pride.

Also consider the Academy of Friends Oscar Night (February), National Center for Lesbian Rights Anniversary Gala (May), Folsom Street Fair (September), Castro Street Fair and Halloween (October) and Holiday Season concerts of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and Lesbian & Gay Freedom Band (Dance Along Nutcracker).

Bucket List

San Francisco's long list of options requires you to select what you truly want to do, and here are some additional possibilities. Take the obligatory walk across the Golden Gate Bridge—or at least half way. Riding across in a car is not the same. Stop by Fort Point just below the Bridge, if you want to see a film about the building of the Bridge



Children's Halloween Parade with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence on Castro Street in 2006 (Photo by Rink)

and check out the Civil War fort built to protect San Francisco from invading Confederates in the 1860s.

Have kids? The Walk Disney Family Museum in The Presidio is a must. Visit Nob Hill, even if you aren't staying there, and see the indoor and outdoor labyrinths at majestic Grace Cathedral.

See a Beach Blanket Babylon performance, and take a stroll around North Beach. For breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean, drive or bike to Land's End, where you will find The Cliff House. There you can enjoy a fine dinner at Sutro's or a more casual, but equally delish, meal at The Bistro located in the same historic structure overlooking Ocean Beach. On your way back, meander through Golden Gate Park, and, if you are an art fan, stop by the world class de Young Museum, the nearby Japanese Tea Gardens, Botanical Gardens, the Conservatory of Flowers or any of the many other beautiful points of interest within the park.

The Legion of Honor, where Kim Novak was once mesmerized in the Hitchcock classic "Vertigo," is another highly recommended destination. The views of the Pacific from there are stellar.

And why just look at the Bay and Ocean when you can ride on them? From ferries to privately rented yachts, there are many options to choose from, some offering tour commentary and some providing special options including dinner, live baseball in McCovey Cove, Alcatraz tours and



Photo: © Rink

Former Empress Marlena and Donna Sachet at Empress I Jose Saria's High Tea at the Twin Peak

more. A favorite of ours, if you venture across the Bay Bridge to Oakland, at Jack London Square is FDR's "Floating White House," the USS Potomac.

Speaking of Oakland, it has more lesbians per capita than any other U.S. city. Noe Street in San Francisco is also an elegant destination for lesbians and other members of the LGBT community. And then there's Napa Valley for fine wines and Marin County, with its Spectrum LGBT Center and... Well, we could go on, but you just have to come to the San Francisco Bay Area to experience all of these things and more. For the latest information about local events, please pick up a copy of the San Francisco Bay Times and find us online at sfbaytimes.com and SF Bay Times on Facebook.

Dr. Betty L. Sullivan and Jennifer Viegas can be reached at the San Francisco Bay Times by e-mail: Publisher@sfbaytimes.com or call: 415-503-1375.



Photo: © Rink

Activists dancing on a truck at the 1977 Gay Parade with a sign that became buttons, and the published photograph raised hopes during the worst of the AIDS pandemic.

Community Counseling Center's
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The Center Brings DIFFA's Popular Picnic by Design Event to Las Vegas at Symphony Park Sept. 12

[Cory Burgess]

Basket by Tennyson Nielson Group. Photo by Lydia Cutter Photography.

In partnership with Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS (DIFFA), The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada (The Center) will host Picnic by Design at Symphony Park on Saturday, Sept. 12.

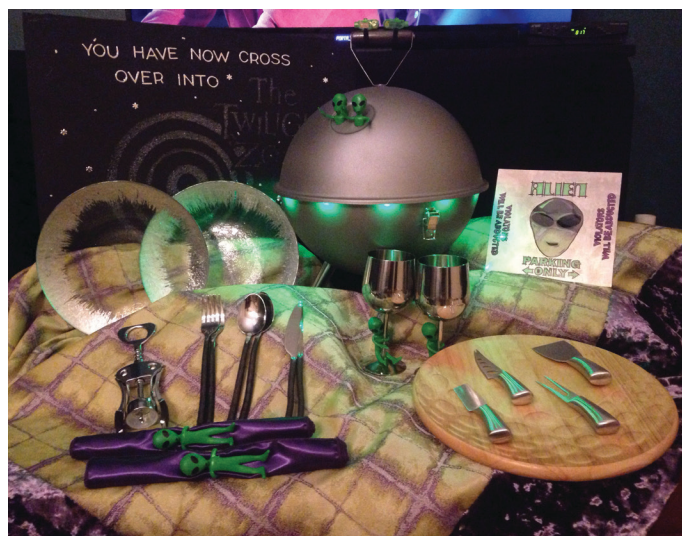
Local designers are creating over-the-top picnic baskets and tables to be purchased online at www.thecenterlv.org/picnic and then enjoyed with delicious food and fine wine in the shadow of The Smith Center for the Performing Arts (361 Symphony Park Ave.). Las Vegas Men's Chorus, Laura Taylor Mulkey and others will provide live entertainment throughout the evening. Dinner begins at 6 p.m., and a cocktails and dessert party follows at 8 p.m. All proceeds will benefit The Center and DIFFA.

Event chairperson and architect/designer Cray Bauxmont-Flynn says, "Picnicking is a lost art, and what better way to boost the joy of being outdoors than with a picnic under the stars? Something unique about Las Vegas is that our immense local talent always comes together for a purpose and charity. Picnic by Design is an exciting summer event that highlights the phenomenal local design talent that Las Vegas has to offer along with top-rated food and fun

for a good cause and redefines the concept of a traditional picnic."

"The AIDS issue is far from over, and DIFFA continues to create innovative events to raise awareness and much-needed funding," says Honorary Chairperson Roger Thomas, well-known for designing the interiors of Wynn Las Vegas. "Picnic by Design will bring Las Vegas together to celebrate creativity and community and to support The Center in its programs that directly address HIV/AIDS with education, diagnosis and support."

The Roger Thomas Collection and Wynn Las Vegas serve as Presenting Sponsors of Picnic by Design. Las Vegas Design Center is a Gold



Basket by Élan Collections



Basket by Sandy Windom

Sponsor. Silver Sponsors are Christopher Guy, Destinations by Design, M+M Creative Studio and Robert Allen. In-kind donors include downtown restaurants eat. and Rock'N'oodles.

For more information about Picnic by Design or to purchase tickets to the event, please visit www.thecenterlv.org/picnic. Designer picnic baskets that serve two are \$300 each, and designer picnic tables that seat and serve eight are \$1,500 each. Dinner will be served from 6 to 8 p.m. Tickets are also available to attend just the cocktails and dessert portion of the evening, from 8 to 10 p.m., for \$75 per person. All guests must be 21 and older.

Gay Vegas /advertising

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Since our launch in September 2014, Gay.Vegas has become one of the most popular destination LGBTQ websites in the Southwest. QVegas Magazine content moved to Gay.Vegas in September and as of January 2015 is completely hosted on Gay.Vegas, contributing to a great upswing in Gay.Vegas traffic.

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CHILL OUT IN ARIZONA



[by Deon Brown]

The Arizona LGBT community is spread throughout the “Grand Canyon State.” With over 300 days of warm sunshine and only about seven inches of rain annually, there’s something to do or somewhere to go all year long.

Arizona’s major cities Phoenix, Tucson and Flagstaff have their own Pride festivals. Smaller, historic Bisbee and the Verde Valley towns of Sedona and Cottonwood also celebrate Pride with popular festivals and parades. In October the Rainbows Festival is a free outdoor LGBT street fair in downtown Phoenix. Local businesses, services, clubs, organizations participate with local and national top entertainment performing on stage at each festival.

A large portion of the LGBT population live in central Phoenix between 7th Ave and 7th Street and Bethany Home Road all the way down to Roosevelt in Downtown Phoenix. One area inside the boundaries is the gay neighborhood called the Melrose District. Six LGBT bars and restaurants are all within walking distance.

The Parsons Wellness Center houses the Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS. This is an important resource and healthcare clearinghouse

providing a variety of medical, counseling, nutritional and pharmaceutical services for those in need. HIV testing is free.

In addition to staging an annual parade and festival every April, Phoenix Pride also operates the Phoenix Pride LGBT Community Center. Phoenix Pride created a scholarship fund helping young students pursue higher education.

Young members of the Phoenix LGBTQ community who face challenges finding a place for themselves, fitting in, or need guidance and friends have a place at one•n•ten, a youth center providing help for youngsters with self-esteem and acceptance.

There are currently 21 gay bars and seven gay-owned restaurants throughout the Valley of the Sun. Country-Western? Casual cocktails? Karaoke? Drag shows? Lesbian? Strippers! Whatever you want, we’ve got it. Phoenix is more progressive than the news would have you think: most downtown and midtown bars and restaurants are absolutely gay-friendly and welcoming. Are you a “foodie”? Our restaurant scene is one of the fastest growing in the nation, with a number of James Beard Award winners, like Pizzeria Bianco, acknowledged as the “Best Pizza” in America according to some experts.

The entertainment and nightlife scene in Phoenix has grown over the last decade. First

Friday, the downtown monthly art walk features the work of local artists in small, independent art galleries and live entertainment. Nearby Scottsdale houses a wide variety of fine art galleries. You like to shop? We've got it. Looking for a place to stay? You can't beat our glamorous, luxurious resorts and spas, most within minutes of downtown Phoenix. Fashionable, boutique hotels for hipsters abound. You can find a hotel or resort to fit any budget, although our mild winter weather can spike rates when the nation's "Snowbirds" come to visit, so plan ahead.

We have every major league sports team, including baseball, basketball, football and even ice hockey. Looking for something more highbrow? Check out our concert venues,



attracting the top names in show business. We also have great a number of theatre companies, plus a ballet, modern dance, a symphony and a stage for grand opera, most within walking distance or accessible by our growing Light Rail.

Don't miss the great outdoors! Metropolitan Phoenix has more city park land than any other city in America. One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, the Grand Canyon, is only a few hours to the north. The famous Kit Peak Observatory is near Tucson. Get a taste of the Wild West in the historic town of Tombstone. The quirky, kooky, copper mining town of Bisbee is a "must." Their Halloween is popular event and the whole town welcomes their LGBT friends. Sunny Mexico is just a hop, skip and a jump away. Puerto Peñasco, also known as "Rocky Point" is a popular getaway on the Sea of Cortez.

Get a taste of college life. Visit the Sun Devils



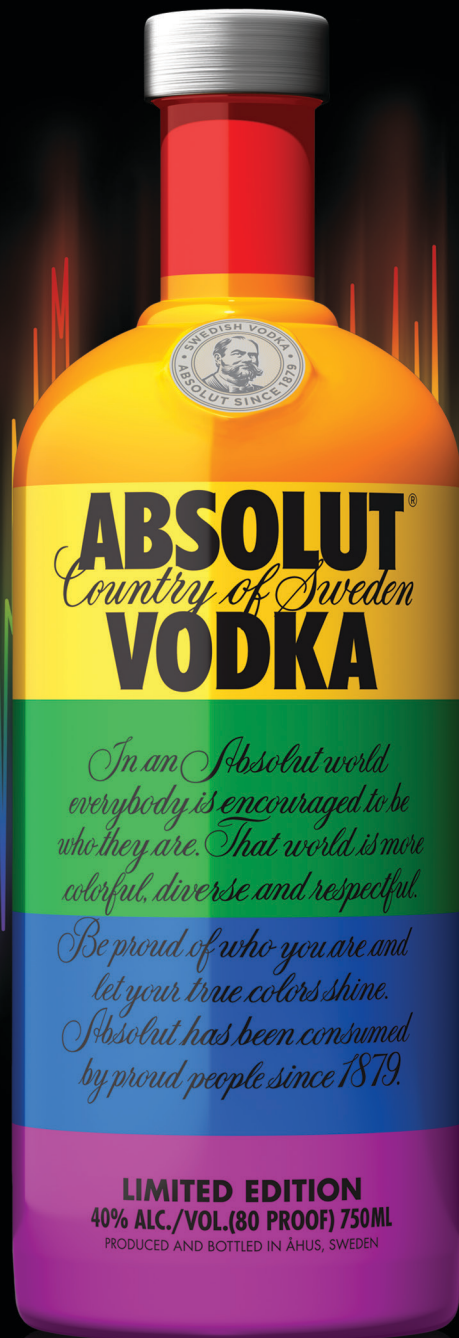
at Arizona State University in Tempe, or the Wildcats at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Pay a call on the Lumberjacks at Northern Arizona University when you're in Flagstaff. The Thunderbird School of International Global Management offers post-graduate studies in International Business and considered among the best in the world.

ION Arizona magazine is the state's most popular LGBT publication. Every month for over 14 years, ION creates a fun, sexy and informative publication. ION features celebrity interviews, reviews, city guides, cartoon, news satire, party cams from around the state and our famous, sexy photoshoots.

If you're looking for a laid back, affordable and fun place to hang out by the pool year 'round, see some of the greatest outdoor scenery in America, visit Arizona. Pick up a copy of ION Arizona magazine at over 150 locations statewide or go to www.IONAZ.com to learn more about what this great state has to offer residents and visitors from across the nation and around the world. Come visit us in Arizona. Who knows? You might even call it "home" someday.



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