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Get Lost in the Desert: A Posh Palm Springs Pride Getaway

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
Friday Oct 3, 2014



Ross Matthews (Source: Bruce Howell)

Since the 1900s, Palm Springs has been a playground for the rich and famous, luring Tinseltown actors and well-heeled gays to the desert for the kind of relaxation and fun that just couldn't be found in L.A. These days, you don't have to be one of the illuminati to make a big splash. Greater Palm Springs Pride is now free, and will be held from Nov. 7-9 on Palm Canyon Drive in the Downtown area. Be sure to check out the following hotspots.

To Play

Palm Springs Pride is Southern California's popular and longest-running LGBT festival in the Coachella Valley. Palm Canyon Drive will be closed to traffic and transformed into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Pride Festival, with a diverse array of artists, entertainers and purveyors of all sorts, plus multiple beverage gardens. Add all that to great shopping, restaurants, clubs and entertainment venues located along world-famous Palm Canyon Drive, and you've got a vacation to remember!

The festivities begin on Nov. 5 with the Wild Pride Party at The Living Desert, with music by Master DJ Luc Benech and special

guest Bella da Ball.

On Nov. 7, the Palm Springs Pride Golf Classic gets a shotgun start at 8 a.m. at Tahquitz Creek Golf Resort, with the Rainbow Flag Raising to be held at 10 a.m. on Palm Springs Village Green.

Later that evening, The Riviera Palm Springs Resort hosts the 5th Annual Center Stage Gala, presented by Eisenhower Medical Center. Headliners include comedian Kate Clinton and the acclaimed singing quartet Well-Strung. Also that evening is a free Equality Concert featuring singer Jeremiah Clark; the Stonewall Equality Concert; and the Broadway in Drag Pageant at Palm Canyon Theater, with female impersonators competing in evening gown, talent and swimsuit competitions.

The free Block Party will kick off on Nov. 8 on Arenas Road, with live performances by Frankmusik, Steed Lord, Amanda Lepore and Purple Crush. The Pride Parade steps off at 10 a.m. on Nov. 9 at Tachevah and Palm Canyon Dr. The Pride Festival will be held on Nov. 8-9 in Downtown Palm Springs.

The official pool parties of Palm Springs Pride will be held on Nov. 8 at the Hacienda Cantina and Beach Club, with no cover charge to enjoy great DJs, cocktails, modern Mexican fare and poolside fun. The clothing-optional Hot Wet & Proud Pool Party 3 will also take place this day, at CCBC Resort.

"The Stonewall 45 - A Flashback to 1969" party at Alibi Azul will celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. And women can enjoy The Official Ladies' Night Pre-Party on Palm Canyon, featuring a free concert by Lunden Reign, with DJ Good Boy and DJ Claudia G.

The Purple Room Restaurant & Stage presents a stellar Pride line-up with Provincetown sensation Miss Richfield 1981, who headlines on Nov. 7-8 with her new show, "Play With My Poodle." Also performing that weekend are Bobby Jo Valentine on Nov. 6 and Michael Holmes' hysterical parody "The Judy Show" on Nov. 9.

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Comedy Night Palm Springs™ announces its Saturday, September 20, show at the Purple Room Restaurant and Stage featuring top comic stars Shelagh Ratner of Lifetime TV's "Prank My Mom" and Matthew Moore of Caroline's on Broadway in New York.



Get Lost in the Desert: A Posh Palm Springs Pride Getaway

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Heading to Palm Springs for Pride (Nov. 7-9)? Here are our top picks for the weekend or any time of year.

"We are excited to bring fresh new shows to Palm Springs for Pride Weekend such as the wildly popular Miss Richfield 1981," said co-owner Tony Marchese. "And with Bobby Jo Valentine and The Judy Show also on the line-up, it will be a great celebration weekend of fun, laughs and song. So, join us. Get your tickets now and make Purple Room part of your Palm Springs Pride weekend."

If this cornucopia of Pride events isn't enough, there's always plenty of gay to while away the day in Palm Springs.

New this year from the Red Jeep Tour folks is the fabulous Gay Icons Tour. Your knowledgeable, passionate guide, Bob Gross, will load you in his trademark red jeep and take you from one side of town to the other.

"Palm Springs is probably the gayest town in the world," said Gross, driving past the gay resorts at Warm Sands and Vista Grande, pointing out the house where Cleve Jones started the NAMES Project and where Howard Hughes hid out at El Mirasol.

Gross will also take you past several of Liberace's homes, and point out where Dinah Shore lived -- recently purchased by Leonardo DiCaprio. He'll show you Elvis's honeymoon house, Debbie Reynold's home and Marilyn Monroe's hideout. You'll cruise past Lily Tomlin's "Lily Pad," and Barry Manilow's crib. You'll even get to drive past Barbra Streisand's homely fortress on the hill. Spend your vacation seeing how the rich and famous enjoyed their vacations!



(Source: Photo Courtesy of Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism)

Desert Digs

If you're seeking an all-gay oasis in the desert, ladies should stay at one of two places on "The Curve," the all-women B&Bs Casitas Laquita and Queen of Hearts. Both feature cozy suites with a full kitchen, and a centrally located pool with stunning views of the San Bernadino Mountains.

Gay men traveling to Palm Springs should check out La Dolce Vita, the 20-room resort in central Palm Springs located near all the gay hot spots in town. For those who like to ditch their inhibitions and their clothes, Vista Grande Hotel is the premium clothing-optional resort in Palm Springs.

If you're not into the B&B experience and are just looking for a great hotel, try the Saguaro Palm Springs. This retro-cool getaway is conveniently located on Palm Canyon Dr., and festooned in bright colors that mimic the desert wildflowers on the property. The Saguaro has amazing in-house dining, a beautiful central pool, and free yoga classes every morning.

To secure get better rates, arrive a day early, or stay several days later, and take advantage of hotels' mid-week deals.



(Source: Bruce Howell)

Too Gay?

Nonsense! It's so much nicer to visit a place where your lover and your lifestyle will be embraced. Palm Springs is the hotspot for gay tourism, and they roll out the pink carpet to their visitors, especially during events like Pride.

The main drag for gay bars is Arenas Road, featuring the video bars Hunters Palm Springs and SpurLine, and the casual spots Streetbar and Score. Leather guys can hit The Barracks, Tool Shed or Cub Night, and civilians can park their keester on a bar stool at Oscar's, Georgie's Alibi or Toucans Tiki Lounge.

Those who want to capture a taste of old Palm Springs, back when the degenerates got their kicks at nearby Cathedral City, should check out Studio One 11, or Digs, renowned for their friendly bartenders and great drink specials.

For great dining in Palm Springs, [click here](#).

To find out complete info on Greater Palm Springs Pride, visit pspride.org.

And remember, whenever you plan a trip to Palm Springs, be sure to check the wide array of resources



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Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she writes about local restaurants in her food blog, <http://brooklyniscookin.blogspot.com/>

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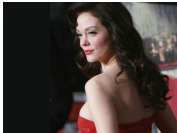
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