

# LGBTQ+ Travellers MAGAZINE

a PinkPlayMags's magazine

Fall/Winter 2025



WONDERLANDS  
WEEKENDS  
SUNSHINE  
WEDDINGS

KINGSTON

OWP

***BETTER  
TOGETHER  
IN KINGSTON***

The food, the laughter. The smiles  
across the table and time with each other.  
It's better together in Kingston.

[visitkingston.ca/plan-your-trip](http://visitkingston.ca/plan-your-trip)



Rainbow  
Registered  
Arc-en-ciel  
Officiel

# Happy & Safe Travels

*from the publisher*

Dear and queer travellers,

Welcome to the second edition of *LGBTQ+ Travellers Magazine*. It feels wonderful to return with another issue filled with ideas and inspiration for your next adventure.

This season, we're taking you from Canada's snow-covered peaks to sun-drenched escapes and everywhere in between. Our main feature dives into the magic of Quebec in winter — a destination rich with culture, warmth, and a uniquely queer-friendly spirit — alongside a special look at Whistler, a mountain paradise that blends outdoor adventure with welcoming vibes.

Closer to home, we've curated weekend getaways from Canada's major cities, quick trips that prove you don't have to go far to discover something new. For those craving sunshine, our "Sunshine Getaways to the U.S." feature highlights Palm Springs, Sedona, and Austin — each city brimming with queer culture, fabulous food, and plenty of fun.

Lovebirds, we haven't forgotten you. Our Destination Weddings feature takes you

inside two very different celebrations: the beaches of Costa Rica, where love shines boldly under the sun, and the charm of Halifax, where Maritime hospitality meets inclusive joy.

And of course, don't miss our Travel Horoscopes, a playful way to see where the stars might guide your next journey.

As LGBTQ+ travellers, we know that where we go matters — not just for the beauty of the places, but for the welcome we feel. That's the heartbeat of this magazine: showcasing destinations that celebrate who we are and how we love.

So whether you're planning your next trip or just dreaming of the possibilities, flip through these pages and let your imagination take flight.

See you on the slopes, the roads, or at a gay dance club.

---

*Antoine Elhashem is the president of INspired Media, the publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags and theBUZZ.*

# In This Issue



**8.** Winter Wonderlands

**20.** Queer Approved Weekend Escapes

**28.** Sunshine Getaways to the USA

**33.** Celebrating Queer Love Across Borders

**41.** Cosmic Compass: Fall/Winter Horoscope

**Publisher + Creative Director**

Antoine Elhashem

**Exec Assistant/Admin Manager**

David Vogelhut

**Social Media Manager**

Rolyn Chamber

**Marketing & Advertising Consultants**

David Vogelhut, Darryl Boyd,  
Zechariah Hockridge

**Edited and designed by**

PinkPlayMags Team

**Published by**

**INspired Media Inc.**

Operating: INspired Creative,  
Publishers of The Pink Pages  
Directory, PinkPlayMags, and theBUZZ.  
Producers of On the Couch and The Queer  
Bunch.

[www.theBUZZmag.ca](http://www.theBUZZmag.ca)

[www.PinkPlayMags.com](http://www.PinkPlayMags.com)

[www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com](http://www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com)

[www.onthecouch.ca](http://www.onthecouch.ca)

**Mailing address**

205-1691 Pickering Parkway  
Pickering, ON L1V 5L9 **905.231.9722**

**COVER PHOTO: Duran Ekiz**



**TORONTO MARRIOTT MARKHAM**

170 Enterprise Boulevard, Markham L6G 0E6, Canada  
T 905.489.1400 | F 905.489.1401  
Marriott.com/YYZMR



**IT'S ALWAYS GREAT TO SAVE**

Count on Avis to provide you with the personal attention and superior service for your rental needs. Plus, always receive **up to 25% off** base rates with **AWD #A079500**.

Reserve today at [avis.ca/thepinkpages](http://avis.ca/thepinkpages) or call **1-800-879-2847**. Visit one of your neighborhood locations:

**333 College St. - 416-963-9496**

**80 Bloor St. E. - 416-964-2051**

**161 Bay St. - 416-777-1842**

**Aeroplan® Members** can earn **Aeroplan points** on qualifying rentals, at participating AVIS locations, worldwide.



For Terms and Conditions visit [www.avis.ca/thepinkpages](http://www.avis.ca/thepinkpages)  
©2021 Aviscar, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
®Aeroplan is a registered trademark of Aeroplan Inc., used under license  
®Avis is a registered trademark licensed to Aviscar Inc., for use in Canada.

# Everyone Belongs Here

*The Distillery District is a place where history, culture and communities come together. We can't wait to welcome you.*





**RIPLEY'S**  
**AQUARIUM OF CANADA**



[www.ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](http://www.ripleysaquariumofcanada.com)



*Winter Wonderlands!*

**Quebec & Charlevoix**

**Whistler**



# The Magic of Quebec & Charlevoix

**Winter** in Quebec is pure magic. Streets dusted with snow, twinkling lights, and cozy cafés invite visitors to slow down and breathe. For LGBTQ+ travelers, this is more than scenery — it's a chance to explore vibrant culture, meet welcoming communities, and enjoy winter activities that feel tailor-made for short escapes. From Mont-Tremblant's snowy peaks to the historic charm of Old Quebec and the serene landscapes of Charlevoix, this season offers warmth, inclusivity, and adventure in equal measure.

## ***Mont-Tremblant***

Nestled in the Laurentians, Mont-Tremblant is a winter playground for all. Skiing and snowboarding dominate the day, but snowshoeing, sledding, and guided nature walks add variety for those looking to explore at a gentler pace.

Après-ski is where the charm truly shines. Local cafés and bars, such as Le P'tit Caribou, are known for welcoming queer travelers with open arms, offering live music, drinks by the fireplace, and friendly faces. Book a spa treatment at ScandinaVe Spa Mont-Tremblant for a winter meltaway, or linger over a hot chocolate at a boutique café while watching snow fall softly on the village below.

For LGBTQ+ travelers, several resorts and chalets openly embrace diversity. Check out Le 900 Tremblant Couette Café Bistro, a charming retreat featuring 11 rooms, and on-site café and bistro, a gathering place for lovers of good food and artisanal coffee. For an economical stay try Auberge Mountainview Inn, featuring 36 room, with some rooms including fireplace, or Tour Des Voyageurs with 49 room, 115 suites, and 675 units available for short term rental .

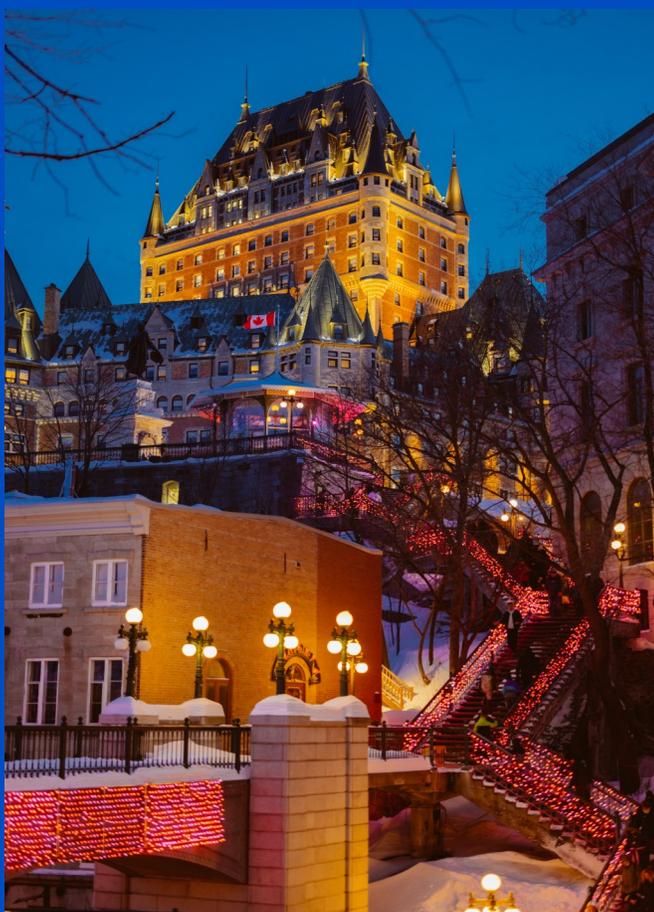
Winter festivals here add a lively touch: from small artisan markets to evening torch-lit walks, Mont-Tremblant feels festive without ever being crowded. It's a perfect mix of energy and tranquility, ideal for a two- or three-day getaway.

### *Old Quebec*

Stepping into Old Quebec is like walking into a snow globe. Cobblestone streets, historic architecture, and seasonal lights make wandering around the city enchanting. Boutiques, galleries, and cafés line the streets, offering everything from artisanal chocolates to local crafts.

Cultural highlights include the Place d'Youville skating rink, live performances at local theaters, and pop-up winter markets along Rue Saint-Jean. LGBTQ+ travelers will find welcoming venues throughout the Saint-Roch district, including Drague Cabaret Club, known for drag shows and themed nights, and Le Pub du Parvis, a cozy bar where everyone is accepted and celebrated.

Accommodations in Old Quebec range from boutique inns to full-service hotels. Many proudly embrace diversity, ensuring that queer travelers feel safe and comfortable. Insider tip: book a table at a local bistro recommended by a hotel concierge — these small, personal touches create memorable experiences.



Take your time exploring the neighborhoods — from the Petit Champlain district with its charming shops to the historic ramparts overlooking the St. Lawrence River, every corner offers a photo-worthy moment. Evening strolls are particularly magical, with snow reflecting the warm glow of streetlamps and the quiet hum of the city around you.

## Charlevoix

Charlevoix offers a peaceful, scenic retreat for those looking to slow down and connect with nature. Drive along the Saint Lawrence River, stopping in small towns with artisanal shops, galleries, and cozy cafés. Winter activities range from snowshoeing through forested trails to guided ice fishing excursions, or even horse-drawn sleigh rides through snow-covered valleys.



Boutique inns and B&Bs in the region openly welcome LGBTQ+ guests. Many are small, family-run operations, providing personalized service and an intimate feel. Insider tip: ask your host for local recommendations — whether it's a hidden hiking spot or a restaurant serving regional delicacies, these suggestions often make a trip unforgettable.

For those seeking art and culture, Charlevoix hosts winter exhibitions in galleries and community centers. Dining highlights include local bistros serving hearty, seasonal fare, perfect for warming up after a day outdoors. Quiet evenings by the fireplace, paired with local wine or craft beer, make Charlevoix a restorative destination.

.....

Quebec in winter is a celebration of culture, charm, and inclusivity. From the snowy peaks of Mont-Tremblant to the historic streets of Old Quebec and the peaceful landscapes of Charlevoix, there's a richness to explore at every turn. Cozy cafés, boutique inns, winter festivals, and welcoming communities make it a destination where LGBTQ+ travelers can feel at home while discovering new adventures.

For a West Coast alternative, let's head over to Whistler, BC, where snowy slopes and Pride celebrations await.





# Whistler: Where Winter Gets Queer

***If*** Quebec is your French winter fantasy, Whistler is your West Coast snow queen, where snow Meets Pride!

Whistler is your vibrant, West Coast snow queen—bold, fresh, and ready to show you a different kind of winter shine. Nestled in the spectacular Coast Mountains of British Columbia, Whistler serves up powder-filled vistas, endless mountain fun, and a joyfully inclusive LGBTQ+ scene during Whistler Pride & Ski Festival (January 25–February 1, 2026.)

**Whistler Tourism’s team says it best:**

*“Whistler has a long and proud history of being welcoming and inclusive to all,” says Lauren Everest, Senior Manager, Communications and Membership at Tourism Whistler. “Our world-class outdoor recreation combined with our vibrant Village at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains attracts adventurous 2SLGBTQIA+ travellers from around the globe. In Whistler diversity is celebrated, and support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is on display with rainbow crosswalks and flags, and gender-neutral public washrooms.”*

***Whistler Pride & Ski Festival 2026: What’s the buzz?***



This isn't just a party—it's an eight-day LGBTQ+ winter fest blending ski adventures, wellness, drag shows, and community connections. Officially the largest queer ski event in Canada, Whistler Pride attracts thousands of diverse travellers each year.

With guided ski groups, arts events, late-night dances, and a flair for festive inclusivity, the vibe is welcoming and high-energy every day.

#### **Pride Moments to Plan Around**

**Ski-Out & Village Parade** - Flag-waving festival-goers carve down Whistler Mountain and march through the Village—rainbow gear encouraged, drama guaranteed.

**Free Ski & Ride Groups** - Daily volunteer-led groups from beginner to expert runs, perfect for solo travellers looking to connect and explore.

**Après & Themed Nights** - From mid-week mixers to the sensational Snowball closing party, there's drag bingo, T-Dances, comedy, and more—a full event lineup keeps the energy high.

**Youth & Family Programming** - All-ages skiing, tubing, and safe spaces for queer youth—a festival truly built for every generation.

**Whistler Pride Eats & Culinary Events** - Celebrate queer food experiences and mountain-side bites—keep an eye out for pop-ups and community dining events.



#### ***Winter Activities Beyond Pride***

Whistler isn't just Pride—it's an adventure playground for snow lovers:

##### ***Epic Skiing & Board Life***

Whistler Blackcomb delivers over 8,100 acres of terrain, with trails for every level, killer powder bowls, and world-class lift access via the Peak 2 Peak Gondola.

##### ***Heli-Skiing, Cat Skiing & Snowmobile Tours***

For untouched lines, heli or cat skiing offers premium powder runs. Prefer land-based adrenaline? Snowmobile tours through backcountry trails are a scenic thrill.



## Sliding the Olympic Track

### Get your heart racing on the Whistler Sliding

Centre sled tracks (bobsleigh or skeleton) used in the 2010 Winter Olympics—yes, speeds can hit 130 km/h.

### Nordic Vibes: Cross-Country & Snowshoeing

Whistler Olympic Park offers 85km of groomed Nordic trails—classic, skate, or guided nighttime snowshoe treks under the stars.

### Peak 2 Peak Gondola & Spa Time

Float between Whistler and Blackcomb peaks in the record-breaking Peak 2 Peak gondola. Wind down afterward at Scandinave Spa or take part in Pride-exclusive spa events like music and wine pools (subject to 2026 confirmation).

### Culture & Local Flavour

Learn Indigenous history and cuisine at the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, then catch the Fire & Ice show—an evening spectacle of freestyle skiing, storytelling, and Indigenous art integration.

### Ziplining & Helicopter Tours

Ziptrek EcoTours' Bear Tour zips through forests and valleys. Or grab a scenic helicopter ride that includes glacier landings for jaw-dropping views and bragging rights.

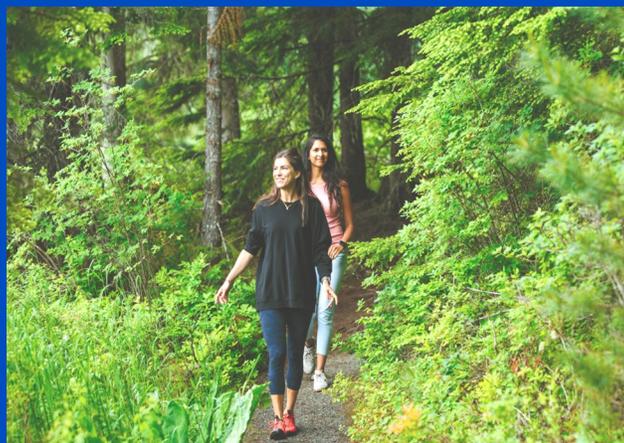
### Why Queer Travellers Love It Here

Whistler has earned its reputation for more than powder—it's built on Canadian hospitality, with local staff who get it, villages adorned in rainbow, and events built to celebrate us. Plus, it respects shared unceded

territories of the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations, with cultural programming woven thoughtfully into the tourist experience.

*"Whistler made history while hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games by*

*providing the first ever Pride House Pavillion, which served as a safe, comfortable space for queer athletes and support staff during the games," adds Everest. "This same inclusive and welcoming spirit lives on today with Whistler accommodation providers, activity operators, and food and beverage establishments supporting equality and queer and gender rights."*



## Quick Tips: Plan Like a Pro

- . Save the dates: Jan 25–Feb 1, 2026 Festival week books out fast.
- . Book the Aava Whistler Hotel Official host hotel often offering shuttle, passes, and proximity to events. Alternatively, for a fabulous stay try Pan Pacific Whistler Village Centre or Pan Pacific Whistler Mountainside.
- . Mix outfits: base layers + flair Pyramid of snow meets sparkle = heaven.
- . Plan rest days Sleep off the Snowball party or soak it out in the village spa.
- . Rent transit passes: Whistler’s dotted with buses—even ski racks—run until 3 a.m.
- . Cultural respect matters When visiting Indigenous sites, honor protocols and treat the land with care. Trust us—it matters here.

.....

Quebec may have the cobblestones and French flair, but Whistler stands tall with rugged peaks, glowing nightlife, and queer community spirit on full display. It’s where your inner snow queen finds her crown—on the mountain, at the bar, or riding down the Pride parade slope holding a friendship bracelet.

Make your plans early, pack your sass, and get ready to live the queerest winter escape yet.

---

*Writer: Sherry Sylvain is an ongoing contributor and columnist to both theBUZZ and PinkPlayMags. She is also founding partner of The Q Musicale and co-produce.*

### Photography:

*Étienne Dionne, Destination Québec cité Whistler Pride*

*Village Stroll: Tourism Whistler/Justa Jeskova*

*Forest Bathing: Tourism Whistler/Oisin McHugh*

*Four Seasons Spa: Tourism Whistler/Justa Jeskova*

*Whistler Blackcomb: Tourism Whistler/Guy Fattal*



LOCATION • HOSPITALITY • VALUE



# *Fall Fever Specials!*

BOOK DIRECT FOR DISCOUNTS\*



SuiteDreams.com

**STAY 2 NIGHTS GET 3RD NIGHT FREE\***

Downtown Ottawa, located between Rideau Canal and trendy Elgin Street, shopping, restaurants, the Byward Market and all major sites.



**BOOK DIRECT:**  
613.236.5000  
1.800.236.8399



*\*Subject to availability*

WE ARE PET FRIENDLY!



# Endless Horizon TRAVEL

**Helping You Find  
Your Place  
on the Horizon!**

**Making Your Travel  
Experience Perfect  
Beginning to End**

**Gay-Owned  
& Proud to  
Serve the  
Community**

**Experts in  
Cruise & Resort  
Vacations**

**Endless Horizon Travel**  
416-519-2260 • Toll Free - 833-451-2270  
endlesshorizon.ca • info@endlesshorizon.ca

Affiliated with Nexion Canada  
ULC 380 Wellington St • Tower B • 6th Fl  
London, Ontario, N6A 5B5  
519-660-6966 • TICO#1549342

Join Our Email Newsletter For Offers, Tips, Travel News &  
Some of the Best Prices in the Industry • [endlesshorizon.ca](http://endlesshorizon.ca)



## Welcome LGBTQ+ Guests



Old Stagecoach Inn  
Waterbury, VT



The Gaston  
Dallas, TX



Volcano Village Estates  
Volcano, HI



Volcano Village Lodge  
Volcano, HI



5th Street Ohana  
Volcano, HI



Gabriel's  
Provincetown, MA



Hotel Saugatuck  
Saugatuck, MI



Inner Banks Inn  
Edenton, NC



Lodging in Napa Valley  
Calistoga, CA

Discover your perfect LGBTQ-friendly getaway with our curated selection of welcoming properties that celebrate diversity and inclusion. From cozy retreats to luxurious escapes, you'll find the ideal destination to relax, connect, and be yourself.

[historicstaysus.com](http://historicstaysus.com)



scan for more info

## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

HISTORIC & MODERN ROOMS  
TWO RESTAURANTS ON-SITE



TRAVEL LOCAL! BOOK YOUR PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY GETAWAY TODAY

(613) 476-7492    395 Sandy Hook Road, Picton ON    [waringhouse.com](http://waringhouse.com)

**WaringHouse**  
Restaurant & Inn



Rainbow  
Registered  
Arc-en-ciel  
Official



CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS



@waringhouse

# COVENTRY

TRANSPORTATION

*Driven by Diversity.  
Powered by Pride.*

BLACK CAR SERVICE  
AIRPORT TRANSFERS  
CORPORATE TRAVEL  
SPECIAL EVENTS  
EXCURSIONS  
WEDDINGS  
GETAWAYS  
CONCIERGE SERVICES  
LARGE GROUPS

*Proud to serve the  
community*

**1-905-468-7727**

[www.coventrytransportation.ca](http://www.coventrytransportation.ca)



Ottawa  
Eastern Townships  
Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Blue Mountain  
Kingston  
Banf  
Lake Louise  
Lunenburg  
Wolfville & Annapolis Royal

**Queer Approved Weekend  
Escapes!**  
No Passport Required



*We've curated cozy winter weekend gateways from 4 major Canadian cities.*

You know that feeling when the city gets a little too loud, your inbox won't quit, and your feet are freezing—but not in the fun, snowy-walk-to-a-cabin kind of way? That's when a long weekend escape can feel like a lifeline. Just a couple days somewhere different — somewhere that smells like fireplaces, serves good wine by the glass, welcomes you with open arms, and a bed you don't have to make — can change your whole outlook. Whether it's a solo recharge, a cozy couple's trip, or a friends' party weekend, these LGBTQ-friendly spots across Canada are just far enough to feel like a getaway, but close enough to do on a whim.

*From Montreal:*

*Ottawa*

This quiet capital turns up the sparkle come winter — especially for queer visitors. It's like taking a breath of fresh air, but with culture, cobblestones, and political charm. Skate the Rideau Canal (fingers crossed for good ice), explore local galleries and the National Arts Centre, then warm up with craft cocktails in the ByWard Market.

For three weekends in February, Winterlude, now in its 47<sup>th</sup> year, turns Canada's capital region into a frosty playground celebrating all things Canadian and Indigenous culture. It's an event attended by more than a half-million people every year.

For your getaway, consider the Cartier Place Suite Hotel. Perfectly located downtown between the scenic Rideau Canal and vibrant Elgin Street, it's ideal for a weekend escape. The property is proudly LGBTQ-friendly, offering comfort and convenience with a welcoming spirit. Or look at a stay at the stylish Le Germain or the LGBTQ-welcoming Alt Hotel downtown.





### **Eastern Townships**

Less than two hours from Montreal, this collection of small towns serves up postcard-perfect winter. Picture sleigh rides in Magog, wine tastings in Dunham, and cozy B&Bs that feel like they were built for cuddling. Spa Eastman or Balnea are dreamy stops for a warm soak while the snow falls outside. Special mention goes to the gourmet farm-to-table restaurant Les Mal-Aimés, located in the town of Cockshire-Eaton (Town of four bell towers), where you'll enjoy a culinary experience full of rhythm and creativity—blending forgotten, local, and boreal flavours right on your plate. No wonder it's been recommended by the 2025 Michelin Guide! Bonus: The area has a growing number of queer-owned and allied businesses, making it feel both quaint and comfortable.

### **From Toronto:**

#### **Niagara-on-the-Lake**

The kind of place where you hold hands without a second thought. The town is all charm: heritage inns, LGBTQ+ inclusive wineries, and frosty vineyard tours during Icewine season. Book a fireplace suite, catch a show at the Shaw Festival if the timing's right, and let yourself slow down. This is romance in lowercase, relaxed and real.

Want to travel in style while visiting the region? We would recommend checking out Coventry Transportation, they have been around for 87 years, and their fleet ranges from 4 passengers all the way to full bus. They are very LGBTQ+ friendly.

## Blue Mountain

This one's for the spa-lovers, snowshoers, and après-ski fans. The village has boutique shops, good eats, and slopes for all levels — but you don't need to ski to enjoy it. Hit Scandinave Spa for an outdoor thermal soak (pro tip: book ahead), or take a snowy forest walk under the stars. Many of the lodges and hotels are queer-welcoming, and there's a low-key, inclusive vibe that's hard to resist.

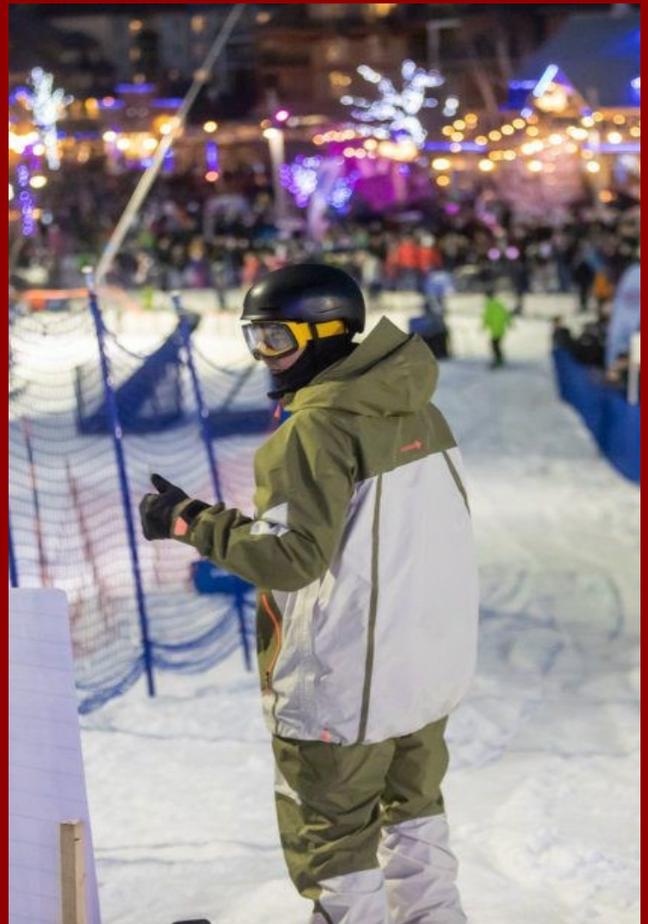
*“At the Town of Collingwood, we believe that a truly vibrant town is one where residents, visitors, and businesses feel seen, valued, and safe. By celebrating our diversity and embracing inclusivity, we don't just build a welcoming place, we cultivate a culture of respect, creativity, and shared pride that strengthens who we are as a community.”* says Mayor Yvonne Hamlin, Town of Collingwood.

## Kingston

Halfway between Toronto and Montreal, Kingston's historic streets shine in winter. You'll find cozy cafés, waterfront trails, and one of the best food scenes in Ontario. As the winter evenings grow darker, downtown Kingston lights up in response. Enjoy the ambiance as you window-shop. Take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage. Bring your skates and take a spin around the public rink at Springer Market Square. Outside of downtown, there are plenty of other opportunities for you to get active in Kingston this winter! Go cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or tobogganing. Holiday markets + Art after Dark shines light on the robust makers community within Kingston and surrounding regions.

Add in a drag brunch or an art crawl, and you've got a weekend that balances chill with culture. Queen's University keeps the energy young, and the city's small LGBTQ+ community is warm, proud, and visible.

Our top pick for a stay in Kingston is the Frontenac Club. They pride themselves on being warm, welcoming, and inclusive to all guests. From the moment you step inside, you become part of a community that celebrates diversity and respects individuality. On top of that, it's also one of the most stunning accommodations you'll want to experience.





*From Calgary or Edmonton:*

### ***Banff***

Classic for a reason. With glowing winter lights, hot springs, and majestic peaks that seem to hum in the cold, Banff feels like a queer-friendly snow globe. The mountain town embraces all kinds of love, especially during the quieter shoulder season. Try snow tubing at Mt. Norquay or just sip something warm at a fireside lounge. Many hotels here have diversity and inclusion policies in place, so you can show up fully as you are. You may want to check out SnowDays Festival which runs January 16 to February 8, 2026.

### ***Lake Louise***

Only 45 minutes from Banff, but with a slower, dreamier pace. That iconic frozen lake is open for skating, and the Fairmont Chateau turns up the grandeur. If you're lucky, catch the Ice Magic Festival (February 5 to 8, part of SnowDays Festival). Whether you go luxe or low-key, it's a weekend of fresh air, dramatic views, and serious "how is this real life?" energy.



*From Halifax:*

### *Lunenburg*

UNESCO-listed and brimming with charm, Lunenburg is a winter wonderland with maritime flair. Think colourful houses dusted in snow, locally owned cafés, and seafood chowder that hits the spot after a day of exploring. It's small, walkable, and quietly queer-welcoming. If you time it right, you might even catch local theatre or live music.

### *Wolfville & Annapolis Royal*

Wolfville is known for its vineyards (many queer-friendly), artsy vibes, and slow rhythm — perfect for a little hibernation with style. Nearby Annapolis Royal adds historic charm and gentle coastal walks. Together, they're a reminder that queer-friendly doesn't always mean big city — sometimes, it means just being seen and welcomed in a small, beautiful place

.....

Not every getaway has to be epic. Sometimes it's about packing light, chasing a new view, and choosing places where you can be your whole self — scarf, snow boots, and all. Whether it's a last-minute booking or a long-planned pause, these long weekend escapes might be exactly what you need before the season's over.

---

*Writer: Antoine Elhashem is the publisher of PinkPlayMags and LGBTQ+ Traveller Magazine, amongst other queer publications. He is a travel enthusiast.*

### **Photography:**

*Yaroslav Shuraev  
Tourism Ottawa  
Tourism Eastern Townships  
Blue Mountain  
Tourism Kingston  
Tourism Banff (Banff Log Cabon)  
Bogdan Krupin*

**PUNK ROCK REALTY INC.**  
BROKERAGE

Serving our Community in  
Toronto, GTA and all of Southern Ontario

www.punkrockrealty.ca | 888-999-9731 | info@punkrockrealty.ca

**GO TOURS CANADA**

**SEGWAY & WALKING TOURS**  
In the DISTILLERY DISTRICT

**EXPERIENCE HISTORY THE FUN WAY!**

Award Winning Tours · Year-round Destination  
Segway Tours, Walking Tours, Food Tours,  
Spirits Tasting Tours, Beer Tasting Tours, Film Tours,  
Private Group Tours, Corporate Tours, School Tours.

getourscanada.com Book Now >>>  
11 Gristmill Lane Toronto Ontario 416-677-3831

**CAROLINE CELLARS**  
FAMILY ESTATE WINERY

**WINE BOUTIQUE & RESTAURANT**

1010 LINE 2,  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE  
WWW.CAROLINECELLARS.COM

905.468-8814

www.elfaroukhaki.ca

**El-Farouk Khaki**  
Barrister & Solicitor

Legal Aid Accepted  
Refugee Claims  
Spousal and H&C Applications  
Pre-Removal Risk Assessment

By Appointment Only  
T 416-925-7227  
F 416-925-2450  
info@elfaroukhaki.ca  
desk@elfaroukhaki.ca

**Celebrate the colours of autumn!**

Here to be of service, visit us for...

- The latest Cameras + Lenses
- Large Selection of bags, tripods & filters
- Photo Printing (online code DCPROMO = spend \$20 get 20% off)
- Passport photos by friendly professionals

**DOWNTOWN CAMERA**  
WHERE PHOTOGRAPHY LIVES  
88 BAYVIEW STREET EAST - TORONTO, ON - M5C 1S1 - 416.363.1748

**YOUR KINGSTON AND AREA REAL ESTATE & MORTGAGE TEAM!**

**Melissa Forman - Mortgage Agent, Level 2**  
CENTUM Financial Services LP #13054  
Direct: 613-449-4488  
melissa@formanmortgages.com

**Melissa Schelter - Real Estate Broker**  
CENTURY 21® Heritage Group Ltd. Brokerage\*  
Direct: 613-331-1290  
melissa.schelter@c21.ca

**Jill Keeling - Real Estate Sales Representative**  
CENTURY 21® Heritage Group Ltd. Brokerage\*  
Direct: 613-484-1270  
jkeelingrealestate@gmail.com

LEARN MORE ABOUT US HERE!  
SCAN ME

**CENTUM** CENTURY 21. Heritage Group Ltd.  
Mortgage Lender Since 1988

\*Each Brokerage is independently owned and operated. Not intended to solicit clients already under contract.

*Proud Supporter of Music in our Community.*

sales rentals financing music lessons online shopping

**Long & McQuade**  
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
long-mcquade.com

925 Bloor St W 416-588-7886  
3313 Danforth Ave 416-309-8722



  
**THE FIELDSTONE BARN**  
**The Gift of Luxury Glamping**  
 thefieldstonebarn.com  
 @thefieldstonebarn  
 @ f

**The Oakville Centre**  
 130 Navy Street  
 Oakville, ON  
 905-815-2021  
 boxoffice@oakville.ca

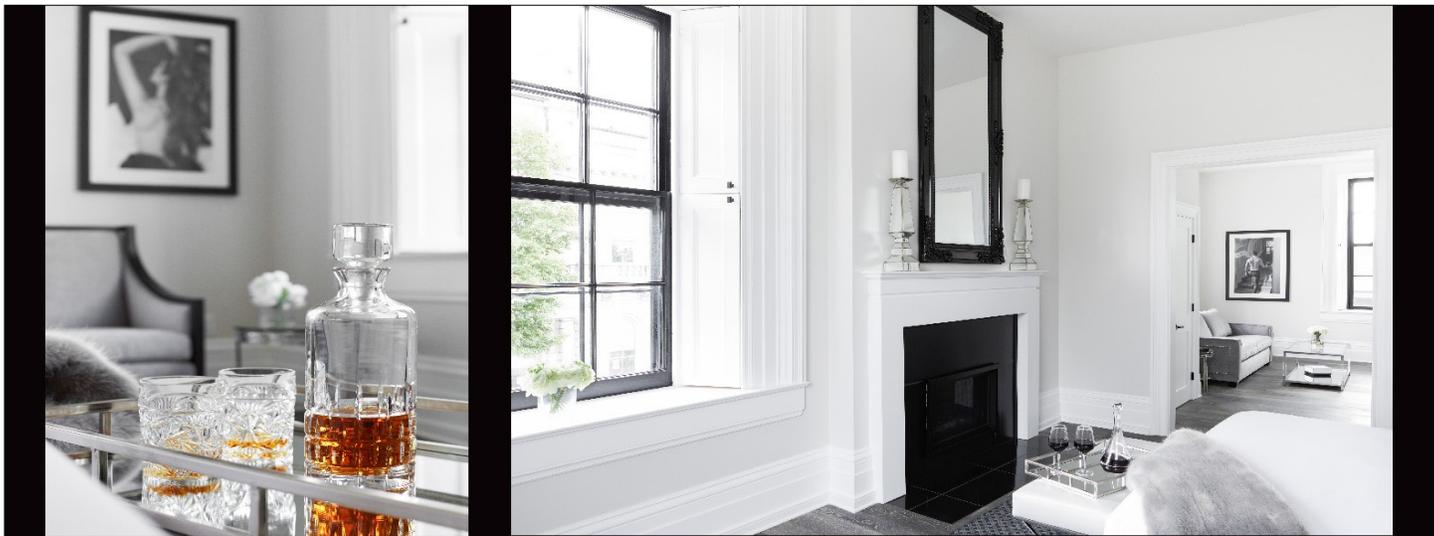
**She of Ten Thousand Names**  
 November 20 at 8 p.m.

[www.oakvillecentre.com](http://www.oakvillecentre.com)



**Where to stay?**

  
 towninn.com



**FRONTENAC**  
 SINCE 1845 CLUB KINGSTON

Playful. Elegant. Unexpected.

Kingston | frontenacclub.com | 613.547.6167



# Sunshine Getaways to the USA

Palm Springs, Austin, and Sedona here we come!

***For many Canadians,*** the United States has long been the go-to for quick escapes into warmer climates, vibrant cultures, and queer-friendly communities. Over the last year, though, the political climate has given some pause — and that’s understandable. But as with any country, the full story is bigger than its headlines. Across the U.S., there are cities and towns where LGBTQ+ culture thrives openly, where art and nightlife pulse with inclusivity, and where visitors are embraced with genuine hospitality. Palm Springs, Austin, and Sedona are three such destinations — each offering a different flavour of sunshine, community, and connection.

## Palm Springs, California

Palm Springs isn’t just sunny — it’s unapologetically itself. A historic LGBTQ+ haven since the mid-20th century, this desert oasis is still one of the most welcoming spots in the country. Here, queer culture isn’t tucked away — it’s front and centre. Downtown buzzes with rainbow flags, stylish boutiques, and a thriving food scene.

For nightlife, you can’t miss Hunters — a staple on Arenas Road where the dance floor never stops — or Chill Bar, perfect for drag shows and themed nights. Daytime? Laze by the pool at Descanso Resort (men-only, but brimming with character) or book a suite at the colourful Saguardo Palm Springs. If your timing’s right, Palm Springs Pride (November 6 through 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025) transforms the streets into a desert rainbow — a festival that feels like a love letter to the queer community itself. Palm Springs Equality Week is celebrated October 25<sup>th</sup> this year. And don’t skip the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, which whisks you from desert heat to cool mountain trails in just ten minutes.



#### Extra insider tips:

- Grab brunch at Eight4Nine, a locally adored spot known for its pink décor and all-welcome attitude.
- Check out PS Underground, an immersive dining/theatre experience that's as queer-friendly as it is unpredictable.
- Many boutique hotels here are clothing-optional — worth noting for travellers who like their sunshine with a side of freedom.

## Austin, Texas

“Keep Austin Weird” isn’t just a slogan — it’s a lifestyle. This city blends Southern charm with progressive values, making it one of the most LGBTQ-friendly cities in the state. You’ll find drag brunches at Rain on 4<sup>th</sup>, delicious vegan baked good at queer owned Skull & Cakebones, and live music venues that will keep you out until sunrise.

For lodging, Hotel San José offers retro-modern vibes and a courtyard perfect for morning mimosas. Austin’s annual QueerBomb parade and Austin Pride (usually August, so you may want to plan for next year) are bold, grassroots celebrations that turn the city into a playground of colour and sound. But the magic of Austin is also in its everyday — an evening on South Congress browsing quirky shops, catching live music at Mohawk Austin, or sharing tacos at Veracruz All Natural. It’s the kind of place where “y’all” comes with a smile, no matter who you are or who you love.

#### Extra insider tips:

- Oilcan Harry’s is Austin’s oldest gay bar and still a lively dance spot.
- For daytime community connection, check out The Little Gay Shop, a queer marketplace and community organizer that amplifies the voices and artistry of queer creatives.
- Foodies shouldn’t miss Lick Honest Ice Creams — proudly queer-friendly and serving inventive, locally sourced flavour.



## Sedona, Arizona

If Palm Springs is bold and Austin is buzzing, Sedona is serene. Known for its red rock landscapes and spiritual energy, this is a getaway for the soul. Hike Cathedral Rock at sunrise, or book a guided jeep tour through the canyons for views that make you forget Wi-Fi exists.

Sedona's LGBTQ+ community might be quieter than in a big city, but it's woven into the fabric of its wellness culture. Couples' spa treatments, queer-friendly yoga retreats, and boutique stays like Sky Ranch Lodge make it a romantic escape. The Sedona International Film Festival (February 21<sup>st</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026) often features LGBTQ+ stories, adding a cultural dimension to your trip.

And when the sun sets? Grab a blanket and head outside — Sedona is a certified Dark Sky Community, so the stars put on a nightly show worthy of poetry.

Extra insider tips:

- Local guides offer LGBTQ+-specific vortex tours for those curious about Sedona's famous spiritual energy points.
- Book dinner at Mariposa Latin Inspired Grill for upscale dining with breathtaking red rock views.

*Travelling to the U.S. as a Canadian right now can feel complicated — but travel, at its heart, is about connection. It's about stepping into spaces where joy, acceptance, and shared humanity can still thrive despite political divides. Palm Springs, Austin, and Sedona each remind us that there are pockets of warmth — both literal and metaphorical — waiting to welcome us. So pack your sunscreen, bring an open heart, and let the sunshine in.*

---

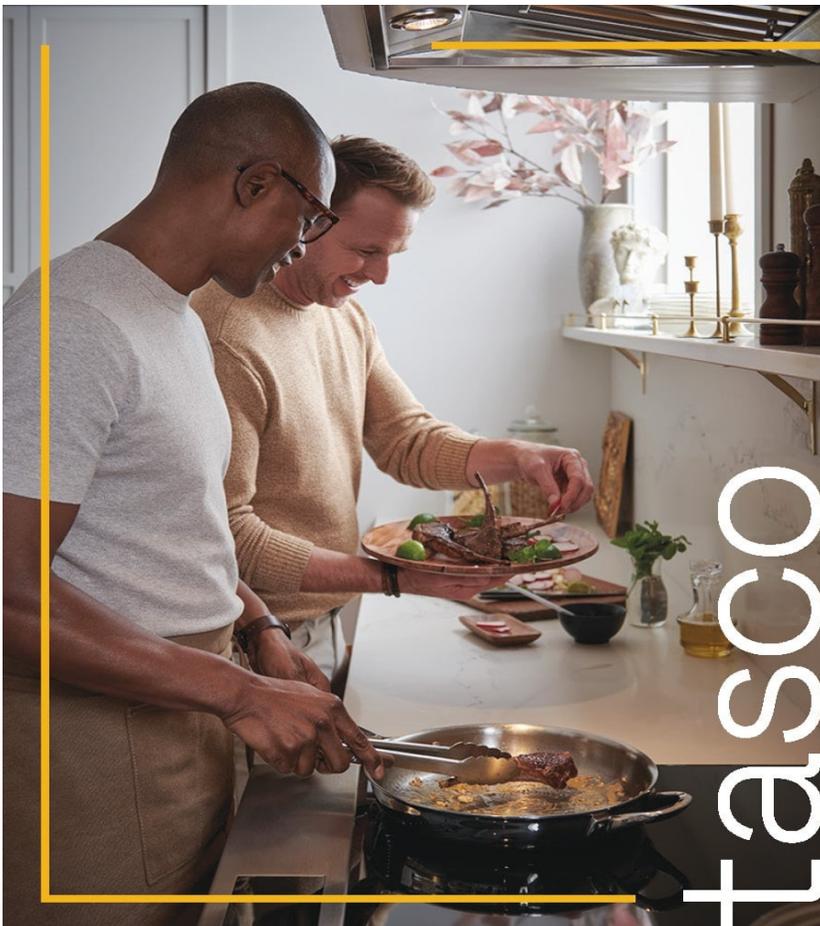
Compiled by PinkPlayMags editorial team.

Photography: Palm Spring Tourism, Visit Austin, Pixabay

# REELOUT QUEERFILM FESTIVAL

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

KINGSTON'S VIBRANT 2SLGBTQ+ FILM FEST  
29 JANUARY TO 7 FEBRUARY 2026  
[reelout.com](http://reelout.com)



tasco

# Every detail matters.

tasco  
appliances

WHERE PICKY  
SHOPPERS SHOP

# SAY YES TO THE CITY—

# ESCAPE TO —THE SEA!



All-inclusive  
ceremony packages  
for beautiful, fun,  
stress-free  
celebrations of love!

[HappilyHitchedHalifax.ca](http://HappilyHitchedHalifax.ca)



A photograph of two men in formal attire dancing in a narrow alleyway. The man on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a black tuxedo jacket over a white shirt and a black bow tie. The man on the right has dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a white patterned shirt and a dark blue bow tie. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The alleyway is flanked by yellow walls, and a stone path leads into the distance. The background shows a hazy, green landscape.

**Celebrating Queer  
Love Across Borders!**  
*Destination Weddings*



## The Allure of Destination Weddings

***Destination*** weddings have long captured the imagination of couples looking for something extraordinary: a ceremony in a place that reflects their personalities, values, and love story. For LGBTQ+ couples, the allure can be even stronger.

Research shows that destination weddings are growing in popularity among queer couples. So, curious as we usually are we dug deeper, and it turns out that LGBTQ+ couples, and it comes as no surprise, are increasingly choosing destination weddings not just for the scenery, but for the freedom to design a celebration that truly reflects their identities — a chance to celebrate openly in a supportive, welcoming environment.

And what they seem to be seeking are destinations that combine natural beauty, cultural richness, and fabulous hospitality. Whether it's a beachfront vow exchange or a mountain-top ceremony, the right location can transform a wedding into a memory that lasts a lifetime.

We asked two experienced wedding professionals to share their insight into planning LGBTQ+ destination weddings, offering a closer look at two very different locations: Costa Rica and Halifax.

## *Costa Rica: Where Queer Love Feels Visible*

Let's start with Costa Rica, and who better to speak to than El-Farouk Khaki, a marriage officiant who has helped couples from around the world celebrate their unions here. Khaki first arrived in Costa Rica in 1993 and was immediately captivated by its vibrant queer scene. "I saw arguably the best drag show I've ever attended — a 45-minute Madonna tribute that left the whole room cheering," he recalls. From San Jose to the Pacific coast, Costa Rica has a long history of welcoming LGBTQ+ travelers, with towns like Manuel Antonio offering clothing-optional beaches and a lively tourist culture.

We asked Khaki about the appeal of Costa Rica for destination weddings. He explained that the combination of stunning natural backdrops, inclusive communities, and flexibility for couples from countries where same-sex marriage isn't legally recognized makes Costa Rica a special place to celebrate. Whether it's a beach ceremony at sunset or a private forest gathering, couples can design a wedding that reflects their love story.

For couples considering a Pacific coast celebration, the Guanacaste province, and specifically Playas del Coco, offers a perfect mix of accessibility and charm. Just 25 km from Liberia International Airport, the crescent-shaped beach with volcanic sand, boutique hotels, and world-class restaurants sets the scene for unforgettable weddings. Couples can also work with local officiants, add musical performances, and customize ceremonies to reflect their culture, spirituality, or aesthetic.

Khaki emphasizes that these weddings are not only about logistics but about creating meaningful experiences. "Couples come to me because they want to celebrate their love in a place that allows them freedom and joy," he says.



The personal touches — whether it’s a sunrise vow exchange, an intimate dinner, or a family-friendly celebration — make Costa Rica a destination where queer love feels visible, honored, and unforgettable.

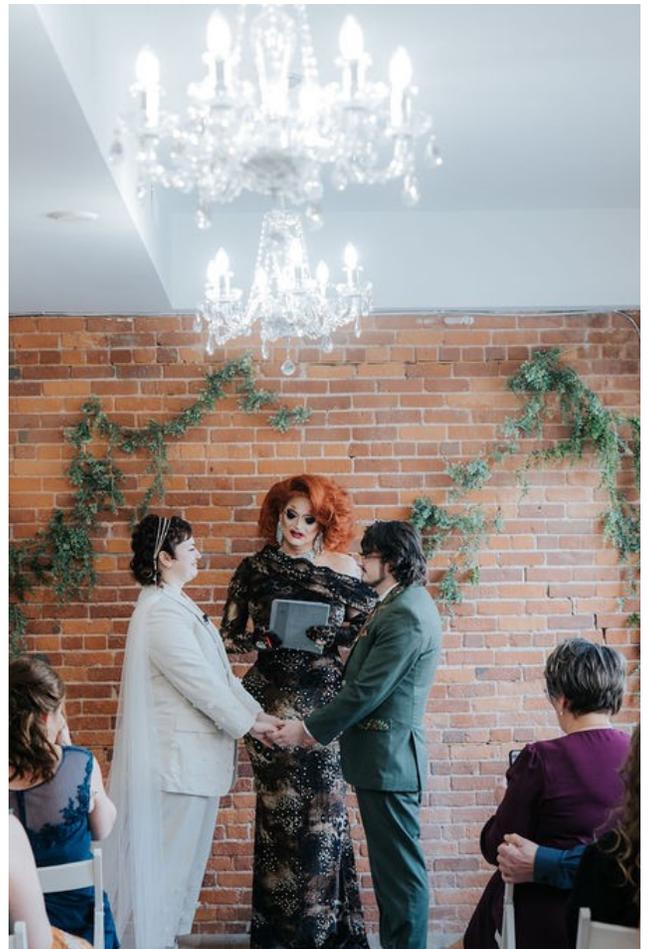
For couples interested in working with him, El-Farouk offers full planning support and ceremony services — you can contact El-Farouk directly via [elfarouk.khaki@yahoo.com](mailto:elfarouk.khaki@yahoo.com). He also collaborates with his husband, Troy Jackson, and percussionist Tajalli Moondragon for music, ceremony hosting, and special touches to make each wedding unique.

### Halifax: A Hidden Weddings Gem

We also spoke with Ashley Groves, the owner of Happily Hitched Halifax, to get her perspective on why Halifax is quietly becoming a favourite for LGBTQ+ couples planning destination weddings.

Ashley has been welcoming couples from across Canada and beyond to her downtown chapel, specializing in elopements and micro-weddings. She says what draws people to Halifax isn’t just its natural beauty — though the ocean views, cobblestone streets, and nearby vineyards are undeniably romantic — it’s the feeling of safety and inclusion. “We see couples who could go to Mexico or Vegas,” she told us, “but instead they choose Halifax because it’s beautiful, safe, and affirming. It’s a way to have the magic of travel without the stress of passports, political uncertainty, and to experience Maritime hospitality at its best.”

In the first four months of 2025, over 81,000 Ontarians visited Nova Scotia, and Halifax Stanfield International Airport welcomed 129,000 air visitors, with Ontario as the largest source market. With multiple daily direct flights from Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal in under two hours, the city is surprisingly accessible for a weekend escape or a longer celebration. Halifax is also one of Canada’s most gender-diverse cities, which matters to 2SLGBTQIA+ travellers — 89% cite safety as a top priority when choosing destinations.





Ashley's chapel offers fully inclusive ceremonies with everything from officiants and photography to bubbly toasts and locally sourced sweet treats. She also works with drag performers, livestreaming services, and other creative touches so every couple can shape their wedding to reflect who they are. "We celebrate love in all its forms," Ashley says. "Every couple who walks through our doors is welcomed, seen, and joyfully celebrated."

Couples often turn their Halifax wedding into a full getaway: stroll the waterfront, explore Peggy's Cove, taste Nova Scotian wine, or enjoy fresh local seafood. For 2SLGBTQIA+ couples especially, Ashley says Halifax offers the kind of safe, affirming experience that isn't always guaranteed abroad.

Visit Happily Hitched Halifax if you would to connect with Ashley or send an email, [ashley@happilyhitchedhalifax.ca](mailto:ashley@happilyhitchedhalifax.ca). Otherwise make sure to do all the research that you need to plan your special day.

## Love Knows No Borders

Destination weddings are about more than the location — they're about creating a space where love can be celebrated fully, authentically, and safely. From the sun-drenched beaches of Costa Rica to the charming streets of Halifax, to any other destination you might choose, LGBTQ+ couples have options that combine beauty, culture, and inclusivity.

Whether planning a wedding near home or across the globe, these celebrations are a reminder that love is a journey worth celebrating — no matter where it takes you.

---

*Compiled by PinkPlayMags editorial team.*

*Photos:*

*Kampus Productions  
El-Farouk Khaki  
Ashely Groves  
Johnny Edgardo Guzman*



# OUT NOW

*the anticipated debut album*



the songs that will make you feel good:

- 1) *Make You Feel Good*
- 2) *Love Letter to Life*
- 3) *We Are Dancing Together*
- 4) *This Wonderful World*
- 5) *Never Giving Up*
- 6) *Soldiers of Love*
- 7) *Tell the Stranger (Oloo Lel Ghareeb)*
- 8) *One Life to Live*

+ bonus cover of *My Life* available for free via website

## [www.elhashemmusic.com](http://www.elhashemmusic.com)

Facebook, IG, TikTok @elhashemmusic

Join our publisher as he chats with LGBTQ+ owned and friendly businesses in North America, and the occasional business experts. .



Your go-to source for the best new LGBTQ+ music! Includes New Queer Music Chart.

ONLY ON  
The Pink Pages Directory  
[www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com](http://www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com)

**PINK**  
MUSIC \* WEEKLY  
by The LGBTQ Creative Network

Loving and respecting ourselves  
A podcast for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, along with our friends, allies, and all human beings.



featured on

the **pink pages**  
directory.com

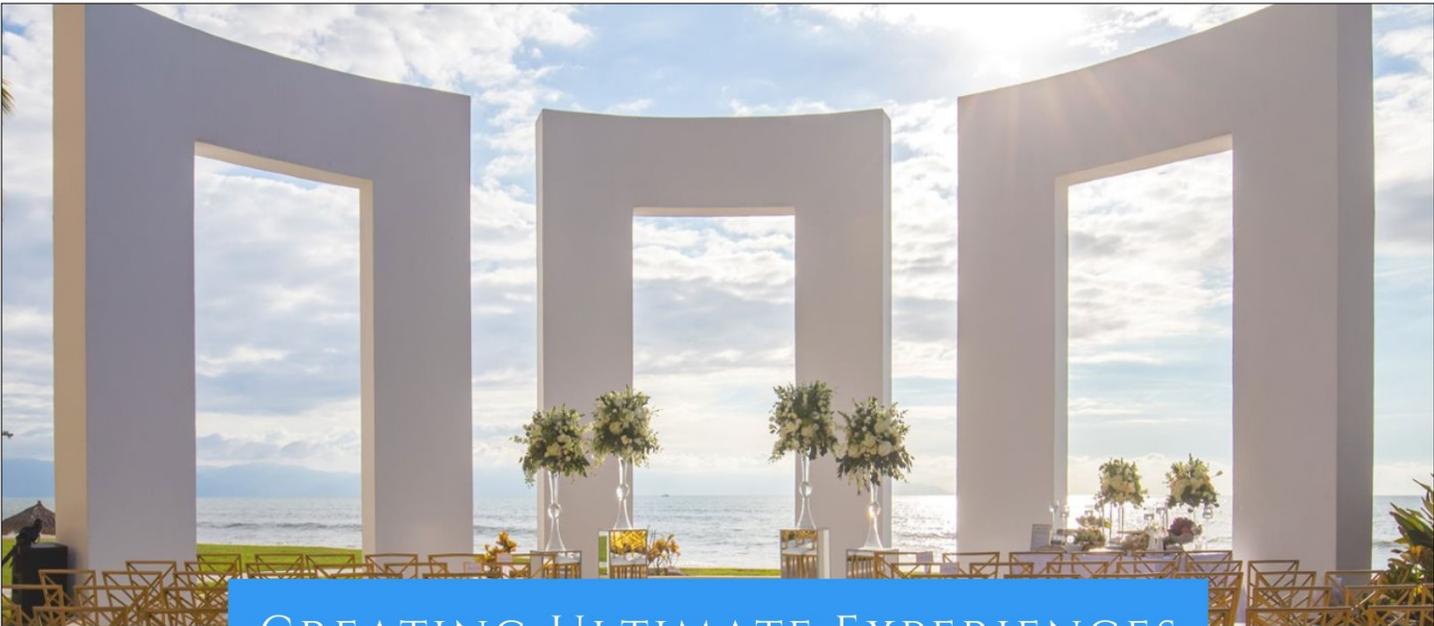
# downtown

WINERY  
EST. 2019

a new kind of winery  
wine bar   bottle shop   tasting room   event space



30 OSSINGTON AVE  
TORONTO, ON @downtownwineryto  
416 537 0416 www.downtownwineryto.com



CREATING ULTIMATE EXPERIENCES



WEDDINGS ♦ HONEYMOONS ♦ GETAWAYS

Let's start planning  
[www.ultimatedestinationweddings.ca](http://www.ultimatedestinationweddings.ca) | 888.362.3660

# Wanderlust & Pride

Your 2SLGBTQIA+ Travel Horoscope  
(October 2025 to February 2026)

The days are shorter, but your wanderlust isn't. Here's where your sign wants to go (and why) when the air gets crisp and the nights get cozy.

## ♈ Aries (March 21 - April 19) – The Bold Explorer

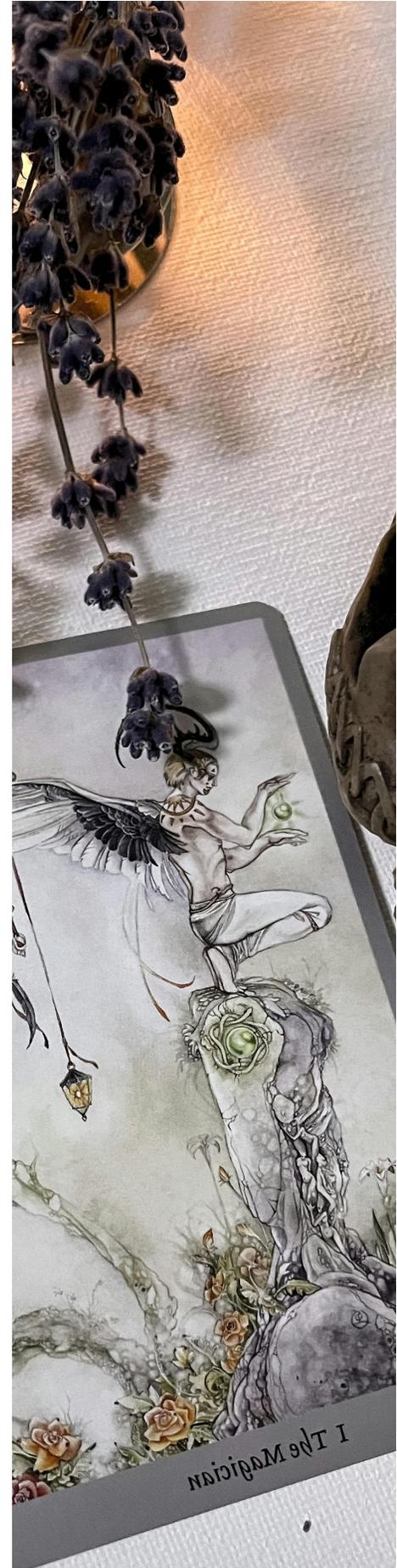
You hate staying still — even when it's freezing. This season, trade burnout for adventure. Hike somewhere steep, snowshoe somewhere silent, or chase adrenaline (safely). You're not made for hibernation — just layer up and go.

## ♉ Taurus (April 20 - May 20) – The Luxe Traveler

Autumn is your season. Rich colours, soft scarves, and indulgent evenings. You're not chasing thrills — you want textures, tastes, and a fireplace. Go where the blankets are heavy, the food is slow, and the Wi-Fi is optional.

## ♊ Gemini (May 21 - June 20) – The Social Butterfly

You're the life of the fall festival. This season, you want variety: bustling cities with winter markets, pop-up events, and people to flirt with under string lights. Book a place where there's always something (or someone) new to discover.





## Cancer (June 21 - July 22) – The Sentimental Voyager

This time of year stirs your emotions — in the best way. A foggy coastal town, a historic inn, or a snowy village where you can journal, nap, and romanticize your life? That’s your sanctuary. Go somewhere that hugs you back.

## Leo (July 23 - August 22) – The Glamorous Globetrotter

You were born for velvet season. You need a destination that lets you show off your cold-weather glam and feel special. Think bold lights, rooftop cocktails, and luxurious lobbies. Bonus if it has a piano and someone to admire you from across the room.

## Virgo (August 23 - September 22) – The Mindful Traveler

You’re ready to unplug from the noise and reconnect with your quiet power. A solo retreat, heritage town, or guided nature walk might just be the reset you didn’t know you needed. Go somewhere with charm, structure, and clean linens.

## Libra (September 23 - October 22) – The Romantic Wanderer

Romantic, aesthetic, and deeply seasonal — you’re basically the human version of autumn. Find beauty in an old European-style city, or a small-town art haven where you can sip, stroll, and subtly break hearts. Dress cute, travel well.

## Scorpio (October 23 - November 21) – The Intense Explorer

You’re in your element when the world gets darker. Take yourself somewhere moody — a cabin in the woods, a gothic old town, or a snowy destination where mystery lingers in the air. You want solitude, passion, and maybe one deep, unforgettable connection.

## Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21) – The Free Spirit

Cold weather can’t tame you. You’re craving movement, meaning, and something you’ve never done before. Plan a road trip, hit up a new country, or explore a spiritual destination. Just don’t stay in one place too long — your fire needs space.



**♑ Capricorn (December 22 - January 19) – The Sophisticated Traveler**

You've earned this. You grind hard all year, and now it's time for structured leisure. A well-planned ski trip, a historic city with a detailed itinerary, or a quiet luxury inn with good cell service and even better coffee — you can do both.

**♒ Aquarius (January 20 - February 18) – The Radical Nomad**

You're not here for cookie-cutter anything. This season, find a destination that feels a little offbeat — think ice hotels, remote artist towns, or northern lights under a weighted blanket. The weirder the story, the better the souvenir.

**♓ Pisces (February 19 - March 20) – The Dreamy Escapist**

You absorb the world like a poem, and this season, your soul wants magic. Waterfalls, snowfall, antique shops, maybe a cottage with a record player and no expectations. Go where you can dream big and feel small — in the best way.

From snowy escapes to soul-deep retreats, let this season remind you that there's beauty in slowing down — and in following your own path. Whether you're chasing northern lights or cozy nights, remember: the best travel companion is always your fabulous self. The world changes with the seasons — and so do you. Pack your bags, trust the stars, and don't look back.

## Safe Travel

# THE SLING SISTERS

FIRST SINGLE FROM THE ANTICIPATED "WHAT I HOPE TO FIND" ALBUM

OUT



Now



ON ALL MUSIC PLATFORMS AND [WWW.ELANAHARTE.COM/THE-SLING-SISTERS](http://WWW.ELANAHARTE.COM/THE-SLING-SISTERS)

## “PROTECT YOURSELF!”



### Criminal Defence

- Bail Hearings
- Drug Offences
- Drunk Driving
- Assault, Theft
- Robbery

### Lawsuits

- Civil
- Commercial
- Collections
- Wrongful Dismissal
- Negligence
- Personal Injury
- Real Estate Litigation
- Family Law

Tel: 416.869.0707 Fax: 1.905.433.0507

Cell/Text: 416.442.5888

e-mail: [jherszkopf@on.aibn.com](mailto:jherszkopf@on.aibn.com)

.....  
Yonge Eglinton Centre 2300 Yonge Street, Suite 1600, Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

**FREE CONSULTATION**

Jerry Herszkopf - Barrister & Solicitor

# the Q musicale

THE  
CURTAIN  
HAS  
COME  
DOWN

ON THE 2025  
2ND ANNUAL PRIDE SEASON  
5 DAY QUEER LIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL  
1ST OF ITS KIND IN CANADA'S HISTORY

@

THE DISTILLERY HISTORIC DISTRICT

  
Pride  
TORONTO

2025 MAJOR CULTURAL EVENTS

TikTok

The Pink Pages Directory  
Harmless harvest

**THANK YOU! SEE YOU IN 2026**

SUPPORTING and UPLIFTING Live Queer Music and Artists

[www.theqmusicale.ca](http://www.theqmusicale.ca)