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QUEER LIVING LUXURY

It's the PRIDE issue!

- Life is a luxury, and Dahlia Black looks at lottoliving. ◦
- Kian Javier considers luxury on a budget. ◦
- Rob Browatzke dreams of vision boards. ◦

Two NEW writers have different views on age – Bryan has A Senior Moment, while Amaya thinks about being Q and Zed.

A guest from Florida gives us a splash of southern poetry that may titillate.
Cooking with Kara sizzles out on the BBQ, with indoor prep options.

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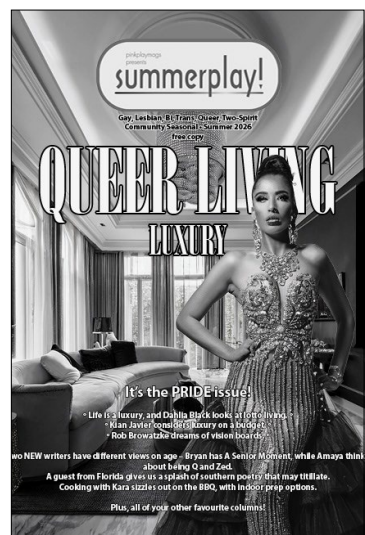
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Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Queer, and Two-Spirit
Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags
Free • Summer 2026

Publisher/Creative Director: Antoine Elhashem
Editor-in-Chief: Sherry Sylvain
Art Direction and Production: Mychol Scully
Executive Assistant/Admin Manager:
David Vogelhut

Contributors

Writers: Dahlia Black, Kian Javier, Rob Browatzke,
Charles Michelson, Bryen Dunn, Kara Thurston, Sean
Ban Beaton, Sherry Sylvain, Amaya Kodituwakku,
Brian Greenwood, Mychol Scully



Cover Concept Antoine Elhashem
Cover Design Mychol Scully

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Published by

INspired Media Inc.

Operating INspiredcreative (www.inspiredcreative.ca), and publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Local Biz Magazine.

President Antoine Elhashem
General Manager Kim Dobie
Admin Manager David Vogelhut
Advertising Adam Matonic, David Vogelhut
Counsel Jerry Herszkopf Law

Mailing address

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

To contact us

416.926.9588 Toronto 905.231.9722 GTA

Websites

www.inspiredmediainc.com

www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com

www.pinkplaymags.com

www.thebuzzmag.ca

We'd love to hear from you. Please send comments, questions or any other matters to publisher@thepinkpagesdirectory.com

For advertising inquiries

advertising@thepinkpagesdirectory.com

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From the Publisher



Welcome to our Pride Issue and the second edition of our ongoing Queer Living series.

In this issue we take a look at Luxury. For some, luxury means beautiful homes, unforgettable travel experiences, fine dining, fashion, or collecting life's special moments. For others, luxury is something much more personal: the freedom to be yourself, the ability to love openly, the comfort of belonging, and the opportunity to build a life surrounded by people who support and celebrate you.

The truth is that luxury looks different for each of us and that's what makes it such an interesting topic to explore. Whether it's a dream vacation, a successful career, time spent with chosen family, or simply a peaceful moment in a busy world, luxury is often found in the things that bring us joy and help us live our most authentic lives.

Longtime PinkPlayMags readers may remember that we've played with them before in *The Luxury Issue parts one and two*. But we got a little cheeky back then. In Winter 2010, we published *Scandals of the Rich and Famous: The Holden Affair Exposed*, a photo essay that followed Toronto's glamorous Holden family secrets, scandals, and same-sex affairs threatened to unravel their picture-perfect lives. We revisited the story in Winter 2015 with

Shocking: Town's Richest Living in Sin — The Holden Affair Continues, where the drama only became more outrageous. If you've never met the Holdens, or if you'd like to revisit their adventures, both stories are available on our website.

As we celebrate Pride season, I encourage all of us to take a moment to appreciate how far our communities have come. Pride is a celebration of diversity, resilience, courage, and community. It is also a reminder that the freedoms many of us enjoy today were made possible by those who came before us and chose to stand up, speak out, and create change.

On behalf of everyone at PinkPlayMags, thank you for being part of our community and for allowing us to continue sharing stores that inform, entertain, and celebrate queer life in all its forms.

I wish you a joyful Pride season filled with love, laughter, connections, and perhaps a little luxury of your own.

Happy Pride!

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher
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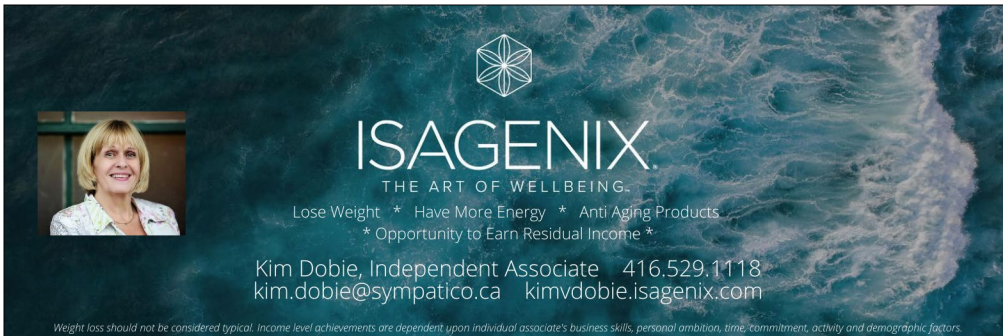


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From the Editor



It is Pride month! And, though most of us think of Pride as a feeling of satisfaction, pleasure, or self-respect, it serves us well to know that P.R.I.D.E. is also an acronym dating back to early 1967 in California, USA. The acronym was established after police violently raided a gay bar raid in late 1966. Not willing to endure this mistreatment, an organization was established with the name P.R.I.D.E. which stands for Personal Rights In Defense and Education. That early rights organization's monthly one page newsletter eventually became "The Advocate", which is the longest running queer news publication anywhere.

And, in our Pride issue, we are proud to offer you some wonderful content where we delve into the concept of "luxury". What is luxury, really? It is different things to different people, and can include those things about which we dream, we are proud, or which we value, be they material or intangible. From considering how one might live in luxury after a lotto win, through luxury on a budget, to dreams on vision boards, and travel that doesn't have to break the bank to feel like a getaway.

Meanwhile, for our literary offering, we are visited by a guest writer from Florida with some alluring poetry with which some may find connectivity and reflection.

Our cooking column offers some incredible ideas for a light summer feast, while our Community Cornerstone looks at a haven for youth who may have to wonder from where their next meal will come. And, speaking of Youth, we introduce a new writer from our youth community with a look at being a Queer Zed, as a representative of our senior community gives us a view from Boomerland.

And, not to worry, our regular columns return with Hot Artist, From The Heart, In The City – so you won't miss any of the best happenings – horoscopes – so you'll know if your stars are going to align – and, of course, thoughts from our publisher on the issue, the season, and life in general.

Sherry Sylvain
Editor-in-Chief
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Living Large, Lotto Style

By Dahlia Black

I think we all do it. At least sometimes. We look at the number in that lotto jackpot and think, “Oh, if only... what I could do with that!” The question is, what could I do with that? Most, if not all of us dream of being “rich.” That brings up the next question: what is “rich”?

Is being rich a monetary thing, or something more? Are we rich if we have a good life with a comfortable home, food in the fridge, clothes in the closet, and our health? At least 18% of the world’s population live in poverty, while in Canada, approximately 11% of the population live below the official poverty line, which is roughly \$25,000.00 per year for a single adult, depending on where in Canada one is located.

Some of us are much richer than we believe; however, as the old proverb tells us, the more you have, the more you want. There are many examples of the ultra-rich who seem to focus on little more than becoming richer. Interestingly, we seem to idolize some while villainizing others. Is the difference in their behaviours, their methods, or something more?

Regardless of all of this, humans always want to have more. And that lottery dream is the perfect illustration. We buy lottery tickets on a recurring basis, despite the fact that most of us never win much, if anything. I often think that I would have a much richer savings account if I simply put the cost of all of those lottery tickets in a special little account. Otherwise, I do tend to think that I may as well put \$10.00 or so per week in a paper bag, and burn it in an alley.

But, I, and most of you, continue to buy those lottery tickets and dream.

My dreams are probably a little different than the dreams of most others because I realize that every asset one acquires comes with costs. There are taxes, maintenance, insurance, and replacement costs for those more ephemeral luxury items.

At the time that I write this, the jackpot for Lotto max is \$20 million, while for Lotto 6/49 the classic jackpot is a paltry \$5 million, and the Gold Ball jackpot is estimated at \$14 million. These numbers make me think that I should only buy tickets when the jackpots hit the big numbers, like \$70 million; but, realistically, any number of millions is more than the millions I already don’t have.

And so we dream, and we buy tickets.

And, I do dream. I know that if I were to win \$20 million, I could immediately spend \$2 million in the first year, and invest the remaining \$18 million at an average annual rate of return of 7%, which would provide me with an income of \$1.26 million per year. I’m pretty sure I could live extremely well on that income, despite the tax department. However, there are so many horror stories of lottery winners who have spent their winnings like it was a bottomless pit, and have ended up broke. Estimates state that as many as 70% of lottery winners go broke due to a lack of financial literacy. Although some lottery winners, usually in the lower bracket, may continue working in the job they’ve had for years, and continue to live in the same home, or only modestly improve their standard of living, and spend their winnings slowly over many years, the big winners tend to be the ones who mismanage and lose it all.

Specifically, the big winners tend to go big, buying luxurious mansions and extravagant cars, not realizing that they have depleted their cash reserves and cannot afford to maintain the cost associated with their excessive spending.

There are also the people who never could manage money, and have always exhibited reckless spending habits. These are the unfortunate ones who spend on luxurious lifestyles, extravagant trips, and generous gifts to family and friends.



Sadly, we also have those who fall prey to financial scams, predatory schemes, and poor financial advice. Greed can often be the great stumbling block for those who have won great wealth, and will risk large amounts on schemes which promise to make them even richer.

If you win big, the best thing to do is to keep your mouth shut about until you have engaged a team of professional financial managers; this is not a DIY project.

But, all that aside, we have established that it is possible to experience a great windfall and be smart about it so that you can enjoy it for many years to come.

Would I blow a bundle on a particular luxury items? I would certainly consider a few.

You can't buy a lot of house in Toronto for only \$2 million, so I'd start by moving outside of the GTA. With the current state of the real estate market, I could buy a nice house on the waterfront, on the north shore of Lake Erie, south of London the \$2 million dollar range. I'm sure I could get

a mortgage for at least half of that with my \$18 million dollars safely invested in blue chip stocks, mutual funds, and similar.

Of course, I now have to furnish this fabulous home – inside and out – with appropriate furniture and accessories. Home insurance policies generally suggest that you insure your home's contents for approximately 50% to 80% of the value of the home. So, I now have to spend another million dollars plus on furniture, knick knacks, and clothing. Not to mention jewellery. And, I have to insure it all. This is getting expensive, and I haven't even bought a car, yet!

Let's start with the car. What would I absolutely love? It seems a top-end Bentley convertible will run me a little over \$500k – plus tax, license, and insurance. Even with my stellar driving record, I think the insurance won't be cheap. I guess I'll have to finance this car because I only gave myself \$2 million for the first year, and I've already spent about \$2.5 million, not including furnishing that house, or buy clothes. Or jewellery!

Clothes will not be cheap because I will definitely be shopping at the best places, and most of the places will require me to fly to NYC, LA, Paris, Milan, or London – first class. Can I afford to charter a private jet? I'm going to have to hit every major designer, and I'll be buying bespoke – not off the rack, thank you. That will be pricey... plus tax, and import duties.

And, I will want to buy jewellery and accessories.

I'll need a watch – or two – and they should be Patek Philippe which start at about \$10k each for

something basic, but easily run up to \$500k for something really nice. Plus tax.

And shoes! I'll need some Louboutins, which will run me an average of \$2k per pair for heels and boots. I'll want to replace my full existing collection of 30 pairs of shoes and boots, so I've just dropped another \$60k, plus tax...

And about the other jewellery. Various quality gems stones in earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. Do I want a tiara? I can probably pick up a nice diamond tiara from an estate jeweller for under \$100k.





And what about food?! I'll have to eat! We all know that groceries are ridiculously expensive, thanks to "certain" current economic factors. But, to be honest, I probably won't be cooking – I don't like doing it, I don't do it well, and I really hate doing dishes. Do I hire staff to deal with my diet at home? A full-time private chef will run around \$100k per year, while a full-time housekeeper will run me another \$50k per year. I guess I'll also have to pay taxes and benefits for them. Restaurants are another option, particularly when one is on a shopping trip, and one exceptional restaurant meal can easily run \$500 per person – because I won't be eating alone, thank you – plus wine and spirits, and a very good tip because I was a server in my pre-lotto days, and know that servers live on tips.

When I do dine at home, with my private chef and housekeeper, I guess I'll need dishes and silverware. A good set of Wedgwood for 12, with serving pieces is going to run around \$6k, while the cutlery will be sterling by Birks, 145 pieces for 12 place settings, plus serving and specialty pieces (who doesn't want a marrow spoon, or gilt berry spoons?) will easily run \$18k.

You know, \$20 million doesn't go as far as it used to. Good thing I didn't think I was buying a really luxurious mansion in Forest Hill, Rosedale, or The Bridle Path, or similar neighbourhoods in Toronto – you can get something fairly nice starting at the \$10 million mark, and just watch the prices climb from there. There are even condos in those neighbourhoods which can easily run \$10 million to over \$20 million. At that upper end, you do get a full floor to yourself, with a marvellous view, and parking for 4 cars. Sadly, the maintenance fees are just over \$12k per month, and the property taxes are almost \$64k per year. Plus insurance.

You know, this whole Luxury Lotto Living is getting quite expensive. I somehow feel poor with my measle \$2 million dollar first year allowance, and seemingly generous \$1.26 million per year – less income tax. Sure, that \$1.26 million is strictly interest, and I still have \$18 million in the bank; but, each year inflation will dig into that \$1.26 million per year, and it will buy less and less. I remember, way back in the 1970's when we in Canada first had the Olympic Lottery. The big prize was \$1 million. That sounded like a lot of money, back then. And it was, relative to the cost





of living. In the mid-70's my parents bought a large house in an upscale Toronto suburb; they paid \$70k for it. By the late 70's, they bought a "country house" for the laughable price of only \$25k – they put a few K into renos; but, it was still not much. Back then, I can remember that I had started driving, and my first used car – actually a 3 year old luxury sedan, cost the astounding price of \$1k, and a tank of gas was as much as \$15. I used to earn \$5 an hour for babysitting, and we could go out for a burger, fries, and a pop at the local diner for maybe \$2 each. At those prices \$1 million was a vast amount of money; but, inflation eats away at everything over time.

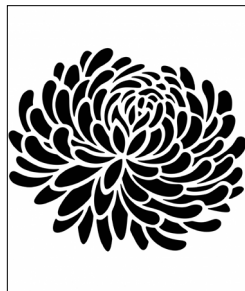
Upon reflection, I think I would have to seriously reconsider my lotto dreams for luxury living. I've long depleted my annual allowance, and have to keep my sticky fingers off of my capital. And, I haven't even made any donations to worthy causes, or helped out a desperate family member – of which I have a couple.

Lottery dreams are fun and exciting, until you dig into the reality of what your life could or could not be, even with a seemingly vast amount of money. I wonder if I should just put my ticket money in a savings account, or only buy tickets

when the jackpot is massive – like \$70 million. Or should I enjoy dreams and delusions of grandeur while keeping my feet firmly planted on the ground? No amount of money is going to buy me health, love, or true companionship. I think I will hold my home, hearth, and loved ones in higher esteem, knowing that I cannot ever buy the love of a good partner, or the loyalty of a warm fur baby. I expect is better to know that you are absolutely loved for who you are, rather than how much you have.

But, seriously, do you think for a moment I'd turn down the jackpot?

Dahlia is the female voice of a genderfluid guest writer for *summerplay!*. Dahlia is newly self-identified as genderfluid, and does not yet feel comfortable with a photo. Dahlia enjoys exploring their identity, and reading fantasy and fantasy-realism fiction.



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**DISCOUNTED DOPAMINE:
 HOW TO LIVE LUXURIOUSLY ON A BUDGET**

By Kian Javier



Despite living a little outside the margins—feeling good and looking good can become more than surface-level; it can be forms of expression and even quiet resistance.

That's why so many folks like me are getting creative about how they access this feeling—sometimes out of necessity and sometimes because it's genuinely enjoyable.

For me, it's both. Call it luxury on a budget. It can look like upcycling furniture pieces which have built-in character, thrifting with friends on slow weekends, digging through pawnshops for hidden gems, or tapping into discount apps that stretch a dollar just a little teeny bit further.

Here are some of my honest takes and tips to feel and look good without your receipt looking like a phone number.

Groceries and Household Items

Let's start with the easiest win: online discounts, digital coupons, or cashback apps—what you can consider the holy trinity of feeling savvy. My go-to has always been the app, Flipp. It's for anyone who loves a good flyer moment but refuses to be buried under piles and piles of papers, wants to be more sustainable for Mother Earth, or simply doesn't have the time (or patience—that's me) to go digging for deals that you don't find until page 9. You'll get access to deals from multiple Canadian

stores for clothing, accessories, shoes, home and utility, furniture, art decors, and more. Flipp shows all of the location and time-based discounts in one interface. It also kinda acts like Pinterest which is another feature that I enjoy. It lets you clip deals and create your shopping list on the app based on the weekly (at least what I do) deals. All you need to do is enter your postal code upon downloading the app and boom, you're in.

If apps aren't your thing because you're not sure how they're curated or if AI is involved, that's fair. Not everyone wants



to put down their first name, last name, and promise their firstborn just to save \$2 on oat milk. But, as someone who loves hosting dinner parties, I like to find the best deals on how I can minimize costs and maximize the quantity of what I serve. I've found a slightly unhinged but effective workaround: following a Costco blog. Yes, it's exactly what it sounds like. It's a human-curated website, cocowest.ca, that gathers Costco deals from BC, AB, SK, and MB every few days. Sorry to the other provinces.

It includes real-time images captured on the day of the deal availability, so you know quite well what you're getting into. I think there's something more raw and real, perhaps charming, with

finding unpolished, unedited pics of the products over promotional images with which we are all bombarded on a daily basis. It's kinda like your mom texting you saying "Aisle 7 now - great deal for heated blankets." Complementarily, they have a Facebook page that shares the same content in a different channel and boasts 155k followers. That has to be trusted and vouched, right?

Clothing and Decor

One platform I've had occasional luck with is Poshmark. And by occasional, I mean you do have to sift a little, but there are genuinely great finds hiding in there—clothes, shoes, accessories, designer pieces,

vintage gems, the whole spectrum. That said, I rarely end up actually ordering from it because sometimes the shipping fees feel a bit too much. Yes, the shirt may be \$14, but why does delivery cost as if it's being transported by Taylor Swift herself in her private jet? Maybe that's just the saving mentality in me, but I'd rather put that extra money toward something tangible I can walk into a store and buy myself.

What I would say is, if you're hunting for something super specific like discontinued sneakers or a bag you saw once three years ago and haven't stopped thinking about, you can absolutely (probably) find it there. Sometimes, the internet does provide.

Next stop: thrift stores—the last affordable gateway to luxury, also probably my

favourite. Thrift shops for me are a religious experience. They are grounding, sensory, and sometimes overwhelming. I once went to a Value Village in Sherwood Park here in Alberta and spent 2-3 hours just going through racks of used shirts I could crop. It ended up becoming my wardrobe for the rest of the summer. Thrift stores are also a great place for accessories—you just have to ask because sometimes the good jewelry is tucked away in a separate room like it's under witness protection. I promise it's worth the effort!

Of course, feeling good extends outside of our physical bodies but to the physical space we move and live in. I have found several great decors from thrift stores but particularly cheap vinyl records that I play



as soon as I get home to provide some elevated ambiance and unwind. Granted—some of them skip or are broken, but hey, a \$5 Nat King Cole record is a win in my book.

Living Well is a Skill

Living well is a skill, not a status symbol. For a lot of us, feeling good and looking good become small forms of solace so learning how to do so with limited resources is an art on its own. It deserves more recognition and credit than it gets.

It might mean spending an extra hour digging through thrift racks or debating whether a faded print on a shirt means that it's vintage or just old, but I genuinely think that effort makes those pieces more meaningful and intimate. They come with stories, memories, and personality in a way brand-new retail items, arguably, don't. Luxury, at least for me, has become less about price tags and more about creativity, intention, and curating something beautiful out of very little.

Kian Javier is a 27-year-old writer and creative based in Edmonton, Alberta who treats life like a first draft—always open to a rewrite. His work is a landing pad for lessons learned in real-time, capturing the messy, beautiful process of building a life in your 20s where the goal isn't just to arrive, but to thrive as the queer man he is becoming.



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to change our bodies, just change our relationships with them. But if you are aspiring to a new improved body that signals a new improved you, keep in mind the smaller victories on the road to that big vision.

Dreams are good – and really, that’s all vision boards are – physical (or digital) manifestations of the dreams we carry within us. Dream big, yes, but try to make that dream a reality in manageable but meaningful ways.

I once started with a personal trainer and he asked about what my goals were, and told me not to worry how silly or superficial they seemed. I said flat out I just wanted to see that vein down my bicep, an insanely silly and superficial goal, to be honest, but every bicep on every man on my mental vision board had that. That was the goal. And when I saw it there, that was the victory.

A short-lived victory as it turned out; an injury soon stopped me from working out, and that bicep soon faded into memory. Because, when it comes to the physical, working towards those vision-board washboard abs is ongoing.

A big purchase or vacation is a different story. If you’ve always wanted to go to Australia, then those pictures of kangaroos and Uluru are what keep you focussed. Sure, you could have that weekend in the mountains, or that fall wardrobe shopping spree, but sometimes, having that vision

board goal helps put the brakes on. That’s a different kind of balance. Yes, I could have A now, but it means delaying B; what’s more important? And not just what’s more important at this moment. With what will the “Me of Tomorrow” be happier with the “Me of Today” doing?

But, that’s the practical side. The savings side. And this, this is just about the dreaming. There’s nothing wrong with dreams, if we don’t weaponize our own dreams against ourselves, if they are, in fact, our own dreams rather than the dreams we saw on a reel. Vision boards are reminders that we can make dreams happen. Whether the board is physical or digital, whether its pictures or words, it’s something we make because dreams matter. We need to dream, and we need to know that some dreams, at least, can be actualized.

Dream with intention. “This is my goal. This is what I want. This is how I am going to get there.” Dream with reflection. “This was my goal, but it’s not anymore, and that’s okay. I can take this picture down because life has changed.” Dream with clarity. “There are lots of things I want from life, from myself; but, right now, it’s This Specific Goal that matters. This is my immediate quest.”

Above all, dream without envy. That’s the truly insidious underbelly to aspirational living. We want because they have. Or, we think they’re happy because they have. Especially in 2026 when we are inundated with branded content and sponsored collabs, all of which are really just a 24/7 advertisement in which we are stuck. Turn off the noise. Close your eyes. The dream



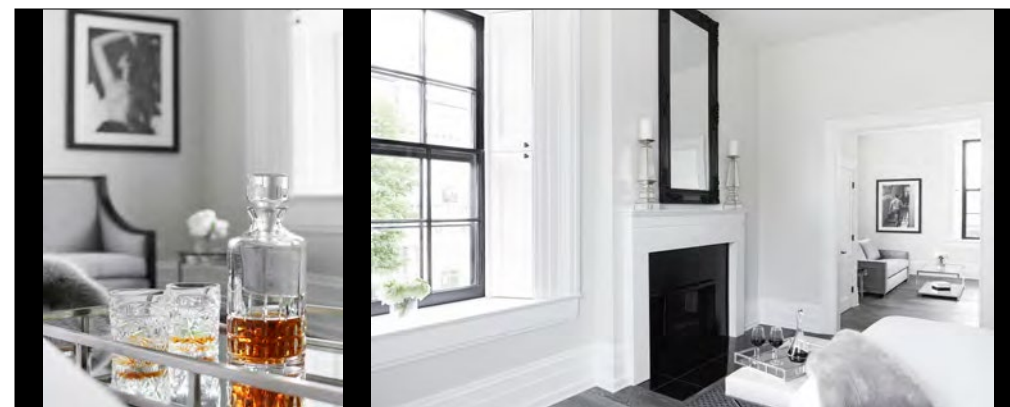


you need to happen will find you there, in the silence and the dark. You'll feel the resonance of it. You'll feel uplifted by the purity of it, if it's coming from a dream inside you and not an ad around you.

Then find the words or images that will put you right back there, in that moment of clarity, and put it somewhere you'll see it when you most need to see it. A refresher course on dreams and hope, that with some hard work and focus, you/we/I can make happen. Because we deserve it.

And that twelve-year-old closeted kid with a collage of cut-outs of Luke Perry (RIP) and Kirk Cameron (cringe) and Keanu Reeves? He never looked like them, or dated them, but he manifested himself a pretty good gay life, and those cut-outs were the first step.

Rob Browatzke is an Edmonton-based writer and teller of gay stories.



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Living Da Vida Luxury

Travel Tips for Savvy Savings



By BryenDunn

Travel is one of those things in life that people value and look forward to. It can be that much-anticipated annual holiday from work, a trip to visit family and friends, a special occasion, or even just a weekend getaway.

With the cost of living on a never-ending upward spiral, we need to start reconsidering our finances and budgets to ensure that we are still able to allocate those travel funds for our dreams to come true. In this travel feature, we're taking a look at various ways to help you stretch your dollars and maximize your savings. As well, we'll offer up some handy advice on how to take advantage of free offers and inside tips that can still make you feel like you're having a luxurious experience, while not bursting your bank account.

1. Sign Up for Loyalty Programs and Newsletters

Loyalty programs have become a way of life for us, with airlines, hotels, car rentals, credit cards, dining, and more all having some sort of offering to try and keep your business with them. Sign up for everything you can, even if you might only be using it for that one time. There are often bonus sign-up offers that provide instant perks or bonus points. Credit cards often waive any enrollment fees for the first year, while also offering enough points for a free flight, accommodations, or lounge passes. Hotels may include free WIFI and discounts for onsite dining and parking. Airlines might offer free checked bags, priority boarding, or even free upgrades. As well, many hospitality partners allow for the transfer of points to other partners, so your hotel points can be used for airline perks, and vice versa. Enrollment is typically free, except for the higher end credit cards that offer greater incentives. Finally,

subscribe to email newsletters from all hospitality partners, as well as travel magazines and blogs, as this is where you're most likely to hear about flash sales, discounts, giveaways, contests, and more!

2. Travel Off-Peak

If your schedule permits, try travelling on weekdays instead of weekends. This not only offers a less crowded experience, but rates for flights, accommodations, attractions, and more are often lower priced and more available. If at all possible, try to avoid statutory holiday travel when most everything is more expensive. Celebrate a week before or after, and you'll have more money to spend on yourself. The same goes for off-season travel, avoiding the peak of summer, and opting for a late spring or early fall visit instead.

3. Ask For Upgrades

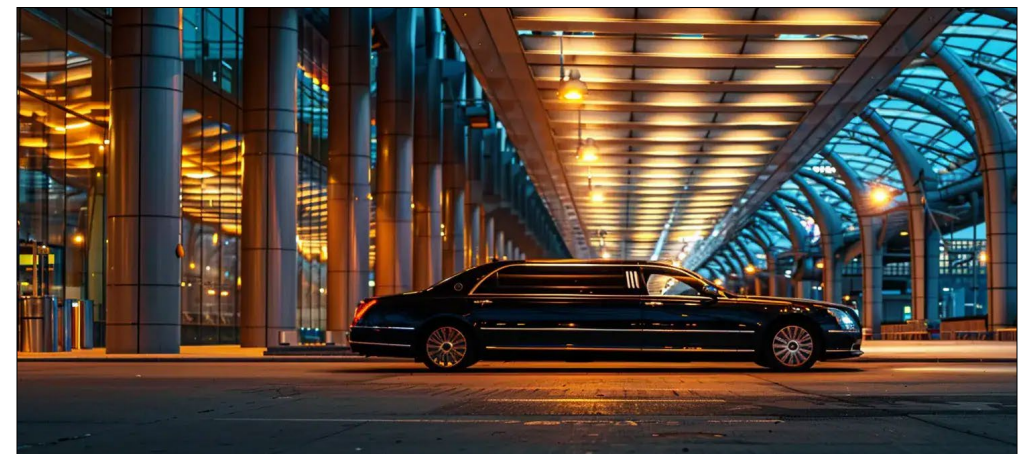
We've heard the saying, "If you don't ask..." Have no shame in asking for upgrades upon hotel check-in, when picking up the car rental, or just prior to boarding your flight. Often employees will have authority to do some sort of complimentary upgrade if space permits, and you're a loyalty member (see above), and of course, you smile and are nice! Even requesting a corner room or upper floor with a view can make a difference to your stay, or having your seat changed to closer to the front of the plane will have you on your way to vacay sooner.

4. Avoid The Beaten Path

Instead of travelling to the popular bucket-list destinations, opt for something nearby in the same region that can often offer the same cultural experience. There are amazing cathedrals and castles around the world, and sometimes the best discoveries can be found within smaller cities and villages, where both the entrance fees and crowds are less, as will be most everything else from accommodations to dining out. Besides, haven't you heard about and seen enough images of the Eiffel Tower or Taj Mahal that you feel you've already been there anyway?

5. Pack Light

Yes, packing is a pain. What do you want to wear for that safari, or a night out on the town? We've all been there - we cram as much as possible into our tiny suitcases, only to return home not having worn many of the items we brought. Ideally, if you lay everything out that you want to bring, then cut that in half (or at least 2/3rd), you'd most likely have closer to the amount you actually need. This not only cuts down on the burden of transporting heavy luggage every time you move, it will also save you money on luggage fees. No one should need more than a carry-on and a backpack for a trip less than a week, unless of course you're a drag queen!





6. Content Creators

Sometimes deciding where to go can be challenging. Do you want an exciting adventure, an immersive cultural experience, or a fun-in-the-sun beach holiday? The best thing to do is research by reading travel magazines and websites, and also checking out travel content creators on social media. There are so many out there, with some offering niche market advice on travel topics like spas, cuisine, biking, birding, and queer-friendly destinations. Find out where and when smaller community Pride events are happening, what places are emerging as the next queer hotspot, and how you can support local queer businesses while on the road.

7. Discounts, Perks, and Freebies

As mentioned above, sign up for loyalty programs and newsletters to get exclusive offers, such as seat sales, complimentary nights with a minimum stay, upgrade coupons, and special discount promo codes. Also keep an eye out for any freebie offerings, such as breakfast-included at hotels, snack offerings on flights, unlimited mileage on a car rental, 2-4-1 admission on attractions, restaurant discounts, and more. Check both online and in local travel brochures, newspapers, and tourism offices. Again, “If you don’t ask...”

8. Alternative and Affordable Accommodations

Yes, hotels are the tried and true, and we all have our favourites. However, what if we were to jump out of our comfort zone and try something new, that would also offer savings while still allowing you to have the same local experience with everything else? There’s Airbnb, and Misterb&b (for queer travellers), and there’s also home swap and pet care programs if you’re a bit more flexible and open to a more grassroots approach. There’s even couchsurfing if you’re really looking to budget, but also have an experience like no other staying with a local. As well, when the weather permits there are plenty of upgraded glamping options out there now, from yurts and cabins, to fully furnished cottages. These can often be found within an hour of urban metropolitan centres, making it easy to hustle and bustle your day away,



while looking forward to the calm and quiet of a relaxing evening.

9. Staycation

Okay, for those wanting to splurge on a holiday without going broke, look no further than your own city, region, or country. There are no expensive flights to book, and you’ll be there quicker. I know everyone thinks somewhere else is more exotic and fascinating, but once you start to dig, you’ll be surprised at all the things that can be found nearby that you weren’t even aware of. Take those flight saving dollars and splurge on a resort property that offers all the stay and play amenities included. Spend locally on attractions and dining, and help your neighbouring businesses. Also, you can go home knowing that if you had an amazing time, it’s so much easier to go back to again. So go on, be a tourist close to home, and perhaps instead of one international vacation you’ll have enough savings for two local ones!

10. Rideshare and Public Transit

Unless you’re going on a road trip, I wouldn’t recommend renting a car. Besides the actual rental fee, which can be outrageous in high season,

there’s also parking and gas to be considered, as well as road tolls and (ooops) speeding tickets. Most cities have some form of local transit to get you from the airport to the downtown core, and many are faster than driving in traffic and not knowing where you’re going. Typically transit rates are between the \$3.00 and \$5.00 range. Also, once at the destination, consider an all-day pass that allows you to take unlimited rides to everything you want to see. For that special occasion, you can always opt for Uber/Lyft, or those driverless Waymo vehicles popping up in various cities. Look mom, no hands... or driver!

So, there you have it, a handy guide that will help you navigate your next travel adventure, while saving you time and money. Travel is meant to be fun and should be an option for everyone who wants to do it, regardless of their budget. One final tip is to start a travel fund by putting aside a minimum amount every week, whether that be \$10.00 or \$100.00. At the end of the year, take that amount and see how far it will get you. You’d be surprised at all you can do with a little bit of cash, and a big imagination!

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.





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Incr'edible Bites

"As the weather warms and grilling season begins, this BBQ Chicken Marsala brings together the best of spring and summer cooking — smoky flame-grilled chicken, fresh seasonal vegetables, and a rich, earthy Marsala mushroom sauce. It's the kind of meal that feels elevated enough for entertaining, while still being relaxed and rustic enough for a backyard dinner with family and friends."

Ingredients

Chicken

- 3–4 whole chicken legs w/ backs attached
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt & pepper
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp fresh rosemary (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika

Fingerling Potatoes

- 1 lb fingerling potatoes, halved lengthwise
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Thyme + rosemary
- Salt + pepper

Seasonal Vegetables (spring/summer ideas)

- Asparagus, carrots, zucchini, or green beans (either mixed or choose 1)
- 1–2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt + pepper

Marsala Sauce

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup Marsala wine (dry preferred)
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup heavy cream (optional, for a creamy finish)



- 1 tbsp fresh thyme
- Salt + pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Season the chicken

Mix the following ingredients in a bowl: olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic powder, rosemary, paprika. Rub this mixture on the chicken

Let sit at room temp for 30 minutes (or refrigerate overnight for deeper flavour).

2. Par-cook potatoes

Boil fingerlings in salted water for 10–12 minutes until just tender. Drain and toss with oil, salt, pepper, thyme and rosemary.

Cooking Methods

Chicken (Indirect Heat)

1. Preheat BBQ to 375°F (190°C) with indirect heat zone. Or use oven/air fryer on roast/grill
2. Place chicken skin-side up away from direct flame.
3. Cook 35–45 minutes, turning occasionally.
4. Finish over direct heat for 5–8 minutes to crisp skin.

5. Internal temp should reach 165°F (74°C) at the thickest part.

Potatoes (On BBQ or in the oven)

- Place par-cooked potatoes in a grill basket or foil tray, or in tin foil
- Roast on BBQ for 15–20 minutes, turning occasionally until crispy and golden, or in oven on an

oven safe tray.

Vegetables

- Toss with oil, salt, pepper.
- Grill directly or in basket for 8–12 minutes depending on veg., or use an air fryer on roast/grill
- Aim for char + slight bite (don't overcook).

Marsala Sauce (Stove top or Side Burner)

1. Heat butter + olive oil in a pan.
2. Add mushrooms → cook until browned and moisture evaporates (important for depth).
3. Add garlic → cook 1 minute.
4. Deglaze with Marsala wine → simmer 3–5 minutes to reduce.
5. Add chicken stock → reduce by half.
6. Stir in cream (optional) → simmer until slightly thickened.
7. Finish with thyme, salt, pepper.

I look forward to creating an incr'edible' experience with you in every issue, with a little Tender Love and Kare in every bite!

After many years in the restaurant world, Kara Thurston decided to venture out on their own. Now, they focus on the things they love the most - small intimate parties of approximately 40–60 people, serving a variety of filling bite-sized items that are sure to please the palate.



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Hot Artist

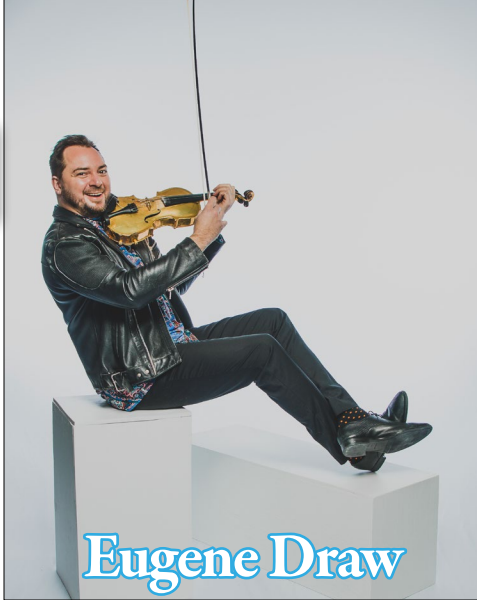
It's always impressive when a musician has the Royal Conservatory chops to dazzle an audience with technical proficiency, and it's next level when they're able to pull emotion from that technical skill to tell a story without words - but it's rare to find a musician who is a true performer.

Electric violin pioneer and lifelong queer ally Eugene Draw, or 'Dr. Draw' as he's known professionally, thrives in a live environment, and has spent his career honing the craft of engaging audiences through passionate performances on his signature golden violin.

After emigrating from the Soviet Union with his family as a child, he got his start busking right on Church Street in Toronto's Gay Village at age 14. "Busking taught me how to connect instantly," he explains, "how to read people, and how to create a moment powerful enough to stop someone in their tracks."

After a favourable mention in a Toronto Star feature, his career began to take off. He got noticed by an agency and was paired up to perform events alongside legendary operatic drag performer Bitch Diva, and by 16, he had become a regular fixture on stage at Woody's, FIVE, and Fly Nightclub. His manager, who was well-connected in the drag scene, arranged bookings for him at Fashion Cares, Montreal's Divers/Cité Festival, the Black & Blue Festival at Montreal's Olympic Stadium, and a stream of gay bars and circuit parties from Toronto to Montreal and beyond.

At 18, he had more exposure to queer culture than your average straight teenager of that era would be bold enough to admit, but as a self-identified eccentric, he felt he was lucky to have found a community that embraced his differences. He recalls, "In my teen years I was raised by the Gay Village, and it played a huge role in shaping who I am today. It was a world that was incredibly creative, intellectually stimulating, and deeply accepting of others. There was a lot of



kindness and support in the scene, but also fierce criticism, which was really useful to me as a young performer."

Now a successful artist with six albums under his belt, Draw has been performing his blend of world music and 'rave violin' to audiences worldwide, with a mission to encourage self-expression in others: "I think a lot of my work comes from wanting people to explore who they are creatively, and to recognize that there is a place for them in the world exactly as they are. I've always tried to lean into individuality rather than hide it."

Dr. Draw's upcoming album is now in the works, with a public performance planned for late July. His solo show is also currently touring to various wineries around the world, and Nemesis, his collaboration with beatboxer Scott Jackson, has two new singles with corresponding videos set to be released later this summer.

For more, visit drdraw.ca, or @drdraw on Instagram.

Sean Ban Beaton is a music creator, performer, and sound editor in Toronto.



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On Seeing Pink Flamingo's Flasher scene for the first time

I.

One is titillated even aroused
Amused by John Waters Boyhood Humor
His forever young David Lockery getting
Being Fellated
And then cut away to
The bare breast perfectly round
The hot dog that is tied to his
Flaccid penis
All this is to say thank you
John Waters

II.

Campy and fabulously absurd
A flasher walks up to an unsuspected
Woman
His long hair bounces as he flings
His trench coat opens
Exposed is a very chilly appendage
Which is tied with twine
Attached is a uncooked frank
It's all encompassing

III.

Being a baby gay and watching
Pink Flamingos For the first time
And thinking I'll love this Big Queer Life as
long as I live
Some Love Song

The beach chair

There you are
Sitting in the hot sun
It slaps you
Sweat is pouring out of every orifice
Places you didn't even know sweat could come

out of
You feel like you are hung over
Its been a long day
Suddenly an annoying brat chucks a beach ball
It lands on your face
a perfect ten points
you rock backwards
your legs writhing like some turtle that's been
flipped over
your embarrassment is only briefly ceased
by the sound of sea gulls cackling at the fact
If you could only bury your head in the sand
But alas you cannot
So you dust yourself off and try to but your
beach chair has other plans
It closes like an allegator on your toes
Woosh you fall through it
Now it has been broken in like someone had a
good time with it
It is the conclusion of a very long and
obnoxious day
Your tired feet burn drag your burn carcass to
the car
You carry all your beach ephemera to your
back seat
Including your blown out beach chair

Where's the lost Bermuda shorts

I.

Standing in the gay friendly hotel
Waiting for the luggage
To be brought in by the bellman
Wearing corny outfit of burnt orange and teal
My husband john is fuming

II.

Now I'm a pretty patient person
But when the suitcase that your husband has
so carefully
Packed like a surgeon

Explodes in the lobby
You might say I lost my cool.

III.

So the question still remains
Where are my Bermuda Shorts
They were my favorite pair!
Periwinkle and white polka dots

IV.

"No!, they are not in the suitcase" john says
Finally, I look to my left they have
Landed in the fountain filled with coy

Some Love Song

I.

Through the thistle
upon the wind
Through the days of
Life
That have stained
This ancient mind
That is unvanquished
As if it were eternal
Now the total heart
Encapsulates the
Lost soul
The love unknown
Its embers glow
Bright yellow and gold
Through the hours
And years that have
Passed in search of
True love
Through the many drinks
Of cheap beer and conversation
Through all this
A resolve which is unflinching
The idle of love
Sits upon a bar stool
Its name is tattooed on his arm
Etched into the skin like needlepoint
The blair of the sound
Melts away only this
Moment is now unfurling

Before me as gaze upon your manly frame

II

Later we can hear
Each other's breath
As our ribs hold each other
And echo into the depths of
Our being is outstretched
the longing Of our desire for each other
The totality is in this moment of passion
The feeling unmatched
We are holding the new
World within this embrace
My Flesh for his flesh
Now and forever

III.

We meet on Beale Street
It was a hot night
And there you were sitting
With a dusty cowboy hat and auburn hair
On a bar stool
Unbothered
At that instant my world
And everything I knew
Became your hope
All my troubles and pain melted away
And
Your promise
Your soul
Intertwined
With mine
Forever

Charles Michelson is a South Florida Based Poet who loves opera and cheesecake. His work has appeared in Jimson Weed, Lights and Shadows, and The Sucamochee Review. He loves Pink Flamingos!



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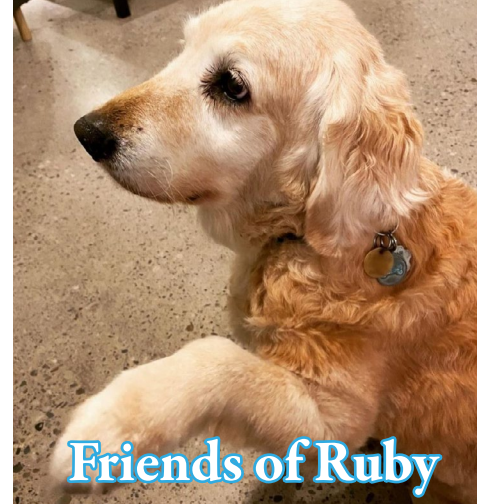


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A welcoming space for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

Friends of Ruby supports two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and all gender non-conforming youth (aged 16-29) by providing free counselling, housing and social services.

Friends of Ruby was founded in 2014 by Egale Canada as Egale Youth Services to meet the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the Greater Toronto Area. The catalyst was Egale's "Not under my roof" study that shone light on the crisis of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth homelessness due to disproportionately high rates of family rejection, violence, and trauma.

The report made clear that there was an urgent need for services specifically for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the shelter system. It found that almost one in four young people experiencing homelessness or precarious living identified as 2SLGBTQIA+. Subsequent research suggests the number is even higher, with unique barriers to transgender youth for housing.

Moved to action, Egale Canada started two initiatives: the construction of a housing facility dedicated to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, and a Youth Centre to better support and understand the needs of youth while the house was under construction.

Since then, the Youth Centre has doubled in size, featuring a drop-in space, barrier-free counselling, practical support programs and meals. It is housed in a brand new, purpose-designed 7,500 square feet space at 70 Richmond Street East, and provides support to over 100 young people per month.

In 2019, Friends of Ruby became an independent charity to best support young people and expand their scope as they prepared to open the Friends of Ruby Home – Canada's first custom-built transitional housing facility for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

Once upon a time, this burgeoning youth centre had a young person who visited the drop-in space, but never spoke with anyone. Most of the time they would sit in a corner by themselves and stare. Despite the best efforts of many, the youth didn't seem comfortable engaging with staff or other participants.

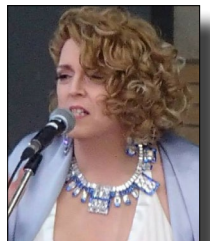
Then, one day, they had a visit from Ruby, a golden retriever who enjoys cuddling and meeting new people. The two hit it off immediately. Little by little, the youth opened up, asking for Ruby whenever they visited and eventually started counselling, with Ruby by their side. They were a friend of Ruby.

Friends of Ruby is all about creating a supportive community; there with you on your journey. More than a pet, Ruby is a symbol of the connections that happen at the centre with the focus on respect, accountability, transparency, continuous learning, collaboration, and the dignity and strength of the individual.

Friends of Ruby
70 Richmond Street East, Suite 400
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Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).



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Queer Zed

“I just wish they’d be quiet about it, they don’t have to rub it in our faces.”

The above quote is an often-parroted sentiment found across social media comment sections, usually found on videos posted of people and their loved ones celebrating Pride. The raucous laughter, bright colours, and dazzling smiles of a community celebrating their history and strength seems too much for the average anonymous (cowardly) account to handle. Comments like this plague the internet; it’s hard to swipe across your algorithm without feeling the weight of the comment section creeping up to scare you into silence.

As the years have passed, and the winds of gender- and sexuality-based hate continue to blow in our direction, I have noticed my body tense up whenever June rolls around. This sense of unease in my bones really came to a peak three years ago: June 28, 2023. I was walking around the University of Waterloo campus with one of my close friends, taking in the warm summer sun and chatting up a storm. I distinctly remember one of the topics of conversation being how much we dreaded those difficult conversations with our extended family members. Next thing I knew, people were running out of Hagey Hall, and armed police officers covered the Arts side of campus.

It has been three years since a Gender and Social Justice classroom was brutally attacked by a man in what was officially considered a hate crime by the courts. After the attack happened, it took me months to feel even remotely comfortable on a campus and in a city that I had so easily once considered a home. I know the same can be said for many of the queer

and trans students, staff, and faculty across campus; we were angered by the University’s lack of adequate response, prevention measures, and culture of transphobia, homophobia, and misogyny that sowed the seeds for an attack like this to happen in the first place.

Now in 2026, we are seeing a slew of anti-trans legislation being introduced across Canada. The numbers of 2SLGBTQ+ youth feel like they’re dwindling, not because there are less children coming out as queer or trans, but because the psychosocial tolls of being out and proud are terrifying in an online and offline climate that claims that there is only one right way to love and one right way to be.

No, cowardly social media commenter, I will not be quiet about it. I will continue to scream and dance and laugh my way into a world of beautiful queer and trans joy—for those before me, for those with me, and for those who will come after me.

Bio: Amaya Kodituwakku (they/them) is a Sri Lankan-Canadian graduate student, beginner knitter, and intersectional feminist.

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Artists! Submit Your Music Online
curatedbyq.com/submit-music

by Brian Greenwood

A Senior Moment

Every June, corporations discover Pride. The rainbow logos come out, the giveaways appear, the merchandise arrives, and we're told how welcoming and inclusive everyone is. Some of us are old enough to remember a different Canada.

We remember when being openly queer could cost you promotions, careers, housing, safety, family, dignity, opportunity, or your life. We remember when corporations weren't lining up to associate themselves with us or market themselves to a demographic with disposable income; we remember when we were "fired" for incompetence before your life or health insurance premiums were raised to your disabilities from "the plague".

We remember when there was a price attached that was greater than your money. They got rid of us. Now they want to party with us?

The further we get from those years, the more Pride seems to be repackaged as a cheerful consumer experience rather than a hard-won civil-rights struggle.

The difficult part for corporate was standing beside queer people when doing so carried social, political, professional, and financial risk. Optics were just not good. "Stay away from that. They carry signs and dress funny and chant. We can't be part of that. Run away, run away."

Many of the people who paid that price are no longer here.

Sorry, I don't get excited about a Pride flag hanging from a corporation that spent decades benefiting from a society that marginalized us, only to discover its enthusiasm once acceptance became profitable. Sure, city halls and governments raise their flags for four weeks a year and make a big deal about it in local news and social media. I remember when those same governments beat us, locked us up, ruined our lives, even killed us, and did so with pride in containing a social threat and plague, under cover of law. Sure.... Hang up your flags. They're drenched in the blood of my generation and that of my queer ancestors. We weren't screaming for attention on tik-tok. We were screaming

for our lives. Then, begging for the drugs while conservative leaders like Reagan in the States and Mulroney, Campbell, Harris, et al. in Canada waited for more of us to die. Was that then? Yes. And ever since, the Right have held to the oppression of human rights belief systems.

But, what interests me even more, is what organizations and councils do with their pride flags during the other eleven months of the year than what they advertise in June.

Has any major corporation or council ever held a vigil, memorial, or act of remembrance for the employees who suffered, were marginalized, were forced into hiding, lost their careers, or died during the years when being identified as queer carried real consequences, and the police enforced it?

Has any corporation meaningfully acknowledged those who paid the price before Pride became transactionally marketable?

This brings us to the questions about memory, accountability, and whether support is still support when it arrives after the danger has passed and the party has started. Sometimes what looks like solidarity can also look like self-congratulation, or "transparent corporate virtue signalling with impunity". Sometimes what is presented as courage and inclusion is simply arriving after the battle has already been won, and it's easier to be on trend.

We remember when there was a cost that wasn't measured in visibility, marketing campaigns, quarterly reports, or seasonal flag waving.

Do you?

Bryan is a senior, long-lived member of Toronto's LG... community having inhabited the culture since 1977. As such, he has a rather well-informed, cynical view (to a fault) of how the culture changes.



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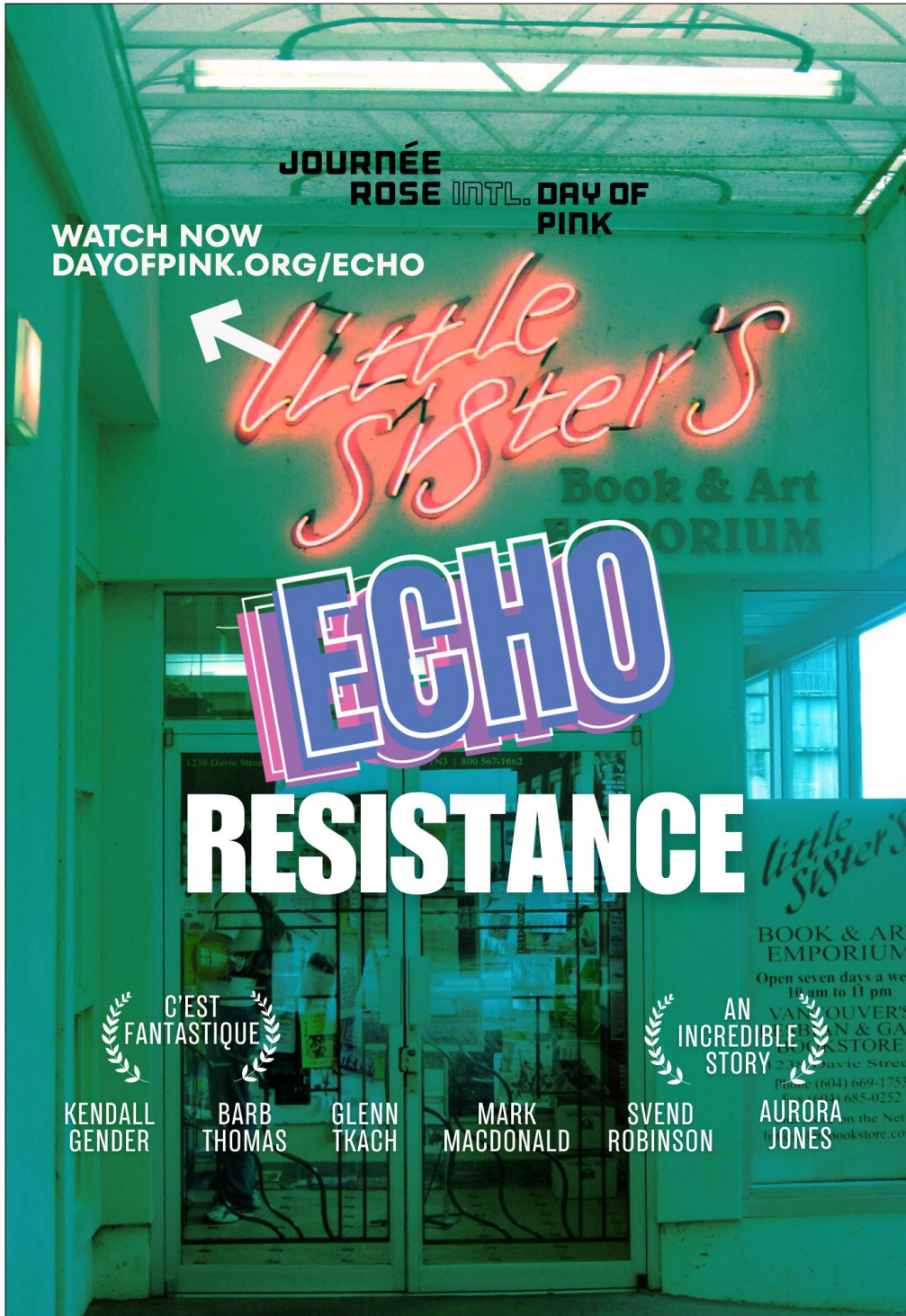


Loving and respecting ourselves. A podcast for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, along with our friends, allies, and all human beings.



featured on





What's happening in and around The Village?

C.U. Next Tuesday - Open Stage

Tuesdays from 9:00 p.m. to midnight

Bring your sheet music or pick a song from their song books. Musical Theatre & Jazz Standards encouraged but you may sing what you like.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

<http://www.ogradyschurch.com/>

Open Stage Cabaret

Tuesdays from 10:00 p.m.

An open stage event hosted by a stunning array of leading queens, with special guests. DJ Cory Activate. GLORIOUS Star Making Machinery & BIG Fun. Arrive early to sign up as a performer.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<https://www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch>

Hump Night Honeys

Wednesdays; from 10:00 p.m.

Hosts Carlotta Carlisle and Katinka Kature welcome an array of special guest stars with DJ Chris Steinbach, and Toronto's sweetest staff.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<https://www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch>

Jock Night Thursdays

Thursdays; from 10:00 p.m.

Join hostess Morgan James, everyone's second favourite drag queen, and the semi-clad (or less) men of Cock Bar for an evening of feisty fun and frivolity. Drink specials, prizes, and surprises. This is a "men only" space on the second floor, and not handicap accessible.

Cock Bar, 461 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

<https://www.flashonchurch.com/>

The Dmanda Show

Fridays from 9:00 p.m.

Friday Night Drag Race viewing party and live Drag Show with Dmanda Tension and Vitality Black, plus some of Toronto's best performers! Must be 19+ with valid ID.

The Drink, 459 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

<https://beacons.ai/drinkatthedrink>

Hollywood Broadway Show

Sundays from 6:00 p.m.

Hilarious host Georgie Girl welcomes a selection of guest performers every Sunday evening serving up your favourite hits of stage and screen, and more.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<https://www.instagram.com/woodysonchurch>



Cain Culto

June 24; 7:30 p.m.

After leaving his acclaimed Christian band Ecclesia in 2021, he reemerged as Cain Culto — an artist reclaiming his spirituality, sexuality, and cultural roots. A fearless DIY auteur, he crafts provocative music and visuals that challenge faith, politics, and capitalism, fusing protest, satire, and undeniable pop magic.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., Toronto
<https://www.showpass.com/cain-culto/>

Pride in the Six

June 27; 7:00 p.m.

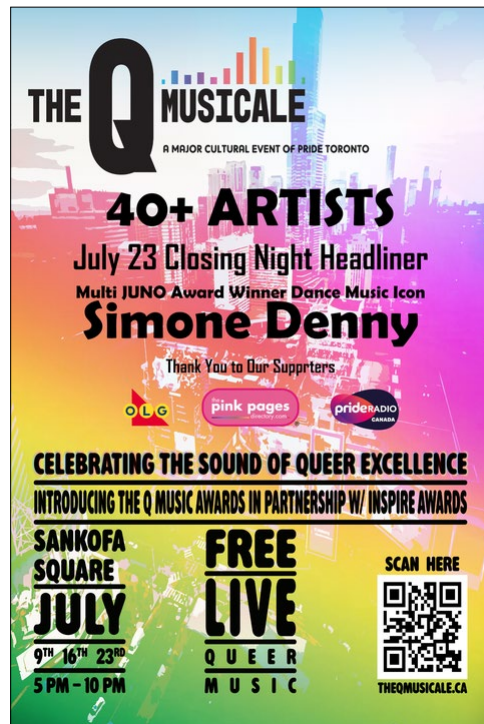
DJ DALLAS presents PRIDE IN THE CITY. Whether you're vibing on the patio or tearing up the dance floor in the AC, this is the place to be. Friends and Allies always Welcome when accompanied by YOU. \$22 Advance; \$25 at the Door
 The Keating Channel Pub and Grill, 2 Villiers St., Toronto
Musicandfriendsdanceparties@hotmail.com

The Q Musicale Festival

July 9, 16, 23; 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

All queer, all live music! Featuring special guest artists Micah Barnes, Nicolina Bozzo, and dance music icon, Simone Denny. Plus, The Q Music Awards on July 23 featuring 5 exciting artists who are the recipients of the new awards for Queer Song, Solo Artist, Group, Emerging Artist, and Album of the Year.

Sankofa Square, 1 Dundas St. E., Toronto
<https://theqmusicale.ca/>



Looking for Queer fun outside The Village?

Spiritual Circle

Last Sunday of each month; 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

In partnership with Durham Alliance Outreach, Pride Durham, and Club 717. Hosted by Glenn. A monthly spiritual circle where all are welcome to explore faith in an inclusive environment.

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa
<https://www.club717.com/>

Karaoke

Thursdays; 8:00 p.m. to midnight

Whether you're an award-winning vocalist, a show-tune aficionado, or just enjoy a great time, with great music, and good friends, this night is for you! No cover.

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa
<https://www.club717.com/>

Drag Bingo

June 26; 8:00 p.m.

They are excited to bring you a live, intimate, fun night of Drag BINGO - part of their 'Pride Tour'! Drag, BINGO, and Prizes in an interactive environment all wrapped up in Rainbows! Happy Pride!

Raging Bull Dart Lounge, 84 Lewis Rd., Guelph
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/troyboyentertainment/2242865>

Pride Palooza

June 26; 9:00 p.m.

Join host Scarlett Letter and special guests Gloria Hoal & Dixie Normus for a night of incredible drag, cheap drinks, and unforgettable Pride celebrations!

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa
<https://www.club717.com/>

Canada Drag

July 3; from 9:00 p.m.

This show is dedicated entirely to Canadian music, with local drag performers taking the stage to celebrate iconic Canadian artists and legends through lip sync performances, comedy, and runway moments.

Club 717, 717 Wilson Rd. S., Oshawa
<https://www.club717.com/>



Pitbull X Fur - Camp Boozy

July 24 - 26

Ready for all the naughty boys to head to the woods for a weekend of shenanigans at Cedar's Campground? Pack up your sunscreen and speedos, they're about to get wild in the woods.

Cedars Campground, 1039 Concession Rd. S.W., Hamilton
<https://www.camplife.com/1061/reservation/step1>

Looking for fun with the Queer-adjacent crowd?

Toronto Jazz Fest presents Isaiah Collier

June 22; 7:00 p.m.

Experience one of the most exciting voices in contemporary jazz in this special celebration of John Coltrane's centennial. An incredible legacy celebrated by a maverick of creative and improvisational force.

Hugh's Room, 296 Broadview Ave., Toronto
<https://torontojazz.com/artists/isaiah-coller-coltrane/>



Toronto Jazz Fest presents The Dip

June 24; 8:00 p.m.

With a three-piece horn section and a vintage sound, The Dip harkens back to earlier soul and funk influences while hinting at the jazz foundations that brought the band together - selling out shows across the continent along the way.

The Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave, Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/>

Canada Day

July 1; 4:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Don't miss the incredible lineup of Canadian rising stars and biggest acts on the saugaLIVE Stage, featuring the pop stylings of Tedy, Latin-Pop powerhouse Aiona Santana, and multi-platinum, JUNO award winning, bbno\$.

Celebration Square, 300 City Centre Drive, Mississauga

<https://www.mississauga.ca/arts-and-culture/>



Black Gold

August 15; 8:00 p.m.

A talent-packed music review featuring solid gold hits from Motown, R&B, Disco, and Soul to Rock'n'roll!

Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/>

Reverend Horton Heat with The Surfrajettes

June 23; 7:00 p.m.

A true rock and roll institution storms the Maxwell's stage. Reverend Horton Heat deliver a high-octane, sweat-soaked live show that fuses psychobilly, rockabilly, punk, surf, and country into something wild, primal, and unforgettable.

Maxwell's Concerts and Events, 35 University Ave. E., Waterloo

<https://ticketscene.ca/events/58292>

Pitbull Rave

July 10; 10:00 p.m.

On arrival, you'll be handed a bald cap. From that moment on... you're part of it. A sea of bald heads. Sunglasses on. Hands in the air. Pitbull, reggaeton & Latin party anthems.

Biltmore Theatre, 39 King St. E., Oshawa

<https://tickets.biltmoretheatre.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=338>

Drag Bingo

July 10; 8:00 p.m.

A live, intimate, fun night of Drag BINGO - brought to you by Eventful Moments with Amanda! Drag, BINGO, & Prizes in an interactive environment! Let's play with balls!

Bourgeois Community Centre, 527 Len Self Blvd., Midland
eventfulmomentswithamanda@gmail.com

Summer Noise Fest

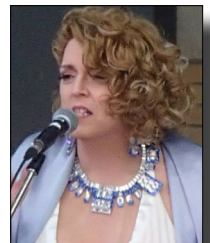
July 11; from 6:00 p.m.

In its inaugural year, Summer Noise Fest takes over Biltmore Theatre with a stacked line including: The Wild High; Excuses Excuses; The Jailbirds; Double Experience; Army Of One; ZAFTIG.

Biltmore Theatre, 40 King St. E., Oshawa

<https://tickets.biltmoretheatre.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=331>

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).



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From The Heart



Living the luxurious life doesn't always mean breaking the bank. With a little creativity and smart planning, you can enjoy a touch of elegance without overspending. Here are some fun and friendly tips to indulge in luxury on a budget.

1. Embrace the Power of Thrift and Vintage Finds

Thrift stores and vintage shops are treasure troves for unique, high-quality items at a fraction of the original price. Whether it's a chic designer handbag, a stylish piece of jewelry, or elegant home decor, these hidden gems can elevate your style and living space without draining your wallet.

2. Pamper Yourself with DIY Spa Days

Who says you need a fancy spa to relax and feel pampered? Create your own spa experience at home with affordable ingredients like Epsom salts, essential oils, and homemade face masks. Light some candles, play soothing music, and enjoy a luxurious retreat without the hefty price tag.

3. Opt for Experiences Over Things

Luxury isn't just about possessions; it's also about creating memorable experiences. Look for free or low-cost events in your community, such as outdoor concerts, art exhibitions, or scenic hikes. These activities can provide a sense of indulgence and adventure without the expense.

4. Upgrade Your Wardrobe with Capsule Collections

Instead of buying numerous trendy pieces, invest in a few timeless, versatile items that can be mixed and matched. This approach not only saves money but also helps you build a stylish wardrobe that exudes sophistication.

5. Focus on Quality, Not Quantity

When shopping, prioritize quality over quantity. Well-made items last longer and often look more luxurious. Look for sales, outlet stores, or online discounts to find high-quality pieces at a lower price.

In conclusion, luxury on a budget is entirely achievable with a bit of creativity and a positive attitude. Remember, it's all about enjoying the finer things in life without the stress of overspending. So go ahead, indulge yourself—you deserve it!

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing any time at mychol@mychol.com.



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Summer Horoscopes

Summer arrives with heat, radiance, and unapologetic expression. This is the season of stepping into the light — of celebration, connection, and claiming space with confidence. For queer people, summer has always been more than sunshine — it's Pride, visibility, chosen family, and the freedom to be seen exactly as we are. In this luxury issue, your horoscope invites you to indulge — not just in things, but in experiences, beauty, joy, and self-worth. Surround yourself with what feels rich in meaning. Say yes to moments that make you feel alive. Let pleasure, pride, and authenticity guide you.

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

This summer, your energy is magnetic. Step into bold experiences — rooftop parties, spontaneous plans, and moments that put you at the center. Luxury for you isn't quiet — it's excitement, confidence, and being seen. Own every room you walk into.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Indulgence is your language this season. Think soft linens, beautiful meals, and slow, sensual moments. Create a space — and a life — that feels lush and grounding. Pride reminds you that comfort and self-worth go hand in hand.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

Your social world sparkles this summer. Conversations, connections, and flirtation are your currency. Say yes to invitations and new faces. Luxury for you is stimulation — surround yourself with people who inspire and energize you.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

You're curating emotional luxury. This means safe spaces, meaningful connections, and moments that feel like home. Pride season may bring reflection — honour where you've come from and celebrate who you've become.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

This is your runway. Your presence, your style, your voice — everything shines brighter. Go bold with your expression. Luxury for you is visibility and celebration. Let yourself be admired — you've earned it.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Refinement is your focus. Edit your life — what stays should feel aligned and elevated. From your routines to your surroundings, create a sense of calm sophistication. Pride reminds you that authenticity is the ultimate standard.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Beauty surrounds you — if you let it. Design experiences that feel harmonious and elevated, from gatherings to personal style. Love and connection flow easily this season. Let yourself enjoy the romance of it all.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Transformation comes with a touch of indulgence. Let go of what feels heavy and step into something more aligned with your power. Luxury for you is depth — intense connections, meaningful moments, and emotional truth.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Adventure calls — and not just the usual kind. Explore spaces that feel expansive and new, even within your city. Pride energy fuels your freedom. Say yes to experiences that broaden your world and perspective.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You're building something lasting — but this summer asks you to enjoy the rewards too. Invest in yourself, your environment, and your joy. Luxury for you is stability with style — success that feels good, not just looks good.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Innovation meets expression. Experiment with your style, your space, your identity. Pride season amplifies your individuality — lean into it. Luxury for you is originality and the freedom to redefine the rules.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

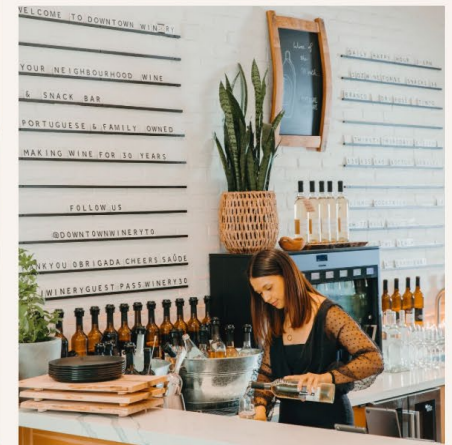
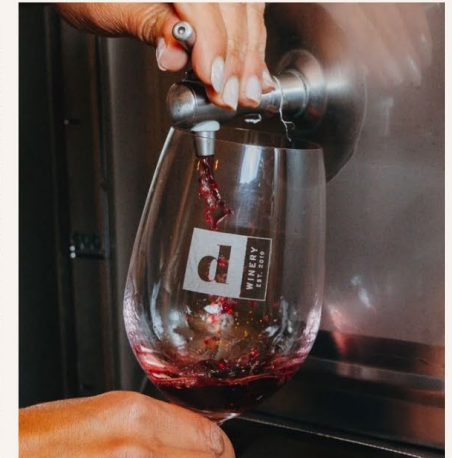
Create your dreamscape. Softness, creativity, and emotional richness guide your summer. Whether it's music, art, or quiet escapes, surround yourself with beauty that nourishes your soul. Let intuition lead the way.

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