

AMPLIFYING LGBTQ+ VOICES SINCE 1978



QEGAS

**BEN BAKSON TURNS UP
THE HEAT AT PIRANHA
THIS NEW YEAR'S EVE**

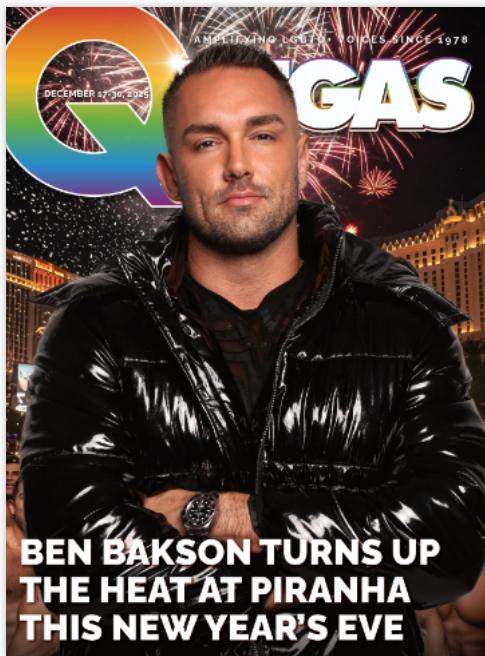


Photo: Jacob Lopez

With a proud publishing legacy that dates back to 1978, QVegas has been at the heart of Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ community for over four decades. What began as a grassroots newsletter has evolved into a dynamic weekly publication that informs, celebrates, and amplifies queer voices across Southern Nevada. QVegas is available in print at over 30 LGBTQ+ establishments, community nonprofits, and partner advertiser locations, making it a vital part of the local scene.

Beyond the printed page, QVegas connects with readers through a robust digital presence—on the web, across all major social media platforms, in our dedicated iOS app, and through weekly email blasts that keep the community in the know. Our coverage spans nightlife, entertainment, politics, health, advocacy, and the everyday stories that make up the diverse LGBTQ+ experience in Las Vegas.

As an advertiser-supported publication, QVegas is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ+ locals and visitors alike—offering unparalleled access to one of the city's most loyal and engaged audiences. In an era where equality rights are under attack nationwide, QVegas stands as a strong and unwavering community partner, committed to visibility, representation, and celebrating the power of queer voices.



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When the Clock Strikes Twelve, Vegas Hits Play: NYE Across the City

As QVegas heads into the year's biggest party week, this issue leans hard into one idea: New Year's Eve in Las Vegas isn't a single event—it's a citywide takeover, with the LGBTQ+ nightlife scene and the Strip's midnight spectacle feeding off each other.

On the club side, the headline moment is Piranha Nightclub's New Year's Eve countdown built around international DJ Ben Bakson, a high-energy producer with deep roots in global queer circuit culture. The feature frames him as a peak-hour specialist: big, vocal-forward house, driving beats, and the kind of booth presence that turns a crowded room into a unified scream when the clock hits twelve. After years of Pride-weekend bookings and major-event appearances, he's positioned here as the perfect match for a Las Vegas NYE—loud, polished, flirtatious, and engineered for lift-off. The night is presented as a full-scale celebration designed to carry the dancefloor from pre-midnight anticipation into the first wild hours of the new year, with the kind of "go big or go home" energy Piranha is known for.

Beyond the clubs, the issue nods to the other main character of the night: the Las Vegas Strip itself. At midnight, the skyline becomes the show—rooftops igniting in near-unison, fireworks reflecting off glass towers, and crowds turning the boulevard into a glittering, communal front row seat. It captures that uniquely Vegas feeling where the countdown is public, the cheers are collective, and the midnight kiss is basically a civic tradition.

For visitors building an NYE itinerary, the issue also points to big-ticket entertainment as part of the week's momentum, including Jennifer Lopez launching a new Colosseum residency with shows timed for New Year's Eve week. It's positioned as the "start the year like a headline" option—go big on the Strip, then go bigger after.

In 2025, the LGBTQ+ community has been forced back into a defensive crouch as the Trump administration and its allies pushed a drumbeat of policies that treat LGBTQ+ lives as a political prop instead of human beings—most visibly through executive actions aimed at restricting or defunding gender-affirming care for youth and rolling back federal language and guidance that recognized gender identity in education and health settings. As the midterms heat up, the hope is that voters, institutions, and a few remaining adults in the room choose restraint over spectacle—because the country can't keep lurching from outrage to outrage under leadership that feels increasingly uncontrolled, maniacal, and allergic to accountability.

Happy New Year, Vegas!



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani

Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media



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What We're Watching: Power Suits, Rival Rinks, and Queer Chaos on Demand

If your watchlist has been feeling a little... beige, consider this your glitter bomb. The newest batch of streaming picks leans into exactly what gay audiences do best: razor-sharp dialogue, high-stakes yearning, chosen-family comfort, and the kind of messy, fabulous decisions you'd absolutely make after two cocktails and one perfectly-timed text. From courtroom couture to hockey heat to sapphic soap with a side of scandal, here's what's currently owning our screens.

All's Fair (Hulu)

This one sits at the top for a reason: All's Fair is glossy, star-stacked, and completely unbothered by subtlety. Ryan Murphy's legal drama follows a crew of elite divorce attorneys who split from a male-dominated firm and build a practice that's equal parts justice, vengeance, and immaculate lighting. It's the kind of show where every conversation feels like a monologue audition, every hallway is a runway, and every secret is one subpoena away from detonating.

And yes, the chatter has been loud—critics have been brutal, the internet has been... the internet—but audiences showed up. Hulu renewed it for Season 2 after it became the streamer's biggest scripted series debut in three years. If you like your drama with a side of camp, and your camp with a side of "call my lawyer," this is your weekly appointment viewing.

Heated Rivalry (HBO Max)

Heated Rivalry is the rare romance that gives you steam and story. Two rival hockey stars—Shane and Ilya—start out as pure competitive aggression, then spiral into a secret relationship that's intense, tender, and complicated in all the ways that feel real: pressure, identity, image, and the brutal spotlight of pro sports.

The rollout is tailor-made for obsession: it debuted with two episodes on November 28, 2025, then goes weekly through the Season 1 finale on December 26, 2025. And if you're already emotionally invested (you are), you can exhale—Season 2 is officially happening, with the creative team confirming they'll continue following Shane and Ilya. This is rivals-to-lovers done with heart, heat, and enough longing to power a small city.

Boots (Netflix)

Add Boots to the top tier of "surprisingly moving, unexpectedly addictive" watches. The series follows Cameron, a bullied gay teen who impulsively joins the U.S. Marine Corps, where boot camp becomes a pressure cooker for self-discovery, survival, and the uneasy kind of brotherhood you don't know you need until it's there. Netflix describes it as an eight-episode drama about finding purpose and connection in the last place you'd expect.

What makes Boots work isn't just the premise—it's that it treats queer identity as

part of a larger emotional ecosystem: fear, ambition, loyalty, masculinity, and the ache of wanting to belong. GLAAD's cast interview digs into those themes directly, framing the show around self-discovery and queer identity without flattening it into a single "issue." In other words: bring snacks, and maybe don't start this one when you "only have time for one episode."

Loot (Apple TV+)

When you need something bright and breezy—without sacrificing smart writing—Loot remains the perfect reset button. Maya Rudolph's Molly Wells is still navigating what it means to be absurdly rich and vaguely trying to be a good person, and the show's secret sauce is that it never pretends growth is clean. It's funny, chaotic, and weirdly warm, with plenty of queer-friendly comedic texture in its ensemble.

Apple's Season 3 release plan is also chef's kiss: it returned October 15, 2025 with the first two episodes and then rolled out weekly through December 10. It's comfort TV for people who like their comfort served with jokes, feelings, and a little bit of rich-person embarrassment.

Palm Royale (Apple TV+)

If your ideal genre is "expensive people behaving terribly in gorgeous rooms," Palm Royale is still that girl. Season 2 doubles down on the show's candy-colored satire of status, reinvention, and social warfare—



plus the cast remains an absolute magnet for gay audiences (hello, Ricky Martin in a world that worships appearances).

Season 2 premiered November 12, 2025, and Apple has it running weekly until January 14, 2026—which means you can either savor it like a fancy dessert or hoard episodes for a decadent binge. Either way, it's camp-adjacent, couture-forward escapism that understands the joy of watching someone lie beautifully.

The Hunting Wives (Netflix)

For those craving sapphic tension with a soapy, scandalous bite, *The Hunting Wives* is the kind of show that makes you pause, rewind, and say, "Oh—so we're doing that." It follows a liberal outsider pulled into a seductive, dangerous circle of wealthy women, with the relationship between Sophie and Margo driving the series' most electric moments.

The show's appeal is that it leans into desire and power like they're two sides of the same blade—less "rom-com butterflies," more "Killing Eve" energy in expensive perfume." Autostraddle notes the adaptation makes the romantic/sexual connection more explicit, which explains why queer viewers latched on fast. It's not subtle—and that's the point.

Wayward (Netflix)

If you like your queer viewing with a darker edge, Mae Martin's limited thriller *Wayward* is already streaming. Netflix frames it around a small-town cop investigating a "school for troubled teens" and its charismatic founder—because, of course, something is rotten under the wholesome exterior.

The vibe here is eerie, twisty, and bingeable in that "one more episode because I need answers" way. It's less sparkle, more shadow—but still very much part of the queer streaming conversation this year.

Overcompensating (Prime Video)

Sometimes you want queer coming-of-age that's funny, painful, and painfully familiar. *Overcompensating* is a college ensemble comedy about Benny, a closeted former football golden boy trying to maintain the persona he thinks will keep him safe—while his actual self keeps banging on the door.

It's messy (emotionally), loud (comedically), and sharp about that specific brand of early-adult identity panic: the performance, the friendships that save you, and the moments you finally stop auditioning for approval.

A fond note: Mid-Century Modern (Hulu)

You were right: *Mid-Century Modern* was fun—and it deserved a longer life. Hulu's Palm Springs-set multi-cam about three gay best friends aging into their chosen-family era premiered March 28, 2025, and then got canceled after one season. If you haven't watched yet, it's still worth it for the warm sitcom rhythm and the sheer joy of seeing queer friendship centered like the main event.

Movie Night: Fresh LGBTQ+ Picks at Home

If you're in a "movie on the couch" mood, Rotten Tomatoes' newest-at-home LGBTQ+ list is stacked with options that range from tender to outrageous. A few worth flagging:

- **Outerlands** — A scrappy, intimate drama set in San Francisco, now available to watch at home (streaming date listed as Nov 26, 2025).
- **I Wish You All the Best** — A story centered on a non-binary teen dealing with family rejection and rebuilding life elsewhere; listed as "new movie" on Prime Video.
- **Lesbian Space Princess** — Exactly what it sounds like: a heartfelt, hilarious queer space opera with a title that refuses to whisper.
- **Sauna** — A newer LGBTQ+ drama also appearing on the "newest" list—perfect if you want something moodier and more intense.

And if you're already planning ahead, Netflix has confirmed *Heartstopper* will wrap with a feature-film finale coming in 2026—so yes, start emotionally preparing now.

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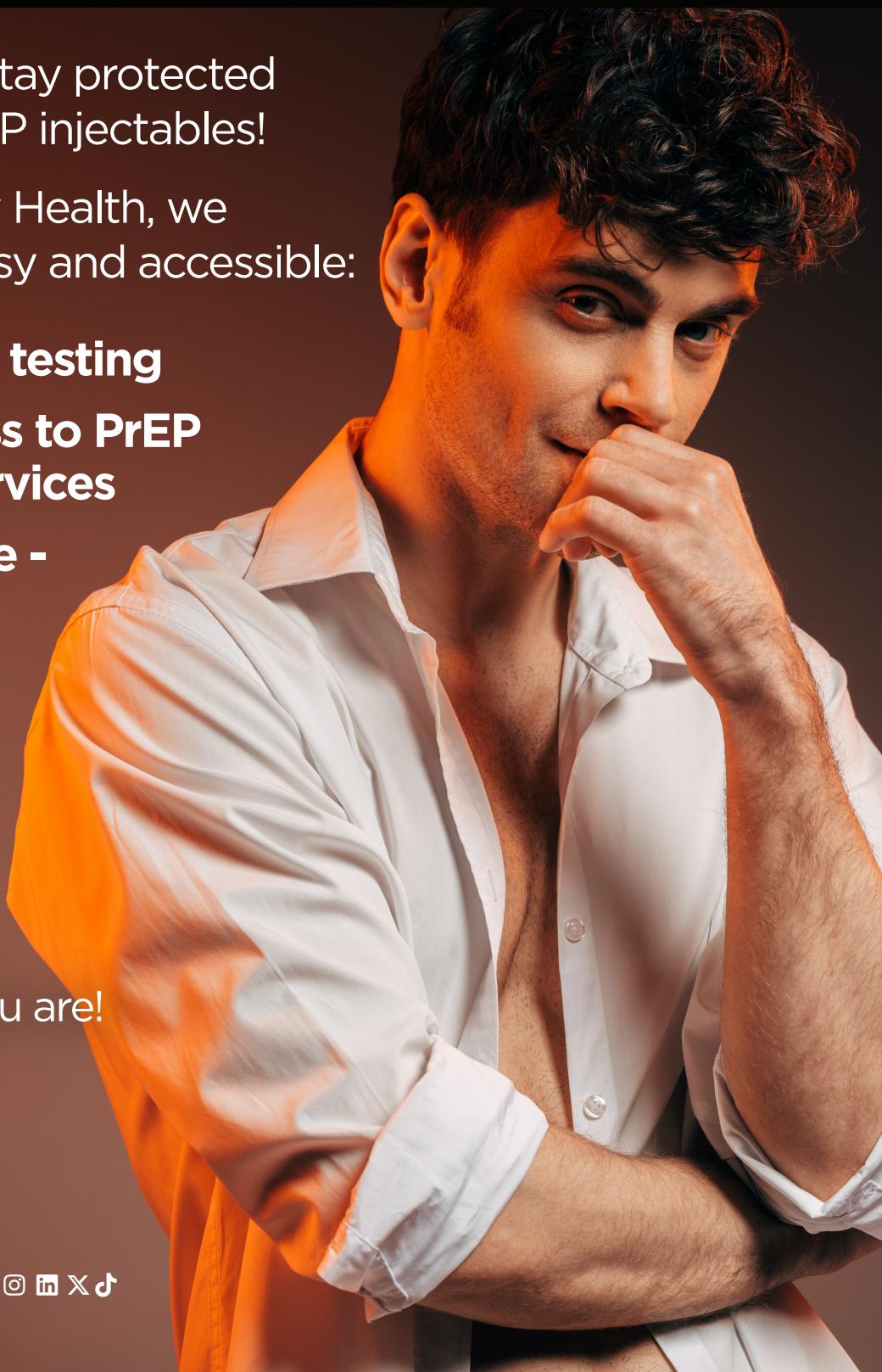


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BEN BAKSON HEATS UP NEW YEAR'S EVE IN LAS VEGAS

Ben Bakson is an international DJ and music producer who understands a simple truth about nightlife: the best rooms don't just *dance*—they lift off. Born and raised in southern Germany, Bakson carries a blend of German precision and Slovenian passion that shows up in everything from his disciplined work ethic to his bigger-than-life, "go for it" stage energy. His personal motto—"You only live once"—isn't branding for him; it's the way he moves through the world, chasing momentum, connection, and the kind of joy that only happens when the whole crowd hits the same beat at the same time.

Before he was packing dancefloors, Bakson took the path that looks "safe" on paper: he moved to Berlin at 18 to study economics, then worked in marketing and sales for international companies across Germany and Switzerland. But the 9-to-5 track wasn't going to hold him forever. As his love for club culture deepened, he started producing and shaping his own sound—then in 2016, he made the decision to stop being just a listener and become a creator: a professional DJ and music producer with his own point of view.

Even his name is a mission statement. "Bakson" nods to Dionysus—god of celebration, ecstasy, and the kind of revelry that turns strangers into a temporary family. That's

exactly the feeling he aims to build in his sets: big, commercial-leaning, high-energy house with hard-driving beats and emotional punch. Vocals matter to him because they're the fastest route to real feeling—those sing-along moments that turn a party into a memory.

And yes—there's no ignoring the full package. Fans know Ben for more than just the sound: he shows up with a sleek, confident presence that's equal parts polished and playful, the kind of sexy charisma that reads instantly from the booth. The vibe is intentional: he wants the room to feel turned on—by the music, by the lights, by the moment.

In recent years, Bakson has been based in Miami (he moved there in 2022), and that location makes perfect sense for an artist who lives at the intersection of nightlife, travel, and global LGBTQ+ party culture. He's become a familiar name on the Pride and circuit calendar—especially during the summer stretch when the biggest queer dancefloors in the world are in full bloom. In a single Pride run, he's been billed for major moments including Toronto Pride, San Francisco's HEAT party, Planet Pride in New York City, and Denver Pride weekend, along with headlining San Diego Pride's Coronation Ball.

Washington, D.C. is another standout on his LGBTQ+ resume: he's been featured at Capital Pride's KINETIC main event at Echostage (including a billed back-to-back set with Dan Slater), a production-heavy Pride experience built for massive crowds and peak-hour spectacle. And for WorldPride programming in D.C., he appears on the official afterparty listings for an XLSIOR Mykonos AI event—another signal of how firmly he sits inside the international circuit ecosystem.

That international reach also includes legacy LGBTQ party brands and destinations. He's been associated with XLSIOR Mykonos (including an official "Resident podcast" release), tying him to one of the most recognizable gay dance-festival names in the world. And he's been listed among the DJs for White Party Palm Springs—an iconic U.S. queer party weekend where the dancefloor is practically its own weather system.

Now, he's bringing that global, Pride-season, hands-in-the-air energy straight to Las Vegas—headlining New Year's Eve at Piranha Nightclub for NYE 2026. On Wednesday, December 31, Piranha's countdown is built around his "signature sound," designed to carry the crowd from pre-midnight hype into the first wild hours of the new year—driving beats, soaring drops, and a room that's ready to erupt when the clock hits twelve. It's the perfect match: a DJ built for peak moments, in a club famous for big energy, bold style, and a dancefloor that doesn't do "subtle."

Ben Bakson's promise is simple: show up, lock in, and let the night take over. When he's on, the room doesn't just celebrate the moment—it becomes the moment.



Photo Credit: Cody Ryan

Global superstar Jennifer Lopez is returning to the Las Vegas Strip with a brand-new residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Jennifer Lopez: Up All Night Live in Las Vegas launches New Year's Eve week with four shows on Dec. 30-31 and Jan. 2-3, plus eight additional performances in March 2026.

The engagement marks Lopez's triumphant comeback to Las Vegas after her record-breaking JENNIFER LOPEZ: ALL I HAVE run at Planet Hollywood (2016–2018), which played 120 shows and grossed over \$100 million. Fans can expect a high-energy celebration of her biggest hits—plus exclusive, never-heard-before songs.

On New Year's Eve, the Las Vegas Strip turns into one long, glittering front row seat—because at midnight, the skyline itself becomes the headliner.

As the final minutes of the year tick down, the boulevard swells with party energy: sequins, champagne, countdown chants, and that electric feeling that anything could happen next. Then the city collectively looks up. Rooftops across the Strip ignite in near-unison, sending waves of color bursting above the resorts—gold palms, crackling comets, silver rain, and big, booming finales that bounce off glass towers like an applause you can feel in your chest.

If you're doing it right, you're screaming "Happy New Year!" at the exact moment the first blast hits—because in Vegas, the midnight kiss isn't just romantic, it's practically a civic tradition.





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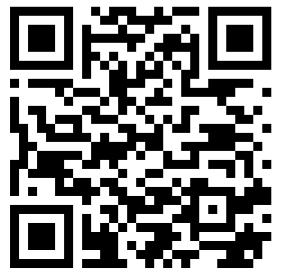
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Washington's Latest Hobby: Policing Gender Markers and Pulling the Rug Out From Under LGBTQ People

In recent weeks, a cluster of federal executive-branch moves associated with the Trump administration has sparked alarm among LGBTQ advocates, particularly because several of the actions directly affect transgender and nonbinary people's ability to navigate daily life safely and with accurate documents. Some of the changes are already being challenged in court or have been temporarily reversed, which means the practical impact can shift quickly. Still, taken together, the actions reflect a clear policy direction: narrowing federal recognition of gender diversity, weakening enforcement of protections in vulnerable settings, and slowing access to humanitarian relief pathways that LGBTQ people often rely on.

One of the most visible flashpoints has been the federal government's handling of identity documents. In recent weeks, the State Department has moved away from policies that allowed greater flexibility in passport sex markers, including the "X" marker used by some nonbinary Americans and by others who did not want a binary designation. The practical effect is more than symbolic. A passport is a key "breeder document" used to obtain other IDs and to travel, and it is often the identity document most scrutinized by employers, landlords, financial institutions, and border officials. When the federal government limits or rescinds options that had allowed a person's documents to match their lived identity, the consequences can show up everywhere from airport security lines to background checks. For transgender and nonbinary people, mismatched documents can increase the risk of being outed, harassed, delayed, or denied services, even when the person is simply trying to complete routine tasks that most Americans can do without thinking.

Another significant development has unfolded in the criminal legal system, where LGBTQ people—especially transgender women—are disproportionately vulnerable to abuse and violence while incarcerated. In the past six weeks, the Department of Justice has taken steps that, according to advocates,

reduce pressure on correctional facilities to maintain certain safeguards connected to the Prison Rape Elimination Act, often referred to as PREA. PREA standards and audits are not perfect, and they vary in implementation, but they create a framework that can influence how facilities handle housing decisions, searches, classification, and protections for people who face elevated risk of sexual assault. When enforcement is paused or narrowed, facilities that were already inconsistent may feel less compelled to meet benchmarks or to prioritize the needs of transgender, intersex, and gender-nonconforming people. In an environment where a single placement decision can determine whether someone is safe, any rollback of accountability mechanisms can have immediate consequences for real human beings living behind locked doors.

The administration's approach has also touched the homelessness system, an arena where LGBTQ impact is often severe but less visible to the broader public. LGBTQ people are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, particularly youth, and many rely on networks of nonprofit providers that focus on affirming services and targeted outreach. Recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development moved to impose new restrictions on a major federal homelessness funding stream that would have limited or discouraged grants connected to programs serving transgender communities or operating within a broader diversity-focused framework. Even temporary grant restrictions can create chaos on the ground, because shelters, transitional housing providers, and street outreach teams operate with thin margins and strict compliance demands. When the rules change abruptly, providers can be forced to choose between maintaining affirming services and keeping the funding that pays staff, rent, and emergency beds. After litigation pressure, the agency reportedly pulled back or paused the change for the moment, but the episode still sent a message: the federal government may be willing to use funding levers to reshape

who gets served and how, even in life-or-death public health and safety contexts.

Immigration policy, too, has been pulled into the turbulence in ways that can sharply affect LGBTQ people. In the last six weeks, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has moved to slow or halt decision-making on asylum applications while it conducts internal review. Even if such a hold is framed as broad and not explicitly LGBTQ-related, the downstream impact is predictable. LGBTQ asylum seekers often flee countries where being gay or transgender is criminalized, where state or vigilante violence is common, and where reporting abuse can itself be dangerous. Delays in asylum processing can leave people in prolonged limbo, unable to stabilize their lives, reunite with family, or fully access services. For those who are already traumatized or who have unstable housing and employment, long pauses can compound vulnerability. A decision hold is not the same as a policy banning LGBTQ asylum claims, but it can still function as a barrier by extending uncertainty and prolonging exposure to precarious conditions.

Across these arenas—identity documents, incarceration protections, homelessness funding, and asylum processing—the common thread is not just a change in paperwork or procedure. It is the use of federal power to redefine recognition and access for LGBTQ people, often by narrowing definitions, reducing enforcement, or delaying relief. Because several of the actions are tied up in lawsuits or administrative revisions, the "state of play" can change quickly. But for people whose safety depends on accurate IDs, stable shelter, protection from violence, or timely immigration decisions, even short-term reversals and pauses can carry lasting harm. The past six weeks have underscored how rapidly federal policy can reshape the lived reality of LGBTQ Americans and LGBTQ immigrants—and why advocates, service providers, and affected individuals are watching Washington so closely right now.



LGBTQ+ Resources

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thelucoflv.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetreelv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org



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FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hpvlv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

PARCS DENTISTRY
parcsdentistry.com

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
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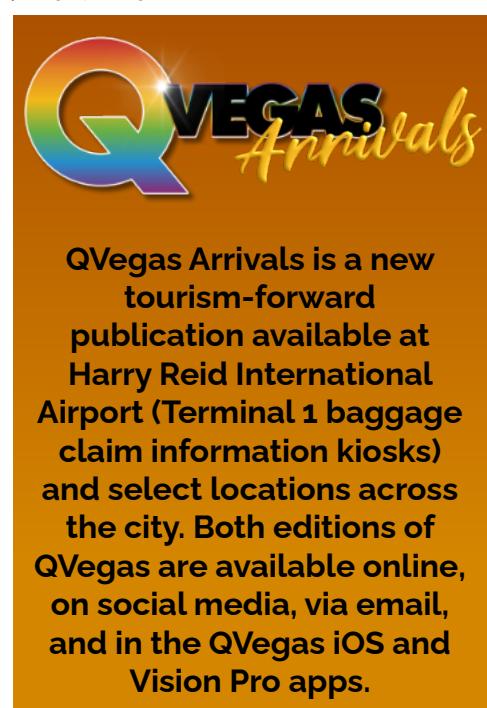
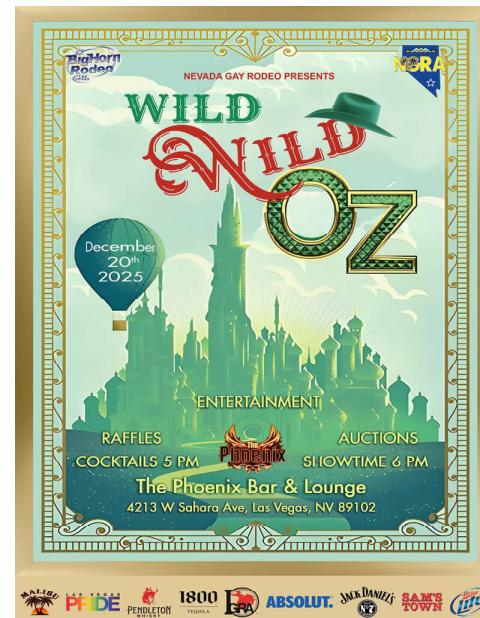
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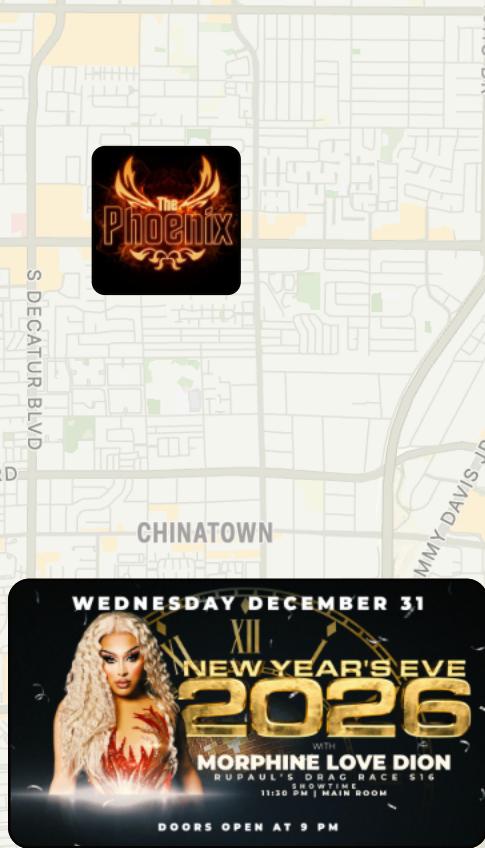




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GET BOOKED

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GIPSY NIGHTCLUB

4605 Paradise Rd

PIRANHA NIGHTCLUB

4633 Paradise Rd

QUADZ

4640 Paradise Rd

BADLANDS

DUST

855 E Twain Ave, Unit 114

THE EAGLE

3430 E Tropicana Ave Unit 47

FLEX COCKTAIL LOUNGE

501 E Twain Ave

FUN HOG RANCH

THE GARAGE

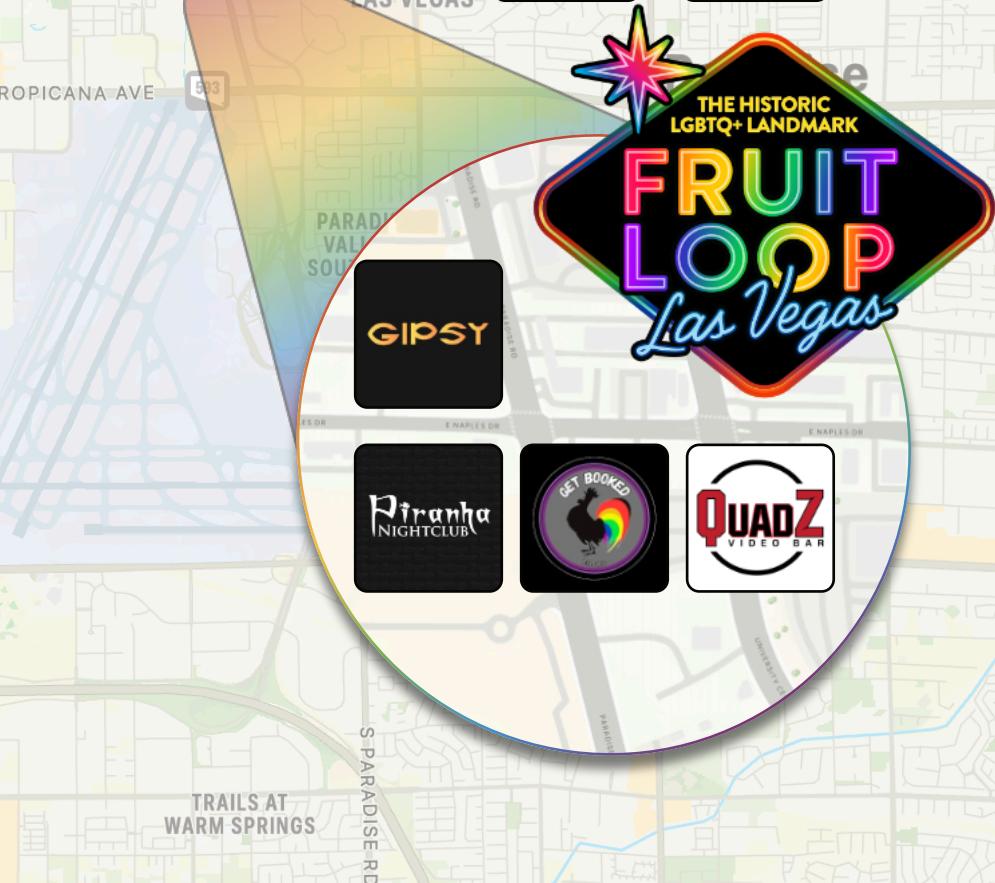
1487 E Flamingo Rd

HAMBURGER MARY'S

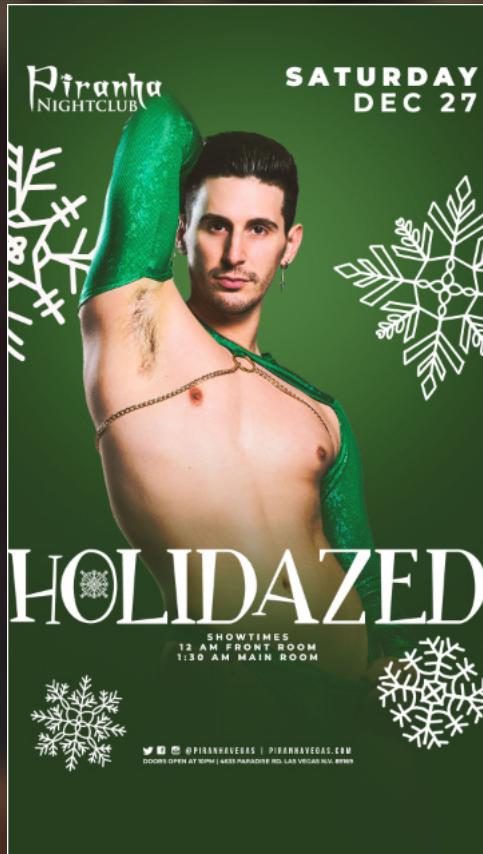
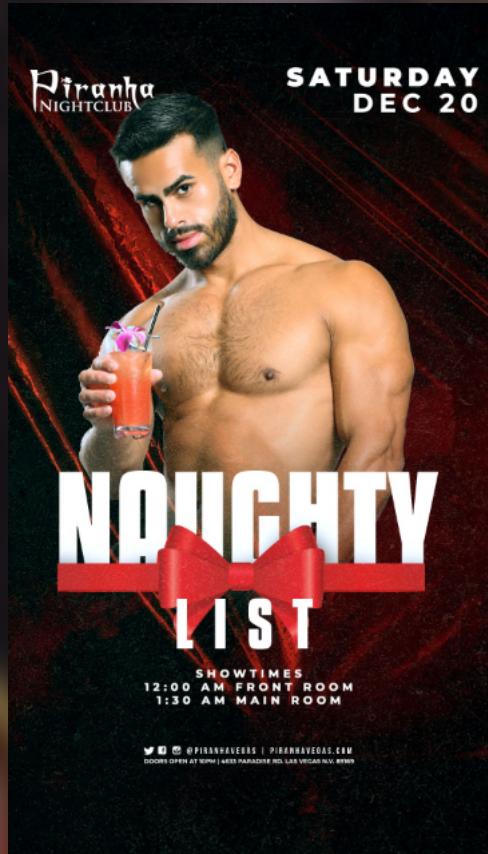
1700 E Flamingo Rd

THE PHOENIX

4213 W Sahara Ave



Piranha NIGHTCLUB



OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK. VISIT PIRANHAVEGAS.COM FOR CURRENT LINEUP AND TABLE RESERVATIONS.

4633 PARADISE ROAD, LAS VEGAS, NV 89169