

# TORONTO

*This friendly urban playground attracts gay visitors from around the globe*

Matt Mathrani

**g**ay folks enjoy more than just a stripe in the swirling tapestry that is Toronto. The Greater Toronto Area bustles with over 5.5 million, and almost half the city's populace was born outside of the country. Toronto is Canada's multi-cultural behemoth – and one of the most visited cities in the world. Its gay scene is a global draw.

Toronto is suffused with gayness, but the solar plexus is in the “Gay Village” – the blocks around the intersection of Church and Wellesley streets. Sophisticated bars, cafes, and restaurants support an exciting street scene, with compelling guys and girls strolling up and down Church Street. Take advantage of the bars' window seats or pick a table at one of the many patios and watch the parade.

## Bars and clubs

There's no better place to watch than **Woody's** (467 Church), or the front terrace at brother bar **Sailor** (465 Church). Everyone goes because everyone else at least passes by! There's plenty of pageantry inside, too. Thursdays feature a Best Chest contest, Fridays are Best Ass, and Saturdays are Best Legs. If that's not enough distraction, there's a pool table. Five bars fill this complex.

Leathermen predominate the hugely popular **Black Eagle** (457

Church), famous for its randy vibes and active calendar. It's situated on two floors, and there's a huge rooftop terrace where they do a Sunday evening barbecue – be prepared to line up for this well-attended event.

**Churchmouse & Firkin** (475 Church) offers an English pub ambiance, classic pub food, and zillions of beers, all in the center of the gayborhood.

A packed patio all summer long at **O'Grady's Tap and Grill** (518 Church) attests to its popularity. Come in anytime for food or drink. Fridays at O'Grady's are Bear Night and are awash with big boys and those into them.

**Play on Church** (504 Church) offers something for everyone, including a well-attended daily bingo competition 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday to Friday, and Saturday at 3 p.m. This is a mainly cabaret and dance bar, with a Latin flair. They do classic drag Thursday through Sunday evenings.

**Crews/Tango** (508 Church) has a deck overlooking Church Street, offering more people watching. The bar also boasts shows daily, with a slant toward drag queens and kings, along with dancing, karaoke, and two sunny patios.

**Zipperz** (72 Carlton Street) is always a blast, and when the weather turns hot, the bar's secluded back patio draws a crowd eager to party. There's a day bar and piano lounge featuring various entertainers, including Toronto legend

Greg Beer. Also here is **Cellblock**, a dance bar, with the weekly Retro Sundays after 10 p.m.

**The Barn** (418 Church), a Toronto legend, recently reopened. There's pool, cruising, and dance Wednesday through Sunday. A dark room completes the release.

**Pegasus** (489 Church), “the Cheers of Church Street,” is quite the upstairs neighborhood bar, a good spot for watching the street action from on high.

**Byzantium** (499 Church) draws an upscale clientele of all ages. On Friday and Saturday, this restaurant *cum* martini bar (and it boasts one of the longest bars in the city!) turns into a funky lounge with top DJs spinning from 11 p.m. until 3 a.m. (See more under “Dining.”)

**Straight** (553 Church) is a decidedly queer dance venue, lounge, and boutique nightclub. Catering to sophisticated men and women, it combines rustic, historic detailing with a sleek modern decor.

**Church Street Bar** (501 Church) is a bar, restaurant, lounge, and club featuring industry and international DJs seven nights a week.

One major block west of Church is Toronto's main thoroughfare: Yonge Street. The gay bars here include **Gladaman's Den** (502a), a comfortable place to meet friends for a drink, enjoy a fully-licensed garden patio and a country pub environment any day of

the week. Evenings, Kendall tickles the keyboard, and at night Gladaman's becomes gay Toronto's live entertainment destination. They showcase musicians, singers, and Toronto's sassiest drag personalities, with a variety of genres from blues and jazz to rock and country. On weekends expect cheap drinks, charity barbecue parties, and marquee concert events.

During the day, the main bar at nearby **Alibi** (529 Yonge) attracts friendly locals. Then in the evening, the complex transform into something decidedly dark and interesting. There are two floors, three bars, a pool table, a rooftop patio, and a cruise maze. Their infamous Underwear Party every Sunday is packed.

With its comely and manly dancers, **Remington's** (377 Yonge) brings a bit of Montreal to Toronto. Strippers rule here.

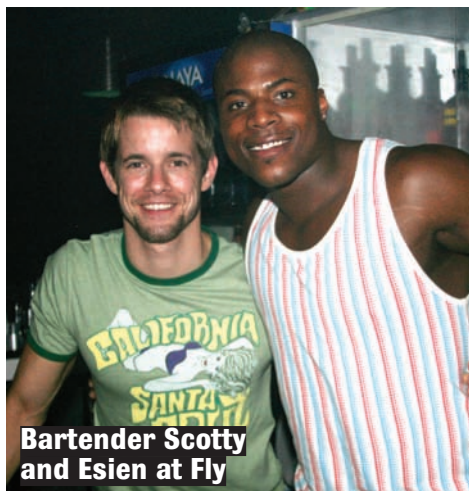
Among the city's premier dance clubs, **Fly Nightclub** (8 Gloucester Street) hosts some of the world's hottest and most talented DJs and performance artists. They're open every Friday and Saturday.

Heading West, at **El Convento Rico** (750 College Street) trannies and straight and gay boys and girls let down their hair.

**Goodhandy's** (120 Church) is a unique pansexual club that covers as much of the queer spectrum as possible. There are regular nights for gay and trans guys, t-girls and admirers, the fetish community of all stripes, and queer women. Pick the night that lights your fire, and you'll be amazed at the sexual openness. This intriguing space hosts many special events – some geared toward charity, others veering in the direction of the swinger community, bisexuals, and sex-workers' rights groups.

## Dining

**Byzantium** (499 Church) is a gothic-chic martini lounge and restaurant. There's a full glass front that opens to create an open-air covered patio in summer, along with a designer-style



**Bartender Scotty and Esien at Fly**



**Bartenders Mike and Francis at Woody's**



**Steve Martin (Mr Leatherman Toronto 2007) with Peter Rex at Black Eagle**



**Bartender Michael at Sailor**



**Pablo and Leanne of Fuzion**



**Lia, Maria, Preeanne, Brian, & Debby at Voglie**





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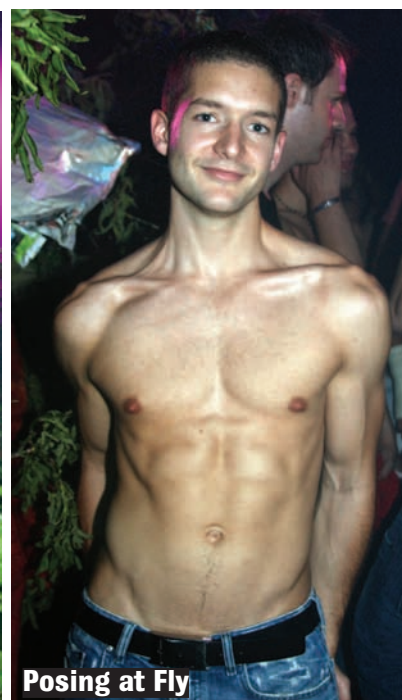

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**Roberto, bartender  
at El Convento Rico**



**Sofonda Cox at Fly**



**Posing at Fly**

private patio in the rear. Chef Jerome Rivest gets rave reviews for delights such as pan-roasted ostrich or the juniper-scented rack of lamb.

**Statler's** (487 Church) is a piano bar and restaurant with the **Polar Ice** lounge perched right above it. Cabaret Mondays bring in a lot of traffic but there's live entertainment seven nights a week. A DJ on weekends steps up the beat. The staff is polite and approachable.

**Fuzion** (580 Church), voted one of Toronto's top four restaurants, reflects the flair of chef Sam Girgis. In summer, their courtyard affords dining under a canopy of luscious green. Scenesters, fashionistas, and celebrities vie to be viewed here. Celebrity DJs spin to keep spirits upbeat.

**Voglie Risto Bar** (582 Church) is an art-deco lounge in a Victorian mansion. Two seasonable patios (in front and rear) offer views for days! The main floor seats up to 50 people; the rear dining is for intimate setting for groups of up to 20. Sip martinis and ogle, or opt for private dining *al fresco*.

**Zelda's** (542 Church) could be a definition for "fabulous off-kilter." You may have to wait for a table on the ever-popular patio because everyone has a han-

kering to be seen at Zelda's.

**Churchmouse and Firkin** (475 Church) offers daily specials in a pub-style atmosphere. Try their chili, fish and chips, or a savory pie – all made fresh daily. There are two floors as well as a patio open during good weather. Third Sundays brings Leather Brunch.

**Il Fornello** (491 Church) is part of a Toronto chain, but this location has that special Village feel. Famous for their wood-oven pizzas, they also feature Martini Mondays with \$6 drinks all the nightlong.

**O'Grady's Tap and Grill** (518 Church) offers breakfast, lunch, dinner with what owner Jimmy describes as a homemade "pub grub" flair.

**Hair of the Dog** (425 Church) is an upscale neighborhood pub and restaurant with a gorgeous patio. Though often the trysting place before a night out on the town, they are also open for brunch, lunch, and dinner. Their unconventional menu ranges from macaroni and cheese to jambalaya and Thai steak salad.

**Village Rainbow Restaurant** (477 Church) offers a people-watching patio in a truly laid back environment. Their early bird breakfast specials are popular.

Other nearby eateries include **Sam-bucas on Church** (489 Church); **Cafe California** (538 Church); and **Veda** (506 Church), a healthy Indian takeout and eatery. For fresh fruit and veggies, **Pusateri's Market** (497 Church) is your best bet. You'll find the **Garage Sandwich Company** counter at the back, where they offer fresh, build-your-own sandwiches. For healthy refreshment, a visit to **Juice Box** (491 Church) is what the doctor ordered. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices are the ticket here, and all drinks are made on the spot.

**Church Street Diner** (555 Church) offers classic atmosphere and fare with friendly service. For quick deli comestibles visit **Reither's Fine Food International** (530 Church).

For years, **Olympic 76 Pizza Cafe** (8a Gloucester Street) has been a popular choice for residents and visitors alike. Among other Italian specialties are the tastiest pizzas and panzarotti around. They don't deliver, but there's take-out service, or eat in the cozy dining room or on the patio.

**Wish** (3 Charles Street) is a rather modern gourmet restaurant with an enticing array of cocktails.

A neighborhood restaurant and bar



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# TORONTO

## BARS/DISCOS

- 2) **Alibi**  
529 Yonge St.
- 6) **Black Eagle**  
457 Church St
- 3) **Byzantium**  
499 Church St
- 20) **Crews & Tango**  
508 Church St  
416.972.1662
- 9) **Fly**  
8 Gloucester St
- 17) **Pegasus on Church**  
489B Church St (2nd Fl)
- 30) **Play On Church**  
504 Church St
- 12) **Sailor**  
465 Church St
- 12) **Woody's**  
467 Church St
- 28) **Statlers**  
487 Church St
- 18) **Gladamen's Den**  
502 Yonge
- 10) **Zipperz**  
72 Carlton St

## RESTAURANTS

- 14) **Zelda's**  
542 Church St
- 7) **Adam & Eve Chocolatiers**  
97 Maitland
- 13) **Churchmouse & Firkin**  
475 Church St.

- 15) **Baskin Robbins**  
536 Church St.

## HOTELS/GUESTHOUSES

- 4) **Bearfoot Inn**  
(416) 922-1658  
30A Dundonald St
- 5) **Bent Inn**  
(416) 925-4499  
107 Gloucester St
- 8) **The House on McGill**  
(416) 351-1503
- 26) **Victoria's Mansion**  
(416) 921-4625  
68 Gloucester St
- 29) **Sutton Place**  
955 Bay St

## SAUNAS/OTHER

- 22) **The Cellar**  
78 Wellesley St
- 25) **St. Marc's Spa**  
543 Yonge St
- 21) **Glad Day Bookshop**  
598A Yonge St
- 12) **Priape**  
(416) 586-9914  
501 Church St
- 23) **Northbound Leather**  
19 St Nicholas St
- 1) **Spa Excess**  
105 Carlton
- 27) **Steamworks**  
540 Church St (level 2)  
(level two)
- 11) **Club Toronto**  
231 Mutual St



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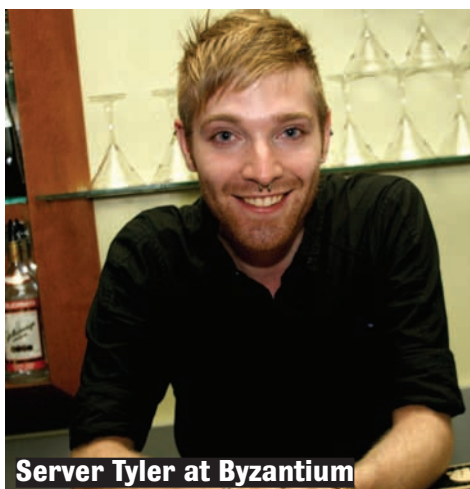
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Russell of The Barn



Server Tyler at Byzantium

Miss Conception  
at Gladaman's Den

Overlooking Woody's and Sailor

## HELP US RAISE \$25,000 TO SUPPORT THE WOLF'S HABITAT @ METRO TORONTO ZOO!

**I**n ancient times western Europe was settled by a proud and brave people who were known for their artistry and their sense of kinship with the natural world. Those ancient tribes were the Celts and their language was Gaelic.

The peoples of Scotland and Ireland still retain this tradition within their culture and each society keeps alive their unique dialect of the ancient Celtic language.

Many of these peoples have had a part in the building of Canada. Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, was born a Scot. The third most spoken language, when Canada became a nation, was Scottish Gaelic.

Some ancient Celtic tribes held a month of celebration, in the dead of winter, from mid January to mid February, known as foal or wolf month. Gladaman is Scottish Gaelic for wolf & Gladaman's Den was launched on February 16th, at the culmination of Wolf Month.

We, the people of The Den, have a particular affection for the plight of the wolf. We have made a commitment, for as long as there is a Gladaman's Den, to continue to raise funds in support of the Wolf's Habitat at Metro Toronto Zoo. It is our hope, that through this project, the people will continue to learn about the wolf and this amazing creature will have a more secure future.

**PLEASE WATCH FOR FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN THE FALL OR STOP BY GLADAMAN'S AND MAKE A DONATION TO THE WOLVES!**

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**TORONTO'S GAY PUB!**

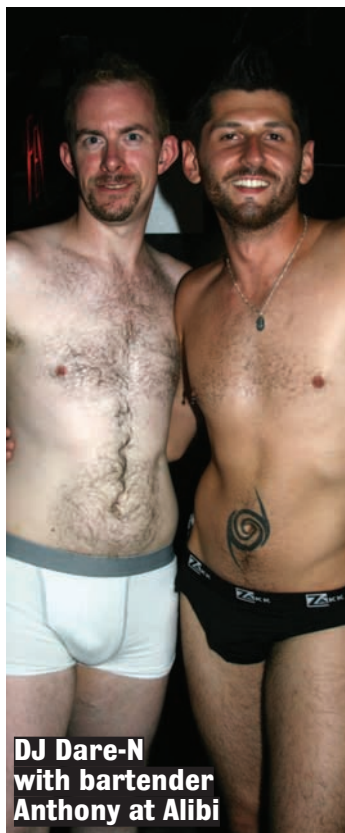




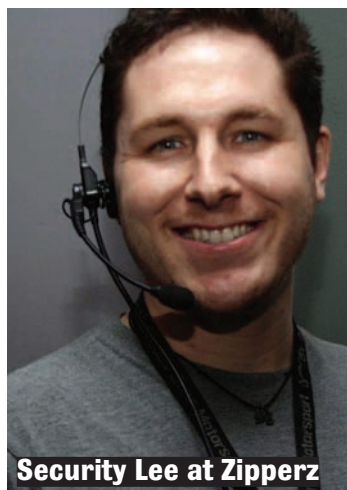
**DJ Alain at  
Zipperz / Cellar**



**Paul and Kelly at Zipperz / Cellar**



**DJ Dare-N  
with bartender  
Anthony at Alibi**



**Security Lee at Zipperz**



**Clay and Mike  
at Zipperz / Cellar**



**Out on Church Street**

**Fire on the East Side** (6 Gloucester Street) serves up Southern-inspired cooking with a global flair. Comfy, hospitable, and a good value, they're open for brunch, lunch, and dinner.

**Le Commensal** (655 Bay Street) is a dizzying vegetarian and vegan heaven. This Quebec import offers hot and cold buffets made with the freshest, all-natural ingredients.

For cooling down on a hot summer day or night, **Baskin Robbins** (536 Church) offers everything ice cream.

Ever see the movie *Chocolat*? **Adam and Eve Chocolatier** (97 Maitland Street) comes pretty darn close to the chocolate bliss that film immortalized. Donna Young's choco-magic realm tantalizes with cocoa and coffee treats. There are Belgian truffles, chocolate-covered cocoa-dusted almonds, boxed chocolates, gelatos in many flavors, and more. In the rear of the store, there's a coffee bar with comfortable couches and an outdoor patio. Young supports local artists and greeting-card makers, and their works are on display and on sale.

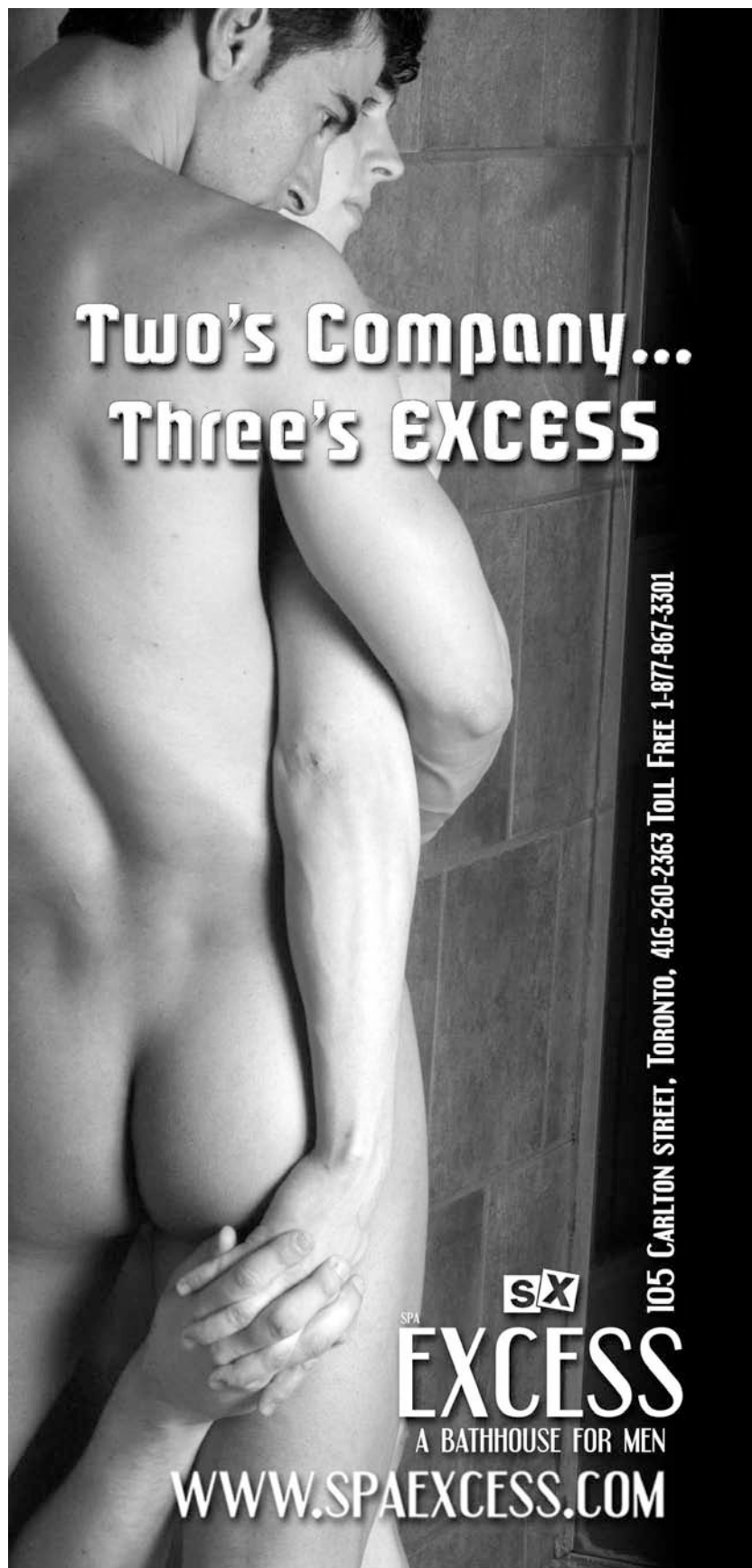
## Retail

**Priape** (501 Church) is the anchor of gay retailing in the gayborhood, with its spanking new store on the corner of Church and Wellesley. Product lines include Ed Hardy, Diesel, Energie, and Priape Wear (their own label). This is the go-to place for underwear, swimwear, accessories, fetish gear, and toys.

Founded in 1970, **Glad Day Bookshop** (586 Yonge) is the oldest queer bookstore in Canada, and the second-oldest in the world. It's a storehouse of every and any manner of GLBT literature, rare books, art tomes, 'zines, as well as an exhaustive queer DVD section encompassing the classics, the latest releases, the must-haves, and the hard-to-finds. And, of course, there's also the smut: one-handed reading, vintage mags and pulps, and current offerings.

At **Northbound Leather** (586 Yonge) one enters a world of exquisite fetish





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Rolyn of *Fab* magazine



Pianist Kendall  
at Gladman's Den



Out on the patio  
with bartender  
Lionel at Zipperz





**Donna Young of Adam and Eve Chocolatiers, flanked by staff**



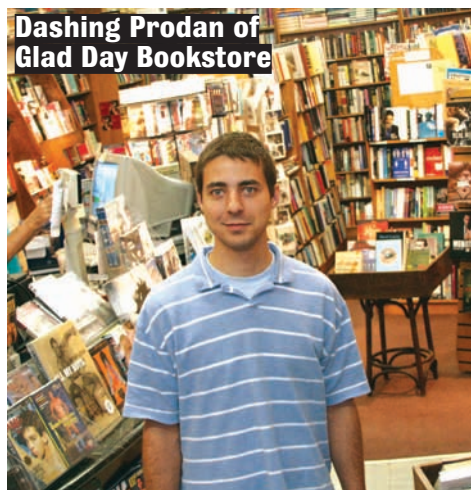
**Genderbender Roxie Teraine and pianist Joel Lightman at Zipperz**



**Staff at Church on Firkin – Emily, Andrey, Sebastien, & Kevin**



**Owner Rob Wolvin of Gladman's Den**



**Dashing Prodan of Glad Day Bookstore**

fashion. Fine leather clothing, lingerie, and kinky dungeon gear is their business.

A good literary bookstore, **This Ain't the Rosedale Library** (86 Nassau Street) has recently moved from the Gayborhood to the funky Kensington Market area; it still offers a robust gay section.

Rather than filling your head with words, maybe you need to trim off some of its hair. If so, make your way to **Michael's Barber Shop** (66b Wellesley Street E) where a quick haircut starts at just \$15. And speaking of good looks, on a cloudy day keep that tan nice and dark by enjoying a session at **Glow** (9 Isabella Street, 2nd floor).

**Stag Shop** (449 Church) and **Love Shop** (489 Church) are the two adult retail stores in the neighborhood.

## Lodgings

**House on McGill** (110 McGill Street; 416-351-1503), where "hot men are always welcome," is a comfortable and colorful house located just steps from the action on Church. There are six handsome rooms, one with a private bath. Guests enjoy free internet and wi-fi, and there's a computer available at reception. Amenities include a guest kitchen, free local calls, and a welcoming back garden for your enjoyment.

**Bent Inn** (107 Gloucester Street; 416-925-4499) offers several leather-themed guest rooms that can be re-configured depending on your group's size. The in-room industrial rubber



**Matt, Ryan, Kiley, & Laurence of Priape, Toronto**



flooring is a unique design feature here. They offer equipment rental and “fantasy fulfillment,” so let them know in advance what you require. Don’t feel bashful about pulling out your credit card: hosts Dennis and Rod are happy to bill discreetly.

The luxurious **Cawthra Square Inns** of Toronto (514 Jarvis; 416-966-0013) are comprised of three properties, one at 10 Cawthra Square, and the others around the corner at 512 and 514 Jarvis. The Cawthra Square house is a gem: rooms are large and comfortable, and several have attached decks. There’s a beautiful country kitchen where a serve-yourself breakfast appears daily. The other properties are Victorian mansions lovingly restored to their original grandeur, but with extras, such as an in-house spa service (by appointment, please) available to all guests at the complex. Cawthra Square Inns play frequent host to wedding groups and other special events.

Glen and Jerry continue to steer the **Bearfoot Inn** (30a Dundonald Street;

416-922-1658). Located on a charming side street, this four-story guesthouse is just steps from Church and Wellesley. All rooms come with private bath. Make sure to book in advance at this busier-than-ever establishment.

Guests love the beautifully decorated guest rooms at **Victoria’s Mansion** (68 Gloucester Street; 416-921-4625). They offer affordable, fully equipped suites with private bath, wi-fi, laundry facilities, and other amenities. Parking is available. Outside, enjoy the serenity of their beautiful Victorian garden. It’s a great value, and just steps from Church and Wellesley.

**Sutton Place Hotel** (955 Bay Street; 416-924-9221), in the heart of Toronto business and shopping, is just steps to the village. There are some 230 elegant guest rooms and 64 suites, a business center, fitness club and pool, and wi-fi throughout the hotel.

With 575 guest rooms and suites, **Marriot Courtyard** (475 Yonge; 416-924-0611) is a convenient gay-located, full service hotel, with complimentary

internet.

In the dynamic Yonge-Bloor area find **Town Inn Suites** (620 Church; 416-964-3311), a luxury apartment hotel offering an array of suites each with a full kitchen and separate working, living, and sleeping areas.

**Neill Wycik** (96 Gerrard Street E; 416-977-2320), normally a student residence, opens its doors to individuals and groups May through August. Offering budget accommodations, it is minutes by foot from all popular attractions.

In what’s called the Queer West of Toronto, **Gladstone Hotel** (1214 Queen Street W; 416-531-4635) is a boutique hotel offering a taste of Toronto’s art scene. Thirty-seven artist designed guest rooms are available.

## Saunas and bathhouses

**Steamworks** (540 Church, 2nd level) is gorgeous and immaculate, with a steel-and-glass design motif, and all the services, including steamroom, sauna, lounges, body-builder’s gym,



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**DJ Geoff Kelleway  
at Byzantium**



**Bartender Jason with  
Jimmy of O'Grady's**



**Manager Michael Dawson  
of Gladaman's Den**



**Many pleasures tucked  
inside Club Toronto**



**At Spa Excess**



**Pierre, Ash, Gary, & Wendell  
out on the patio at Gladaman's Den**



**Entertainment at  
Gladaman's Den**



**Spotted partying at Straight**



**Peter, Steve, George,  
& Omar at O'Grady's**



Party boys at Fly



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and a 40-man stainless-steel hot tub. Some of the best DJs in town provide the music, and their private rooms include fetish and sling options, and all have 16-channel XXX video. It's one of the busiest, too, with one of the hottest cruise and play spaces in Toronto. It's all right at the heart of the gay village, and they never close.

Feeling adventurous? **The Cellar** (78 Wellesley Street) is a subterranean recess famous for its exceptionally dark ambiance, which attains its greatest pitch in their special Dark Room. A selection of other rooms is available, too, as well as a sauna and a small theater. It's worth the trip down!

At the busy **St. Marc Spa** (543 Yonge, at Wellesley, 4th floor) you're sure to find something to strike your fancy, after you arrive on the spa's private elevator. Boasting over 100 rooms and 80 lockers, St. Marc sports a wet and dry sauna, plus a steam room, intimate whirlpool, and multiple shower areas. Some rooms come with leather or fur beds, while others are all mirror. The VIP Room comes with its own private washroom. Special nights at St. Marc include Wednesday's Campus College Night, Friday's Deep South night (geared to Latino and Caribbean men and those who can't get enough of them), and Sundays Dark Night party, billed as the "superhero of lights-out parties" from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m.

**Spa Excess** (105 Carlton Street) offers a friendly ambiance, and the facilities are solid and clean – like the beautiful glass-and-tile wet area and the step-down, eight-man whirlpool with cozy seating and videos. There's a lot to do in the amazing playroom. You'll find many sexy features, including a one-way mirror (with seating!) with views to the large urinal on the other side. If you like, take a turn in the sling or on the St. Andrew's cross. Spa Excess also sports a large main floor lounge with a bar and a pool table, and a newly renovated rooftop sun deck.

**Club Toronto** (231 Mutual Street) is the only pleasure palace with an outdoor pool with boys lining up for the

Sunday barbecue. Tucked discreetly, it is housed within a gorgeous mansion.

## Fit and cruisy

To tone, flex, and build musculature, **L3 Fitness** (9 St. Joseph Street) is the gay choice. Cardio funk, kickboxing, Latin cardio, Pilates, yoga, and spinning are some of the offerings on hand within this four-story body factory.

**YMCA** (168 Isabella Street) is the gayest of the YMCAs that abound. First-time visitors get in for free at this multi-leveled gym, pool, and sports facility.

The aptly monikered Queen's Park is Toronto's top spot for after-dark quickies. Hanlan's Point Gay Beach is nudist paradise, quite the place in clement weather.

## More info

Good gay travel resources include [Gaytorontotourism.com](http://Gaytorontotourism.com), [PrideToronto.com](http://PrideToronto.com), and [ChurchWellesleyVillage.ca](http://ChurchWellesleyVillage.ca). For advice on the Niagara region, with its famous falls, visit [Gay-tourismniagara.com](http://Gay-tourismniagara.com). Local publications include *Xtra* and *Fab* (*The Guide's* sister publications!) and *About*. ▼

# TORONTO'S ANNUAL AGENDA

## Buddies in Bad Times Theater

Ongoing performances and events  
[Artsexy.ca](http://Artsexy.ca)

## Church Street Fetish Fair

Sunday, August 18, 2008  
[Churchstreetfetishfair.com](http://Churchstreetfetishfair.com)

## Leather Ball 14

August 22 to 23, 2008  
[MrIt.com](http://MrIt.com)

## Writing Outside the Margins Queer Literary Festival

Aug 31, 2009  
[Writingoutsidethemargins.ca](http://Writingoutsidethemargins.ca)

## Toronto International Film Festival

September 4 to 13, 2008  
[Tiffg.ca](http://Tiffg.ca)

## Nuit Blanche Toronto

October 4, 2008  
[Scotiabanknuitblanche.ca](http://Scotiabanknuitblanche.ca)

## Toronto Fashion Week

October 20 to 25, 2008  
[Lorealfashionweek.ca](http://Lorealfashionweek.ca)

## Halloweek Toronto

October 24 to 31, 2008  
[Halloweek.ca](http://Halloweek.ca)

## Fashion Cares

November 1, 2008  
[Fashioncares.org](http://Fashioncares.org)

## Mr Leather Toronto Competition

November 27 to 30, 2008  
[MrIt.com](http://MrIt.com)

## International Gay and Lesbian Tourism Association (IGLTA) 26th Annual Convention

May 7 to 10, 2009  
[iglta.org](http://iglta.org)

## Inside Out Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival

May 14 to 24, 2009.  
[Insideout.on.ca](http://Insideout.on.ca)

## The Toronto Fringe Theater Festival

July 2 to 13, 2008  
[Fringetoronto.com](http://Fringetoronto.com)

## Toronto Pride Week

Jun 19 to 27, 2009  
[Pridetoronto.com](http://Pridetoronto.com)

## International Gay Rodeo Association Annual Convention

November 11 to 15, 2009  
[lgra.com](http://lgra.com)



# ONTARIO

## TORONTO

**Steamworks** is North America's newest club for hot men of every type: blue collar, white collar, or dog collar! In the heart of Toronto's Gay village, this smokin' club is Toronto's hottest legal cruise/play space. Listen to some of Toronto's best DJs spin while enjoying amenities including steam room, showers, sauna, lounge, bodybuilder's gym, and 40 man stainless steel hot tub. Lockers, and a variety of private room options including fetish and sling rooms all with 16 channel XXX videos. The new standard in men's recreation and fitness centers. Unmistakably Steamworks... uniquely Toronto. Onsite STD and HIV testing provided by our Health and Services Center. Open 24/7 365 days a year. Must be age 18 to enter. Visit us at [www.steamworksonline.com](http://www.steamworksonline.com). 540 Church St, Level 2, Toronto (416) 925-1571