



Power of Pride: Hotels and Host Cities Fly Rainbow Flag

DESTINATION & TOURISM | JAMES RUGGIA | APRIL 23, 2014



Vienna is just one of many cities that is reaching out to LGBT travelers. (Courtesy of Vienna Tourist Board)

On October 1, 1989 Denmark became the first country in the world to allow same-sex civil unions. On that day, 11 gay couples entered into partnership at a ceremony at the Copenhagen Town Hall. This coming fall, various events will mark the event's 25th anniversary of Denmark.

LGBT Denmark and the National Museum of Denmark will exhibit the history of Danish same-sex civil union, and how it has been a leader in the recognition of same-sex marriage and LGBT rights. While it's way too early for congratulations in a civil rights struggle that is still struggling, it's important to acknowledge progress along the way.

www.travelpulse.com/news/destinations/power-of-pride-hotels-and-host-cities-fly-rainbow-flag.html

Gay Pride Parades, which began in New York City in 1970, have been instrumental protest/celebrations in the struggle. Taking place in cities all around the world they continue to play an important social and political role and also serve as a lucrative catalyst for sellers of travel. The combined spending of American and European LGBT travelers is estimated at about \$132 billion annually.

Gay Pride Parades are popular and fun. [Amsterdam Gay Pride](#), for instance, draws more than 350,000 gay and straight participants, for about a week every summer. The canal parade is the highlight of the event, which only begins after a week of parties, film festivals and more. For Amsterdam, the parade also offers a chance to strut its history of tolerance as lavishly decorated barges sail through its canals during the parade.

The advancement of LGBT acceptance has now begun to reach well beyond cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen to businesses. The [Preferred Pride Collection](#) from Preferred Hotel Group, for instance, just recently added 33 properties to its portfolio of TAG-certified (Community Marketing's Travel Alternative Group) or IGLTA-member (International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association) hotels in destinations ranging from Mossel Bay, South Africa and Cusco, Peru to the tried-and-true such as San Francisco and Barcelona.

There are now 92 hotels in the collection, which was just launched in 2011. The hotels are all either TAG Approved or belong to IGLTA, organizations that set standards for LGBT travel. Hotels that participate in Preferred Pride are offered diversity training on best practices in serving the LGBT community from check-in to check-out.

"We are so proud of Preferred Pride's continuous growth as the world's premier collection of gay-welcoming hotels and resorts," said Rick Stiffler, vice president of leisure sales for Preferred Hotel Group. Each property within the Preferred Pride portfolio is now offering a Preferred Pride package through Dec. 31. The offer features the best available rate, a special property-specific amenity and double iPrefer points.

The newest hotels in the collection are adding special touches to the packages. Il Salviatino, a hillside retreat in Florence, for instance, is adding a Tuscan Home Fragrance and a bottle of Italian sparkling wine and package rates from \$1,262. Located on Paseo de la Castellana, the Hesperia Madrid is a 15-minute walk from Chueca where the Gay Pride festivities take place every July. The hotel, known for its private rooftop terrace and the two-Michelin-starred restaurant Santceloni is adding a welcome amenity, a welcome drink and late check-out (4 p.m.) with package rates starting at \$138 per night.

The following is a list of Preferred Pride hotels and the dates of the annual Gay Pride parades in their host cities: Tokyo Rainbow Week, April 26 to May 6 at Capitol Tokyu Hotel; Capital Pride (Washington, D.C.), June 1 to 8 at The Jefferson; Vienna Gay Pride, June 11 to 15 at The Ring, Vienna's Casual Luxury Hotel; Gay Pride Dublin, June 14 to 29 and Dylan and The Fitzwilliam Dublin; Gay Pride New Orleans, June 20 to 22 at Windsor Court Hotel; Chicago Pride Fest, June 21 to 22 and June 29 (Parade) at The Talbott Hotel; Pride in London, June 22 to 29 at Draycott Hotel and ME London; San Francisco LGBT Pride, June 28 and 29 at Cavallo Point, Pier 2620 Hotel Fisherman's Wharf, and Hotel Nikko San Francisco; New York City Gay Pride Events, June 24 to 29 at The Mark and The Michelangelo; Gay Pride Montreal, Aug. 11 to 17 at Hotel Gault; and Austin PRIDE, Sept. 14 to 20 at Travaasa Austin and Lakeway Resort & Spa.

Preferred Hotels and the other businesses that are out in front on this deserve the praise and the profits they'll receive. Sadly, we were all reminded of the battles yet to be fought when the Russian Duma enacted its primitive anti-gay legislation, which served only as an overture to a series of offensive moments during the games and concluded with the invasion of the Crimea. Then certain [politicians in Arizona](#) tried to set the U.S. back a few decades. Here's to Copenhagen, New York City, Amsterdam, Preferred Hotels who recognize the LGBT community for what is, a group of people who are as entitled to as much respect as the rest of us.