

- home
- news**
- viewpoint**
- local life
- main feature
- nite life
- **pride**
- arts**
- sound off**
- email updates**

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## PRIDE

### Take off your shirt & show your Pride!

This year, the parties during Pride Weekend are better than ever

By [Matt Kalkhoff](#)  
Friday, May 28, 2004

Where else would you be at the end of June? At one of the country's best and most enduring Pride celebrations, of course. The enormous built-in loyalty and longstanding reputation keeps rainbow revelers from every corner of the world — and even those fly-over states — coming back to celebrate Gay Pride in New York City each summer.

This year's nearly overwhelming array of extreme events will keep you party-hopping with delightfully decadent debauchery. In other words, you might want to take Tuesday off as well.

Pride festivals embrace our entire diverse community. That, perhaps, is New York's prime advantage — there's something for everyone. While bars and other venues have much going on during Pride Weekend (check the listings/calendar section of this paper), I'm going to focus on the larger dance events. And this year, there's plenty to choose from.

If you want to ease yourself into the weekend, that's perfectly respectable (please do pace yourself). But those of us who are anxious to dive in headfirst are in luck because the weekend kicks off full throttle on Friday night with two great options.

DJ Alex Lauterstein will be manning the decks at SBNY for the bar-cum-nightclub's most popular party of the week. Always crowded, always fun — and the staff? What better way to celebrate Pride than ogling the hottest barkeeps and strippers in town?

A little further uptown is Octagon, where the Tom of Finland Foundation will be benefiting from the turntable talents of DJs Louis Morhaim and DeMarko. An official Heritage of Pride event (included on the VIP Pier Dance pass), this party promises lots of leather, testosterone and other activities (ahem!) to keep everyone occupied both on and off the dance floor.

Producer Mark Nelson is hoping to create a more community-oriented event that will include art exhibits, safer sex outreach and a performance by Quentin Elias singing his Junior Vasquez-produced anthem "This Time Baby."

Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$45 at the door, and can be purchased directly at [www.markn](http://www.markn)



Singer **Quentin Elias** helps heat up Friday's kick-off party.

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A new addition to New York's Pride schedule is the Freedom Party on Saturday afternoon. brainchild of talent agent Marc Katz (Deborah Cox, Kristine W) and event planner Rob Lad Beach Pride, H.O.P. Pier Dance), this outdoor party will be held on Pier 62 and will feature a little known up-and-coming DJ named Manny Lehman.

Yeah, right. Manny is one of the most popular DJs on the Circuit and spins regularly in Nev Roxy and Avalon. As versatile as he is talented, Manny is looking forward to playing a light tunes than Manhattan audiences are used to hearing from the LA-based mix master.

While there was some initial apprehension about a Saturday event undercutting the traditional festivities, such worries have thankfully been put to rest. This party benefiting the HIV Lav being embraced by all as a welcome addition to the weekend's festivities.

A surprise "A-list performer" is also promised, as is delicious décor courtesy of Mitchell Gre (Pines Party). Beginning at 2 p.m., the party won't fade out until the sun dips into the horizon. You might also want to check out the Freedom Pass, which includes admission to the Freedom Party on Saturday and Spirit on Sunday, as well as discounts at local merchants throughout the weekend. Visit [www.freedompartynyc.com](http://www.freedompartynyc.com) for more info.

### **Roxy or Crobar? Choices, choices**

Saturday night renews a delicious dilemma: Peter Rauhofer or Victor Calderone? Sure, you can go to either Roxy any old weekend, but you may already be planning on spending Sunday at Crobar if you don't plan to attend both, then please consider the following.

Victor Calderone's Pride events at Hammerstein Ballroom over the past three years have been short of extraordinary. From Caligula's live orchestra to Jungle's orgiastic tribalism, it's hard to see how he could possibly top himself. But considering the massive visual installation Victor has planned for Crobar this year — including a dome that envelopes the entire dance floor with a 360-degree projection that will literally immerse revelers in a sensory spectacle not unlike that seen in theater — then it's hard to imagine missing this one.

Add to that DJ That Kid Chris playing the opening set, Victor's complete control of the room (i.e., no bottle service), and a reasonable ticket price (\$45 in advance; \$60 after June 20) — available online at [www.victorcalderone.com](http://www.victorcalderone.com) or [www.crobar.com](http://www.crobar.com).

Then again, there are those of us who prefer a sure thing. And since Peter Rauhofer rules Roxy, there's no question that many boys (and girls) will be filtering over there for the night (let's hope the AC holds out). Try to get there before peak hours (generally midnight to 3 a.m.) to avoid a long wait. Although the party will coast through the morning hours, so even a fast entrance will still be rewarded. Tickets are available at the Roxy box office. Visit [www.jblai.com](http://www.jblai.com) for more info.

After the parade on Sunday, ship on over to Pier 54 where Heritage of Pride will present Dance on the Pier. For those concerned about overcrowding or entry difficulties (and rightfully so), be assured that drastic measures have been taken this year to cut down on confusion at the pier to ensure easier access and a more dignified entrance and departure experience.

The flow of the party inside the gates has also been altered for maximum fluidity, and the organizers have even taken a page from "Queer Eye" and spruced up the décor (including live foliage swaths and café tables) to give the pier a softer, more welcoming touch.

DJ Robbie Leslie "unofficially" begins spinning at 3:30pm (attention fan dancers!), and will continue around 6 p.m. when DJ Tony Moran takes over the decks. If you enjoyed the superstar performance at the 2000 event, then you'll want to make sure you're on the pier well before the fireworks are launched this year (and that's all I'm going to say about that!).

Volunteers are always welcome, so please email [dance@hopinc.org](mailto:dance@hopinc.org) if you're interested in helping or visit [www.hopinc.org](http://www.hopinc.org) for more info.

### **Sunday night: Junior or Abel?**

Sunday night presents yet another tough decision: Post-Pride revelers must decide between

Odyssey with DJ Abel at Crobar and Junior Vasquez at Spirit (aka Twilo). This is a toss-up, almost guaranteed good time, but it could end up severely overcrowded, or Abel might get many tedious tribal tangents. Then again, tickets might be reasonably limited and patrons treated to the more melodic sounds of "Circuit Abel."

On the other hand, Junior's been shuffled around to different venues more times this past JLo's switched wedding rings, so it's really anybody's guess what his party will hold. Of course spinning on the main floor of his former residences might inspire greatness, not to mention traditionally one of Junior's best events of the year.

Whatever happens, kids, may the party gods smile upon all of us this (and every) weekend it's all over, just be sure to rest up so that you can do it all over again the following week to celebrate the July 4th holiday.

Kevin Lechner contributed to this article

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