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Destinations



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EXCLUSIVE

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The sexy duo on romance,
fame and their unbreakable bond

LOVE ON LONG ISLAND

NEW YORK'S
RESORT DESTINATION
WELCOMES LESBIANS
TO SAVE THE DATE.
BY MERRY N JOHNS



With New York State's marriage equality win, it's no surprise that Long Island is getting in on the gay wedding boom. What may seem like pure pragmatism rather befits the "live and let live" ethos of The Big Apple and comes across as a genuine welcome. Such is the case with the Long Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, which went so far last July as to create an entire wedding campaign in partnership with ILOVENY, the office of state tourism. And this was no flash-in-the-pan campaign designed to cash in on queers rushing to the altar on July 24, 2011: The Long Island CVB has decided to further extend the welcome by partnering with the Long Island GLBT Services Network and provide information about planning your 2012 wedding on Long Island.

Yes, it's times like these that I am proud to call New York my home. Like many New York residents, I even find myself vacationing in the state; whether it's a festival in the Finger Lakes, mountain magic in the nearby Catskills, or a weekend beach adventure out on Long Island.

Long Island, which lies just east of Manhattan and juts slightly north into the Atlantic Ocean like an upside down crab claw, is a refuge from the urban intensity many associate with New York City—especially in summer, when N.Y.C. residents get in cars or on trains and flee to the beaches known as the Hamptons (and let's not forget Fire Island or the "Gay Hamptons" locales of Cherry Grove and The Pines). Even though Long Island is part of the New York Metropolitan area, and is the most

populated island in any U.S. state or territory, it offers places of spectacular beauty, awe-inspiring history and many opportunities for the visitor to relax in the arms of nature, and indulge in several aspects of culture, too.

While Long Island as a geographical location may conjure suburban images of housewives, tacky houses, strip malls and traffic snarls, many places on the island more closely resemble quaint New England villages: Oyster Bay, Port Jefferson, Sag Harbor, and the secluded and beautiful Shelter Island make it hard to believe you are only a couple of hours from New York City.

Yes, the diverse and very urban melting pots of N.Y.C. boroughs Queens and Brooklyn are part of Long Island, but it's really the stretch of beaches, from Long Beach on the Southwestern shore, to Montauk at the furthestmost Northeastern point, that make the trip worthwhile to Manhattanites. But no matter where you are from, there is a lot to love and discover about this 120-mile-long land mass—especially its proactive decision to roll out the red carpet to commitment-loving lesbians. Which brings us back to why you might find yourself there this year.

To understand the needs of gays and lesbians choosing the area as a vacation destination, the Long Island CVB held meetings with the Long Island GLBT Services Network, their reciprocal partner, to discuss issues affecting our community. They also participated in a Long Island Business, Life and Wedding Expo in October last year, geared to educating the LGBT community about

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marriage equality and other services in New York State, and launched a weddings page on their website with special offers, promotions and listings of recommended wedding venues, accommodations and services.

To help you plan, and find a wedding location, request a free Long Island Travel Guide, or a free Long Island Meeting Facilities Guide. The following are special offers from participating "Save the Date" campaign partners to encourage same-sex couples to choose Long Island as their wedding destination. (discoverlongisland.com/weddings)



RAINBOW PACKAGE

Say yes to an oceanfront wedding, to a rooftop poolside ceremony with gourmet organic cuisine—and the next day, watching the sunrise over the Atlantic from a luxury suite. The Allegria would like to make you feel welcome on your special day. Make sure to ask for the special Rainbow Package for just \$144 per person. Contact the Allegria Hotel for food selection choices and options. (allegriahotel.com)

"MAKE IT OFFICIAL" PACKAGE

The Hilton Long Island/Huntington hotel is a first class, full-service hotel offering a 5-hour Make It Official Wedding package including: Customized menu, deluxe open bar, complimentary ceremony space, a complimentary suite for the happy couple, two complimentary rooms for guests of choice, elegant chair covers and linens, valet parking and discounted room rates for out of town guests. Mention you want to make it "Official" and breakfast is

complimentary the next morning for up to 25 guests. (hiltonlongisland.com)

RAINBOW PRIDE WEDDING RECEPTION

Celebrate the love of your life with the wedding of a lifetime at Danfords Hotel & Marina, with its spectacular views of Port Jefferson Harbor. This boutique hotel's wedding planners can design a complete wedding package for you, from an intimate family event up to a 175-guest reception in the ballroom. Overnight accommodation in renovated rooms and suites and on-premises spa and salon services are available. (danfords.com)

"SHOW YOUR PRIDE" WEDDING PACKAGE

The Glen Cove Mansion has always welcomed LGBT weddings, and now they are celebrating New York's historic same-sex marriage law with a new iPad 2 outfitted with a Rainbow Case—loaded with your wedding pictures (minimum of 125 guests, \$150 per person). The Show Your Pride Wedding waves the ceremony fee and includes butler-style champagne at your ceremony or reception. (glencovemansion.com)

FIRE ISLAND LIMO

Fire Island Limousine has been joyfully catering to the gay and lesbian community since 1980 with their tradition of combining newly-fashioned limousines with old-fashioned service. They cater to Cherry Grove, The Pines, Ocean Beach, Fair Harbor, Davis Park, Montauk, Amagansett, the Hamptons or to any Long Island resort. (fireislandlimo.com)

LOVING LONG ISLAND

Long Island has long been a gay-friendly destination, with the world-renowned queer haven of Fire Island, the super-chic Hamptons, and the increasingly popular Long Island and wine country are just a few draws among many.

Another benefit of a Long Island wedding is your choice of four seasons—and no matter what the weather you know that this island welcomes you with an official rainbow-colored smile. (discoverlongisland.com) ■

CURVE DROVE THIS

This past summer, **curve** was lucky enough to host a Hamptons party with the LGBT-and-allies group, dot429.com. 429Escape benefitted the Hetrick Martin Institute and took place in a haute-designed show home in the hamlet of Watermill. A swank, end-of-summer party in the Hamptons—what better excuse to test drive one of the best sports cars of all time? The first thing we noticed about the Porsche 911 Carrera GTS Cabriolet was its longer, lower and seemingly wider profile. Our initial reaction was, "This is going to be tough to parallel park (always the concern of Manhattanites)," but we couldn't have been more wrong. The car handles as well at a virtual standstill as it does on the highway at 80mph. Before we hit the road, we acquainted ourselves with the car's interior control panels, which were pretty straightforward. Both our BlackBerry and iPhone synced in seconds with the Porsche Communication Management system, allowing hands-free phone use with voice activation. The onboard GPS was simple to program and worked flawlessly once we sorted out how to increase the navigation system audio so we could hear it over the impressive Burmester sound system. The stereo system includes 12 individually controllable speakers, a 300-watt subwoofer and 16 amplifier channels with a total output of more than 800 watts. With the top down, the music playing and the destination loaded, we were exhilarated, and we hadn't even started the engine. As soon as that formidable Porsche growl sounded, we knew we were in for a thrill. This car did not disappoint. The steering is tight, the acceleration is instantaneous, the braking is dynamic and responsive. The sky really is the limit with this luxe convertible. [Constance Parten]

