

IGLTA eNewsletter

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Enjoy cocktails and travel talk at one of New York's rarely seen venues, the Bernard B. Jacobs Rooftop, opened for the evening by the Shubert Organization from 6-8 p.m., 17 May. Proceeds from this cocktail reception will contribute to the [IGLTA Foundation's](#) global advocacy, educational and research efforts worldwide, helping to make the world a more welcoming place for LGBT travelers. Admission is \$35, which includes open bar and hors d'oeuvres. You'll also have the opportunity to take home great travel prizes and Broadway theater tickets in our on-site raffle and silent auction. [RSVP here.](#) [READ MORE](#)

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Tap into the expanding LGBT tourism market at the LGBT Tourism & Hospitality Symposium New York. The dynamic half-day conference, which is free of charge, will be held from 1:30 to 5 p.m., 17 May with a reception following at Google's Autumn Tech Talk Room, 111 8th Avenue (11th Floor). Held as part of the annual LGBT Week, it's presented by [Community Marketing & Insights](#) and [Pink Banana Media](#) in partnership with IGLTA and Google. Featured presenters include [Belmond](#), [Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority](#), [NYC & Company](#), and more! To register, please RSVP with your name, title, company and email to David@CommunityMarketingInc.com. [READ MORE](#)

Travel Weekly

For the first time, the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) held its annual Global Convention on the African continent. The event, which took place from 14-16 April in Cape Town and welcomed more than 300 delegates from 26 countries, opened up the continent to LGBT travel. In his keynote welcome address, South African minister of tourism Derek Hanekom said, "What I can say without any shadow of a doubt is that, as a country, we need you and want you here. Not because of who we are, but because of who you are. Because of the struggles you have faced. Because of the brave or even the ordinary lives that you lead. We need you because you bring experience and challenge into our lives, and we have never been afraid of either." [READ MORE](#)

International Business Times

Colombia has become the fourth country in Latin America to have legalized gay marriages after the country's high court cleared all hurdles, extending the same marriage rights to them as heterosexual couples. Other countries to have legalized same sex marriages in the region include Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Previously, gay couples had the choice to form civil unions in Colombia, but on 28 April the high court cleared the way for them to get married. Alberto Rojas, the judge who presented the motion, said "Some 70 unions previously registered only as civil partnerships will now be automatically converted into full marriages under the new ruling." [READ MORE](#)

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Examiner

On 25 April the LGBT Guide to Business Travel was released. It is the first comprehensive tool to provide LGBT business travelers with information to help them stay safe, productive and successful when visiting unfamiliar and uncertain destinations. The guide was created by ManAboutWorld, which also produces a monthly digital travel magazine for gay men. [READ MORE](#)

IOL

Africa's first mass same-sex wedding added a dash of color to gloomy weather on the Garden Route, when 15 couples tied the knot in the usually sleepy holiday town of Knysna. The wedding was part of the 16th Knysna Pink Loerie Mardi Gras and Arts Festival, one of the country's biggest gay pride events, with celebrations held at the Villa Castollini guesthouse and venue between Knysna and Brenton-on-Sea. "As we celebrate 16 years of making a mark on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community, and the 10 years since same-sex marriage in our country was legalized, we felt it only appropriate to highlight one of the most appreciated and sought-after rights – the right to marriage equality," festival organizer John O'Neil said. [READ MORE](#)

Gay News Network

Nur Warsame is now Australia's first openly gay imam (Muslim leader), after detailing secret gay Muslim meetings in a recent interview and also revealing he is gay. Warsame, who has previously been married and also has a younger daughter, said the journey has been "very difficult." "Reconciling spirituality with sexuality is a very difficult journey," he said. [READ MORE](#)

Euro Weekly News

LGBT tourists visiting Torremolinos, Spain, have had a rough deal in recent years with a lack of activities, events, and infrastructure presenting a limited holiday experience based around the town center's aging bars and discos, leading many with little reason to return when far greater variety is on offer in Sitges (Barcelona) and Ibiza. This may now be set to change with the new council recognizing the promise of LGBT tourism, and this year will see a total of four large events in what promises to be the greatest summer in history for the local LGBT community. [READ MORE](#)

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BBC News

Kira is a young Russian transgender woman waiting for the gender re-assignment operation that is going to allow her to live her life officially as a woman. She is studying in Moscow, where she also works as a fashion model. Back in her home town in northern Russia, the revelations about her sexual identity have thrown her family into turmoil. Her brother Maxim's first reaction was to beat her up. Her sister Alyona will barely talk to her, while her mother is continually dissolving into floods of tears. [READ MORE](#)

Temple Update

The first weekend of May will bring Tokyo City's Rainbow Pride Parade. As one of the most energetic cities in the world, Tokyo has it's own unique LGBT culture. Japanese Studies Professor, Karl Neubert said "In Japan, there is no religious script says it's a sin to be homosexual or to identify with a different gender." In

Japanese history, there were times where homosexuality was seen as an ideal form of love. It was a male dominated society, so the relationship between a samurai and his younger male apprentice was seen as more pure than a heterosexual relationship. Even between monks, homosexuality was quite accepted.

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Washington Blade

Lawmakers in the Faroe Islands have approved a bill that extends marriage rights to same-sex couples. Members of the Faroese Parliament voted for the measure on 29 April by a 19-14 vote margin. The Copenhagen Post reported that Georg L. Petersen, an editor for Dimmalæting, a Faroese newspaper, said the bill contains a provision that does not allow gays and lesbians to marry in churches. [READ MORE](#)

Times of Malta

Gay men may soon be able to donate blood, as long as they have not been sexually active for one year, as the government considers relaxing the lifetime ban on blood donation. Health Minister Chris Fearne told the Times of Malta that the technical committee set up last year to review the ban had recently completed its report and recommended scrapping the current indefinite deferral on donations. [READ MORE](#)

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Westgay, a frisky gay dance party in the West Village, ended last summer when the building was sold to condominium developers. PrettyUgly, a twink-filled dance party at the Diamond Horseshoe in Times Square, ended its run this year. New owners, new directions. JB Saturdays, a party in Hell's Kitchen that drew about 1,600 shirtless gay men every week for three years, stopped in January. [READ MORE](#)

The Desert Sun

Restricting travel to states that pass discriminatory laws, requiring all single-occupancy bathrooms to be available to everyone, and treating minors engaged in prostitution as victims of sexual exploitation instead of criminals are just some of the pro-LGBT bills Equality California is supporting this legislative session. [READ MORE](#)

WGHP-TV

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam signed a bill into law that allows therapists and counselors with "sincerely held principles" to reject gay, lesbian, transgender and other clients. "Although Senate Bill 1556 has received attention for its perceived focus, my job is to look at the actual substance of the legislation," said Haslam, a Republican in his second term. [READ MORE](#)

MISSED AN ISSUE OF THE IGLTA eNEWSLETTER? [VISIT AND SEARCH](#) THE ARCHIVE TODAY. Travel + Leisure

As LGBT tourism continues to grow, travel-planning app and website Gogobot just announced its 2016 top destinations where the specialized sector is expanding. Atlanta topped the list this year beating out Minneapolis and Boston— Dubai even cracked the top 10 briefly before being removed considering homosexuality is illegal in the region. "Gogobot's LGBT Tribe is exploring exciting new spots that transcend traditional LGBT travel destinations like Miami, San Francisco, and Provincetown," Krista Canfield, Gogobot's Getaway Expert told Travel + Leisure via email. [READ MORE](#)

The Association Press via USA Today

A unit of Chinese conglomerate HNA Group has agreed to buy Carlson Hotels, which owns brands including Radisson and Country Inns and Suites, the latest in a flurry of overseas investments by Chinese companies. HNA Tourism Group will acquire all of Carlson Hotels Inc., the companies said in a joint statement released late Wednesday that did not disclose the purchase price. [READ MORE](#)

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