



HOMO-GROWN



HOLIDAYS



Summer beckons queer travelers to come out and play

BY WILL O'BRYAN • PHOTOS BY LINDA KIEWER

Some women, each with \$2,545 to spare, will find themselves spending their 1998 summer vacations floating down the Amazon River with Women in Motion tours, complete with pink dolphins swimming alongside their chartered boat. The brochure promises dolphins.

Meanwhile, a world away, a few gay men and lesbians, for nearly \$3,000 each, will spend 12 days with Family Abroad tours sailing through the Aegean Sea visiting Greece and Turkey.

Or why not join thousands of lesbians and gay men in Amsterdam for Gay Games V in early August?

The gay and lesbian travel business is booming and it can be very expensive. Closer to home, though, it can be a bit more reasonable, and our own backyard has plenty to offer queer travelers looking for a summer getaway.

Rip Rupinski, a gay travel agent with Carlson Wagonlit (formerly of Travel Agents International) in downtown Portland, can rattle off a list of gay and lesbian mainstays for regional summer vacations: San

Francisco, Russian River, Hawaii...

Wayne Boulette, a gay travel agent with 17 years of experience, mentions Hawaii as the top destination for Portlanders, regardless of their sexuality. Even in the summer heat, gay and lesbian couples are flocking to the islands for "union" ceremonies.

Boulette also points out that any place becomes a gay destination if the city has a pride celebration. And Boulette's experience tells him that the most popular pride celebration in the Pacific Time Zone is in Long Beach, Calif., happening early in the season, May 16 and 17.

"People who know it want it," he says. "It

draws lots of out movie stars. Long Beach is a very active community. There's a lot of pride in it."

Paring back a traveler's budget even further and breaking out the pup tent (queers being the kings and queens of camp), there are a variety of summer events heavy on rustic relaxation and low on cost.

Sharing Long Beach's sensibilities, another event saddling up early for the season is the Gay and Lesbian Equestrian, Biker and Hiker Games and Camp-Out.

The event, which is in its eighth year, is held at Goose Lake Ranch in Bend, Ore., from May 22 to 25. This is a summertime must for

Elvis-adoring cowpokes, as one day of events is dedicated to the King.

Queer Fest '98, scheduled for early June, is a three day gathering at Camp Westwind on the Oregon coast near Lincoln City.

Produced by Q-Basics, it's a call to all "gay, lesbian, bi, trans, same-gender-loving and queer folks" interested in celebrating themselves and their culture. A fee of \$75 includes meals. Cabins are available, but don't expect room service.

Lesbians trying to channel their muses—or just get a little time alone with them—will have ample opportunity at two separate summer events.

The first is the Dyke Art Retreat Encampment slated June 28 to July 5 in Southern Oregon for less than \$200. Later in the summer, Aug. 3 to 8, and for a bit more money, try Dyke Art Camp. But don't try bringing any alcohol or pets. (They apparently don't mix well with the outdoor waterbed.)

For women who spent the gray months watching too much *Xena*, *Warrior Princess* and

IGLTA 1997 MEMBER SURVEY

The 1997 survey of IGLTA members illustrates some of the particulars of sexual minority travelers.

Those surveyed said:

- ✦ The top destination of their L/G/B clients is California.
- ✦ Their L/G/B clients travel internationally more often than domestic.
- ✦ Forty-two percent of clients prefer to stay at gay/lesbian resorts exclusively; 16 percent never do.

To find an IGLTA member travel agent or IGLTA accommodations, call the association at 1-800-448-8550

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