

THE French capital is cloaked in myth and cliché, but rest assured, few places on earth can be gayer than the roads of the intimate Marais and the neon-lit Les Halles districts just north of Notre Dames. There are dozens of queer bars, clubs, eateries, saunas, sex shops and boutiques – enough to fill a novella. But if you try out those suggested here you'll have more than scratched the surface.

Settle in with a nice cuppa coffee! Sit, sip and stare at your own pink-purpose-built and homo-ly

Coffee Shop (3 rue Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie); or **Le Eleven** (11 rue de la Ferronnerie) provides a stylish, youthful caffeine kick-start to any gay away-day. Peckish already?

L'Amazional (3 rue Ste-Opportune) is a huge gay restaurant with great food and outrageous but variable service, stretched beyond limit at weekends. **Le Gai Moulin** (4 rue St Merri) provides a more cosy, intimate culinary alternative.

Amnesia (42 rue Vieille du Temple) is the kind of bar you're unlikely to forget, not least in the basement. The

Banana Café (13 rue de la Ferronnerie) is worth avoiding since extremely overrated and now a bit passé and frankly somewhat straight-laced – it should relax and forget itself a bit. You couldn't say that about the **Mixer Bar** (23 rue Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie), a small space where a lot of people cram in for a musical buzz, not dissimilar to the nearby **Thermik** (7 rue de la Verrerie).

One of Paris' oldest gay bars, **Le Central** (33 rue Vieille du Temple) is pretty dead in truth, as a cursory glance through the windows will reveal. Only go in if you want some quiet. Mere streets - yet seemingly a million miles - away is the overfull **Le Cox** (15 rue des Archives) stuffed with butch manly men seeking a stuffing. **Okawa** (40 rue Vieille du Temple) is one of Paris' more ambient gay haunts, with candles and class - good for romance. And the **Open Café** (17 Rue des Archives) is one of the largest and most airy meeting points in town, sprawling out onto its corner pavements.

Le Bar du Palmier (16 rue des Lombards) and **Le Tropic Café** (66 rue des Lombards) are both informally chic drinking holes a few doors down from each other. Far more mean and moody is the cruisy **Quetzal** (10 rue de la Verrerie) just

along the road, pulling in an older no-nonsense crowd. But for some really serious man-on-man action, Paris has a wide range of men-only bars with suggestive titles like **Le Banque Club** (23 rue de Penthièvre) and **Les Docks** (150 rue St Maur).

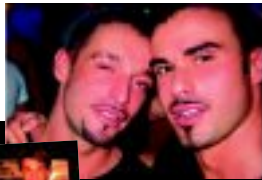
For more innocent clubbing pleasures? **Le Queen** (102 avenue des Champs Elysées) is to Paris what Heaven is to London – only with a Parisian twist of being slightly arrogant. **Le Vogue** (25 boulevard Poissonnière) is more like London's G-A-Y, on a smaller scale – shamelessly tacky but a good laugh. More mixed, **Le Gibus** (18 rue du Faubourg du Temple) is stylish yet uninhibited, for your true clubbing crowd.

Caution: take out a loan to buy your drinks in any Paris club.

One of the world's great gay saunas, they queue around the block to get into **Key West** (141 rue Lafayette) on a Sunday afternoon! It boasts a vast steam room, an endless warren of cabins and wipe-down wide-open mattress spaces - plus lots of young'ns. **IDM** (4 rue du Faubourg Montmatre) is also worth a visit for steaming away any remaining spare Parisian moments. For outside action, try the Seine's **Louvre Quay** between Pont Neuf and Tuileries Gardens.

Hotel Central Marais (33 rue Vieille du Temple; T: 0033 1 48 87 56 08) is one of Paris' only strictly gay hotels, above the dinosaur that is **Le Central** bar. It couldn't be better placed but you will need to book up months in advance.

> For travel to Paris call tour operator Manaround, tel 020 8902 7177.



PLASTERED IN PARIS

ADRIAN GILLAN got Gallic and phallic in Paris

» SOUTHERN DECADENCE - USA

2nd - 6th September 2004 (Labour Day weekend)

> www.SouthernDecadence.net and www.BourbonPub.com
NEW ORLEANS' biggest gay weekend of the year. Southern Decadence remains one of the most unique gay events in America today. Considered to be the Gay Mardi Gras of New Orleans, Southern Decadence has gained popularity as one of the largest free street parties you can attend... with over 100,000 visitors from all over the world.

» FUN IN THE SUN - SARDINIA

10th - 17th September 2004

> www.Alternative-Holidays.com or phone 020 8795 6569
 THE 4th annual all-gay-all-inclusive week of fun in the sun: loads of wild activities to keep you entertained over 7 days. There's nightly evening cabaret and late night parties, with DJs being flown in from Salvation, Crash, Heaven and Beyond amongst others.

» MISTER CIRCUIT - PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

15th - 21st September 2004

> www.EGayWorld.com and www.MrCircuit.com
 A truly magical weekend in the enchanted Golden City of Prague. Three steamy nights of dance, surrounded by the hottest guys and go-go-Gods. Non-stop parties with performances and DJ's such as Hex Hector and Tracy Young plus more. There's also a Mr Circuit contest to find and crown the world's hottest circuit party boy: www.MrCircuit.com

» FOLSOM STREET FAIR - SAN FRANCISCO, USA

26th September 2004

> www.folsomstreetfair.com or
www.folsomstreetevents.org/magnitude or www.realbad.org
 and www.mezanineest.com

THE world's largest leather event, the Folsom Street Fair is filled with people in their most outrageous leather/rubber/fetish attire enjoying the world's largest and best loved leather event. Saturday's main event is called Magnitude and is famous for breaking all the rules! Another hot ticket for the weekend is for Jito's Aftershook with DJ Abel where the hunkiest come to play.

» SLEAZE BALL - SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Saturday 2nd October 2004

> www.MardiGras.org.au
 IF you are looking for a gargantuan dance party that attracts sleazy, hedonistic, and broadminded folks from around the globe, then this is your party. With the accent on fun this is the place to be for thousands of muscle daddies, club kids, slave boys, fierce fashion and an international assortment of hunks.

» BLACK & BLUE - USA

6th - 12th October 2004

> www.bbcm.org
 THE 14th edition of the renowned Black & Blue Festival in Montreal, Canada. One of the biggest gay events in the world, this week-long festival offers a variety of activities ranging from major parties like the infamous Black & Blue Party, the Military Ball, the Leather Ball and the Recovery Party, to socio-cultural activities such as art exhibits, brunches, conferences, and even sports activities.

» RESPECT HOLIDAYS, TEL: 020 7428 3737

> **IBIZA, Lido Llobet apartments, 28th August (7 nights)** from Gatwick

> **ATCH** the closing weeks of the summer 2004 season on the clubbing isle.

4 share £299, 2 share £359 (All prices per person)

» ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAYS SUMMER 'FUN IN THE SUN', TEL: 020 8795 8569

> **SANTO STEFANO, SARDINIA - 10th to 17th September 2004**
PROMISING to be bigger and better than 2003's Sicily week which left the gay scene talking for weeks! The finest entertainers, men & music. One price includes accommodation & buffet style breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.

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 - Gay Times January 2004

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