

BLACK & BLUE IN MONTRÉAL

ADRIAN GILLAN explores the French-speaking Canadian gem of Montréal in the run up to North America's biggest gay festival: **BLACK & BLUE**



PICK OF THE SCENE

Agora (1160 Mackay St, near René-Lévesque, metro, Guy-Concordia; Tel: +1 514 934 1428). One of the few

"THE mega production, the hot boys, the music, the city, the best event in North America," gushes Bad Boy Club of Montréal's Caroline Rousse, organiser of the whopper gay Black & Blue festival that will dominate Montréal from the 5th - 11th October. "Is that enough?"

"I go every year," whoops charming Laurent Chaumet from London's club-night Discotec, which has hosted a promo party for Black & Blue annually at The End for the last five years - this year on Thursday 18th August. "It's one of the best festivals I've ever been to - and it's all for charity."

One of the oldest cities in North America, Montréal in the Canadian province of Quebec is the largest French-speaking city in the world after Paris - a truly international hub and only seven hours from London. This home to 3 million is a colourful hybrid of North American and European cultures - a treasure chest spanning three centuries. It also boasts one of the largest queer quarters in the world, with focal metro station Beaudry oh-so-proudly bearing those rainbow hues. The gay neighbourhood stretches east to west along Sainte-Catherine Street - the city's main thoroughfare - from Saint-Hubert Street to Papineau Street.

Vivid nightlife is complemented by a high level of daytime energy in town, when the Village streets bustle with brimming cafés, bistros, boutiques, antique shops and exotic eateries. Numerous events and festivals take place each year to keep excitement mounting, including the Festival des Arts in July; the Divers/Cité LGBT Pride Célébration in August; and - of course - Black & Blue in October.

gay bars left in western downtown. Unlike many places in the East End, many of the clientele speak English. Good if you don't want to be hassled or hustled. Karaoke at weekends.

Club Bolo (960 Amherst St, near Viger, metro Beaudry; Tel: +1 514 849 4777). Country & Western dancing in the heart of the Village. Offers different levels of courses weekly, as well as free dancing for members and non-members Fri - Sun.

Club Unity 2 (1400 Montcalm St, near Ste-Catherine, metro Beaudry; Tel: +1 514 523 4429). Inside this mammoth men-only yet easy-going club, explore the retro-themed Bamboo Bar, a beautiful rooftop terrace and various lounges. DJs Thurs - Sun.

Drugstore (1366 Ste-Catherine St East, near Panet, metro Beaudry; Tel: +1 514 529 8999). This huge gay complex fills an entire block. Enjoy enough bars, bistros, restaurants and clubs to enthrall for a full week.

Groove Society (1288 Amherst St, near Ste-Catherine, metro Beaudry; Tel: +1 514 845 5045). Hip hoppers and dance maniacs love this club. Tues and Thurs mainly gay, other nights mixed.

Sky Pub (1474 Ste-Catherine St East, near Dalcourt, metro Papineau; Tel: +1 514 529 6969). Step down into the lower floor of this three-story complex for a much louder and younger crowd than its upper levels. Or, step up for a more relaxed ambience, delicious food and a diverse crowd. Some hustling, but it is subtle, so a good place for either cruising or socialising.

Taverne Rocky (1673 Ste-Catherine St East, metro Papineau; Tel: +1 514 521 7865). This engaging, gay-friendly place, like most of the remaining taverns in Montréal, serves only beer and soft drinks. Older clientele. The music is as loud as the hustlers. All good fun!

15TH BLACK & BLUE FESTIVAL (Wednesday 5th - Tuesday 11th October 2005)

MONTRÉAL'S annual Black & Blue Festival (Weds 5th - Tues 11th October 2005) has grown from a small party in 1991 - organised by The Bad Boy Club of Montréal volunteer group to raise cash for local HIV and LGBT causes - into one of the biggest gay festivals in the northern hemisphere.

This week-long event celebrates gay life through social, cultural and sporting events, plus parties, and brings together 80,000 people from across the globe. Held on the joint holiday weekend of Canadian Thanksgiving and American Columbus Day, Montréal explodes with multiple reasons to party, bubbling with community spirit to help good causes. The main event - the Xtreme Ball - is on Sunday night (9th October) at the mighty Olympic Stadium, with DJ/producer Danny Tenaglia plus DJs Chus & Ceballos from Spain. Other dates for your diary include the Leather Ball (Fri 7th October), Military Ball (Sat 8th October) and the Recovery Party (Mon 10th October) - plus a host of other cocktail shebangs and tea dances.



> For more info, or to reserve a **Festival Pass** - available at four different grades (**Special, Bronze, Silver, Gold**) to suit all interests and budgets, with discounts until 15th August: www.bbcm.org/bb2005/EN_home.htm

> **Discotec's Black & Blue Party is at The End on Thursday 18th August 2005, with Guest DJ Charles Poulin from Montréal. Anyone attending will have the chance to win a pair of London - Montréal air tickets courtesy of Air Canada and a pair of passes for the Black & Blue Festival.**

> **Book ahead for Montréal Out Games, 29th July - 5th August 2006. Manaround is the official UK tour operator for the games, tel: 020 8902 7177 or go to www.manaround.com. For more info on the games, go to www.montreal2006.org**

> For info on the Montréal Gay Scene, check out www.TourismMontreal.org/Gay

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ANTHEM

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ORANGE

Tuesday - Bling Bling Bling with
Laquisha Jonz. Orange - PA by
Therese.



Wednesday - 'Beauty and the Beast'
Fancy Dress Ball. Nightingale
entertains - with Phil Oldershaw

Thursday - Fleurettes. Winners of
Drag Idol. Milk and Sugar - Holland's
hot club.

CRASH

Friday - Pool Party, Rocky Horror and
fireworks. Crash - with Steve Pitron.

BEYOND

Saturday - Sunset Tea Dance, Diva
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