



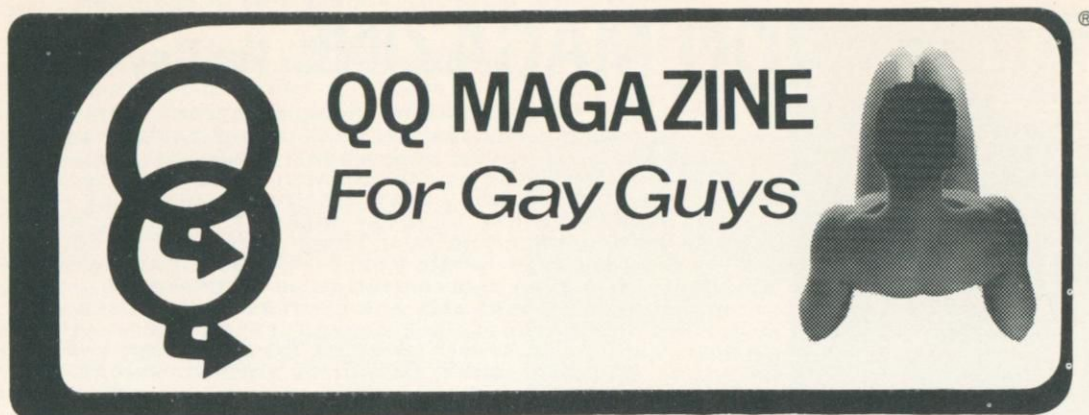
QQ MA
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10 Pages Of
Personal Ads

FOR ADULTS ONLY
Sexually Oriented Material Not To Be Sold T

August 1976
\$3.50





JULY/AUGUST 1976

VOLUME 8/NUMBER 4

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Front cover: Peter, by Dudley. Back cover: Robert Butler, by Kensington Road.

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Gay San Diego

By Ralph W. Davis

FEW small cities offer so much gay diversion as San Diego. In early evening the downtown literally swells with restless young men who flaunt their sexual readiness as boldly as the aging residents flaunt their wealth. Most of these young men are inexperienced and come here from small towns across America for their military training. They bring with them their quaint provincialism and All-American good looks. With passes in their pockets, they wander the streets, parks and movies with a naivete and curiosity which makes plucking easy.

For this reason, older San Diego residents, living off comfortable incomes, find the city ideal for satisfying their insatiable appetites. At dusk these local gays converge on the city from all directions and almost rapaciously strip the young of their innocence before sending them back to their bases a little wiser and often a little richer. Consequently, San Diego is a microcosm of life, of the old and the young, of the wise and the innocent, meeting together briefly in dark places for their moment. Unlike larger cities, these symbiotic encounters are less strained and tense, making San Diego more a garden of pleasure than a jungle of fear.

Physically, San Diego is beautiful, with an even Mediterranean climate that makes life lazy and luxurious. Trapped between sea and mountains, the city stretches to the edges of both and gleams spic-and-span like no other American city. It is a fairytale city, both modern and quaintly old, and from almost any angle it is picturesque. The homes are anything from middle-class nice to upper-class palatial. There is a ghetto, but it is out of sight so that the city isn't defaced.

OUTSIDE CRUISING

Pacific Highway, between Broadway and Laurel, is referred to by many local gays as "*Milk Run*." This is because so many servicemen thumb back and forth, and sell or give themselves away to whomever meets their fancy. "*Cannibal Square*" is another popular place for mating. Any type can be found here, from white to black, from straight to gay, from winos to teetotalers. It is a melange of men who have one thought in mind: Getting It Off! In the evening they often stand around the curb at Fourth and Broadway (in the Plaza, as it's popularly called) and look longingly at the drivers who pause for a light. A full smile is all one needs to communicate one's needs to these humpy youths. The same types who visit Cannibal Square also head for the Greyhound Bus Station.

The *Balboa Park johns* are notorious, especially the three on Sixth Avenue. Unfortunately, they are very hot. By the *Ford Pavilion* across from the *Starlight Theatre* is a john which always gets heavy cruising. Behind it is a wooded area which descends the hill. At night screams of pleasure fill the air and drown out the music from the nearby theatre.

Other johns worth a visit are: the one by the *Bahia Hotel* (after dark); the one at the *Mission Bay Inlet* at El Carmel Street off 3350 Mission Blvd. (next to the Yacht Club); the *Physics Building* and the old *Arts and Science Building* at *San Diego State University*. It is best, if you visit any of these johns, to be careful. The police have been known to spoil some of the fun.

There are three places for swimming. One is the "*Fruit Bowl*" (as some call it) on Coast Boulevard in front of the *Casa de Manana* apartment complex in La Jolla. At night the john becomes very cruisy, as does the beach area. The other place is the *Mission Bay Beach* by the amusement park near the parking lot at Ventura Street. Many gays sun on the sands here, and some even cruise the changing room nearby. They both are especially good during the summer months. Finally, there is bare-ass beach. It is about a half-hour walk from the *Torrey Pines State* Parking lot at the base of the golf course. It is often called *Black's Beach*. If you should have difficulty finding it, ask anyone. It has a national reputation, and straights and gays from all over head here during the warmer months for full exposure.



"Cannibal Square"



Balboa Park Johns



"Fruit Bowl"



Mission Bay Beach



Aztec/Casino



Vulcan Baths



Glen's Turkish Bath



Gent's Turkish Bath



Atlas Steam & Sauna



The Hut

MOVIE THEATRES

At 645 Fifth Avenue is another place that attracts gays. This is the *Casino Theatre*. Unfortunately, every fifteen minutes management checks the theatre. But next door, at 665 Fifth, cruising is usually easier. The management at the *Aztec* doesn't seem quite as attentive to what's happening there as at the Casino. Both theatres charge \$1.50 to enter and have late, late shows.

If the 25-cent arcades turn you on, there are many of them on and off Broadway, downtown. Unfortunately, the police are a major nuisance and they make a big show of raiding the book stores. Still many gays visit.

THE BATHS

There are five baths in San Diego of particular interest to gays. Perhaps *Dave's* and the *Vulcan* are the two most popular ones. Glen's and Gent's are usually best on weekends. The Vulcan is at 805 W. Cedar, just a short walk from the YMCA. On Monday and Wednesday, it is packed to capacity because of the \$2.50 specials per person for entry. Other times the admission is \$5. It is a clean, well-managed baths. There is a sundeck and a whirlpool bath.

Dave's (Coast Security) is at 4969 Santa Monica in Ocean Beach. It is a private baths which is open only to members. Visitors must be sponsored. It is a chain baths, and like the others on the West Coast it is clean and nice. They offer—besides the usual diversions—a swimming pool and gym.

The three downtown baths are:

Atlas, at 743 Columbia (across the park from Bee Jay's). They too have Monday and Wednesday specials of \$2.50. On Tuesday, rooms are \$2; on Sundays, \$3. Lockers are always \$2. They have masseurs for hire. They also make home visits, and some are very humpy-looking men. If you are interested, call and check the prices.

Gent's, at 540 F St., is the largest baths. Like all downtown baths, all types visit. On Monday and Wednesday there is also a \$2.50 special. This baths attracts gays and straights, and even potential gays . . . who won't kiss! Because of the large mixture of types, use common sense before plunging into a frenzy of activity.

Finally, there is *Glen's* at 867 Fourth Ave. The help here is very courteous and shows appreciation for your visit by placing 'thank you' signs everywhere. There is a special military rate of \$2.50 all the time. Everyone else pays \$5. But on Monday through Thursday there is a \$2 special for everyone.

THE BARS

Although San Diego doesn't have the rough, masculine crowd found in L.A., it does have a few bars that attract this type. But they are sometimes so mixed it is difficult to be sure who will show up. These bars are:

The Hole, at 2820 Lytton Street. This bar is pushing hard for the leather/western crowd. In *The Crypt* (their leather shop) almost any toy or leather item can be bought. On Fridays and Saturdays, it is an after-hours bar. Only beer and wine are served until 2 a.m.

The Hut, at 2581 University St. (North Park) has a cowboy atmosphere. But it can't be considered strictly a cowboy bar. All types visit. Every night it is open after hours. On Friday and Saturday it is open 24 hours. After two, though, only light drinks are served. Food is also served. No dancing. Incidentally, the bar is located under the San Diego sign.

Bee Jay's, at 750 India Street, is another bar that attracts the masculine types. Its Sunday brunch from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. is very popular and for \$2 you can get a steak-and-egg breakfast, and for fifteen cents more, a beer.

Finally, there is the *Riff Raff* at 1005 Kettner St. (near the YMCA). This bar also tries to attract the masculine types. Most, though, are older—although the ages can be very mixed. They have only a beer-and-

wine license, and they are open from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The disco bars are:

The Ball Express, 4025 Pacific Coast Highway. This is the city's most popular dance bar. Hours are from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday through Thursday. After 10 p.m., there is a \$1 cover charge. On Friday and Saturday the bar opens at 8 p.m. and food (primarily sandwiches) is served from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. on weekends.

The Barbary Coast, 2341 Pacific Coast Highway. There isn't any cover charge here. Since the Ball Express opened, it has lost some of its regulars. But it still packs them in. Young crowd goes here, like the Ball Express, for dancing.

Diablo's, at 2533 El Cajon Blvd., is a popular dance bar which attracts mostly girls. Some men head here for dancing, though.

Mothers, 2501 Kettner (at Laurel St.). This used to be The Club and was once popular with the leather crowd. Now it has become a disco bar that attracts the young. It has the usual computerized lights on the dance floor, and an outside patio. No food. Hours, from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. weekdays; Saturdays and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The show bars are:

Show Biz Supper Club at 1421 University (Hillcrest). On Wednesday through Sunday, they put on a drag show at 9:15 p.m. and 11 p.m. which has been favored by all residents of the city. It won the San Diego Entertainment Award last year. Although the show is amateurish, it is funny and fresh. Dinner is served from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Opens at 6 p.m. Monday and Wednesday it's closed.

Chez T. Cabaret at 4629 Cass Street. They also have shows, but not nearly as good as those at the Show Biz.

The other bars are:

The Shadows, 6035 Fairmont (East San Diego). There is live entertainment here and mellow music. No dancing. Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. They plan to open after hours soon.

Babe's No. 3, 4321 Fairmont. This bar attracts the 35-plus age group. No dancing. Strictly a bar for

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Bee Jay's



Riff Raff



Ball Express



The Barbary Coast



Mothers



Show Biz Supper Club



Babe's 540 Club



A Different Drum



Outrigger



Basin Street

SAN DIEGO

(Continued from page 27)

conservative people. Dinners are served from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. No food on Sunday. Food averages about \$3.50.

Babe's 540 Club, 540 West C Street, gets a young crowd at night, and during the day an older crowd. No dancing. Beer-and-wine license.

A Different Drum, 3175 India St., is a small, popular bar with go-go dancers. No cover charge. Open from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. daily.

The Brass Rail, 3796 Fifth Avenue (Hillcrest). This bar attracts an older crowd who think they are more elegant than they really are. Once very popular, it now survives on its old reputation.

Outrigger, 840 W. Mission Bay Drive (Mission Bay). This bar is a short distance from the beach area, popular with gays. It's extremely busy on weekends after everyone has returned from the beach. Sundays, especially. This is where to head if you like young, humpy surfers. Dancing. Beer/wine only.

Chee-Chee Club at 959 E. Broadway attracts an older crowd. It is rather seedy, and the business isn't always that good to warrant a visit. *Bradley's* at 303 Plaza (facing Cannibal Square) gets a tough crowd. Of course, it's usually very mixed. Watch yourself at both places.

King Richard at 613 Pearl Street (La Jolla) is a restaurant-bar popular with elegant types. It's mixed, of course, but not so mixed as to make cruising difficult. Hours from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. Dinner from 5 p.m. No lunch. Cocktail hour is best.

The under-21 crowd goes to *Basin Street* at 3919 Fifth Avenue (Hillcrest). No booze, and there's a \$1 cover charge. Open from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Finally, there's *Jamie's* at 2930 Addison (off Rosecrans) near the U.S. Naval Training Center. This attracts mostly an older crowd who come here to dine. The food is good.

HOTELS

There are two popular places to stay: the *Armed Forces YMCA* at 500 W. Broadway, and the *Hotel San Diego*, 339 W. Broadway. Both are popular with servicemen. The Y charges \$5.30 per night and \$6.36 with TV. Everyone is welcome at the Y, in or out of uniform. Also the Y has a very busy john.

The *Hotel San Diego* is more expensive, of course. Singles run \$12.72; doubles \$15.90 and \$18.02. Rooms are comfortable and clean.

Nothing special, though. Recommended for those who want to bring friends to their room without being bothered by management.

If you should have any questions during your visit to San Diego you can always call the *Gay Information Center* at 232-7528. They have an Alcoholics Together group and other special services which might be of interest. For those who spend Sunday at church there is the *MCC* at 1355 Fern St. (Golden Hills). Services at 10:45 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. There is a service on Wednesday at 8 p.m.

Although San Diego may be small, it is remarkably busy and has some good action. Unlike other cities near L.A., it doesn't live in the shadows of that city. Instead, it has a personality and charm all its own. So if you want some real action without fears and anxieties of larger cities, head here. You may just stay and never want to return home again.

• • •

A SONG OF OUR OWN?

(Continued from page 13)

*he cruised like sin,
And above the door a sign said
'MEN'.*

*When John went in he got a big
surprise,*

*'Cause he'd never seen one quite
that size,*

Big John . . . um, hum . . .

Big Queer John.

It's a collector's item, no doubt, and I still have a copy at home. I'm sure every gay activist today would like to smash it to smithereens, because of the stereotyping, the use of the obsolete word 'queer', and so on. But I think it was fine for its time. At least it admitted that homosexuals *do* in fact exist, something no record had done so explicitly before. And even though it was really poking fun at us, like the superior creature Man does to monkeys in a zoo, so what? I can take a joke. And a poke. I've been taking 'em all my life.

An important thing did happen during the sixties, however, and it's no joke! Gay people everywhere started coming out of their closets, in greater and greater numbers, no doubt spurred on by the so-called sexual revolution. Gay bars and clubs began to operate openly, even proudly, and they proliferated until there were bars catering to segments within the gigantic minority group known as homosexuals, now "Gays" with a capital "G." Drag shows were quite popular, and still are, and befeathered, bejeweled drag-queens mim-

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