

## Buffalo Gals

One Corvette shares the best of her hometown as a romantic destination.

By Lyndsey D’Arcangelo



born and raised in Buffalo, N.Y., I could list a variety of reasons why the “City of Good Neighbors” is often unjustly overlooked as a unique and affordable travel destination. But instead of climbing up on my soapbox, let me take you on a little tour around my backyard, my city—which is even more attractive as a destination since 2011’s Marriage Equality Act, a New York State law that allows gender-neutral marriages for both same- and opposite-sex couples.

### Things To Do • Cultural Wonders

We lesbians often like to immerse ourselves in independent music, art and culture—three things that Buffalo is known for. After all, Ani DiFranco grew up here.

You can start your cultural adventure at the Darwin Martin House, an architectural gem designed by the incomparable Frank Lloyd Wright. Witnessing his talent for design and innovation with your own eyes is a one-of-a-kind experience.

Buffalo is also home to both the Burchfield Penney Art Center and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. The Burchfield Penney is the first art museum in New York State to be certified by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It was specifically designed to interact with the art on display and enhance

your viewing experience. Many regional artists are featured throughout the museum, including Charles E. Burchfield himself. Located right across the street is the Albright-Knox, an art gallery that is nationally recognized for its artistic history and long-standing dedication to modern art. You’ll find everything from photography and sculpture to artwork from some of the most celebrated artists of all time, including Monet and Picasso. For fans of contemporary art, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center is located in Babeville—a rehabbed-church-turned-event-venue developed by none-other-than Ani DiFranco. Righteous Babe Records is located there, too.

I’ve seen many wonderful Broadway shows and musicals at Sheaf’s Performing Arts Center. My grandmother took me there to see *Guys and Dolls* when I was 10 and I’ve been a theater fan ever since. I’ve also had the pleasure of seeing Sarah McLachlan perform live at Sheaf’s. The acoustics gave me goose bumps. There’s also the Buffalo United Artists Theater, which is an off-Broadway performance center dedicated to showcasing LGBT artists, playwrights and performers. This year, the BUA will be celebrating its 20-year anniversary.

In order to get a good feel for Buffalo’s diverse vibe and community, simply take a walk through the Elmwood Village and Allentown district. You’ll find plenty of

JIM BUSH

boutiques, coffee shops, independent bookstores and restaurants to keep you busy for hours. Down by the waterfront, Lake Erie's cool breeze will wash over you as you stroll along the water's edge. Speaking of water, Buffalo is only a short drive to Niagara Falls—a natural wonder that can't even be described in words. Add in all of the art and food festivals and special events that take place in the city throughout the year, and the question quickly becomes "what not to do?"

### Where to Stay • Go Big Or Go Home

Buffalo is a city with a small town feel. It doesn't matter where you choose to stay while you're here, because you'll be close to everything. The Mansion on Delaware Avenue is an upscale, top-rated hotel featuring stately rooms and European-style design, perfect for grand-style weddings and events. During your stay, enjoy award-winning food and beverage as well as 24-hour personalized butler service. Down the road a bit, you'll find Embassy Suites—newly constructed and built according to "green" construction standards. The hotel is situated in the Avant, a gorgeously aesthetic mixed-use building in Buffalo's thriving business and entertainment district. Lastly, the Hampton Inn and Suites is comfortable and convenient, being within walking distance of the theater district and HSBC Arena, home of the Buffalo Sabres.

### Where to Eat • Bountiful Buffalo

There is no shortage of great food in Buffalo. From local staples like "beef on weck" (roast beef on kummelweck roll) to our world-famous chicken wings, there are many different local pubs and fine restaurants to choose from. I'm partial to Betty's Restaurant, a quaint little restaurant and café located in the Elmwood district. It's a gay-friendly spot known for its sunny disposition, funky and friendly staff and wholesome food. (I highly recommend their breakfast.) Vegetarians and vegans alike can get their food fix at Merge, a local eatery dedicated to sustainable and organic food options as well as to preserving local music and art in the Buffalo area. If you're looking for a fine-dining experience, Hutch's Restaurant and Tempo are considered premier

dining destinations. There's also Mother's Restaurant and Allen Street Hardware Cafe, which are both located right in the middle of Allentown—the "gay" side of town.

### Where the Girls Are • Righteous Babes

Of course, I know where the girls are—I live here. You can start in the Allentown district at Roxy's, our most popular lesbian club featuring high-energy DJs, live music, karaoke and "Coyote Ugly Night." If you love to dance and mingle with the many colors of the LGBT rainbow, Club Marcella is the place to go. From Thursday to Sunday, you can enjoy club music, theme parties and events, and live eclectic performances. But if you're looking for something more low-key, Nietzsche's is a dim-lit and laidback bar that showcases live bands and folk musicians. Melissa Ferrick, among others, loves performing at Nietzsche's.

### Where to Tie the Knot • Wedding Belles

Now that New York State has legalized gay marriage, there's even more reason to come to Buffalo. You can plan a memorable and affordable wedding rather easily. One-of-a-kind wedding venues include Babeville (DiFranco's own event venue), Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, Burchfield Penny Art Center, the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Delaware Park, Shea's Performing Arts Center and the Statler Ballroom at the historic Statler Hotel. Of course, you also have the option of holding your wedding ceremony and reception in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Rainbow Bells and the Falls Wedding Chapel both cater to same-sex wedding couples.

### How to Get There • Shuffle Off

American Airlines (American Eagle) flies to Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara International Airport is small and easy to navigate, with the city only a short 15-minute drive away. Both the bus and the Amtrak station are located downtown. For additional travel advice, LGBT wedding information and details, and directions to all of Buffalo's famous hotspots—visit the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau ([visitbuffaloniagara.com](http://visitbuffaloniagara.com)). Hopefully, I'll see you around town. ■



Go Buffalo: Shea's (from left), Albright-Knox Art Gallery and the Mansion on Delaware