

The 7 most luxurious LGBTQ-friendly spas in the US



Ryan McWilliams

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NO MATTER SEXUAL orientation or gender identity, everyone likes to be pampered. A long massage or rejuvenating skin treatment will recharge and revitalize you — a necessity in the high-stress, constantly connected world we live in. But as a queer traveler, it's important to take an extra layer of caution and ensure that you are visiting a safe, tolerant spa. Finding an LGBTQ-welcoming spa can be a difficult task — there are numerous factors to determine if spas deserve this accolade. They can be located in a city prominent for its queer communities, such as New York City; owned by a gay person; part of a verified LGBTQ-friendly hotel brand; or certified by online resources like GayTravel.com. Here are seven spas around the US that are verified queer-friendly with luxurious treatments.

1. Paul Labrecque Spa — New York City



Photo: Paul Labrecque Spa on Instagram

Located in NYC's prestigious Upper East Side neighborhood, Paul Labrecque is a standalone spa and salon, owned by the eponymous celebrity hairstylist and his partner (in life and business), Brian Cantor. The couple began their spa business over 30 years ago in a humble 200-square-foot space and have since created a beauty empire, with locations around NYC, Philadelphia, and Palm Beach, along with many high-end corporate partnerships.

The New York-based spa group is one of the few certified vendors of Biologique Recherche, the coveted skincare brand that prides itself on a stripped-down approach to beauty. Every facial here starts with a skin analysis by the esthetician to create a treatment based on the customer's unique needs. Popular treatments include Biologique Recherche P1CM 400 SR, Facial, a dark spot-correcting treatment that uses a mask inspired by textile technology, and a slimming body algae wrap, detoxifying the epidermis through the release of excess water. The spa also offers massages, body treatments, makeup applications, and nail services for all genders. In New York, a city chock-full of spas and cutting-edge beauty treatments, we recommend Paul Labrecque for R&R.

2. Ape + Canary — Rochester, New York

Rochester is home to New York's second-largest LGBTQ community, and Ape + Canary is the most luxurious spa in the area. Part of the Strathallan hotel, Ape + Canary is located in a traditional Finger Lakes brick building in downtown Rochester. Soak and couples treatments include traditional Chinese Ming Dynasty gua sha and ear reflexology to relax muscles and detoxify the skin, dermaplaning, O2 facials, manicures, pedicures, and the like.

3. Boon Hotel + Spa – Guerneville, California



Photo: Boon Hotel + Spa/Facebook

This wine country boutique hotel is situated among the redwoods of Guerneville, a sleepy town in the Russian River Valley. The hotel is owned by Crista Luedtke – also the hotel's chief, mixologist, creative director, designer, and spa director – a proud lesbian woman who delights in welcoming guests of all orientations. Given the hotel's proximity to San Francisco – only two hours away – the 16-room hotel is a coveted, sequestered hideaway for the Bay Area's gay community.

In Sonoma County, a place famously laid-back and always slightly inebriated, the hotel and its spa evoke the area's easygoing attitude. There are a number of body and skin treatments, including deep tissue massages and facials; you can even escalate the zen with CBD treatment add-ons. A day pass to the spa and pool, for LGBTQ travelers who don't wish to opt for Boon's glamping experience, comes with a bottle of locally made bubbly upon arrival.

4. Tamaya Mist – Albuquerque, New Mexico

Few places come close to earning the title "paradise" – the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa is one of them. Situated in Santa Ana Pueblo, between the Sandia Mountains and the Rio Grande, the adobe-built hotel is surrounded by miles of horseback riding (on rescue horses), hiking, biking, three pools, and a golf course. The hotel is Gay Travel.com approved, a gold standard for choosing LGBTQ accommodations.

The spa, called Tamaya Mist, draws inspiration for treatments from ancient Native American practices, including the lavender dry brush therapy, which is comprised of dry brushing, a lavender oil massage to release tension, and a hot oil scalp treatment. The prickly pear treatment uses a moisturizer made from indigenous southwestern plants to firm and tone the skin with a salt scrub.

5. Away Spa – Fort Lauderdale, Florida



Photo: W Fort Lauderdale/Facebook

The Away Spa at the W Fort Lauderdale is a new South Florida relaxation center, especially friendly to LGBTQ travelers. The W hotel brand is a longtime supporter of the queer community, and the Away Spa is no exception – the decor is loud and colorful, bold graphics of lipstick-lined lips and high heels adorning the walls. The space includes a Glam Station to quickly get camera-ready; a Quick Fix chair to sort out a look; a Manicure Bar; and five treatment rooms, including a couple's suite, which is a treat after a day on the packed beaches of Fort Lauderdale. Nearby is the gayborhood of Wilton Manors, with plenty of nightclub options.

6. Shui Spa – Provincetown, Massachusetts

Provincetown – commonly referred to as P-Town – is a veritable gay capital and artist's colony located on the isolated tip of Cape Cod. The Shui Spa is a unisex space in the midst of this utopia, with a mineral tub, Himalayan Salt Cave, and steam room; treatments include massages, facials using Kiehl's products, waxes, and salon, and even energy work – you'll leave with chakras rebalanced. In party-heavy P-Town, the Shui Spa is a meditative refuge for LGBTQ travelers looking to have a few moments of peace before attending a drag show or underground dance party later that evening.

7. Hotel Palomar — Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Photo: Kimpton Hotel Palomar Philadelphia Facebook

Kimpton Hotels are famously LGBTQ-friendly, a principal hotel brand to develop outreach programs for the queer community thirty years ago and the first to score 100 percent on the HRC Equality Index. The brand is the Trevor Project's national hotel partner, donating a generous \$5 for every booking. The Palomar in Philadelphia embraces this support, a chic Art Deco property located in Rittenhouse Square, close to the city's gayborhood. The hotel offers an in-room spa for guests, ideal for LGBTQ guests who don't feel comfortable going to a public wellness space. Treatments vary from hot stone massages to body wraps to aromatherapy — all in the privacy of your own hotel room. 🌈