

Charlotte Business Guild

Meeting Date:
Tuesday, May 18, 2004

Program:
Rooftop Party with Singer Christy Snow
Holiday Inn, College and 7th St.
Social 5:30 pm - Dinner & Program 6:30 pm

To Reserve:
Cost \$20
Call 704-565-5075 by 12:00 pm
Monday, May 17, 2004
charlottebusinessguild.com

GLBT



Travel: London Pride makes for

*Soho feels like gay home
away from home*

by David Stout
Q-Notes staff

LGBT travelers looking to splurge on a memorable summer getaway should consider a leap across the Atlantic for London Pride. I flew over with a small group of gay and lesbian journalists to cover last year's event and had a bang-up time. There's loads to see and do, the people watching is

During our stay we were booked into The Rubens at the Palace Hotel. No one gave the name much thought — until we arrived and found Buckingham Palace sprawled across the street. As if our proximity to the Queen wasn't enough, the rooms were fit for one as well. After a full day of sightseeing and a night on the town it was wonderful to return to a turned-down canopy bed with a chocolate on the pillow.

The best way to get an instant overview of London, a sprawling city of seven million, is on the London Eye. Built on the banks of the Thames River to mark the Millennium, this ferris wheel on steroids is one of the city's biggest attractions and the U.K.'s fourth-tallest structure. Tourists wait hours to board one of 32 plexiglas pods on the 26-story behemoth, but their patience is rewarded with an incredible view. Fun fact: The London Eye moves so slowly that each revolution takes 30 minutes.

Nearly all of our sightseeing time was spent in Soho — London's answer to Chelsea or Castro. Gays and lesbians were all around, comfortably holding hands, shopping and enjoying the area's numerous entertainment venues.

Prior to the trip I didn't have an image of Londoners as being particularly attractive — not that I'd really ever

given the matter any thought — so I was struck by the number of male and female hotties who were constantly about. Trendy haircuts and immaculately distressed clothing were *de rigueur* in Soho.

The West End is the theater district. One evening we caught a performance of "Mama Mia," the ABBA musical. The British have a great affection for camp — which gladdens my gay heart — and the show is nothing if not that. Needless to say, "Mama Mia" packs 'em in at the Prince Edward Theatre every performance.

As would be expected from one of the

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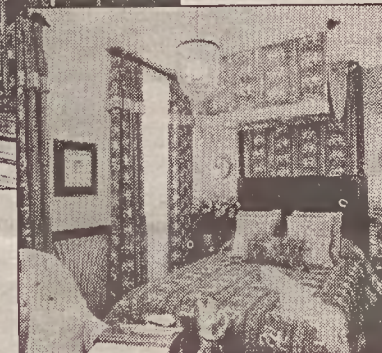


The Rubens at the Palace is a hotel fit for a queen.

choice and the accepting social climate will make any Friend of Dorothy feel happily over the rainbow.

The transatlantic flight takes approximately eight hours — although you lose even more time since the U.K. is already five hours ahead of the U.S. eastern seaboard. If you can swing it, travel first class. The added expense is worth it on a flight of this length.

Our group flew with Delta Airlines, an official sponsor of London Pride, Atlanta Pride and New York Pride. The mini bottles of water and hot washcloths (both to counter the dry cabin air) never stopped coming and neither did the food (which included a choice of lobster, steak or pasta for the main entree). These and other amenities made the trip surprisingly bearable.



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