

Leo of Swinging Richards



ATLANTA

Hub to an entire region's air traffic and gay life, Atlanta draws visitors from around the world

Matt Mathrani

home to *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell (as well as RuPaul) Atlanta is the ninth largest metropolitan area in the U.S. This gateway to the South is a major cultural and economic center, and its airport is among the busiest in the world. Moreover, "Hotlanta" as it's popularly known, vaunts one of the largest gay populations in America, its DeKalb and Fulton counties being among the 10 gayest in the nation.

The city is a hodgepodge of sprawl and mall; you really do need a car to get around. Forests of towers are being built along narrow two-lane streets. These 50-story residential behemoths look down on modest bungalows not long for this world and create curious architectural juxtapositions.

Midtown is the axis of nightlife, from the west side of Piedmont to the east with a rich vein of venues still a bit farther east on Ponce de Leon, jutting out from the Midtown axis. Some establishments may also be found about two miles north of Midtown's Piedmont Street, the principle north-south artery in an area called Buckhead. It is here that Piedmont Street forks and Cheshire Bridge Road starts, another pathway to many things gay and gay-friendly.

On the town

Piedmont Park, smack in the middle of it all, is a premier spot for the gay community. Among the most concentrated gay areas are the crossroads of Juniper and 10th Street, Ansley Square Mall, the bars at the end of Amsterdam Avenue, and the Avenues off Cheshire Bridge Road.

Don't miss the action at **Blake's** (227 10th Street), where you'll catch young, good-looking boys and girls just about any evening. There's a main-floor bar, with video monitors and intriguing mirrors, plus an upstairs bar with big-screen action, and a porch bar. Much drag entertainment is also at hand, and you'll find beautiful flesh pressed into every corner of this celebrated establishment, trying to catch the show. Kitty LeClaw is the resident diva *cum* manager here. Her Friday night Meow Mix is worth caterwauling over; Thursday nights belong to the super energetic Shawwna Brooks.

Wet Bar (960 Spring Street) is an entire complex, fully licensed, with two revolving dance floors, performance stage, rooftop lounge, and gardens in the back. Sister bar to Blake's, there's free bussing between the two clubs. Bathed



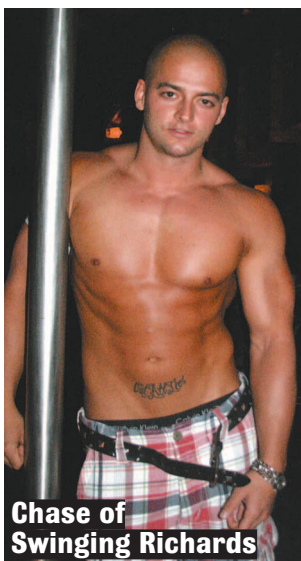
**Joshua at
the door at Woofs**



**Miss Kely
Princeton
of Model T**



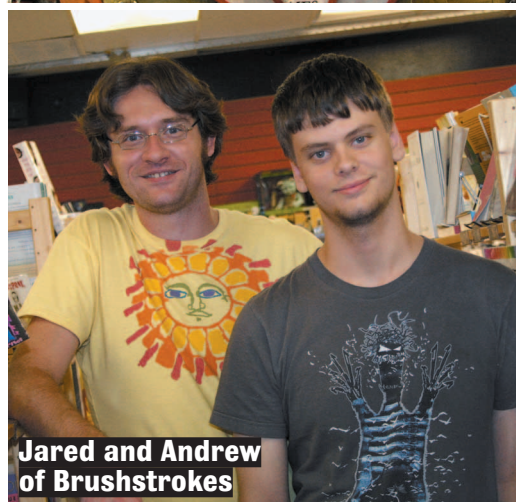
**Bartenders
Robert & Michael
at Model T**



**Chase of
Swinging Richards**



**Kenneth and Mike
of Poster Hut**



**Jared and Andrew
of Brushstrokes**



**Clint & Gage of
Swinging Richards**

in cool, cobalt light with VIP lounge and entrance, Wet offers a sleek, upscale club atmosphere to the mostly collegiate-to-thirtysomething set and is predominantly gay on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Club 708 (708 Spring Street) is a sleek, hip-hop dance club that attracts a strong Afrocentric gay crowd among the mixed-orientation patrons. Definitely a worthwhile stop.

Bulldogs (893 Peachtree Street) is the place for "brothers," and continues its run as the men's bar with the an easy black-white mix. It's open from 4 p.m. daily, with plenty of backyard grilling. You can dance here, too. Its popularity means there are lines to get in on weekends.

Joe's on Juniper (1049 Juniper Street), a midtown tavern, is super gay-friendly, offering an array of traditional American food and an extensive beer list. Trivia Show on Tuesdays and Thursdays is a big draw.

Chaparral (2715 Buford Highway, out beyond Cheshire Bridge Road) is popular with Atlanta's burgeoning Mexican population.

Ansley Mall, located right on Piedmont Avenue, is a truly camp strip mall with gay and gay-friendly shopping, and three gay bars. **Oscar's** (1510-C Piedmont Avenue, Ansley Square Mall) is a stellar video bar. Drawing a handsome, garrulous crowd, it shines for Show Tune Tuesdays and Country-Western Thursdays. The bar is decked out with original murals, designer cocktail glasses, and lighting that makes everyone look compelling. A quiet secluded patio in the rear abets tender moments. Oscar's celebrates six years this coming October 26.

Felix's on the Square (1510-G Piedmont Avenue, Ansley Square Mall) is the neighborhood bar where the old Scandals did its thing for so many years.

At **Burkhart's** (1492-F Piedmont Avenue, Ansley Square Mall) the crowd is mostly guys, but girls show up, too. Burkhart's does dinner daily, featuring burgers, steaks, and other favorites at good prices, so cocktail hour and beyond is a busy time here. Diva Mary Edith Pitts calls the shots here.

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Amsterdam Atlanta (502 Amsterdam Avenue) is a successful attempt to import the revelry that its Dutch namesake is so famous for. A welcoming photograph of Queen Beatrix and wooden clogs at the entrance reaffirm that, as do the orange pool tables and several insignia that are typically Amsterdammer. There's a huge main bar, an area for playing darts and video games, and a pulsating dance floor – all under high ceilings. An outdoor patio packs in a male gaggle of every ilk.

With a seemingly endless array of sports on TV sets, internet access, pool and darts, **Woof's on Piedmont** (2425 Piedmont Road) is Atlanta's first and only sports bar. A full kitchen open through 10 p.m. is well received here (subs, pizzas, and various blue-plate specials). Licensed by the state of Georgia for the lottery, you can even play Keno here.

Perched atop a hillock, **TripPs** (1931 Piedmont Circle) is located right across from a bowling alley. This unassuming, cozy bar is a perfect spot for a date

or for enjoying the gaming machines. A daily happy hour from 3 p.m. through 9 p.m. and free wireless internet are part of the deal.

The Heretic (2069 Cheshire Bridge Road), formerly a leather bar, has evolved into one of the city's premier dance clubs. Their midweek and weekend dance parties are legendary. Atlanta's great mix is nowhere more evident, as black, white, Asian, and Latin patrons do it up sweaty together (you'll love the bare torso action). There's a big back porch, and the bar is open during the day, but the party starts later, at 10 p.m.

Formerly the Jungle, **Wild Mustang** (2115 Faulkner Road) is a mega dance club trying hard to make a comeback in its newest incarnation.

BJ's Roosters (2345 Cheshire Bridge Road) looks spiffy with its metal bar. Go-go dancers are the main entertainment here.

Atlanta Eagle (308 Ponce de Leon Avenue), seemingly a leather bar, has evolved into a throbbing clubhouse. Bear plus leather events keep the Big Eagle

well trod, as do the Underwear Nights. Low lighting amplifies the intensity at this long-standing leather bar. A huge outdoor patio is also a draw. **Rawhide Leather** (306 Ponce de Leon), located downstairs at The Eagle, sells everything leather your mother wouldn't wear.

At **Friends on Ponce** (736 Ponce de Leon Avenue) the bartenders are fetching and friendly (they're reputed to have some of the biggest "personalities" in town). People party inside and out on the expanded outdoor deck.

Just across the avenue from Friends, **Model T** (699 Ponce de Leon, in Ford Factory Square) is open to any and all (it is Ponce de Leon after all!), and the sign on the bar captures the spirit of Model T: "Be nice or leave. Thank you." Six-dollar Brokers Martini are a big draw here as are the Saturday night Model Teeze Girls. A free buffet on Sundays is the bonus.

They're definitely kicking it at **Swinging Richards** (1400 Northside Drive), Atlanta's "All Male, All Nude" strip club. A stable of studs works the

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ATLANTA

BARS & CLUBS

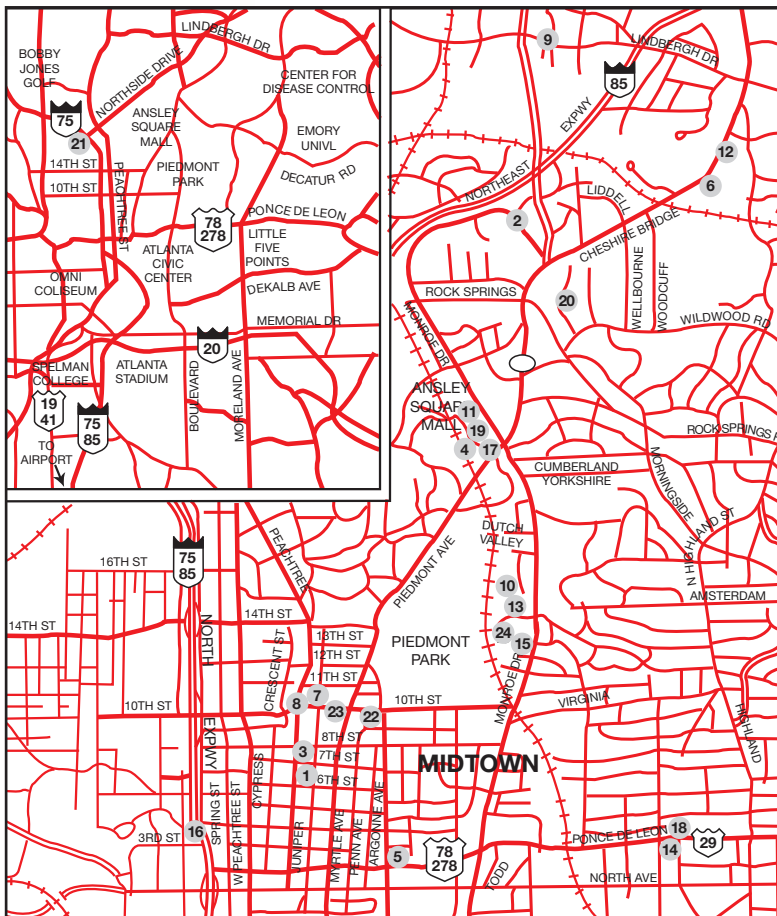
- 1) **Amsterdam Atlanta**
(404) 892-2227
502 Amsterdam Ave NE
- 5) **Atlanta Eagle**
(404) 873-2453
306 Ponce de Leon
- 22) **Blake's On The Park**
(404) 892-5786, 227 10th St
- 3) **Bulldogs**
(404) 872-3025
893 Peachtree
- 4) **Burkharts**
(404) 872-4403, Ansley Sq
- 15) **Cowtippers**
(404) 874-3751
1600 Piedmont
- 7) **Einstein's**
(404) 876-7925
1077 Juniper St NE
(12th & Juniper)
- 18) **Friend's on Ponce**
(404) 817-3820
736 Ponce de Leon
- 8) **Joe's on Juniper**
(404) 875-6634
1049 Juniper
- 13) **(Miss) O's**
(404) 875-6255
560-B Amsterdam Ave
- 14) **Model T**
(404) 872-2209
699 Ponce de Leon
- 10) **Red Chair**
(404) 870-0532
550-C Amsterdam Ave
- 21) **Swinging Richards**
(404) 352-0532
1400 Northside Dr
- 6) **The Heretic**
(404) 325-3061
2069 Cheshire Bridge
- 17) **the Oscar's**
(404) 874-7748
1510-C Piedmont Ave
- 2) **Tripps**
(404) 724-0067
1931 Piedmont Circle
- 9) **Woofs on Piedmont**
(404) 869-9422
2425 Piedmont Rd

ACCOMMODATIONS

- 20) **Hello B & B**
(404) 892-8111
1865 Windemere Dr

OTHER

- 11) **Brushstrokes**
(404) 876-6567
Ansley Square
- 19) **Capulets**
1510-D Piedmont Ave
- 16) **Flex Social Club**
(404) 815-0456, 76 4th St
- 23) **Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse**
991 Piedmont Ave
404-607-0082
- 12) **Poster Hut**
(404) 633-7491
2175 Cheshire Br Rd NE

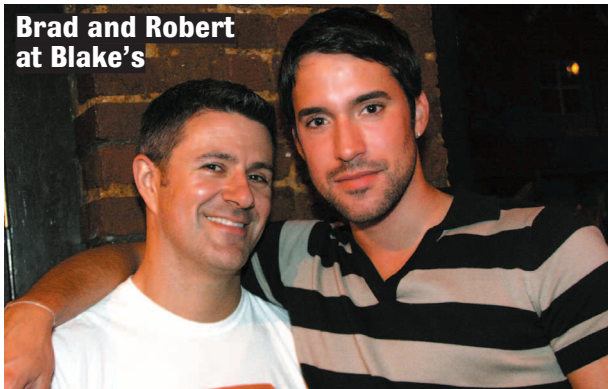


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**Brad and Robert
at Blake's**

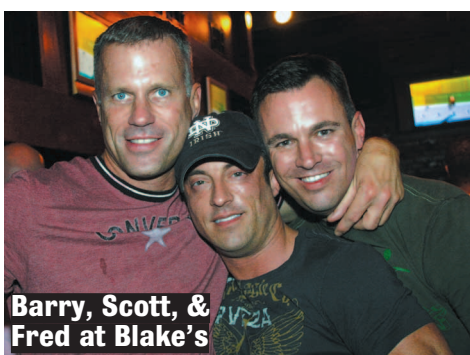
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Aaron, Blake, Dan, & Rick of Woofs



Barry, Scott, & Fred at Blake's



Security by Austin, of Blake's



Shawna Brooks at Blake's



Ed and Wes of Brushstrokes Pleasures / Capulets



Host Mike Russell of Hello B&B



Brent and Charles at The Oscar's

club's three stainless-steel stages nightly. The lads are available for private debriefing in Richards's secluded champagne lounges in the rear. The club is about five minutes by car from midtown, at exit 252, off I-75N.

Saunas and such

All these bars and still no luck? And you didn't check for an invite to one of Atlanta's increasingly popular private parties? Then get it on at **Flex Atlanta** (76 4th Street; Flexbaths.com), the city's very visited "Gay Men's Social Club," with recently remodeled rooms and a large sauna, steam, and shower area. The covered, heated, clothing-optional pool is warm, but the clothing-optional outdoor sun deck is hot. Looking to get online while you're there? Get lucky again because this social club is set up for wireless internet.

Club Eros Atlanta (2219 Faulkner Road, off Cheshire Bridge Road) is another busy private social club. Its converted warehouse space features plenty of sexy nooks and crannies, and a pleasantly quiet, conversational ambiance. The club is open 10 p.m. on, Thursday through Sunday.

Dining

Metrotainment Cafes (Metrocafes.com) has a stable of nearly a dozen restaurants and lounges operating under a variety of formats in the Atlanta area. Three of these operations are specially pitched to the gay community. **Joe's on Juniper** (1049 Juniper Street) comes close to being an outright gay place, offering an array of traditional American food and an extensive beer list along with generously poured cocktails. There's sort of a raucous, gay cowboy-saloon atmosphere at Joe's, where the sports bar crowd mingles with the general carousing public. **Einstein's** (1077 Juniper Street), located a few doors away from Joe's, attracts a metrosexual crowd with a large gay contingent. The decor is cool and stylish, and the cuisine is taken pretty seriously here,

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with novel twists on bistro fare, often served with a Southern accent. The lounge finds many upscale gay guys socializing in a subdued, friendly atmosphere, while others prefer to dine *al fresco*. **Cowtippers** (1600 Piedmont Avenue) is located north on the way to Buckhead. This is the place for steaks and Southwest fare and easy pouring cocktails. There's a terrace here, too, and no hassle parking.

Las Margaritas (1842 Cheshire Bridge Road NE) is an interesting Mexican restaurant in Buckhead with lots of lavender karma along with its 24-hour fast-food cousin, **Taco Cabana** (1895 Piedmont Avenue NE).

Roxx (1824 Cheshire Bridge Road) seems to draw gays in droves, especially on their patio during clement weather.

Shopping

At Juniper and 10th you'll find **Outwrite Bookstore and Coffeehouse** (991 Piedmont Avenue), a local landmark offering books, CDs, magazines, movies, and gifts. There are treats

galore at the coffeehouse – and the strongest coffee you can find in this town. Events featuring emerging writers and literary superstars alike are frequent at Outwrite. Bring your computer for free wi-fi.

Boy Next Door (1477 Piedmont Avenue) sells utterly unique gay clothing. Personal attention is their hallmark.

Universal Gear (935 Peachtree Street NE) is a premier retailer of clothing and accessories for the fashion-conscious man. Their Atlanta boutique is one of several in the country, the other locations being in Chicago, New York, and the flagship store in Washington, DC.

Atlanta Leather Company (2111 Faulkner Road, next to Jungle) is open 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 1 to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Within Ansley Mall, **Brushstrokes** (1510 Piedmont Road) is one hot retail store. It's chock full of DVDs, CDs, books, magazines, t-shirts, rainbow paraphernalia, cards, gifts, gizmos, and

guys! There's constant traffic. And Brushstrokes employees are cordial and friendly. Their sister store **Capulets** (1510-D Piedmont Road, Ansley Square Mall) purveys candles, incense, soaps, and other gift items.

At **Poster Hut** (2175 Cheshire Bridge Road), an institution in gay Atlanta for over 40 years, party and fetish gear lend the store a sexual frisson. There's other spiff stuff, fashion jewelry, sunglasses, smoking paraphernalia, soaps and aromas, gag items (perfect for bachelor and bachelorette parties!), cards and posters, dildoes, and movies (both the naughty and regular ones). Their line of British "Dirty Fuckers" underwear and True Religion jeans is something they're proud of, too.

Gay men into serious fitness make their way to the well-designed **Gravity Fitness** (2201 Faulkner Road), an excellent gym with free-weights and machines.

Accommodations

Weary of look-alike chains? Gay-

WEEKLY LINE UP

- [MON] DRAG ON THE EDGE
Starring Alexandria Martin
- [TUE] THREE MEN AND A BABY
- [WED] THE HOOK-UP
Sponsored By MANHUNT
- [THU] THE A-LIST
Starring Shawna Brooks
- [FRI] KITTY LeCLAW'S MEOW MIX
@ 11:00PM
- [SAT] COLLEGE FOOTBALL SATURDAYS
& JEALOUSE'S DARING DIVAS
- [SUN] THE BIG TIME SHOW @ 9:00PM

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Chris, Brad, Greg, Matt,
& Chris...

...out on the patio at Wetbar

Rick and Gary
of WoofsKitty LeClaw
of Blake's

friendly **Hotel Indigo-Atlanta Midtown** (683 Peachtree Street NE; 800-957-4654) aims to deliver "high peace and renewal to people who are tired of mundane cookie-cutter hotels."

Hello B&B (1865 Windemere Drive; 404-892-8111) is a small owner-occupied gay bed-and-breakfast off Cheshire Bridge Road in a wooded, residential neighborhood. Mike Russell is your congenial host and expert on gay Atlanta. This family-home B&B is located in a pleasant upscale residential neighborhood, minutes by car from entertainment districts in Midtown and Buckhead. The jacuzzi is a big plus.

W Hotel Atlanta Midtown (188 14th Street NE) is super gay friendly (they're usually the host hotel for annual Gay Black Pride) and tucked in the heart of Atlanta's Gayborhood. Southern comfort and hospitality meet contemporary luxury and sleek chic, and pampering with "whatever/whenever" service is their hallmark. ▼

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