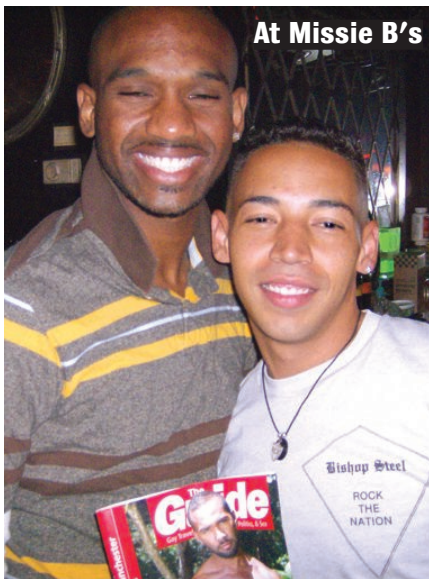


At Missie B's



At Missie B's



At Missie B's



KANSAS CITY

In the early 19th century, the Westport community of Kansas City was the trailhead for legendary destinations that included Santa Fe, California, and the Oregon Trail. Today, new legends are made in this historical district, now the center of the Kansas City gay community.

Peter Cini

there are real cowboys here in KCMO – lots of queer folks from the Ozarks and the Texas Panhandle. Their stories can be vivid and heartbreaking... a very different spin on gay life outside the usual urban metropolis. A great place to catch up with these cow-pokes is at the Wyandotte County Fairgrounds, featuring the Missouri Gay Rodeo Association (check out their website, Mgra.us). The main event here is the 15th annual Show-Me State Rodeo held mid-September this year.

Cowboys aside, Kansas City also presents a surprisingly robust theater and cabaret scene, complementing a fine array of dance halls, saloons, and edgy drag shows. This is a fun town.

Nightclubs, bars, and restaurants

You haven't seen Kansas City if you don't stop at **Missie B's** (805 W. 39th), where there's entertainment and dancing Monday through Saturday, and it's "always good times with good friends." See the Flo Show Wednesdays and Saturdays, and on Mondays the Sunny D Leight Show in the show bar. Guest emcees host each Friday night, and karaoke nights are Tuesdays and Thursdays. There's dancing upstairs in the Bootleggers Lounge, and the leather shop is open

Friday and Saturday nights. Mondays through Thursdays there's a beer bust, from 7:30pm. Groups such as KC Cave Bears, KC Pioneers, and the Heartland Men's Chorus have events here. For upcoming special events and drinks specials see their website.

Cut across to Main Street for one of the area's most popular and sociable hangouts, "KC's favorite midtown party place." **Buddies Lounge** (3715 Main) is an all-day affair Mondays through Saturdays, with a 14-hour "Happy Hour" and the best Bloody Marys in town – always on special. Daily drink specials, beer and liquor busts, weekend shot specials, and their Killer Quart of well cocktails-in-a-jug keep it lively here. A cruisy bar that attracts a diverse and loyal following, Buddies also has a pool table, video games, darts, and cable TV sports events and concerts. Everyone knows each other at this neighborhood bar, but the atmosphere is not cliquish, and they welcome visitors – there are no wallflowers here! There's off-street, well-lit parking, and an on-site ATM too.

Next door, **Sidekicks** (3707 Main Street) is a saloon and dance hall open Monday through Saturdays, 2pm to 3am, with a mixed but mainly male crowd of lively cowboys, leathermen, and bears. Friday and Saturday nights they come for the country-music dancing, and there are games, darts, and pool every night. On Tuesdays it's a retro-music affair, and on Wednesdays check out the contestants in

their underwear. "Live Singers" are Thursday's featured event. Check the local press for special events and guest appearances.

Other bars include: **Balanca's** (1809 Grand); **Bistro 303** (303 Westport), for daytime lunch and evening martinis; **Club 1020** (1020 McGee); **Outa Bounds** (3601 Broadway), a sports bar; and **Sidestreet** (413 E 33rd), a neighborhood bar and grill, mainly for guys.

bar Natasha (1911 Main), is especially intriguing. This stylish lounge often features local diva Missy Koonce, and serves as an arts center of sorts. There's original music presented in a lively cabaret format. Natasha's nifty kitchen has fine fare to go along with libations served at a first-class cocktail lounge.

Tootsie's, (1818 Main) and **Wetherbee's** (2510 NE Vivion) are primarily women's bars.

On the Kansas side are **The Fox** (7520 Shawnee Mission Parkway; Overland Park), and **The View** (204 Orchard; Kansas City, Kansas).

Accommodations

Ken's Place B&B (18 W. 38th; 816-753-0533) occupies a grand old house between Main (near Buddies and Sidekicks) and Broadway. The six rooms, each with its own theme, come with cable TV, DVD/VCR players, and great nightly rates. Amenities include a room with a sling, balconies, sun deck, pool, hot tub, and breakfast. Ken Yalverton is ringmaster here. Not for all tastes, but definitely a way to connect to the local scene in a hurry.

Hydes KC Men's Gym (Hydeskc.com; 816-561-1010) is a men's private club that has accommodations, as does the affiliated 40th Street Inn (1007 E. 40th; 816-561-7575).

Shopping and restaurants

The Westport Road area has shopping, dining, and entertainment, just off Main Street. Here you'll find **Out There** (205 Westport), with gay fiction, guides, photo books, comics, and calendars – plus cards, casual wear, briefs, lubes, bath and body care products, novelties, party supplies, and home furnishings. Did we fail to mention gay DVDs and more? You can shop from anywhere at their website (Outthereonline.com), or see Larry and Brian at their store.

There are lots of restaurants in the area, offering an array of dining options. Gene and Jeff welcome guests to their **Bistro**



At Sidekicks



At Buddies



At Sidekicks

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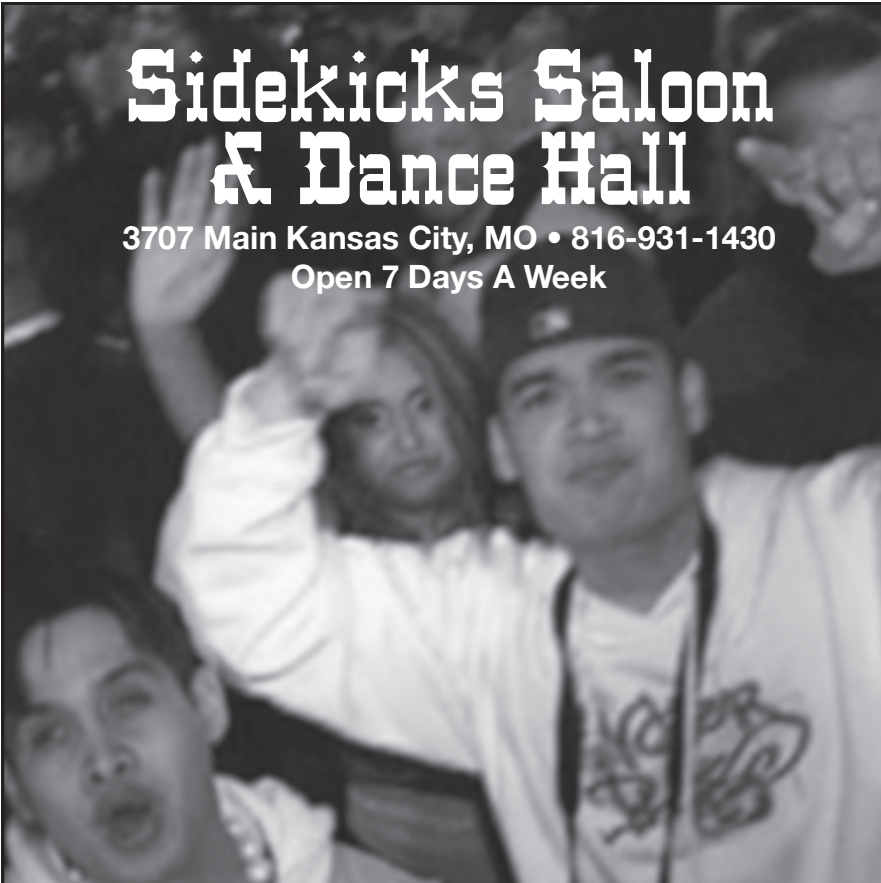
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'Flo Show' set at Missie B's



At Buddies



**Sidekicks Saloon
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Open 7 Days A Week

303 (303 Westport). Here you'll enjoy cocktails and fine dining set in a contemporary decor with outdoor patio. Not far is the gay-themed **Cafe Trio** (3535 Broadway), one of the trendiest restaurants in town. Reservations are advised.

Nearby the **Tivoli Cinema** (4050 Pennsylvania; Tivolikc.com) screens films of gay interest, and the **Westport Coffeehouse** (4010 Pennsylvania) has panini, coffees, and internet access.

A favorite of many is the **Broadway Cafe & Roastery** with two nearby outlets (301 Westport and 4106 Broadway). They roast and serve their own artisan-crafted brews here, but alas, no wi-fi connections. **Planet Cafe** (3535 Broadway) is another local internet coffeehouse option. A cluster of restaurants on 39th Street at the Missouri-Kansas state line feature a variety of ethnic cuisines.

Late Night Theatre (Latenighttheatre.com) and the **Kansas City Repertory Theatre** (KCrept.org) have interesting productions. The **Unicorn Theatre** (Unicorntheatre.org) and director Jeff Church offer fare that's always compelling, and frequently gay-tinged. ▼