

GO ESCAPE

UP FRONT | GO OUTSIDE

Fall for Autumn

Gay-friendly destinations invite travelers to soak up the season's beauty

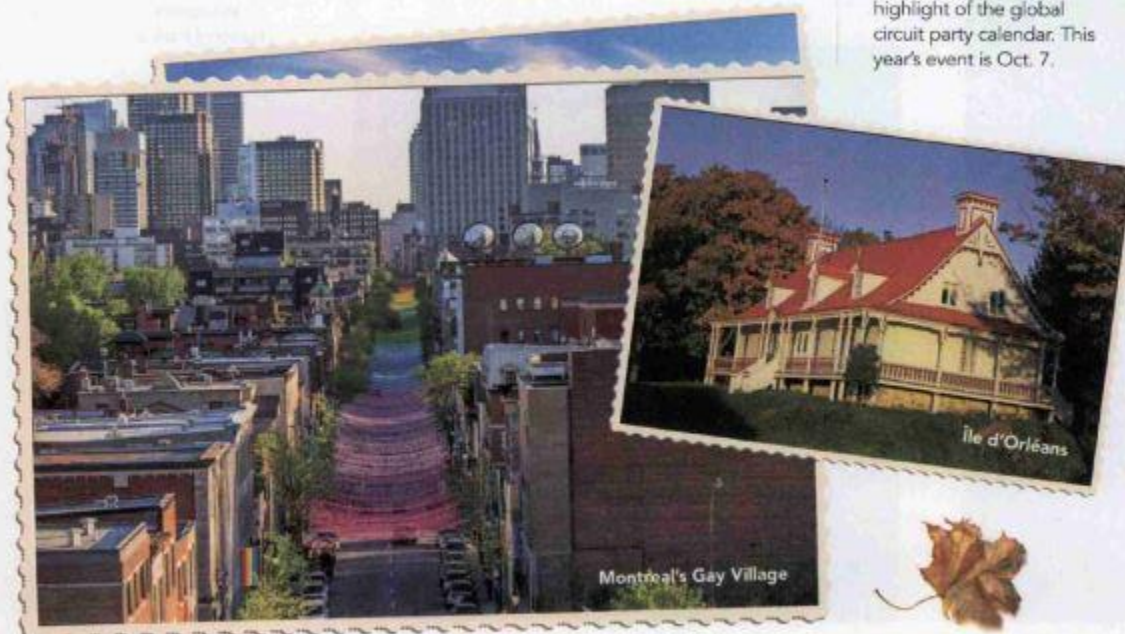
BY MICHAEL T. LUONGO

THE BRILLIANT RAINBOW flag waves all year, but autumn brings a colorful competitor: kaleidoscopic fall leaf displays. This is especially true in the border regions of the United States and Canada, where Mother Nature hosts spectacular scenery. These areas are also some of the most popular gay-friendly travel destinations, welcoming everyone.

Here, we spotlight five cities with spectacular autumn highlights. These locales are "very special for LGBTQ travelers year-round," says John Tanzella, CEO of the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, which creates awareness of the multibillion-dollar tourism industry and related rights issues. "But fall adds an extra touch of romance with the colorful landscape and culinary delights only found at this time of year."

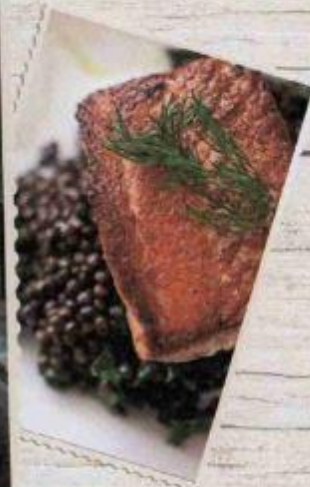
QUEBEC, CANADA
Canada's Quebec Province (quebecregion.com/en), home to Quebec City and Montreal, is famed for French-kissed European flair. Steven Overly, a reporter with *Politico* who escapes here on breaks, recommends a visit to Île d'Orléans, just outside Quebec City. "It's a beautiful island full of wineries, cideries, cheese shops, maple syrup farms and other quaint attractions," he says. "The rich forestry would make for a stunning change of season there." Autumn is also when Montreal hosts the annual HIV services fundraiser, the **Black and**

Blue Ball (bbcm.org) — a highlight of the global circuit party calendar. This year's event is Oct. 7.



RUSSIAN RIVER, CALIF.

A little over an hour north of San Francisco, **Russian River** (gayrussianriver.com) is strewn with wineries, small hotels and resorts. Two great options are the Woods Resort and Rio Villa Beach Resort. Life centers on the former logging town of Guerneville, an unincorporated community in the Russian River Valley. David Lytle, editor at large for *7x7 Magazine*, vacations several times a year here with his husband and sons. "The truly tiny town of Guerneville has a quaint street lined with an ice cream shop, a five-and-dime store, restaurants in varying price ranges and two gay bars," says Lytle. "It's a great weekend escape from San Francisco, all nestled in pines and redwoods along a river perfect for swimming and floating."



SAUGATUCK, MICH.

One well-kept secret within the gay community is Lake Michigan's **Saugatuck** (saugatuck.com). "Autumn is a great time of year to experience Saugatuck's beauty and natural splendor," says Salvatore Sapienza, a novelist and pastor in the neighboring resort town of Douglas. "Come October, the fall colors are at their peak, and visitors can enjoy hayrides, apple orchards, corn mazes, winery tours and farm-fresh pies at a local cider mill." The area offers bed-and-breakfast inns, retro motels and the Dunes Resort, one of the Midwest's largest gay resorts.



RELY PALERIO GETTY IMAGES SAUGATUCK DOUGLAS VESL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



Carnival Week

PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

One of the world's best-known LGBT destinations, nicknamed **P-town** (provincetowntourismoffice.org), this cozy seaside town on Cape Cod's tip offers travel bargains and beautiful light in autumn, according to Massachusetts native Ed Salvato, contact officer of gay travel website *Men About World* and co-author of *Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality*. "You can find an event for every genre of person, from transgender gatherings like *Fantasia Fair*, a weeklong celebration and conference for the transgender community, to events for women, leather lovers, partiers and more," says Salvato. He especially likes the restaurants *Strangers & Saints* and *Victor's*, and recommends hiking and biking through peak foliage on surrounding trails.

Welcome!

There is plenty for all to do and see in these inviting locales.



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High Heel Day

OGUNQUIT, MAINE

Ogunquit (ogunquit.org), whose name means "beautiful place by the sea" in the language of the Abenaki tribe, is on the rocky Maine coast, bringing to mind the fictional *Murder, She Wrote* town. It's a charming, walkable city with a downtown area full of shops and restaurants. Finding a place to hang out is easy in the district called *The Village*. Spots like *The Old Village Inn*, a pub and inn housed in one of the town's oldest buildings, and *The Front Porch* piano bar are two of the main locales where everyone mingles.