

My city: Lifestyle guru **Steve Kemble** on Dallas



by Josh Rocker

Name: Steve Kemble
Age: 49
Profession: Lifestyle guru: parties, fashion, weddings
City: Dallas, TX
Relationship Status: Taken
Sexuality: Gay

What are some of the things you love most about Dallas?

In a word, the people. The Southern hospitality shines through with each and every person you meet -- even the straight ones.

What is your least favorite thing about Dallas?

Most would agree that it's the heat. It gets to over 100 degrees through much of the summer. Yet there is a good side to this: There is nothing hotter than tan lines in all the right places.

What gym do you like most there?

A private gym owned by fitness guru and author Larry North, Larry North Fitness, in the heart of the toniest neighborhood in the city, Highland Park. Since it is private, you hardly ever have to wait to use any of the equipment. And let me tell you, the hot beefcake trainers walking around in their tight shorts is like watching a Chippendales show while you work out!

What are some of the some great restaurants for a night out with gay friends?

Two of my favorites (and extremely gay-friendly) are Taco Dinner and Steel. Taco Dinner, amid the shops of the West Village offers yummy Mexican food and margaritas at a nice moderate price. Steel on Oak Lawn (major gay street) would be given a passing grade by those who live by feng shui, and the fusion cuisine is some of the best in the city.

What are some great restaurants for a romantic gay date in Dallas, and what about them appeals to you?

One of my favorites is Parigi on Oak Lawn. This romantic hotspot is modeled after the bistros of Paris and New York. What I love about it is that this friendly and upbeat restaurant has been gay-friendly since the first day it opened. Another favorite is Stephan Pyles, a very stylized restaurant with a menu that reads like a global tapestry of tastes; it's the ultimate location for a romantic evening out.

What are your favorite gay bars/or dance clubs there?

We have so many incredible gay bars in Dallas, from JR's, which is huge (and has a balcony which looks onto the street, perfect for lusting at the passers-by) and is the cornerstone of the gay area here. Next door to JR's is Sue Ellen's for the lesbians. The Rose Room is our local drag venue (and let me tell you, we have amazing drag queens in Dallas!). The Round-Up Saloon is, in my opinion, one of the best (and cleanest!) gay bars in the country. If you like country/western music (think hot cowboys in tight jeans), then this is the place for you. Station 4 is the premiere mega-Texas-sized dance club, with two cavernous dance floors. What's so cool is that all of these are all within walking distance of each other.

What are your favorite gay parties or events in your city?

My favorite event of the year is the Annual Easter in the Park celebration. Held in Lee Park on the edge of Dallas's predominant gayborhood, Oak Lawn, the event is nothing short of fabulous. Everyone adorns his head with a fabulous bonnet, packs a picnic basket, brings a blanket and enjoys the music by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. A terrific part of the event is the amazing pooch parade and doggie costume contest. What makes the event wonderful is that it's a fabulous mix of both gays and straights. What a concept!

I also love the annual DIFFA gala, where celebrities and designers (both local and from all over the world) adorn denim jackets, which are then auctioned off in an over-the-top event featuring a glamorous cocktail reception, dinner, runway show and after party. This is the "see and be seen" event of the year in Dallas.

What is the best public place for a gay person to make out in your city?

Oooh, gross! That is so Lindsay Lohan and Samantha Ronson!

What is the gay community like in Dallas? Do you consider yourself a part of any particular "scene"?

The gay community in Dallas is fabulous! I travel extensively, so I have seen a lot over the world, and Dallas is right at the top in my book. It is wonderful to be gay in Dallas. Dallas, in my opinion, is a very gay-friendly community, so being gay is OK! I am not part of any particular scene, as I tend to be very open-minded and inclusive with friends from all walks of life.

Are you involved in any LGBT community organizations in your city?

Due to my extensive travel schedule with TV and other appearances, I do not have the time to become fully committed to a particular organization, yet when I am in the city, I do all I can to support their very worthwhile efforts.

What do you think of the annual LGBT Pride celebration in your city?

I think it is fabulous! Our Pride is held annually in September (versus during the extreme heat of summer!). I definitely attend if I am in the city, and the parade is the highlight for me. What's not to love about baton twirlers -- especially when they're male?

Do you have a particular fashion style? Where do you shop for clothes?

My wardrobe is virtually all name-designer haute couture -- the louder, more colorful and bolder the better! I adore fashion and shop virtually every day. My favorite stores in Dallas are Neiman Marcus (which started in Dallas) and Stanley Korshak, both in the Crescent complex near downtown Dallas.

Where do you go for other forms of entertainment?

The world famous, 200-plus-member Turtle Creek Chorale Gay Men's Chorus is one of my favorite forms of entertainment in Dallas. They perform regularly at the fabulous I. M. Pei-designed Meyerson Symphony Center, and their shows sell out fast to both gay and straight audiences. Additionally, anyone visiting Dallas should check out the incredible exhibits and art at Dallas Museum of Art. For those enthusiasts of the "Dallas" TV show, you can indeed visit and tour Southfork, the legendary ranch of J.R. Ewing (I still dream about that shower scene with Patrick Duffy as Bobby!).

If you had any friends visiting from out of town for the first time, what are the "musts" you'd recommend they see or do?

First of all, consider staying at the Melrose Hotel. It is a mere two blocks from the majority of the bars, so there is no need to worry about driving home or even taking a cab. You must visit the shops, restaurants and bars of Oak Lawn. For more gay-friendly shopping, restaurants and clubs, you will want to visit the West Village, the newest hip area in the city.

What city in America would you most like to visit next?

San Francisco. I call it the Motherland! Not only is it one of the most gorgeous cities in America, but also I love the food and shopping -- and nothing is better than a fun day in the Haight and an evening out in the Castro. Also, I am a huge fan of "Beach Blanket Babylon."