

Celebrating a Rainbow Moment

Discussion



John Tanzella,
IGLTA
President/CEO



Carlos Kytka
Executive Director of the
Gay European
Tourism Association (GETA)



The U.S Supreme Court handed down the ruling regarding the same-sex marriage where couples will have the right to marry in all 50 states. LGBT experts share their views about the same as we put forward the discussion on how great it was to celebrate this rainbow moment.

Carlos Kytka Executive Director

Gay European Tourism Association (GETA)



Champaign corks were popping across the whole of the United States last month as the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have the right to get married in every state. America has now joined many countries across the world, particularly in Europe and South America, that have introduced same-sex marriage. This is a whole new opportunity for promoting destinations and products to appeal to this new wave of eager honeymoon couples. The LGBT tourism market has always been a valuable sector. The Gay European Tourism Association estimates that LGBT travellers spend over \$200 billion dollars annually on travel. More importantly, because we tend not to have children, we can travel throughout the year particularly in those low season months. We are not bound by school holidays and actually prefer to travel when it is cheaper and there are fewer noisy children around. But because same-sex marriage is new there are no rules or traditions. We are making it up as we go along. Some want to copy traditional weddings. Some want to do something totally different. This means the field is wide open for traditions to be started. The question is who is going to be the pioneer that sets the gold standard for LGBT honeymoon travel? Will it be a destination, a hotel or a tour company? Because whoever is ahead of the curve is going to get more than their fair share of those LGBT dollars. So there's the challenge – who is going to rise up to meet it?

John Tanzella, IGLTA President/CEO



The tourism industry has been a longtime leader in supporting LGBT issues and we've seen widespread celebration from our business members regarding the U.S. Supreme Court decision. Major travel brands like Hilton, Delta and United were among the many companies urging the court to rule for equality in the days leading up to the decision. This ruling will certainly contribute to the global trend toward more visible destination-based gay and lesbian wedding or honeymoon offerings. Countries that legally support their LGBT citizens send a message to gay travellers that they are welcome - and feeling safe and welcome is what every traveller wants, regardless of sexual orientation. Any time there is a significant victory for LGBT equality in the world, it has an affect that transcends borders. It provides encouragement to the repressed that things can change for the better. The U.S. was the 20th country to legalize same-sex marriage, but there are still more than 170 that do not recognize our unions. We believe that travel can help open minds, which is why we support our member businesses wherever in the world they are located and our IGLTA Foundation underwrites memberships for LGBT-owned businesses in emerging destinations. Even a single business willing to hold the rainbow flag in a destination can help make a difference.