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# IN magazine

LOS ANGELES

PALM SPRINGS  
LONG BEACH  
SAN DIEGO

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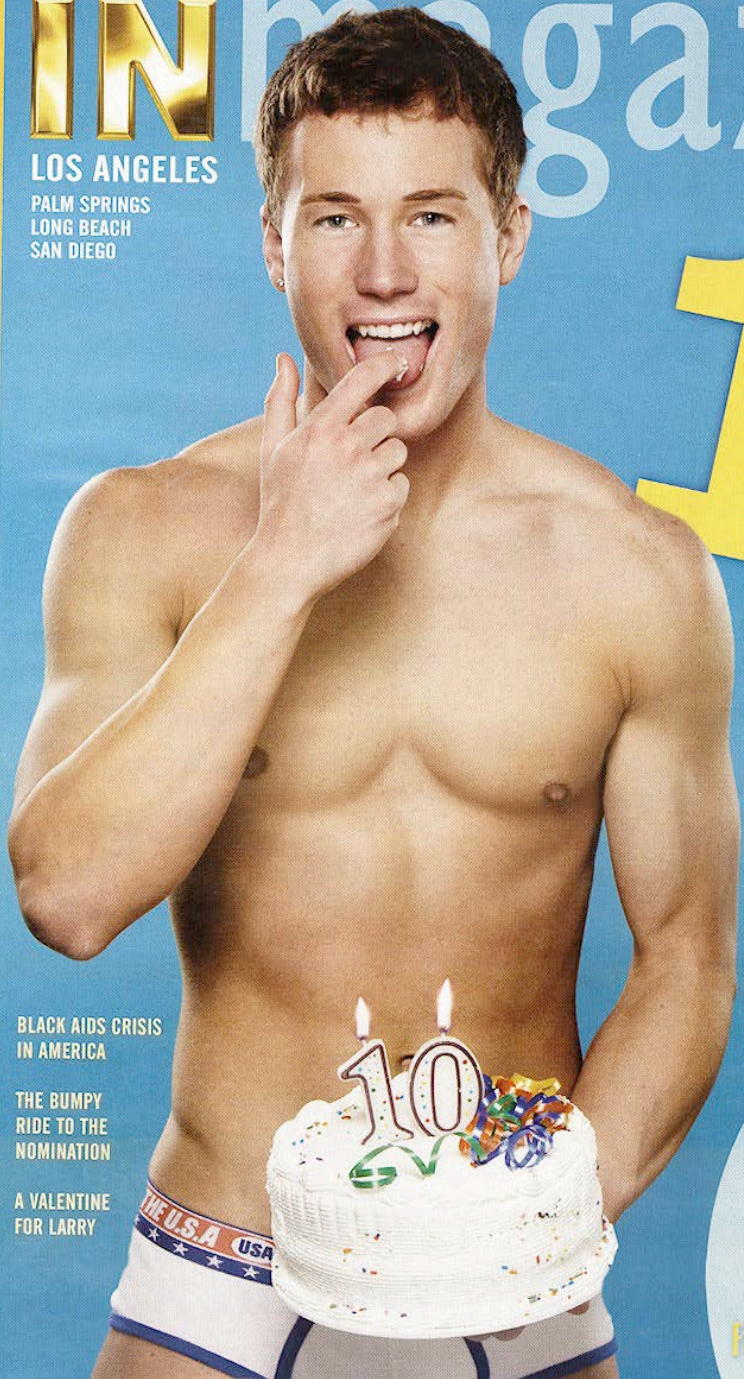
## 1998- 2008

LGBT NEWS, POLITICS AND ENTERTAINMENT

BLACK AIDS CRISIS  
IN AMERICA

THE BUMPY  
RIDE TO THE  
NOMINATION

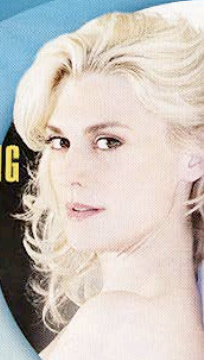
A VALENTINE  
FOR LARRY



AND  
INTRODUCING

**L**  
IN LA

FOR THE LADIES!



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# On Top of the



It's Mammoth or bust for the thousands headed to Tom Whitman's sixth annual Elevation Gay Ski Week, March 12-16.

BY ROBERT ELLSWORTH

Snow sweeps down, settling on our noses as we make the ascent to the glistening caps. Up, up and away, we soar in the lifts, rising high above the setting sun. Wind whips off the peak, briskly across our tanned faces. Suddenly, Mammoth Mountain emerges with a light veil of billowy cloud swirling around the summit. White capped mountains plunge into the ravine, not to mention a 6-foot-3 muscle daddy zipping by in nothing more than a skin-tight, neon jumpsuit. All too soon my wingman perches on a ridge, blue glow reflected off the snow. Ineptly, I get out, tumbling in the crunchy snow. We strap on our boards and stand on the edge of an infinite, steep basin in untracked powder, before my buddy, a keen snowboarder, launches himself, and I hesitantly follow. Once I push off, a buzz takes over as I soar down the slope. Pure nirvana. Yes here we are in March—forget about the desert or the beach—and there is beaucoup snow, not to mention a surfeit of sexy men: perfect conditions for gay powder hounds.

It is the exhilarating beginning of a five-day ski weekend, selected as much with an eye on the man candy as on the quality of the skiing. Yes, it's Elevation 2008, the sixth annual Mammoth Gay Ski Week, being held from March 12-16. For the last six years, thousands of gay men have dashed to Tom Whitman's rollicking snow soiree. You just can't beat the thrills and spills of California's most chillin' ski town.

## Win with IN!

Here's your chance to win two VIP Passes to Elevation 2008. Just a few seconds on the Elevation website could land you and a guest all-access passes to the hottest parties in Mammoth. To enter, go to [www.mammothgayski.com/incontest](http://www.mammothgayski.com/incontest) by March 4.

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### [GETTING THERE]

The Mammoth Lakes are 300 miles from Los Angeles (about a four-and-a-half-hour drive). For frequent flyers, there is a charter service available into the Mammoth Airport. You can also find inexpensive flights into Reno and from there, rent a car for the three-hour drive.

### [LODGING]

While there are a wide variety of accommodations throughout Mammoth, Elevation has secured discounts at its host hotels. To work the discount, contact Jason Couvillion at [jasonc@travelctcs.com](mailto:jasonc@travelctcs.com). Space is limited, so make your reservations today.

**Mammoth Mountain Inn**  
[www.tinyurl.com/3X8B5G](http://www.tinyurl.com/3X8B5G)  
Comfy, old-school vibe with an action-filled Jacuzzi. Adjacent to the Main Lodge at the mountain base, this funky, recently renovated hotel offers ski-in/ski-out accommodation, in a cozy, kitschy atmosphere.

**The Westin Monache Resort**  
[www.westinmammoth.com](http://www.westinmammoth.com)  
For those who like posh, five-star comfort and upscale amenities, this recently opened gem features 230 guest suites with fireplaces, slate floors and plush beds. It also boasts breathtaking views and impeccable dining.

**The Village at Mammoth**  
[www.villageatmammoth.com](http://www.villageatmammoth.com)  
After an exhausting day swishing down the slopes, rest your head in comfort sequestered here in Mammoth's magical old town. The property features 166 condominiums built in the midst of a mix of exceptional restaurants, snazzy boutiques, art galleries, bars and brew houses.

### [THE SLOPES]

Tucked into the Eastern Sierras, the mountain averages 40 feet of snowfall per year. The terrain covers 3,500 acres with a vertical drop of 3,100 feet, and plenty of California sunshine—over 300 days a year. If you're renting equipment, there's less strain on your wallet if you eschew the resort and do it in town. Try Footloose Sports Center, at the corner of Canyon and Minaret ([www.footloosesports.com](http://www.footloosesports.com)), and Wave Rave Snowboard Shop, on Main Street (760) 934-2471, for snowboards and accessories.

"Elevation was modeled after Altitude, the original Whistler Gay Ski Week. I wanted it to be about making new friends, snowboarding and having a great time," says Whitman. "To me, Aspen is more about VIP events and fancy restaurants. Elevation, like Mammoth, is more inclusive. Everyone comes to the parties, drops the attitude and meets people from all over the country."

He's right. It's this unspoken camaraderie and the resort's inherent grandeur that make the week such a blast.

For the infusion of snow bunnies who flock here each year, Elevation is the coolest of tickets, offering high-octane boarding and high-powered hook-ups in surroundings of pristine, pine-swathed slopes. Size matters, which is why the well-endowed Mammoth is showered in accolades by all the major ski and snowboard magazines. At an elevation of 11,053 feet, it's an alpine region of 3,500 acres of sweeping beauty, lovely lakes and beautifully groomed trails. But best of all, you won't find the long lift lines that you find in Tahoe or Aspen.

This year, January storms dumped tons of fresh snow with a solid 100+-inch base, so whether you're a skier who sticks to the bunny slopes or a snowboarder who's trying to perfect a daring 360, there's no better place for the adrenalin junkie.

But Elevation isn't just for speed demons and diehard snow addicts. If the idea of barreling down a mountain is a little worrisome, fear not, there is a packed roster of activities, including the traditional nocturnal Party @ 10,000 Feet, featuring a moonlit ride on the mountain gondola; Cliffhanger, the most awesome dance event of the season; and plenty of rowdy après ski parties.

At the Lakanuki—think *Gilligan's Island* as a ski shack—the clientele runs the gamut from Hollywood agents, like Jonathan Perry, to doctors turned dizzying drag queens. Two gender illusionists, Helga and Ivana, decked out in bedazzled ski couture, entertain, while rowdy blokes kick back Jägermeister. "Besides the great snow and intense boarding, you just never know who you are going to meet on that late-night gondola ride coming back from the mountain top party," Perry says, explaining why he continues to come back year after year.

And he's right. By the end, half the single dudes seem to have scored. It's like a gay cruise without the passport, motion sickness or cabin fever.

The Village Lodge provides a stress-free haven where boys relieve their achy muscles in the steamy pool—some in board shorts, and others, "California style." After an exhilarating day charging the slopes, what better way to unwind than a misty hot tub at the main lodge with some shredded friends? Landscape architect Greg Sanchez travels to Elevation every year. "I wouldn't miss it," he says. "One of my favorite things to do is bomb it down the back of the mountain into the snow-capped trees. I call it Chronic of Narnia. The parties are a bonus."

So whether it is sleep or gravity you choose to abuse, look no further, thrust your pole deep into Mammoth Mountain and experience a gay man's *pièce de résistance!*

Elevation takes place March 12-16. For more information, go to [www.mammothgayski.com](http://www.mammothgayski.com).



### [THE PARTIES]

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12**  
**Welcome Event**  
9 p.m.-midnight  
Lakanuki, 6201 Minaret Rd., Suite 200, Mammoth  
[www.lakanuki.com](http://www.lakanuki.com)

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13**  
**Smack! North**  
9 p.m.-midnight  
LuLu, 1111 Forest Trail Rd., Unit 201, Mammoth  
[www.restaurantlulu.com](http://www.restaurantlulu.com)

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14**  
**Friday Apres-Ski**  
3-6 p.m.  
Lakanuki

**THE PARTY @ 10,000 FEET**  
8 p.m.-midnight  
Catch the gondola at the main lodge to the mountaintop party.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15**  
**Malibu Beach Party Apres-Ski**  
3-6 p.m.  
LuLu

**Cliffhanger**  
9 p.m.-1 a.m.  
Canyon Lodge, 1 Minaret Rd., Mammoth

**SUNDAY, MARCH 16**  
**Sunday Apres-Ski**  
3-7 p.m.  
Canyon Lodge