

Rainbows and glitter for a Gay Day at The Alnwick Garden this weekend

Monday 22 August, 2022

Rainbows, pride flags, glitter and feathers turned a wet day in Northumberland into the brightest and loudest celebration of the year at this years Gayday.

For the second year running, The Alnwick Garden in otherwise sleepy North Northumberland has hosted the finals of Mr Gay England and Mx Drag and this year the day was even busier with the grand finals of Mr Gay Europe too.

What on the surface appears to be a fun day full of catwalks and swimwear actually has a particularly serious side. The winners of both Mr Gay England Mr Gay Europe are competing to become spokespersons for their community, representing the LGBTIQ+ community in an official capacity.

Not only are all contestants judged on the glamorous catwalk round, but they are also awarded points for charity campaigns, a written test and an audience vote.

This years judging panel were blown away by all of the contestants and are already signed up for the 2023 competition! Comprising TV personalities, previous winners and The Duchess of Northumberland, the judging panel faced a very real dilemma when it came to choosing their winners.

The Alnwick Garden – host to the World's largest Treehouse, the World's largest Taihaku Cherry Orchard and soon to be home to Lilidorei, the World's Largest play structure – would seem to be an unlikely host to this event. Opened in 2001 and the brainchild of Jane Percy, The Duchess of Northumberland, The Alnwick Garden was always intended to be an inclusive, relaxed, and informal space for visitors to roam freely.

Jane Percy, Duchess of Northumberland, said “The Alnwick Garden was honoured to host Mr Gay Europe which was a wonderfully colourful occasion which epitomised the core values of the garden and indeed the reason for me starting The Alnwick Garden 27 years ago - namely inclusivity”

In the end – as with all competitions – there could only be one winner for each category and this year's winners were absolutely delighted to have been crowned.

“Tall” Paul Dennison – 2022's Mr Gay England Winner – went on to become this years Mr Gay Europe with Italy, Cheque Republic and Ukraine all coming in close.

David Allwood walked away with the closely fought Mr Gay England title, and 2023's Mx Drag Winner was **Lavender Love**.

Stuart Hatton – the reigning Mr Gay World and event organiser – said “Wow! What a day! Come rain or high water (literally) I know that Alnwick is now the place for all queer people to feel free, celebrated and their true authentic selves.

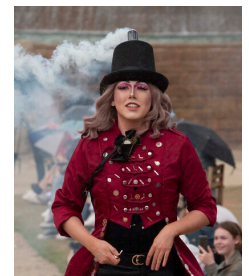
Thank you to Her Grace, The Duchess of Northumberland for being a marvellous ambassador for our LGBTIQ+ community and a BIG thank you to everyone at The Alnwick Garden and Alnwick Castle for making us all feel welcomed. From The Ukraine to The Czech Republic to Italy and England we are truly, truly humbled that you chose to welcome us into your home and into your hearts and for allowing us to be seen and to tell our stories.

In 2022, it is still punishable by death in some countries for loving someone of the same gender and I hope that Gay Day which was broadcast LIVE around the world on Pride World Media gave hope to those people who feel oppressed by their states or governments.

But for now, lets look to the future and to bringing Mr Gay Europe back to Alnwick in 2023, the new Queer Capital of Europe.”

Ian McAllister, Head of Marketing & Communications at The Alnwick Garden, said “We were not

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only delighted to be asked, but immensely proud to host this years competition. North Northumberland – and in particular a horticultural garden such as ours – isn't the first place that most people think of when they think of a competition such as this. However, we always love to be somewhat different and this competition and the values that it promotes are something that we are absolutely honoured to be part of. To not only help to highlight the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community but to actively promote these issues to a wider audience fills us with immense pride”

Mr Gay England
Europe :: LGBTQ+ :: Alnwick
Garden :: Northumberland ::
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Scan Me:



Company Contact:

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The Alnwick Garden

T. 07917789307

E. ian.mcallister@alnwickgarden.com

W. <https://www.alnwickgarden.com/>

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