



TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2009

amNewYork 15

amNY.com

TRAVEL

+ CHAIN-FREE SHOPPING

COOKMAN AVENUE, ASBURY PARK'S main retail thoroughfare, is lined with mom-and-pop restaurants and shops. It's a Starbucks- and Dunkin' Donuts-free zone.

Asbury's glory days

BY LUCY COHEN BLATTER
lucy.blatter@am-ny.com

Take a stroll down the recently renovated boardwalk in Asbury Park and you'd never believe that not long ago, the area was almost entirely off limits, overrun with violence.

Thanks in large part to its popularity with the gay community, the Jersey Shore town is enjoying a resurgence.

This weekend marks Road Trip Weekend, featuring beach parties, sports and arts events geared to the gay community.

But this and every weekend, there's truly something for everyone.

DURING THE DAY
Beach and

boardwalk

asburyparkboardwalk.com
Lining the Atlantic Ocean, Asbury's sandy beach is worth the \$5 admission charge.

The recently renovated boardwalk is lined with shops, restaurants and bars. At the north end, you'll find the historic Asbury Park Convention Hall. True to its roots, it still features lots of musical events.

AT NIGHT
The Stone Pony
913 Ocean Ave., 732-502-0600, stoneponyonline.com

This legendary rock-music venue is credited with helping launch the career of Bruce Springsteen. Both he and Jon Bon Jovi have been known to drop in.

GO BACK IN TIME

Ocean Grove, N.J.

Ocean Grove is a one-square-mile (dry!) town located just a stone's throw from Asbury Park. It was founded in 1869 by Methodist clergy as an outgrowth of the Camp Meeting Association. The church still owns the land.

Club Paradise

101 Asbury Ave., 732-988-6663, paradisenj.com

At this gay nightlife hot spot (located in the Empress Hotel), DJs spin pop and dance music in two separate rooms. On Sundays, the pool provides a backdrop for tea dances from 4-8 p.m. (Cover charge is \$5).



Tim McLoone's Supper Club on the Boardwalk was once a Howard Johnson. (FREDERICKA VILARDI)

Ghost tours

327 Cookman Ave., 732-455-3188, paranormal-booksnj.com

Kathy Kelly, owner of Paranormal Books, runs ghost tours Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, starting at 8 p.m. (\$10 adults, \$5 kids). Haunted investigations take place twice a month

from July-November. The price is \$50, which includes dinner.

TO STAY **Sixth Avenue House**

305 Sixth Ave., 732-361-6609, sixthavenuehouse.com

This cozy bed-and-break-

fast is just a couple of blocks from the boardwalk. Each of its six rooms are decorated uniquely, but it's all clean and quaint.

Added bonus: It's pet friendly. During the summer, rates range from \$99 to \$150 a night during the week and \$125 to \$250 on weekends.