



Photo courtesy of Joel Nudelman

## Rendezvous

184 South Franklin Street, Juneau, AK (907) 586-1270

58°17'59"N 134°24'18"W

License Issued: 1986 to Rendezvous Inc. (Robert and Vivian Schroth)

**CLOSED 12/08/2019**

Amenities: Pool table, TV, dance floor, live music

Web site: <http://juneaurendezvous.com>. YouTube

History and Notoriety: The Rendezvous began as the New York Exchange, which was owned by Henry Olsen in 1909. After prohibition, John Pastl re-opened the bar in July of 1933 in a building that was built in 1898. By 1935, John, who was originally from Germany and 57 years old at the time, had changed the name to the New York Tavern (NYT). George Salo, who was born in Finland, bred in New York, and worked as a gold miner in Juneau, was the owner in 1946. George was very proud of the NYT and invested handsomely in interior decorations and for advertising.

In the 1950's and 60's, the NYT was popular with the sporting crowd, who came to play "pan" (short for panguingue and similar to rummy).

Olav Lillegraven, who had interests in several southeast Alaska bars, took over ownership in 1956. Olav was appointed to the state Alcohol Beverage Control Board in 1965 and retained an interest in the NYT until Robert "Bob" and Vivian Schroth (who also owned the Imperial Bar at the time) took over in 1986 and changed the name to The Rendezvous.

Visiting The Rendezvous: The bar still resembles the old NYT, but has been renovated over the years, including the addition of a great sound system. This bar offers a wide variety of entertainment, even during the week. Primarily rock bands, but also country, jazz, and even punk have played the Rony, and the place fills up. On these nights, sometimes just a \$10 cover charge will get you in. But when bands from the lower 48 perform, you might have to get tickets in advance. The bar also hosts fundraising events such as the "Femme Fatale," an annual drag show which benefits the Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association (Four A's).

**Author's Note:** The bar owners decided not to renew the liquor license in 2019. See articles below.



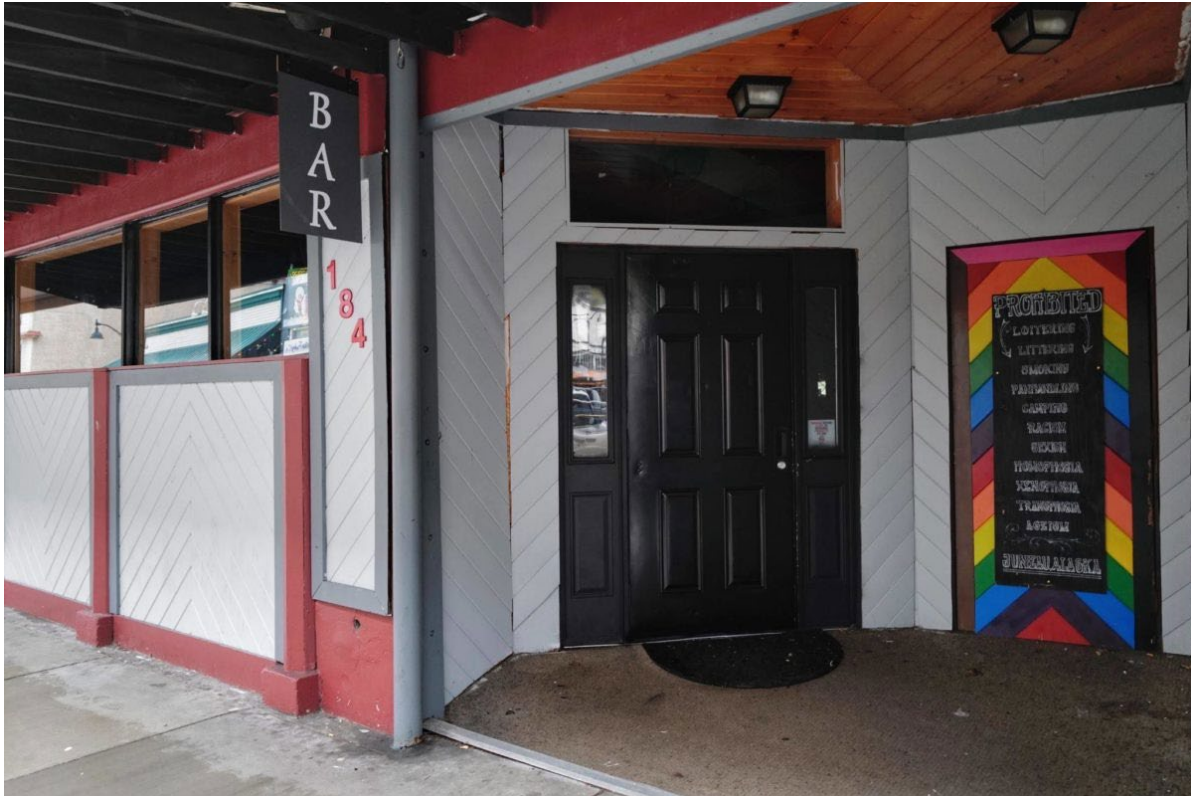
GEORGE SALO, *Proprietor*

# NEW YORK TAVERN

*Juneau, Alaska*

From *Alaska Life* magazine – Centennial Edition, 1946  
Note the similarity of this photo to the first photo by Joel Nudelman.





Rendezvous, as seen in this Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019 photo, is closed for day-to-day business but will open for monthly drag shows. (Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)

Downtown bar closes for business  
Monthly drag shows are still planned.

By Ben Hohenstatt

Thursday, December 12, 2019 - 6:34pm NEWS BUSINESS LOCAL NEWS

A popular downtown bar is now closed for day-to-day business.

**Rendezvous, a South Franklin Street bar, is closed for daily business for the foreseeable future but open for monthly drag shows, said former bar manager Asher Rohan. The closure was effective as of Sunday.**

When reached by phone, Rohan declined to comment on a reason for the closure, but said more information would be forthcoming later this week. When asked if the hangup was due to legal or paperwork concerns, Rohan answered with an all-inclusive yes.

There was no signage outside Rendezvous nor a social media post indicating the closure.

Rohan and Michael Friend began co-managing the bar this summer, and at that time told the Empire they plan to eventually formally own the bar. The transfer never formally happened.

Rohan and Friend oversaw a remodeling of the space that included removing a pool table and giving the front door a colorful makeover.

[Rendezvous has new management]

Deborah Percy and Erik Emert are listed as the owners of the bar in the 2018 business corporation biennial report. The next biennial report is due Jan. 2, 2020, according to documents available through the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development website.

Percy did not return a phone call seeking comments for this article.

The Rendezvous is known for being the site of monthly drag shows, and that tradition continued under new management. A Dec. 31 event in honor of Stonewall 50 dubbed New Queer's Eve is still scheduled to take place at the bar.

That arrangement is similar to the Rockwell Ballroom, which is closed, but has been the site of events in recent years.

In recent months, regular happenings at Rendezvous included a fem-only open stage night known as GRLZ.

Dana Herndon, one of the event's organizers, said she's optimistic the closing isn't a death knell for GRLZ, but the event will need to find a new home.

"GRLZ will go on, we're just going to have to find another venue for it," Herndon said.

- Contact reporter Ben Hohenstatt at (907)523-2243 or [bhohenstatt@juneauempire.com](mailto:bhohenstatt@juneauempire.com). Follow him on Twitter at [@BenHohenstatt](https://twitter.com/BenHohenstatt)



Rendezvous co-manager Asher Rohan paints outside of the downtown Juneau bar, June 26, 2019.  
(Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)

## CAPITAL CITY WEEKLY

New management is making this downtown bar even more LGBTQ-friendly  
New drinks, new events and more changes are planned for the Rendezvous

By Ben Hohenstatt

Friday, June 28, 2019 -12:49pm NEWS CAPITAL CITY WEEKLY

Rendezvous is under new management, and while they aren't branding it as a gay bar, they are putting their most inclusive feet forward.

That's what the recently painted rainbow on the front door symbolizes — it's a welcome sign to people of all stripes, not a statement of exclusive intent.

"This isn't a gay bar just because we have a rainbow door," said Asher Rohan co-owner of Black Sheep Productions, a new production company that is now managing the Rendezvous. "It's very all-inclusive. We want to be an all-inclusive space where everyone feels welcome."

Rohan is gay, but Black Sheep Productions co-owner and Rendezvous co-manager Michael Friend is not, and they don't want the business to be pigeonholed as only catering to one type of person.

A sign Friend and Rohan are working on prohibits sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia and racism as well as littering, loitering and other undesirable behaviors at the bar they manage. Eventually, they will be the venue's owners, but until title transfers and liquor licenses are squared away, they're co-managing the bar.



Co-managers Asher Rohan, left, and Michael Friend talk about their remodel of the Rendezvous Bar on Wednesday, June 26, 2019. (Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)

That paperwork wait means they're keeping the Rendezvous name for now since it's what appears on licenses, but the pair hinted that a rebrand could be coming at some point. They wouldn't share what the new name could be.

The bar was previously owned by Deborah Percy and Erik Emert, and Rohan and Friendly said they approached them about purchasing the bar when it was for sale.

While the bar isn't just for one group of people, the new Rendezvous does have close ties to Juneau's LGBTQ+ community. Rohan said the Juneau drag family pitched in with the bar's ongoing face-lift. It was also the site of the GLITZ drag show after-party.



[The sights, sounds and spectacle of Juneau's biggest drag show]

"This is their house," Rohan said of the drag community. "They perform here once a month."

The overt dedication to inclusivity is appreciated.

"It's important to have a safe place where one can be themselves," said JoLynn Stevens Shriber, co-chair for Southeast Alaska LGBTQ+ Alliance. "I've met several cruise ship employees that are relieved to have a queer friendly place to hang out while in town. Most of the bars in town are queer friendly but to have one that is advertising as LGBTQ friendly is incredible."

Friend and Rohan's vision for what can happen at the bar goes beyond monthly drag shows.

Both Rohan and Friend have been longtime workers in the service industry at bars and restaurants, and they want Rendezvous to be a venue for burlesque nights, spoken word events, musical performances and to watch big sporting games.



Co-manager Michael Friend paints a wall inside the Rendezvous Bar on Wednesday, June 26, 2019. (Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)

A lifelong dream

They want their space to be good for downtown Juneau, too.



While Friend and Rohan have each only been permanent Juneau residents for about a year, they have been visiting the city for the past 15 years and are fond of the community. Friend and Rohan actually met in the capital city while working for a boutique cruise company.

That's part of the reason they opted to realize Friend's lifelong dream of having a bar to call his own in Juneau and why they hope Rendezvous will be part of a collaborative network of business owners on Franklin Street. They're already off to a start on that effort. They're hosting an Entrepreneur Meet-Up Thursday.

Getting the bar to the point that it meets or exceeds their goals means putting a lot of work into the structure built in 1914, according to the City and Borough of Juneau's assessor database.

Late Wednesday morning, that meant new interior and exterior paint and moving stacks of chairs.

Ultimately, Rohan and Friend are hoping for a blend of new and old — that applies to lighting, painting, decorations and staff.

"It's been a bit of a beast," Rohan said.

While work is ongoing, Friend said they'll do their best to have the bar open by the early afternoon, and the hope is that by July 1, the bar will be opening daily at noon.

[The long, strange story behind Juneau's New Deal totem poles]

An eclectic variety of beverages are meant to pair with the all-comers welcome vibe and disparate events booking.

That includes offering a rotating selection of cocktails on some of the bar's 18 taps. Cocktails made using Amalga Distillery gin are expected to be a staple in the rotation.

"We're really excited about teaming up with them," Friend said.

Non-alcoholic options are also part of the plan.

"It doesn't need to be just a place you come to drink," Friend said. "We want to gain consistency. We also want people to pop their head in the Rendezvous to see what's happening. It makes it fun for us."

And that's one of the core pillars of what they want the business to be.

"I can't stress this enough — clean, safe, fun," Rohan said.

• Contact reporter Ben Hohenstatt at (907)523-2243 or [bhohenstatt@juneauempire.com](mailto:bhohenstatt@juneauempire.com). Follow him on Twitter at [@BenHohenstatt](https://twitter.com/BenHohenstatt).