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# We Say Goodbye To Bounce Nightclub Hinge Lounge

The LGBTQ club that opened in 2001 closed in November. (HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/CLEVELANDMAGAZINE/)

Give a diva's wave goodbye to the circular stage, the chandeliers glittering over the long sleek bar and the weekly entertainment that kept audiences on their feet for hours.

When Bounce Nightclub Hinge Lounge shuttered in early November, Cleveland's LGBTQ community lost one of only a handful of gay gathering places.

## Cleveland

When I first moved to Cleveland in summer 2013, I went to Bounce to check out the scene. That Friday night, the house was packed with patrons of all ages for some pretty fierce entertainment. I was thrown back to my New York City heyday in the late '90s. When a drag queen I knew from New York strutted onstage, Bounce suddenly felt like home.

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"When I walked into Bounce for the first time, I finally felt comfortable in my own skin," recalls Anthony Covatta, a Cleveland singer-songwriter who's served as a Bounce bartender, promotions director and open mic night host over the past 14 years. "I was able to talk, walk, dress and act however I wanted without fear of being ridiculed. It was truly liberating as an LGBT person to finally get a taste of that freedom."

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And yet, the loss of Bounce, which opened in 2001, is not unique. A similar fate has befallen many other LGBTQ establishments in other cities.

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"Big dance clubs, which were a staple of LGBTQ nightlife in the '90s, began to wane in the late 2000s," notes Greggor Mattson, associate professor of sociology at Oberlin College. "When bars or clubs close, important segments of the community become disconnected."

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In recent years, Bounce distinguished itself as a hub for Northeast Ohio drag with performances several nights a week from budding talent, established performers and reality TV drag queens such as Raven. The space was a regular weekend destination for those looking to socialize and dance, but it also became the home for Stonewall Sports, a Northeast Ohio grassroots LGBTQ-friendly league.

None of that will be easily replaced. Drag artist Lady J Martinez O'Neal says it best: "Bounce was a magical place."

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10:00 AM EST

January 5, 2018



## Story:

Ken Schneck

## Art:

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### EDITOR'S NOTE: ON MY TIME IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

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From her beginnings as a waitress to taking part in finding Cleveland's best restaurants, editor Colleen Smitek has an appreciation for everyone in the service sector.

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This month's issue is a deep-dive into the best bites Northeast Ohio has to offer.



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