

Pride Under the Pines in Idyllwild continues for its 5th year, despite social media backlash

Pride Under the Pines, founded by couple Jeremy Taylor and Niels Kosman, continues on October 4th with live performances, drag, activism, and fellowship

Within Riverside County, in the San Jacinto Mountains, lies the charming community of Idyllwild, known for its beautiful scenery, artistic vibe, and recreational activities. Located just an hour from Palm Springs, it also boasts a growing LGBTQ contingency.

Idyllwild captured the hearts of couple Jeremy Taylor and Niels Kosman, the owners of PS Homeboys, one of Palm Springs' top interior design and art boutiques. Frequent visitors to Idyllwild, Taylor and Kosman began to wonder why the town never held its own Pride. Taking matters into their own hands and partnering with business owners in the city, Pride Under the Pines debuted on October 23rd, 2021, with over 800 attendees.

Not only was the event a success in terms of LGBTQ representation for the community, but local businesses reported a boom in sales and customers. Pride Under the Pines has since become one of the most anticipated Idyllwild events of the year.

This year, the event celebrates its 5th year with a bang, turning up the glam. The day's festivities will feature headliners Janice Robinson ("Dreamer", "There Must Be Love") and West Hollywood's Prince Joshua, go-go studs, DJ Galaxy (courtesy of KGay), Congressman Candidate Brandon Riker, and community health partners, with a drag line-up that includes Mayhem Miller, Violeta, and Abigail Beverly Hillz. Los Angeles Blade publisher Alexander Rodriguez will serve as the day's emcee.

This year continues ahead, full force, despite social media backlash for the event's signage, hanging smack dab in the center of town. Pride Under the Pines founders Taylor and Kosman are unwavering in their mission to bring queer representation to "The Hill." They chatted with us as they put the final touches on next week's programming.

What was the inspiration behind creating Pride Under the Pines?

We wanted to create something truly grassroots and community-driven—a Pride that felt intimate, authentic, and rooted in love. Idyllwild is a magical mountain town that has always embraced diversity, and we thought it was the perfect setting to bring people together in celebration of LGBTQ+ pride, visibility, and joy. We were the first Pride Festival since the pandemic, and it all started when we used Idyllwild as our lockdown escape. We fell in love with the town and its community. Through conversations, we learned there is a large LGBTQ community that also feels the need to be heard and seen. This Pride was started to shine a bright light on the local queer community and to bring awareness to everyone else.

What makes Pride Under the Pines different than other Prides?

Unlike many large-scale city Prides, this event has an intimate, small-town charm. You're surrounded by nature, pine trees, and a community that genuinely rallies together. It's not about corporate floats—it's about neighbors, friends, and allies lifting each other up. That balance of heart, inclusivity, and stunning mountain setting makes it truly one-of-a-kind.

What is your mission in producing Pride Under the Pines?

Our mission is to create a safe, joyful, and visible space where the LGBTQ+ community and our allies can come together. We want to celebrate diversity, promote equality, and strengthen connections in a way that uplifts both the queer community and the town of Idyllwild.

What have been some of your biggest challenges in establishing this event over the years?

Permitting, logistics, and funding have always been challenges for grassroots organizers like us. Each year, we navigate county regulations, rising costs, and unexpected hurdles. And of course, building something from scratch in a small town takes time and persistence. But the love we receive from attendees makes every obstacle worth it.

What have you loved most about working on this project?

The connections. Seeing people who've never been to Idyllwild fall in love with the town. Watching LGBTQ+ youth feel seen. Hearing allies say this is their favorite event of the year. And, most of all, the joy of building something meaningful together as a couple, a team, and a community.

What can we expect from this year?

Our 5th anniversary is the biggest yet! A brand-new location at the Idyllwild Town Hall, incredible headliners like Janice Robinson, fabulous drag performances, DJs, live music, a beer garden, delicious food, and a VIP experience with open bar and meet-and-greets. It's going to feel like a full festival while still keeping that warm community spirit.

Your sign is in the middle of town. Why is it so important to grow visibility in today's climate?

Visibility saves lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ rights are under attack nationwide, putting a Pride banner in the center of town says: *We are here, we are proud, and we are part of this community.* It's a statement of resilience and hope—for queer people in Idyllwild, for visitors, and for anyone driving by who needs to feel seen.

You have received hateful social media comments. How does that make you feel? What is your first reaction?

Of course, it stings—but more than anything, it strengthens our resolve. Hate is loud, but love is louder. Our first reaction is to lean on our allies, our friends, and the outpouring of positivity that always follows.

Did you ever consider cancelling Pride because of hateful comments? What makes you continue to put it on?

Never. If anything, the hate shows exactly why this Pride is needed. We continue because the LGBTQ+ community deserves visibility, joy, and safety in every town—not just the big cities. We continue because love is stronger than hate.

What do you want to say to those who want you to shut down Pride Under the Pines?

We'd say this: Pride isn't about you. It's about love, equality, and visibility for people who have historically been silenced. No amount of hate will stop us from celebrating who we are.

On a fun note, how did you two meet, and how long have you been together?

We met years ago in Palm Springs—two creatives who bonded over design, humor, and a shared love for community. We've been together for over a decade, and every year just gets better.

You also own and run your business together. How do you maintain a healthy relationship while working so hard together and putting on events?

We laugh. A lot. We balance each other's strengths and give each other space when needed. We've learned how to divide and conquer, but also when to come together. At the end of the day, we love what we do and we love each other—that makes even the hard days easier. We say if you can run a business together and produce a Gay Pride for 5 consecutive years, we must be doing something right.

What do you love most about the queer community in the Coachella Valley?

The diversity and resilience. Our community here is vibrant, creative, and unapologetically itself. Whether in Palm Springs, Idyllwild, or beyond, there's a sense of family that's deeply inspiring. We all support each other, whether we patronize each other's business or we lift each other up through conversation and showing up. It is truly an amazing feeling, that sometimes we feel people forget to remember.

What is your message to the community?

Stand proud, stand visible, and stand together. We need each other more than ever. Come to the mountains, celebrate with us, and remember that Pride isn't just a party—it's a powerful act of love, resilience, and community.

The event will be held at **Idyllwild Townhall** / 25925 Cedar St, Idyllwild-Pine Cove, CA 92549