

It's only September, but already, a few events have been announced for Super Bowl week.

- **NFL Experience** Family-friendly event on the lawn south of Raymond James Stadium. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 24 and 25, and daily Thursday, Jan. 29 through Super Bowl Sunday. On game day, the event is open only to ticket holders.
- **Celine Dion** The diva will perform at the St. Pete Times Forum Jan. 28, the Wednesday before the game. Tickets are \$46.75 to \$150.
- **Joyner-Walker Foundation's Par & Poker Celebrity Challenge for Charity** So far, baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith is the only confirmed star in this fundraiser sponsored by former NFL player Seth Joyner. It's Jan. 29 at TPC of Tampa Bay in Lutz.

- **Nick Lachey and Jimmie Johnson's Super Skins Celebrity Golf Classic** Last year, this event drew names like P. Diddy, Kurt Busch and Kevin Dillon. This year's event should take place on Saturday, Jan. 31, though a location hasn't been announced. The tournament is closed to the public, but there will likely be a fan kickoff party Jan. 29.
- **Charity bowling event.** Pin Chasers Veterans, 5555 W Hillsborough Ave., hosts the NFL's Hall of Fame charity bowling event on Thursday, Jan. 29. About 30 Hall of Famers will participate, benefitting the NFL's Youth Education Town initiative for children. Tickets are about \$250 a person and include a commemorative bowling ball. For info, e-mail info@pinchasers.net.
- **Pepsi Smash Super Bowl Concert Series** At the Ford Amphitheatre. This year's took place on the Thursday and Friday before the game; headliners were Mary J. Blige, Maroon 5 and RBD.
- **Franco Harris golf tournament** The Steelers legend hosts a charity tournament on Jan. 30, at Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor.

- **Super Bowl Saturday Night** This free, NFL-sponsored concert and fireworks will take place Jan. 31 at Vinoy Park in St. Pete.
- **Taste of the NFL** Annual event features chefs and former players from each of the 32 league cities on Saturday, Jan. 31, at Tropicana Field. Benefits hunger relief organizations nationwide.
- **22nd Annual Super Bowl Breakfast** Jan. 31 at the USF Sun Dome. Bart Starr will be there.
- **Club 009 Super Bowl Parties** Two James Bond-themed parties (one pregame, one during the game) co-sponsored by DeBartolo Sports and Entertainment. Jerry Rice, Jesse Palmer and Miggs will appear. Tickets are \$275 to \$495. club009party.com.

**A**nd so the countdown begins: T-minus 149 days until Super Bowl XLIII hits Tampa.

That's less than five months until Tampa — not Vegas, not Miami, not New York or L.A. — becomes the center of the sports and celebrity universe. One hundred forty-nine days until the streets of Tampa Bay are flooded with big-name athletes, movie stars, rock stars and *Playboy* bunnies. (We're also told that there will be a game of some sort — not that anyone outside of One Buc Place cares about that.)

So as the NFL season gets under way this weekend, we're looking ahead — way, way ahead — to Super Bowl week. What can Tampa Bay residents expect to see when the Big Game hits the Big Guava on Feb. 1, 2009? Here's a preview.

**How can I get game tickets?**  
Only if you're very connected or very lucky. About 75 percent of the tickets go to the NFL teams. About 17.5 percent go to each of the competing teams, about 5 percent to the host Buccaneers and a little more than 1 percent to the other 29 teams. The league controls nearly all of the rest. About 650 tickets will be sold to fans through a random drawing — but the deadline to enter has already passed, so if you didn't enter, you're out of luck. If you did enter, winners will be notified in October or November. If all else fails, you can always shell out a couple thou on StubHub.

**Where will the teams stay?**  
The AFC team is staying at the Intercontinental Hotel at Kennedy and West Shore boulevards in Tampa. The NFC team — that is, if the Bucs don't make it — will stay at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on the Tampa side of the Courtney Campbell Parkway. The Marriott Waterside in downtown Tampa is the NFL headquarters. Stalk accordingly.

**Who's throwing the biggest Super Bowl parties?**

The two biggest party players each year are *Maxim* and *Playboy*, though in recent years *ESPN the Magazine* has thrown a super-exclusive VIP party of its own. *Sports Illustrated* and *Penthouse* also throw exclusive parties. And earlier this year in Arizona, the Victoria's Secret party may have been the hottest of them all. Other parties to watch: the annual "Leather and Laces" party and a bash called "Vice the Party," organized by former *Maxim* Party honcho Dan Parente.

**How can I get into a party?**

Take out a loan. Brokers were selling tickets to the most recent *Maxim* Party for as high as \$3,200, according to superbowlpartyhq.com. Tickets to the *Playboy* Party started at \$2,000, and skyrocketed from there. If you can't afford that, try one of the dozens of other parties hosted by celebrities and athletes. Bucs, Rays and even Yankees players could host their own events, and you could snag a ticket for \$150 or less, especially closer to the event. But for Friday and Saturday night parties featuring more than one recognizable celebrity, you're likely to shell out \$500 or more. If you've got the cash, search Craigslist, eBay or StubHub during the week leading up to the game.

**Have any other events been announced?**

A few. But expect a lot more in the coming weeks and months. The NFL asked large venues like the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center and the Tampa Theatre to hold off booking events until Sept. 1 in case the league wanted the space. So far, the venues appear up for grabs but have plenty in the works. The performing arts center put out proposals this week, and the Tampa Theatre may get a concert or a movie, depending on the schedule. Ybor City, International Plaza and Channelside Bay Plaza also have big plans, although nothing has been announced.

**Come on, give us something! There have to be more events lined up!**

Oh, sure, there are rumors floating around. We've heard the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino will host either the *Maxim* Party or the *Playboy* Party. We've heard Lil Wayne may be at Club Underground. But the truth is, few events are set in stone. This is partially because most contracts have yet to be finalized, and it's partially because party organizers want to maximize the amount of publicity generated by their event. In November or December, you'll get hit with a sudden glut of Super Bowl party info. Meanwhile, for a list of confirmed and rumored events, see the boxes on both sides of these pages.

**Can I still volunteer?**

Organizers needed 6,000 volunteers and have almost enough. Volunteers will greet people at the airport and hotels, and assist at the NFL Experience, a family-oriented football theme park open the week before game day. To sign up, go to



# SUPER BOWL XLIII

It's officially NFL season. That means one thing: The Super Bowl party train is on its way to Tampa.

tampabay.com.

**Should I think about renting out my house or condo?**

You can think about it, but it probably won't happen. The Tampa Bay area has plenty of hotel rooms, which was one of the requirements for getting the game in the first place. But it hasn't stopped people from trying. Ads already have popped up on Craigslist, where prices range from \$1,350 for a six-bedroom

home in Ruskin to \$25,000 (plus a \$10,000 security deposit) for a five-bedroom mansion in Lutz. "For the right price, I'll vacate my house for a week," said mansion owner Avi Elias, 36, who says he's already received nibbles from potential renters. "I'll live with my mom if I have to."

**Who will play at halftime?**  
No one knows yet. The *New York Post* suggested it might be Bruce Springsteen and the

E Street Band. We're not convinced yet, but we are told Bruce was in talks to play at the last Big Game, before Tom Petty got the gig. Garth Brooks, Eagles and Bon Jovi were also in the mix then, and could be this year as well. Other artists to watch: AC/DC (they're launching a tour this fall and singer Brian Johnson lives on the Gulf Coast); Jimmy Buffett (the Florida angle is impossible to ignore) and Kenny

Chesney (he's headlined Ray-Jay in the past). Expect an announcement by December. **Contributing:** Susan Thurston, Dalia Colon, Jay Cridlin, Janet Zink.

**In the photo above, that is how Tampa's Skyline looked for Super Bowl XXXV. This year, a few more buildings will light up the night sky.**  
tbt\* files (2001)

## Looking back at parties past

How will next year's Super Bowl party scene be different from that of the first three games held in Tampa? Let's look back, shall we?

**1984**

**Frank Sinatra! Bob Hope! John Denver! Barry Manilow! Mel Torme!** Okay, so no one ever accused Tampa's first Super Bowl of being the hippest convocation of celebrities in NFL history. But they did get *Dallas* star **Patrick Duffy** to appear at the Clearwater Mall, which was something. The L.A. Raiders' Super Bowl XVIII win over the Redskins was a huge draw — so much so that even House Speaker **Tip O'Neill** couldn't get a table at Bern's. The biggest bash was a \$500,000 "Night at the Circus," featuring leopards, dancing bears and trapeze artists at the Florida State Fairgrounds. There was no *Maxim* Party, no *Playboy* Party ... but *Sports Illustrated* did hold a "dinner dance" at the Don CeSar.

**1991**

**Whitney Houston. Scott Norwood. New Kids on the Block** (they performed at halftime). Super Bowl XXV, between the Giants and the Bills, was memorable for a number of reasons, but none more so than Operation Desert Storm. A handful of parties were canceled, like the NFL's ritzy bash at the Tampa Convention Center. (Gasparilla was canceled, too. Organizers with Ye Mystic Krewe opted to cancel the festival rather than admit black members, so the city threw a one-time flop called Bamboleo.) **Sinatra** was back, performing at the USF Sun Dome. **Jimmy Buffett** played the Florida Suncoast Dome (now the Trop). And *Saturday Night Live* stars performed at Ruth Eckerd Hall.



Whitney Houston sang the National Anthem at the 1991 Super Bowl. Getty Images

**2001**

Organizers had the bright idea of hosting the Super Bowl and Gasparilla on the same weekend — great for parties, but horrible for city congestion. Still, **Jay Leno, Ricky Martin, David Copperfield, Magic Johnson** and **Denzel Washington** all came to see the Ravens beat the Giants in Super Bowl XXXV. *Maxim's* first-ever Super Bowl party took place at the A La Carte Pavilion, and Rain Lounge, a bar in the Channel District, hosted parties by *Playboy*, Smirnoff and ESPN. (Rain closed a year later). Ybor was popping, with the hottest parties (*Sports Illustrated*, Anheuser-Busch) taking place at FUN, which is now the Honey Pot. Among parties there were the **Backstreet Boys**, **'N Sync** and **Carson Daly**, which would be like getting **Zac Efron, the Jonas Brothers** and **Ryan Seacrest** in the same room. — **Compiled by Jay Cridlin and Mary Melstrom from tbt\* files.**

**The word on the street**

We checked in with a handful of Tampa Bay's hottest spots to see what they had planned for Super Bowl week. Here's what they're working on.

**Floyd's at the Seminole Hard Rock**

"We're definitely doing to be doing something really big that Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday," said Johnny Pease, who organizes events at the Hard Rock's nightclub. Pease said he's received about 50 proposals for parties and concerts, but nothing's set yet. Some events will take place at the pool; others will be invite-only; others will invite the public.

**Vintage Ultra Lounge**

Manager James Guttridge said the St. Pete club is considering four bids, including proposals from *Maxim*, MTV and *GQ*. Tickets will be expensive, although Guttridge couldn't say how expensive, but expect the "best party in the bay area," he said.

**Florida Aquarium**

The Florida Aquarium was eyeing the *Playboy* Party until it found out it would have required the aquarium to be closed for three days prior. It also was interested in hosting the media party, but those plans fell through. At the very least, the aquarium will host a party sponsored by local businesses, said spokesman Tom Wagner.

**Jackson's Bistro**

Promoter Mike Piper says Jackson's hopes to host the annual Leather and Laces party, which could be hosted by Carmen Electra, Jenny McCarthy or stars from *The Hills*. Admission would likely range from around \$250 (general) to around \$750 (VIP), he said.

**Bern's Steak House**

Bern's usually accepts reservations three months in advance, but they made an exception and began taking Super Bowl reservations Aug. 1. "At 9 a.m., the phones started going crazy with reservations," said Laura Kurtz, group sales and catering manager. For the Saturday before the game, they've already booked more than 400 guests. Many are for Bern's regulars, but there will be a lot of athletes there, too.

**Centro Ybor**

Ybor City officials sent a proposal to Fox Sports Network to broadcast the *Best Damn Sports Shows Period* live from the Centro Ybor Plaza on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday before the game.

WHAT'S GOING ON

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