

BUDDING
WALLFLOWER



DJ Roland Belmares gives us something to be thankful for

ROLAND BELMARES, A 34-YEAR-OLD WEST Hollywood DJ/Producer, has come a long way from his Austin, Texas, roots.

After two years in college, a stint at a stagnant day job and a chance encounter with a man who would change his life, a timid Belmares learned to shed his unassuming skin and now charms dance floors around the country.

He remixed and produced the likes of Debby Holiday, Amber, Pepper Mashay, Pat Hodges and Kristine W. Now he's headed to Atlanta for a highly anticipated Thanksgiving night party, SweetPillow's "Pantheon."

He took some time to chat with *David* before the big night.

David: How did you get involved in the music industry?

Roland Belmares: It was in my blood. My best friend kind of forced me, because at the time I had no confidence in myself. He forced me to get my demo tape into this club in Austin called the Forum.

They were originally going to hire me as bar back and a backup DJ. At the last minute, a DJ backed out and they threw me in.

After you went to the University of Texas, you worked a pretty mundane computer job. How did you get from there to being a full time DJ/Producer?

I had just started doing it part time at the club while I was at Motorola. I thought I would do that for a little bit and eventually get back into a real job — what I considered a real job at the time. It didn't happen that way.

Then you found your manager Ken Harwood and started dating him, right?

We met at the Gay Days Reunion, and it was one of those things where I thought you meet someone for the weekend and you'll probably never meet again. He was in Los Angeles and I was in Austin, but we kept in touch.

After almost a year of long-distance dating, he started seeing how the business end wasn't being taken care of for me. It was when he started to take over when the business started to take off. That was about 1997. Our relationship grew even tighter, and then I moved to LA.

That's an eternity in gay years. How do you manage to stay so close to someone you're involved with personally and professionally?

It was my upbringing. My mom definitely instilled a lot of these morals in me, and I guess she just always taught that nothing comes easy. Anything that's worth having is going to take work.

Texas isn't known for being gay-friendly, so what did your mom say when you came out?

She was surprisingly open to it. My dad died right before I started high school, so my mom was my main role model growing up. She was religious, but never preachy.

She knew that I wasn't off being crazy or doing anything stupid with my life. That just gave me the room to grow up and be who I was.

It seems like you're pretty relaxed for a guy who works the party scene with high energy. How do you stay so chill?

I've always been kind of mellow. I was the wallflower. It was really hard for me to be in the spotlight.

That's why DJing was the natural choice, because you're in the back corner where nobody can see you. But when I am DJing and I get that feedback, that kind of transforms me and I get crazy on the dance floor and when I'm spinning, I take on a new persona from that energy.

Has the party industry changed how you feel about the scene?

I think my eyes are more wide open to what's going on. I've definitely seen the crystal meth epidemic kind of take the whole party scene and give it a bad spin, but there is still that core group that's there to have fun, and it's not about the craziness of partying every weekend.

So what can we expect from you on Thanksgiving weekend?

It's definitely high-energy. It's more house/tribal, but it's never like the monotonous tribal. I always hear that I incorporate so many different styles into an evening, and they all mesh together, but predominately tribal/house with lots of vocals.

What do you expect of us?

Atlanta is definitely one of the few places where I always have such a positive experience, where people are there to dance and I definitely hope to find that again. It's fun to play that because you get to experiment with what you're doing and the guys are eating it up.

DJ Roland Belmares heats up the dance floor at the 'Pantheon' party Nov. 24 at Compound, 1008 Brady Ave., 404-872-7433, www.sweetpillow.com

Winter Party



BEYOND THE BEAT ROLAND BELMARES



PRODUCER ROLAND BELMARES

As a DJ and producer, Roland Belmares has been a staple in the Atlanta party scene for years. He's known for his high-energy, eclectic sets that blend house, tribal, and hip-hop. His production skills are also evident in his collaborations with other artists, including Mike Cruz. Roland's sets are always a mix of familiar hits and new discoveries, keeping the dance floor hot and the crowd engaged. He's a true professional who knows how to read a room and adapt his music to the energy of the night.

DJ ROLAND BELMARES
TOP 10
FOR NOVEMBER



ROLAND BELMARES



1. "Seasons Of Love" (Eddie Baez, LEX Mixes) by the Cast of 'Rent'
2. "Hung Up" (LEX Club Mix) by Madonna
3. "Just Like That" (Belmares & Preve Mix) by Amber
4. "Don't Forget About Us" (Tony Moran Mix) by Mariah Carey
5. "Guilt Is A Useless Emotion" (Mark Picchiotti Mix) by New Order
6. "House Is Not A Home" (Tony Moran Warren Rigg Mix) by New Order
7. "I Am Tha 1" (Mike Cruz Mix) by Mr. Timothy ft. Inaya Day
8. "Celebration" (Roland Belmares & Mike Cruz Mixes) by The Sweet Inspirations
9. "Sunshine" (Tony Moran Mix) by Jacinta
10. "First Time" (Jose Cortes Mix) by Offer Nissim ft Maya