

Virgin Publishing's NYC Guidebook, Nightclub section by Lorie Caval – 1999



night fever

Despite Mayor Giuliani's 'Quality of Life' laws putting a stranglehold on NY nightlife, club promoters still cook up the new, the retro and the extravagant and dish it out at venues all over the city. The club beat goes on, even if at some of the city's lounges, dancing isn't strictly allowed.

↓ top venues

Bakktun

Music comes first at this sleek, cozy and truly unique lounge, with staple nights providing different types of dance or electronic music. Creative party promotions, video projections, modest bar prices and friendly staff make it a diamond in the rough.

418 W 14th St (bet. 9th & 10th Aves), Chelsea
☎ 206-1990 • www.bakktun.com • A-C-E to 14th St, L to 8th Ave ☎ 50-51st ☎ 10pm-4am
Wed-Sun • MC/V ☎ Casual & Bang The Party deep-house night (first Fri of the month)

Fun

Party people have a great time at Fun, a vast space under the Manhattan Bridge, where the music comes in hip-hop, funk, reggae and house colours. Suited doormen meet and greet at the entrance, but there are no guest lists nor cover charges! The drinks are pricey but that's all you'll have to pay for. You'll need a sense of humour to pay a visit, though: the sinks in the bathrooms have surveillance monitors (so guys can spy on girls, and vice versa).
130 Madison St (at Pike St), LES ☎ 914-1993
• F to East Broadway ☎ 1st-5th ☎ 8pm-4am daily • all ☎ casual-smart
• Never a cover. DJ tax or special events on Saturdays. • Hard to find out of the way

Ultralight

The controversy surrounding owner Peter Catlin's involvement with drug rings and murder has made his club a must-see for the curious. By day, Ultralight presents art shows and theatre; by night, it's home to themed parties. Hard house is usually featured on the main floor, while hip-hop and pop are elsewhere. The huge, thumping fiestas allow you to appreciate how they can charge top-whack admission.
560 8th Ave (bet. 20th & 21st Sts), Chelsea
☎ 800-7780 • F-M-F to 22nd St ☎ 50-52nd
☎ 10pm-4am daily • MC/V ☎ dress up

Nell's

Having hit on the recipe for success way back, Nell's has changed little over the years. Upstairs, a hash bar has a DJ playing between live R&B sets, while downstairs pulsates to a classic dance mix. It's renowned for a picky door policy so come well-dressed (and men come with a woman). Particularly popular is Visions (Tue) where amateur songbirds and the occasional celeb birdie perch on the open mic.

141 W 14th St (bet. 7th & 8th Aves), West Village
☎ 617-1977 • A-C-E to 14th St, L to 8th Ave
☎ 50-51st ☎ 10pm-4am daily (to 1am Mon)
• MC/V ☎ dress up

Shine

A rock 'n' roll venue transformed into a party paradise, Shine radiates good clean fun. There are cushy couches and a mini-stage hosting everything from dance and drag to burlesque and comedy. Promoters bring all sorts of special events and parties. • Home Cookin' hip-hop party (Wed) 185 West Broadway (at Canal St), Tribeca
☎ 941-0901 • A-C-E to Canal St ☎ 1st-5th
☎ 10pm-4am daily • MC/V ☎ smart-casual

Spa

After being The Grand, System, and Key Club, the Spa incarnation at this address is the most glamorous. Its white decor is accented with 'spa' touches, such as sauna-like bathrooms, and a tanning bed above the dancefloor. But the sound system has been neglected. Great if you don't mind paying top dollar for a cocktail in a plastic cup for a chance to see and be seen.

26 E 19th St (bet. Broadway and Fourth Ave), East Village ☎ 388-0050 • F-M-F to 1st-6 to 14th St Union Sq ☎ 1st (Tue-Thu) 50-52nd ☎ 10pm-4am Tue-Sat • all ☎ to impress
• lovely decor Thursday night Ultra party with DJ Jackie Christie. • expensive bar

Tunnel

Thousands of people from all walks of life converge at this megacub. Every area - even the bathroom - has its own bar and sound system, so weave in and out through hard house, boy pop, hip-hop and deep house. Admission's expensive, but there's more than enough bang for the buck with smash hit nights and special events. Dress up; and men, come with a woman.

110 12th Ave (at 27th St), Chelsea ☎ 695-4118
• C-E to 22nd St ☎ 50-51st ☎ 10pm-6am
Thu-Sun • MC/V ☎ smart-casual
• Saturday night Yurfew hard house

Twilo

The huge dancefloor dominates this magnet for an energetic gay crowd. Large psychedelic globes hang from the ceiling and movies are screened on the walls, giving this club a rich, yet frivolous atmosphere. • Ultimate Twilo (Fri) and Twilo & Junior Vasquez Presents (Sat)

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clubs

530 W 27th St (bet. 10th & 11th Aves), Chelsea
☎ 268-1600 W www.twofaces.com ☎ C-1 to
27th St, 1-9 to 18th St ☎ 11-12 ☎ 10pm-1am
Fr, 10pm-noon Sat ☎ MC/V ☎ casual

Vinyl

This hallowed patch of land is the birth-
place of legendary clubs of old Area,
Quick, and Shelter. Now known as Vinyl,
it's dance heaven, still carving out a giant
reputation. Usually closed in the week,
weekends see queues wrapping around
the corner. No alcohol is served.

6 Hubert St (at Hudson St), Tribeca ☎ 344-1179
☎ A-C-1 to Canal St, 1-9 to Franklin St
☎ 1-10 ☎ 1-5 ☎ very ☎ none ☎ very casual
☎ Body & Soul deep and underground house
music, tea party (Sun all day long)

↓ best nights

monday

Giant Step @ Shine

Giant Step returns with their musically
innovative event and it now features
Chicago house producer Ron Trent as re-
sident. The funky, Afro-infused, danceable
tunes allow early-week scenesters and
recond industry shmoozers to party hearty.

285 West Broadway (at Canal St), Soho
☎ 941-0900 ☎ A-C-1 to Canal St ☎ 1-10
☎ 10pm-2am ☎ all ☎ casual-smart
☎ Great music. ☎ It's only four hours long.

Sleaze Factor @ Sapphire

Partiologist Adam Goldstone mingles
and mixes on the wheels of steel at this
uninspired gem, where dancing is guar-
anteed. Guest DJs of the highest under-
ground caliber pop by for strings of hard
house, hip-hop, funk, trip-hop at this
shabby-chic club.

225 Eldridge Street (bet. Houston & Stanton
Sts), LES ☎ 777-5511 ☎ F to 2nd Ave ☎ 1-5
☎ 10pm-2am ☎ none ☎ casual
☎ Fun-loving crowd, affordable night out.
☎ Crowd can be somewhat random.

tuesday

Easy Star Reggae Tuesdays @ Black Star Lounge

As NYC has a dearth of good reggae par-
ties, the guys from Easy Star Records fill
the void with this weekly do. DJ King
Crown spins real roots-reggae for a cool
mowtown crowd. The night starts early,
there's no cover charge, and the vibe is
laid back.

34 Second Ave (bet. 5th & 6th Sts), East
Village ☎ 254-4367 ☎ F to 2nd Ave ☎ free
☎ 10pm-2am ☎ all ☎ casual ☎ Casual
atmosphere with great music. ☎ Can be
too mellow.

practical information

Magazines such as *Paper* and *Time Out*
feature nightclub listings, as do free pub-
lications like *Flyer NYC*, *Address*, *Hot Heat*
and *Wipe*, found on street corners and in
record and clubby clothes stores.

Nights move from venue to venue
frequently, so it's best to call ahead.

☎ Some clubs have specific dress codes.
Many have a 'no sneakers or jeans' policy
and a few clubs will refuse entry to men
not accompanied by a woman.

☎ Most clubs will only accept a credit
card for a large bar tab.

☎ The majority of clubs open at 10pm and
fill up around 1am. According to NYC law,
all clubs must stop serving alcohol at 2am,
so most of them close down at that time.

The Murray & Penny Show @ The Slipper Room

It's lady of nightlife Penelope Tuesday gets
together with drag king Murray Hill to
inject some burlesque, music, and comedy
into New York (showtimes 10pm & 12:30am).
Dress to impress and party with an inter-
esting crowd of locals and drag luminaries.

117 Orchard St (bet. Houston & Stanton Sts)
LES ☎ 253-5546 ☎ F to 2nd Ave ☎ free ☎ from
11:30pm ☎ all ☎ casual ☎ Quirky crowd.

Velveteen @ Serena

Velveteen provides a little glamour for
your rump shakin'. Party promoter Audrey
Bernstein joins up with talented resident
DJ/promoter Johnny 'Don Flan' Sender and
playgirl Oberon Sinclair to create a haven
for hipsters and their wannabe friends.

Chelsea Hotel, 225 W 27th St (bet. 7th & 8th
Aves), Chelsea ☎ 255-4545 ☎ C-1 to 27th St
☎ free ☎ 10:30pm-2am ☎ all ☎ smart-
casual ☎ Hip, young and fashionable crowd.
☎ Hip, young and fashionable crowd.

wednesday

Dance Ritual @ Vinyl

Deep house lovers let rip on the dancefloor
as internationally renown DJ/producer
'Little Louie' Vega lets loose on the boom-
ing system. Liquor-lovers will be disap-
pointed by the beer-and-wine-only license.

6 Hubert St (at Hudson St), Tribeca ☎ 344-
1179 ☎ A-C-1 to Canal St, 1-9 to Franklin St
☎ 1-10 ☎ 11:30pm-1am ☎ none
☎ dance-casual ☎ lots of space

Latin Tribe @ Gemini Lounge

This small, sexy venue lends itself well to
the sexy vibe of Latin Tribe. DJ/promoter
Babaloo makes a musical offering every
week, with Latin jazz, salsa, merengue,
and cha-cha. Wallflowers also fit right in
at a bar of Cuba Libre sippers.

225 Second Ave (bet. 19th & 14th Sts), East Village
☎ 214-5260 **M** L to 3rd Ave **C** \$5 **D** from 10pm
all **Q** **casual-smart** **Q** friendly mixed
crowd **☞** Not as high-energy as trad latin clubs.

thursday

Say It Loud @ Opaline

After sundown, basement restaurant Opaline turns into a party hot spot every Thursday. Cool DJ Marv spins a smooth selection of hip-hop, soul classics, and R&B for a crowd of up-for-it young professionals.

85 Ave A (bet. 9th & 8th Sts), East Village
☎ 475-5050 **M-F** to 2nd Ave **C** \$5 women
(free until 11pm); \$3 men **D** from 10pm
all **Q** **smart-casual** **Q** fun mix of
music & people

Subliminal Sessions @ Centro Fly

Subliminal Records proprietor DJ Eric 'More' Morillo brings this house party to Centro-Fly, whose psychedelic decor, high-tech sound system, and funky restaurant please the most fickle nightclub aficionado. Huge DJs such as Armand Van Helden sometimes make guest appearances.

45 W 2nd St (bet. 3th & 4th Aves), Chelsea
☎ 523-7750 **M-F** to 4th St **C** \$10 **D** 10pm-6am **all** **Q** **casual-smart** **Q** World-famous DJs every week **☞** Selective door policy

Trannie Chaser @ NewBar

NY's only transexual promoter Gloria Wholome has made a perfect place for Trannies and their Chasers to meet and cavort. Men of all shapes and sizes woo the 'Tadies' downstairs, while in the upstairs 'lap dance' lounge, they go that bit further.

23 Seventh Ave S (at Limoy St), West Village
☎ 293-0321 **M-F** to Houston St **C** \$5 (50¢ for women, TV's and TS's) **D** 10pm-4am **M** MC/V **Q** **casual**

friday

Twilo @ Twilo

Anyone who enjoys a big club experience will love Twilo. Fab DJs like Sasha, Digweed, and Carl Cox tweak the state-of-the-art sound system for a sea of hard-house revelers. High-tech visuals and occasional art installations enhance the fun.

503 W 27th St (bet. 10th & 9th Aves), Chelsea
☎ 268-6500 **www.twiloclub.com** **M** C-E to 3rd St **C** \$25 **D** 10pm-2am **all** **Q** **casual-smart** **Q** Great sound system **☞** High admission price.

Squeasbox @ Don Hills

A night of fun and frolics at this long-established punk (as in Sex Pistols) party. Experience Downtown's decadence with a room full of limber go-go dancers and daring drunks. Come early to catch live sets.

514 Greenwich St (at Spring St), West Village
☎ 334-1390 **M** C-E to Spring St **C** \$10
D 10pm-2am **M** AE/MC/V **Q** **funky-casual**

saturday

Foxy @ The Cock

A quirky night, where between dancing and drinking, patrons are invited to strut their stuff on stage – and win \$100. Judged by the crowd, contestants do dastardly deeds ranging from acrobatics to anal probing.

188 Ave A (at 10th St), East Village ☎ 777-0254
M L to 1st Ave **C** \$5 **D** 10pm-2am **all** none
Q **casual**

Direct Drive @ Baktun

Direct Drive provides a much-needed night of drum 'n' bass with an unbelievable roster of DJs. Sevil, Seem, and Reid Speed are among the residents, and guests drop in on occasion. Enjoy it hard and fast in this high-tech, yet warm and intimate, atmosphere.

418 W 14th St (bet. 9th Ave & Washington), Meat Packing District ☎ 206-1990 **M** A-C-E to 14th St, L to 8th Ave **C** \$10 (women free before midnight) **D** from 10pm **all** **Q** **casual** **Q** friendly vibe, great music, **☞** Young crowd.

Shelter @ Vinyl

Shelter attracts older souls as well as younger house disciples. The original DJ Timmy Regisford keeps the underground crowd dancing, twirling, and flipping to the classics non-stop until 3am.

6 Hubert St (at Hudson St), Tribeca
☎ 343-1329 **www.clubshelter.com** **M** A-C-E to Canal St, 1-9 to Franklin St **C** \$10 (50¢ with membership) **D** from 11pm **all** none **Q** **dance-casual** **Q** wonderful dancers & music **☞** Doesn't get going until late.

sunday

Shout @ 13

Anglophiles gather in sleek, comfy surroundings to listen to all-night Brit-pop. 13's low-key atmosphere makes it a good place to wind down your weekend, especially in summer when the roof-deck is open.

31 E 17th St (at University Pl), East Village ☎ 309-6677 **M-F** to 4th St, L to 14th St Union St **C** free **D** 10pm-2am **M** MC/V **Q** **smart-casual**

Body & Soul @ Vinyl

Probably the best-known dance party in NYC, attracting house heads from the world over. Doors open at 10pm, and it's packed by 6pm. Residents François K, Joe Clausell, and Danny Krivit take dancers on a journey in house, world beat, soul et al.

6 Hubert St (at Hudson St), Tribeca
☎ 343-1329 **www.bodyandsoul.nyc.com** **M** A-C-E to Canal St, 1-9 to Franklin St **C** \$10 (50¢ with membership) **D** 1-10pm **all** none **Q** **dance-casual** **Q** wonderfully mixed crowd of dancers **☞** Usually gets crowded.