

KEN ON THE SCENE



In and around Los Angeles' funky East side gayborhood, Silver Lake.

From bears and singing nuns to mingling with porn stars and smoking hookah—that's just a snippet of my life on the Silver Lake scene.

It all got started over at the Faultline, where Matt Moody's monthly club, Furr Trade, once again brought in a hefty crowd (pun intended). There were super-woofy go-go bears dancing on the tables, drunken patrons pawing each other in the corners and more fur flying than at the local zoo. All in all, it was another great time with da bears.

I was back at the Faultline the following Sunday for the yearly parking lot Porn-A-Thon, where several triple-X stars were on-hand to help raise money for Equality for All, one of the few organizations working to defeat Proposition 8, the anti-gay marriage amendment up for consideration in November. TitanMen exclusive Tony Buff, Hot House exclusive Johnny Gunn and Steve Cruz handed out free porn schwag, while special guest bartenders Zak Spears and Dean Phoenix served drinks from behind the makeshift bars on the patio. Other porn stars in attendance included Josh West and Adam Faust. All in all, the event raised more than \$3,000 for EFA, who later said the event was the most effective fundraiser held in L.A. yet. And who said porn was just about sex?

Later in the week, I made my way over to the Eagle, where several comedians were present to celebrate the two-year anniversary of Strap-on Standup, Patricia Villette's weekly comedy club. The comedy ranged from awkward to polished, but it was great to check out some up-and-coming talent who weren't afraid to play at a gay leather club.

Finally, my adventures in the underground ended with my very first trip over to Club Nur, the weekly Middle Eastern-themed club that happens every Thursday night at MJ's (see sidebar). And talk about fun! From the moment I walked into the door, I began kicking myself for not having gone sooner. From the super-hot crowd of Armenians, Turks, Iranians and Arabs (and more) and the extra-friendly (and über-sexy) go-go boys (Hello, Chris!) to the sultry Middle Eastern music and the tasty hookah pipes on the patio, Club Nur offered up a brand new experience on the scene for me, so much so that I can't wait to go back!

OK, kids, that's it for me this time around, but I will be back next time around with even more craziness to report on. Until then, stay cool, and stay in touch.



SILVER LAKE SPOTLIGHT: CLUB NUR

One of the great things about living in a metropolitan melting pot like Los Angeles is that there are men from all types of ethnic backgrounds. However, the irony is that often times those men don't have anywhere to go to meet and socialize with other men of the same background. Enter Club Nur, a weekly club at MJ's that brings together Middle Eastern men of all types for a night of socializing and sexy time. "If you come to my house on a weekend, you'll hear lots of Middle Eastern music, and you'll see a couple of hookahs going around between good friends," says club co-founder Gevork "Gev" Khudyan. "I wanted to bring that out in a club."

As it turned out, Khudyan's friend, Hrair Sarkissian, had a similar idea. "I knew Middle Easterners would love to come and dance to their own music, which they never get to hear in any of the clubs, and I knew that non-Middle Easterners would come to see them. As it happens, Khudyan was looking for a location to have a Middle Eastern club of his own. I told him what I had in mind, and we decided to join forces."

Club Nur began at Fuel in Studio City, but before long the club had become so popular that the two men realized they needed to move it to a bigger venue. MJ's came calling, and the rest is history. "Being in Silver Lake has made the club more accessible and attractive to both the Silver Lake boys and the West Hollywood crowd, plus everyone in between," Khudyan says. "When West Hollywood boys come out to Silver Lake, they expect a certain vibe, and they find it at Club Nur."

One of the things that make the club so popular is authenticity. "It's really not about playing a few Middle Eastern songs and calling it a Middle Eastern night," Khudyan states, citing resident "spinsters" like DJ Jack and DJ O as being integral to the night's mood and tone. "Our music is carefully selected to reflect our crowd and to appeal to everyone." Another big factor in the club's success, the men add, is diversity. While the men say the crowd is more than 70 percent Middle Eastern, a large number of other nationalities and ethnicities regularly attend the club. What's more, Nur brings together people who might not otherwise give each other the time of day if they met under different circumstances. "It really is a microcosm of the ideal Middle East," Sarkissian explains. "You'll never ever hear a Turkish song played at an Armenian event in the real world. But at Nur, we have Armenians and Turks dancing next to each other; same with Israelis and Arabs. Groups that hate each other in the real world come together at Club Nur because we don't pay attention to what the outside world suffers from. I love seeing a group of white West Hollywood boys or a group of Latinos shaking their hips to Arabic tunes. It's hot!"

With plans to branch out in the future ("We get a lot of requests to come to different cities and do parties," Khudyan claims), Club Nur will no doubt be bringing its special magic to others. But for now, the men say they are happy spreading the love in their own backyard. "Our favorite part is that although there is a huge crowd every week, we always feel like we're having a small party with our friends," says Sarkissian. "We are more than promoters. We are hosts who are in the crowd, hanging with friends, meeting new people, taking pictures, whatever. When we are at Club Nur, we're partying and having a blast every week."

Club Nur happens every Thursday at MJ's in Silver Lake. Check out myspace.com/clubnur for more information.

