

# ROGUE APPEAL

HAVE NO FEAR—HIPSTERS STILL HAVE A HOME AT SCOTTSDALE'S FAVORITE INDIE DRINKING HOLE

■ The Rogue Bar is the place my friend took me the *morning after*. It opens at 6 a.m. so the timing was perfect. We huddled in the sheltering darkness and sipped Bloody Marys while I sat so my skin wouldn't touch the presumably dirty vinyl booth. I stared at the black walls as a surly barmaid served beers to her blue-collar regulars. Nothing of this scene (except for the punk-rock mural, empty stage and DJ booth) betrayed what goes on at night.

"It's a dance club, but it's got a bar feel, a hole-in-the-wall, Chicago feel," says DJ Brannndlee, one of the four resident DJs at Shake: A Motherfucking Rock 'N' Roll Dance Party, Rogue's Saturday night event.

"It's about drinking, dancing and carrying on. There are no asshole bouncers, there isn't a VIP area and there isn't any attitude," says Jay Wiggins (aka DJ Funkfinger), another of Shake's residents. Considering its Scottsdale, Ariz., location—where the norm is surgically enhanced Barbie dolls—the Rogue Bar is one hell of an anomaly.

But this place isn't just a hipster hideout; the real draw is the music.

"When I first started Shake over two years ago, the music format was strictly rock 'n' roll," says DJ William "Fucking" Reed, the party's godfather. "Today, the format is a mix of dance-rock, indie, Brit-pop, disco-punk, electro and a few token hip-hop jams thrown in for good measure."

Reed is known for his ability to bring in significant guest DJs and bands. His list of past visitors reads like a rock 'n' roll history book: The Ramones' Marky Ramone; Andy Rourke of The Smiths; the Sex Pistols' Glen Matlock; Gerald Casale from Devo; Bauhaus; The Damned; Arcade Fire; Louis XIV; Ima Robot; Moving Units; VHS or Beta; and Paul Epworth.

Then there's Katie Rose, a local hipster-set celebrity with big ambitions and a spicy past. She helped start Shake with Reed and now hosts HI-FI Monday nights at the Rogue, where vinyl is king and garage rock of the '60s and '70s is the soundtrack.

Though Rogue features events every night of the week, Shake brings in the biggest—and wildest—crowds.

"I've seen people literally fucking on the dance floor," says DJ Brannndlee, who goes on to

describe the feeling of dancing at Shake. "There's a real energy; it gets wild—screaming, stomping, clapping. People are linked; everybody's moving. There's a real present-ness that is almost overwhelming."

However, not everybody likes the rainbow energy of Shake. Brad Rhoades, a patron of the Rogue for six years, likes to call Shake a "gay disco." He says he prefers the regular nights where he can sip cocktails and play pool in relative peace.

Rhoades might have seen more nights of peace at Rogue had a recent change in ownership taken the bar in the wrong direction. When patrons Emmanuel Tripodis and Lindsay Lehane used money saved up for their wedding to buy the bar from Mark Maertens in March, hipsters and employees alike freaked out.

"The staff didn't know if we were going to turn it into a sports bar," says Lehane. To everybody's relief, the new owners wanted to keep the bar's original vision. "The reason we wanted to buy the Rogue is because we love the Rogue. The bar is dark; people do things here that they wouldn't do in other, brighter lit bars."

Think making out with strangers, not doing coke in the bathroom. Tripodis and Lehane have ousted the fabled, rampant drug use. But can a bar keep its edge if it's missing a member of the unholy trinity of "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll?" Apparently, yes.

"I think it's a smart move," says Reed. "The new owners are fantastic and actually care about the community and their role within it."

While most everyone agrees that the new owners are genuinely nice people, how many small changes add up to something big? In addition to the drug crackdown, Tripodis and Lehane also plan on painting over the graffiti in the bathrooms, possibly replacing the bar top and making the place a hair more approachable for the regular guy. "But we're going to keep it dark; it's always going to be a little dirty," says Lehane.

Though the Rogue's patrons are protective of their bar and resistant to change, one former Shake DJ is optimistic.

"I really think they're going to be good for the place," says DJ Dirty Dave. "Change, in my opinion, is always good when there are good people involved who have every intention of keeping the place edgy and out of the mainstream."

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## THE NEW BLAK

Some say that rock 'n' roll is dead. But even if that were true (and believe us, it's not), Morpheus Blak would continue to embody its essence. With his razor-cut, long black hair, tight jeans and thick eyeliner, Blak is a one-man tribute to the hard-rocking music that represents rebellion, debauchery and danger. He tries to bring those attributes to life every Friday night at Beauty Bar (517 E. Fremont St.) for Blak Fridays.

"Blak Fridays are the coolest and edgiest rock 'n' roll club nights in Las Vegas," Blak says. "It is doing extremely well because I know so much about the history of rock 'n' roll."

Measuring the veracity of Blak's boasts is impossible, but you would be hard-pressed to find a wider selection of music from all eras of rock. A sampling one night at Blak Fridays included Elvis Presley, AC/DC and Bon Jovi. And though it's true we're living in the era of irony, the partygoers at this weekly event seem to truly enjoy and embrace the music, presented free of the usual mash-up context heard in the mainstream clubs.

"I have worked very hard to create something new and vibrant for Las Vegas," says Blak. "Getting people dancing to good old rock 'n' roll is a real thrill for me."

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THINK MAKING OUT WITH STRANGERS,  
NOT DOING COKE IN THE BATHROOM.

