

# INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

## Around Midnight, When It's Your Turn to Be Seen: What's Hot in Parisian Clubs

By **Rebecca Voight International Herald Tribune**  
Saturday, October 12, 1996

Sally Bowles would feel right at home at Cabaret. Liza Minnelli, a friend of the owners, was one of the first to try out the small stage at this intimate new Paris bar where guests shimmy between tiny round tables, sup on caviar and are regaled by a revolving troupe of 30 cabarets acts featuring everything from rope tricks and performing poodles to magicians and tap dancers.

In the former location of an erotic theater, Cabaret attracts a chic, Parisian crowd in film, television and fashion. Raphael Santin, who managed top models at Elite before launching his Celebrity Service to put famous faces and big projects together, has wanted to open the club for the past four years. The music here swings from vintage Charles Trenet to disco and funk. Santin and his partner, Franck Maillot, left the late 1930s rococo decor intact. Guests tend to start the evening with a drink and a light meal on selected nights before midnight.

The venerable Paris nightclub institution Le Palace, closed recently because of financial woes, left a hole in the city's dance floor lineup. This has been quickly filled, however, by a batch of new-style dance party evenings organized by Parisian personalities who send out elaborate flyers — some specifying cryptic dress codes like "high heel funk" — fly in legendary DJs from New York and Ibiza or put on dinner and entertainment in unexpected places.

Sylvie Chateigner of Thanx God I'm a V.I.P., or TGV, has been running the hottest dance parties in town one Saturday a month at the Elysee Montmartre over the past year, and is extending her reign to include three nights in October. Her musical choice is Garage, and she features leading French DJs like Gregory and special guest star DJs like New York City's Frankie Knuckles.

The crowd at TGV looks good, thanks in large part to Chateigner's clothing store of the same name, where she spends her days reconditioning secondhand goods from the 1970s and producing the in-house collection. The shop, on a small Les Halles street, resembles the dream closet of a best-dressed Parisian night owl. Low-waisted three-piece velvet suits, once bell-bottomed, are cut down to straight legs by Carlos, the shop's resident tailor. The racks are filled with polyester print body-hugging shirts and plunging neck disco dresses. The store attracts a young Parisian fashion and music crowd who would rather wear vintage Charlie's Angels items than designer labels.

The dance party host Axel has taken over Friday and Saturday nights at La Casbah near the Bastille for his Stylelife evenings. He features easy listening lounge music from Paris's renowned DJ Pedro Winter upstairs, and Hard House on the dance floor downstairs. During collections week, guest appearances are scheduled for DJ Mike Lovechild from the Limelight in New York as well as the Lipstick duo Gan and Bizar from Belgium.

THE biggest dance floor in town, Paris's premiere gay club, Queen, is the site of the new Respect,



which kicks off this month on Wednesdays. Respect opens Queen's door to women "although it's not a hetero night per se," said Jerome Viger-Kohler, a French music journalist who orchestrates the party with David Blot. International DJs like Jose Padilla from Ibiza, and evenings celebrating the French underground magazine Self Service and the launching of the Respect fanzine fill out the October calendar.

Club-hopping Parisians will always tell you the nightlife is better in New York City or London, but they're out all the time here anyway. Bruno Collin, a style journalist, goes out three nights a week. "once in the middle of the week, once on the weekend and always on Sundays," when he begins the evening at the Diable des Lombards in Les Halles. A habitué of TGV, he wears bell bottoms "after dark only," football jerseys, bright tailoring from the French designer Jean Fixo and a selection from his collection of more than 100 pairs of shoes, like the latest Converse "Illusion" sneakers with wave soles and fluorescent bands, which he picked up on a club-hopping trip to New York last summer.

Marc Zafutto, a booker at the Paris hair and makeup agency Atlantis, which represents Julien D'Ys and Yannick D'Is, lived in London before Paris and likes atmosphere such as those at the old Kinky Gerlinky party or Freedom bar there. He finds this in Paris at occasional party nights like those at La Kentina and TGV. "People in Paris go out when it's a special occasion, when they can dress up and know they're going to see their friends," he said.

Jerome Peuch, who works at Christian Lacroix, says La Kentina, organized by Lola, Lenny Kravitz's Paris-based wardrobe designer, is among the best of Paris's ambulant parties. Lola and her partner pick a different location for each one — from an artist's loft to a Trocadero penthouse terrace, and feature offbeat entertainment and dinner for a Parisian fashion crowd. Peuch describes the Paris-by-night look as "calculatedly messy," a mix of vintage and labels like Dirk Bikkembergs, So and Dolce & Gabbana for men, with girls in Dolce, Lacroix, Helmut Lang and Martine Sitbon.

Alain Benoist, who is preparing a book on Facade, the Paris café society style magazine he founded in the late 1970s, when the city was a nonstop party, likes the cozy atmosphere of new bars like Cabaret. Benoist might start the evening with a meal at l'Osteria, a lively Italian restaurant in the Marais. He bar hops at the Bastille, but not just anywhere. His list includes the What's Up Bar "when there is a good DJ," and Sanz Sans, a restaurant-bar with an upstairs video lounge opened recently by Jean-Louis Costes of L'Hotel Costes. The right time at Sans Sanz is just before midnight, but beware: It closes at 1:30 A.M. That's when the bartenders in this tattered rococo hangout give guests shots of oxygen from mini-oxygen tanks, play the cymbals — which double as lampshades — and dance on the tables. - A short guide to Paris at night: Cabaret, 68 Rue Pierre Charron, Paris 75008. Tel: 42.89.44.14. Thanx God I'm A V.I.P. at the Elysee Montmartre, 72 Boulevard Rochechouart, Paris 75018. Dance parties on Oct. 12, 25, and 31. TGV (shop), 60, Rue Greneta, Paris 75002. Tel: 40.28.43.14. Stylelife at La Casbah, 18-20 Rue de la Forge Royale, Paris 75011. Friday and Saturday nights. Respect at Queen, 10 Avenue des Champs-Elysees, Paris 75008. Wednesday nights. L'Osteria, 10 Rue de Sevigne, Paris 75004. Open Monday through Friday for lunch and dinner. What's Up Bar, 15 Rue Daval, Paris 75011. Tel: 48.05.88.33. Sanz Sans, 49 Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, Paris 75011. Tel: 44.75.78.78. - REBECCA VOIGHT is a Paris-based journalist specializing in fashion.

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