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NIGHTLIFE: Party People

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Ajna Bar

Alex Erikson

Ajna Bar goes gay for promoters Brandon Voss and Tony Fornabaio every Thursday.

Say the name "Brandon Voss" in a New York queer bar and the conversation will most likely turn towards the long-running weekly parties Club 57 and Rockit. After ditching the IT industry, Voss has spent the last 11 years making a career of partying, putting on the gay-boy get-togethers with promotions partner Tony Fornabaio. The unambiguously gay duo will celebrate the two-year anniversary of Club 57 this month, only a short while after moving Rockit from District 36 in Midtown to Crimson in Chelsea, and plan on unveiling a new Thursday party at Ajna Bar in the West Village tonight. Amid plans to open his own place later this year and preparations for his other parties, we got the nightlife impresario to give us the skinny on his new project.

What was your favorite '90s party?

How dare you! I was still hanging out with my fraternity brothers and pretending to like vagina in the '90s. Ask Tony [Fornabaio]; he can fill you in on the best parties of the past four decades!

What was the impetus for this new party?

We've been itching to do something new for a while so when Ajna decided to dabble in the gay waters, we jumped at the opportunity. Rockit has bounced around a bit and we've done several special events, but we really haven't started a new weekly party since we opened Club 57 two years ago. We've been ready for a while, just waiting for the right opportunity to arise.

How did you go about selecting the venue?

Tony and I have been scouting venues for months and unable to find the right fit until now. Our objective was to do a lounge night but on a scale our audience is used to. Most lounge venues in the city these days only hold a couple hundred people, which just wouldn't be feasible for us. Ajna Bar is perfect because it's this gorgeous, Asian-inspired lounge, but on steroids. It's one of the most opulent venues in the city complete with multiple rooms, Buddha-lined tunnels, silk opium dens and private pagodas. The VIP area even has a glass-bottom floor with a koi pond beneath it. I think the koi pond is what really sold me. I'm a sucker for a gimmick.

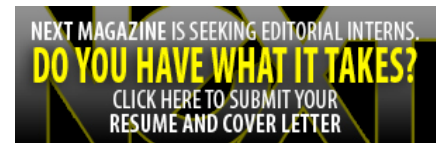
What made you decide to start a new weekly?

Just trying to take over the world, one gay party at a time.

Tell us about the new concept. It's different from your usual parties, right?

With the opening of Ajna, we're going to have three events every week so each really has to be markedly different. Both Rockit and Club 57 are large club nights, but Rockit has always catered to the younger crowd that enjoys pop music and Club 57 to the big-room house-music boys. With Ajna, we're offering an upscale lounge night where people can sit, relax and even hold a conversation. There will be dancing and plenty of





room to get wild but also lots of space for socializing.

What type of crowd do you expect?

As with all our events, we expect a pretty diverse audience. We're also targeting the fashion crowd; similar to the audience we had at Key Klub when we did Thursdays a couple years back. This place is massive so we're expecting an equally massive number of cute boys.

Who will be DJ-ing?

Peter Paul and Whitney Day will rotate initially. Both play an eclectic set of both old and new which is the vibe we're going for.

Any special guests?

We've become pretty well known for hosting celebrities at our parties so we expect a decent flow of celebrity traffic. Ajna Bar is already a favorite of Heidi Klum, Lindsay Lohan, Eva Mendes and Sarah Jessica Parker, so we'll certainly be inviting them to hang with the boys on Thursdays!

Anything else we need to know?

Just that there's no cover and it's going to be a blast! Oh, and Michele Bachmann is an asshole.

Ajna Thursdays at Ajna Bar, 25 Little W 12th St (btwn Washington/Greenwich Sts), ajnabarnyc.com. 10pm; free. Visit FVEvents.com for more info.

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