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new
on the
scene

By Lisa Arnett
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Amp Rock Lounge
BARRY BRECHEISEN FOR METROMIX

Rock of the ages

The latest crop of bars takes its cue from music and more

October's too late for afro-co imbibing, you say? The latest batch of nightlife newbies would beg to differ. While some lounges opened patios in the last days of mild weather, others looked to themes (rock music and zoo animals, anyone?) to play the muse.

Amp Rock Lounge

1909 N. Lincoln Ave. 312-376-1860

The owners of Level opened this rock-focused bar in the former Katacomb space. iPods loaded with 23,000 songs take the place of a DJ, and murals of rock greats and lyrics cover nearly every inch of the space. Beer dominates, while frozen glasses are on hand for whiskey and Jager shots.

Sully's House Tap Room

1501 N. Dayton St. 312-929-2779

The owners of long-standing Salvatore's are behind this sports bar. Expect a robust happy-hour crowd during the week, a Sunday Bears game brunch buffet and a competitive crowd on Saturdays when University of Florida alumni claim the place as Gator Country.

The Whistler

2421 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-227-3530

Logan Square's latest watering hole reminds us of a smaller, more neighborhoody Violet Hour, what with its light blue walls, smooth wood bar and throwback cocktails. But with a stage dedicated to free local music and a storefront window for art installations, it's by far an artsier enclave. Indeed, despite the range of American craft brews, the drink of choice is still PBR.

Sortie

1212 N. State Pkwy. 312-440-5100

This two-level Turkish-American eatery and late-night lounge has taken over the Bella Lounge address. Dabble in lahmacun (Turkish pizza), kofta (meatballs) and kebabs, then wash it down with an Efes beer or raki, a liqueur that is to Turkey what ouzo is to Greece. The lounge and dining room opened this week; the basement opens Nov. 2.

The Zoo

3369 N. Clark St. 773-697-4511

The old Twisted Spoke/Brody's on Clark space reawakens Friday as this contemporary three-room lounge.

Modern wood furniture and earth-toned couches temper the more thematic elements of this bar: animal photos, a dash of leopard print and a signature cocktail called The Tranquillizer.

Vertigo

2 W. Erie St. 312-202-6060

Expect hot views at the Dana Hotel's rooftop lounge, from twinkling nighttime vistas on the Astroturf-covered terrace to leggy short-skorts-clad waitresses. The owners designed every square foot for mingling; even the communal bathroom features a killer view, chalkboard wall and pass-through window to get drinks from the bar.

Hi-Tops

2462 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-549-3232

The well-known Wrigleyville original (converted into Harry Caray's Tavern this past spring) has been resurrected in the former Gin Mill address. The bar has inherited the Gin Mill's MSU allegiance, but thanks to a gut rehab, regulars will barely recognize the place.

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The Countdown

KEEPING TABS ON COMING-SOON SPOTS



District Bar

WEEK OF NOV. 3

The centerpiece of this classy bar: A circle of flat screens airing sports by day and artwork by night. 170 W. Ontario St.

Stay

NOV. 4

The entrance to this low-key, late-night lounge from the owners of Manor and RiNo is cleverly concealed by a wall of worn concert posters. 111 W. Erie St.

Bull & Bear

MID-NOVEMBER

The Stone Lotus guys switch gears with this sprawling, stock-market themed sports bar. 431 N. Wells St.

The Crocodile

MID-NOVEMBER

The sign is up, but this bar in the former Baccula space in Wicker Park is still tackling license issues. 1540 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Wild Pug

WEEK OF NOV. 17

An homage to Oscar Wilde springs up in Uptown in the form of an Irish pub from the owners of nearby Crew. 4808 N. Broadway.

Madpoison Ultra Lounge

LATE NOVEMBER

Pick your poison using a holographic touchscreen at this high-tech West Loop "lBar." 806 W. Randolph St.

The Firkin & Pheasant

LATE NOVEMBER

This Canadian chain of pint-pouring pubs has staked its claim for its first Chicago outpost in Lincoln Park. 670 W. Diversey Pkwy.

Loft Six Ten

TBD

This Wicker Park hang from the owners of Cortland's Garage has stalled. Keep your fingers crossed for 2008. 1332 N. Milwaukee Ave.

CHECK OUT "THE COUNTDOWN" ONLINE AT METROMIX.COM FOR MORE DETAILS ON ALL OF THESE ON-THE-WAY SPOTS.

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