



Can Studio 54's Ian Schrager Get the Cool Kids to Times Square?

The night's being run by the Paradise Club Group on "Saturdays" every 10 days, but it's not really a party.

Even at 72 years old, Ian Schrager is still the man about town. His latest comeback, since first co-founding Studio 54 with Steve Rubell in 1977, is opening a new nightclub in Times Square that could very well be the sequel to his previous disco days.

It's true. Schrager, pioneer of the **boomtown hotel**, the Lower East Side's **Public House** and the subject of a documentary about Studio 54 which recently hit Netflix, just launched the **Time Square Edition** hotel, at the corner of 7th Avenue and West 47th Street. It has the five-star slickness you might expect, while casual, reflective contemporary art and a Mediterranean restaurant. But it also has a discreet suggestion that it's a successor to the club of Studio 54, a special place called the **Paradise Club**.

If you keep in the hotel's above and get off on the 7th floor, you'll instantly feel its magic — it has a ceiling of over 1,000 colored light bulbs, which change according to the mood, the walls are lined with murals inspired by Hieronymus Bosch. The current music played (some songs are attributed to the old Studio 54 night, but here it's combined with what appears to be a hip-hop-shaped survey that is post-hip-hop, post-EDM).



This is where the Brooklyn dance troupe the **House of Q** have their two-year residency, giving the space a very much more glam. Expect a mix of dance and dancing, there is an ever-evolving sense of performance art and social interaction, art with wine, a food counter devoted to a global, casual menu and behind everything is an open view of Club Tech Club. Close, all the while, it's several blocks away from being called **The Boystown**, which is inspired by William Shakespeare's **The Marriage of a Braggart** and **How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying**.

The Paradise Club (not to be confused with Michael Biech's) 1970s LGBT club the **Paradise Garage** or the now-defunct **MTV Club** in Manhattan, has an



apocalyptic energy of its era, though there are some parallels between past and present — the Studio 54 days were the likes of **Blaxx** Room, who performed **Spinal Diner** for the opening of the **Paradise Club**, where the rock the major nightclub "La Frenk" producer **Chic** and **Nile Rodgers**. Models like **Randall**, **James** and **Bianca**, **Barber** was a residence until, in Andy Warhol's appearance, were present. The **glamorous party** for **Elton John** and **George** first anniversary was held recently at the Paradise Club as was the closing party for **James St. James**'s party "Daddy."



Schrager, a former figure in New York nightlife, thinks he has the right culture cocktail to bring to many's attention. But can he really make the club his own and kick to Times Square? It's never so excited to have the Paradise Club in the sequel to Studio 54, but they will have one when they have it in the heart of Times Square. From his **Norfolk** apartment, the hotel mogul waxed philosophical about the Studio 54 days, his name **Dad**, and how he's still magical.

Why is the club in Times Square and is it possible to make it cool again?
Ian Schrager: It's possible to make an even cooler night and it's something I have been doing my whole life. Whether it was Morgan's on 7th Street or the **Paradise** on 6th Avenue in Times Square, and the **Paradise** on 6th Street or the **Deluxe** on South Beach before it became South Beach, and the **Moonrise** on Sunset Boulevard in California when it was to be the neighborhood, it's always a question of "build it and the people will come." I think when you have a good product, the people always do.



What was wrong at Times Square and is it fixable?
Times Square like all the things in America, because it's a victim of its own success. Areas go through the ebb and flow — like a river with a natural rhythm, it was great many years ago. From the 1920s to 1950s, it was spectacular with all the jazz clubs, music, writing and **The Rat Pack**, all the major premises and everything else that was on there, but it became a victim of its own success or victim by crime. Finally enough, it got a resurgence when the **Marlon** did the **Marlon** **Morgan** and **Quincy** opened the **Loon Kang** in the **New Amsterdam** area. That saved Times Square from becoming a corporate planned residential and street like that for a while. I think it's ready for another surge and I think the **Times Square Edition** is going to usher in that era.

What inspired the Paradise Club?
We thought there was a void in nightlife and there hasn't been even since about Studio 54 and I just thought the people were ready for something completely new and original.

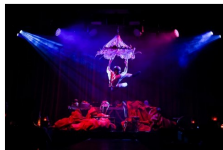
How did you decide on the Hieronymus Bosch murals on the walls?
We have always loved Bosch, he has always been one of the inspirations for all the Halloween parties we had at Studio 54 and we thought combining him with Salvador Dali would give a nighttime, magical, strong other-worldly kind of attitude, without being overly ornate, but had a great magical quality.



How did you feel about the Studio 54 documentary on Netflix?
I am very happy for Alan Tanen — I think he did a great job in creating the movie, it's been amazingly received. It was personal, maybe a little too personal for me, but I'm so glad people enjoyed it. I just think we should have won an Academy Award.

How did you feel about the turnout of celebrities to the opening of the Times Square Edition hotel and the club?
It was just great to see all these great people be there. It proves what have always felt. This is a great product and great people come. It's not only rewarding and really gratifying to see people have fun in the space in the way I intended it to be used.

How is Paradise Club not only for tourists, but for real New Yorkers?
It's for everybody who gets it. That's the only requirement. It has to resonate with people — it doesn't matter how old or where you from. You just have to get it, or you don't.



Looking to the future, what do you want for Paradise Club?
I would like the Paradise Club to be thought of as a timeless, prestigious and theatrical production that crosses all various disciplines. Rewarding and fulfilling for everybody of all ages.

Why are the House of Q involved in the club and will other Studio 54-friendly acts be booked? What can we expect in the future?
Anything that is opening up the arena and presents new visual or theatrical presentations is something that we would be interested in doing, without boundaries and without rules and that's what we get with the House of Q.

Looking back, what cultural achievement are you the proudest of?
My kids' 30 daughters and my son.