



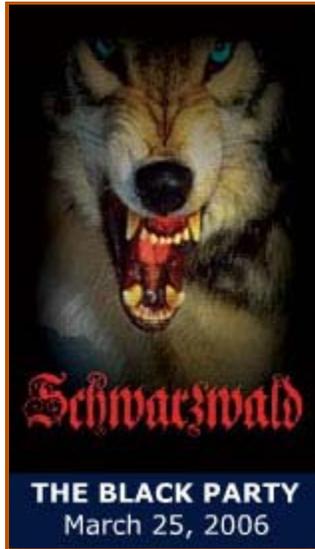
## ▶▶ Nightlife Features

### MattUnleashed on Nightlife :: Black Party Primer

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As the vernal equinox approaches, so too does New York's most provocative party weekend. While the Black Party itself serves as the weekend's anchor event (celebrating its impressive 27th anniversary), there are a slew of other soirees vying for your attention that make this weekend the season's largest gay party gathering in Manhattan. Whether this is your first or, gulp, 27th time tackling the Black Party lineup, effectively managing social commitments during this particular weekend can be a daunting task for novices and pros alike. Here are some suggestions that will hopefully make your decision process a little less tortuous.

Assuming you've been a good little party boy (or girl) and have already purchased your advance ticket for the Black Party (available at [www.saintatlarge.com](http://www.saintatlarge.com) and select local outlets), I hope you also took advantage of the group discount offered by SAL for the official after-party, Hammam. This is my pick for breakout party of the weekend, and advance tickets have already sold out (more will be available at Roseland and Pacha). The revitalized and refocused brilliance of DJ Junior Vasquez merging with the labyrinthine glamour of Pacha under the guise of a Turkish Bath theme on the most mischievous weekend of the year is just too hot to pass up. Add to the mix the detail-oriented professionalism and vast imagination of Stephen Pevner and the entire Saint At Large team and this is one party you'll definitely kick yourself for missing. Hammam begins at noon on Sunday and continues until midnight. Please consult the SAL website for updates, but it is expected that Junior will begin spinning sometime around 2 or 3pm.



While many will be traipsing off to Crobar on Sunday night for the sixth Alegria Extreme party with DJ Abel (and for good reason -- this is probably the most popular Alegria event of the year, which is saying a lot, and Ric Sena never fails to impress with a wild, mind-blowing event that will go well into Monday afternoon), I'm really intrigued by Susan Morabito's Odyssey party that she's throwing in conjunction with Candida Scott Piel at Element. A throwback to the legendary Equinox parties she used to play and produce, this is a sponsor-driven party that promises to be a reunion of sorts for revelers of all walks of life who cherish the dance floor journey and familial atmosphere of such tribal gatherings.

While those aspects are certainly inviting on their own, the club itself is also a major draw and should contribute beautifully to the type of vibe Susan and Candida are no doubt looking to create. Yes, everything you've read and heard about this new club (a former bank "located at the crossroads of the East Village and the Lower East Side") is true: it's an amazing, intimate dance space with catwalk overview and a gorgeous well-appointed basement lounge area in what used to be the vault that still retains much of its original architectural flare.

The club is open most nights of the week with Saturdays reserved for us homos with a party called, appropriately enough, Bank. DJ Larry Tee provides the tunes for the super fun, cute and diverse crowd while über-promoter Josh Wood puts his PR prowess behind the night. Then again, maybe I'm biased as I consider any night when I hear both "My Neck, My Back" and "Work This Pussy" (full-on versions with all verses, mind you), as I did a couple weeks ago, a winner in my book.

Getting back to Black Party, it's a rather advanced move to start the festivities any earlier than Saturday, and is only recommended under a doctor's (or pharmacist's) close supervision, but I'm fascinated by the idea of Manny Lehman spinning at Splash on Friday night. For a man who plays mostly for audiences numbering in the thousands, it should be interesting to see how he fares with a dance floor that only holds a few hundred at most. Then again, it was good enough for Britney Spears who performed there a couple years ago at the height of her popularity (seriously!), so why not? Of course, it was so crowded and stifling hot in there that even Britney, who sang three songs, was drenched in sweat a few seconds into her performance. (Note to Manny: the sound will be fine, but you might want to do an AC check ahead of time.)

And if you want to do something totally out of the ordinary (as if anything about Black Party weekend is typical in any way, shape or form!), check out Leather Invasion 4: Black Ice. Yes, the leather community is going ice skating in Central Park at the Wollman Rink on Thursday, March 23, at 8:00 p.m. So break out your skates (hockey probably, not figure) and join the boys, er, men in Central Park for what is sure to be quite the scene. Visit [www.leatherinvasion.com](http://www.leatherinvasion.com) for more information on this and the group's past three outings, including "Candles, Crisco and Cruising." Oh my.

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### The Toughest Places to Drink in NYC

Posh, one of my favorite neighborhood hangouts in Hell's Kitchen, is a regular destination for me and my friends. You can usually find a dozen or so of us gathered on or around the comfy new couches in the back lounge area pretty much every Friday night after work. Unfortunately, sometimes it can be rather difficult to actually get a drink when it gets too crowded. That's just something we've come

to accept, and are generally pretty patient about it.

This past Friday, however, was particularly bad as the sole bartender on duty when I arrived at 6:30 was completely overwhelmed. One friend told me he had been waiting for 10 minutes with no apparent hope of getting served anytime soon. About 10 minutes later he stormed out of the bar and returned with a six-pack of beer. Resourceful, no? Granted, he would never have done that under any other circumstances, but it just seemed like a better solution than trying to relocate our entire group to another venue.

Fast forward about 30 minutes, long after the smuggled spirits had been consumed and our group had returned to purchasing Posh-peddle beverages (a second bartender now made this possible), and my friend is being escorted out of the establishment by a never-before-seen manager after a busybody bar-back tattled. We all left in solidarity, and who knows if or when we'll ever go back. But one thing I would like to know is where was this manager guy when the sole bartender was swamped and nobody could get a drink? Perhaps if he had been more concerned about helping out behind the understaffed bar than kicking out a long-time regular patron, this could have all been avoided. Well, at least Therapy always seems well-staffed and eager to help quench a thirst.

Until next time: Be Smart. Be Safe. Be Yourself.

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On the Net:

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*Matt Kalkhoff is a New York-based freelance writer whose love for dance music is only surpassed by the depth and passion with which he writes about it. A full collection of Matt's work can be viewed at his website :: <http://www.mattunleashed.com>*