

DIVA LOUNGE IMPROVEMENTS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Montclair, NJ – February, 2009 – The Diva Lounge, voted Best Lounge in the State of New Jersey by AOL for three years in a row, is steadily improving its reputation. Due to renovations – to the building, staff, and overall attitude surrounding the Montclair night spot – the Diva Lounge is quickly turning from a police trouble spot to a must-go lounge.

“Over the past two months we have reinvented ourselves as a restaurant /lounge,” explained Seth Lawrence, owner and general manager of Diva Lounge. “We’re trying to capture a dinner crowd from the Wellmont with a new ‘comfort food’ menu.”

In order to achieve this new status, several efforts of compromise have been made to appease both the clientele, who love the great music and ambience of the lounge, and the lounge’s neighbors, who deserve peace and quiet. This is a major change in attitude from the previous owners, explained Lawrence.

“We sound-proofed the dance floor within 30 days of taking over,” he said. “We have also worked very hard with Frank Leslie and Tom Lonergan to meet Code Enforcement regulations.” The Diva Lounge now has personnel to clean up any debris that patrons may leave on the streets after a night out, and a team of Montclair high school students has been hired to do more pick-up on their way to school in the mornings.

Security is extremely important to the staff of Diva Lounge, and Lawrence is proud of the fact that off-duty Montclair Police Officers participate actively in crowd control outside of the Lounge. In fact, Lawrence has paid more than \$110,000 to off-duty police officers for this service. There are never less than 10 security guards on duty inside the Lounge at all times, and as of December 2008, all of them – police or otherwise – have official security certifications.

“Any officer that works for Diva Lounge will vouch for how well my security team handles the smallest skirmish inside the lounge,” said Lawrence.

Even Roger Terry, former deputy of police and counselor at large, frequents Diva Lounge often and has personally commended the staff at Diva Lounge for their crowd management skills.

Terry isn’t the only officer who enjoys the safe environment inside the Lounge: The staff of Diva Lounge was recently presented with a plaque from Ms. Kim Nelson for hosting the annual dinner meeting for the Fraternal Order of Montclair Police for three consecutive years.

Lawrence is more than willing to change directions if signs point to any kind of threat to his patrons or the Lounge’s neighbors. A Sunday Night College Party was recently removed from the Diva Lounge’s schedule after two separate altercations led Lawrence to cancel the event.

In spite of recent rumors regarding the Lounge’s security and reputation, the Diva Lounge boasts some extremely positive attributes, including being fully insured, never having an ABC violation, and having bartenders who are TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedure) certified.

“I have paid for every server and bartender to be TIPS certified,” explained Lawrence. “TIPS is the global leader in education and training for the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol.”

On top of all this, the Lounge is host to many charity events for the city of Montclair, including the recent "Parents Who Rock" fundraiser with Alma Schneider. Every year, the Lounge hosts charity events for Livingston's Elementary, Middle and High Schools, and is home to the Montclair High School Wrestling Team's banquet and awards ceremony every year. The Diva Lounge was also a contributor to Bobby Brown's charity to raise money for Montclair public schools.

According to Lawrence, the management team at the Lounge is top-notch. The team consists of Paul Morgan, head of security at Montclair High School; Lauren Sharpe, a college graduate with over 10 years of experience in the nightlife business; and Rich Rivera, who is New York State-certified in security, fire awareness, and self defense.

Patrons and neighbors have certainly noticed the change, but beyond that, the Lounge is getting good press in several other places.

“New Jersey monthly's Park Place magazine surprised us one evening and had dinner with us,” said Lawrence. “We are getting a full page spread in the March issue. They were very impressed with the new Diva Lounge comfort theme!”

For more information, please contact Seth Lawrence.