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Oppenheim, the night's organizer, explains, "There wasn't a queer place that catered to what I wanted—fancy cocktails and yummy food," as opposed to the E-Room's steady diet of beer, jeans and Doc Martens. "I wanted to create a cocktail party, low-key and less intimidating, where women can come alone and make friends instead of worrying about being asked to dance."

The ladies came like a flood. They waited in their cars for the club to open, stood in line down the block and filled Holocene with 200 people the first night and more than 400 on the busiest. All of the factors that often spell doom to established club strategies (Sunday events, afternoon and early evening time slots, even natural lighting) instead drew in an unbelievably diverse crowd: 21-year-old tattooed punks mingled with 50-year-old real estate agents dressed in sexy Sunday dresses and suits, swiveling their cocktail straws and high heels to the sultry beats, while still getting home for a proper business night bedtime.

Like Skervy's before it, Tart's success set off a string of similar nights, these catering mostly to women: the now-defunct Diva, the struggling Snatch and the burgeoning After Hours.

But Tart was not alone in jacking the party from downtown through risky bar maneuvering.

Double Down



In a smoky dive on North Lombard lined with corrugated steel and hand-penned signs advertising Jell-O shots and other drink specialties, DJs Stormy and Puppet revived the pirate spirit of Skervy with Booty, where you are as likely to grind with three different genders on the dance floor as you are to walk the proverbial plank.

In the not-so-sterile laboratory of queer Portland, Booty is a testament that it takes more than smart organizing and social grace to succeed. Puppet and Stormy had several flops after Skervy before striking gold. The pirate's

brew required a proper mix of novel location, avidly supportive bar owners, the right crowd and demand born from at least half a year

when the queers were twiddling their thumbs without a strong party in sight.

Now, Puppet says, "We've consistently had over 200 people every Thursday for the last six months," and the place is notorious for being so crowded and smoky that one wonders why it appeals to anyone other than those into auto-erotic asphyxiation. Nonetheless, Booty is

loved for the same reason Queer Night was: The strong sense of community makes people feel like they are at a house party with friends and a few key, hot strangers.

With Booty, another wave of queer nights came crashing down on Portland: Taint and Jack (both already shark meat), Suicide Club and queer-rebound Holocene's dream-team lineup of Sissyboy, Party Line, Monster Truck and Oppenheim's new mixed night, Double Down.

The Slippery Slope Into Young Adulthood

The proliferation of queer nights signals that Portland's queer community is growing up fast. As Van Sant notices, "There is an informed, academic and bohemian queer culture" in the Rose City, which can be attributed to a number of cultural changes. Van Sant points to what Alvin Toffler calls the Third Wave—the children of baby boomers maturing in an information-based society—who have both come of age in Portland and immigrated here. (Can we say "creative class"?)

Further, since the 1990s and the onset of the Internet, American society has witnessed

an increased visibility and even mainstreaming of alternative styles. Paradoxically, even though the political culture grows more conservative, younger generations have greater access to their progressive peers.

While a decade ago indie rock fags and hip-hop dykes only represented a population large enough to support one queer party, the changing queer culture has now planted seeds enough to support an entire diversified scene raised on Pabst and the DJ's sweet sonic crack.

Granted, there's no guarantee of success; queer nights fold as fast as they fly. And some commentators, such as Bierbaum, claim the nights lack distinction and are no longer interesting. But others such as Holocene proprietor Charlie Hodge argue, "More and more nights mean better quality as we shed the nights that lack something different."

What the future holds for the queer night is uncertain. Perhaps the parties will become even more privatized and specific as the queer community grows and diversifies, or perhaps they will become post-queer, blending straights and queers so seamlessly that they no longer need separate parties.

Whatever may come, you can currently get trashy at queer parties six days out of the week—seven. We suggest you schedule yourself accordingly. jn

After observing some of the catastrophic personality explosions created by combining queers, alcohol and the night, AARON SCOTT has become a teetotaler. A sober historian. Unless, of course, you're buying.

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