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Cherry Pop heats up West Hollywood



Lawrence K. Ho / Los Angeles Times

Go-go dancers at Cherry Pop keep the crowd moving.

Saturday night's alright for dancing at the new club night at Ultra Suede.

By Enid Portuquez, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
May 15, 2008

Herds of absurdly good-looking men dancing to Rihanna's latest single are a typical sight at promoter Tom Whitman's club nights in [West Hollywood](#). His weekly parties at gay watering holes [O Bar](#), [Fubar](#) and [Here Lounge](#) are known for combining chiseled biceps and cheekbones with well-curated dance music, and his new Saturday night, Cherry Pop, is no different.

Cherry Pop is the continuation of Whitman's 2-year-old Saturday party Popular, a night dedicated to pop music formerly at Here Lounge. "We simply outgrew the space," Whitman says. "I wanted a bigger dance floor, but I also wanted to keep it in the neighborhood."

Photos: [Cherry Pop](#) in [West Hollywood](#)

After shopping for venues, he moved across the street to the recently redesigned [Ultra Suede](#). He also changed the night's name so patrons wouldn't confuse it with Ultra Suede's similarly pop-centric Friday party Popstars.

Like his clientele, Whitman, 37, is tall and handsome with a proclivity for stylish hats. Before promoting clubs, he produced concerts and television.

"I've worked on big spectacles for MTV, so I'm good at creating events with really great sound and lighting," he says, lounging on a leather banquette. "I want to give people a full club experience, a place to really let loose and get a little crazy."

Whitman cites Club Cherry, the raucous weekly party that reigned Hollywood's club scene from 1994 to 2001, as an inspiration for Cherry Pop. "It was one of my favorite clubs when I first came to L.A.," Whitman says. Ultra Suede's previous incarnation, the Love Lounge, hosted Club Cherry for five years. Former Club Cherry hostess and transgender performer Shokra also takes the stage weekly at Cherry Pop.

"Tom's not trying to re-create Cherry," says Shokra, who, on opening night, sported

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a towering platinum Mohawk, red vinyl hot pants and cherry printed chaps. "But I hope it becomes a reincarnation of it."

The move to Ultra Suede is a good start. Boasting a spacious dance floor, fancy flat-screen TVs and a stellar sound system, the once-stark dance club now has more lounge elements. Black-and-white mod-inspired prints drape the walls, and black leather couches for bottle service have been added to both the back and main rooms.

"I knew it was time [for a redesign], but I didn't have much of an impetus," says Ultra Suede owner Sandy Sachs. "With Tom wanting to come over, I said it's time to do it. His move into that space wouldn't have been as impactful if we didn't make it look different."

The changes haven't gone unnoticed by clubgoers. "I do think it looks a lot better than it did last time I was here," says Kenyon Toy, 28, of Long Beach. "The cute boys, great music and the venue make for a good vibe."

CHERRY POP

WHERE: [Ultra Suede](#), 661 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood

WHEN: 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Saturdays

PRICE: \$5 before 11 p.m., \$10 after

INFO: [www.tomwhitman.com](#)

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