

FULL SWING

A New York sex club in action, courtesy of live-sketch artist Luma Rouge



● SCENES FROM A SEX PARTY

Upscale, invitation-only orgies are sweeping the nation's top cities. They're way hotter, more exclusive, and less freaky than the old sex clubs of yore. But what really makes these naked bacchanals tick?

by ADAM LINEHAN

I'M IN A WAREHOUSE LOFT IN WILLIAMSBURG, Brooklyn, a few nights before Halloween, sitting uncomfortably between my friend Erica to my right and a naked couple struggling to have sex on the eight inches of available ottoman to my left. Erica and I are doing a rather heroic job of shifting our gaze to just about anywhere in the room but at our feet, where a pretty brunette in what's left of a Dorothy costume (ruby slippers) services a grinning, half-naked cowboy in a Stetson and not much else. Beyond them, a few dozen beds lined up like some kind of Hieronymus Bosch version of a Sleepy's showroom play host to sexual situations of varying size and gender combinations: girl-boy; girl-girl-boy; boy-girl-boy; girl-girl; girl-girl-girl; and, on the large, sweat-drenched mattresses at the center of the room, girl-boy-girl-girl-girl-girl-boy-boy-girl-boy (I think). A low-grade funk moves through the place like a

rising weather system.

“I’m gonna get some air,” I say, standing suddenly. Erica stands, too, and when she does the ottoman seesaws, dumping the bare-assed conjoined couple onto the floor. “Oh, oh!” the woman cries, her big, Kardashian-like mane spilling over her face. A few people laugh. The man looks around, red-faced, his white buttocks illuminated in the loft’s weird blue light. Then, after maybe 10 seconds of hesitation, the two reclaim the divan and carry on with the same reckless fervor as before.

For many, “sex clubs” conjures up images of leathery swinger types performing passages from the *Kama Sutra* in clouds of patchouli smoke. But plenty has changed since your Uncle Howie was doing the jellyfish at Plato’s Retreat. The modern reality: A new crop of invitation-only sex parties, located in big cities across the U.S. and Europe, is expanding exponentially by replacing the old swingers model with something more upscale, more exclusive, more attractive, less emotionally scarring, and specifically targeted to the instant-gratification ethos of a generation weaned on Tinder and text message hookups. But what really makes these naked shindigs tick? My goal: infiltrate, assess, and maybe even participate, all in the fine name of glossy magazine journalism.

Chemistry, a New York-based “producer of erotic parties,” and the host of the pre-Halloween bash, is one of a handful of members-only partyers in the city marketing themselves as playgrounds for the young, beautiful, and “sexually enlightened.” “I don’t like the term *swinger* because it harks back to the ’70s and the misogynistic practice of wife swapping,” says “KennyBlunt,” a mysterious dude in his early 40s who says he started Chemistry with his then girlfriend in 2006 after the two became disenchanted with the local swingers scene, finding it awkward, poorly organized, and disconcertingly male-centric. “A lot of our members are just getting out of college—mainly couples and single women. As organizers, our job, first and foremost, is to create an environment where women feel very comfortable.”

The first step: Curate the hottest—and least creepy—crowd you could ever hope to find yourself in a room with naked. After e-mailing Chemistry a request for an application, my next-door-neighbor “dates” Erica and Katie and I are sent digital questionnaires, along with requests for “G-rated” photos. (Erica

FOR MANY, “SEX CLUBS” CONJURES UP IMAGES OF LEATHERY SWINGER TYPES PERFORMING KAMA SUTRA IN CLOUDS OF PATCHOULI SMOKE. BUT PLENTY HAS CHANGED SINCE YOUR UNCLE WAS DOING THE JELLYFISH AT PLATO’S RETREAT.



and Katie thankfully push that a bit.) The questions range from straightforward (“What decade were you born in?”) to probing (“What’s your favorite nonsexual hobby?”) to cosmic (“What’s your philosophy on sex?”).

After two days of waiting, I begin to worry about what a rejected application will do to my ego. But the following day, we receive a “for-your-eyes-only” e-mail revealing the time and location of the party. The price for three of us is \$170: \$150 for Erica and me as a couple (which we’re not; single guys are a no-go) and \$20 for Katie to tag along. Later, KennyBlunt explains the vetting process to me. “We’re looking for creative, thoughtful people.... But if we have an applicant whose answers sort of suck but is drop-dead gorgeous, it’s like, OK, this will be good for the party.”

It’s 10:30 P.M. when we arrive at the nondescript door of a warehouse in a newly developed portion of Brooklyn’s hipster mecca. With trick-or-treating days away, the party is christened Freaky Friday, and guests have been encouraged to dress accordingly. Out of sheer laziness, we show up in normal going-out attire. After a security guard checks our IDs, we step into a near-pitch-black room where we sign waivers and are ushered past a black curtain into the party. “Enjoy!” says a buxom, blond werewolf, handing us gift bags containing condoms and mints.

We find ourselves in a cavernous, concert-like space, with about 200 people crowded in front of a stage watching a slender woman in a glossy, skintight dress doing some kind of X-rated stand-up. The ratio of girls to guys is impressive—somewhere in the ballpark of 60:40—and everyone’s pretty much straight out of the young Brooklyn nightlife playbook. We take a mini tour. Here’s what we see: a well-stocked bar, a nicely appointed snack table, a pair of metal staircases leading to an open loft filled with rows and rows of beds. Here’s what we don’t see: Fucking. Groping. Not so much as a surreptitious hand job or flashed boob.

We locate KennyBlunt (“KB to my friends”) during the next performance: a girl not much bigger than a Keebler elf twirling fire fans while a pair of giant torches shoot flames from her chest. “Man, if she burns this place down, we’re *screwed*,” he says. KB is a solidly built Midwesterner; with his top hat and skull-painted face, he resembles a stocky Alice Cooper. “The party needs time to build,” he tells us. “It’s like a pot heating up—everyone talks and drinks and gets to know each other. But you’ll see, the

moment the show ends, everyone’ll remember why they came here.”

Sure enough, during the final act—a by-the-numbers zombie bit starring a blood-spattered girl in a nightie wielding a severed arm—the crowd, as if on silent cue, begins trickling away in twos and threes, vanishing in a steady stream up the stairs.

Pumps are kicked off. Zippers are unzipped. Sexy Ebola Nurse costumes are discarded in yellow and white heaps. Thongs, boxers, and lacy bras are dropped midstream, leading to beds like bread-crumbs trails. In a moment, the vibe has switched from Williamsburg-hipster-bar to director’s-cut-of-*Caligula*. The orgy is under way.

And a couple of hours later, it’s still under way. I’ve been drinking all night, working up the nerve to join in on the fun. But how, exactly? Erica and Katie have bailed, complaining about the lack of attractive single men. I decide to stick around, and now I’m seated on that same ottoman, chatting up a couple who’ve graciously invited me to join them for the remainder of the party. “We were hooking

up in the other room, and it was just way too crowded,” says Laura, a dark-haired beauty dressed like a Depression-era gangster, complete with bowler cap, blue pinstripe minidress, and black thigh-high stockings. “I kept getting elbowed in the face.” She’s in her late 20s and owns an Internet company. Her boyfriend, David, also in his late 20s, is an executive at a big New York financial firm. Six months ago, Laura first heard about the sex parties and suggested they try them out. “I’m the luckiest guy in the world because she doesn’t want to sleep with other guys—just girls,” David tells me. “Most people we’ve met doing this are highly educated, successful, and personable. They’re people with regular lives, just like us.”

David and Laura are, hands down, the best-looking couple here. A few minutes into our conversation, two girls who’ve been eyeing Laura from across the room join us. One, a curvy blonde in her mid-20s, wears nothing but red lace underwear and a red velvet cloak draped over her shoulders, and, not surprisingly, introduces herself as Red

Riding Hood. The other, a tall brunette whose name I don’t catch, is dressed as a German barmaid, pigtails and all. They want to know if Laura wants a massage. She does. Within seconds, Laura is supine on a table, being ridden by Red Riding Hood, while Barmaid Helga kisses Laura’s neck. Not sure what to do, I follow David’s lead. He positions himself on one side of the table, and I stand on the other, and we begin running our hands along Red Riding Hood’s upturned ass and thighs. My heart is racing. *This is how it happens*, I think. When David pulls off his shirt and throws it on the floor, I do the same. And when he starts massaging Laura’s thighs, I do, too.

The next few minutes are a blur—a sweaty tangle of limbs and fingers and tongues and nipples. It winds up like this: Red Riding Hood grabs my head and begins pulling it down toward Laura’s nether regions. While moving south, I shoot David a glance. “Is this cool?” I say. “Yeah,” he says, grinning. “Of course.” Laura is clearly into it, too. I take a breath and dive in, and now I’m 100 percent certain this is going to escalate into a full-blown five-way.

Then the lights start blinking on and off. *What the fuck?* I look up—everyone, Laura especially, looks startled. I glance at my watch: 2 A.M. The party is supposed to go until 3. A general sense of confusion settles over the room, and everyone is grumbling and reaching for their clothes. I pull my shirt back on, feeling embarrassed it came off in the first place. A guy dressed as a Trojan soldier appears at the door. “Hey, sorry about that, guys!” he shouts. “A mistake! Party on—we’re going until 3!” But it’s too late. The buzz has been mercilessly killed. “Let’s get out of here,” Helga says with a sigh, and as a group we descend the stairs.

At the bar, I order a shot, feeling as if I’ve reached the pinnacle of sexual frustration. David puts a hand on my shoulder. “We’re all thinking about going somewhere else,” he says. “What do you think?” Yes! I turn back to the bartender, telling him to hurry with the tequila. I down it in a single gulp and turn, expecting to see my new friends waiting for me. They’re not. Through the black curtain at the entrance, I see a flash of brilliant red. I rush to the door into the crisp Williamsburg night. I look left: nothing. I look right: Halfway down the block, I see the silhouette of Laura’s bowler cap ducking into a cab. I want to yell, “Wait for me!” But I don’t. As the cab recedes into the distance, I light a cigarette and begin the long walk home. ■

THE NEW SWING SET
PREFER YOUR SEX PARTIES (MORE OR LESS) SLEAZE-FREE? WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED. HERE ARE THE CREAM OF THE INVITE-ONLY CROP.
by SUSANNA GOOCH

KILLING KITTENS
\$240 for couples;
\$95 for single women.
London and L.A.

With 40,000-plus members worldwide, this London-based swingers group relies heavily on its curated computer network. Champagne and oyster receptions, and candlelit romp rooms, make for an extra-sophisticated vibe, while the rule that all guests must wear *Eyes Wide Shut*-style masks keeps the sex as cold, detached, and British as possible. *killingkittens.com*

CLUB HERMIONE
\$150 for couples;
\$50 for single women.
New England, Berlin, London

With parties that max out at just 20 heavily vetted couples and 10 single ladies, Club Hermione is the Ivy League of the underground sex party scene. Venues include fancy villas and yachts where guests mingle over cocktails before getting naked and humping all over expensive furniture. Gatsby would approve! *clubhermione.com*

MASS PLEASURES
\$200 for couples;
\$30 for single women;
\$4,000 for VIP package.
New York, L.A., Miami, Las Vegas, and London

Don’t expect plebeians at these monthly, bottle-serviced orgies hosted in ultraluxe venues, including—at least once—Coco Chanel’s former Hollywood mansion. Those applying for membership must disclose details like their education level, occupation, and yearly income. *masspleasures.com*

SANCTUM CLUB
\$250 for couples;
\$50 for single women.
Beverly Hills

Got a hankering to watch a girl in a latex suit bathe herself in a tub of milk? This is the orgy for you! Applicants for these surreal yet formal black-tie events get an easy in if they can name-drop current club members. (This is Beverly Hills, after all.) To keep it paparazzi-proof, emphasis is placed on security and secrecy, and guests are urged to conceal their identities. *sanctumclub.org*