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**“I don't care where you are, if you build something good, people are going to go to it.”**



# sion plan

## STEVE ADELMAN LOVES HOLLYWOOD — AND IT SHOWS

BY LIZBETH SCORDO PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON LUCY

Ask Steve Adelman how he ended up where he is today — a club mogul with successful venues in New York and Los Angeles, managing a landmark Hollywood Boulevard building where he's created yet another club as well as a restaurant and boutique gym — and the 45-year-old is likely to use the word "random" more than once along the way.

After all, in the mid-1980s he was dangerously close to getting a Ph.D. in economics at Boston College, when he suddenly changed his mind in the midst of writing his dissertation. "I'd gone to school for seven straight years, then I started working in the [economics] field, consulting. I was like, 'I can't do this.' I just quit. I didn't fit in. So I decided I was going to do something else, but I wasn't sure what."

Around the same time a friend of a friend was opening the Hub Club, a dance club in Downtown Boston. Adelman started working for him, assisting with advertising, promotion and staffing. "I was just helping, randomly helping. I didn't have any experience. I just did stuff. I don't know how, but it became somewhat successful."

Not long after, he made a contact who was about to open a club — this time in New York. "This guy randomly came to the club, happened to be sitting next to me and said, 'Oh this is a really cool club.' I told him I was involved in it and he said, 'Oh, well this it's great and I'd like to hire you in New York,'" Adelman says. "Random."

So Adelman moved to New York to help open what would become one of the city's most famous clubs of all time, The Roxy. From there, he was tapped to reopen New York's legendary Limelight. Today it's called the Avalon and is owned by Steve Adelman along with nightclub mogul John Lyons of the Lyons group, which is behind many other venues across the nation. Adelman later went back to Boston to help revitalize six hotspots on the club-lined Lansdowne Street. Since 1997, he's helped build 12 clubs in three cities, all of which are still operating. A pretty big feat for a self-proclaimed "not really a club guy" kind of guy.

In 2000, Adelman and Lyons came out to LA seeking the perfect location to open their first West Coast club. After more than a year of looking, the two fell in love with The Palace, a grungy, old building on Hollywood's Vine Street. "We thought, 'This is the spot. Whoever gets this spot wins,'" Adelman says. "It was doing these heavy metal nights. It was painted blue. It hadn't been on the radar for 10 years, but in the '80s it had been considered the Studio 54 of the West Coast."

They turned the building into two clubs — Spider Club and Avalon — then

later opened the restaurant Honey at the same spot. "At the time there wasn't a small, exclusive club in Los Angeles. People thought we were nuts. But I don't care where you are, if you build something good, people are going to go to it," says Adelman. And not just any people, Spider Club quickly became an über-popular hangout for celebs and the place to be for Young Hollywood.

But this is LA, the land of facelifts, and even hot clubs need one every few years. This spring, Adelman plans to renovate both Avalon and Spider Club. "They've been there three or four years, we'll just update them," he says. "We'll bring up the energy there, change the look."

His latest venture, Hillview, is a 52-unit apartment complex that silent movie stars such as Charlie Chaplin used to call home in the 1920s. Though Adelman says his original plan was simply to create a small takeout joint, as usual, his plans have expanded and he's become a partner in the building. In early 2007, his new restaurant, Lift, will open in the building and stay open 22 hours a day. "It's casual gourmet. We're focusing in on the new way people are eating. It's a combination of things that are going to help energize your body," he says. Downstairs, in a former speakeasy, Adelman is almost finished with his new club, 86. "It's a combination of live performers, lounging and dancing. It's a throwback to the old classic Hollywood nightclub," he says.

The building's gym, called the Joint, is ultra-swanky even by Hollywood standards, with metallic wallpaper, teak flooring, a high-end sound system and personalized workouts. Adelman will soon add a rooftop boxing ring to the mix as well.

Next up, he's wants to open a couple of boutique hotels in Hollywood. He explains, "They'll have a certain sense of style. Cool and hip. We'll do what we do and just translate that into a hotel. It will be an easy transition."

And how about expanding out of Hollywood? Not a random chance.

"I don't understand anything else. I will not go downtown, I don't get it. I don't want to go west. I think West Hollywood is very saturated, everything's too expensive, and there's no vibe," says Adelman. "I just think Hollywood's great."

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