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BOÎTE

# The Exclusive Freebie

By MONICA CORCORAN

HOLLYWOOD

**I**N New York, you flaunt your power by picking up the tab. In Los Angeles, you assume alpha status when there is no tab. West Coast heavies don't like to fumble for their wallets. For the true V.I.P., the best things are free. That explains why the exclusive new Spider Club here is members only, but with a twist: it exacts no pesky dues.

Patrons flash their black leather membership cards to gain entry. Each is limited to three guests, but one recent night Hugh Hefner managed to rumba past the door leading six blondes. Mr. Hefner and his V.I.E. (very important entourage) bypassed the king-size bed in the center of the upstairs lounge for a leather booth.

On the patio downstairs, smokers huffed about the recall election for governor. "Arnold didn't get a card," said Donovan Leitch, who oversaw the mailing of membership cards to a select group of 900. Mr. Leitch, whose official title is artistic director, is a model, musician, documentary filmmaker and son of the folk singer Donovan. "Arianna Huffington got one," he revealed, as did Bob Dylan and Francesco Clemente.

Mr. Leitch, with the club owners, John Lyons and Steven Adelman, hope to cultivate a salonlike atmosphere at Spider Club, basically a Moroccan-theme club-within-a-club (it adjoins the Avalon). They have scheduled a private party to celebrate a documentary about the band Jane's Addiction and an exhibition of Dennis Hopper's photographs. "Ideally, we want interesting people who are looking to have a thoughtful-minded experience," said Mr. Lyons, a part owner of some 20 clubs in Boston, New York and Los Angeles. "We'll just let it evolve naturally."

By 1 a.m., the scene had done just that. A stunning woman sporting a Mohawk hairdo chatted up another gorgeous woman with the same cut. A fashion designer, Henry Duarte, was discussing modern art with a friend. On the dance floor, couples disengaged to form a rippling communal ring.

"It's nice to see other women and not all those skinny 22-year-olds with their hipbones showing," said Josephine Banks, a 34-year-old set designer.

On Oct. 31, Spider Club goes bicoastal with another club-within-a-club, this time at the New York branch of Avalon (the former Limelight). Membership cards are in the mail. "New Yorkers are definitely more demanding than the Hollywood crowd," Mr. Adelman said. "They always want the best table or a separate entrance." At least they're willing to pay for it.

## Spider Club

1737 North Vine Street, Hollywood; (323) 462-8270.

**GETTING IN** If you're a member, call. Sans card? Lurk outside and tag along.

**DRESS CODE** Tight cashmere sweaters and flower tattoos for women; floppy hair, sideburns and vintage corduroy jackets for men.

**D. J. PICKS** "Love Will Tear Us Apart" by Joy Division; "Listen to the Music" by the Doobie Brothers.

**SIGHTINGS** Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots, Lisa Marie Presley, Christian Slater.

**SIGNATURE DRINK** Old-school fuzzy navel (vodka, peach schnapps and orange juice on the rocks), \$12.



**I'M WITH HIM**  
The Spider Club in Los Angeles is for members only. Joining is free, but if you have to ask, you're not invited. A New York branch opens Oct. 31.

Ann Johansson for The New York Times