

SINGAPORE'S DEFINITIVE MEN'S JOURNAL **THE EXPERIENCE ISSUE**

# AUGUST MAN

SUBSTANCE / STYLE / SUCCESS

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# TAKESHI ABE SHIRO

ASIA'S JOHNNY DEPP  
TAKES IT EASY

**PLUS**

**MOBY'S CASTLE**  
THE DENS OF INIQUITY  
HE'S LIVED IN

**THROUGH THE AGES**  
DIFFERENT ROADS FOR  
DIFFERENT FOLKS

**MVMT SUPPLEMENT**  
AN ANNUAL FEAST OF  
HOROLOGICAL BEAUTIES



# Beyond The Velvet Rope

The wait is almost over. Mega club Avalon is here to redefine local nightlife, thanks to a certain **Steve Adelman**

WORDS LANCE LIM IMAGES AVALON



MTGD



Benny Benassi



Toxic Avenger

"Avalon is not a nightclub, but an entertainment venue"

**W**hat's a world-class casino resort without a splendid entertainment venue? When Marina Bay Sands identified this need, it went to the best man for the job – it asked Steve Adelman to build one. Adelman's career in the nightlife industry spans 20 years and includes a repertoire of successful high-profile clubs such as The Roxy, Limelight, The Modern, Embassy, and the iconic Hollywood nightclub Avalon, which has been the favourite haunt of top celebrities (Leonardo DiCaprio, Justin Timberlake, Lindsay Lohan, et al). Now Adelman is poised to set a new benchmark in Singapore's nightlife and entertainment landscape with the opening of Avalon here at Marina Bay Sands this September. The 49-year-old industry veteran always aims to surpass expectations, whether it's a mega dance club, a cosy lounge, or a bar. He takes a creative approach that manages to fuel the public's imagination and repeatedly capture its attention.

Avalon is massive, spreading 1,580 square metres across two levels in design prodigy Moshe Safdie's new creation, the Marina Bay Sands Crystal Pavilion. After 18 months of preparation, with Adelman going over every minute detail of the club, Avalon will open its doors in mid-September with a capacity to entertain 18,000 clubbers. The list of opening live acts is impressive, including The Bloody Beetroots Death Crew 77, Sander Kleinenberg, Chemical Brothers. The state-of-the-art intelligent lighting features and top-end custom made sound systems will no doubt help to dazzle the crowds and create an unprecedented clubbing experience. *August Man* caught up with Adelman to bring you the scoop on the most anticipated new-concept entertainment club in the city.



Boy George

**How did you come to be in this industry?**  
I was working on my PhD in Economics in Boston. I was an actual teaching fellow. I just couldn't see myself doing that for the rest of my life. A friend of a friend was opening up a nightclub, and asked me to help him with the business plan. Before I knew it, I was booking DJs and throwing events. I'm not by nature a club person, and didn't even go to a club until I was 23.

**What is tougher? Starting a club or managing one?**  
Both represent unique challenges that in the end come down to perseverance and focus. Without the ability to roll with the punches, you can be faced with the toughest thing of all: closing a club.

**What are the three important requisites for starting a club?**  
Experience, money and a sense of humour.

**What makes your clubs successful?**  
First, finding a market where there is a demand for what you are offering. Second, finding a unique location and concept. Third, becoming a student of all aspects of the business: music, interior design, marketing, etc. Fourth and most importantly of all, work like hell and hope for the best.

**What's Avalon's business model?**  
Avalon is not a nightclub, but an entertainment venue. As such, its model is based on various sub businesses such as special events, concerts, club nights and film/photo shoots.





K&D



Sander K

**FORMULA  
ONE WEEK  
LIVE ACTS**

**21 Sep:**  
Kele of Bloc Party  
Digitalism

**22 Sep:**  
Tensnake  
Vincenzo  
Lovebirds

**23 Sep:**  
The Bloody  
Beetroots  
Deathcrew 77  
M.A.N.D.Y  
Toxic Avenger  
Congorock  
Make The Girl Dance  
Benny Benassi  
Sander Van Doorn

**24 Sep:**  
Kruder &  
Dorfmeister  
Massive Attack  
Sander Kleinenberg

**25 Sep:**  
Chemical Brothers  
Boy George  
Marc Vedo

**What's the management and operating style for Avalon?**

Our management style is based on hiring the best people we can, and allowing them to do their thing. When that's done and I know the company is where it's supposed to be, I will find myself being irrelevant. It's always a goal of mine, however odd it sounds.

**What's the best advice you would give for club owners?**

You are only as good as your last night. And make friends moving up so they can catch you if you are falling down.

**In Hollywood, Avalon has a reputation as a popular celebrity haunt. Did you do anything in particular to attract celebrities to your club?**

We do nothing actually, which means to say we just let them be and they have their fun at my club. No photos of me standing next to them, none of that stuff - they come in because they want to and because they want that freedom of having fun with their friends knowing that we won't intrude on their night.

**What are some of the celebrities like when they hang out at your clubs? (eg Paris Hilton, Justin Timberlake, Lindsay Lohan)**

They usually come in to let their hair down and have fun, and use my clubs as a way to escape the public eye. Now if I commented on anyone's specific behaviour that would be against the whole point, right?

**How do you treat these celebrities when they are your clubs?**

Buy them a drink and wish them a fun evening, and let them be.

**Come on, you can tell us about a most interesting encounter with, or unusual request by a celebrity?**

Wow, let's see, over the last 20 years I've had Madonna ask me to find her favourite stash: lollipops. Bob Dylan requested that I accompany him from his dressing room, as long as I didn't look at him, and Paris Hilton tried stealing my shoes. Dinner with Jean Paul Gaultier, and Garavani Valentino was interesting and very high maintenance. But the one that takes the cake involved Leonardo DiCaprio, Juliette Lewis and a lot of chasing around... that's all I can say.

**What are some of the challenges doing what you do?**

Living a balanced life despite the hectic schedule. Trying to maintain friendships with all the travel that's involved.

**What are reactions from people you just met when they hear you run clubs?**

Oh, a club guy!... like I'm Scarface or something. For the record, I've never said "say hello to my little friend" to anyone.

Also, I always get the inevitable "where's my VIP card?" That gets old pretty fast.

**How has the club scene evolved over the last decade?**

Clubbers are a lot savvier, given current technology. They are very aware of what's good and what's not.

**How different is the party culture like in North America and Asia?**

In the end, it has been my experience that people around the world are the same. They go out. They want to let off steam and be entertained. The world's oldest profession is actually being a dancer. You know that, right?

**What would be doing if you are not a club owner?**

Probably selling shoes... but only Converse. ☺