

returning to at 4am, when you want to keep partying and everywhere else you can think of has closed for the night.

Given its illustrious history as one of Taipei's oldest and sleaziest nightclubs, you'd think it would be easy for a reporter covering the entertainment beat to collect a long list of interesting stories about the place. But it's actually quite difficult. Most people who go to Vibe are too intoxicated to remember what it was specifically they did there or, even if they do, say it's something they'd rather not talk about, even anonymously.

"Vibe was just that spot you went to and regretted it," said Antoni Barry, one of the few people willing to go on record. "I think there's two sides to Vibe," he added. "If you went there with a bunch of friends it was a lot of fun, if you went there

by yourself it was the most depressing place you could be." Most of the Vibe stories people were willing to tell involved someone other than themselves. One frequent flyer recalled watching a man who was obviously drunk but trying to play it cool on the dance floor when he suddenly fell down, then stood up and pretended someone had pushed him. Another regular said she knew someone who woke up one morning to find a woman he had never met before in his bed. Apparently two women had followed his housemate home from Vibe, unbeknownst to him.

"It was a dirty, dirty place but it was hilarious," said one old hand, who requested that his name not be published but who admitted to drawing phallic symbols with permanent maker or smearing lipstick on Vibe-goers who had passed out.

One long-term expat — who fell down the stairs the first time she set foot in Vibe's current location — said she liked the place because "the guys are really cute, everyone is there for a reason, the booze is cheap, and the music is danceable.

Alyson Schill said her first Vibe experience was "awful." "I basically was drunk already and I was there because a guy I thought was cute people at three o'clock in the morning," said Schill. "And Vibe was gonna be there," she said. The man left her alone, someone

(台北市金山南路一段155號B1)

LINEUP: DJs Elemence, Mixter-T, Gil T Azell, C-Type, Shorty and Rich, with MCs Stoppa and Shaman ADMISSION: NT\$350, includes a drink

WHAT: Roxy Vibe Farewell Party: The Last Stand WHEN: Tomorrow from 9pm to 7:30am

WHERE: Roxy Vibe, B1, 155, Jinshan S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City 市金山南路一段155號B1) LINEUP: Coach (教練), Skaraoke, Boyz & Girl, High Life Wedding,

Dr Reniculous Lipz, Rock in Hose Burlesque, and DJ Marcus Aurelius ADMISSION: NT\$400, includes a drink

WHAT: Roxy Rocker Grand Opening WHEN: Tonight from 9pm to 4am WHERE: B1, 177, Heping E Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市和平東路一段177號B1) ADMISSION: Free

stole all her money from her purse, and a person spilled a drink on her. She didn't return until she started organizing live music and DJ parties at the club last year.

But Vibe was once more than a late-night pickup joint. It started out in a different location south of Xinyi Road (信義路) as a venue for "Vibe was basically the originator of underground music in

Taipei," said Greg Russell, who also organizes music shows at Vibe. "Some of the big bands like Mayday (五月天) and Assassin (刺客) started off at Vibe."

In recent years, Vibe has been getting started later and later. As in 3am or 4am. To get people to show up earlier, Ling Wei (凌威), the club's owner, started hosting live music shows again.

"It worked sometimes and it didn't other times," said Russell. "Vibe had that reputation ... and was hard to sell as a venue that was known as a late-night pickup joint." Not that that's necessarily a bad thing.

"Its like Ling Wei says, everybody needs love — even drunk was the place to get love." - RON BROWNLOW six months. Now, with a new location on Heping East Road (和平東路), "we're going back to our roots," said Ling. "At Roxy 99 and Vibe we have to play more and more music we don't really love," he said, noting that he's not as fond of the more contemporary hip-hop and rap that his newer clientele demands. "They don't know the history,

they will think Roxy is not fashionable because they don't recognize the background — we believe we have the best music collection in Taiwan." In Rocker there is a separate room with soft lighting, turntables and low couches. The walls are lined floor-to-

ceiling with more than 10,000 vinyl albums, all of which they also have original CD versions of at the DJ booth in Ling bought vinyl until 1997 and he still loves it. "It's something real, you can touch it, that feeling," he said.

"Lots of bands insist there is something different with vinyl, the sound, the touch, the culture." Another wall is lined with music magazines and books, from the 1990s through to the most current issues. "This

place is dedicated to rock and roll," Wei said. The main bar makes this clear as well, with a huge mural of the album cover of Led Zeppelin's Houses of the Holy; the orange sky and rocky landscape with little blond children crawling across it stretches across an entire wall. Lighting streams down from the ceiling to showcase the art and other murals that decorate the venue and to

create an ambient amber glow around the central bar. Though Rocker is spacious and comfortable, with couches around its tables, there is not a lot of room to dance. "Here we don't have to be responsible for your dancing beat," said Ling, laughing gleefully. "We'll play Bob Dylan if we want. People can realize how good of a collection we have."

He is opening two additional bars: Roxy Roots, on July 8 in the Neo 19 building next to Vie Show in the Xinyi District, is dedicated to reggae lovers and is the only venue in Taipei, Wei said, with a performance stage "for live ska bands, 2-tone, African beats ... and some rock and roll." Near the end of next month, The Other Side will open, with more alternative rock, ranging from Jimi Hendrix to Linkin Park, that "will blow your mind" said Ling. "Rock and roll is the best dance music." This bar will also be located in the Xinyi District. Roxy 99, meanwhile, will continue to play "more popular music and hip-hop."

Of his love for rock, Ling said: "I grew up with The Beatles in the '60s, with Santana, Led Zeppelin." When asked what he thinks of more modern rock like The Killers he scoffs, "Modern? That's over five years old. I was the first one to play it in Taiwan. After a while it became a hit."

Ling was a radio DJ for 20 years at the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC,中廣), and "got a lot of listeners calling me and writing letters asking many questions," so he decided to open his first club in 1982, which was called AC/DC. "I had a place to share music with them," he said.

Now he has that again, with Rocker. Just "don't come here and ask me to play some dance track, please," he said. "But if you are into real rock and roll you'll be satisfied."

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