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## The Catwalk Leads to the Lounge

By BEN DETRICK

New York night life is frequently maligned as sluggish and homogenized in comparison with its reckless past, but each September offers an opportunity for redemption. As usual, New York Fashion Week's homecoming of debutantes and jet-setters coincides with a panoply of new options for depravity, each jostling for the fickle affections of the cool-kid aristocracy.

With many night-life heavyweights sitting this season out, the new crop of bars, lounges and discothèques is unlikely to shift the flattened landscape. Still, the resurrection of the once-shuttered mainstays Max Fish and Don Hill's (now called the Hills NYC) offers a hint of optimism. What was lost can, sometimes, be reclaimed.

Here are some notable openings seeking to bask in Fashion Week's reflective glow.

### MOST SUFFOCATING VELVET ROPE?

#### The Leonora

Claiming the mantle of New York's toughest door is prestigious currency, and the Leonora, a lounge in the barrens of Chel-

sea, aims to seize the title via membership cards and quasi-social-club rhetoric.

"It gives the doorman a good reason not to let people in," said Noel Ashman, part of an ownership hydra that includes Michael Strahan and Patrick McMullan, whose celebrity photography adorns the walls.

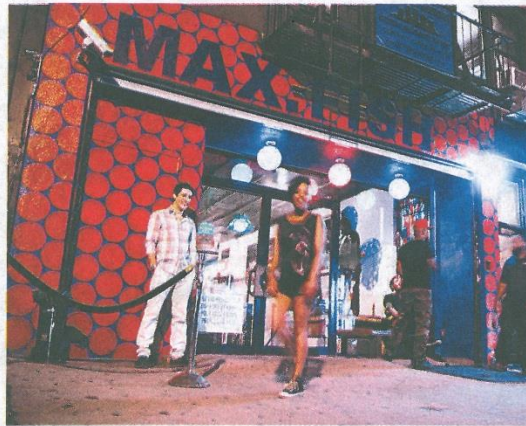
The smallish room is burgundy and brick, ringed with banquettes and an antebellum bar from Kentucky. After hosting parties for Julia Stiles, the Leonora hopes a Fashion Week soiree for a modeling agency will keep the buzzy cachet. "Nelson Mandela's son was here the other day," said Liam McMullan, a D.J. there.

525 West 29th Street, 212-594-6000, [theleonoranyc.com](http://theleonoranyc.com).

### RETURN OF THE DIVE BAR

#### Max Fish

A year ago, the closing of Max Fish was rhapsodized as the expiration date for the grimy Lower East Side. But welcome to Mayor Bill de Blasio's New York, where the fabled bar has reclaimed its old turf (albeit a couple of blocks south) and the familiar snarl of art kids, musicians and



Max Fish has returned to the Lower East Side, this time in the former Gallery Bar.

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goony skaters. "After endless searching for the right space, it felt right," said Ulli Rimkus, the owner.

The new version, which opened in August in the former Gallery Bar, is a low-frills rectangle with concrete floors and bathrooms that are already lashed by graffiti. The cherished portrait of a disfigured Julio Iglesias is back on the wall, Budweiser remains cheap and the endangered species of the downtown dive has clawed out of hibernation. DKNY and Frank 151 host a party there on Sunday.

120 Orchard Street (between Rivington and Delancey Streets), 212-529-3959, [maxfish.com](http://maxfish.com).

### BALEARIC WAVES ON THE HUDSON

#### Space Ibiza

Brooklyn dragged the dance scene across the East River, but the owners of Space Ibiza are wagering that Manhattan's clubland can be saved with an assist from overseas. "I miss the days of getting lost in cool, cavernous venues," said Antonio Piacquadio, one of the owners who is bringing the popular Ibiza club here.

The huge space, scheduled to open next month after substantial delays, has room for over 1,000 guests on its dance floor, elevated bottle service areas and a lounge built from a shipping container. Opening Ceremony (with Spike Jonze) and Jeremy Scott have fashion parties there this week.

637 West 50th Street 212-247-2447, [spaceibizany.com](http://spaceibizany.com).

### NEW FASHION FLOPHOUSE

#### Ludlow Hotel

Sean McPherson, whose dominion includes the Marlton hotel and Waverly Inn, burrows deeper downtown with the 184-room Ludlow. "The Lower East Side has a rich tradition of accepting newcomers," he said. "It still feels like old New York City."

The convivial lobby bar has caterpillar-segmented sofas, bronze chandeliers and a limestone fireplace that makes anyone look erudite. Its restaurant, Dirty French, is hosting Fashion Week dinners for Details magazine and Guest of a Guest.

180 Ludlow Street (between Houston and Stanton Streets), 212-432-1818, [ludlowhotel.com](http://ludlowhotel.com).

### ROCK CLUB REVIVAL

#### The Hills NYC

Don Hill died in 2011, and his namesake rock club has been lurking undisturbed on a Spring Street corner since. It feels almost cryogenically intact, with the same spray-painted art, scrawled memorial tags and plastered photos of Kate Moss.

"Why would you want to change anything?" said Alma Ayala, a friend of Mr. Hill's who is orchestrating the reboot. "Nothing like this exists." Rechristened as the Hills NYC, it will open with a Fashion Week party for Interview magazine, though it will not be fully open until November.

314 Spring Street (at Greenwich Street), 212-334-3645, [thehillsnyc.com](http://thehillsnyc.com).

### MIDTOWN GLAMOUR

#### Park Hyatt New York

Ninety stories tall and devastatingly thin, the new Park Hyatt is an icicle of anonymity staked across from Carnegie Hall. The lower 25 floors are devoted to a hotel and ancillary amenities: pool, restaurant,



A Details magazine party at Dirty French, the restaurant in the Ludlow Hotel.

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event space with 30-foot ceilings. Tones are muted, via a frosty color palette of gray, marble and pastels, and the grave solemnity of luxury. The Back Room, a 90-person bar with stacks of cubic art conjuring the feel of fragrance counters, serves cocktails by Julie Reiner of Pegu Club.

For Fashion Week, the hotel is hosting a lounge for The Daily Front Row and a Veronica Beard presentation.

153 West 57th Street, 646-774-1234, [newyork.park.hyatt.com](http://newyork.park.hyatt.com).

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

Later in September, Jon Neidich (Acme) and Jim Kearns (NoMad hotel) are opening the Happiest Hour, a midcentury-style bar in the split-level West Village space formerly occupied by Kingswood. ... On the Lower East Side, Happy Ending, which hosted sweaty indie parties in the mid-2000s, will reopen as a restaurant by Oliver Stumm (Café Select) and Max Levai (Marlborough Chelsea gallery). Travis Bass, an orchestrator of foggy, red-hued, Chinatown pop-up parties, will oversee its basement lounge.