

Lilium

By JOHN ORTVED FEB. 29, 2012

WHEN considering places to dance, the basement of the W New York hotel in Union Square is not the first that comes to mind. That may explain why the former Underbar underwent a million-dollar renovation and reopened in December as Lilium, with help from the Gerber Group, a night-life agency that operates 23 hotel bars.

But changing the club's facade and adding some contemporary art does not a dance party make. While Lilium hosted some events during New York Fashion Week, a more recent visit found a more generic scene, populated with out-of-town hotel guests and those driving in for a night of club-hopping.

THE SPACE Separate from the hotel lobby, down two flights of stairs, the 1,600-square-foot room is carved up by black leather banquettes and dominated by a web of 200 black steel lilies hung from the ceiling. While the goal is to recreate a cave adorned with flowers, the result approximates a set from an unmade "Alien" sequel.

THE CROWD On a recent Saturday night, the mix of 20- and early 30-somethings was a study of urban arrivistes: young professionals and students from Long Island to the Upper East Side, Hell's Kitchen to Murray Hill. They milled around and danced in groups, with guys in jeans and oxford shirts buying shots for pretty blondes in miniskirts.

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other words, you or someone you know will have to be buying a bottle.

THE PLAYLIST A shameless layer cake of Top 40 hits, and super-hits worthy of a Sweet 16 party. Gold Bar's Johnny Lennon, who plays some Tuesday nights, offers a wider range of hip-hop, disco and indie dance, but don't expect to whip out the Shazam app.

DRINKS A Bud is \$7 while a craft beer like the Matilda wheat ale is \$8. A vodka and soda is \$12, while specialty cocktails like the Black Lilly (vodka, blackberry juice, champagne) are \$15. Bottles start at \$300.

Lilium, 201 Park Avenue South (entrance on East 17th Street), (212) 253-9119, gerberbars.com/lilium. Monday to Saturday, 6 p.m. to 4 a.m.

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