

# New Memphis nightclub District XII Social Club offers unique experience for millennials

[Jacob Wilt](#) Memphis Commercial Appeal



A new nightlife experience curated specifically by and for millennials has opened its doors in Memphis.

Co-owners of [District XII Social Club](#) Brent Hooks and Tony Smith combined their extensive experience in the entertainment industry to create something wholly their own. What came out of that partnership was DXII, a nightclub unlike anything the southeastern part of the city has seen before.

The club, at 6642 Winchester Road, opened its doors on New Year's Eve.

Hooks, 34, said his time in the entertainment scene began when he was just a teenager, when his uncle owned the old Plush club on Beale Street. Working in the industry got him

through college, and now he is a co-owner of civil engineering and construction management firm [Allworld Project Management](#), where he works as the chief administrative officer. Still, his passion for what he grew up with hasn't left him.

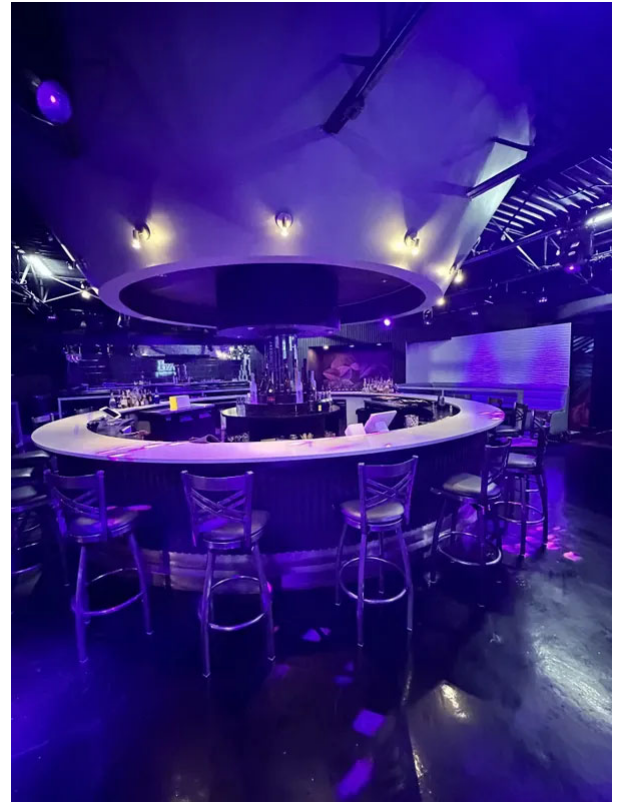
Neither has Smith's excitement for his work. Originally an aerospace major, during college Smith found he enjoyed hosting parties and simply making people happy.

"I always had just a love for people," Smith, 35, said. "So I never was the one to overcharge for events, my whole thing was to get people together and have a blast."

After leaving Middle Tennessee State University and returning to Memphis, Smith said he realized something was missing for his age group.

"As a collective [group of] young professionals, alumni, there was nowhere for us to go and have a party, enjoy ourselves and be around each other," he said.

Looking to fill that gap, Smith hosted his first event in Memphis to great success. Each event he hosted increased in popularity, and soon enough, he met Hooks. "The whole time his vision and my vision were aligned," Smith said. A few years later, they bought what is now District XII.





The club's name is two-fold. District XII represents both the club's location in Shelby County Commission's District 12, as well as the fictional District 12 from the ever-popular book and movie series "The Hunger Games". The name alludes to the main characters' journey from poverty and obscurity to prosperity and fame in the story. "They started from the bottom, now they're here," Smith said.

**MEMPHIS RESTAURANTS:** [Here are 4 new spots that opened in January and 5 that closed](#)

DXII's real world location, however, is just as important as its fictional inspiration. While there are similar restaurants and lounges in the area like In Love Memphis and Acapella's, Hooks said they chose the area to complement the others, while still feeling confident that DXII stands out among the competition.

"There's other businesses similar to this, but they don't provide exactly what we're providing," he said. "As far as the experience and overall feel... we consider ourselves to stand apart in a number of different ways."

One of those ways is refreshments. Top notch drinks including specialty craft cocktails make DXII the place be. For food, Carlotta Dailey, a chef at DXII, has a few personal

favorites, including a southwestern egg roll, flatbreads including vegan flat bread, and four different flavors of chicken wings.

"Everything's just really fresh, everybody's getting handmade, hand-cooked [food], nothing's frozen," Dailey said.

"Even when it comes to the wings, we have our own signature sauces here," Smith said.

"Everything here we want to craft. We don't go buy premade eggrolls that sit in the freezer and taste freezer burnt."

Hooks and Smith were very intentional in how they designed the interior space. Hooks described the style as "simple, but classy."

"We wanted to expand the room," Hooks said.

"So we did that by including mirrors on our walls, almost from the top of the booth to the ceiling... we just wanted to make it feel like it had a certain flow."

Smith said when deciding on a layout for the bar and booths, he made sure to account for how people move around in a party atmosphere.

"I want everything to flow like water, and be calm and cool all the time," Smith said. "There's no stopping points, everything is controlled. It's tight, it's simple."

Those interior design goals, high-quality customer service, craft cocktails and everything in between are connected to the duo's central goal of creating a space for millennials specifically to enjoy. Hooks and Smith said marketing to their generation was always part



of the plan. "It's by us and for us," Hooks said, "The diversity in our music selection and our style of operation really stems from the next generation of leaders."

Hooks explained that catering to people at a similar age with similar life experience just works.

"We haven't seen that type of establishment exist," he continued. "This is coming from a perspective of, 'these are my friends, these are people that I grew up with.' That style of operation has allowed us to kind of execute on a different level."

**MEMPHIS ON TV:** [Guy Fieri to feature 3 Memphis restaurants on Food Network in February. Here's who.](#)

For both Hooks and Smith, the club is clearly a passion project in which they both see great potential.

"I'm excited," Smith said. "I see the growth. I know where we can go. We have a great partnership, great management team, a great staff, so the sky's the limit."

*Jacob Wilt is a reporter for The Commercial Appeal. You can reach him at [jacob.wilt@commercialappeal.com](mailto:atjacob.wilt@commercialappeal.com).*

## **District XII Social Club**

**Address:** 6642 Winchester Road, Memphis

**Hours:** 5 p.m.-midnight Friday, 7 p.m.-2 a.m. Saturday and 4-10 p.m. Sunday; the nightclub is still in its soft opening phase and will eventually be open on Thursday too

**Online:** [d12socialclub.com](http://d12socialclub.com)

