



CRAZY AT THE DAISY

By Mark Richens

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It has been about eight months since the New Daisy Theatre's grand reopening following an ownership change and a 10-month restoration effort.

Now owned by Memphis businessman J.W. Gibson and nightclub developer Steve Adelman, the 74-year-old venue has brought some needed activity to the struggling east end of Beale Street, particularly on Saturday nights.

That's when the club hosts Daisyland, a signature weekly event featuring national and international electronic dance music acts, along with local

Electronic dance music show immerses crowd in sound, light

resident DJs, performing on the venue's state-of-the-art Funktion-One sound system under an astonishing array of lights, lasers and LED displays. This weekend's guest artist is NGHTMRE, an emerging producer whose festival-ready trap and dubstep sounds could test the limiters on the Daisy's new back line.

For Adelman, whose past nightclub ventures include the Avalon in Hollywood and Limelight in New York, the skyrocketing popularity of electronic dance music, or EDM, made including a dance element in the New Daisy's programming "a no-brainer."

"I saw no reason why that couldn't work here, and as I talked to people, they said there's nothing like that around here," Adelman, who is in his early 50s, said on a recent afternoon while sitting in the club during soundcheck for that evening's live band.

"There's cycles, right? You had the disco DJs, and then dance music in the late '90s early 2000s was really, really big, so that had a cycle. And so now it came back basically through DJs becoming sort of pop stars, rock stars. Really the difference from say 10 years ago is the DJ experience sounds like a concert. So we sell it sort of like

a concert. Although it's taken a different form, it's still kind of the same thing. People like to go out late night, weekends, dance, have fun. Some elements have changed, and some elements are tried and true since the '70s."

Adelman says the June bookings for Daisyland are the strongest yet, with NGHTMRE followed by the live electronic act Zoogma (an afterparty for that evening's Widespread Panic concert) on June 18 and Los Angeles-based DJ/producer Borgeous on June 25. June is also the month when Adelman says the club has finally reached cruising altitude after

an eight-month ascent.

"It's stabilizing with the staff and the way people are perceiving it, and the branding of it has a certain path to it," he says. "So it's kind of where it should be."

Adelman and Gibson also purchased the building across Fourth at 380 Beale, a notorious property that over the years was home to several nightclubs and the site of dozens of disturbances and shootings. The much larger venue, to be called The Palace, has been gutted and blueprints have been drawn to reconstruct the interior. But Adelman says there's no hurry to get started there.

"These things take a life of their own, so you have expectations, but the reality is you've got to roll with what"



inli Devine (left) hula hoops during Daisyland at the New Daisy Theatre. Nightclub developer Steve Adelman says Daisyland attracts an "eclectic" crowd of mostly 20-somethings, with maturing of older folks. The lights can be disorienting, the music chest-pounding.

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DAISYLAND

Every Saturday night at
the New Daisy Theatre,
330 Beale. newdaisy.com

This weekend:
NGHTMRE.
Doors open at 10 p.m.
Tickets: \$15 in advance,
\$25 at the door.

like, 'Holy (expletive)!,'"
says Tree Riehl, who has
been one of Daisyland's
resident DJs from the start
and recently took over as
manager of the New Daisy.
He has DJ'd at many of the
nightclubs that have come
through Memphis in the
past decade and a half,

but he says Daisyland is
different. "You walk into
the Daisy, we want you
to feel not that club thing,
but that MAJOR club level.
Like, 'Oh, man, this is what
it really is!' You come in to
hear the sound, to see the
lighting, and everything's
tied in. Some clubs, it's
hard to see the DJ when
they put them way in the
back. It's hard to reach the
crowd because they don't
see you. But here we pro-
vide a stage for DJs to come
and play, and I think it's
just a more personal expe-
rience because you're right
there in front of them."

With customers dressed

See DAISY, 6



CLASSIC WEEKEND

CLASSIC TAILGATE

Sept. 8-10 • All day
Liberty Bowl parking areas
Friends, football and food
Premium Tiger Lane,
RV and tailgating
packages available

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Thursday, Sept. 8 • 8 p.m.
Orpheum Theatre

Enjoy a Classic performance
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CLASSIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

Friday, Sept. 9 • 8 p.m.
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Starring **MAZE** featuring
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Hosted by **Jammin Jay Lamont**

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Saturday, Sept. 10 • 6 p.m.
Liberty Bowl Stadium

Traditional football rivals:
JACKSON STATE and
TENNESSEE STATE

JACKSON STATE vs
TENNESSEE STATE

WWW.SOUTHERNHERITAGECLASSIC.COM

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call 1-800-745-3000

THE
FUN NEVER
STOPS!



Breathe Carolina performs during a recent Daisyland. Club developer Steve Adelman says the decision to include an electronic music dance event in the New Daisy's programming was a "no-brainer." "As I talked to people, they said there's nothing like that around here," he said.



In a more subdued environment, DJ Dudecalledrob spins some tracks in a private party room during a recent Daisyland. The New Daisy, eight months into its newest iteration, is "kind of where it should be," says developer Adelman.



Daisyland patrons get into last month's performance by Breathe Carolina. The club keeps it comfortable, casual and reasonably priced (\$15 to \$25) while delivering a club experience that brings in national and international electronic dance music acts.

“There’s cycles, right? You had the disco DJs, and then dance music in the late 90s early 2000s was really, really big, so that had a cycle. And so now it came back basically through DJs becoming sort of pop stars, rock stars. Really the difference from say 10 years ago is the DJ experience sounds like a concert. So we sell it sort of like a concert.”

Steve Adelman, nightclub developer



“You walk in, and you’re like, ‘Holy (expletive)! says New Daisy manager and Daisyland DJ Tree Riehl, who has DJ’d at many Memphis nightclubs over the past 15 years.

DAISY from 5

in T-shirts and sneakers and with reasonable ticket prices (\$15 to \$25), Daisyland comes off as a much less fussy alternative to the bling-bling-and-bottle-service experience of clubs in party destinations like Las Vegas.

“People are comfortable, and that’s great,” Riehl says. “If you went to New York or Miami, places like that, just to get in it’s 100 bucks. You can only imagine what it’s gonna cost to get a drink. Where we’re at, we’re able to

provide what we get here, and we’re able to bring people in and we don’t have to go over the top.”

Adelman hopes the east end of Beale Street becomes its own destination, with ample surface parking close by for the Daisyland crowd, many of whom come from as far away as Little Rock or Blytheville, Ark. Recent disruptions on Beale Street — including last weekend’s rampage, in which 21-year-old Justin Welch is charged with fatally striking Memphis police officer Verdell Smith with a car after shooting three people — have added urgency

to these plans.

“Whether it’s Be Street Music Festival anything that happens they block the streets that’s the main issue with us,” says Adelman, who kept the Daisy open all the Saturday night inside. “Our crowd is not a Be Street crowd. ... For people, the issue is, ‘How do we get to you?’

“Public safety is important, but it’s not happening by us. It’s not happening in front of our building. It’s confusing to people in how to get there. That’s what we’re trying to work on through the summer.

Running the small club of his career, Adelman says his goals for Daisyland are in sight.

“I think now it’s a harder challenge than it was in the day because people are very savvy,” he says. “They go online and they say, ‘Oh, you have a DJ and this lighting team.’ So wherever you go, you’ve got to deliver a major product to enter people because they’re very well aware. Back in the ’70s, you put up a ball in a black room and you had a great night. The bar has been raised and I think we’re up to that challenge.”