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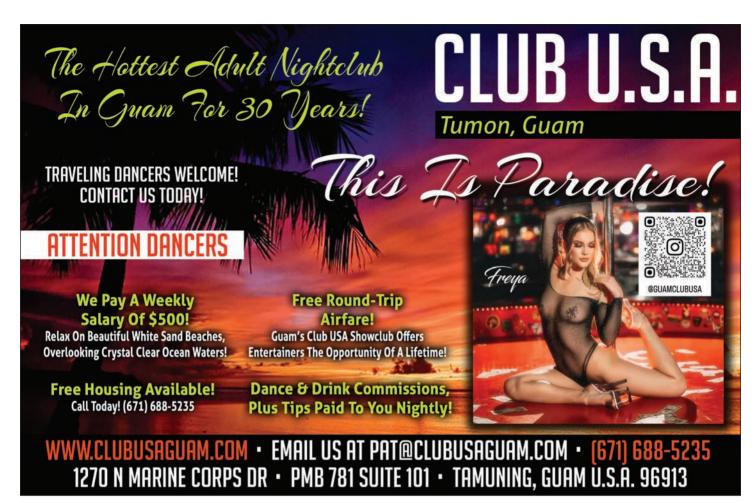
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FEATURES



A HISTORY OF PIZZA

the past you never knew about your favorite food page 20 by wombstretcha the magnificent



THINGS I'M CURRENTLY OBSESSING OVER

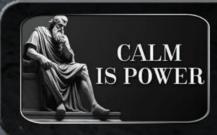
we all do it but hannah was brave enough to write about it page 34 | by hannah one cup



GET MORE PEOPLE TO COME TO YOUR SHOWS

keepin' it real with the most creative ways to pack the house

page 36 | by blazer sparrow



A BOUNCER'S CRASH COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY

an in-depth look at stoicism in volume four of this series

page 38 | by nate hazen

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PG. 18 PG. 19

PG. 24 PG. 28

PG. 31 PG. 32

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ECOCCITY BY BRYAN A. BY BEE

The warm weather is upon us, and it's the beginning of a magical time in our city—it's officially Rose Festival season. Yes, my loyal strip club connoisseurs, our city is known not only for the most adult business per capita than anywhere in the world but also for having a deep love affair with roses. This year marks the 118th Portland Rose Festival, which boasts nearly 58 years of seniority over P-town's first strip club. We'd have to include brothels and "naughty" speakeasies to overcome that disparity! And while we're on disparities, your favorite industry magazine wouldn't arrive until 86 years after PDX first Rose Festival. At least we made the same century! That's enough history for now; you might stop reading for fear of learning something...or apathy...but I'm going with the former!

On to birthdays! On Saturday, June 21, head over to AJ's Gentlemen's Club for Alex and Violet's Birthday Party. Fast forward a week to Saturday, June 28, and it's Freyja's Birthday Party at Union Jacks! Make sure to drop by and buy these lovely ladies a birthday shot! Happy Birthday from Exotic!

As far as other industry events and parties, there's a special Fleet Week edition of our industry's own stand-up comedy show: Tits & Giggles. Head to X Exotic Lounge on Thursday, June 5, for Syrens & Sailors! Then, your regularly scheduled Tits & Giggles will return on Thursday, June 19—at X Exotic Lounge, of course!

Union Jacks will have their Latin Night on Saturday, June 7. Then, on Sunday, June 8, it's Miss Nude Oregon '25 at Club Rouge (Portland) at 9 p.m. You don't want to miss this pageant, folks!

Ever had Jameson Orange mixed with Skrewball Peanut Butter Whiskey? I'm not sure I'm adventurous enough to try it, but you can if you head to Union Jacks on Thursday, June 12, for their Jameson Skrewball Night! Let me know if it tickles your fancy! If you're an emo fan, make sure to return on Tuesday, June 17, for Union Jack's Feel the Feels Emo Night.

On Friday, June 20, head over to Lucky Devil for their Summer Kick-Off Party, with summer cocktail specials, free food, and raffles! Also on June 20, it's the Wild, Wild West Party at Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport). This is a good and proper western party, complete with a mechanical bull, prizes, and food and drink specials. Then, on Saturday, June 21, head to Stars Cabaret in Salem for their Summer Kick-Off BBQ, complete with outdoor games, tasty BBQ, and a specialty cocktail menu.

Bust out those baggy jeans because it's Back to the 2000s Night at Union Jacks on Sunday, June 22, and Bike Night at AJ's Gentlemen's Club on Saturday, June 29—complete with a wet T-shirt contest! Let's googoo!

Wrapping up events for June, we have DJ Dick Hennessy's 7th Annual *Motorbooty Twerking Competition*! Check all the event dates on the right, as well as the promotional spread on page 22!

POLEROTICA 2025

There will be full coverage of *Polerotica 2025 Finals* in our 32nd Anniversary Issue—next month! Until then, we'd like to congratulate all of the qualifying finalists from rounds four through seven:

<u>Round 4</u>: Passion from Guilty Pleasures, Persia from Desire, and Jade from Annie's Saloon

<u>Round 5</u>: River from The Lounge, Maria Knox (independent), and Remedy from The Lounge

<u>Round 6</u>: Kit Kat from Kit Kat Club, Amora from Desire, and Kota from Kit Kat Club & X Exotic Lounge

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(O)

@EXOTIC_MAG

<u>Round 7</u>: Jess from Cabaret, Harley from Casa Diablo, Sky from Reveal Lounge, and Auriela (independent)

(Check out the left-hand page to see photos of all the abovementioned finalists in action during their qualifying set.)

Alla prossima.

IG: @exotic_mag | X: @exoticmag | FB: @xoticmag

Zeroliccity spotlight

SUN 01 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO CABARET WED 04 - THE SHOWDOWN - COUNTRY CABARET THU 05 – X EXOTIC LOUNGE – STRIP CITY PRESENTS: SYRENS & SAILORS SAT 07 - THE LOUNGE - MOTORBOOTY ROUND 1 SAT 07 - UNION JACKS - LATIN NIGHT SUN 08 - CLUB ROUGE (PORTLAND) - MISS NUDE OREGON '25 SUN 08 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO CABARET WED 11 - THE SHOWDOWN - COUNTRY CABARET THU 12 - UNION JACKS - JAMESON SKREWBALL NIGHT FRI 13 – GUILTY PLEASURES – MOTORBOOTY ROUND 2 SAT 14 - AJ'S - MOTORBOOTY ROUND 3 SUN 15 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO CABARET TUE 17 - UNION JACKS - FEEL THE FEELS EMO NIGHT WED 18 – THE SHOWDOWN – COUNTRY CABARET THU 19 - CLUB DETOUR - MOTORBOOTY ROUND 4 THU 19 – X EXOTIC LOUNGE – STRIP CITY PRESENTS: TITS & GIGGLES FRI 20 – LUCKY DEVIL – SUMMER KICK-OFF PARTY FRI 20 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT) – WILD, WILD WEST PARTY SAT 21 – AJ'S – ALEX & VIOLET'S BIRTHDAY PARTY SAT 21 - DESIRE - MOTORBOOTY ROUND 5 SAT 21 – STARS CABARET (SALEM) – SUMMER KICK-OFF BBO SUN 22 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO CABARET SUN 22 – UNION JACKS – BACK TO THE 2000S NIGHT WED 25 - THE SHOWDOWN - COUNTRY CABARET SAT 28 – GUILTY PLEASURES – MOTORBOOTY FINALS SAT 28 – UNION JACKS – FREYJA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY SAT 29 – AJ'S – BIKE NIGHT & WET T-SHIRT CONTEST SUN 29 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO CABARET

HAPPY HOURS

AJ'S - 10AM-5PM

CABARET - 2PM-6PM

CLUB 205 - 10:30AM-6:30PM

DEVILS POINT - 3PM-6PM

DESIRE - 6PM-9PM

DV8 - 12PM-3PM

GUILTY PLEASURES - 12PM-8PM (SUN-THU)

THE LOUNGE - 11AM-4PM

LUCKY DEVIL - 3PM-6PM

UNION JACKS - 6PM-8PM

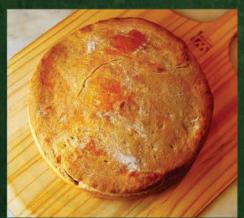


BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

A HISTORY OF PIZZA

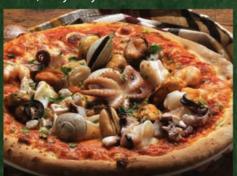
Pizza. It's so commonplace now that you can't envision pizza as not being a flat-ass bread with sauce and cheese and various toppings. Except for you Chicago deep dish folks, wherein it is more of a sort of...casserole than a grab-a-slice-and-go affair.

I am eating pizza right now from Hometown Pizza in Portland. Good stuff. But pizza right now is not how it used to be. The modern incarnation of what we call pizza today is nothing like in the past. Let's deep dive and see where pizza started and how we've come to know our favorite dish.



Pope's Pizza

Yes, pizza has been part of Italian/ Catholic history for over 1,000 years, even before "Italy" was a consolidated nation and not a collection of constantly warring city-states. The papal conclave and the Pope himself reveled in the delight of what they then called pizza. It looked nothing like it looks today—more like a loaf than a pie. In the words of Pope Pius V's executive cook: "Split the dough into two or three pieces, and with each of these pieces, make the pizza in a tart pan, where there is fresh butter, and put them to cook in the oven with melted butter on top. Make several holes with the point of the knife on the top so that it does not puff too much. When it is nearly finished cooking, sprinkle it with sugar and rose water. This pastry should be cooked slowly and served hot." It was apparently Pope Pius V's fave in 1570. Sugar and rose water and a fuckton of butter. Sounds more like dessert than dinner, but I ain't the Pope, who I believe has the authority to decide what is breakfast, lunch, or dinner, at least for Catholics. No fuckin' meat on Friday? Fuck that, I'm joining the Zoroastrians, they let you eat children.



Evolution

In 1535, poet Benedetto di Falco wrote "Rock Me Amadeus," and it changed the world. Nah, just playin', but he did write "Description of Ancient Places in Naples" and commented that seasoned flatbread, which the rest of Italy

called focaccia, was called pizza. That is why Naples, or Napoli if you wanna get all Italian about it, is considered the birthplace of what we would call pizza, in the sense we think of it today, as they served it with many toppings, but mostly fish. Honestly, if you made me a pizza on what modern people consider focaccia bread, I would pee on your wife.



OH SHIT! WHAT THE FUCK? TOE MAY TOES?!

Italians, when the tomato was introduced to them after people visited the New World™, it blew their fucking minds! There's-a so-a many-a things to do! They immediately applied them to their pizza and said to themselves, "This is the best shit ever; what the hell?" So, the pizza game was changed forever.

The Margherita

One of the classics. Flatbread, cheese, tomato and basil. But why is it one of



the classics? Well, who better to look to, than the legendary Alexandre Dumas, French writer and professional asshole.



According to his writing, Queen Margherita of Savoy, wife of King Umberto I, had it out for this. Pizza, at this time in the 19th century, was seen as poor people's food. Not fit for a queen. But Margherita requested it, and as the story goes, this was because she was bored of the fancy French cuisine that



royalty was accustomed to being fed. According to accounts, she was served three pizzas made by quite famous pizza chef Raffaele Esposito. He made one with garlic and fish, one with tomato and mozzarella, and her favorite: basil, tomato, and mozzarella. She didn't like the fishy one and preferred the one with the basil because it was apparently the most delicious. Red, green, and white were the colors of Italy, and she liked that. So, it became known as the Pizza Margherita.



Chicago deep-dish pizza. It was ostensibly invented in 1943 at Pizzeria Uno by one Ike Swewll and one Ric Riccardo. Is this an I Love Lucy gag? The toppings are layered between the sauce and the cheese. It can go fuck itself.



This one we can blame on Canada. In 1962, a Greek immigrant named Sam Panopoulos came up with the brilliant idea of adding pineapple to a Canadian bacon pizza. They just call it bacon, there. He had no idea that a worldwide communication network would eventually spring up and tell people to hate it. Poor fellow.



In the 21st century, people will put pretty much any kind of bold, crafty ingredients on their pizza and charge you 60 bucks for it. People buy it, though. "Yes, I want the salmon and olives pizza with extra country gravy on top." Just gimme a slice of pepperoni and, ideally, non-ethically sourced cheese for \$2. People in California are probably ordering extra sauce and dogshit on their pizzas. The "Mastiff Special."

That's pretty much the best that my research came up with, so I hope you enjoyed knowing the history of what you order on your phone at 2 a.m. when your friend is too drunk and you need to get something in her stomach.

Eat well,

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a cold crust leftover from last night; tomato fan, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter/X/whatever as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe and (begrudgingly) Facebook as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."





e **SAT JUNE 7** 6210 NE COLUMBIA BLVD

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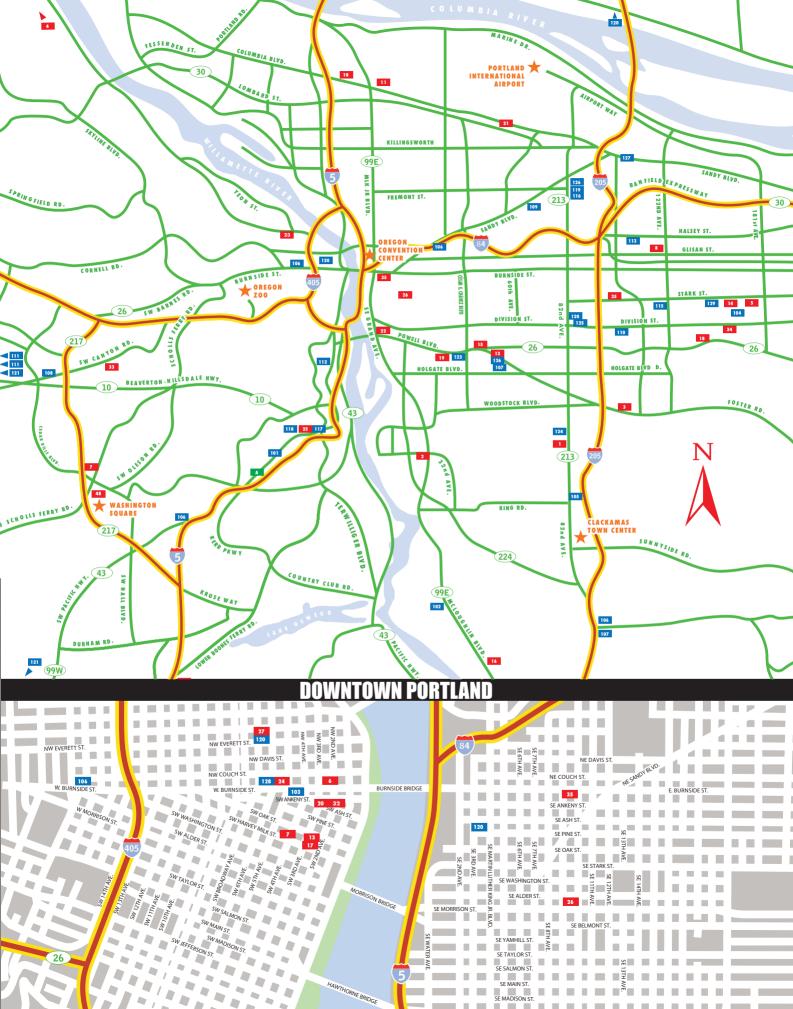


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SINNERS

By Ian Sellwood

Well, my excitement about the re-horniness of films has been extinguished like a baptized-burning Irish vampire. Sorry for the slight pre-spoiler, but I need to make it clear from the get-go that this movie was greatly disappointing in terms of wankability. You're probably wondering why I even bothered reviewing this film instead of just scraping it like I did some other unforgivably skinless flicks like Companion. Even if you're not, I'm going to tell you. It's been two whole months without reviewing a new movie, and I was starting to worry about getting a talking-to from the editorin-chief. I had to deliver something, and I thought this Ryan Coogler yarn would provide an opportunity to rail against the prudification of blockbuster films. I realize now, too late, that this film was exactly that. I think I was confused since Mr. Coogler has been described as an auteur and a visionary, etc. Especially after the Lynchathon last month, I was excited to see what this new voice in film would offer in terms of the male gaze.

But after leaving the theater disappointed and blue-balled, I looked up this dude's résumé. He's made two Marvel movies and a Rocky spinoff! This is no auteur; this is a blockbuster IP schlock hawker!

So it seems that although the world of artsy and award-winning cinema is indeed shifting towards a new full-blown hornytopia, the world of big-budget, novelty popcorn bucket films remains quite chaste.

Spoilers Ahead!

So to be fair, the only reason I even bothered to see this was because my social media feed kept throwing ads at me showing Hailee Steinfeld giving a sharp-toothed, horny grin. I thought, "Holy shit! Do we finally get to see her naked?!" An R-rated vampire movie set in a boozy, sweaty juke joint? Forgive me for thinking we were going to be getting an absolute flesh feast.

The precedent is there. All the best vampire

movies are basically excuses to make softcore porn with fake blood. I remember, as a wee lad, snatching my stepdad's VHS copy of Interview With The Vampire, thinking I wasn't allowed to watch it 'cause of a bunch of gore and violence. I learned that day why we watch movies. To see naked ladies! From Dusk till Dawn gave us Selma Hayek's tits. Even Coppola's Dracula, the one with Keanu Reeves stretching the definition of "acting," had loads of titties in it and weird, horny monster sex scenes. The vampire horror movie subgenre is basically an excuse to indulge in our most perverse, horny fantasies. Even the new Nosferatu (my review of which you can read in this magazine's archives) provided plenty of tits, bush, ass, and weird not-sex scenes to aet off to.



This movie was called *Sinners* for God's sake! I thought we were full speed ahead with continuing the tradition of horny vampire movies. Not so! They really wind you up for it though. The whole movie is basically setting up for the party of the century, and even the protagonists' exes are interested in coming. And to be fair, there are two boning scenes, but they are *fully clothed*! What the hell? This did get an R-rating, right? We see more of Michael B. Jordan's body than Hailee Steinfeld's! Not fair!

Now, we do get to see a good portion of

the thicc Hoodoo Priestess lady's massive titties, but there's a fucking baby in the way the whole time! You don't even get to see a nipple. I guess there is enough titty in the shot to get a good wank going, but the baby really kills the mood, and I'm not into the breastfeeding thing.

So much opportunity. So much sexual tension. Absolutely no payoff. You literally have people sneaking off to the broom closet to fuck, and all we get is a wide shot of a clothed gal grinding. Barely in focus.

I like to imagine that if this movie was made in the '70s and leaned fully into blacksploitation cheese, we'd have *non-stop* nudity and fuck scenes during the juke joint climax. As the trouble-causing twins Smoke and Stack come back to their hometown, dicks swinging, they'd have plowed two bitches each with said dicks in the first half hour of the film.

I really hope that, at some point, blockbuster popcorn flicks will go the way of Oscar winners and artsy films. Stuffed to the brim with a bunch of gratuitous sex scenes and unnecessary nudity. Especially if they're rated R. If the point is to sell tickets, I guarantee that tits and ass will only help sell more of them.

More importantly, let's please not backslide into the chaste hell of *Twilight*-era vampire movies. The woman who wrote those was a Mormon! Those movies should be the exception, not the rule. Make vampire movies horny again!

1/5 eggplants



Ian Sellwood is a voice actor, comedian, and certified Sigma Male from Lake Oswego. He frequently contributes content to Mr. Skin and is highly active on 4chan. He can be reached at iancel@xmaq.com

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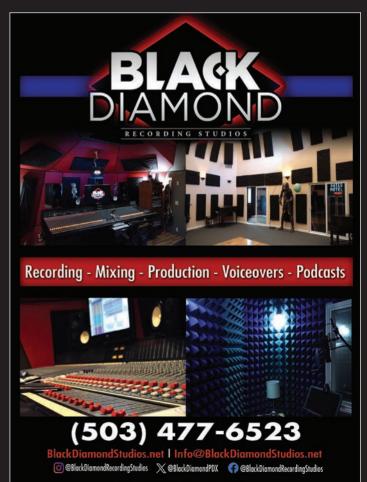




PORTLAND, OR 97220







AND I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S GENERAL INTEREST OR ADHD) BY HANNAH ONE CUP

June is presumably the beginning of the unbearable season of hellish warmth bordering on killing heat...summer. I don't end up having many hobbies during this season, which can make me a rather dull person at times. Ask me to go to the river, go on, do it. Chances are, if it's anywhere about 85 degrees outside, I won't do it and will prefer the comfort of my hardworking AC unit. That isn't to say I hate being outside. I really love adventuring outdoors, but that blasted heat causes me to wilt, not unlike a delicate flower.

That's right. This is the only time of year I'll fess up to weakness of that magnitude. It's also the only time of year I get a cold. As these soon-to-be hot summer days turn into months, I've found that I need to have some sort of hobby to entertain myself with. Otherwise, I'm just a recluse, sitting in a dark room watching anime or murder shows with my dogs, probably sneezing. Becoming an adult made me realize a lot of interests I somehow left behind along the way (when do people start becoming boring?!), and at this moment in time, I've started to pick back up on a few of them. I thought I might share what I'm up to now, what I'm currently obsessing over, and pretending this has never had anything to do with ADHD but is of my own volition and interest.

Drawing - Art in general. I mean, I'm doing tiny dabbles at clay right now, but the one flower I made looked like a peach-colored dildo, and one of the dogs ran away with it and shoved it under the couch. So, I've been sticking mainly to drawing. I used to love drawing and painting. Truth be told, I used to enter competitions at fairs; it was fun. Realizing I left that alone for so long was kind of depressing since art really is so relaxing and not physically taxing at all. Especially when it's hot outside, you can always pick up a piece of paper and a pen and just draw a snowman to make you feel cold again.

Japanese – Aight. So I've been watching anime and reading manga since it wasn't considered cool, and I've recently started picking it back up.* In my way back time machine, I used to want to move to Japan because of the way the houses looked and the trees. I've been brushing back up on my Japanese, including their pictorial alphabet (kanji), and I'm doing pretty decent at it. Just in case, you know, I don't wanna work in America anymore...l can move my skills elsewhere to a Japanese company and live somewhere in an old country house I can purchase for \$10K. Don't look into it. It's my dream. Influencers, stay tf away.



*I purchased a children's book that's entirely in Japanese because it looked cute, with a fox on the front. And now, I'm realizing it's looking more like an extremely sad life lesson about death. Obviously, I saw this coming somehow.

Hair-Dos – I used to wear my hair up a lot. When I was younger, my mom used to take me to beauty school, where she and her friend were attending, and they'd use me as a model. It wasn't as much fun for me as it was for them taking pictures of me. But being an adult and being able to make my own decisions, I've realized it's fun to venture into trying new hair out. It almost made me want to purchase something from the early 2000s called the Conair Quick Twist. Until I fondly remembered one of my friends getting her hair

caught in it so badly that they had to cut that chunk off with scissors.



Misleading device that absolutely does not serve its function.

Flowy Pants - I'm really into this will-othe-wisp-wispy look going on. Not the MC Hammer pants; I do not want to look like I'm going to a yoga retreat or to a bankruptcy lawyer. Those flowy pants that look like paper might be something I'd consider wearing during the summer if I was forced to go outside...but that'd be it. Wispy pants and a bra. I wanna look like a pasty-white ephemeral being that looks like they came out of a grave somewhere and then promptly withers away somewhere in a cave.



Things My Friend Linda Tells Me to Buy -This is not a good one. This is not a good

thing to be into at all. In fact, I try to stay away from these things. However, it's been hard lately. Linda has a habit of getting us both excited about something so ridiculous we both question why we're about to hit "Buy now." We bought Kendamas. Are we good at them? No. Did we almost buy the most expensive one there is because it's cute? Yes. Yes, we almost did...until I stopped us. I must be Confucious-like, remain calm and vigilant, and prepare for Linda's onslaught of attacks of impulsive purchases. We also bought some offbrand Labubu something (hell if I know, I have no idea what I just bought, and it's upsetting me). Again, this isn't a good hobby to have. But it can keep you entertained and makes for a good exercise for our common sense.

Stuffed Animals - They're great. I love floofy things. I like floofy pillows and blankets, and all I want is to be in a floofy room filled with soft things and a huge stuffed animal tanuki, or a dragon roll that's actually the shape of a dragon... but as sushi. That's all I want. Total immersion in clouds. Give it to me! I wanna feel like ET when he pretended he was a creepy doll in the sea of toys. Except not really, because all those toys were terrifying, and so was he. IDK; maybe that was a bad analogy. We'll just go with clouds.

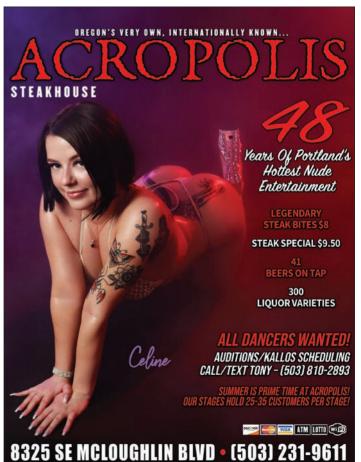


Lighting – I've always enjoyed ambiance of some sort. I'm not sure what the general feel or aesthetic of my home or apartments have ever been, but they've pretty much stayed the same. Strings of multi-colored and purple Christmas lights on my windows or in my bedroom, an Edison bulb somewhere, and a lamp with a red lampshade that makes me feel like I'm in an Edgar Allen Poe story. I like to keep these lights on and turn off all the others during the summer. It feels kind of like a dark, dreamy forest to me. But I think one of my friends told me my house was kind of creepy one time, so I really have no sense of how people feel about me or my taste in décor or definition of ambiance.

So that's that. Just a few things I'm a bit more into lately, and I'm content with it for now. If anyone would like to join me on a quest for soft things or fun lighting, let me know. So long as it's not over 85 degrees, I'll be willing and able. And if it's above 85 degrees, so long as I've found a pair of those wispy pants, I might also be up to it. Stay cool and interest-

ing, sexy people.





GET MORE PEOPLE TO COME TO YOUR SHOWS WITH THESE FIVE EASY TRICKS!

By Blazer Sparrow

The all-important question. The death knell to any email conversation with a prestigious venue:

"What's your draw?"

This is what separates the children from the adults in the music performance world. It doesn't matter how much time you put into producing your little bedroom pop demo or how many online fans you have. How many asses can you get into those seats? That's all the venue that doesn't have a built-in draw gives a shit about. Whether or not that's a good way to run a small music venue for upand-coming artists is a conversation for another piece. Sadly, it's the nature of the beast.

If you're reading this and you're a musician, you're probably well aware that this is indeed the most difficult thing to hack when it comes to being a performing artist. Oftentimes, money is the barrier to entry with things like touring and recording, and time is the barrier to being good (gotta practice so you don't suck).

But how do you get warm bodies in the venue to watch you do your performance therapy?

Gurus, influencers, consultants, music veterans, and con artists will all sell you some horseshit about ways to increase your draw, but the long and the short of it is...no one fucking knows. Some shit takes off, and some doesn't. If there was an instruction manual, a lot more of you would be able to quit your day job.

I don't claim to be one of the above con artists; I'm a humorist. But I've had enough experience in the scene to notice some gimmicks—cough—sorry...no, I mean gimmicks that seemed to work.

Offer Free Treats!

I know this sounds counterintuitive since you want folks to *pay* to go to the show and *buy* your merch, but you'd be surprised how many people will come if you say you'll be giving away free...anything! Something like this is easy on Halloween or some other candy-flooded holiday because you can just buy a bunch of Costco-sized bags of goodies and throw 'em in the crowd. But you can get

more creative than that. I once saw a poster for a show where they had "Free Taco Bell" in bold print. Obviously, I had to call their bluff and attend, and they did not lie. These crafty bastards bought like 100 soft tacos from Taco Bell and chucked 'em out in the audience, as promised, near the end of the set. This might not be the most cost-effective way to get folks out, and it might piss off the venue, but hey, it worked!



Get Naked!

Well, let me rephrase: if you're attractive, get naked. But also, just say you'll do something if X amount of tickets get sold. You'll take a pie in the face. You'll let yourself get kicked in the balls. Debase yourself! People love it! This is another real thing I saw someone advertise on their poster. If a certain amount of people paid to get to this artist's show, she'd take her pants off. Now, don't worry, parents and Christians, she had booty shorts on underneath; this isn't a Jesus Lizard concert. Still, it worked! That was a packed show. Give the people what they want! Nudity! I've seen multiple shows that advertised gals wrestling in some form of lubricant in a kiddie pool, and boy howdy, those were not ill-attended shows.

Say You're Filming a Music Video!

See, here's the thing. Everyone is a selfish bastard who wants attention. All humans want to be on camera. If you say that you're filming this show for a music video, I promise you'll see numbers you've never seen before. All your friends have seen you play your shitty songs before, but they haven't had the chance to be in a music video that'll be seen by four people on YouTube! So long as you have someone with a camera at the show; otherwise, folks might get suspicious

that this was all a ruse to get them to come to your show. This tactic only works once (maybe twice), but hey, you also get an actual music video out of it! Just splice in footage with some artsy shots of the sky and the band looking sad or some shit.

Have a Contest, Raffle, or Something Where People Win a Cheap Prize!

Again, the best way to get people to come to your thing is to make it about them. A costume contest is easy. People love to dress up. As dumb as raffles are, they will keep folks in the building 'cause they'll want to see what cheap shit you bought at Walmart they won. Have the audience members draw their silliest caricatures of the band. Whichever is judged to be the best gets...I dunno, free Taco Bell or something.



Say a More Famous Band Is Gonna Make an Appearance!

Fuck it, just lie. Choose your favorite contemporary band and say they're showing up as a special guest. Spread it like a rumor. A super secret headliner, except not so secret 'cause you'll let people know on social media and tell your friends. What's the worst that'll happen? People show up? Say that Kendrick Lamar, Deafheaven, or Sabrina Carpenter are totally going to come and perform. The audience will stay through the whole night waiting. A literal captive audience! Granted, after the promised super secret headliner doesn't show up, you'll likely have a riot on your hands, but at least for one night, you'll know what it feels like to play to a packed house.

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A BOUNCER'S CRASH COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY VOL. 4: STOICISM

Alright, bouncers...everyone take your seats class is back in session. This time, I'll be discussing Stoicism. The Stoics were a group of philosophers in ancient Greece and Rome who emphasized the importance of virtue, namely the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. They taught that one should live life in alignment with nature and recognize the difference between the things that can and cannot be controlled—kind of like an early version of the serenity prayer taught in twelve-step programs: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." So, what can bouncers learn from the Stoics? Let's take a look at what three of them had to say.



Epictetus

"It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it, that matters." Look, if you're doing security work, shit will happen. Drunkenness, the dickmeasuring contest of clashing egos, and generally, shitty people doing shitty things are all on the table. Don't make the mistake of thinking those things matter. How are you reacting to those things? Focus on that.

"The more we value things outside our control, the less control we have." Wish in one hand and shit in the other, and see which hand fills up first. Let go of wishful thinking; it's not productive. We all wish our customers would behave respectfully, tip, control their drinking, and so on. How often do those wishes come true? Focus on what you can control, like correcting unacceptable behavior, reminding them to tip, monitoring customer intoxication levels, and cutting them off as necessary.

"Nature hath given men one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak." Taking time to listen to what others have to say is a useful practice in security work. Don't get me wrong, I've had plenty of people try to talk me around in circles in an attempt to frustrate my efforts at kicking them out, and obviously, the answer in such cases is to shut that shit down. But some people, customers, and coworkers alike have legitimate complaints or concerns that ignoring them would be a disservice to them and your establishment. Don't act like you know it all—hear people out.

"Any person capable of angering you becomes your master; he can anger you only when you permit yourself to be disturbed by him." This is a pet peeve of mine with bouncers. In our line of work, when someone tries to piss you off, they're trying to get you to react irrationally. People are dumb when they're mad, so stop taking the bait.



Seneca

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Do your job. Keep the club tidy, maintain order, and do your part to make it the kind of place where people want to be. When some high roller walks in and decides he likes your club and that it's where he wants to spend his money, preparation will have met opportunity. Or neglect the place and watch it sit empty night after night. Make your own luck.

"Associate with people who are likely to improve you." Look, I get it. Nobody wants to hear from the people in their life that they're anything short of perfect. Hearing that you have room for improvement can be a blow to the ego. But if you're surrounded by people who push you to be a better version of yourself, then you're with the right people. There's a saying that's attributed to General Electric CEO Jack Welch (it's also attributed to Confucius, so who knows where it actually originated...) that goes, "If you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room." Think about it.

"Anger, if not restrained, is frequently more hurtful to us than the injury that provokes it." So you didn't listen to what Epictetus had to say about anger, and you let that drunk asshole provoke you. Now you're in trouble for breaking his jaw.

Lawsuits or jail time are far worse than the minor indignity of being disrespected. Don't be an idiot.



Marcus Aurelius

"Waste no time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one." It's that easy. You may not get it completely right all the time, so you adjust course as you go. Like Lao Tzu said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

"In your actions, don't procrastinate. In your conversations, don't confuse. In your thoughts, don't wander. In your soul, don't be passive or aggressive." Do what needs to be done in a timely fashion, communicate clearly, be present on the job, and keep a level head. I don't really think this one needs all that much explanation.

"You have power over your mind, not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength." In this quote, Marcus Aurelius echoes the sentiments of Epictetus, and it really gets to the heart of Stoicism. Let go of what you can't control and focus on what you can.

"Confine yourself to the present." This one honestly feels a bit hypocritical of me to write about, especially since I'm finishing up this article ten days past the submission deadline, and I keep putting down my laptop to pick up my phone to distract myself, but hey...I'm learning here, too. It's especially important to remain in the present when doing security work. You're getting paid to protect your people, so put your phone away and take charge of your environment.

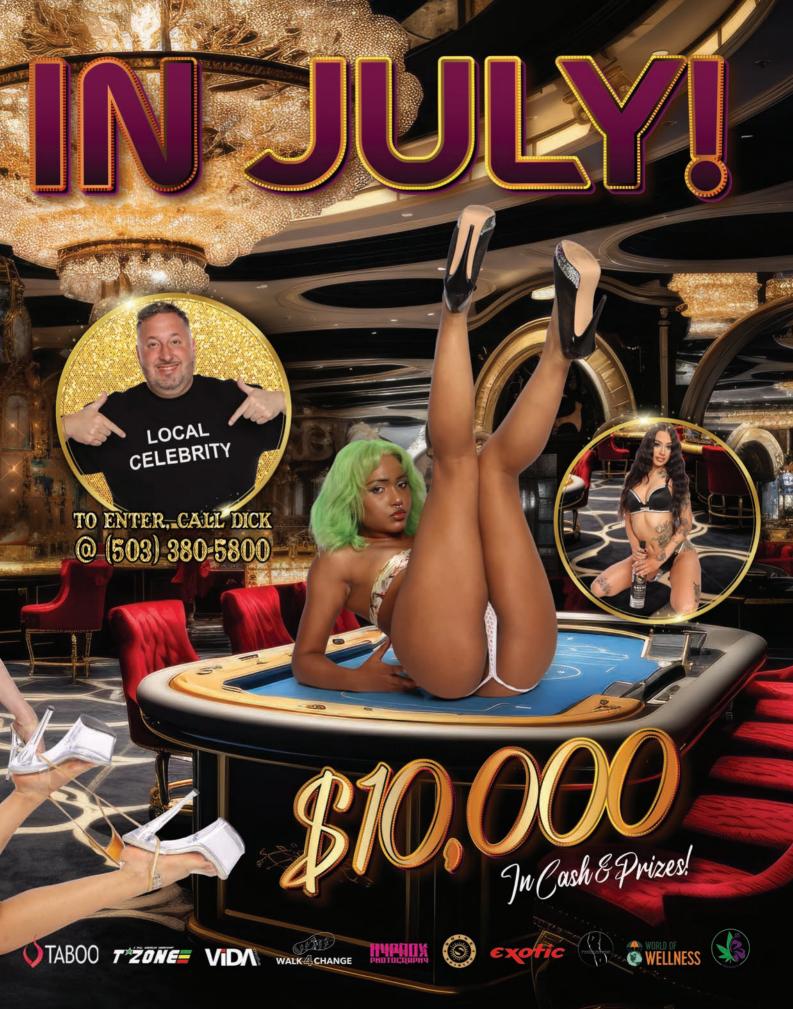
Okay, that's a wrap on Stoicism. Try putting these concepts into practice going forward; I certainly plan on it. Class dismissed!

Nate Hazen is a writer, bouncer, and standup comic. Catch him working at X Exotic Lounge and Dixie Tavern or telling jokes at comedy open mics around town. Come see his comedy show, Tits & Giggles, at X on the first and third Thursdays of every month.



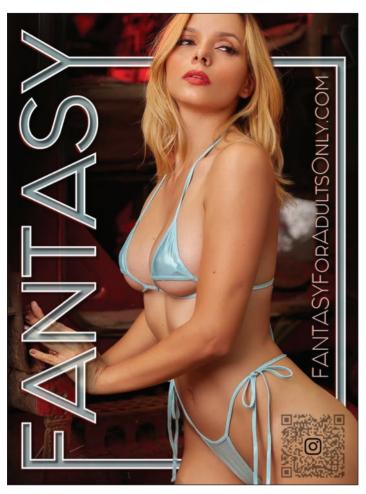
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