

# At Splash House, Dance Music Industry Professionals Come to Party Hard

BY PATRICK SHANNON

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2016 AT 10:39 A.M.



This may look like a wild scene, but even wilder things happen at Splash House behind closed doors.

*Ed Carrasco*

The desert sun is baking the stiff, dry air to over 110 degrees in Palm Springs, and the sold-out August edition of Splash House is feeling like a weekend for the daring. The event is known for its rowdy pool parties, but the aquatic attractions are a tame façade for what can be found in the privacy of the hotel rooms that surround the action.

In the extreme heat, seasoned partiers often are inclined to skip the scorching pool antics almost entirely and stick to the air-conditioned, indoor confines of the Saguaro and Riviera resorts, which play host to the weekendlong dance party. There, in hotel rooms and suites

overlooking the pools, party professionals indulge in another level of debauchery on an exhausting weekend binge.

Saturday afternoon starts out at the Saguaro's in-house cantina, El Jefe. It's a small, box-shaped restaurant with wood-paneled walls, located off the hotel's lobby. The back bar is lined with tequilas varying in shades from golden to clear and the walls are lined with photographs of broken-down cars, desert views and a metal barrel with the words "waste oil" painted on the side.

A Splash House attendee from Temecula is celebrating her 30th birthday and debating whether the milestone signifies the need to downshift a couple of gears or send the weekend into overdrive for one last taste of youth. Sitting at the table with her are several employees from dance-music labels you've probably heard of, a couple of publicists who work in EDM and hip-hop, and an up-and-coming L.A.-based DJ duo.

Their food arrives and suddenly their appetites no longer appear to be a concern. One of the DJs reveals the origin of his satiation when he blurts out, "Yeah, I did a lot of coke." It's 1:30 p.m.

A round of tequila shots concludes the birthday brunch and the group splits up to scout out the next move. There is word going around that a balcony party on the third floor is taking place, and the DJ duo are trying to identify the room number. They navigate their way out into the hotel's pool area, where Matt DiMona is just getting started cutting up house music with tropical undertones on the mainstage.





Multicolored balconies at the Saguaro hotel

Jesse Fulton (@jesse\_lee\_fulton)

The pool is surrounded by a long courtyard of retro, Technicolor balconies where scantily clothed partiers are waving their hands in approval like ancient Roman emperors in the Colosseum, giving DiMona's set the thumbs-up.

The brunch crew make their way up a back stairwell on the north side of the building to scout out the third floor and elude the cloudless sky. They knock on a tangerine-colored door and are told to get in quick and shut the door behind them, to keep the air conditioning flowing for the 15 or so people packed into the room.

The residents are part of a larger group that occupies three rooms on the floor. They are acquainted through Hard's Holy Ship cruise and also work in the dance-music industry.

Inside, the door's citrus hue is offset by lavender molding, and red Solo cups are scattered around the room. There's a glass bong, a stainless steel whipped cream dispenser and an unopened box of Cinnamon Toast Crunch fighting for counter space on the TV stand. Every so often, the static sound of a nitrous oxide tank goes off on the far side of the room.

A thin girl in a bathing suit standing at the base of one of the twin beds inhales the nitrous from a balloon, also known as "hippie crack," and turns to another young woman sitting on the bed. "I'm going to eat some acid," she says. "Do you want some?"

Besides LSD, they're mostly talking about a boy they are both swooning over. The girl sitting on the bed, eager to affirm her affection, declares, "I imagine his butthole tastes like cotton candy." The statement is followed by an uneasy silence in the room, then an outburst of laughter.

After an hour, the rising body temperatures of the Holy Shippers turns the room into another sweat box, and the remaining six brunch attendees head out to Splash House's other host resort, the Riviera. Their goal is to catch the Parisian future bass group Point Point at 6 p.m., but first they decide to pass a couple hours in one of the Riviera's rooms and double down on their pre-gaming efforts.

They recruit a few more friends to join them in one of the Riviera's spacious, contemporary suites. In a short period they drink through a 30-pack of Bud Light and a cheap bottle of white wine. A wooden chess board with lines of white powder filling the checkered squares is passed around the room, the lines ritualistically inhaled through a \$20 bill.





At Splash House, some of the wildest parties happen in the hotel rooms overlooking the pools.

*Ed Carrasco*

“You know how many tampon applicators I’ve gone through?” says one woman. She’s not discussing personal hygiene but the most effective utensil to snort cocaine. The conversation gets louder with each rotation of the chess board and eyes start to bulge from intoxicated heads.

As the evening sets in, the sun is more bearable and the group breaks off into smaller numbers to go see different DJs perform. The exodus process takes another 15 minutes as they run through a final pre-party checklist of bathroom breaks, chugging the final beer and one more line of blow.

It’s evident that these veteran festivalgoers have different priorities than most. They don’t schedule their entire day around specific artists. They frequently rotate between “We should probably go watch some music” and “Screw this – let’s go inside.” They always have water on them. And they treat Splash House like a music industry summer camp. For all the drugs and debauchery, this is also where professional and personal bonds are forged that will shape L.A. dance-music culture in ways that go far beyond a shared 8-ball of coke in a sweaty hotel room.

After a night of going off in their own directions, they will reconvene the next day for brunch and start the whole process all over again.

---

Sponsor Content



©2016 LA Weekly, LP. All rights reserved.