

CLUBWORLD



2009 COLLECTORS ISSUE



30

NIGHTLIFE'S 30 MOST INFLUENTIAL
PEOPLE Past Present and Future

PLUS: NEXT 10 Exciting Up-And-Comers



The Influencers 2009

Last year Club World kicked off a new tradition; a new way - in addition to the annual Club World Awards program - to honor the exceptional people among us in clubland.

We think that the honorees in the following pages are the Top 30 Most Influential People In Nightlife, as of 2008's end. Why? They might not have opened a venue, or had the most successful party on the block (although some did). But they did open up new ways of thinking about how we do what we do.

Check out the promoter who reacted to the recession before it happened in Miami. Or the two technologists who saw the infinite possibilities of working with, rather than against, each other. Or the celebrity DJ who sneaked leftfield rock into the most exclusive parties in the world. Or the booking agents who refused to let the role of the DJ stay static for yet another year.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of everyone who consistently makes nightlife great in the U.S. But it is a sampling of the most inspiring. (And for more inspiration, check out the Next10 list in the back: highlighting new faces aiming for the Top 30 over the next five years.)

Industry legends tell us that hospitality is safe in a recession. But venues are already feeling the effects. In order to stay open, and more than that, keep growing, we need a constant infusion of new ideas. We hope the profiles in the following pages provide you with just that.

The Editors

Age: 36 Hometown: Lawrence, NY

Stephen Lieberman

Lighting Designer/Installer

For Stephen Lieberman, eye-opening designs begin with closed eyes.

Visualization is the first step for the president and designer of L.A.-based SJ Lighting, which went from a major player to the dominant player in nightlife lighting in 2008.

A string of major, high-visibility projects – including Shrine at the MGM Grand in Foxwoods, Connecticut; Rok Vegas in Las Vegas; Versus in L.A.; and LIV at the Fountainbleu in Miami – have made it impossible to profile anyone other than Lieberman in this space this year, even though he was on the 2007 Top 30 list, as well.

Lieberman starts on projects from the concept stage and carries them through to installation. That includes elements like design work, engineering work, documentation and programming. So sometimes, his original closed-eye vision doesn't become reality, especially when it has to be revised nearly 20 times. But that's part of what he says separates him from the pack.

"It's one thing to have a concept. It's another thing to be able to deliver it," he says.

Before taking up lighting full-time in 1995, he spent years doing nightclub work in a variety of capacities. He prides himself on fulfilling venues' goals with a professionalism that lets the client know what to expect from a project's onset. "We deliver what we say we're going to deliver," he says.

He's done his share of packed, high-energy venues, but Lieberman is just as familiar with smaller spaces – high-end, more intimate nightlife experiences where visual effects aren't the



FAVORITE QUOTE:
**"THE HARDER
 YOU WORK,
 THE LUCKIER
 YOU GET"**

dominating draw. In those projects, Lieberman has a more ambient philosophy for design, focusing on smooth movement. "The light show is a secondary item," he says.

He doesn't buy into blanket formulas and isn't afraid to experiment, especially with things like architectural fixtures.

"I think each project has its own very specific and very unique needs," he says.

In 2008, Lieberman worked with some of the major manufacturers in lighting, video and media servers. The list includes Color Kinetics, Robe, Elation Professional and Martin Professional, to name a few. But he emphasizes the importance of mechanical support, rather than just name recognition, when it comes to choosing equipment.

"What's important to me is that I have a good mechanic behind it," Lieberman said.

Lieberman is also a sought-after live event programmer, serving as lighting director for a variety of events, including the massive Ultra Music Festivals in Miami and Brazil, the Electric Daisy Carnival, and the Nocturnal Festival.

Vision. Creativity. Diversity. The qualities helped Lieberman and his team find an elite niche in nightlife design. With a 2009 schedule that's booked solid, Lieberman's visions are set to continue. He has upcoming projects in Los Angeles, New York and Atlantic City, as well as some international work. But party goers' reaction to the final product doesn't have to be specific at all. Awestruck gawking means Lieberman has accomplished his mission. "We want to deliver a pretty big 'wow' factor," he says.