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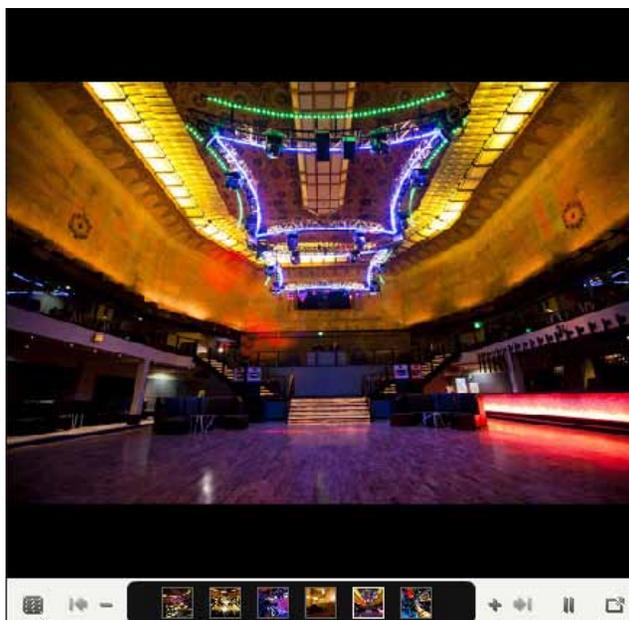
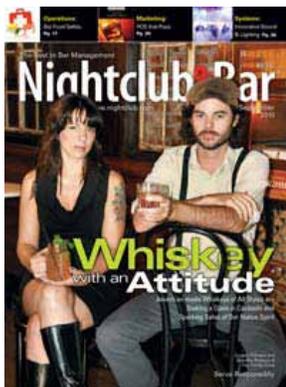


An Inside Look at Exchange LA

By: [Leigh W. O'Quinn](#)
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Something old is new once again in Downtown Los Angeles, and it's aiming to reinvigorate the area. Welcome to **Exchange LA**.

The historic West Coast Pacific Stock Exchange building was built in 1929 and operated as such until the mid '80s before it began its path to a nightlife venue. "A group from New York came in and opened it up as **The Stock Exchange Nightclub**," says Exchange LA's Director of Operations **Roman Sanchez**. As that incarnation, the club ran for a few years before ceasing operation, then was reborn in the '90s with a different operator. Most recently the space was branded as **Versus** nightclub, but after a grand opening party featuring **Dave Navarro** in October 2008, it was discovered improvements were made without proper permits and licensing, so it was shut down the following week.



Nearly two years and \$5.5 million dollars later, Exchange LA is ready to go. In fact, it's going already with an assortment of private parties and even film and television production happening in the space. The grand opening to the public is set for early November, and Exchange LA is primed, thanks to test runs of the 25,000-square-foot space. "That process was purely designed to have our best type of operational standards in place [by opening night]," Sanchez says about throwing one-offs prior to the big unveiling. "We wanted to test the actual flow of the room because it is an unusual space. It's big, it has a lot of square footage, so we really weren't quite sure if the present bar would suffice. If we needed to add another one, where did we need to add it?"

After the test runs, management decided the permanent primary bar off the 3,000-square-foot dance floor wasn't enough, so another permanent bar was added, positioned just before guests enter the main room of the club, plus modular bars are opposite each bar so the venue remains flexible. "You can have furniture anywhere and not have furniture anywhere. Everything we can move around, and we can accommodate what the client would want," Sanchez says.

One thing that's not going anywhere, however, is the giant horseshoe-shaped booth in the upstairs VIP room. "We had to use a crane to get it up there," laughs Sanchez. The venue wanted a Foundation Room feel upstairs that overlooks the dance floor, with a large cutout so those in the



room could still be part of the vibrancy below. "It has everything there that you would need: It has a bar, it's got its own set of restrooms, plush seating. Everything there was made so you wouldn't have to leave that room unless you wanted to." And with custom furnishings courtesy of the same designers behind the stylized **W Hotel** and **Tao** in Las Vegas and New York, the overall design only enhances the gorgeous venue.

Exchange LA may have classic architecture and a marble staircase ascending to the club, but the technology is state of the art. Exchange LA serves as a showroom for **Funktion One**, a place where the loudspeaker manufacturer brings clients to check out the club's Resolution 3 speaker system, one of only two in the U.S., Sanchez says. And you can't have great sound without fantastic lighting, designed by **Stephen Lieberman** and **SJ Lighting**. Plus there's a giant LED screen in front of the DJ booth where Sanchez says high-profile DJ talent will preside; the venue will host bands and after-concert parties, thanks to the proximity to the **Staples Center** and **Nokia Theater**.

Sanchez stresses Exchange LA is more than just a club — it's also perfect for live music events and more. "It's really a multi-use venue."

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