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Arkadia Preview Sizzles in Miami Beach

By: [Sean Evans](#)
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Photo courtesy of the Fontainebleau.

If last Sunday's invitation-only preview of **Arkadia** at the **Fontainebleau** is any indication of how the subterranean space will fare when it opens its doors to the public, **Dave Grutman** and **MMG Nightlife** are set to have another whopper of a venue on their hands — despite the lounge's rather modest size.

LeBron James, **Alex Rodriguez** and **Elle Macpherson** all were in the house, as well as actor **Ed Norton**, "who was in awe over how cool Arkadia is," says MMG principal Grutman. The space, in the basement of the iconic South Beach resort, is where **Blade Sushi Lounge** used to be but bears no resemblance to the former concept. "We didn't do a theme," Grutman says. "We just wanted to use the intimate space to create a very cool setting for a lounge." Intimate indeed: Arkadia's capacity tops out at 388, and there are only 25 tables in the whole place, a far cry from the lounge's monster of a big sister, **LIV** nightclub, also at the Fontainebleau.

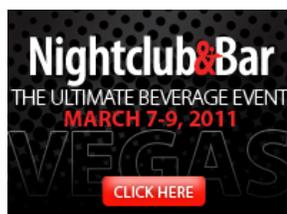
Tapping **Stephen Lieberman** and **SJ Lighting** to come up with a futuristic lighting system for the room, which does look exactly as a lounge on a spaceship likely would, was a key to the design plans, Grutman revealed. "We wanted everything to flow perfectly. Even our Funktion One speakers have these grills covering the subs, which looks amazing with the room's aesthetic," he says.

And it's already hit with the locals, celebs and local celebs. "Our phones are ringing off the hook for reservations, since that's the only way we're doing admittance. No walkups," Grutman says, adding that certain people will get tables quicker than others. "LeBron's already picked out his table, where he wants to hang out regularly," he laughs.

As for music and programming, expect Arkadia to offer the alternative to what LIV is offering on nights when both spaces are opening. "They won't be competing with each other," Grutman says. "It's more of a complementing thing. Sunday nights at LIV is the hip-hop party, but Sunday nights at Arkadia, we'll have the big house DJs coming unannounced after they've played LIV the night before." The right names will be there. "[**Erick Morillo**] is doing our opening bash and bringing the **Martinez Brothers** with him, and **Tiesto** is playing this coming Sunday," he says, noting that it's virtually unheard of to secure a mega artist like Tiesto to spin in such an intimate setting.

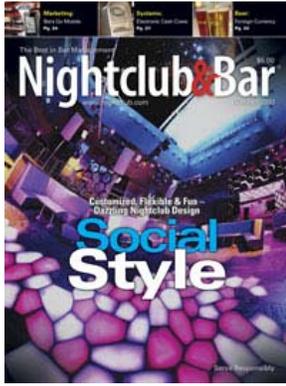
While the new kings of the night will flock to Arkadia to master the turntables and regular tables, no one is forgetting the luminaries who once famously ruled the Fontainebleau's evenings. "Inside the venue, we do have a whole nostalgic collage, which features Frank Sinatra and the rest of the Rat Pack," Grutman says.

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