

Swinging in the sexy city

by Scott Winton

It ain't the 60s, but Auckland is definitely starting to swing.

In fact, Auckland's inner city now has two swingers clubs. Club Sparty on Cross St opened at the beginning of April, joining the well established and popular CKK in a small but growing market.

"CKK is more of a fetish club based on a European model with swings and bondage and discipline equipment," says Club Sparty owner Rod Jackson.

"That doesn't happen here. We're more a traditional swingers club."

He says a lot of people have the wrong impression of swingers clubs and while sex does happen it's not a "free-for-all" where everyone gets laid.

"For some people it takes four or five visits before anything happens and others will bonk anything that moves the first time they come," he says.

Club Sparty is twice the size of CKK and caters for a maximum of 100 people. As at CKK, punters have to turn up as a couple.

Club Sparty has a dimly lit dance floor where Jackson says people often stop dancing and "bonk themselves silly".

There is also a separate room with a spa and sauna and a darkened lounge with a bed with space for 10 people.

Three to four smaller lounges adjacent to the dance floor are used for couples to get intimate.

At the pool table couples often

play for "biological forfeits". Jackson says it's all good adult fun.

He says Club Sparty hosts private functions, including "gang bang" groups and the filming of pornographic movies. He even has a booking from a woman who wants to have sex with 46 men in one day for her 46th birthday.

"I've run clubs like this for years and the weirdest request

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SWINGING AROUND: Club Sparty bar manager David whips co-owner Sharon into shape.

sexual peak.

"Men in their 20s will sleep with anyone they can but someone like me in their 40s is a bit more discerning. I have a few play partners," says Jackson.

Club Sparty promotes safe sex by providing free condoms in the club. At both clubs it's something taken very seriously by management.

Daniel, who didn't want his surname published, says it's very important people protect themselves as it means he can really relax and enjoy his visits to CKK.

The owners could not be contacted but on CKK's website they call it "an interactive lounge bar for couples and ladies" and you're invited to "leave your inhibitions at the door".

But to find out what really happens, you have to talk to someone with experience.

Daniel's partner Susie has been to CKK more than once and says it's not just for married couples who are bored with their sex lives.

"Sure, a lot of people do go to swap partners, but more often than not you have sex with the person you came with."

"Personally, I get aroused from having sex with my partner in front of strangers," says the

48-year-old office worker.

She says women are made to feel secure at CKK because the club has a very non-threatening atmosphere. She attributes this to the German owners, Lulu and Klaus.

"They show you around the club when you arrive and

"People often stop dancing and bonk themselves silly."

Partner swapping happens but because everyone knows the rules, jealousy is seldom an issue.

"I don't mind what Daniel does at CKK as long as I can make eye contact with him at all times. You arrive as a couple and leave as a couple," says Susie.

You might wonder how this type of activity can be legal but media liaison officer for the Auckland police Philippa White says no law is being violated.

"As long as it's not a brothel and they have a liquor licence, the police have no issue with it. It actually sounds like a bit of a hoot."

Daniel is a fan and says that it's something everyone should think about trying.

"I've fulfilled so many sexual fantasies at CKK that if I died tomorrow, I'd die a happy man."

Berths becoming too expensive, say boaties

by Jocelyn Rein

The days of the ordinary bloke being able to afford to berth his boat at an Auckland marina are diminishing, according to boat enthusiasts.

"There was a time when every Joe Blow could afford a boat," says boatie Kevin Borley, who sees a general trend towards marinas becoming "fairly elite".

Prices range from around \$2500 a year for a 10m yacht at a small marina, up to \$8000 or more for boats 18m or larger.

Rising prices and marina upgrading seem to be forcing less affluent boaties out of the market.

Borley, who once rented a berth at the popular Gulf Harbour marina at Whangaparaoa, has recently decided to shift elsewhere because of an increase in rental price to \$11 per day, a whopping \$4015 every year.

His new pile mooring at Westhaven Marina, though not



NOT AFFORDABLE: Some boaties say marinas, like this one being developed at Okahu Bay, are too expensive.

nearly as convenient — he will have to row out to his boat instead of being able to just step aboard — is almost half the price. "I simply can't afford to continue with the marina berth," he says. "I'm not a wealthy man and I just can't afford the luxury."

The development of a new and improved Orakei marina at

Okahu Bay will also come at a cost to boaties. Previously boats were attached to simple swing moorings, but the building of the new marina means they will now be more accessible to owners. The new moorings however will only accommodate boats 12m or larger, forcing smaller boats to move elsewhere.

Borley says "people grizzle

and complain all the time" at the ever-increasing expense. "Just because we've got boats doesn't make us rich."

But Yachting New Zealand's national programmes director Richard Brown says while some boats may have to move, "they're not going to be forced to buy a berth at the new marina", if they cannot afford it.

Brown says while he agrees boating is a sport well-populated by the rich, there are "a lot of things" besides berth rental prices forcing up costs, such as the introduction of new seabed occupation charges.

He says while these may be disincentives to purchase a boat, he does not think "it's going to drive them out of market".

Kevin Lidgard, travel lift manager at West Park Marina in Hobsonville, says boating and the people who own boats in Auckland are changing.

Rising costs of mooring a boat are "eroding away at people's lifestyles", he says.

The owner of a 35ft yacht moored at West Park, Lidgard is

well aware of the costs involved and says even he has trouble justifying these sometimes. "We could sell the yacht and put it up against the mortgage but we enjoy it too much."

Lidgard says the type of person who goes boating is definitely changing. "I've got salt water gorging through my veins," he says.

"But the customer base has gone from carpenters and builders to smart-casual executives. And some of them don't have much of an idea about boating."

Borley agrees. "It is getting that way and will get more so."

"There's got to be a market for just the ordinary bloke to put his boat somewhere."

Sadly it seems the City of Sails, a place that was once celebrated as being a haven for boaties of all incomes, is being increasingly driven by the profits to be made from the wealthy.

If the cost of keeping a boat continues to rise, the dream of owning a boat in the city of sails may have to remain just that.

Bombs wreck Balinese tourism

by Jessica Skinner

Bali's recovery is proving painfully slow as tourists continue to stay away six months after three suicide bombers rocked the tranquil Indonesian island.

According to the Bali Tourism Board, the island was predicted to reach a new record of more than 1.6 million visitors in 2005.

However, the October bombings in South Bali caused a substantial decline in numbers with a drop of almost 40 per cent in the last quarter compared to the previous year.

Further unease has been created by the very public trials of Schapelle Corby, Michelle Leslie and the "Bali Nine" drug couriers, as well as constant travel warnings issued by the

Australian Government.

There are also concerns over the effects of the Papuan asylum-seeker row with Australia.

Guest relations officer at Hotel Padma Bali Ni Komang Yuliani says the streets and hotels of central Bali seem noticeably quiet and the Balinese are beginning to feel desperate over the declining tourist numbers.

She says the average occupancy rate of the hotel has been only 30 per cent, compared to being overbooked before the bombings.

The number of Australian tourists, who made up 40 per cent of all visitors to Bali, is steadily declining, says Yuliani.

"The only tourists we see now are German, Dutch and Swiss, not the numbers of New Zealanders, Australians, and Americans."

Tourism accounts for 70 per cent of the Balinese economy.

Mary Yu, a souvenir and clothing seller and mother of four, says that since the bombings she has had to take her two eldest children out of school thanks to poor business.

She says she feels very upset at the Islamic extremists who carried out the bombings but understands why tourists are afraid to come back to Bali. "Bali people cry for more tourists to return. That is all we want."

Marketing assistant at Auckland's Bali Holidays Yumi Kim says while she feels Bali is "definitely a safe holiday destination", many of her customers are still nervous.

"I still get a great deal of queries over whether it is safe to return to the island or not."

Kim sees the Indonesian Government's \$10 million Bali



BALI CRIES: Locals are desperate for tourists to return.

recovery programme as a positive step but feels it needs to do more to win back valuable confidence in the island.

Simon Nengah, an English teacher and tour guide, is optimistic things will return to normal within the next year.

A flair for flaring

by Froilan Gom'es

A Chinese bartender is hoping to teach the art of "flaring" to New Zealanders.

Steven Chang, 26, a "flaring bartender" from China, arrived in January to study English in Christchurch.

"Flaring" is juggling wine or beer bottles soaked in gasoline and on fire, creating a breathtaking effect in a dimly lit bar. The flame is then doused in the juggler's mouth.

"I came to New Zealand to study English so I can speak it well enough by the time of the Beijing Olympics in 2008."

Qingdao, the Chinese city which will host sailing events at the 2008 Olympics, is known for its bars and for having the largest brewery in China.

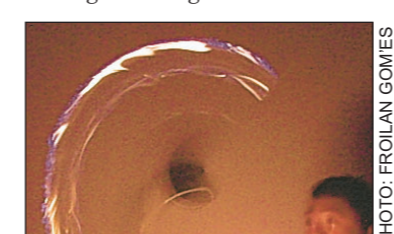
"Once my English gets better, I hope to go back to Qingdao and work at one of the bars there."

"With all the foreign tourists coming to China, especially when the Olympics begin... I'll need to be able to talk to them and do various flaring tricks."

Flaring tricks have names like the Tomahawk, the Flame Bouncer and Shaker Tin. "Makes it more interesting," says Chang, who is willing to teach the art of flaring to interested students in Auckland.

"I need some cash to pay for the English language school that I'm attending."

"Plus, if they learn really fast I can make a deal with them — teach me English and I give the rest of the classes free," says Chang with a grin.



FLARING: Steve Chang.

She offers a three to six-week programme as a fitness workout, as well as teaching the art of erotic dancing.

"It's cardio, but it's also quite good for developing your core strength."



DANCING IN THE STREET: Pole dancing teacher Aroha Wikohika practises her moves.

Fitness fans are mounting the pole

by Helen Twose

Skills acquired during a mispent youth have developed into a business teaching pole dancing for 27-year-old Aroha Wikohika.

Wikohika, who recently established Swing 360 pole dancing fitness classes, first tried pole dancing while living in Australia. The fitness craze, described as "Pilates with a pole", was just taking off.

A 12-month stint working at Auckland strip bar Showgirls when she was 18 had given her the practical background. Now back in New Zealand, she realised there was a gap in the market here for pole dancing classes.

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"It's cardio, but it's also quite good for developing your core strength."

"It does hurt. People's perception of pole dancing is that it's easy but it's actually quite hard because your resistance is your own body weight, so if you weigh 60kg then you're lifting 60kg."

Students wear regular gym clothes but for the last 15 minutes they put on high heels.

"People's attitude towards the class changes once they're in high heels. They become more extroverted. They shake their butt a little bit."

Students can practise on a pole that can be discreetly installed in their home, or on any available poles — even street signs.

Wikohika tells her students to practise while waiting for the bus.

"You've got 10 minutes... you know, just give it a little bit of a spin or practise your lift."

She also runs "spice dancing" classes, which teach erotic moves used by strippers in clubs around town.

Briar Neville, who has taken

a "spice" class, "loved it". She says: "I'm a big fan of dancing in the first place and it's just being able to move your body in a way that's quite sensual. It's quite empowering."

"It gave me a new found appreciation. I was using parts of my body I've never used before."

Pole dancing student Emma Brown attests to the fitness aspect.

"I've lost heaps of weight," she says. "I've never worked those muscle groups before. It's a different kind of hurt as well — it's a good hurt."

While men might think women are just trying to please them, the classes aim to empower women to embrace their sexuality and feel sexy. Students become "more confident and you're aware of how to press their buttons", says Wikohika.

The pole dancing trend has been criticised overseas for glamourising aspects of the sex industry and reinforcing female

stereotypes. Feminists in New Zealand spoken to by *Te Waha Nui* were either unaware of the fitness trend or declined to comment.

One academic, who didn't want to be named, said women should question whether they are comfortable objectifying their bodies and reinforcing a culture associated with prostitution and passive display.

She says there are far more effective ways to develop strength, flexibility, fitness, and to have fun while training.

"I can only conclude that women do pole dancing because they want to be able to move in ways that they have been told are sexually gratifying for men to watch."

The classes attract mainly women. Men are welcome to join but tend to take the alternative "men-only" classes run by a dancer from Auckland club Showboys.

"Men want to be sexy as well," says Wikohika.