

GAY NEWS SUPPLEMENT - JANUARY 1980

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I'M IN *Heaven*



A MATTER of £300,000 later, the old Global Village in Charing Cross just ain't the same. London's gay disco world has at last reached Heaven.

It's claimed to be the most sophisticated gay disco in Europe and opened with prestige fanfares just before Christmas, complete with "high-tech" gimmickry and decor — tracking spotlights, neon light sculptures, thin strings of twinkling lights set into parts of the floor, mirror balls, glass bricks and black-painted vaults relieved by what looks like silver-painted scaffolding (and could well be just that) and rich orange carpets.

Oh, and a floor-trembling 5,000-watt sound system belting out what GN disco expert Jean-Claude Thévenin describes as first-rate music.

"Heaven", declared the *Evening Standard*, "could prove Gay Lib's smartest move." The paper reckoned Heaven's biggest headache could be in deterring London's non-gay discophiles who could end up trying to pass for gay to get past the elegant bouncers at the disco's equivalent of the Pearly Gates.

But with such a hefty investment by co-owners Jeremy Norman

and Michael Fish (Norman recently raised about £100,000 by selling his interest in the snob's bible, *Burke's Peerage*) — Heaven is hellish pricey.

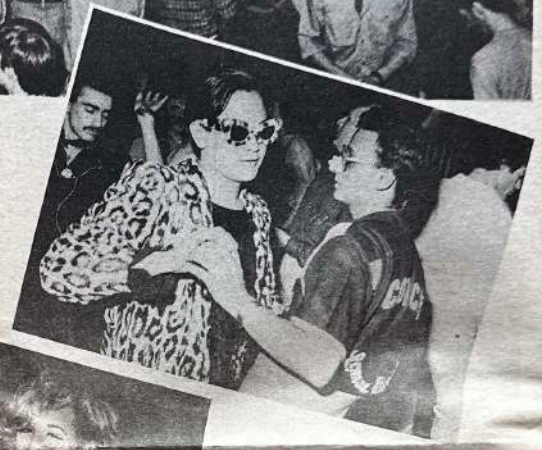
A half of lager (no pints) or a glass of wine costs 50p. Spirits start at 90p and £1.50 a shot. Champagne will set you back £6.50 a half bottle, £12 for the whole hog.

Membership costs £15 a year (they've got 1,500 so far, they say) and that gets you in for £2 a go. Non-members are charged £3 a time, but all get two 50p drink vouchers — just enough for the equivalent of a pint (as you can only buy halves, that counts as the two free drinks advertised).

But will Heaven, despite the hoo-ha of its opening, be able to attract 1,000 gays a night? The Heaven team is confident that it will. "The buzz has been extraordinary", says spokesperson Billy Kennedy.

However, sources close to Stephen Hayter, the somewhat fallen Archangel who first announced that Heaven would rival New York's celebrated Studio 54, indicate that the confidence is only super-

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ficial. Hayter himself is thought to feel that the gay community is being given a rawer deal than promised — and that pricing policy is going to force either a lowering of charges or a widening of admission criteria so that the club becomes mixed, like its up-market stablemate, the Embassy Club. Hayter himself won't comment.

But the trappings are still there, angled at the trendy, well-to-do gay male. Gay women are welcome, we are told, but apart from the music and the space-age decor, there's little in it for them. Lithe and scantily clad male waiters and go-go dancers, however titillating to male susceptibilities, aren't likely to send lesbians wild with joy.

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Photo Report

by

BOB WORKMAN

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