

## GOING OUT



DAMON WINTER Los Angeles Times

**SHARING A TOAST:** At Teddy's, cozy leather seats, a cascade of crystals over the bar, and cathedral-like vaulted ceilings create an air of Old World elegance.

A NIGHT AT TEDDY'S

# If you get in, the vibe's just right

**The Roosevelt Hotel's new lounge is warmly welcoming, as long as you're cool enough to make the cut.**

By STEVE BALTIM  
Special to The Times

**L**OVE it or hate it — and both viewpoints have backers — Amanda Scheer Demme's Tropicana Bar at the Roosevelt Hotel was the most talked-about spot in L.A. after it debuted last year. At once a favorite of A-list celebrities and a target of criticism by those who bemoaned the poolside lounge's new exclusivity, the Tropicana Bar became a lightning rod for attention.

But how do you follow a venue that makes national newspapers, is cited weekly in the gossip mags and spawns more Internet chatter than Tom and Katie? If you're Demme, you launch your new enterprise quietly. Very quietly.

Teddy's, Demme's new spot in the Roosevelt, opened with little fanfare on Oct. 26, the birthday of her late husband, director Ted Demme.

"I feel like the Tropicana was a huge success, and in order to make my second place successful I have to do it in a much different way," Amanda Demme says in

her first interview about the new lounge. "That's exactly what I've done."

"[It's] like I feel like I've added a stage show to it," she adds, returning to her roots in the music business for an analogy. "I'm touring now, and it's even more credible."

With a capacity of only 160, Teddy's is even more exclusive than its outdoor counterpart. With the intense demand to get in, it's little wonder that even those inside, such as screenwriter Johnny LaRusso, who frequents the bar three times a week, preface their compliments with, "If you make it in here."

Even those chosen few recognize that gaining admission is akin to being handed a golden ticket. For those who do make the cut, however, it's hard to deny the majesty of the place.

Described by one patron, Katrina Kaufman, as feeling like an "old cathedral," the space, with its vaulted ceilings, long rectangular wood bar with a crystal chandelier hanging above, leather sofas, crimson curtains and Romanesque beams, has an air of glamour that feels more old Europe than L.A. chic.

Demme carries that dignity over to the attire of her clientele as well, enforcing a strict dress code (celebrities exempted, of course). "Sophistication, style, elegance: That's what I want this world to feel like," she says.

Customers are taking note. "I like that it's dress-up. It forces guys especially — 'cause girls tend to get dressed up any-

way... Girls wear dresses and guys wear jackets and it adds to it. It's fun. It's great eye candy," says Adam Tomei, who, as a doorman for promoter Brent Bolthouse, sees all kinds of L.A. club crowds.

Susan Anderson, a fashion designer, says, "It's classy and it's always a high caliber of people."

Not that the nattily attired crowd — which has featured the likes of Kirsten Dunst, Paris and Nicky Hilton, Eva Mendes, Prince and Bono (who was in the house opening night) — doesn't know how to get down. By 11:30 or midnight, the only open space in the lounge has turned into a full-on dance party, with some celebrities joining the festivities as the crowd grooves to a mix of '80s, rock, hip-hop and soul.

The celebratory atmosphere has become part of Teddy's vibe. "It's always full of joy, and there's not a lot of standing around and people looking at each other and pretending to have fun. People are dancing and letting it go," Tomei says.

**I**t's something that caught even Demme off guard. "It's not a dance floor, but people dance around their tables. It's kind of hilarious, actually," she says.

Ironically, while people on the outside grumble about the difficulty getting in and Demme's pretension, the tone inside is decidedly laid-back. Kaufman describes it as "warm and cozy," citing specifically the friendliness of the staff. "There was a

nice intimacy to it."

"I travel all over the world, and I go to different places," Anderson says, "but it feels like home to me."

So how does one get past the velvet rope to experience all this firsthand?

Says Demme: "I'm looking for personal style; sophistication but playfulness; I want people to think of this as a haven; I'm looking for people that appreciate what it is and what it stands for."

"It doesn't really matter how old you are, doesn't really matter what you do for a living. You have to be at the top of your game in your own way, whatever that may be."

Is it worth all the fuss? "Absolutely," LaRusso says. "If you make it inside, it's pretty amazing."

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### Teddy's

What: Teddy's at the Roosevelt Hotel

Where: 7000 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Thursday

Price: No cover

Info: (323) 785-7247