



## TABÚ ULTRA-LOUNGE, LAS VEGAS



Undeniably the first of the recent slew of ultra-lounges, Tabú is arguably the best. Located in the MGM Grand, the small space features three rooms that boast a combination of careful design, creative expertise, and surreal art (courtesy of Jeffrey Beers' interior design and Reactrix's revolutionary video system). Tabú's got an animated mural that runs the full length of one of the walls, custom-designed furniture, and (infamously) models for hosts, bartenders, and waitresses, all who excel in "tableside drink mixology." Also integral to the package is music director Frankie Anobile's strict "no hip-hop" policy, which further differentiates the venue from its throng of imitators. Attracting a crowd that recalls that original Studio 54 feel – A-list glitterati partying next to beautiful commoners – the multi-million dollar venue has done more than carve a new niche. At this point, it's safe to say that Vegas wouldn't be Vegas without Tabú. *—LG*

## HALO LOUNGE, ATLANTA



Halo is a gorgeous lounge, if you can get past the food. So many people rave about Chef Stephan Leed's cast of international snacks, you'd think they go just to eat. The menu includes gourmet cheeses, Southern specialties, and home food rethinks like the Duck Confit Sloppy Joe. While that's not really a flirty kind of food, the inspired campfire S'Mores Kit, complete with tiny grill, is entirely, in intent and execution. Gucci girls eat marshmallows in what Halo calls a "minimalist/deconstructivist design" – part burnished industrial, part streamlined furnishings in muted fabrics. Textured concrete catches the low lights, and metal staircases, some leading up and some leading nowhere, level the space in what becomes a series of micro-environments that create intimacy for the 300 or so late night revelers. The glowing marble bar has served many an Atlanta celeb and gained a rep as a place for the thread-conscious, but Halo is smart to keep industry and gay nights at the core of their business. Hidden away in the old, recently refurbished Biltmore Hotel, Halo is all that a lounge should be (plus food!). *—DC*

## ZANZIBAR, SANTA MONICA



A mid-sized lounge with a North African theme, Zanzibar offers an escape from the high-profile glitz of the Hollywood scene. The space formerly known as the West End was transformed by designer Nathalie Cohen Pillows from a dingy black box into an open, inviting room, with generous chairs around low, candlelit tables. It's the type of place where 20-somethings come for the night, find a perch, and just enjoy themselves. Long curtains cover walls in part of the room, cutting a clean line between chic and romantic, and giving an analog to the room's function as a place for the best of Santa Monica's Latin, funky house, reggae, and roots DJs to entice the seated to move to the floor. Saturday's hip-hop night, Quality, and Club World Awards-nominated Friday party bossa:nova have reputations that reach beyond the local, drawing international adventurers to this new kid on the block. *—DC*

## ESCAPE ULTRA-LOUNGE, MINNEAPOLIS

Escape Ultra-Lounge opened its doors six months ago, and it's been 12,000 square feet of decadence and style since. The brainchild of CEO David Koch, the décor is lavish and high-tech, with custom-designed furniture, nine large plasma screens throughout, and a multimedia, state-of-the-art sound and light system (designed and installed by Sound Stage Systems). Escape has played host to Minneapolis' elite, the VIPs cruising through town, live entertainment and shows, CD release parties, fashion shows, private receptions, product launches, corporate meetings, and more. It

features a diverse selection of music both popular and underground, from Das Efx to Silk, and Mark Farina to Ivano Bellini. And with four distinct areas to lounge, there's a spot for every taste. The resulting overall vibe is dressed-up, yet totally get-down. "There are no kids spilling beer on you. You can sit down and be comfortable," says Chuck Gilbert, Vice President and General Manager. "It's a place where the corporate executive can take clients, and the up-and-comer who works behind the desk can come and hang out for the evening."

—LG

