

# BEST SUPERCLUB



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AVALON

## CROBAR, MIAMI

Where other club empires have gone the way of Madonna, taking on the affectations of foreign locales, crobar remains as distinctly American as they come. Owners Ken Smith and Cal Fortis hit their first nerve with crobar Chicago, a gritty, industrial space that referenced the city's house music roots and still flourishes. But it was when the pair took a 1930s theater on Miami's Ocean Drive and reimagined it as a sweeping nightclub space that would capture the extravagant essence of South Beach that the true scope of their vision became obvious. This crobar is still a theater, but the stage is the dancefloor and the players are the patrons. From the vintage marquis that remains outside, to the bird's-eye, glass-enclosed lounge, walking through it makes you feel glamorous and important, like you have a role to play. And the customized Phazon sound system and kitchen-sink light rig turn it from design showcase into the ultimate dance club. — KLM

## TEN15 FOLSOM, SAN FRANCISCO

Open since 1986, Ten 15 Folsom is one of the longest enduring superclubs in this country. The site of many a cultural and neighborhood change, not to mention the occasional run-in with local law enforcement, the main reason for the club's survival and worldwide reputation is owner Ira Sandler's endless desire to renovate, grow and get that new thing that will keep his 17,000-square-foot space filled with international talent, great local parties and thousands of dancers. New this year is a booth built to make the DJ magic all the more obvious — a clear acrylic tabletop that changes angles with a movable DJ shield, plus an attached greenroom and bathroom. The killer sound system (mostly Bag End and EAW speakers) is now controlled through six BSS Soundweb DSP units which can be accessed through remote, wireless laptops, which means that the system can be reset from the dancefloor if need be. A friendly, well-planned West Coast club with East Coast flourishes, Ten15 pours back all the creativity and love so expressed on its dancefloors into tangible improvements. — DC

## AVALON, BOSTON

There has to be some irony in Avalon's nightland success being in a town founded by Puritans. Known since 1992 by this name, the club has been on the forefront of music since 1969 as psychedelic tinged venue the Ark. The club's reinventor, executive director Steve Adelman, learned the business during New York City's glory days at its most infamous clubs (Limelight, Tunnel, and Palladium). So he knows just how to conjure the essentials — music, vibe and respect — of a great party. He also knows that today's clubs don't just compete with one another for the young and hip, they also play against Hollywood, video games and the internet. That's why Avalon has not only top-notch sound and lighting systems, but awe-inspiring sight lines and the presence to give clubgoers a place to hide away and talk — the grandiose and human at their most beautiful. Add some of the most successful nights in the business, a city full of party-ready, drinking age students and a 100-plus staff and you have the kind of party that could convert anyone to the path of clubbing righteousness. — DC

## SPACE, MIAMI

Combine four decrepit warehouses in a dilapidated part of town and what do you get? If you're owner Louis Puig, one of the most successful nightclubs in the country. Space is the small, plain, music-centered dance club gone large, the most hyped stop on any DJ's American tour that carries the mythology of dance music's biggest night — Danny Tenaglia's annual Winter Music Conference marathon — with it all year round. But it's not the hangar-like dancefloor space, the EAW Avalon Series stacks, and the swirling Martin Professional lights that put Space over the top. Any regular or WMC attendee can detail "that walk," the path from the dark heart of the club's floor, past the bathrooms, out the back door and into the most unforgiving sun you've ever felt. The club's ever-expanding patio looks like the deck your Dad built, only with two bars, a DJ booth, branded heat relief — an overhead tarp, misting fans — courtesy of every liquor sponsor, and a Kryogenifex system. Add the possibility that the headlining DJ might sneak out there in the early morning hours to join resident Ivano Bellini at the decks, and you have one of the most definitive experiences of American clubbing. — KLM