

BlackBook

GOODNIGHT MR. LEWIS

Good Units Opens Tonight

By Steve Lewis, | February 9, 2010

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I caught up with a seemingly suave, cool and collected hospitality designer, Robert McKinley, as he prepared for tonight's opening of Good Units, the brand new space in the **Hudson Hotel** basement. Publicist Steve Kasuba told me Robert was frantic finishing up, but I sensed no panic, except from Kasuba. One thing is for sure, when opening a joint, in 99.99% of the cases, no matter how much time you get to complete the task, there will be paint drying opening night. I love Robert McKinley's designs. I loved **Cain Luxe**, thought **Surf Lodge** was a home run and **GoldBar** a masterpiece. Shoot, I'd go to GoldBar even if Jon Lennon wasn't there

The trend of superior food and beverage in superior hotels continues. Mr. Kasuba told me, "Robert designed Good Units and worked closely with Ben Pundole of Morgans Hotel Group. The approximately 7,000 square foot space will operate as a private event space, not a nightclub". Good Units is the buzz spot as fashion week approaches. *Interview* will celebrate its 40th anniversary tonight. Susanne Bartsch is hosting a fashion week soiree. Patricia Fields was doing a much whispered about photo shoot with DJ Superstar Mark Ronson, bon vivant jewelry designer, actor and all around nice guy, Waris Ahluwalia and glorious supermodels Pat Cleveland and Julie Henderson. Giant Step, who throw hipster events leaps and bounds above the rest, will also host a gala here. I caught up with Robert on a 15 minute break.

Where does the name come from? The space is a long abandoned YWCA gymnasium in the Hudson Hotel basement. The words "good units" is literally spray painted on the walls near old electrical meters. Probably to indicate that this set of "units" is still working.

I love what you've done to the place. Tell me about it. We kept a lot of the character of the old gym, including the telescopic bleachers. We added low tech '80s dance lighting and neon gelled spot lights. We made it look like young cool kids came through and added graffiti, collages, images and artwork. There's an old concrete floor

This is outside your partnership with Jayma and Jamie at GoldBar, Surf Lodge and those properties. I'm still partners with them, but do many design projects outside that relationship. For instance Saint Ambroeus [www.blackbookmag.com/guides/details/sant-ambroeus], I'm updating their West Village location. It's the same owners as Felice Wine Bar, which I also designed

You just completed a nail for nail GoldBar pop-up at Sundance. Now you're recreating a Surf Lodge installation this weekend at Milk Studios. Yes, Milk will host an alternative to the tents--'Milk & Mac,' the hip alternative to the tents. We'll recreate the look and feel of the Montauk spot in the 8th floor loft space. Chef Sam Talbot will create meals and there will be parties for the likes of Gwen Stefani, Purple Magazine's **Olivier Zahm** and Alexander Wang.

What else do you have time for? I'm collaborating with designer Rogan Gregory of Loomstate for a clothing collection that will be available at Bloomingdales stores starting this April.