



Disco, the doorman at Temple Bar, has been working in New York City nightlife for more than 25 years. Stephen Yang

GETTING PAST THE TOUGHTEST DOORMEN IN NYC

Loud music, flashing lights, and sweaty dancefloors—everyone knows New York comes alive at night.

Downtown Manhattan has always been a hub for nightlife, with iconic spots like Club57, CBGB, and Mudd Club where artists and socialites alike would come together to dance the night away. However, a good club can't let just anyone in, and getting past the doorman is a bit more complicated than flashing a smile. New spots like Paul's Casablanca, The Blond, and Little Sister's Lounge are just as exclusive, and getting inside can take some planning. Whether you're new to the area or just looking for a new spot to dance, here are some tips for getting into some of the most exclusive clubs downtown.

1. DRESS TO IMPRESS

One of the most important things to remember when trying to get into a club is to dress the part. Most clubs have a strict dress code, and no one wants to be turned away because they look too casual. Do your research beforehand to get a feel for the vibe of the venue. Instagram is a great tool to see what people usually wear, as most clubs have photographers who document the best outfits of the night. A basic rule of thumb here is to follow the dress code but make it your own. Bouncers want unique and fashionable people at their clubs and while you don't need to be decked out in designer gear, make it clear you have a sense of style

2. TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Being fashionably late doesn't always work in nightlife. When arriving with a large group, it's best to cut the pregame short and show up early to miss the lines. If you're not worried about a late night, you can also show up around 1 or 2am when the lines have died down, but be mindful of a club's cut off time, because clubs like Little Sister Lounge and Paul's Baby Grand usually stop taking people around 3am. If you know which club you want to visit, do some research ahead of time to find out if they require reservations or pick people from the line throughout the night

3. NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

Networking is key in New York City, and nightlife is no exception. If you know someone who works at or frequents a club, they may be able to help you out. Reach out to your contacts and ask if they can get you on a guest list or introduce you to some people working at the club. Mingle when you're inside and get to know people who go out often. Not only are you making new connections, but nightlife is a great way to meet some of New York's most interesting people.



Ronny Estrella, a fashion designer and art curator by day, runs the door at The Blond. Photo courtesy of Stephen Yang.

5. SCHMOOZE YOUR WAY IN

A little small talk with the bouncers can go a long way. Introduce yourself and if they seem interested, ask them how their night is going or talk about the club. Bouncers are regular people too and some appreciate a bit of polite chit chat, rather than you demanding to get inside. Remember that bouncers are just trying to do a job to keep the club safe. Establish a relationship, and bouncers will take note of who was a respectful and friendly customer.

6. LEAVE A GOOD IMPRESSION

Thank the bouncers and tip your bartenders, not only because it's the right thing to do, but club employees take note of who is a good customer and who isn't. If you're with a group, have a good time but don't be obnoxious or overly loud. Bouncer's will remember a bad customer just as much as they remember a good one, so be poised and polite to everyone you meet.



Dylan Grace runs the door at The Palace. Photo courtesy of Stephen Yang

4. FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

Confidence is key when getting into clubs, and sometimes you have to fake it till you make it. When approaching a bouncer, act like you belong in that club and there's no question about it. Pretend you know someone on the list, make up an obscure name or say you have a connection to the club owner. Let's be honest, showing up with a few girls and good looking people, certainly doesn't hurt. Be confident but don't be cocky, at the end of the day, even if your "friend" is on the list, it's up to the bouncer to decide if they want to let you in.