

## The Colony - Los Angeles

Oct 26, 2010

By Danine Alati; photography by John Ellis



The Hamptons and Hollywood may seem worlds apart—each a distinct A-lister's scene set on opposite coasts. Yet the new **SBE**-owned and operated club Colony brings a beachy East Coast feel to the heart of Hollywood with its design by **ICRAVE**, the New York-based firm known for designing a host of New York City and Los Angeles hotspots. "We wanted it to be an oasis so that when you walk into the Colony, it transports you somewhere else, making you forget you're in the middle of Hollywood," says Behzad Souferian, vice president of SBE real estate. "LA has the best setting that is conducive to this type of theme."

Located on the once-seedy but now trendy Cahuenga Boulevard in a vast, 13,000-square-foot space that was previously home to shuttered clubs Halo and White Lotus, Colony adeptly melds indoor and outdoor spaces into a cohesive nightspot that's unlike the traditional Hollywood club. Souferian and SBE founder and owner Sam Nazarian sought a scene that would be reflective of their experiences summering in the Hamptons. "We were more focused on the idea of a beach resort setting because of what it lent to the notion of feeling casual—a kind of barefoot chic—which sets this venue apart from other Hollywood clubs," explains ICRAVE founder Lionel Ohayon. "We wanted to create something that differentiates this experience from what the LA scene had been delivered to date. Aesthetically, we were looking for something that was non-pretentious and invited the guests to engage fully in the space...to literally take their shoes off and dance on a table. This approach to encourage the guests to feel at home completely changes the dynamic of the room and ultimately the experience."



ICRAVE designed Colony as a series of spaces, each with its own personality, that work well as one cohesive venue where circulation seamlessly flows from inside to out—from dance floor to lounge to pool and bar areas. "It also is designed to be scaled back to smaller, separately operated venues. If you look through the space you will see a series of large sliding lower walls and rotating panels that close off rooms and allow the space to function practically with a floor [plan] that makes sense," Ohayon notes. Souferian adds, "The seating of the interior was designed with the DJ in the middle and stadium-style seating throughout, making for a high-energy atmosphere. With the sight lines, no one gets blocked, and it allows for patrons to be active participants rather than just spectators."

With a large space and a meager budget, the ICRAVE team had to be judicious in their allocation of dollars, creating maximum bang for the buck with strategic selections of materials. "The rough sawn lumber worked perfectly to lend the conceptual context as well as meet budgetary requirements," Ohayon says. Salvaged distressed barn wood flooring achieves a beach boardwalk feel and also works as cladding for walls and seating. ICRAVE-designed furniture crafted of distressed wood and aged steel help foster the desired aesthetic. And cabanas on the patio exude a true beach club ambiance, as do the structure reminiscent of a lifeguard stand that denotes the main entrance and the perfectly landscaped exterior that features sand dunes and beach grass. Versatile lighting throughout the space ranges from soft highlights to a full-scale rig with moving heads and an LED grid for a full nightclub effect, according to Ohayon.

"It is true that this is a Hollywood club, but in many ways that gave us carte blanche to create a space that was literally a set," explains Ohayon. "Since the building was a standalone, it affords us the opportunity to create a complete immersive experience and use the exterior to reform and reinforce the idea of what lay beyond the velvet rope."

<http://www.hospitalitydesign.com/hospitalitydesign/projects/The-Colony-Los-Ang-2763.shtml>