

HL HAUTE LIVING

Nightlife Impresario, Victor Sutter Launches the New Foundation Room in Dallas

BY DEVE SANFORD | DINING + DRINKING, FEATURED, NEWS | FEBRUARY 25, 2016



VP of Foundation Room, Victor Sutter

Victor Sutter is no stranger to bringing unique, progressive experiences to a global audience and in his new role at **Live Nation** as VP of Foundation Room; Dallas will be getting a taste of one of the hospitality industry's top nightlife experts. His career spans over 12 years across 5 continents including, the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa with top destination brands such as Nikki Beach, The Cosmopolitan and Tao. Successfully incorporating his experiences from all over the world, **House of Blues**/Live Nation brought Sutter on to lead creative and operational teams in elevating the brand across the country. Having the opportunity to assemble a diverse portfolio of one the best teams in nightlife management, Sutter has meticulously curated each component of the legendary **Foundation Room**.

The once exclusively private club in the iconic Swan building downtown is set to make its re-emergence mid March and will offer a full array of premium experiences from sultry designed spaces, featuring exotic décor, enhanced sound and lighting, new food and craft cocktail menus, live music, curated theme nights and top entertainers from all over the world. Combining the Far Eastern contemporary design of the Foundation Room with the rock and blues theme of the House of Blues, Sutter creates an artistically infused ambiance with Moroccan influences and spiritual underpinnings of a historic music genre.

The Foundation Room, will offer the ultimate in VIP experiences with the purchase of a membership. Members will enjoy many benefits including premium entrance and seating at events and an impressive loyalty program with rewards that include an artist meet and greet. Members will also be able to securely stash their own private collection of spirits and cigars to either entertain with or enjoy on their own at a moment's notice. With its beautiful décor and an outdoor lounge filled with plush seating overlooking the Dallas skyline, the Foundation Room is certain to leave an impression and become one of the most sought after spots for entertainment in Dallas.

Victor Sutter spoke to Haute Living to unveil his dramatic plans of transforming the venue and making it into one of the country's premier nightlife destinations.

Where are you from and what is your professional background?

The "where are you from" always gets a little complicated for me. Both of my parents were foreign service officers, so I was really lucky in that I had the opportunity to grow up in Africa, Europe and Latin America. I was living pretty much all over until my move to Miami, where I went to school and later worked for some really amazing hotel companies; Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental and Ritz Carlton. Then eventually my path crossed with Nikki Beach, as their director of development for 6 years and I ended up doing a lot of traveling with them opening up properties around the world. I made my way to Vegas with Nikki Beach, where a few years later I was lucky enough to join Live Nation.

Where do you live now?

I'm based out of Las Vegas.

The entertainment industry is dynamic and constantly changes what do you think is the key element in staying up to date and relevant in your field?

It's not always about being at the cutting edge Someone once told me, " The guy that breaks the wall usually comes out bloody on the other end." More often, it's about ensuring that you are confident about what you are putting out there and you're genuine, authentic and honest about your product. That's something we strive to do, not just put out a product that's hot or trendy but a product that we are genuinely honest and intrigued by. That's what fundamentally influences the customer; if you believe in what you are doing.

How have your travels influenced your career and how have you incorporated those experiences into your venues?

I like to bring those influences from interesting things I've seen in art installations, music, and food around the world. Every culture has a different idea of what entertainment should be and how to present it. The Foundation Room being so eclectic in its cultural background and design; it lends itself to a lot of those experiences. I feel like I am tailored for the room in a sense because of my international background and the ideology of the room does play with a more global background.

How has social media changed nightlife?

It's an important vehicle in giving us the ability to share experiences immediately. I think it has helped us spread the word and share great moments.

Compare the nightlife in Dallas with Vegas or NY?

I think Dallas has some really great venues! I like the fact that they are smaller and more socially intimate environments than Vegas. Vegas went the completely opposite direction with it's mega clubs where 7,000 people fit in a giant space. Vegas is more of an event driven nightlife where as Dallas is all being part of a scene, enjoying your friends and having a good time.

What led to the rebranding of the Foundation Room?

It was always a great private and membership room but above and beyond it was a room that was not exposed to the public and not that many people knew about it. So we felt that having such a great piece of real estate and one of the best looking rooms in town, that more people needed to experience. It became a great opportunity for us to look at our business model, better the brand and have more people exposed to it.

Where do you see things heading for Foundation Room?

With our Orange County opening later on this year, we will be right at eight properties. We are actively looking for an LA location, so with both Orange County and LA we would be sitting at nine. We have plans on having a more global presence. We are exploring partnerships with a development opportunity in the Philippines and strategic cities in Europe. Since Live Nation is a global brand it makes sense for us to follow in that path and the timing is good for House of Blues to bring its vibe and energy to the world.

What kind of patron is the Foundation catering to?

The good thing about the room is that we are open earlier in the evening as well as late at night. So as the evening progresses, so does the patronage. It's the perfect spot to have a cocktail before heading home from work, or if you are living downtown and just got home from work it's a great spot to have a glass of wine on the patio watching the sunset. There will be live music, DJs playing and the longer you stay, the music will get louder and the lights will get dimmer and hopefully you will find yourself dancing.

How do you think the blending of the American Delta South vibe of House of Blues with the contemporary, eclectic feel of the Foundation Room will create a successful dynamic?

It's juxtaposed a bit in that the Foundation Room lends itself to a more nightlife scene, which by default makes it a more contemporary vibe but the room itself has vintage artifacts. There are artifacts from Burja India that are 300 years old, vintage carpets and folk art that go back more than even the House of Blues. So there is a lot of history in the room despite it being a more contemporary space.

Will the Foundation Room maintain private memberships? And what is the advantage of having a private membership?

It will maintain a membership component but it will longer be private. Members will have access to special perks including a personal concierge service, preferred seating at events and the use of private rooms to entertain guests. There will be a loyalty program that will allow guests to accumulate points on what they spend to use for dinner, tickets, shows and all kinds of fun stuff.

Does Live Nation support any nonprofit organizations or give back to the local communities in any way?

The Foundation Room itself was built with the premise of supporting a nonprofit. The

reason it's called the Foundation Room is because we support the **Music Forward Foundation**. A large percentage of every dollar spent on membership fees or select menu items go to supporting local music programs and raising funds to provide youth with the opportunity to study music, receive instruments and participate in musical showcases. We are definitely a product of the foundation and without it, the Foundation Room wouldn't exist. Our job is to have a wonderful venue and VIP room for House of Blues but above and beyond; our job is to make money for the foundation and ensure the exposure of music to our youth.

What and where was the best bash you have attended and what made it so memorable?

I was invited to a party in Napa and I thought it would be a very much subdued wine party. Apparently Napa doesn't party like that! It was something between Eyes Wide Shut and a wine tasting. So that would definitely have to be one of the most surprising, therefore memorable bashes that I've ever been to.

Where do you go to unwind?

Vegas is lucky enough to have all these amazing award winning Michelen Star Chefs and I always seem to run into them at one or two in the morning at some horrible dive eating a sloppy burger, and I think for me, it's kind of the same thing. These days I enjoy a good quiet dive bar! I get my itch to go out dancing and see some of the club world, but I think when you do it as often as I do that the welcoming feeling of a dive bar is perfect at the end of a long night.

Your management style in three words?

Accountability, Support and Fun!

What's your drink of choice?

I feel like I should say bourbon because it's the cool thing to say, but I will have to say wine. If I start drinking hard liquor its never a good thing.

What makes the Best VIP Service?

Genuine is the biggest thing. Having a genuine VIP service where they care about the customer and the experience. Whether in a restaurant or nightclub, genuinely wanting to serve the customer goes a long way.

What do you love most about your work?

We get to create stuff and have the ability to present our ideas and run with them. It's fun!

Do you have any mentors and who are they and why?

I think I've picked up the most from travel and I've had mentors as I went through every city and town. Probably what sticks out to me most are the hotelier. They are work horses and they really installed an incredible work ethic in me. I got made fun of when I arrived at work at 7:30am because I slept in.

What time is your bedtime?

When I'm in Dallas 4 am and when I'm in Vegas around 2:30 am. I'm a night owl.