

A Night ON THE TOWN

BY NICK LEONTI

When the sun goes down in Sacramento, the lights come on and the party starts. Midtown visitors are welcomed by dozens upon dozens of warmly lit dining, dancing, lounging and entertainment options. From dive bars to the opera, there's a little something for everyone.

In fact, there are so many nightlife options in Sacramento that it's best to start in the late afternoon. That's when a great selection of the city's finest restaurants offer specials which have started a legitimate happy hour revival here in California's capital.

For example, take a look at the Spa Bar at Spataro Restaurant and Bar (1415 L St., 916-440-8888) where the seats offer great views of Capitol Park and the menu offers great pizza for \$5.

The sophisticated bar offers lounge seating in a relaxed "after work" atmosphere. The décor is designed for comfort for both the body and the eyes making you feel right at home even if you've never been there before. Plus, with happy hour specials starting at \$3 it's pretty hard to go wrong. Highlights include prosciutto wrapped shrimp and Limoncello drops.

There is even a "Bartender's Choice Cocktail" which varies daily and allows the bartenders to show off their skills.

Spataro's happy hour runs Monday-Friday 3pm-6:30pm. Should you decide to stay for dinner, the main restaurant at Spataro features a fresh take on classic Italian dining that you're sure to love.

After dinner, Sacramento offers night owls a great variety of entertainment options. Local and national music acts play weekly throughout the city. There are movie theatres, the IMAX and art house theatres. There's the Sacramento Opera, the Sacramento Ballet, Music Circus and a great selection of live theatre.

Of course, if your inner rock star is screaming to get out, the only real option is Live Band Karaoke at Marilyn's on K (908 K St., 916-446-4361). This Tuesday night happening has earned a strong fol-

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lowing since its debut a couple years ago and it's easy to see why.

If you've ever dreamed of taking the stage as the lead singer for a real rock'n'roll band, then stand up and be counted (for what you are about to receive). Local favorite, Adam Donald, will show you the way as he and his band are ready to rock out behind you and provide any necessary back-up vocals.

Just pick a song from the ever changing catalogue, anything from Britney Spears to Lynyrd

Skynyrd, and let the show begin.

The atmosphere is a sort of contained rowdiness – lots of jovial yelling, laughter and good times. You'll see all your friends' hidden rock star moves and might even find a superstar in your midst. Some folks are naturals up there, while the others just provide good, clean entertainment for the rest of the group.

After the final encore you'll want a nice, comfortable place to enjoy a nightcap. The L

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Wine Lounge and Urban Kitchen (1801 L St., 916-443-6970) is the perfect spot. Even before the wine hits your lips, you'll be more relaxed as soon as you enter the exquisitely modern design of the space. Soothing lighting and welcoming couches beckon you to the front room as "the loft" and "the bubble room" await you up the stairs. It's like the living room you always dreamed of and it's filled with wine! Does it get any better than that?

Choose bottles or wine by the glass from the extensive wine list or try one of the nightly flights which are sure to please. The kitchen provides great food for any occasion from cheese plates and salads to entrees like spare ribs and pork tenderloin.

The "L" allows for great conversation with friends as the perfect end to a great night out in Sacramento.

Of course, this is just a small sample of what's out there. Take a look around and follow the city lights to find your own Sacramento nightlife experience.

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The Torch Club

904 15th St., Sacramento

916-443-2797 | www.torchclub.net

Sacramento's favorite blues club is still going strong after 70 years. Featuring the best blues musicians from all over the map six nights a week, the Torch isn't showing any signs of slowing down.

The Blue Lamp

1400 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento

916-455-3400 | www.bluelamp.com

Showcasing the best in area talent, the Blue Lamp prides itself on good music, good people and strong drinks.

Old Ironsides

1901 10th St., Sacramento

916-442-8832 | www.theoldironsides.com

Since opening in 1937, there has been no more legendary dive bar in Sacramento than Old Ironsides. Featuring live music from popular regional acts throughout the week and the indie dance party known as "Lipstick" on Tuesday nights, "Old I" is a true Sacramento treasure.

Harlow's

2708 J St., Sacramento

916-441-4693 | www.harlows.com

Harlow's has been one of Sacramento's most popular nightspots for many years now. The modern design, lively dance floor and the best in national and local talent including popular 80s cover bands, keep Harlow's hopping five nights a week.

Empire Events Center

1417 R St., Sacramento

916-448-3300 | www.empireeventcenter.com

As one of the largest clubs in Sacramento the Empire is known for bringing well-known national acts to town in addition to its regular weekly lineup of dance music and college nights.

For more music and nightlife happenings in Sacramento pick up the latest issue of the *Sacramento News & Review* for its weekly "nightbeat" calendar featuring more than 75 local venues. View it online at www.newsreview.com.



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SECOND SATURDAY

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