


CLUBWORLD



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LASERS ARE BACK

MAJOR VENUES
INVEST IN
BEAMAGE

SORRY, PARIS

NO MORE SIX-FIGURE
APPEARANCE FEES
IN VEGAS

Walk Out

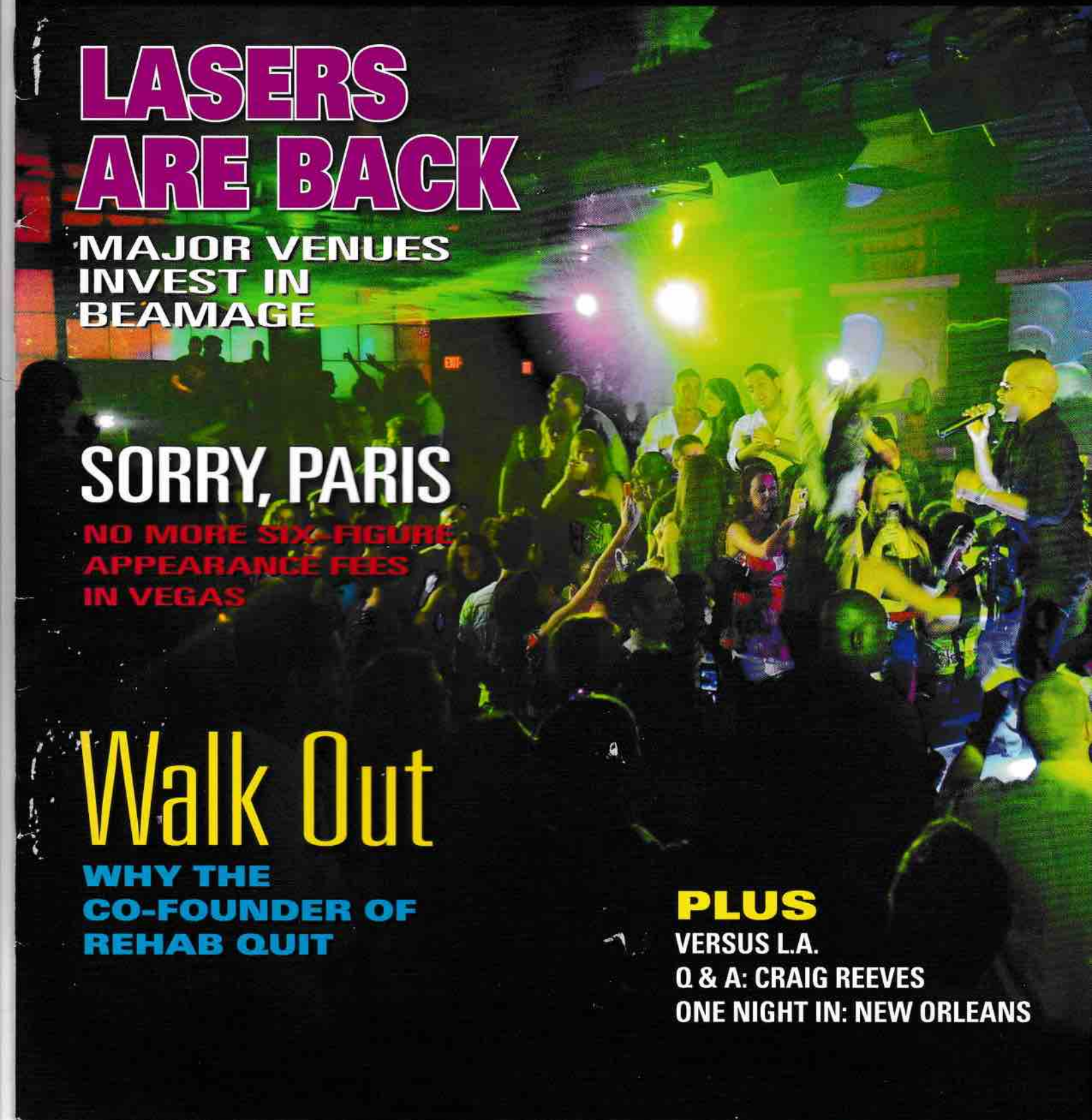
WHY THE
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VERSUS L.A.

Q & A: CRAIG REEVES

ONE NIGHT IN: NEW ORLEANS





Laser Show

Miami club Mynt is outfitted with cutting edge laser technology.

**Thought lasers were dead?
Think again. They're back—and putting
the planetarium to shame.**

By Justin Hampton

Most clubs can get away with mere lighting if they know what to do with it, but nothing says “next level” quite like a laser beam shooting and reflecting all over a venue’s interior. Longtime staples of many a stadium rock show, for prices ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000, lighting designers can now get their hands on lightweight boxes that are easy to use and offer a wealth of visual capabilities.

Tom Harman, the president of Miami-based laser manufacturer and distributor LaserNet (whose BeamRaider product won the 2006 Club World Award for “Best Effect Product”), acknowledges the high price tag, and recognizes the impor-

tance of explaining a laser’s risks and rewards to his customers. “Our goal is to give it the highest impact,” he says. “The laser is always a high-dollar item, so we want to make sure that the owners [understand it]. So we try to explain to them how to install it to get the maximum effect at all times.”

The first thing he instructs them is that this is not your hippie great-uncle’s Laser Floyd show. Tons of innovations have crept into the game since the planetarium was retired. We’ve provided a breakdown of what lighting jockeys at Miami Beach-area clubs Set and Mynt and Vegas’s RokVegas are playing with.

A Lean, Mean Green Machine

IJs at Mynt and Set both drive a one-watt solid state diode laser box (Mynt possesses an SP1200 made by LaserNet for the club, whereas Set has a NeoLaser from China) redesigned to conserve a maximum amount of power for each club without sacrificing one iota of color vibrancy. SJ Lighting's Steve Lieberman of RokVegas went one better by installing two 300 milliwatt and one 500 milliwatt laser from NeoLaser within the club.

Horatio Pugliese, technical supervisor of LaserNet, says that the newer diode lasers are analogous to the LED fixtures currently sweeping the lighting fixture market due to their flexibility and energy efficiency. He adds, "A few years ago, the only way to have a physical laser in a disco or in a party [was] to use three-phase power, 30 amp per phase, 208 volts and three gallons of water running to cool down the laser per minute on an ion tube...."

"We now have the new laser working, generating one watt out of one-tenth of the power that you can get out of a regular outlet: 110 volts, four amps maximum," he continues. "And this cools down using just a few fans on the heads." Its compact size and weight - 20 lbs. in a square foot box - doesn't hurt either.

Programmed To Love

Depending on the requirements of the lighting set-up, lighting jockeys can either operate lasers on a dedicated computer or from the computer running their main lighting controller. Harman's lasers are all fully DMX-compatible, so they're fully synchronous with any lighting effect that can be run from a lighting controller.

Club Set's lighting jockey, Jorge Tellez, runs it using the Cypher-Lite DMX package, as does Mynt, whereas RokVegas splits the difference between one dedicated computer running one laser and DMX running the others. "We have a DMX interface that allows you to control pretty much every single parameter upon the laser projection and also what kind of images, in which colors, sizes, etc. from 16 DMX channels. So this gives you the chance to set your laser system as another moving head in your show," says Pugliese. "The lighting guy can control the laser intensity and colors, animations and speeds like another lighting fixture. Or you can have a laser operator that does his show like a light show."

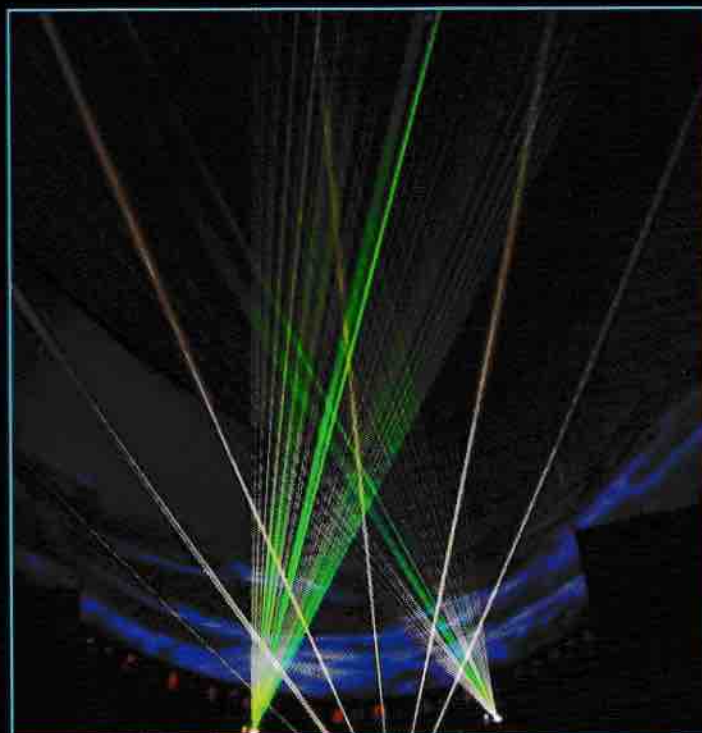
The lasers can run with virtually any DMX-compatible software, but LaserNet offers through Pangolin Software its own user-friendly version, which offers a sophisticated and intuitive paintbrush-based interface that allows IJs to design their own logos and choose from any font Windows provides, in addition to dozens of preset wavelengths and effects.

Tellez mentions one instance when this option came in handy during a Sasha appearance. "I put on the wall really big, 'LOVE,' and I made the whole room red, 'cause he was playing some love song. And people loved that. So it lets you play a lot."



PHOTO BY FIREDOGPHOTOS.COM

Mynt creates the "liquid sky" effect, which sends a beam through a sea of haze or fog, with two hazers on either side of its laser.



RokVegas has a DMX interface that allows it to control virtually every parameter upon the laser projection.



Set's lighting jockey runs the effects with a Cypher-Lite DMX package, as does Mynt.

The Shape Of Things To Come

Harman himself would be remiss if he were to forget the time-honored mirror-bounce effect that can send beams on an intricate ricochet above the heads of clubgoers. "I'm an old rock-and-roller who believes that when you have a laser show, you've got to see incredible three-dimensional beam grids over the dancefloor," he says.

Which is why mirror bounces are a staple at both Set and RokVegas. Indeed, Set will soon invest in rotating mirrors that allow for greater visual options. Even the smaller Mynt Lounge, which initially bypassed them, will soon pull the trigger, according to its technical head, Pawel Rogusztzak.

Of course, one cannot forget the vintage "liquid sky" effect, which sends a beam through a sea of haze or fog. Mynt creates this effect with two hazers on either side of its laser, which sits atop the DJ's booth, whereas Set has two Kryogenifex nozzles it can fire into its laser, which is positioned on top of the bar. And Harman notes that although neither club has availed itself of the opportunity yet, the system can even project text messaging, so clubgoers can make themselves heard in a big way.

Such options indicate how much further the laser industry continues to go. Pugliese mentions a new laser fixture LaserNet recently debuted at Lighting Dimensions International in Vegas, which features 12 turrets and 24 repositions as well as a full set of DMX chasers programmed into the microprocessor - all the DJ needs to do is enter in the parameters and that's it, without the need to learn any additional software.

And Harman also announces work on a sensor that may allow for audience scanning - a laser effect involving pointing the beams into the audience that is legal in Europe but illegal in the States due to safety concerns - at some point in the future. "An internal box [will be] built into the projector that will calculate and guarantee that once the laser beam reaches a certain position as it's going to enter the audience viewing area, it automatically decreases the power to predetermined safe levels," Harman says. "And those safe levels will give the audience a different, new effect and will invigorate the laser show even further."



Nothing says "next level" like a laser beam reflecting all over a venue.



Mynt's laser system has the ability to project clubbers' text-messages.



Mirror bounces - an effect that sends lasers on an intricate ricochet - are a staple at RokVegas.