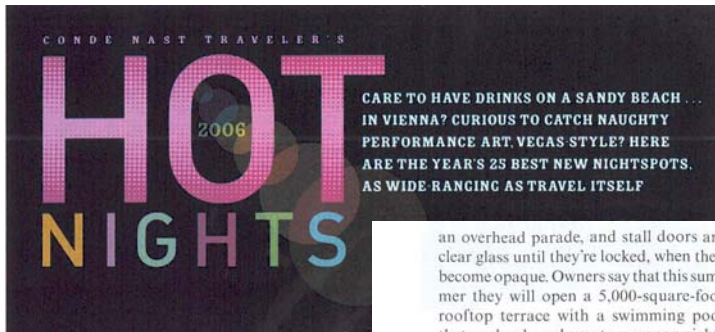




May 2006



an overhead parade, and stall doors are clear glass until they're locked, when they become opaque. Owners say that this summer they will open a 5,000-square-foot rooftop terrace with a swimming pool that can be glassed over to serve as a nighttime dance floor (3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702-388-8588; taolasvegas.com; cover, \$20-\$30).

**G Spa & Lounge, New York, New York**

And now for something completely different, even in no-holds-barred Manhattan: a hotel spa that transforms into a club by night. In the basement of the Gansevoort Hotel, G Spa & Lounge is the scene of mani-pedis during the day, but as evening descends, the infinity-edge hydrotherapy

man (18 Ninth Ave.; 212-660-6733; hotelgansevoort.com).

**Bar Belmont, Dallas, Texas**

Inside the recently reopened Belmont Hotel, in the Oak Cliff neighborhood, lies a decidedly low-key lounge that has become the unofficial watering hole for media, art, and fashion types. Set on a rocky bluff, this former '40s motor lodge, designed by Dallas architect Charles Dilbeck, is a pioneer of gentrification in a neighborhood better known for its bail bondsmen than its chic bars. Those tired of celebrity DJs and the calculatedly sleek bar scene will appreciate warm touches such as floor-to-ceiling casement windows, earthy green walls, and bright Mexican glass-and-tin chandeliers. Weekends, you might find duos playing folk tunes in front of the fireplace—don't worry, the music never overpowers the e-mailing lap-toppers. In the sunken den area, get comfortable in midcentury modern chairs and on cushioned benches. Or better yet, take to the large terrace, the best place in the city to watch the sun go down (901 Fort Worth Ave.; 214-393-2300; belmontdallas.com).



**THE OPEN-AIR TERRACE IS SET JUST ABOVE THE LAS VEGAS STRIP, SO REVELERS FEEL A PART OF THE BOULEVARD'S MANIC ENERGY**

tubs are covered with transparent tops and converted into seating, and the three treatment rooms become VIP areas with red backlighting. Waitresses in short white robes serve spa-inspired cocktails such as the Sauna (Stoli vanilla, fresh pineapple, and lime juice) and appetizers from Ono, the Japanese eatery next door. While the Gansevoort's rooftop bar has maintained a fashionable crowd in the three years it's been open, this subterranean lounge is *the* Manhattan velvet rope to get past: The intimate club, which holds only 75 people, has a strict guest list and even a hotel key doesn't guarantee that you'll get in. So arrange admission with the hotel concierge, turn up early, or be prepared to bribe the door-

**Tabaq, Washington, D.C.**

Once jammed with legendary jazz clubs, Washington, D.C.'s U Street Corridor is today an incongruous mix of fast food restaurants, check-cashing services, and chic new eateries, clubs, and lounges. Tabaq was an abandoned town house before a \$4 million renovation turned it into a five-floor partyplex. First there's the lounge, where cocktail-quaffing young professional types get cozy on Scandinavian furniture as DJs spin house and hip-hop. The long, narrow second-floor room, flanked by red leather banquettes and a zinc bar, is a romantic spot for dining on tapas: stuffed mussels, shredded wheat-wrapped fried calamari, and more. But the best seats in the house are on the roof, which has 360-degree views of the capital's well-lit monuments. And the pièce de résistance is the retractable transparent covering, which transforms the rooftop from glassed-in to open-air in a minute (1336 U St. N.W.; 202-265-0965; tabaqdc.com).

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