

AUSTRALIAN

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East Side Story

VODKA'S TOP 10 MOMENTS

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Inside Sydney's Favela

EYES ON THE PRIZE
How to win cocktail comps

HAVANA BALL
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review.

Favela



ADDRESS: 1 Kellett Way, Potts Point, Sydney

PHONE: 02 9357 1640

HOURS: Tue-Sun 6pm till 3am*

WEB: www.favela.com.au

BY AMY SPANTON

Photography: Courtesy of venue

Favela (*fa-vela*) noun. A shantytown or slum, especially in Brazil

It's been a long time coming. Three years ago a couple of Sydney 20-something entrepreneurs bought a 400 square metre building on the corner of Kellett Way and Roslyn Street in Sydney's Potts Point/Kings Cross with hopes of opening Sydney's hottest restaurant, bar and nightclub. They faced an agonising battle with Sydney's archaic licensing board, but finally managed to secure a coveted nightclub licence for their prime piece of real estate. Building commenced and finally, in December 2006, the doors of Favela opened. The name, a term for a Brazilian shantytown, is a tribute to the site's adopted use in the interim as a

homeless squat.

The owners, James Moses (formerly at **The Collection** in London) and Dean Dinov (who has a background in property development) poured a whopping \$3 million into building the polar opposite of a slum. They started by gutting the interior of the old Korean barbecue restaurant **Yellow Book** and rebuilding it into a three storey entertainment venue with a capacity for 250 people. All that remains of the old space is the heritage sandstone feature walls on the sunken ground level.

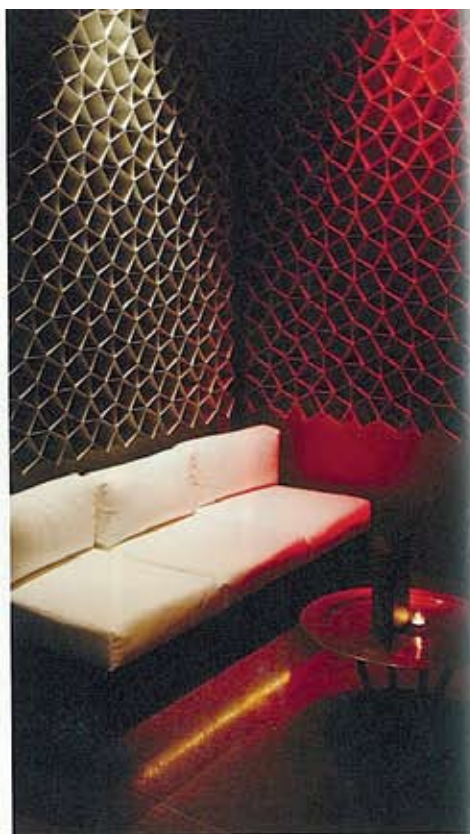
The architectural design of the venue was

undertaken by Sam Ragoli of Studio R, while the look was conceived of by Anna Di Napoli Designs & Graphics. The restaurant on the ground level is a sunken, glass-enclosed courtyard which seats 50 people. Ray Ang, former chef from **Longrain** and **Zushi** is running the restaurant, which serves an Asian-style menu from 6pm till 10pm, when it turns into a fully-fledged cocktail bar. In the great tradition of London hotspots, the staff encourage bottle service at these tables, but also have an extensive cocktail list (more of which later). For anyone with late night hunger pangs, the restaurant serves snacks, in the form of a yum cha menu, from 6pm till close at 3am. Offerings include all the Chinese delights you would imagine: sweet potato and orange zest spring rolls, steamed prawn dumplings, mini bbq pork buns and pork gyoza dumplings.

Next up there is the VIP Gold Room. Inspired by a Parisian perfumery, this private enclave is tiled floor to ceiling in reflective gold tiles. Already graced by the likes of Paris Hilton, it looks set to be the new hideaway for visiting celebs.

The dancing happens upstairs, where Sydney's only Funktion One sound system is in action. Installed by Avsound, the system cost a tidy \$250k and the boys are committed to a strict policy of non-commercial music, recruiting Central Station Records to control their DJ bookings. The lighting system on the dance floor is also unique – the ceiling is covered in 8,000 individual light bulbs which are controlled from the DJ booths by the same master light control system used at the Olympic Games. But it's not just lights and thumping beats. Cocktails are pumped out to guests who prefer to rest their weary legs, with waitresses offering table service in the lounge areas.

Now back to the cocktails. Heading things up in the bar is Christophe Lehour, a Frenchman who left his post at **Cabaret** in London to look after the drinks at Favela. His bar team





consists of recruits from outside the local bar scene, mostly London and Ibiza, Christophe has put together a well-rounded collection of cocktails that fall under different headings: 'Champagne Glory' for sparkling blends such as the Crack Baby (featuring vodka, raspberry liqueur, passionfruit and lemon juice); 'Sorbet Cocktails' featuring a selection of housemade iced fresh fruit purées; 'Unashamed Luxury' for those who want to spend up; 'Martini Station' for vodka drinks served in cocktail glasses; 'Old's Cool' for the classics; 'Flash Back' for the retro classics and 'Hall of Fame' for the house originals. All spirits are well represented, with a particularly good selection of rums and Bourbons on offer. Costing is in line with the other premium venues in the area, with cocktails priced at an average of \$16, wines by the glass at about \$10 and bottled beer at between \$7 and \$10. For those who really want to splurge, there are a couple of heavyweight Champagnes on the list such as the Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame Vintage Rosé (\$459) and Champagne Salon Vintage (\$750).

People often use the terms 'a-list' and 'beautiful people' to describe the crowd in swish new establishments (particularly in Sydney), so we won't bother here. Needless to say, the Eastern suburbs clique is well-represented. All that aside, these new operators have gone out on a limb by offering something not seen in Sydney - a restaurant, nightclub and cocktail bar under one roof and one moniker. Will these chaps prove that Sydneysiders want to eat and club in the same place? Only time will tell.

*Cover charge of \$20 applies on weekends