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Big time operators

by Hillary Schuler-Jones

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The RMD Group: Dave Renzella, Rodrigo Iglesias and Michael Georgopoulos. Photo by Mike Savacool

The RMD Group has scored another victory in the Gaslamp district with the opening of Fluxx nightclub at 500 Fourth Ave., marking one more achievement in a long string of successes by Michael Georgopoulos and his team.

Georgopoulos, who got his start in the restaurant industry as a dishwasher at the age of 13, has steadily moved up the ranks to become a major contributor to the success of multiple hot spots in San Diego. He is the former general manager of Stingaree, and he helped launch Bar West and Universal before starting RMD Group in 2008.



Club-goers revel on the circular dance floor in the new state-of-the-art Fluxx nightclub at 500 Fourth Ave. Fluxx is just one of the RMD Group's successful projects in San Diego. Photo by John Audley

His business partners at RMD Group hold similar credentials: Dave Renzella, Georgopoulos's uncle, worked in the food and beverage industry and is also a former GM of Stingaree. Rodrigo Iglesias was once a security guard for EnDev and spent 12 years managing clubs like Onyx in the Gaslamp.

The trio started RMD Group when Side Bar went up for sale, and they have been in growth mode ever since. After renovating both Side Bar and the neighboring Ciro's pizza, the team barely caught its breath before planning Fluxx, which opened March 12.

The 11,000-square-foot club is one of the only "true" dance clubs in San Diego, Georgopolous said.

"RMD's vision was strictly as it related to flow and energy and vibe, and most importantly, we wanted the best lighting and sound system, certainly in San Diego, but also in Southern California and potentially beyond," Georgopolous said.

"Everybody dances everywhere ... but a true dance club has a dance floor that has lights and sound around it that are at a higher level than everything else, and the design is that you are going to be on that floor dancing," he added. "That's what you have here, and you really don't get that at too many other places in town."

The result is what some have called "Vegas in San Diego." RMD Group worked with designer Davis Krumins of Davis Ink to come up with a theme that incorporates natural textures like wood, brick and rope with the latest in club technology, including state-of-the-art lighting features and backlit photos of robots and vintage toys on the walls. The club's three bars each overlook the dance floor and performance stage, which has already hosted Warren G, FloRida and Brandy as special guests.

Fluxx is billed as "a club in constant change," an appropriate tagline for the ever-evolving nightclub scene, and that concept is incorporated into the club's design. Many of the decorative components are interchangeable, including the artwork on the wall, some elements in the bars, the lighting scheme and the backdrop on stage, which will all be replaced by a new theme every six weeks, Georgopoulos said.

He also said that after only a few weeks of operating, the bar is already running smoothly, and his partners are considering their next move. They have been getting calls from nightclub owners in Las Vegas and other parts of the country who want to tap into the winning management formula they have created, but they might also try building another bar from scratch.

"I know what we are not going to do — we're not going to do another nightclub in the Gaslamp, we're not going to do another lounge in the Gaslamp, we're not going to do another pizzeria in the Gaslamp," Georgopoulos said. "But outside of that, really, the sky's the limit."