

Drinking, dancing, and home before dark

For millennials in Greater Boston, a new crop of daytime dance parties and events offer nostalgia, energy, and purpose — with a bedtime

By **Haley Clough** Globe Correspondent, Updated April 19, 2025, 12:00 a.m.



Attendees at Kulture Lounge, a recurring late-afternoon event hosted at Ball Square, for millennial patrons who want the "nightlife" experience before the sun goes down. PROVIDED

Just after 5 p.m. on April 8, a gaggle of windswept patrons burst into [Trina's Starlite Lounge](#) in Somerville. Hugs were exchanged, coats thrown over barstools, and drinks dutifully ordered. If it hadn't been for the dregs of near-dusky sunlight peeking through the windows, the buzz of music and energetic conversation might have given the impression of an event several hours later and several drinks deeper.

The vibe is warm as [Old Man Bar](#) — hosted by Trina's owner Josh Childs with special guest, Row 34's bar director, Vannaluck Hongthong — kicks off. The new social event, of which there have been two since January, is an opportunity for patrons with jobs, kids, or other commitments to still have a “night” out. The evening of lively talks, specials, and guest bartenders “who like to be in bed by 9 p.m.” runs from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. While not outside Trina's usual 5 p.m. open time from Monday-Saturday (and 11 a.m. for Sunday brunch), the goal is to attract a crowd that wants a “night out” that doesn't end in a nightcap.

The concept started as “a tongue-in-cheek joke,” said Childs. But, he added, “there's something kind of great about it, too. You can come in, you can make the drinks you want, you can go home by a reasonable time and go to bed.”





Trina's Starlite Lounge owner Josh Childs and Row 34's Vannaluck Hongthong during the April 8 edition of Old Man Bar, a new early evening event that features specialty cocktails and guest bartenders. ALYSSA DIPASQUALE

Old Man Bar is part of a shift toward new nightlife options that specifically cater to Gen Xers and millennials. In February, Medici, [a nightclub featuring a lounge that targets an over-30 clientele](#), opened doors in Providence. While the club stays open until the wee morning hours, the lounge mostly opens at 7 p.m. with decor and features (brighter lights, softer music, more comfortable seating) chosen for an older crowd. Other events may not explicitly call out a targeted age range, but center on activities and concepts that appeal to partiers-turned-early risers in their 30s and 40s, like [mindfulness and meditation](#) paired with speed dating or happy hour [networking for the “space-curious”](#) (or space pros) followed by astronomy-themed trivia.

Think “darty” — (colloquial for “day party”) — but for parents and middle-aged adults looking to blow off steam. For these pre-dusk parties, the goal is to provide “nightlife” experiences while considering a work/life balance.

Childs said Trina’s loyal patrons jumped at the chance to socialize and imbibe at an earlier hour. The two hosts slung playfully named cocktails like the Miso Shisho by the Seashore (Hongthong’s Collins interpretation) and Van is my Old Pal (Childs’s take on a Negroni) from behind the bar; a soundtrack of “pseudo-yacht rock and classic dad rock ... a little ’90s hip-hop,” chosen by Hongthong, filled the air, and most guests left by 8 p.m., without the risk of sacrificing a good night’s sleep.

“I want to be in bed by nine,” said Vanessa Yip, an Old Man Bar attendee who has known Childs and Hongthong for the better portion of a decade, not only as a regular but as a friend. She calls Trina’s “an arms-open place.”

Sarah Murphy, owner of Vinal Bakery and Vinal General Store and Trina’s patron, appreciates a chance to unwind that is mindful of busy work-life balance: “Now that we have kids or more demanding careers, [early nightlife] fits better with our lifestyle than the late hours of our 20s.”



Attendees at an EarlyBirds Club event in February 2025 in Los Angeles. CARISSA WOO PHOTOGRAPHY

[The EarlyBirds Club](#), a Chicago-based event producer, was founded by Laura Baginski, Susie Lee, and Helean Lee, three friends in their 40s who shared similar sentiments. They launched in February 2024 and now host like-minded events across the country with dance nights that run from 6 to 10 p.m. Each promises, according to its website, “a dance party inspired by the bygone nights spent clubbing with your girlfriends ... but now at a much more reasonable hour.”

While [created](#) with women and non-binary folks of a certain age in mind, everyone is welcomed at EarlyBirds' events, which are inspired by music and nightlife of the '90 and early aughts with occasional themes like prom and '80s night.

“[W]e’re harkening back to a time when we didn’t have kids, or we didn’t have to worry about taking care of someone, where we were probably in a dorm room pregaming before whatever frat party and getting ready with our girlfriends,” explained founding member Helean Lee. “That’s the general time to which we’re trying to trigger memories. We’re pulling a nostalgia. ... Those times are so precious.”

EarlyBirds arrives in New England for the first time on May 2 at Fete Music Hall in Providence, and May 3 at Middlesex nightclub in Cambridge, which is currently waitlist-only. For each event, cofounder Laura Baginski said 10 percent of proceeds go to a charity that is local to the venue, “often for the benefit of women or the trans and nonbinary communities, and it’s got to be a mission that really resonates with us.” For their Providence party, the group plans to support [Sojourner House](#), a support system for survivors of abuse, and in Cambridge, the proceeds will go to [Rosie’s Place](#), a Boston-based emergency shelter for women.



Guests at Kulture Lounge's residency at Upstairs at Bow in Bow Market in Somerville. PROVIDED

For those looking for a more regular haunt, Kini Udovicki and Malene Council, both in their mid-40s, launched [Kulture Lounge](#) in June of 2024. The monthly event, which take place at Bow Market's [Upstairs at Bow](#) in Somerville, is promoted as a “sophisticated day party tailored for the professional grown crowd.”

“There are lots of places where 21-year-olds can go. There is nightlife in Boston, but we don’t want to be around that crowd, and we know that people our age don’t want to be around that age [group],” said Udovicki. The founders are long-time friends and oversee Kulture Lounge’s operations in addition to their full-time professional careers; Council works in family and teen advocacy in the Cambridge community, and Udovicki is an educator.

Kulture Lounge’s pop-ups typically run from 5 to 10 p.m. with the next event on April 19. Tickets are typically \$25 and sold online and at the door, and the venue’s capacity of 110

people helps to maintain the event’s intimacy. A \$50 ticket for the new VIP section, features a complimentary drink and comfortable couches to socialize on.

“We’re not so old that we don’t want to go out anymore, right?” Udovicki said. “We wanted to create a space where people could come out, enjoy old-school hip-hop ... [and bring] you back to a place that maybe you had forgotten about ... and you’re like, ‘Oh, my God! I haven’t heard that [song] in so long,’ and it just brings joy to the space.”

The soundtrack at Kulture Lounge draws from the ’90s and early 2000s, hip-hop, R&B, and reggae. Attendees can nurse drinks and visit at the bar or seating areas or dance the (early) night away on the dance floor.

“I think music was how you got through things,” Council said. “We’re always high energy, worrying about things. But with Kulture Lounge, I managed to say, ‘It’s going to be what it’s going to be’ ... I feel like I’m back when I was a kid. This feels good, just feels good, even if it’s just for that day.”

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