

# GOTHAM

## WHO OWNS THE NIGHT?

THE BIGGEST PLAYERS AND COOLEST PLACES THAT MAKE NYC NIGHTLIFE TICK.



## BEYOND THE DANCE FLOOR // Eugene Remm & Mark Birnbaum

Thanks to such nightclubs as Finale and Lulu's, and *Top Chef*-helmed restaurants like Catch, the EMM team, spearheaded by Eugene Remm and friend Mark Birnbaum, has over the last eight years helped blur the distinction between the dance floor and the dining room. **WHAT'S THE BIGGEST SHIFT YOU'VE SEEN IN NIGHTLIFE?** **EUGENE REMM:** People's jobs have changed. They have to be up early and have a lot of responsibilities. They aren't out until 4 AM. Entertaining and socializing are done earlier, over food. **ARE THERE MORE HIGH ROLLERS IN RESTAURANTS NOW?** **MARK BIRNBAUM:** In one of our restaurants a very serious wine buyer spent almost half a million dollars on wine at one seating. And yes, he did drink it—not all of it, though. We and the staff took a sip of whatever was left. **WHAT ABOUT BIG SPENDERS IN NIGHTCLUBS?** **MB:** They're from out of town, Mexico, Texas or wherever. People used to buy the biggest bottle; now, they like to make a splash, with maybe 20, 30, even 100 bottles of Cristal, DP, or Ace of Spades Champagne. There are more people being brought out, more sparklers [hand-held fireworks]. You can do this a few times a night instead of once. If someone is in the bathroom and misses the first show, they'll catch the second or third. **HOW HAS SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTED YOUR BUSINESS?** **MB:**

Not long ago, people would show up and you had them until the end of the night. Now, if someone is bored, they can look down at their phone—and Twitter or text friends to see what's around that's better. People go to three places a night, minimum. **ER:** You can't really control the message in the same way. Now, people are looking on their phone at 1 AM, and if they see something amazing happening elsewhere, they get up, close their tab, and leave. **SOUNDS LIKE WE'VE MOVED INTO A MUCH MORE DEMOCRATIC, POST-BOTTLE-SERVICE WORLD.** **MB:** Bottle service came from Europe in the early 2000s. It was more about VIP rooms, separate from regular clubs, with an entry fee. Well, that lasted until the economy blew up in in 2008. Then everyone realized you didn't have to buy 20 bottles to get the same treatment. **WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE BIG-SPENDING WALL STREET WOLVES?** **ER:** There are a lot of restrictions, mostly by the government, on the finance guys now, so that type of spending isn't what it used to be. New York has become an international market, and that wealth is balancing it out. **SO THERE ARE STILL CRAZY, BIG-SPENDING NIGHTS?** **ER:** Recently someone bought 100 bottles of Perrier Jouet in one shot. That was pretty wild. He provided the evening's entertainment for the entire place.