

# Inside SEX

*In this walk down memory lane, Tex McKenzies tours and offers tips about sex on premises venues*

Remember your first time? That scary feeling as you approach the front door of a sex on premises venue? I well remember my first visit. I went on three successive nights – watching to see who went in and who came out, walking past the entrance trying to peer into the gloomy interior, walking past to pluck up the courage to actually set foot inside. On my fourth visit I went inside. It was a revelation and a disappointment at the same time. Having read countless lightweight American porn ‘novels’ I was expecting to be the centre of attention, to be the new meat on the block. Now many years down the track, I see the uncertainty when ‘a first timer’ sets foot inside the doorway of my favourite fuck club. Whether it is a ‘wet’ sauna or ‘dry’ sex-club/backroom, the first time can be the hardest. Like entering a gay bar for the first time, it can be scary and exciting but in time it all can become so blasé. When you enter a Sex On Premises Venue, you see the counter where you pay your entrance fee and, in a number of venues, a small yearly membership fee. You will also have to ‘sign-in’. I’ve seen more than my fair share of ‘John Smiths’ and even a few ‘Donald Ducks’ and ‘Rock Hudsons’. Before you enter you will be encouraged to lodge your keys, wallet and other personal items in a safety deposit box, so that these don’t go ‘missing’ in a dark spot. More often than not you’ll be handed a safe sex pack containing one or more condoms and lubricant sachets. Around the venue itself you will find bulk supplies of condoms and lube, either in sachets or pump-top containers, in easy to reach places. Condoms and lube should be found in cubicles, dark rooms and other nooks and crannies where sex is likely to happen.

## **Over the threshold**

Once you are past the front door, most often you will walk into a lounge area. If you are in a wet-venue (sauna) you’ll have been handed a towel and a key to a locker for your gear. In a dry venue (sex-club) you can dispose of outer layers of clothing and put them in the coat-check. In the lounge there is usually complimentary tea, coffee and soft drinks. Adjacent to the lounge area you’ll often find a TV or movie area showing latest release movies or gay-popular TV series – read Ab Fab, Buffy or Will ‘n Grace. Elsewhere in the venue you’ll find more intimate lounges showing hard-core porn.

## **Beyond the lounge**

Beyond the lounge areas, a variety of pathways, corridors and stairs offer you a choice of ascending or descending into dim lit areas. Unless you are plucked ‘off the shelf’ as soon as you walk in the door, set aside some time to see where other guys are heading and mooch along discovering the different types of areas where you can play. Each venue has its own culture. The most striking feature may be that not a lot of talking goes on. Guys can cruise each other, negotiate and have sex, often without a word being spoken. Sometimes the unspoken word can lead to misunderstanding prospective partners’ intentions. A particularly important issue is not making an assumption about another guy’s HIV status by the way he looks or what he does. HIV status is rarely discussed. One of the QuAC/AFAO posters currently displayed in venues suggests, “I don’t have to tell you I’m HIV positive if we are having safe sex – safe sex means I’ve got it covered.” Sex On Premises Venues offer a diversity of play spaces. There may be walls of ‘glory holes’ where you stick your cock through a suitably placed hole and someone on the other side sucks away with glee. Some ‘glory holes’ are big enough to fuck through. It may be difficult to know exactly what is happening. A guy may have your cock in his mouth then take it up his arse without you realising. Condoms aren’t used often in ‘glory holes’ so check from time to time.

## **Burning rubber**

Corridors can often be lined with cubicles. These are small rooms with a door and with walls that usually don’t reach the ceiling. Sometimes they only allow standing or crouching room or they are large enough for a narrow vinyl double bed. Most venues have separate larger rooms that you can hire for a set number of hours, with walls that reach the ceiling and often a leather sling for regular or fist fucking. For fist fucking

wearing a latex glove with heaps of water-based lube is recommended. Both wet and dry venues will usually have a darkroom area with no door and a low level of lighting. These rooms, some with a large mattress, are intended for group sex. Group sex can be pretty hot but it may be hard to follow exactly what is going on in the dark. Someone may go directly from fucking one guy to another without changing condoms. So put on a condom for each new guy and try to ensure any guy fucking you puts on a new condom. Some venues will have a sauna and/or steam room. Inside the steam room you may be reminded of the film 'Gorillas in the Mist'. Steam rooms can be very busy with sweaty, hot action so take care to keep your fluids up and not stay in too long. Venues strongly promote safe sex but there are no 'Safe Sex Police' on hand to ensure that the only sex is safe. Venue staff and patrons acknowledge that both safe and unsafe sex happens. The common point of view is that 'people make their own decisions – one on one, behind closed doors'. The guys having sex share the responsibility for looking after their own and their partners' health.

Adapted from an article by Tex McKenzie - Lifeblood – Victorian AIDS Council