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To 7/30: Rawhide opens 19-and-under Club Eclipse

by **Jennifer McClellan** - Jun. 9, 2011 09:16 AM
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Club Eclipse looks and feels like a typical nightclub, with an expansive dance floor, a lounge area done in black and red, a

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laser-light show and hip-hop DJs.

Club Eclipse

What: Rawhide hosts a 19-and-under dance club during the summer.

When: 6 p.m.-midnight Fridays and Saturdays through July 30.

Where: Rawhide, 5700 W. North Loop Road, Gila River Reservation.

Admission: \$8 online, \$10 at the door.

Details: 480-502-5600, rawhide.com/club_eclipse/index.php.

» PHOTOS

But, there's one glaring difference: Everyone inside is 19 years old or younger.

The club, which opened Saturday and runs Fridays and Saturdays through July 30, at Rawhide near Chandler, caters to teens who want to party and parents who want them to do it in a safe place.

Open to teens 13 to 19, the club serves soda and popcorn instead of alcohol, enforces a dress code and has a visible, but not overbearing police presence.

Inside, the scene is more high school dance than nightclub party.

The younger girls teeter, not used to walking in heels. Guys stand stoically with hands shoved into pockets.

For the most part, girls and guys segregate in closed circles, throwing over-the-shoulder glances at each other. Girls giggle; guys try not to.

Wallflowers sit at tables, checking phones to look busy. Extroverts break-dance in the middle of the dance floor while on-lookers encircle them.

Heather Osterhaus, 15, and Kayla Jackson, 14, friends and self-described "party people," were excited to have something to do on the weekends. Dressed in leggings and leopard-print shirts, the two Pinnacle High School students scoped out the club from a table, then headed to the dance floor when DJ Casper's "Cha Cha Slide" came on. (This is a wedding reception song: "To the left, take it back now, y'all. One hop this time, right foot let's stomp.")

The two Phoenix girls heard about Club Eclipse on the hip-hop and Top 40 station KKFR (98.3).

"When I heard about it, I was screaming in the car," Jackson said.

"She called me and said, 'We have to go,' and I was like, 'Yep.' " Osterhaus said. "Why not spend \$10 and have a good time?"

Staged in the pavilion in the back of Rawhide's property, the club can hold more than 2,000, and has a mix of two lounge areas, six dance platforms, a Facebook photo booth and a concession stand.

Community centers and churches have been hosting teen nights for ages, offering a place for kids to dance awkwardly and to play basketball and board games. And throughout the Valley, a handful of nightclubs have hosted 18-and-older nights, most notably the Buzz in Scottsdale, which closed in 2009.

But Club Eclipse is one of the few Valley nightclubs dedicated to younger partiers, especially the 13- to 16-year-old demographic.

"There's really not much for teens to do during the summer," said Rawhide general manager Brian Crum. "And the teen market is one that everyone would like a piece of."

Doors open at 6 p.m. Teens pass through security, showing either a school or state-issued ID. If they're 16 or older, they get a colored bracelet; others get an "X" on their hand.

At 9:30 p.m., club staff asks everyone under 16 to evacuate the dance floor so they can be home by the 10 p.m. Chandler curfew.

For the older teens, who tend to arrive later, the club is open until midnight.