

Best. New Year's Eve. Ever.

From movie-worthy moments and personal reflection to burning buckets of coal and dwarf tossing (well, almost) here is how some of the East End's most creative types have celebrated the start of a new year.



kathryn g. menu photos

Nancy Atlas

THE NANCY ATLAS PROJECT

I should have known playing the Talkhouse for the closing minutes of 1999 would not be normal. There is no way Peter Honerkamp would have settled for just a good band, dressed up bartenders and silver balloons. Like some derelict version of a John Waters play, there must be strippers and a dwarf. Make that confused strippers and a nasty dwarf. Somewhere in the back of Peter's head he came up with the idea of having Coco the Stripper and Hector the Dwarf do a reenactment of "Lady Godiva" after the first set. What Peter had NOT foreseen was the look of stunned confusion on the faces of the dressed up ladies who were there to celebrate a monumental passing of time. Patrons watched a well endowed stripper, complete with a long, fake, blond wig, get chased back and fourth on a 16-foot stage by a midget dressed up as a jester.

The band stood side stage frozen in disbelief. Coco and Hector returned upstairs where I was sitting on the couch as I, along with every other band leader in the world, had to make sure that Prince's "Tonight We're Gonna Party Like It's 1999" was played as we headed into the bright New Year of 2000. That was when Hector came up to me and in a voice that can only be described as Angry Munchkin Lollipop Kid said, "Hey, just so you know, I'll be doing the countdown." I looked up and arched a brow. Coco chimed in. "Nooooooo. I'mmm supposed to do it." she purred, batted her eyes and made a sad face. Topless. In a fake long blond wig and smeared mascara.

Have I offended you yet? Good. I don't care. Because reality is offensive and this, as I was

heading into the 21st century, was my reality. People had traveled the globe to be in Paris, the top of Kilimanjaro, maybe an African Safari or deep in a Costa Rican jungle for this sacred night. The turn of the century.

"What are you going to do?" Everyone asked. "Where are you going to be for the turn of the century?"

Oh me? I'm going to be upstairs in the Talkhouse, on a semen covered couch arguing with a stripper and a dwarf.

Okay, back to the story. I told the stripper and Dwarf "No." Neither was pleased. Hector must have sensed I wasn't budging and accepted defeat because his next sentence was, and I kid you not, "Would you like to throw me?"

No. This is not really happening. Yes. It is.

We hit the stage. The clock was ticking but as anyone who has ever played the Talkhouse knows, the clock on the wall is fast by about 10 minutes. Phil Vega, looking dapper in his tuxedo, was screaming "FIVE MINUTES" when in actuality it was fifteen minutes. I couldn't fight it. The pressure was on. I cued 1999 but then Vega figured out the clock was fast and was now screaming "NO! NO! You have 10 more minutes!" What resulted was the longest version of 1999. EVER. I just remember repeating "I got a tiger in my pocket and baby it's ready to ROAR" about 16 times till Hector was thrown into the audience and Coco bounced up and down without rhythm next to the drum kit.

This, for the record, is how the Millennium was ushered in at my favorite bar, The Stephen Talkhouse.