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Super Cherry Pop :: Turns 3!

by Brody Brown
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There are few promoters that are able to play in the competitive space of West Hollywood successfully. **Tom Whitman** is one of the few who appears to have mastered the art of launching and sustaining a weekly event that the boys and those that love them keep returning to, week after week.

Whitman currently throws a successful Thursday night party at **The Abbey**, has put on the giant **Wonderland** party for the past six years during LA's Pride weekend, hosts a very crowded beer bust at **Here Lounge** on Sundays, and helms **Cherry Pop**, the get-your-ass-to-the-dance-floor Saturday night party at **Ultra Suede**.

Over the years Cherry Pop has showcased performances by Katy Perry, Solange Knowles and Wynter Gordon. And Super Cherry Pop, Whitman's extra large version of the party thrown on the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Saturdays of each month (and an occasional extra Saturday) has featured performances by Erika Jayne, Mya and Lady Gaga.

We caught up with Whitman on the eve of Super Cherry Pop's three-year anniversary celebration to recap the last couple of years and to ask how he's kept the Saturday night party "poppin" for so long.



Super Cherry Pop celebrates a new year! (Source: Courtesy of Tom Whitman Presents.)



Tom Whitman and Vanessa Hudgens at Cherry Pop. (Source: Courtesy of Tom Whitman Presents.)

EDGE: How did Cherry Pop first start and when?

Tom Whitman: Cherry Pop started three years ago, when I moved my Saturday night promotion "Popular" at Here Lounge over to Ultra-Suede and the Factory. Ultra Suede did a big renovation for the opening of Cherry Pop, and suddenly my Saturday night (which had been good at Here Lounge) became great at Ultra-Suede. And it's been the biggest Saturday night in LA for three years now.

The name came from a couple of things. I wanted to reference my previous "Popular" promotion and "Cherry" used to be an über-popular club in the same space 10 or 12 years before - and Cherry was one of the first clubs I frequented in LA. It had a more underground vibe, but was still balls-to-the-wall fun. So I combined the two, and Cherry Pop was born.

EDGE: Is there a different crowd you target with Super Cherry Pop vs. Cherry Pop?

TW: No, it's always the same, fun, crazy, pop vibe. Super Cherry Pop means that we are in two clubs - Ultra Suede and Factory, so we can fit in almost 2000 people, instead of 800. We do different versions of Super Cherry Pop though sometimes. Super Cherry Pop Remixed has one room where the music is a bit clubbier and features dance remixes. Super Retro Cherry Pop has one room of 80s, one room of 90s, and one room of 00s.

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Men Who Love Men Who Love Super Cherry Pop. (Source: Courtesy of Tom Whitman Presents.)

Whitman's Magic Touch

EDGE: Though hitting the three-year milestone is certainly admirable, it seems like "Tom Whitman Presents" events do fairly well in terms of longevity and almost always make it over the three-year marker. Isn't that usually the case?

TW: I try to build events that are going to be fun over the long term. SIZE Sundays at Here Lounge has been going for 9 years! Yikes! I've had a couple of events last for a year or two, but mostly we are in for the long haul. And as long as I continue to enjoy being at the event, I think other people will enjoy it as well.

EDGE: After one or two years of throwing a party, many promoters throw up new giant decorations or change the name or theme of a night in an effort to try to keep things fresh, but it seems that Super Cherry Pop has stayed relatively the same over the years and still remained quite popular. Why do you think this formula has worked for you?

TW: I think that just changing the name or putting up different colored balloons is cheesy. Event producers should focus on delivering a great product, rather than doing it half-assed and then changing it to another half-assed promotion. When I started Cherry Pop, we started with a ton of elements that I loved: choreographed routines with professional dancers (the Cherry Pop dancers) as well as traditional go-go boys, aerialists, a definite choice of radio-edit pop music that we all know and love instead of circuit music, a friendly door policy, a cheap cover charge, performances each week from up-and-coming as well as established singers, and a gender-bending artist-in-residence (Shokra - who danced at the original Cherry as a go-go boy). With all of that stuff, why would I want to change the name or the image of the club? I think creating an experience for people and attaching it to a brand works better. When people come to Cherry Pop, they know what they are getting - a crazy, fun, not-so-serious vibe with eye candy everywhere.

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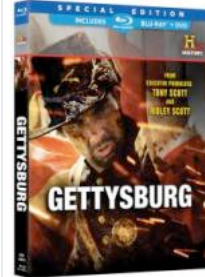
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