

## Final countdown

**Still trying to decide** what to do on New Year's Eve? Here are 10 suggestions – but definitely not for the faint of heart



MARIE LECONTE THE GAZETTE

If this scene at Place Jacques Cartier just after midnight last Dec. 31 appeals to you, there will be a repeat performance Saturday night, and you and thousands of your closest friends are invited.

MAXINE MENDELSSOHN  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Searching for a quiet, intimate locale to ring in the New Year? You're on the wrong page – the party suggestions below are sure to be wild, booty-shaking events. If you haven't figured out what you're doing with only two days to go before the big night, here are 10 downtown parties that are still open for revellers:

**1 The New Year's Eve Grand Ball.** Don't sit at home watching New York's Times Square celebration – we have our own outdoor bash, and last year, 30,000 people braved the cold to attend. Live bands will play on stage at Place Jacques Cartier, and the Rickard's choir, dressed in their red robes, will sing a repertoire of gospel and swing to countdown to a midnight fireworks display. There is no alcohol permitted outside on Place Jacques Cartier, but all the area bars will be open.  
**Where & when:** Place Jacques Cartier, Old Port. Starts at 9 p.m. Cost: Free. More info: 1-(877)-266-5687, www.xmasfairies.info.

**2 A Kidnapper Films New Year.** The group of young filmmakers-cum-party promoters are at it again this year with their third New Year's celebration at Green Room, a cozy pub in Mile End. The \$10 cover price will get your foot in the door and a swig of Champagne at midnight. Expect a typical crowd of "we only shop at thrift stores" Mile End scenesters. It's sure to be a sweaty, raucous gathering.  
**Where & when:** Green Room, 5386 St. Laurent Blvd., doors open at 10. Cost: \$10. More info: (514) 969-7546.

**3 The W Hotel.** It's pretty much a guarantee that, walking into the W Hotel on New Year's Eve, you'll be hit with a wall of music and a whole lot of beautiful people partying. There are three separate bashes at this den of cool. Wunderbar, the W's ground-floor club, has a \$75 cover charge, which includes Champagne at midnight. The upstairs Plateau Bar is \$65, drinks included, and Otto, the swanky restaurant, is having a five-course gourmet meal with cocktails, for \$125. (Reservations are a must for dinner.)  
**Where & when:** W Hotel, 901 Square Victoria. Starting at 9 p.m. More info: (514) 395-3100.

**4 Meet Me at the Waterfront Party.** Promoters of this Old Port party are angling for a more mature, hip-hop-loving crowd, so there's a semi-formal dress code. Guys are encouraged to show up in sharp suits, and ladies in stylish evening wear. The big story here is the music, with six deejays spinning on four turntables. Expect a heaping helping of reggae and soca beats with a little early Michael Jackson and some 50 Cent club anthems. There's valet parking and bottle service; \$150 will get you a bottle of vodka and all the juices to mix your own cocktails.  
**Where & when:** Marché Bonsecours, 305 de la Commune St. E., Old Port, 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Cost: \$60, includes Champagne at midnight and hors d'oeuvres. More info: (514) 816-1649 or www.lymetyme.com.

**5 I Love Neon Party.** The cavernous SAT art gallery on the Main, with its floor-to-ceiling concrete no-decor decor, is the perfect setting for this semi-underground party. They're expecting 1,000 electronic music-loving revellers to fill the giant loft for an earful of house, dance and drum & bass. A video-jockey will be projecting trippy visuals on the walls and they've booked Paris house deejay Alex Gopher and Digitalism, a live electronic music act from Germany. Montreal deejays Jordan Dare and Sean Kosa will also be spinning. A top-secret after-party is planned, the location to be announced at the event. Dress comfortably because there's going to be a whole lot of dancing.  
**Where & when:** The SAT, 1195 St. Laurent Blvd., 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Cost: \$40 at the door. More info: (514) 844-2033, www.iloveneon.ca.

**6 Break 2005 at Aria Nightclub.** The hook here is house music and the after-hours vibe. They don't have a liquor licence, but you can fuel up on energy drinks – you'll need a few because the party lasts 14 hours. For those deejay-obsessed partiers, they have an all-star lineup of disc jockeys with residents Maüs and Creator as well as Deep Dish and Danny Howells. There's also a hip-hop room where Redd Dredd, Clinton Sparks, Quest and Majess will be spinning.  
**Where & when:** 1280 St. Denis St., 10 p.m. to noon. Tickets: \$75, www.admission.com. More info: (514) 987-6712, www.aria-nightclub.com.

**7 The End at Club Unity II.** This is first and foremost a gay and lesbian bar, but it's also

for open-minded people who love to dance. Cover is a bargain at \$15, and it includes Champagne at midnight and live entertainment all night. Performers include electro-jugglers with neon lights, acrobats, ballroom dancers who dance to house music and a drag queen show. There are two rooms, with deejay Alex Lauterstein from New York spinning house in the main room, and top 40 music in the other.  
**Where & when:** 1171 Ste. Catherine St. E., 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. More info: (514) 523-2777, www.club-unity2.com.

**8 Fluid.** After shelling out \$85 to get into this shindig, you can party without opening your wallet for the rest of the night. The price includes everything from an open bar and hors d'oeuvres to the coat check and tips. There will be live bongo players and dancers on stage. Yo-C, Buona Notte's resident Friday-night deejay, will be spinning club favourites.  
**Where & when:** Club Soda, 1225 St. Laurent Blvd., 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Cost: \$95 for a regular open-bar ticket, with VIP and premium packages that go up to \$170. (Champagne all night is included in the top price.) More info: (514) 846-3300, www.fluidnewyears.com.

**9 Celebration NYE 2006.** About 6,500 people are expected to pack the Bell Centre for this 14-hour dance extravaganza. Promoters have lined up an all-star cast of deejays like Britain's Paul Oakenfold and Steve Lawler. Partiers should expect a sensual barrage, including cascades of mist, confetti, fireworks and a laser show. There's Champagne at midnight and bottle service in the VIP area by the party specialists from Time Supper Club.  
**Where & when:** The Bell Centre, 1260 la Gauchetière St. W., 9 p.m. to 11 a.m. Tickets start at \$92, www.admission.com.

**10 Bye Bye 2005 at Cabaret Mado.** Say bye bye to 2005 with celebrated Montreal drag queen Mado and her girls at this New Year's cabaret. The show starts at 10:30 p.m., but doors open at 9 p.m. and it's best to get there early for good seats. deejay Mado will be spinning from midnight until closing time.  
**Where & when:** Cabaret Mado, 1115 Ste. Catherine St. E., doors open at 9 p.m. Cost: \$20. More info: (514) 525-7566, www.mado.qc.ca.

IN PERSON MAXINE MENDELSSOHN

## He speaks softly and plays some very loud music

Ugo Gitau is just 26, but he speaks of his wild party days like a man reflecting on his bygone youth. Gitau is a club deejay, so he's still a fixture on the bar and party scene, but he has learned to keep his distance from destructive habits that can come with all-night clubbing. Gitau is a diminutive, quiet guy who speaks softly and plays very loud music.

UGO GITAU, 26

**Shot at:** A loft on St. Dominique St. where his booking agent works.  
**deejay name:** deejay B'Ugo.  
**Occupation:** Resident deejay at Circus after-hours club and Jello Bar.  
**On his days as a party kid:**

"Those days are behind me. I used to go to after-hours clubs twice a week to party. I was so into it. Drugs were just a part of the scene but they were never discussed."  
**How he copes with working in loud, smoky dance clubs:** "I don't believe the hype, I just don't let myself get swept up in it. When I'm working, I can't be all messed up and still deliver the goods. I'm a performer, my s-t has to be tight. I have a responsibility to the partiers, I can't let them down."  
**His pet peeve:** "Cigarettes. There is no smoking in my deejay booth."  
**He can't live without:** "My cellphone. I'm addicted."  
**On what occasion does he lie:** "I

always tell people I can do something even when I'm not sure I can."  
**His greatest achievement:** His career.  
**If he could die and come back as a person, it would be:** Chaka Khan.  
**Where to find him at midnight:** "If I'm not deejaying, I'm usually home listening to music."  
**One of his newly acquired tastes:** Disco music.  
**Last time he gave charity:** "I threw a party to raise money for the tsunami victims last year and I volunteer a lot. Right now I'm volunteering for the Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale to develop a fair-

trade fashion label."  
**Hidden talent:** "I'm a barbecue master."  
**Secret shame:** "I'm addicted to Addidas, which is really bad because it's so not a fair-trade company."  
**Necessary extravagance:** "I'm anal about my deejay equipment – it has to be high-end."  
**What makes him upset:** Exploitation.  
**What makes him happy:** Music.  
**Last song stuck in his head:** "My Humps by the Black Eyed Peas. I hate it, but it's so catchy."  
**The worst fashion trend:** "Girls who are too skinny."

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Ugo Gitau's deejay equipment must be high-end.