

KRUISIN KROME ROLLOVER TO START ME UP

NITESIDE

Shedding light on life after dark

CALLIN FORTIS, KEN SMITH, BIG TIMES DESIGN, CROBAR WORLDWIDE, WMC, EDEN ROC

NiteTalk: Big Time Design Mind Callin Fortis & Crobar Worldwide

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In a town with more clubs per capita than any place else on earth, it's more and more difficult for a venue to stand out. That's what made Crobar and then Cameo so appealing. The mix of whim and wile had not been seen since the days of Lapidus, and both venues remain legendary staples of what it means to truly do South Beach. The design mind behind the massive creations was one Callin Fortis, head of his own Big Time Design, and Ken Smith, co-owner of Crobar Worldwide. Fortis's latest great creation is the B Bar at The Betsy and Crobar's teamed with WMC for a pair of official pool parties destined to live

in infamy. Niteside caught up with the keen cat on the eve of even more stunning bedlam.

You're the fine mind behind Big Time Design, can you please give us a brief overview about the company and what it does?

Bigtime Design began in Chicago in 1999 after a grueling design school battle with kids a decade behind me. My vision as then a thirtysomething design and architecture ball of creative energy was to create a truly collaborative studio reminiscent of the famed masters who really created a conduit with which fresh new ideas, techniques in both design and manufacturing could find a home in a truly unique creative space. Enter, Bigtime Design.

One of BTB's latest projects is the subterranean swing spot B Bar at The Betsy, which has a certain retro-tomorrow feel about it. Was there a single line or theme behind the design? I have been blessed by great spaces. By that I mean I typically work on large if not huge canvases. Bigger moves hide little mistakes. This space was, shall we say, size-challenged. It began as an unusable space in a basement of a historic hotel on Ocean Drive. The first magic move was to create the illusion that you were in a grand space yet small, secret and subtly alluring. The big idea here was the ceiling treatment, which has turned out to be quite a unique feature in that it not only accomplished its goal of soaring volume overhead but it envelopes you in an ethereal fashion delicately underfoot.

What about your designs in general? Is there a consistent theme or idea from which they all spring? Absolutely. I live by this axiom: It is the big things that create the impression and the small things that create the memory. I am of German descent and with that comes a little thing called obsession to detail. There is a social story behind all my design efforts. If I can't tell a story, I don't begin to write. The muse for Betsy was a sultry post modern whip. She could recognize a fine single-malt and beat you at checkers and recite the last paragraph from "Catcher." My kind of gal.

Which designers/architects do you find most inspiring and why? I am forever a student of architecture and design, though I switch up what's on my nightstand more frequently than not. Lately, Zaha Hadid for her experiments with spatial quality in addition to a certain contained

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whimsy that I find creates a unique tension in all of her work. And [Frank Gehry](#). Though obvious yet not present in my work other than deconstructive features when costs promote it, I remain fascinated by deconstructivism -- also known as DeCon Architecture. I am inspired by his legacy and his ability to bend socio-political norms as supplely as the steel with which it is formed.



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In addition to BTD, you and Ken Smith are the kingpins of Crobar Worldwide, which began in Chicago and now counts outposts all over the globe. If one was to ask for Crobar's mission statement, what would you say? Ask Ken. Ken is nightlife visionary. By comparison what he does for nightlife all current club concepts are measured. If mega club life were to be measured in time, we should all be as lucky to have entertained as long as Ken.

How many cities are you in now and when and where will we see the next installment? We are working on an all-new Crobar Chicago, which is our hometown. That location will break every rule, boundary and expectation for nightlife as we know it. That one is personal. China is rocking. San Diego is on line, and Houston is under construction.

Crobar Worldwide also does outside productions all over the planet, and I know you cats have something planned for Winter Music Conference. Can you give us the details please? We have taken over the pool at the Eden Roc for a monumental partnership with WMC. Thursday is The Size Matters pool party with Steve Angelo and friends, which I believe is almost sold out. Friday is Circoloco from Ibiza, which is the one party I will not miss of the year. Production, mayhem and pure house music as we know and love it.

When, where and why did you cats start throwing outside parties to begin with? We started the off-premise concept with Punta Del Este and San Tropez in the mid 2000s. We found that the opening weekend of a club typically is the most mind-blowing 48 hours you can create. Taking our show on the road, as it were, gave us the opportunity to re-create opening after opening after opening again and again. Our party in San Tropez in the season of 2003 was one for the record books.

Speaking of parties, can you name a few of the best you've thrown at Crobar over the years? [Miami](#) -- the first year of "F--- Me I'm Famous" with David Guetta. Eric Morillo and Puffy at Crobar New York. Black Eyed Peas live at Crobar NY.

When you're not hanging in one of your own joints or parties, where do you like to go? Michaels Genuine -- great outdoor dining, great service, great crowd. Red Light -- oh my God, the food, the atmosphere and the fact that it is Miami's own Florent, the original New York Meatpacking institution. The bar scene is sort of same-same for now for me but if I go anywhere it would be to hang with Carmel Ophir and Big Chris at The Vagabond. Little old school SoBe, with a pinch or two of Downtown. Just right.

BY [JOHN HOOD](#) // 19 MINUTES AGO

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Elizabeth Newman

Liz is a lifestyle writer and a self-proclaimed pop culture junkie. While never knee deep into the Miami club scene, she is always on the quest for a new hole-in-the-wall -- or at least anywhere with decent beer on tap.



Peter Bailey

Peter is the co-author of Trick Daddy's forthcoming memoir "Magic City: Trials of A Native Son." His award-winning work has appeared in the Miami Herald, Time and Newsweek.



John Hood

John Hood bylines for a plethora of publications, from Miami to Glasgow. His beat is to cover the keen and the colorful, no matter what they do.



Jipsy Castillo

Since launching her site in 2005, Jipsy's photos have graced countless newspapers, magazines and websites. Documenting Miami's nightlife and social scene, her images reminds us that there is more to party pictures than a smile and a pose.

- [Thrillist Miami](#)
- [Daily Candy Miami](#)
- [Miami New Times - Crossfade](#)
- [The305.com](#)



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