

The Importance of Being Exclusive

By [Andrei Muchnik](#)

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People clustering to watch the bands play at the impossible-to-get-into Miller festival, held at a secret venue.

Dubbed the ultimate party of the year, Miller's "Tonight. Summer In the Air" tried to outdo the most talked about party of last year. Thrown by Bacardi and featuring Die Antwoord and Twin Shadow, it was advertised everywhere yet practically impossible to get on the list. A lot of fans of Die Antwoord and Twin Shadow felt cheated and angry last year, myself included.

Miller took this one step further by announcing that the party would feature Chromeo and Simian Mobile Disco but would take place at an undisclosed location.

After last year's fiasco, I was determined to get on that list. By Friday, everyone who cared knew that the so-called "undisclosed location" was a certain posh club near Hotel Ukraina, which we are not going to name. I had never been to the "Club That Must Not Be Named" before, and the only detail I could bear witness to was that it is extremely hard to get in.

The first parties
of summer
offered
celebrity-
watching
and internation
al music acts,
though
excessive face
control left
many waiting
at the door.

Having decided to save money on the cab, I spent some time zigzagging my way around Hotel Ukraina and walking along the embankment. I eventually ended up in front of the club, with a small crowd of regular clubgoers. My heart was thumping as I thought "What if I'm not on that list? I won't be able to survive the embarrassment."

After climbing the stairs, I found myself on a fake lawn with several bench-swings, every inch of ground packed with people. Free Miller was literally flowing. I was wandering about, taking swigs from a bottle of cold Miller, staring at vaguely familiar faces I couldn't quite place. Although I did identify actor Konstantin Kryukov, artist Andrey Bartenev, and director Valeriya Gay Germanika, I realized I was in sore need of a celebrity-spotting crash course.

The concert was supposed to start at the top floor. The stage was several meters away from the roof's edge and seemed to be miraculously suspended in the air, just as the organizers promised. In reality it was supported by an immense construction built right next to the club, but it was impossible to see from the roof.

When Chromeo, the pop funk duo from Canada, finally came on stage, they seemed dwarfed by the stage's dimensions. It didn't affect their performance, which was upbeat and very danceable. Not everyone thought so: Well-tanned and gray-haired men in the forties, accompanied by girlfriends with various degrees of plastic surgery were staring at the stage wondering "who the hell are those guys? We thought we were going to see Stas Mikhailov!"

I needed to elbow all the way to the front of the crowd where people were really getting it down, especially to the hits like "Night by Night" and "Bonafied Loving." After Chromeo, Simian Mobile Disco played a DJ set well into the morning.

The following night, the place to be was the courtyard of Strelka Institute (Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya 14, Str. 5A), where the official afterparty of the Ahmad Tea Music Fest was taking place. At first, the bouncers were letting everyone with Ahmad Tea Fest bracelets enter. As the night wore on, guest lists were produced out of nowhere and it became increasingly difficult to get in.

Judging by the crowd, the whole town went hipster. Bearded guys in shorts and checkered shirts were dancing with their backpacks on. Strange occurrences included a guy waving his iPhone left and right as if to clear the way. Then he squatted down and started snapping

pictures. I turned around and saw his girlfriend posing with a glass of wine next to the wall.

First, Alt-J's drummer, Thom Green, entertained the crowd with a few dub step and hip-hop mixes. Later, The 2 Bears, a duo consisting of Hot Chip's Joe Goddard and his buddy Raf Rundell (both quite heavysset, hence the name) came on stage and played for more than two hours.

Their music oscillated between classic house, remixes of Hot Chip's own tunes, two-step and even hip-hop. Raf Rundell did a bit of emceeing and warmed up the crowd with his talking.

Strelka's indecisive and increasingly strict entry policy resulted in less than a hundred fans dancing to The 2 Bears by 3 a.m. in an almost empty courtyard, while another hundred were smoking outside, having been denied entry. At no time during the night was Strelka anywhere near capacity. Both Miller and Strelka promise more exclusive parties this summer.

While we are happy and excited to see more bands like Chromeo and The 2 Bears live, we say let's have more parties, but less exclusiveness.

Way less.

Contact the author at artsreporter@imedia.ru

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