

THE BRASSERIE: REBIRTH OF A CLASSIC • BILL BRADLEY'S BETTER HALF

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# NEW YORK

CELEBRATION 2000

# IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT

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## Two Million for Two Thousand

**E**m-i-ly! Em-i-ly!" in Times Square, on Millennium Eve, a saucy young woman sitting astride someone's shoulders was pulling her top up in exchange for beers. "Em-i-ly! SHOW-YOUR-TITS!" "Gimme a beer!" she yelled.

Despite the scenes of family togetherness seen all day on TV news—three generations in wacky Day-Glo wigs and "2000" glasses—Times Square remained true to its proud tradition of frat-house debauchery, a kind of Daytona Beach on the Hudson. But, with 8,000 cops in the streets, it felt more like *Animal House* under the watchful eye of Dean Giuliani.

For those who showed up too late to make it to the center of the action near the Coca-Cola sign and Jumbotron TVs, it was a matter of making one's own entertainment, with the help of a new group of instant intimates.

"Tell Giuliani to get some speakers out here—we can't hear the music," complained Chris Lamondang, 18, who'd ridden seven hours on a bus from Bowdoin, Maine, and was now sprawled out on the ground with some newfound friends, running a card game.

There was plenty of drinking—Poland

Spring and Snapple bottles served as containers—but there weren't many Port-a-Potties, so the desperate revelers, who weren't allowed to leave their block-long, cordoned-off crowd pens, resorted to what they dubbed "piss circles." "The basic idea," said Gibbie Wheelan, 24, from Denver, Colorado, "is stand with your backs in a circle while somebody stands in the middle and pees in a bottle, or, if you're a girl, in a millennium souvenir." She held up a yellow plastic top hat crowned with "2000."

Gibbie and her boyfriend, John Larsen, were standing in a circle of seven other out-of-towners with whom they'd bonded over the Port-a-Pottie situation. "I never met these people before, and now I'm peeing with them," said Gibbie. "Me and that girl over there did it cheek-to-cheek."

"Here is the center of the world," mused a ticked-off Lucas Licinio, 23, from Argentina, "the capital of the universe. When in my country I say tonight I come here, everybody say, 'Oh, I so envy!' But now, I am in a bad humor. This is not the kind of party I hoped—I do not like the way the cops treat people like animals, how you say, in a zoo!"

**THE BANG THANG** At Frank's Cocktail Lounge in Fort Greene, the old guard mixed with the young and the restless—sometimes within the same person.

Insults and indignities were magically forgotten just before midnight, however, when it became impossible to ignore that everyone was about to live through the millennial shift together. Horns went off; people screamed; men looked around for women to kiss and hold.

"Ten, nine, eight, seven..." After waiting for the new year to sweep across everywhere from Japan to Jerusalem, the crowd was counting down—finally—for New York.

The fireworks over the neon lights; the cheers of millions of people of every race and background, all crammed in between police barricades like a massive roundup of suspects—"How you gonna do better than that?" Chris asked dreamily.

Now John was in the street on one knee, murmuring something to Gibbie.

"Are you serious?" she shrieked. "Shut up!"

"First proposal of the millennium!" someone screamed. A buzz went through the pen. "Did he have a ring? It doesn't count if he didn't have a ring." He had a ring. "Did she say yes?" "She said... yes!"

"Aw, that'll make you cry," said a beefy fellow, John Barbato, from California, cheeks flushed.

Then, as quickly as it had happened, it was over. "What, no bombs, no terrorists?" someone asked. The new friends dispersed forever, the crowd began to move; now it was time for pedestrian gridlock, and the urgent attempt to get to someplace else and have some real fun before it was just another day on an indifferently planet.

Nancy Jo Sales

## Y2Kaviar

**W**hen the millennial midnight struck at the restaurant Daniel, one might have expected soft-spoken chef Daniel Boulud to raise a glass and toast his guests with a few bons mots. Instead, he was leading a conga line out of the kitchen and through his celebrated restaurant, greeting the New Year by banging pots and pans and whirling sparklers. His team of chefs hoisted Boulud onto their shoulders, Knute Rockne-style, before dousing him in Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut, Gatorade being nowhere in sight. The dining room crowd, typically a study in suave gentility, broke out in riotous cheers, though

