

LIVING

# Paint Nite helps singles brush up against other art lovers at New York City bars

Art class brings drinks and fun into the picture with a recent get-acquainted session at Essex restaurant. Artist Shannon Pan welcomes men to join, noting the 'abundance of beautiful women' at the classes.

Comments (1)

BY NICOLE LYN PESCE / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2013, 2:00 AM

13
 21
 0



JOE TABACCA FOR THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**Art instructor Shannon Pan, r., coaches participants at PaintNite.**

Want to pick up chicks? Then pick up a brush.

Paint Nite, the city's hottest new happy-hour craze, mixes alcohol with art class in nightly acrylic-on-canvas lessons in bars across Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

Patrons drink, mingle and paint. If all goes well, a masterpiece isn't the only thing they'll take home.

"This is a great way to meet single, hot girls," says artist Shannon Pan, who instructed a roomful of 17 ladies — and just three gents — at a recent Paint Nite at the lower East Side's Essex restaurant.

**RELATED: SINGLE MEN CHANGE THEIR SHEETS EVERY THREE MONTHS: SURVEY**

"I don't know why guys are not tapping into this more," she says, "because we have such an abundance of beautiful women."



JOE TABACCA FOR THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**Aspiring students can bring drinks into the scene at Paint Nite.**

Single lady Kelly McDonough, 25, from Chelsea, has hit four of these events and rarely sees men who aren't coupled up.

"Maybe guys are nervous about art, because these nights are always just groups of girls," she says. "It's too bad. This would be a great date."

The creative concept is the design of Daniel Hermann and Sean McGrail, who sketched out the idea after going stag to a painting party in Boston last year. They realized that moving art classes from stuffy studios to buzzworthy bars would make an irresistible girls' night out — and a lucrative business.

"Half the reason we thought the business was a good idea was to meet women!" laughs Hermann, who brought Paint Nite to New York last fall.

It has spread to 30 watering holes across the city, and recently expanded to Hoboken and Westchester — but male painters remain the minority.



JOE TABACCA FOR THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**Phyllis Huang has a drink and a wink during PaintNite at Essex Restaurant with her husband, Gene, on the lower East Side.**

"We probably run at 85% to 90% female customers," Herman says. "I'm not sure why we haven't hit the point yet where men feel comfortable to go out and paint."

No talent or experience is necessary for the \$65 sessions, which provide all the equipment (including paints, brushes, canvas and smocks) and the instruction needed for newbies to replicate a sample painting.

"There's a difference between trying to teach someone how to paint in general, and trying to teach someone how to paint a specific painting," says Hermann. "A specific painting is a lot simpler."

Drinks also help. Many bars offer discounts on Paint Nite, including the Essex, which let would-be Picassos get the paint flowing with two glasses of Pinot Grigio for just \$10.

"If you're feeling nervous, take a sip of your drink, take a breath," Pan assures her apprentices. "I will break everything down step-by-step so that you guys can do it yourself."



**Art's in bloom at fun-oriented Paint Nite.**

At the lower East Side gathering, the template was an abstract scene of two birds silhouetted on a branch. It looked complex, but students quickly got a hold on the medium. After two hours of mixing, dabbing and, well, drinking, the 16-by-20-inch canvases actually looked pretty good.

"That was surprisingly fun," says Gene Huang, 36. His wife, Phyllis, 31, had wanted to switch up their same-old dinner-and-a-movie date. "I'm working my way down the drink menu."

The couple plans to hang their pictures side-by-side at home in Holliswood, Queens.

Gil Salanga, 35, from the Gramercy neighborhood, certainly wasn't looking forward to setting up his easel when his girlfriend "dragged" him to Paint Nite.

"I don't paint. I don't do any of this artsy stuff," he says. "But she bought the tickets, and said there's alcohol, so I said, 'Okay.'"

Salanga softened his art criticism after realizing that painting has a certain beauty — or several beauties.

"If you are a single guy, go paint!" he says, "If you're trying to find some ladies, here they are."