



CLUB STY

BY JASON RICHARDS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHLEIGH WESSEL

Thanks to Sport Pig, Anna Von Frances isn't exactly wallowing in the mud.

Disappointed to find Toronto's club scenes so limited by genre when she arrived from Montreal four years ago, Anna Von Frances envisioned a bold and eclectic party in the rigid city. So she decided to build it. And they came.

"Just because you like Mobb Deep doesn't mean you can't listen to Bruce Springsteen," says Von Frances, reciting the line that would become the mission statement for the night that's jokingly called Sport Pig, the ugliest name she could come up with.

When the first Sport Pig went down at The Gladstone Hotel it piqued mass interest among the party people for its eclectic lineup (then-unknown hip-hop guitarist Shad K and Alexisonfire's singer George Petit on the 1s and 2s) and its provocative

flyers of boobshell and bodily fluids, many of which Von Frances posed for herself. The flyers were, she says, shocking and subversive, but they "gave girls agency." Still, they'll be toned down this year so

as not to further encourage all the imitators who started making less ironic versions for their own events.

And lots of imitators there are. Back on that very first sweaty summer night in 2004, Von Frances, a 20-something MuchMusic staffer, birthed not only a successful party series but also a whole career in promotions. Money and requests for her to throw after-parties (she's run them for Metric, The Stills and The Casby Awards) were tossed about as Toronto partiers wanted to get in on the nu action.

Part of Sport Pig's action comes from its unorthodox locations, like the January party with Broken Social Scene's Brendan Canning, Eclair and Lindo P inside Bright Pearl, a Chinese restaurant on Spadina

not exactly known for its V.I. bottle service. Another part is the equally unorthodox (for Toronto) roster of performers featured; shuffling all over the musical place, Team Von Frances has hosted wall-to-wall affairs with appearances by Cone from Sum41, Ian from Billy Talent, From Fiction, k-os, Broken Social Scene drummer Justin Peroff and 'nuff others. But, says Von Frances, the real secret to the success of Sport Pig and its all-female promotional cabal is the woman's touch.

"The big thing is we get a lot of girls out, and girls really let loose. Because girls run it, there's always gonna be toilet paper in the bathroom, and no one's allowed to call another girl a whore because of a skirt they're wearing."

And if someone does? Like a drunken stray from the Richmond-Adelaide corridor?

"I'd probably kick them out," says Von Frances. "Women always come first."