



### 23. Beta Nightclub

Words: djmag



As if bossing the globe's MP3 market wasn't enough, Beatport's Brad Roulier has reset the parameters of 21st century clubbing with his pet project, Beta. In under two years, Roulier and his team have transformed what was once a commercial hellhole in Denver's tourist district and shaped a strong contender for the most forward-thinking dance club on the planet.

Don't believe us? Just ask the experts. Richie Hawtin says the DJ booth has the best monitoring system he has ever played on, Deadmau5 describes the venue as "a DJ's wet dream" and just about everyone that has played here is full of praise as pure as the club's consuming soundsystem.

Of course, perfection never comes cheap and the Beta crew have thrown every last dime of financial and creative investment at the place. Built from the DJ booth out, Beta's sound design is borderline obsessive. On a mission to build the best they could, they gutted the place out, bankrolled acoustic engineers to analyse the room to its definitive optimum and then fine-tuned the country's first Funktion One Dance Array system.

Not only that, the four towering speaker stacks that face off in its 900-capacity main room would easily flood a 10,000-capacity concert arena with sound. But instead of being raked up to the limits, the system runs at just 30% – 40% capacity, resulting in the warmest, cleanest and most engulfing sound possible.

But whilst the system never needs to be pushed up high, Beta is raising the bar across the board. With a 90% environmentally green rating, it is the most Earth-friendly club on the planet. The bar top in both the main room and the Cielo-inspired Beatport Lounge is shaped out of recycled concrete, the acoustic panelling from old denim jeans, mirrors from reformed glass and the LED signs run on low voltage - there's even a botanical garden on the huge patio area.

Yet Denver remains a city of rave hounds first, tech geeks second. Never once featuring a dud DJ or staid line-up, Beta is high-energy rave hedonism at a technological optimum, rather than endless geeky admiration or stationary chin-stroking.

A diehard clubber himself, Roulier has been putting on 10,000-capacity raves in this city since 1997 and was programming Denver venues like the Church and Vinyl around the turn of the century. When his valiant attempt to buy the Church failed, he decided if you can't buy them, beat them. And how.

Now Beta is the new church for Denver's clubbing community with names as varied as A-Trak, Boys Noize, Paul van Dyk, Matthew Dear, Above & Beyond, Danny Tenaglia and Hercules and Love Affair all playing since it opened back in March 2008.

"It's a club that is about the crowd as much as the DJ," confirms Armin Van Buuren. "You're very close to the crowd and not elevated in any way. But the sound is just awesome, it's so pure and fresh. The Denver crowd has always been one of the big ones but the atmosphere at Beta brings it to a new level. Like Space, Ministry or Amnesia, it has that special magic and it's just a privilege to play."

**Travel:** Shop clever for flights to Denver International from London Gatwick and Heathrow for as low as £310 at most times of the year, with

airlines like Delta, US Airways, KLM and Northwest Airlines. Don't pay more than £340. Check [expedia.co.uk](http://expedia.co.uk) or [opodo.co.uk](http://opodo.co.uk)

**Sleep:** A group of three or four can stay at the Comfort Inn (17th Street) for as low as £32 a night each, which includes 24-hour room service, a free full American breakfast and free high-speed internet access. For a five-star experience it's all about the Ritz Carlton (1881 Carlton Street), just a short walk from Beta with double rooms starting at £200 a night. Sweeping views of Denver's unique skyline and some of the most spacious rooms in the city come as standard. [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com)

**Pre Club:** Brad recommends a warm-up at chilled Zen Ultra Lounge on Lincoln Street, which offers Mediterranean cuisine, Eastern sculptures, bamboo stylings and a soundtrack of progressive and electro-house if you're lucky, hip-hop, r&b and Top 40 if you're not. Also on the hipster radar is the Funky Buddha Lounge, at 776 Lincoln Street. Open until 2am every night, it's a low-lit, intimate lounge with a cool rooftop that regularly gets down to Westwood endorsed hip-hop as well as the deepest house.

**After Hours:** The basement hovel Two AM, at 1144 Broadway, is Denver's main afterhours haunt with Kompakt's Michael Mayer and Damian Lazarus just two of the names that have recently played there. A stripped-back, dark rave basement, the venue is perfect for maintaining that 2am state of mind although it's only open until 5am.