



DJ Ethik and DeeJay Saurus helped bring Motown on Mondays to Reno at the Loving Cup.
PHOTO/CESAR LOPEZ

Back in the day

Motown on Mondays

Every day of the week has its signature “thing.” For example, there’s Taco Tuesday, Hump Day, the Sunday Scaries. It’s time to add a new regularly scheduled program to your mental calendar: Motown On Mondays—or MOM, as it’s known.

Every Monday, the Loving Cup, 188 California Ave., hosts a DJ set playing the danciest, funkier sounds from the Motown era—a genre that never has and never should go out of style (barring a societal cyborg deletion of the groove centers in our brains).

The weekly party is a compilation of Motown hits, close relatives and remixes spun by DJ Ethik, DeeJay Saurus and regular guests like DJ Andrew, who used to host the infamous Soul Night at the former Lincoln Lounge.

It’s a renaissance of DJ culture. Modern DJ decks allow them to spin digital files using a vinyl controller and the same mixing techniques developed by the hip-hop and Motown DJ originators.

“I’ve always been fond of vinyl, since that’s how I learned [to DJ],” said Ethik. “This is the only way I would mix this music.” He explained that it’s not the same as push-button DJs beat matching songs with digitally precise time signatures.

“It’s important for us to embrace the DJ culture and where it came from,” said Saurus. “We’re hip-hop to the core. We’re purists.”

He said playing the Motown style is cleansing to his soul as a working DJ. The reality is that any other night he may have to play electronic dance music to an inebriated crowd demanding to hear today’s hits.

Motown On Mondays is not unique to the Loving Cup, or Reno in general. It’s an official weekly event in 35 cities around the U.S. and internationally. It’s branded and stylized. It was founded in Oakland in 2009 by Donovan “Gordo Cabeza” and has spread with the help of local host DJs, venues and a supportive fan base across the globe.

According to Saurus, each event has a grassroots feel. They’re never in the flashiest clubs. Every city has its own vibe and spin on the Motown sound. Saurus explained that the crowds at the San Francisco MOM respond more to the dancy remixes.

“We’re finding that Reno likes the OG Motown tunes,” he said. He explained that there is a tight network among the resident MOM DJs in the various cities. They’re constantly trading and sharing remixes or hard-to-find copies of songs. Some of the DJs produce their own edits, adding their signature sounds and flares to the music.

The Loving Cup is no stranger to a spirited soul train. The hardest part is getting people out, since Mondays are not the most party-minded weeknight. Since launching in February, the event has also combated spring weather conditions of all kinds. Nevertheless, MOM persists.

According to Ethik, even when there’s only a few people in the room, their bodies are moving. They’re not just sitting in the booths looking tough. They’re feeling the music.

“The River Fest last weekend really just kicked off the going-out season,” said Robb Dunmore who was at a recent Motown On Mondays dancing with a friend wearing bellbottoms. “Summer’s summer, and we’re going to tell people about this event.”

Saurus said they have more in store as the warmer months continue. They’re planning to flaunt vintage cars of the Motown era, possibly partnering with Hot August Nights. They’re hoping the dance party will spill onto the Loving Cup patio. □

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