

# CLUB

trict's cultural touchstones were in place.

The Tower Theater was struggling to operate as a first-run movie house into the 1980s. It had a short run showing foreign films, but didn't get a full revitalization until late in the decade.

Roger Rocka's Dinner Theater didn't open until 1978; after Rocka himself has visited the Blue (that's according to Bixler, anyway).

The Daily Planet restaurant followed two years later.

As, Delpit remembers it, "There wasn't much going on when they started."

"It was sleepy, you could say. The Tower grew with it."

By the time the '90s rolled around, the area was seeing rising rents. That, plus changes in musical tastes and burnout among the Bixlers, led to the Blue's closure.

The spot has been mostly vacant since.

A disco club called SoHo ran for three years, before its dance permit was revoked the city over safety concerns.

Jax House, tried to bring live music back into the space, but lasted only a year-ish.

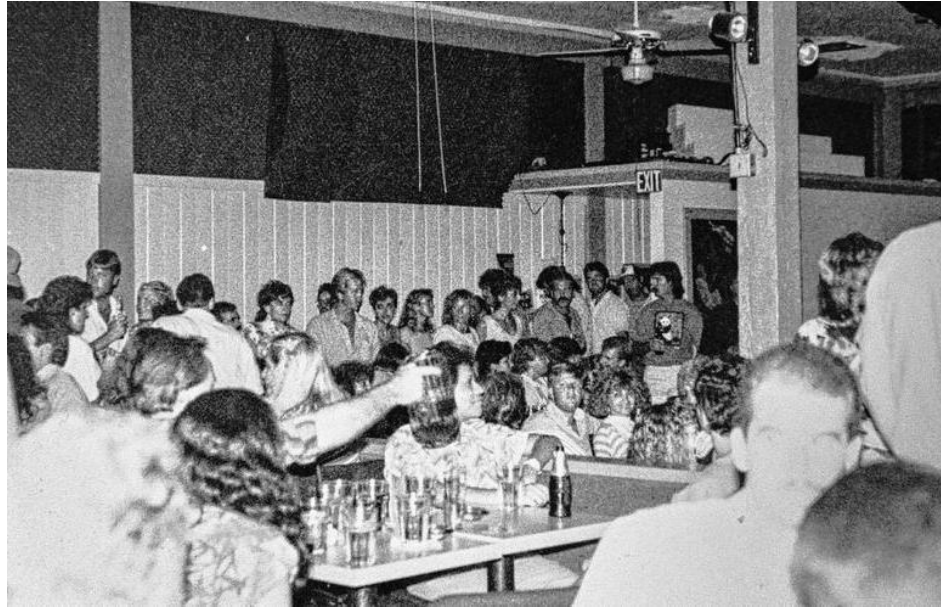
It was the same for a Christian nightclub, Elementz.

Recently, there has been activity inside the venue and a notice for alcohol sales was posted. It appears to have some connection to India's Oven, the restaurant next door, but the owner wouldn't comment.

## VALLEY MUSIC HALL OF FAME 2024 INDUCTEES

The Wild Blue is the Valley Hall of Fame's first Legacy Award honoree.

It was selected by the board of directors as a way to honor those that might



SPECIAL TO THE BEE

A photo from Glen Delpit's collection shows people enjoying the music at The Wild Blue Yonder music venue during its heyday.

otherwise be overlooked, says board chair Don Priest.

"As we've gone through the process of selecting inductees based on the nominations submitted by community members, it's become apparent that there are people and or-

ganizations out there that have played extremely important roles in our musical community that will probably never be nominated," he says.

"We wanted to have a way to give special recognition to those individuals/groups/venues. It's

kind of our gift to them."

In June, the Hall of Fame announced its full list of inductees for 2024.

It includes folk musician and educator Evo Bluestein; Armenian folk musician and ensemble leader John Chookasian; blues singer John Clifton; Fres-

no Community Chorus director Anna Hamre; and Marisa Orduño, a pioneering female in the mariachi genre.

This is the first class in which all of the honorees are still living, which means they'll all be at attendance at the induction ceremony at Roger Rocka's Dinner Theater.

Prior inductees into the Valley Music Hall of Fame are:

- Class of 2021: Russel S. Howland, Dr. James. H. Winter, Dick Contino, Audra McDonald and Dave Stogner.
- Class of 2022: Gene Bluestein, Ray Camacho, The Fresno Musical Club, Allen and Fay Harkins, and Richard Hagopian.
- Class of 2023: Benjamin Boone, Kenny Hall, Redbone, Dr. Juan Serrano and Ann Leonardo Thaxter.

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