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How to be cool in the Power & Light District

When it comes to social politics, we never seem to escape high school. No matter how much you mature, life will always bring a little drama here, a little clique there.

I think most people move in and out of every role. Sometimes you'll be the cool kid; other times you might play the outcast. Because of this, every now and then, that girl who didn't invite you to the party and poked fun at you ends up being your friend.

Right now that girl is the Power & Light District. It's no secret I haven't been a big fan of the P&L and the stereotyping it seemed to provoke. And even though they've loosened up that divisive dress code, I still wish there were more locally owned businesses, and parking wasn't such a hassle.

Still, I've recognized some of their stellar restaurants — Bristol and Peachtree. And I've conceded that Mosaic is a gem among the chain of clubs. But overall, I've had a few bad experiences that left me feeling bitter and uninvited. For almost a year, I've mostly avoided downtown's diva of a nightlife district.

But places and people change. And on a recent Sunday afternoon, we played nice together.

For all the brouhaha surrounding its dress code, the one Power & Light hot spot everyone should give a try isn't about the clothes you wear. In fact, at the Jones, most attendees aren't wearing any.

Don't get me wrong. They aren't naked. It's a rooftop pool at 1271 Main, and most of the time basking in the sun entails swimsuits, not clothes.

I won't lie. When a friend invited me, I was reluctant and unsure of the crowd, the pretty people who tend to party P&L style. I didn't want to fret over fashion to bathe in the sun when I can do it comfortably and cost-free at my suburban neighborhood pool.

But as soon as I unpacked my beach bag, I knew I would gladly pay \$5 to kick it at this water lounge this summer.

Yes, the rooftop was packed with a lot of perfectly sculpted abs and expertly made-up faces. And it was a reasonably diverse crowd. Some stood at the bar, while others popped bottles in cabanas. But most of the people filled up the pool. They looked the part of the snotty casts of "Gossip Girl" and "90210," but they certainly didn't play it.

We walked around the entire pool while the DJ played a mash-up of pop, hip-hop and rock.

Shannon and Lindsay, two impeccably tan beauties, walked right up to us in the water and started a conversation about swimwear, sun hats and shopping in Kansas City. A few guys talked to us about mixed drinks, and we saw quite a few people mingling instead of sticking to their respective cliques. The pool may be shallow, but the people weren't.

So here I am, giving a shoutout to the Jones. You have to give props where props are due. And the Power & Light got this place right. It's still a little early to call it, but maybe our checkered past is, uh, water under the bridge.

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