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# BPM

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# Christopher Lawrence.

STAR OF THE STAR HOMES TOUR.  
WORLD-TRAVELING TRANCE  
MASTER CHRISTOPHER  
LAWRENCE SIZES UP A FEW  
CELEB HOUSES.

BY MARK VON PFEIFFER



LAMENTABLY, THE TRANCE GENRE HAS OF LATE  
BEEN BASTARDIZED

AMONGST THE STATELY MANORS OF BEVERLY HILLS, CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE ADDRESSES HIS FUTURE FORTUNE.

**BEFORE INTERVIEWING** America's number one pony in the international trance race several people told me that they remembered "the old days" when Mr. Lawrence had been financially challenged and without a car, forced to rely on friends to ferry him to and from gigs in Los Angeles. That, of course, was years ago. Now that his fiscal state is approaching the Gross National Product of Brazil, a ride on the world-renowned Star Homes Tour bus seemed like an

BY WHAT LAWRENCE CALLS THE: "I WAS BLIND AND  
NOW I SEE THE LIGHT" PHENOMENON.

appropriate backdrop to our conversation. A star on the star tour...if only our fellow travelers knew. The irony was strong enough to kill an elephant and perhaps, if the winds of fate blew our way, he might take a fancy to one of the sprawling estates, purchase it and invite me over for weekend cocktail parties and croquette sessions.

Yet, as we course through the Hollywood Hills in a luxurious mini bus, dark vibrations begin to resound. Michael Keaton's gothic mansion is particularity disturbing. "I wonder if he's got a batpole in there," muses

Lawrence. The shellshocking image of Keaton, vaulting around the house in black tights, a cape and a terrifying hairpiece is closely preceded by the discovery that ex-President Reagan's address is 666. These, along with our sheer proximity to Madonna, Ozzy Osborne and Carol Burnett bake our nerves to the point that we retreat to the comforting topic of *electronic* music.

If you don't have the money to tag along with Mr. L as he cartwheels his way from Chicago to Liverpool, Morocco, Ibiza, Australia and everywhere in-between then his new mix, appropriately

titled *Around the World*, will allow you the chance to live vicariously through his travels—at least for 72:30. Lamentably, the trance genre has of late been bastardized by what Lawrence calls the "I was blind and now I see the light," phenomenon, whilst progressive house—the oly-oly-oxen-free where many self-respecting trance DJs originally sought shelter from the "rain of cheese," has become "stagnant and somewhat repetitive."

Fortunately Lawrence has stayed true to his particular brand of mind-ratcheting digitalia. "I like powerful music, that's all there is to it." Genus and species aside, with a gaggle of mixes, singles and compilations under his belt, CL's sound continues to evolve with a style and force that remains an uncircumcised dervish of mids and bass gnashing its teeth at spanning synths and limp-wristed vocals.

We stop to stretch our legs at the public park adjacent to Beverly Hills 90210/Melrose Place producer Aaron Spelling's palace and Lawrence wastes no time in hopping the Spelling gate. Just joking of course, but we do stand outside the palace, multiple video cameras taking note as Lawrence presses the intercom button. "Yes?" a coarse voice replies. "Is Donna home?" Lawrence asks. "This is Steve and Brandon. We were wondering if she'd like to accompany us to the Peach Pit for a drink." Apparently, the elite guards of Hollywood's Grand Puba are not amused. Silence punctuated by heavy, labored breathing is the reply as we slowly back away to the safety of the Star Homes Tour bus.

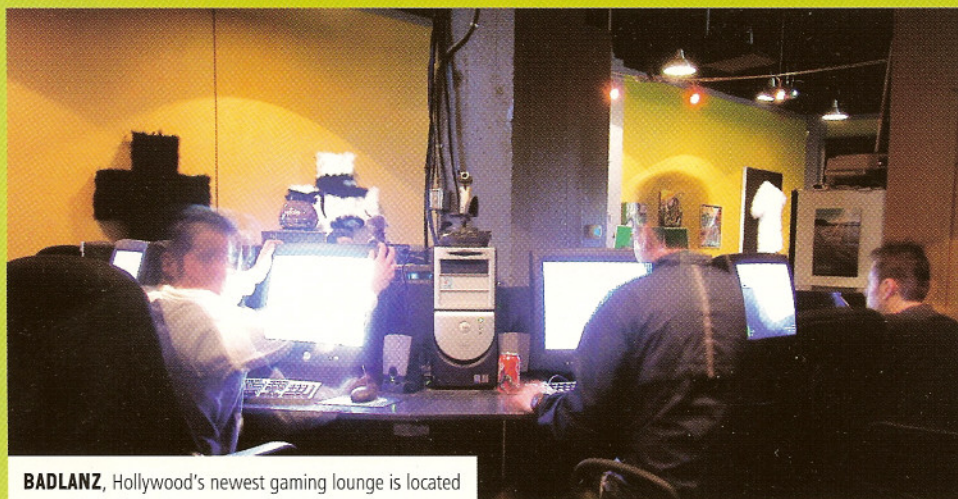
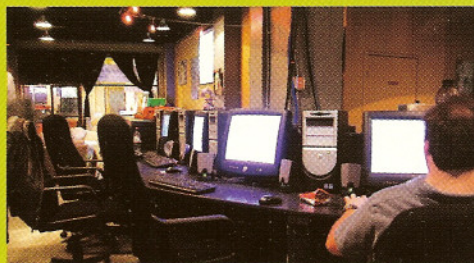
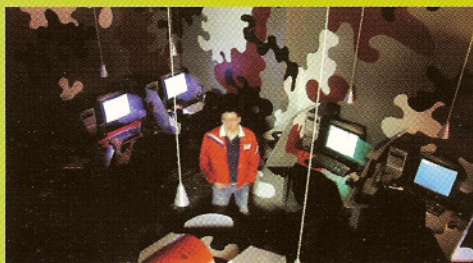
On the way back to Star Homes Tour grand central at the Mann Chinese Theater we pass Moonshine's headquarters, home to—I announce to our fellows, pointing to CL—"world-renowned DJ and philanthropist Christopher Lawrence, whose third mix for said label is out now." Interestingly enough, more enthusiasm is expressed at this declaration than when we were, only moments earlier, favored with a glimpse of Burt Reynolds' shanty. Go figure.



# badlanz

## AND THE GAMING LOUNGE REVOLUTION.

BY MARK VON PFIEFFER



**BADLANZ**, Hollywood's newest gaming lounge is located mere blocks from the Sunset Strip—the dirtiest, screaming drag this side of Vegas. One hundred fifty years ago it could have been a dusted, heavily-riden saloon, filled with card sharks and cutthroats. Today, it's home to a different sort of predator, one that brandishes a keyboard and a mouse rather than a Winchester rifle. Its denizens are the high-plains drifters of the online gaming community—men and women with calloused fingers and bloodlust showing thick in their dilated pupils. Instead of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid or The Wild Bunch it's cadres of electronic banditos like GHOST, Krieger and ZooM that are spoken of in hushed whispers.

It's Midnight on a Saturday and Badlanz is just hitting its stride. *Akira* streams across a titanic HDTV mounted on a camouflage-painted wall. "Techo"...(a Sven Vath mix I think), burns from a strapping sound system as 35 plus digital myrmidons sit astride 1.5 GHZ Pentium 4 god boxes blowing each others appendages to kingdom come via LAN (local area network) and T3 (damn fast internet) connections with a zeal that those of a delicate constitution might find disturbing.

Pushing through the crowd I draw suspicious glances from what I guess to be the "regulars"—hardened veterans of the carpal tunnel variety. As I reach for my Game Boy Advance to show them I mean business, co-owner Don Tapper, sensing bad vibrations, ushers me into one of the darker corners of the game den.

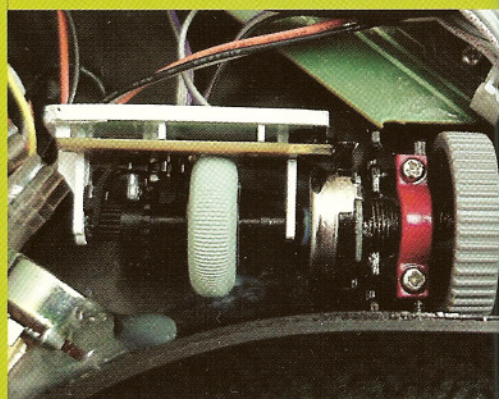
"Parlors like this one are popping up all over the place," admits Tapper, "but they seem to fall into two categories: the 'cafeteria-style' gaming room which has no ambience at all...they're more like libraries, with fluores-

cent lighting and long tables. And then of course there is the Internet cafes, which offer gaming as a secondary resource to surfing. We've applied for a liquor license," he smirks mischievously.

"Here you'll see that we're all about games," boasts Tapper, and he ain't lying. Each machine has more titles than an English aristocrat: *Rogue Spear* to *Quake 3*, *Diablo 2*, *Max Payne* and *Need for Speed*. "As hardware evolves, so do the games. People don't want to have to drop \$500 every six months just to play what's current...and our hardware will always be newer than new." The mustached face of Tony Kollar—one of Mr. Tapper's three partners—pops up over the cubicle wall to comment: "We have DJ's play and encourage budding artists to display their wares," he says, gesturing to the walls with Vana White-esque grace. Basically, **if a rave and an Internet café were to have a lovechild in your living room it would be something akin to Badlanz.**

But is it safe? Is it healthy? Does the brain, after being bombarded with such an onslaught of colors and sounds for prolonged periods, grow soft and draw away from the dun, gray textures of reality? Are generations X and Y sliding into a slothful rut that, when middle age rears its ugly head, will leave us sallow husks lacking real life experiences? Yes. But video games kill less brain cells than beer and are a hell of a lot less expensive. Whenever it becomes possible, I for one am going to dump myself into a virtual reality tank and live the rest of my life, nourished intravenously, as Genghis Kahn sweeping across the plains of Europe leading the mongrel horde on fantastic adventures. Someday...

# JOYSTICKS



**SOMETIMES** you're playing online Quake and some commie will swoop in on you, run around you three times picking up all the booty and then take you and everyone on your team out before you have time to squeeze a trigger. "How 'd they do that!?" I always exclaim. "They're really good" is one lame explanation I've heard. "They're the ones hosting the game so their connection time is really quick." That's another. But really—how do they do that?

Turns out the prime assassins of network games like Quake are deep into tricked out, modified joysticks and mice that allow you to pivot on a pin head, switch weapons and maneuver with the extra edge that gets results.

In fact, joystick modification is a well-represented if slightly illicit online business (see Steve's Mod Service ([www.assassin3d.com](http://www.assassin3d.com))). The most popular modification for improved game play is track ball bolstering, (i.e. installing the Microsoft IntelliMouse into the Panther XL joystick, the gamers joystick of choice). Other modifications are done to the joystick shaft and individual buttons.

Of course there are still those network gamers that claim they can kick anyone's ass with just a mouse. And they probably can. But next time someone swoops on me with super abilities I won't feel so lame. Of course they're "modified." (David Turin)

