



...Oh, o-oh, oh, I'm a working-class man

Just keep smiling and they might let us live

School, club, bed - it's a shirt for all occasions

"There's a variety..." begins Louise. "Quite a lot of old guys, but, er, it's all good." Her face suddenly lights up. "Actually the bar guy is really good-looking - really hot. He gave me a free drink, so hey. You should give him a smile."

I tell her I doubt I'd get a free drink.

Up near the stage, Jackie is one of the few people bothering to dance. She's wearing an Eagles T-shirt. "The Eagles won!" she volunteers. "Wooh! Was there ever any doubt?"

She twirls away on another leg of the tiny dance space, then comes back with a serious expression.

"We've got to stay here for 'Run To Paradise' - it's amazing. The band's name is Footloose."

She sees my sickened expression. "They hate it, don't worry, they hate it." I assume she's talking about the name Footloose, or at least she should be.

**11.48pm**

**ONYX**  
72 Outram St

A HEALTHY walk away, especially if you've been on the beers a while, Onyx is technically West Perth, but is still a regular on many nights out in Subi.

I wade through the thick red carpet to the bar, past white plaster columns and Roman-style carvings of women with no kit on. Bubbles hang over the dancefloor, and a clump of disco balls stick out of the ceiling. Next to the dance floor is a pool with green uplighting, like a magic swamp.

As I turn away from the bar clutching a cold one, I nearly run into a blonde called Kate. She's so gorgeous, it's not even funny. Kate's wearing a top held up by what could be her brother's school tie, but gets

## "I'M FROM ADELAIDE... GUYS ARE MORE SHY AND RESERVED THERE. I GO, 'HEY BUDDY - I'M ONLY A FEMALE - RELAX'"

away with it. She could get away with anything.

"I want to jump in the pool," says Kate, suggesting something more with the words "jump" and "pool". She rocks her hips to the mellow house music, in the way that guys can't. "There's plenty of everything here. The guys aren't usually that great - but tonight's better."

When she leans forward to hear me talk, I can feel my eyeballs steam up.

I tear myself away and continue round the room. Everything is

very white, very black or very red, and very posh. People don't seem pretentious, though, but happy and friendly. The dance floor contains grinning, clumsy people shuffling and bobbing, like the last hour of your cousin's wedding reception.

Brad seems like a typical punter.

"This is the first time I've been here, mate. I study at uni and don't spend that much time going out. This place could be too much, but everyone seems to be having a good time."

Brad points across the pool to a girl in a black dress. "That's Bronwyn

Near the pool again, Manuela, a Qantas air hostie with soft, innocent eyes, tells me Perth is her favourite stopover because it's so friendly. "I come from Adelaide, and guys are much more shy and reserved there. I have to go, 'Hey buddy - I'm only a female - relax.'"

I finally spot cigar girl Bronwyn sitting at the edge of the pool. She has on a thin, slit-down-the-middle black dress, and eyes like a cat's.

"This is my first night here and it's been really good," she says with a beautiful smile. "Heaps of people

over there, selling cigars. Very pretty eyes. Do me a favour? When you talk to her and she asks how you know her name - point to me. It could earn me some points."

At the other end of the bar is the roped-off VIP area, although no-one seems to care when I start wandering around it. With its black-and-white straight-backed chairs, it looks like a cross between a gentleman's club and a bank lobby. In one chair, a girl smokes her durrly like it's a paper-tube orgasm.

bought cigars. I'm a dental nurse - I'm just doing this to help out my housemate, the cigar salesman."

I point to Brad, who's loitering. I tell her I reckon Brad would buy cigars from her all night. And he doesn't even like cigars. She smiles at him.

When I leave Onyx, I find I am holding a cigar in my hand.

**12.50pm**

**BUDDHABAR**  
88 Rokeby Rd

BUDDHABAR looks like a great place.