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Tekst 12

City Venues That Are All the Rage

By Anne Kadet

- 1 Two entrepreneurs think they are offering just what New Yorkers need: Rage rooms where patrons can let out their anger. Both are conveniently located near Penn Station – the galaxy's most enraging transit hub.
- 2 *The Rage Cage*, opened last month, is just a few blocks from *The Wrecking Club*, which opened last year. At *The Rage Cage*, customers pay \$45 to \$120 to come and smash dishes and electronics. Packages at *The Wrecking Club*, meanwhile, range from \$25 for a "Hit It and Quit It" 15-minute option to \$245 for an "Extra Mad House" half hour session for up to six participants.
- 3 I'm not especially ill-tempered, so before visiting these outfits, I posted on Facebook seeking an angry friend to come along. Soon I was bombarded by responses. "I'm in if you need, and I'm Irish!" wrote one. I chose my pal Virginia, a Brooklyn native, because I know her rage is real. Sure enough, she showed up at our first stop, *The Wrecking Club*, furious about a dispute with a friend and a fight with her sister. "Plus, I'm aggravated with life in general" she fumed.
- 4 Having booked our session and signed waivers online, we donned a protective jacket and pants, work gloves and a construction helmet with a face shield, all provided by the venue. Our room, a windowless affair with a tile floor and metal walls, was set up and waiting. I'd sprung for the \$50 "Short&Sweet" package, a 15-minute session that included an HP OfficeJet Pro printer and several buckets of dishes.
- 5 "We can't hit each other, all right?" said Virginia. Then she let loose, shattering mugs and dishes with a baseball bat before going after the printer with a sledgehammer, tossing F-bombs with every blow. I laughed and laughed. "Sorry I broke everything" she said, when the dust cleared. "I got carried away." "I'm feeling really good" she added. I whacked the printer and smashed several mugs myself. It was super satisfying.
- 6 *Wrecking Club* founder and co-owner Tom Daly, a former accountant, says he came up with the rage room idea on his own and only later



learned there were similar venues in other cities – and one that operated in New York City in the 1970s. He chose his location in a former restaurant because it was the only place he could rent. When you're opening a rage room, he says, not many landlords want your business. "Beggars can't be choosers."

7 Virginia and I next walked two blocks north to *The Rage Cage*, housed in the basement of an office building. While the storefront of *The Wrecking Club* had a grungy, post-apocalyptic feel, this place was brightly lit and sparkling clean. We were escorted to a high-ceilinged room with a concrete floor and plywood-reinforced walls. Our \$75, 30-minute "Double Trouble" package included a PS2 gaming console, office phone, keyboard, dishes, VHS tapes, mouse, gaming controller and laptop.

8 Alas, it took just 15 minutes to bust through everything. And while we both felt lighter after our rampage, Virginia noted she could smash stuff at home, free. She had once taken a hammer to a television set. I imagined it must be difficult to run a business catering to folks as angry as Virginia. But Mr. Daly said most come for the fun and novelty. He sees a lot of couples on dates, bachelorette parties, birthday celebrations and families with children.

9 The tough part: Sourcing up to 200 pieces of used electronica to smash every week, he says. Most purchases are one-off deals from someone, say, clearing an office. *The Rage Cage* owner and founder, Jeffrey Yip, agrees. The former software-support specialist says that while he is negotiating with suppliers in China, he's currently buying dishes from IKEA and 99-cent stores. He finds used electronics on eBay and Craigslist. A nonworking keyboard might cost \$2, he says of the going rates, a busted office printer between \$4 and \$10.

10 After everything is smashed to smithereens Mr. Yip says he and his friends bring the remains to the nonprofit E-waste Warehouse in Brooklyn, which sells salvageable items and recycles the rest. Mr. Daly says he recycles all his trash.

11 Mr. Yip, who estimates his startup costs at \$35,000, says he pays four times the typical rate for property insurance and a hefty sum for liability insurance.

12 So is there room in the city for two rage rooms? Both owners are hopeful. "In the U.S., New York City needs it the most," Mr. Yip says.

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