



### ALOFT TEMPE FLYING HIGH

**E**very so often people make the joke that such-and-such place is the new Scottsdale, much in the same way a fashionista jokes that navy is the new black.

But just as nothing is ever really the new black, few, if any restaurants, bars, clubs or shopping centers have succeeded in propelling a region of the Valley into Scottsdale-ness.

So it is with the new Aloft Tempe, a kind of kid-sister property to the W Scottsdale Hotel & Residences. The hotel feels similar to Scottsdale's W in spirit but is designed to be its own thing. So in that case, it's the perfect Tempe-based destination for a Scottsdale night out.

The \$25 million property has 116 rooms and is modern and chic, but designed for business travelers and on-the-go guests. It's the hotel version of a fast-casual restaurant. And its bar, the W XYZ Bar, works in much the same way as an actual fast-casual establishment: just enough design flair to make you feel special, but reasonable prices, quick service and excellent, but not exceptional, drinks.

So if the W in Scottsdale is a little old, a little expensive or a little high-maintenance for you, just head south on Scottsdale Road for a similar, but notably younger, cheaper and more casual night out. Also, a bonus, it is adjacent to an In-N-Out Burger, which, according to management, drives more bar traffic than you might expect.

Bar supervisor Patrick Murphy says his crowd is mostly business travelers and Arizona State University students or recent graduates looking for a more sophisticated night out close to home.

As such, the signature cocktails are only \$9 (a bargain in a W-related property), candi-sweet and appeal to young, female drinkers; and the beers are Bud Light, Guinness, Fat Tire and Sunshine, all \$3 all day, and appeal to everyone, most notably, however, businessmen. It's a match made in marketing heaven.

To appeal to this casual crowd, the bar has smoked almonds sitting out as well as wasabi peanuts (they are not green peanut M&Ms), and it serves tiny to-go boxes of snacks including pita chips and hummus, tater tots with organic ketchup (really) and veggie spring rolls with sauce, most about \$2 to \$6. The tater tots are charming and the ketchup tastes even fancier than regular "fancy" ketchup.

The bar serves nine signature drinks, all of which are common to Aloft properties, including a mojito, a "filthy" martini and a watermelon martini that tastes exactly like a Jolly Rancher candy.

The most popular one is the Brown Eyed Girl, made with pear-infused white rum, brown sugar and pineapple juice, finished with chunks of candied pineapple and a rock candy stirrer. You can hardly taste the alcohol, which makes it an ideal drink for those new to mixed drinks, perhaps fresh off the keg-stand team. That said, I liked it.

**city life nightlife**

The partying hasn't moved south.

The big difference is that it's now in a new neighborhood. In the heart of Tempe, the Aloft Tempe is a new addition to the city's nightlife scene.

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**azcentral nightlife**

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### Nightlife still bright on MILL

**W**alk a block in any direction and you'll find a new scene of nightlife in Tempe. It's not just the new Aloft Tempe, but also the new W XYZ Bar, which is a new addition to the city's nightlife scene.

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The grand-opening party at Aloft Tempe.

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**ALOFT TEMPE**  
**Where:** 951 E. Playa Del Norte Drive, Tempe @ Rural/University  
**Details:** 480-621-3300, starwood-hotels.com/aloft.



These stylish ladies keep the party going during the W XYZ party at Aloft Tempe.

PHOTOS BY JORDAN HULLER/SPECIAL FOR CITY LIFE  
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