"THIS IS NOT AN ORGY": No, it's more like swinging lite, an increasingly popular pastime in New York.

Let-It-All Hangout

They're taking off at Idlewild, with nary a jet in sight. **By Vanessa Grigoriadis**

It was only 12 degrees, but inside the Lower East Side bar Idlewild, guys had their polo shirts hanging open, and women had nothing on top except for the itsy-bitsy flowers painted on their nipples by a man in a white feathered hat. With one hand, he applied sparkly aquamarine to the areola of a blonde in a striped skirt. The other he put up her skirt.

"This is not an orgy," explained the party's promoter, Palagia, a 32-year-old Greek-American with Maria Callas looks. "It is a sexy soirée promoting sensual liberation." A better term might be *swinging lite*, a trend that's been growing in the city with the popularity of bars like Remote Lounge and the female-empowerment "Cake" parties. In fact, Palagia herself is no stranger to orgies—she throws what she calls "eat-in parties" once a month at rented lofts for about 40 couples. But tonight is a "takeout party," where couples remain semi-clothed, taking home their newfound lust.

"After the last party, we were panting all weekend," said an assistant D.A., an arm around her financier boyfriend. "She looks so beautiful," said a screenwriter in chunky black glasses, watching his girlfriend kiss a stranger. "I write movie musicals about military conflicts," he added.

It's a crowd of mostly uptown professionals, with enough hipsters and fetish types to leaven the mix; by Palagia's estimate, only about 15 percent are into the swinging scene. She sells tickets on her Website, onelegupnyc.com; couples are $50, single women $15, and single men out of luck, though there do seem to be a few—one is crying, "Give me your panties!"

By 2 A.M., the bar was empty—even the screenwriter and his girl were gone, with an extra man in tow. "Takeout parties always end early," said Palagia. "Everyone gets too horny."

HOT PLATE

CITARELLA

Where? 1240 Sixth Avenue, at 49th Street (212-332-1515).

But I thought Citarella was a— Look here, if Giorgio DeLuca and Eli Zabar can do it . . . Citarella the restaurant is owned by Joe Gurrera, who also owns the delis (he's opening another soon, in the old Balducci's).

So the shellfish is good? So fresh it's still crawling. Then there's the sand dabs, sautéed with Swiss chard!

Enough about the food. Who are my fellow passengers? Conan O'Brien, Katie Couric, Matt Lauer . . . impressed?

But is it *life*-changing? Well, Ted Turner recently threw AOL a party there. And look what happened! BETH LANDMAN KEIL

Q&A

READY FOR RHYME TIME

TV's latest import has poetry on her mind.

Daisy Goodwin is a bona fide poetry phenomenon in Britain—launching a poetry TV show and becoming a sex symbol for the smart set. Now the witty Cambridge grad is coming out with her anthology of "emotional first aid," *101 Poems That Could Save Your Life*.

People have called you the Nigella of poetry! Ha! Well, we do both appeal to the male mind, but I'm younger, for one, and also have a much more difficult job. She gets to lick berries and finger carrots, while I have to look sexy talking about John Donne.

Isn't the verdict in academia that poetry is dead? So much of modern poetry sounds unintelligible. But *accessible* poetry is especially relevant right now. I mean, we live in a world of computers, which foster a very nonlinear way of thinking. Poetry is very similar—you sort of click on a word, and it unwraps many layers of meaning. And you don't need much of an attention span.

You present poems as a therapeutic device more effective than Prozac or martinis. Any for New Yorkers in particular? Hmmm. For the New York woman, I'd prescribe "Loss," by Wendy Cope. It's quite short: "The day he moved out was terrible— / That evening she went through hell. / His absence wasn't a problem / But the corkscrew had gone as well."

Ever take a stab at poetry yourself? God knows I've tried. And God knows it's all crap. But I can spot a good one!

SELF-HELP: Poems are better than Prozac, says Goodwin.

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, BRIAN FINKE (2); KENNETH CHEN; PAUL RIDER