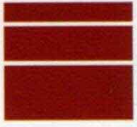


best [club]

SMART BAR, CHICAGO

Renovating a local favorite is a tall order, especially one that carries the music-centered torch for serious purists. But when Smart Bar revealed its new look and sound in February, there was nary a complaining hipster. With a sleek but not impractical design by Thomas Shoner Associates (which snagged a "Best Interior Design" nomination), and thunderous Funktion-One bass by Sound Investment, Smart Bar upped the ante without losing its sneaker-wearing soul. We responded by upping its ranking: It's nominated in the "Best Club" category this year, after winning the NightStalker Award in '06. -KLM www.smartbarchicago.com

