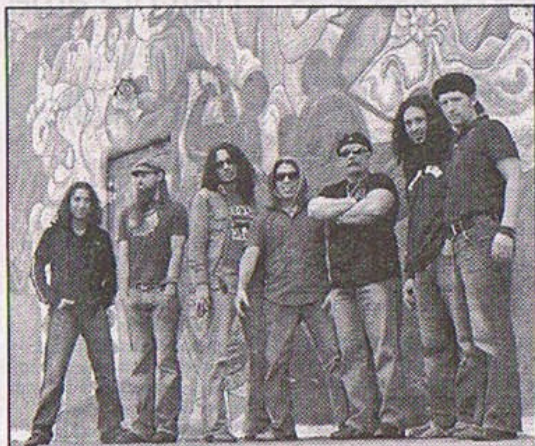


Fusion fiesta at Riverbend's (unofficial) Latin night



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The musicians of de Sol, performing tonight at Riverbend, are known for pounding rhythms and a powerful stage presence.

BY KATHY GILBERT
STAFF WRITER

A trio of top Latin bands will have listeners livin' la vida loca at Riverbend tonight.

"La sangre es fuerte — the blood is strong. It's a multicultural show," said de Sol lead singer Albie Monterrosa.

Opening act Mesa Rio also will pound out big-band Latin jazz.

Havana Son heats up the late-night Bud Light stage with Cuban and Puerto Rican salsa.

"The runaway favorite of 2005's Nightfall concert series, de Sol brings Latin good looks, pounding rhythms, searing solos and a powerful onstage presence that will have women swooning and men dancing," says Riverbend's press packet.

All true, said Monterrosa. "Ancient rhythms open a

SPICE UP THE NIGHT

■ **Mesa Rio**, www.mesa-rio.com, 6:15-7:30 tonight, Covista Stage

■ **de Sol**, www.desolmusic.com, 7:45-9 tonight, Covista Stage

■ **Havana Son**, www.havanason.com, 10 tonight, Bud Light Stage

door in people's soul," he said. "It gets people moving, and yes, we're also very good-looking."

Monterrosa founded de Sol five years ago in Bruce Springsteen's hometown, Asbury Park.

Though they're a "rock-pop band," he said, "there's still an underlying feeling of this pulsating rhythm thing, the energy

is in there strong."

Monterrosa, a Salvadoran, grew up in the multicultural Queens borough of New York City in the 1970s and '80s. His friends included Salvadorans, Africans, West Indians, Puerto Ricans and Ecuadorians.

"Most had drums around the house," he said, "and when they had parties, they'd sing and play."

De Sol's two-hand percussionists re-create those times, he said, with congas, timbales, shakers and bongos.

Still, the band's appeal crosses all cultures.

"I smile a lot, and we're very passionate about it," Monterrosa said. "We emote in a way that's positive and universal. The crowd just gravitates to that."

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