

An Insiders Look at MTV's Video Music Awards Parties

MTV Video Music Awards preparties and after-parties • American Airlines Arena and several locations throughout Miami • Wednesday to Sunday, 08.24.05 to 08.28.05

TRY AS SHE MIGHT, Hurricane Katrina failed to spoil the onslaught of festivities that rolled into town for the 2005 MTV Video Music Awards (VMA), held for the second consecutive year at the American Airlines Arena. Although much of South Florida lived without power in the storm's wake, the awards show, and the barrage of parties surrounding it, went on in megawatt fashion.

Host Sean "Diddy" Combs promised a VMA show like no other and he delivered, ditching the traditional red carpet in favor of a white plush rug at the entrance. (Call it Diddy in the details: He announced this very logistics-minded decision at a pre-VMA press conference.) Celebrities strutted before cameras across the pathway beneath EventStar's 360-foot long semicircular peaked tent that led to the arena entrance. It took EventStar a week to build the custom-designed tent, yet crews dismantled it in just hours because of the hurricane. After Katrina struck, technicians worked more than 30 hours straight to rebuild the tent by showtime.

Come Sunday, millions watched the flashy, high-tech award show on television, but parties had already been happening around the clock for five days. Diddy kicked off the festivities Wednesday, August 24, by officially opening the Hotel MTV at the Doubletree Surfcomber in South Beach. Everlast Productions built a 30-by-30-foot stage at the beachside end of the pool, where DJs and musicians such as Boyz N Da Hood, Black Rob, and 8-Ball performed. Speakers faced both the pool and beach. David Simpson of Cozza Noztra LLC and Nightwatch Management Inc. designed custom lounges on the roofs of the hotel's poolside cabanas. Seating areas adjacent to Diddy's own ultra-plush rooftop cabana were furnished with square cubes with blue rugs and white sofas topped with red and blue faux-fur pillows. Those who visited Hotel MTV found ultra-hip and over-the-top atmospheres in each of the cabanas. One cabana featured a row of C-shaped video game stations in neon colors provided by Access T.C.A. Everlast also covered the walkway and patio leading from the hotel to the pool with a 200-by-60-foot canopy; this covered area became the Hotel MTV Nightclub after 10 PM. In total, Everlast set up more than 250 moving lights and 300 static lights to bring Hotel MTV to life. Thursday and Friday events at Hotel MTV were canceled due to the storm.



EventStar built a 360-foot-long customized tent at the entrance to the VMAs.



MTV's elaborate stage for its Video Music Awards featured water effects, elevating platforms, and state-of-the-art lighting and video inside the American Airlines Arena.

And though the Doubletree Surfcomber was designated the official MTV hotel, the celebrity-hosted parties could not be contained to Miami Beach alone. Private mansions, luxury penthouses, nightclubs, and deluxe yachts hosted parties throughout Miami.

Stuff magazine's Friday night party was among the first after Katrina soaked South Florida. Because of the storm, organizer Logistics Management Group had to change venues at the last minute from a private mansion on Star Island to the Moore Building in Miami's Design District. Guests passed between two sleek black Dodge Chargers at the entrance before hitting the



Access T.C.A. provided video games for the Hotel MTV cabanas.