

The Roseland Ballroom

Roseland was founded initially in Philadelphia in 1917 by Louis Brecker. In 1919, it was moved to 1658 Broadway at 51st Street in New York. It was a "whites only" dance club called the "home of refined dancing", famed for the "society orchestra" groups that played there.

The all-white, ballroom-dancing atmosphere gradually changed with the popularity of hot jazz, as played by African American bands on the New York nightclub scene. Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Chick Webb, Vincent Lopez, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller were just some of the bands that played at the Roseland.

As the club grew older, Brecker attempted to formalize the dancing more by having hostesses dance for 11¢ a dance or \$1.50 a half-hour, with tuxedoed bouncers keeping order. It was to work its way into stories by Ring Lardner, Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John O'Hara.

The original New York Roseland was torn down in 1956 and it moved to its new venue on West 52nd, a building that Brecker earlier had converted from an ice-skating rink to a roller-skating rink. A thousand skaters showed up on opening night at the 80-by-200-foot rink on November 29, 1922. Iceland went bankrupt in 1932 and the rink opened as the Gay Blades Ice Rink. Brecker took it over in the 1950s and converted it to roller-skating. In 1974, Brecker told *The New York Times*, "Cheek-to-cheek dancing, that's what this place is all about."

Brecker sold the building in 1981 to Albert Ginsberg. Under the new owners, the Roseland began regularly scheduled "disco nights", which gave rise to a period when it was considered a dangerous venue and neighborhood menace. In 1984, a

teenager was shot to death on the dance floor. In 1990, after Utah tourist Brian Watkins was killed in the subway, four of the eight suspects were found partying at Roseland. As a result, Roseland discontinued the "disco nights".

In 1996, a new owner, Laurence Ginsberg, filed plans to tear down the venue and replace it with a 42-story, 459-unit apartment building. On October 18, 2013, it was announced that the venue is slated to close in 2014.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roseland_Ballroom]

