

December 26, 2007

## The best soirees of 2007

By MICHAEL SCHRATTER

Ay caramba! 2007 went by in the blink of an eye. Being an energetic spaz and all, I might have gotten a little too eager and taken my society columnist gig a little too seriously. Having attended more than 222 events in 2007, I am about to head to sleep for the remainder of the year.

My hyperactivity aside, looking back at the year, I present to you the second annual "Best Soirees of the year" column. While I thoroughly enjoyed every event that I attended, this special two-page column celebrates the parties that went above and beyond in 2007. Happy New Year! See you in 2008!\ PALATE PLEASING\ FIRST PLACE Sunday, Sept. 16 - Fourteen of Vancouver's finest chefs made the Dr. Peter Centre Passions fundraiser an unforgettable gourmet affair. Pictured, organizers Cate Simpson and food stylist Nathan Fong.

SECOND PLACE Wednesday, Nov.14 - The Gold Medal Plates at the Westin Bayshore offered participants a taste sensation prepared by 12 of the city's top chefs, paired with a dozen of B.C.'s finest wines, as well as an opportunity to meet an Olympian. Pictured, Olympic ski legend Steve Podborski, Bearfoot Bistro executive chef Melissa Craig and Bearfoot wine director Keith Nicholson.

THIRD PLACE Friday, Feb. 2 - Your taste buds tingled at Vancouver Magazine's Big Night, held at the lovely The Vancouver Club. Pictured, Vancouver Magazine's food editor, Jamie Maw, Van Mag publisher Kim Peacock and Urbandiner.ca's Andrew Morrison.\ SPIRITED SOIREES (HIC)\ FIRST PLACE March 26 to April 1 - The 2007 Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival served up a record 1,550 wines from 180 wineries representing 17 countries at a record 58 events. The festival is the biggest wine event in North America and is within the top three of its size in the world. Pictured, Australian wine maker Phillip Casella of exceedingly popular Yellow Tail Wines, Earls proprietor Stan Fuller, Australian celebrity chef Jason Roberts, and Earls executive chef Michael Noble in the fancy new Earls Paramount.

SECOND PLACE Remembrance Day long weekend - dozens of restaurants, thousands of wine varieties, and that fresh air mountain high, Whistler's 11th annual food and wine celebration, Cornucopia, is hedonism at it's best! Pictured, the Travel Guys' Darren Parkman, and Stile Wines' Nikki Marshall & Tarla Begit at Crush! Grand Tasting. Bring back the Bearfoot Bistro's legendary Masquerave!

THIRD PLACE Friday, Nov. 16 - the Hopscotch festival at the Rocky Mountaineer Station has become so popular that next year, there might be two nights of scotch, whiskey, and premium beer. Pictured on the VIP couch, TM Events' Stephanie Esper and Charity Rindero, Torano cigar smoking Fiorino Corsi, and Glenrothes' Scotchman Mike Harrison.\ HOT IN THE CITY\ FIRST PLACE Saturday, Nov. 17 - The JetSet Crew James Bond Party at the Vancouver Club confirmed that black ties, Belvedere martinis and "Goldfinger" mischief, is the kind of revelry the city's nightlife needs. Pictured, Agent 001 Lloyd Baker, Agent 0069 Rob Holly, and gold painted Magdalena Nowak.

SECOND PLACE Wednesday, June 27 - Does the number 11 exist on a scale of 1 to 10? For the love of God make it stop. Ceili's Irish Pub went sexy and exotic while hosting the B.C. finals for the Miss Hawaiian Tropic Model Search 2007. Pictured, contest winner Jessica King glows in the midst of second place finisher Natalia Lundrigan and third place Sarah Porshetta.

## The Right Stuff



**FIRST PLACE Wednesday, May 23** – How cruel a fate to be sick with a disease that can not only rob you of your ability to share a common reality with your fellow man but also requires you to remain fearful and silent in your suffering, for not to do so risks exposure and ostracization. To hell with that! The Comedy Courage Fourth Annual **Laughing and Giving from the Heart** gala at the Westin Bayshore had generous guests laughing at the comedic stories and tales of eight amateur comedians, all of whom have suffered from mental illness at one time or another. Pictured, amateur comedian Angela Daybell in between Comedy Courage founder Darcy James and comedic coach Patrick Maliha. BRAVO!



**SECOND PLACE Tuesday, April 3** – It's simple – we have to say good-bye to mountains of tuna and salmon sashimi, and we should never again have a bowl of shark-fin soup. It's either that, or we continue knowing full well that our gluttonous greed is causing irreversible damage to the ocean's ecosystems. **Fish Forever with David Suzuki: Seafood Choices for a Sustainable Planet** hosted at the Italian Cultural Centre had the seafood industry, ocean biologists and concerned citizens out for a friendly discussion about the needed change in favour of sustainable consumption. Pictured, C Restaurant chef Rob Clark, former B.C. premier Glen Clark, Dr. David Suzuki and UBC's Dr. Daniel Pauly.



**THIRD PLACE Saturday, Nov. 24** – Small treats that touch your heart! Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA) ensures that there is culturally appropriate advocacy and education in the Asian community in regards to AIDS awareness. The **ASIA Celebrity Dim Sum** benefit had the *National Post's* Fred Lee sharing some ASIA love with CBC Radio One's Jenna Chow, CityTV's Tasha Chiu and NDP MLA Jenny Kwan.

**THIRD PLACE** Thursday, March 15 - Visiting Brit Will Jarmain goes back to England with a skewed view of Vancouver after meeting dancers/models Dolly Kumar and Alicia Otranto during the sexy Bacardi White Party at Caprice Nightclub & Lounge.

## SEEING STARS

**FIRST PLACE** Saturday, June 2 - The Leo Awards 2007. The ninth annual celebration of excellence in B.C. film and television had the red carpet out in front of the Westin Bayshore, with gorgeous actresses and handsome actors making the hotel the hot spot for the weekend. Pictured, Dragon Boys -- Part 2 actor Byron Mann had his hands full with leading actresses Amanda Crew and Steph Song. Amanda won a Best Actress Leo for her role in the dramatic series Whistler.

**SECOND PLACE** Sep. 25 to Oct.10 - The highlight of the VIFF party scene has definitely got to be the private soirees the film studios throw. In the time-honoured tradition of Hollywood glitz and glam, Brightlight Pictures & Bridge Studios set the bar high with their sixth annual Red Carpet Event hosted at CinCin on Robson. Pictured, CBC's Intelligence bombshells Alana Husband and Camille Sullivan.

**THIRD PLACE** Nov. 29 to Dec. 02 - It's a tough act to beat - a weekend of fresh flakes, intriguing Canadian film and gorgeous actresses/ski bunnies. For four days, the seventh annual Whistler Film Festival had us all partying like we were famous! Pictured at the Bearfoot Bistro-hosted Director's Guild of Canada Annual Anniversary Party, Walk All Over Me actors Tricia Helfer, Michael Eklund, Leelee Sobieski and Michael Adamthwaite.\

**SCENES FROM THE EDGE\ FIRST PLACE** Saturday, May 12 - It doesn't get edgier than this. Playing rather than fighting, Norm and Andrea donned their best military gear for Sin City's Military Fetish Ball held at Club 23.

**SECOND PLACE** September 06 to16 - With more than 70 different avant-garde performances, the Vancouver International Fringe Festival takes us happily to the edge. The city was finally ready for the Fringe, but I am not sure "frequent Fringer" Michael Walsh was ready for visiting performer New York's Fiely Matias.

**THIRD PLACE** May 2 to May 6 - Seventeen years and running, Vancouver's New Music West Music Festival had musicians and fans having a great time as they bounced along from venue to venue. Pictured, Surfact serving up a little Danish metal at a private slammer at Gaelor's Mews.\

**THE RIGHT STUFF\ FIRST PLACE** Wednesday, May 23 - How cruel a fate to be sick with a disease that can not only rob you of your ability to share a common reality with your fellow man but also requires you to remain fearful and silent in your suffering, for not to do so risks exposure and ostracization. To hell with that! The Comedy Courage Fouth Annual Laughing and Giving from the Heart gala at the Westin Bayshore had generous guests laughing at the comedic stories and tales of eight amateur comedians, all of whom have suffered from mental illness at one time or another. Pictured, amateur comedian Angela Daybell in between Comedy Courage founder Darcy James and comedic coach Patrick Maliha. BRAVO!

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