

# SOCIAL NOTES

JENNIFER CAMPBELL



## ALICE IN DAFFODIL LAND

On Thursday, April 26, 700 of the city's movers and groovers had a "very important date" with the 2012 Daffodil Ball benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society – one that would have made even Lewis Carroll and master screen man Tim Burton puff their chests with indescribable pride. For your Saturday social pleasure, the following includes enough particulars from the enthralling evening, chaired by Rio Tinto Alcan CEO Jacynthe Côté (attending with husband Denis Dion), Air Canada president-CEO Calin Rovinescu (with wife Elaine) and Fednav president and co-CEO Paul Pathy (with wife Marie-Michelle), to prevent even my harshest critics (and bosses) from exclaiming "off with her head!"

**Event Wonders:** 2012 marks the 150th anniversary of the first telling of Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll and, accordingly has been celebrated the world over by prestigious ballet companies in Toronto and London, the Tate Gallery, even the trendy Sanderson Hotel in London, where Mad Hatter teas have become the new standard in socializing cool. While each did the historic novel justice, it is more than likely that award-winning event producer Alison Silcoff, with the support of Toronto design firm Decor & More, did so at the Daff in the most vivid detail. The first evidence of such – the overblown flora at the entrance – was immediately followed by a feisty White Rabbit on the staircase. The cocktail space was equally fairytale, dominated by an iconic Mad Hatter's tea party at centre, replete with an over-the-top lopsided hat cake ingeniously designed by Le Gâteau's Dominique Matte. Post rabbit and 'tails (hee) guests passed through two true-to-theme keyholes to still more of Alice's dreamscape in the dining room (which was remarkably faithful to the peridot, teal, burgundy, purple, fuchsia and gold brights so popular in Burton's screen adaptation). Tables were a pleasing array of circular, rectangular and square variations, topped by six different centrepieces designed by Yves Chénier, that cleverly incorporated Wonderland staples like teacups into masses of fresh daffodils.

**Mad Hatter Fab Fête:** Entertainment was all the rage at the ball, making Alice ... the new Cinderella! Thanks to Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal and FACE Chamber Orchestra (both featured a fine selection of Wonderland songs and music), a flawless performance by FUSE (British virtuoso electric violinists Linzi Stoppard and Ben Lee), the haunting melodies of crystal glass instrumentalist Kristalleon and, of course, Paul Chacra and 1945, guests had the time of their lives (tweedle-DUH!). The majority swirled and swayed 'til the ball's close beneath colossal "playing card" chandeliers, brainchild of expert lighting designer Nol van Genuchten.

**Fantasy Fare:** The theme was a spectacular point of departure for the Fairmont Queen E's executive chef Alain Pignard and his team (under the impeccable direction of Armando Arruda) who drew inspiration from British celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal to produce a meal that was as creatively presented as it was delectable (a foodie feat for a crowd of 700!). Favourites were lobster and crayfish in a "pool of tears" (that elicited anything but) and a classic British breakfast "Curiouser and Curiouser" for upside down dessert that reinvented panna cotta and mousse as "eggs sunny side up." (Also irresistible: Alice's marvels at midnight served to departing guests that included melt-in-your-mouth liquid nitrogen iced maple worth a tumble down the steepest rabbit hole.)

**Perfect Potions and Tonics:** All wines (wonderful) were donated by the SAQ. Equally bewitching beauty elixirs were applied in the ladies room by savvy beauty sorceresses (all courtesy of Yves Saint Laurent).

**Crème de la Crème Cast:** While the Red Queen, with an elaborate skirt of 125 champagne glasses, Mad Hatter magicians and cameo by Alice herself entranced, the real guests were the most compelling. From the world of entertainment, a parade of talented and genetically gifted specimens were in the house including the eye's emcee-television goddess Virginie Coossa, a vision in BCBG Max Azria and Lou Goldberg bling, who attended with husband François Bazinet, brilliant star of ABC drama Pan Am Karine Vanasse, stunning in DUY alongside love-powerhouse TV and film industry insider Maxime Rémyllard; and media celeb Dominique Bertrand, who was beyond glam in a strapless black couture creation in the company of husband Jacques Maurice (of Scotia McLeod).

Proudly representing the political arena were über decisionmakers Yves Bolduc and Michelle Courchesne, the provincial ministers of health and government administration, respectively (who cut quite the figures on the dance floor) and Quebec Revenue Minister Raymond Bachand who, along with wife Micheline Brazeau, were such a scorching social commodity our photogs missed their pic!

And last but far from least, the landscape was alight with the fire and energy of the highest level corporate dynamos and dynamites including: Bellus topman Francesco Bellini and wife Marisa; Aimia's Rupert Duchesne and Holly Coll-Black; Medisys CEO Sheldon Elman on scene with wife Meryl; Lucie Boivin and husband Pierre Boivin (the always beautifully bow-tied president-CEO of Claridge); PricewaterhouseCoopers' Bill McFarland and wife Debbie; RBC Royal Bank royals – the honourable Michael Fortier (attending with elegant wife Michelle Setlakwe) and Tony Loffreda (with elegant wife Angie); dazzling Denyse Tessier and hub Robert Tessier, Caisse de dépôt chairman of the board; new Standard Life prez-

## DAFFODIL BALL INSPIRED BY LEWIS CARROLL'S TALE



**AIR FABULOUS!** President-CEO of Bombardier Aerospace Guy C. Hachey, (left) Alain Bellemare, president-COO of UTC Propulsion and Aerospace Systems, Bombardier Aerospace vice-presidents Janice Davis and Kristopher Pinnow and Christine Hachey break between boogie.

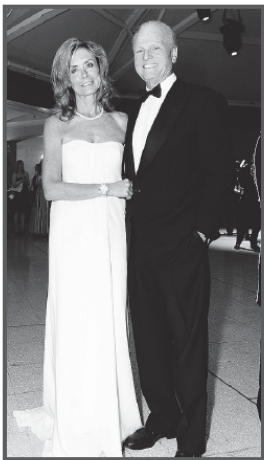


**THE NEXT BIG DEAL SEALED AT THE DAFF** Quebecor chief Pierre Karl Péladeau (left) power chats with Dazmo chief Johann Martin.



**DANCING UNDER THE CARDS** More than 700 guests converged on the dance floor at the 19th annual Daffodil Ball at Windsor Station, the most successful annual cancer-related fundraising gala in Canada.

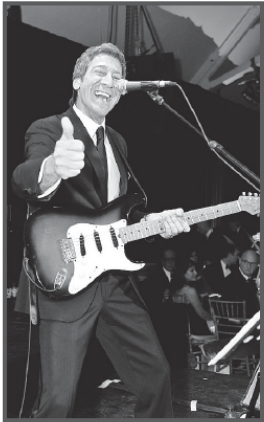
PHOTOS BY MARC MURI



**PAIR WITH FLAIR** Suzan Moreau (in Ralph Lauren Couture) and husband Jean-Guy Desjardins, Fiera Capital board chair and CEO, make a fashion first impression.



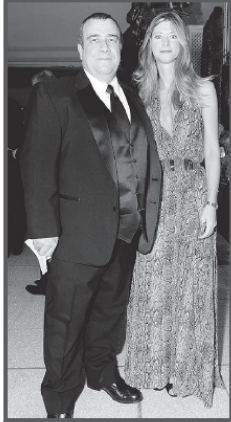
**PROJECT PERFECT** Young musicians of FACE Chamber Orchestra dazzle with selections from Alice in Wonderland during dinner (Scoop: the performance was part of a special school project.)



**THUMBS UP** Master music himself, Paul Chacra, can't help but succumb to the charms of wonder Daff.



**MINISTERS PARTY TOO!** Quebec Health Minister Yves Bolduc takes a spin on the dance floor with Michelle Courchesne, minister responsible for government administration.



**L'OREAL LOVELIES** L'Oréal Canada president-CEO Javier San Juan and wife Constanza, pose perfect.

CEO Charles Guay with wife Isabelle Pagé; Sophie Jones and husband Scott, president of Nova Steel; their good table neighbours Laurence Duguay and Canada Steamship Lines' David Martin; National Bank Financial Group president-CEO Louis Vachon and wife Chantal Carrier; Susan McPeak-Sirois with husband, CIBC's Charles Sirois, aka he who rocked telecom to the top; and Linda Greenberg with husband, Astral Media's Ian Greenberg, aka he who rocked specialty movie channels to the top (where the view is tres bell).

Speaking of Bell, Tom Little, executive vice-president of Bell wholesale was there too, jetting in from home-base in Toronto with wife Ann Sutherland; and finally, an impressive pack of corporate power girls currently crashing through the glass ceiling (bless their ambitious hearts) made their Daffodil mark: Sun Life Financial's Isabelle Hudon (attending with husband Gilles Coulombe), Logistec's Madeleine Paquin, Loto-Québec's Hélène Fortin, Iron Ore's Zoë Yujnovich (with husband Jason), Aon Parizeau's Johanne Lépine, Groupe Germain's Christiane Germain, Cascades' Suzanne Blanchet, BNP Paribas's Anne Marie Verstraeten (with Daniel Grenier), Osler Hoskin & Harcourt's Monique Jérôme-Forget and SAAQ's Marie-Anne Tawil (with Michel Vennat). Whew, that's hot social stuff!

**Also sizzling:** Costumes: Edith Head – and every Hollywood costume and fashion master since – would have been suitably

impressed as guests embraced the theme and an invitational request to sport a wonderland worthy hat. Special mention goes to committee member Claudia Cytrynbaum, whose fascinator was particularly jaunty-chic; and bold PR print-cesses founder-president of Zoe Communications Maria Varvarikos Peart (in vintage) and her associate Marjorie Dumas (in Morales), who dared to go beyond the black!

**Gargantuan Gifts and Goodies:** As always, the raffie featured so many dream packages (total value: \$160,000) guests including my tablemates, Antonella Argento and husband Dario Pietrantonio, couldn't help but purchase several tickets in the hopes of winning rock-star items like the first prize luxury vacay to a decked out villa in Parrot Cay, Turks & Caicos. No, they didn't walk away with it but the sexy swag featuring Yves St. Laurent Touche Éclat, BCBG Max Azria clutches and Toile sur Rendez-Vous tea napkins for ladies and Yves St. Laurent's new L'Homme Libre eau de toilette for men did ease Antonella and Dario's loss somewhat. ... (FYI: Real men do manper!)

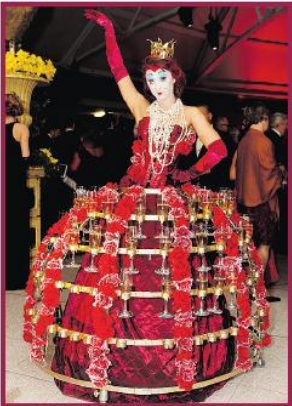
**Tall Tally:** Most importantly, the 19th annual Daffodil Ball raised a surreal \$1.67 million for the Canadian Cancer Society. That had all guests (especially the society's executive director Suzanne Dubois and chairman Jean-Daniel Brisson) leaving the night with Cheshire grins.

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**BOOGIE BABES** Caroline Deslandes (in BCBG Max Azria) hits the dance floor with none other than Alice herself!



**QUEEN OF (CHAMPAGNE) HEARTS:** Nuff said.



**BLOUNDES DO HAVE MORE FUN** At least good girlfriends Jessica Magy (in Cavalli) and Andrea Miller (in Escada) did when they hit the dance floor.



**THE WONDERTEAM** Co-chair/Air Canada president-CEO Callin Rovinescu, Alice, Dame Daffodil Alison Silcoff, co-chair/Rio Tinto Alcan CEO Jacynthe Côté and co-chair/Fednav president and co-CEO Paul Pathy.



**POWER PAIR** Solange Dugas (in red-hot Wayne Clarke) and love Lucien Bouchard, former premier of Quebec and a partner at Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg.



**WORTHY OF A ROYAL CROWD** British virtuoso electric violinist Ben Lee, one half of the evenings' headliner FUSE, struts his strings as the duo's other half Linzi Stoppard wows the rest of the crowd.

PHOTOS BY MARC MURI



**MAKING NEW FRIENDS** Sun Life Financial Quebec boss lady Isabelle Hudon (in Prada) catches up with the white hot White Rabbit during cocktails.



**LOOKING REALLY GOOD** TNT Montreal owner Brian Cytrynbaum (in Armani) and wife, committee member Claudia (in Vanessa Bruno and a fascinator) the epitome of sartorial excellence.



**GODDESSES OF TALENT UNITE** Über actress Karine Vanasse (star of ABC's Pan Am) catches up with just as fabulous tablemates songstress/actress/radio and television personality Mitsou Gélinas (in BCBG Max Azria) and radio/television personality/journo Sophie Durocher.



**ONE LUCKY MAD HATTER** Emcee/television personality Virginie Coossa (in BCBG Max Azria and Lou Goldberg bling) makes the hatter's night!



**TOP TRIO** Popular radio and television personality Sophie Durocher (at centre in H&M's hot new eco-fab fashion) with husband Richard Martineau (left) and a masked animator during cocktails.



**MEET THE PRINT-CESSES** Emcee/television personality Virginie Coossa (in BCBG Max Azria), founder/president of Zoe Communications Maria Varvarikos Peart (in vintage) and associate Marjorie Dumas (in Morales).



**LEGAL EAGLE FLIES ON DANCE FLOOR** 2011 ball chairperson Norm Steinberg and wife Renée Kessler get into the wonder spirit.