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SOCIAL NOTES



FIISHA STUDIO'S DAN PROKOPOWICZ

Tropical boogie: Dazmo's Andrew Lapierre (in Zegna), Yasmine Khalil, Julie du Page (in BCBGMAXAZRIA) and Marty Leroux get dancing at the Daffodil Ball.



FIISHA STUDIO'S DAN PROKOPOWICZ

Hanging with the dream team: Yours truly with Katia Piccolino (in Missoni from PRFKT), Anina Belle Giannini (in Versace and Charlotte Hosten jools from PRFKT), Alison Silcoff (in Monique Luillier from Holt Renfrew and Barbara Stutman), Figi Elman, Isabelle Lè (in Notte by Marchesa), Normand Clarlo, Jeannie Saunders, Nathalie Schwartz Décarie, Belle Grivakis and Maria Grivakis.



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Grand entrance: David Lapierre (in Burberry) enjoys cocktails with Holt Renfrew senior vice-president marketing and customer experience Kimberly Grabel (stunning in Wayne Clark, Valentino and Prada) and Holt Renfrew Quebec divisional vice-president Normand Clarlo (in Canali and Prada).



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In good company: TM Hoteliers managing partner Marco Torriani, Coty Canada's Elee Platis (elegant in Marc Jacobs), Genevieve Torriani and Aniss Drissi (in Calvin Klein) are perfect tablemates at the 21st annual Daffodil Ball.



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Colourful at cocktails: Caroline Codsì (in Laundry by Shelli Segal), Norton Rose Fulbright global co-chair Norman M. Steinberg, wife Renée Kessler, Air Canada pres/CEO Calin Rovinescu and wife, Elaine, help out the Canadian Cancer Society.



FIISHA STUDIO'S DAN PROKOPOWICZ

Cirque sensation: Nathalie Schwartz Décarie (in Adrianna Papell and Georges Schwartz bling) enjoys festivities with husband, Cirque du Soleil COO Charles Décarie.



STÉPHANE PORIER PHOTOGRAPHY

Tant with a view: The cavernous Windsor Station dining room is fiercely reinvented by Décor & More as a spectacular safari tent at the 21st edition of the Daffodil Ball benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society.



FIISHA STUDIO'S DAN PROKOPOWICZ

Masked dance: A bevy of dancers from Académie de Danse de Montréal rock a shimmering Lion King-inspired number at the 21st edition of the Daffodil Ball.

Daffodil Ball a blooming delight

Sublime annual benefit for the Canadian Cancer Society a fairy-tale event

So I've been covering the Daffodil Ball benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society (a.k.a. "The Daff") for almost a decade now (this year's 21st edition was No. 9), and though it sounds a tad fairy-tale and rosy-eyed, I can't help but get caught up in the Daffastic year after year. Indeed, that may have a little something to do with the spectacular production (the 2013 edition once again garnered the Special Events Gala Awards for Best Décor and Best Catered Event). It may also have a little something to do with the VVIP guest list, a veritable smorgasbord of the country's top CEOs, and cultural and political leaders, many of whom also — much to this former style journal's delight — never fail to trot out the season's most impressive fashions. Any way, the dazzler is clearly as addictive as this year's dessert:

Our kind of zoo: We knew we were in for a very out-of-the-ordinary evening (read extraordinary), what with the greeting by a 6-foot ostrich and five parrots. Exotically beautiful (Princess the ostrich's eyelashes were to die for), the animals were in keeping with the deliciously daring "On the Wild Side" theme (and, as a side benefit, provoked some rather riotously hilarious reactions on the faces of ball newcomers).

Cocktails in the wild: Of course, we couldn't spend all our time at the glam zoo (sad face), and after numerous triple bisous bonjours, continued up the safari-decked staircase to cocktails in the Atrium. ("We," by the way, was a sideshow unto itself consisting of yours truly, a photographer, videographer and very patient volunteer event liaison, The Vo).

As for cocktail hour, even the fantastical tropical creations, generously sponsored by PUR Vodka, couldn't compete with main attractions, like the daffodil-distributing giant bird Dream Hunters (wow) and Cirque du Soleil aerial acrobat, tangled (amazingly) in silk six metres above us (double wow).

It's a jungle in here: Before, however, we could belt out a gratifying chest-smacking Tarzan-like cocktail holler, it was time to take a walk on the still wilder side, into the dining room. And much to our collective delight, the cavernous space was fiercely reinvented by Décor & More as a safari tent replete with white draping (strategically lit by lighting designer Nol van Genuchten to simulate sunset) and wooden window-frame structures with peaked centres and bamboo thatching. (Think Gilligan's Island on very stylish steroids).

Also impressive to urbanites: Enormous oversized birdcages suspended from the ceiling, and Yves Chénier's towering centrepieces, featuring bamboo shoots, lanterns, orange amaryllis, heliconias and, of course, a spray of daffodils.

Alas, Daffodil dreamers cannot exist on décor alone. TG for the fine food, entertainment and gift goodies.

We ate like savages (how could we not?): On the foodie front, brilliant Armando Arruda and his gifted catering team at the Fairmont Queen E, outdid themselves. Where else but the Daff does a "butterfly" circle around a beautifully appointed appetizer plate of swordfish carpaccio and tartar? Guests also went gaga for the wapati (delivered in an airmail envelope with African stamps) and melt-in-your-mouth dessert: a triple-layered pot-au-crème, seasoned with curried banana, lemon and coconut, and cocoa shell infused with cardamom and New Guinea pepper.

A tangle of good talent: I honestly don't know how Daffodil doyenne Alison Silcoff does it, but every year, she pulls entertaining genius out of her never-boring magic hat. This year, she stunned first with Juno award-winning South African singer Lorraine Klaasen and her troupe (a gifted entertainer who knows how to bring it and sing it). Next up was the Canadian debut of visually astounding Extreme Beam, featuring a performer who did incredibly artistic things with multiple laser beams. Finally, a bevy of dancers from Académie de Danse de Montréal rocked a shimmering Lion King-inspired number before king of the Montreal dance scene, Paul Chacra and his 1945 band, continued the beat.

Tribal treats: As is tradition, gifting was at its peak. Guests at gala sponsor tables (\$50,000) received Christofle silver-plated trays with engraved names and \$300 Charlotte gift certificates. All ladies took home goodies from Giorgio Armani, Balnea spa, Beyond The Rack and PUR Vodka, while gentlemen were equally pampered with surprises from Giorgio Armani, PUR Vodka and shopping mecca Holt Renfrew (HR gave each gent a gift card for a silk tie of their choice at the Montreal store).

And then there was the legendary raffle and silent auction table. Topping the fantasy range of raffle prizes (valued at \$128,200) was a week's voyage aboard the uber-luxurious "The World, and — all over the auction table — luxury stays at perfect Ritz properties in Israel, Toronto and Montreal.

The tent dwellers (and dancers): Now wait, you honestly didn't think I'd leave you hanging in the VIPeep (and fashion) departments? Heaven forbid. It is the Daff, after all (no matter how distracting the décor and amusements). Ready set, socialize.

Kings of the jungle: This year's esteemed chairmen (who did a truly stellar job, Bravo) were Sanofi Canada president/CEO Jon Fairrest (attending with wife, Helen), UAP president/CEO Robert Hattem (with wife, Hélène Bourassa), and McKesson Canada president Nick Loporcaro (with wife, Claudia Marra).

Past kings: Chairs from Daffs past were also on scene, including Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix chief Domenic Pilla, trending in Tom Ford, with wife, Louise De Serres, just as

trending in Roland Mouret; charming CAE CEO Marc Parent with lovely wife, Sylvie Lecours; past CAE tops Robert E. Brown with wife, Sherrill; Bombardier Aerospace president/COO Guy C. Hachey, GQ worthy in Zegna, alongside wife, Christiane, stunning in MaxMara; Medisys maestro Dr. Sheldon Elman with wife, Dr. Meryl Elman; Norton Rose Fulbright global co-chair Norman M. Steinberg with wife, Renée Kessler; and an exec who always manages to bring the splashdash: Air Canada chief Calin Rovinescu, with ever-elegant Elaine.

More top (biz) bananas: Truth be told, there's no way to name all the massively influential biz peeps that descended upon the Daff "jungle," but the following is a respectable representative sample (presented in random order): CIBC's Charles Sirois with wife, Susan McPeak-Sirois; The Gazette's Lucinda Chodan with husband, Dave Clarke; Loto-Québec's Hélène E. Fortin with husband, Denis Larose; Kevric's Richard Hylands with wife, Arièle; Groupe Copley's Alan P. Rossy with wife, Roula; Cossette's Melanie Dunn; Holt Renfrew's Joanne Nemeroff with husband, Howard; Gildan Activewear's Laurence Sellyn with wife, Kathryn; Transcontinental's Isabelle Marcoux; Cascade's Suzanne Blanchet with Eric Bodnar; Pharmascience's Morris Goodman with wife, Rosalind; La Maison Ogilvy's Steve Lapierre; McCarthy Tétrault's Kim Thomassin; and Van Berkom and Associates's Sebastian van Berkom with wife, Chislaine.

Celebs swing in: Stars were everywhere (and everywhere!) Think emcee Anne-Marie Withenshaw, dressed to the evelens by Holt Renfrew in Cavalli, Oscar de la Renta bling and a Prada clutch; Richard Martineau; Virginie Coossa, in goddessy Trés Chic Styling; Guylaine Tremblay; Marina Orsini, in Muse by Christian Chenail; Anne-Marie Loisique, in clingy Cavalli; her pal, reactor to the stars, Martin Rouleau; Dominique Bertrand, dreamy in Duy; superduo Esther Bégin and John Parisella; Breakfast Television Montreal power pair Alex Despatie and Joanne Vrakas; and interiors guru Scott Yetman, in Dior.

Tall tally: While all of the above is indisputably sublime, what is ultimately most significant (and the force behind the evening) is the \$1,600,000 raised for the Canadian Cancer Society. To say that Society officials like Pamela C. Fralick, Suzanne Dubois and Pierre B. Lafrenière were pleased is an understatement.

That's it, folks. Hope you enjoyed. Gotta go. This Jane (ahem, Jenn) has a date with destiny (ahem, Tarzan).

For more pics and very memorable video, swing over to diary-fasocialgal.com.



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Hear them roar: Performers from Académie de Danse de Montréal strut their stuff in a spectacular number at the 21st annual Daffodil Ball.



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Dior Dazzlers: Dior Montreal masters Leah Rettino, left, and Denis Granger (in Dior bien sur) get into the spirit with a warrior dancer at the 21st annual Daffodil Ball.



CHANTALE LECOURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Here you go! The cocktail crowd goes wild for daffodil-distributing giant bird Dream Hunters.



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Group glam: Héroux-Devtek pres Gilles Labbé, wife Louise Cérat, Bombardier Aerospace president/COO Guy C. Hachey, wife Christiane, former CAE tops Robert E. Brown, wife Sherrill, current CAE CEO Marc Parent, wife Sylvie Lecours, and Air Canada chief Calin Rovinescu and wife, Elaine, tablemates at the 21st Daffodil Ball benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society.



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Beam me up, Alison: Visually astounding Extreme Beam makes quite the Canadian debut at the 21st annual Daffodil ball.



CHANTALE LECOURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Creative presentation: A main dish of perfect wapati is delivered to guests in an airmail envelope with African stamps.



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Bringing it & singing it: Juno-award winning South African singer Lorraine Klaasen and her troupe wow at the 21st Annual Daffodil Ball benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society.



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Puttin' on the Daff: Ritz-Carlton Montréal president/CEO Andrew Torriani and wife, Arlene, are all smiles and enthusiasm at the 21st annual Daffodil Ball.



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Now that's stage presence: Enticing emcee Anne-Marie Withenshaw addresses the crowd alongside 2014 co-chairs Sanofi Canada president/CEO Jon Fairrest, UAP president/CEO Robert Hattem and McKesson Canada president Nick Loporcaro, along with Canadian Cancer Society national president/CEO Pamela C. Fralick.



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Peace out: Isabelle Marechal (in Catherine Malandrino) and Isabelle Ethier (in Rene Ruiz) hit the dance floor at the 21st annual Daffodil Ball.



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In full bloom: Sun Life Financial Quebec president tops Domenic Pilla (trending in Tom Ford) and wife Louise De Serres (trending in Roland Mouret).



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White-hot: Scotia McLeod's Jacques Maurice of the Jacques Maurice Group (in Canali) and wife, media celeb and author Dominique Bertrand (in dreamy Duy and Van Cleef & Arpels jewels) are caught on the glamcam.

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