



PHOTOS: ALLEN McINNIS THE GAZETTE
Behind the masks, emcee Sophie Grégoire and husband Justin Trudeau.



Daffodil ball co-chair Alban D'Amours with Venetian goddesses Marika Iourachkou (left) and Heidi-Rose Cholod.



Andy Habib and Anny Kazanjian at the Living Garden Fountain.



Daffodil guest François Armand with Goldsinger Linda Garcia. At right, E. Leo Kolber with Roni Gandell.



From left: Dr. Meryl Elman with doctor of the opera Sheldon Elman, Elyssa Elman and Daniel Lieberman.

SOCIAL NOTES

AT WINDSOR STATION, guests were greeted with a sea of daffodils, more than 40,000 flown in from Scotland and used in conjunction with 15,000 silk flowers

Daffodil Ball unmask the magic

To outdo last year's daffodil dream was no simple feat, and yet this season's masked ball was the perfect treat, raising a staggering \$2,050,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society.

So come with me and revel in the magic of the night, as we recall with awe each superlative highlight: **The legendary extravagance** of the Venice Carnival: We are talking dazzling Daffodil Ball, as produced by award-winning **Alison Silcoff** (attending with husband **Joel**). So of course, it was inevitable that maestro decorator **Dick Walsh** would do wondrous things with the rich international theme.

Where to start?

Well, as guests descended on Windsor Station, they made their way down a ruby-red pier lined with whimsical gondolier poles and (shock!) a sea of daffodils. (Wow fact: To achieve the evening's decor, more than 40,000 daffodils were flown in from Scotland and used in conjunction with 15,000 silk daffodils.)

Next, daffodilphiles travelled up a fantastic staircase, lit by an explosive tangle of blinking lights, crowned by silk daffodils entwined with handcrafted masks from Venice. Looming above was a mammoth Pulcinella mask covered in (you guessed it) daffodils.

Cocktails continued to stir with stupendous touches including hostesses dressed in the most lavish Venetian costumes (specially commissioned for the night in Thailand) and a stunning Living Garden Fountain (from California) that showcased the most ethereal live statuette.

And then there was the perfect Palazzo dining room, where Walsh



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

used miles of luxurious red velvet to create an ambience to rival even Venice's Palazzo Pisani Moretta. Awash in shimmering crystal chandeliers, tables were swathed in red and gold Venetian-style damask and festooned by miniature gold Pulcinella napkin rings as well as Le Tulipier's masterful daffodil topiary spheres.

Tables laden with Italian epicurean delicacies: Inspired by favourites at Venice's world-renowned Harry's Bar, the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth's gastronomic dream team tantalized taste buds. Top rankers included signature Harry's Bar Bellinis and a four-course feast featuring mouth-watering roasted jumbo shrimp atop Cipriani salsa followed by a caramelized torte fit for Venetian royalty. (Foodie footnote: Incredibly, departing guests still had room for farewell smoked meat and pizza.)

Jesters, mimes and magicians at the Doge's Court: Throughout the night, patrons delighted in the entertaining antics of wildly talented performers including La Commedia dell'Arte who, with their fabulously vibrant costumes, appeared to have stepped right out of a Venetian carnival.

They could have danced all night: And they did, on a crimson dance-floor, beneath a glittering 3-metre

chandelier thanks to nonstop musical pursuits of both divine Paul Chacra and 1945 and the headline band, Les Goldsingers (in for the night from the south of France). Even the most conservative CEOs couldn't help but surrender to their high-octane energy and captivating costume changes. (Juicy scoop: The eight lyrical Goldsinger lovelies have performed for royal notables like Prince Albert of Monaco.)

The magical glow of gifts galore: On top of swanky SWAG (stuff we all get) that included Chanel pendants for the ladies and Birks silver cufflinks for the gentlemen, raffle prizes totalling \$124,000 were deliciously luxe (think sizzling South African safaris and a beyond pamper jaunt to Venice, featuring flights sponsored by Swiss International Air Lines).

The revelry of the magnificently masked: Power brokers of the world united for one of the see-est and be seen-est scenes of the season, starting with titan co-chairs: Desjardins Group president and CEO **Alban D'Amours** (attending with **Denise Périgny**); TD Canada Trust co-chair **Bernard Dorval** (with **Francine**); and doctor of the opera, Medisys president and CEO **Dr. Sheldon Elman** (with wife **Dr. Meryl Elman**).

Also representing fab fodder for the paparazzi: dynamic emcee **Sophie Grégoire** (in embellished cream Amanda Wakely) with hubby **Justin Trudeau** (talk about hot accessories!); **Ginette** and **CGI** VIPest **Serge Godin**; **Marcy** and **John McCall MacBain** (who made a special daffodil pilgrimage from Geneva); **Marie-Josée** and **BMO** Nesbitt Burns chairman **L. Jacques Ménard**; **Michelle Laberge** of Birks (pretty in

pale pink BCBG couture); **Barbara** and **Bill Molson**; **Nathalie Bissonnette**, perfect in Posen (as in Zac); Pfizer topper **Jean-Michel Halfon** with **Linda**; **Stephen Bronfman** (style-making in Kitton) with **Claudine Blondin** (loved her Leiber); Quebec's TV hostess with the mostest **Denyse Bombardier**; debonair **E. Leo Kolber** with **Roni Gandell**; Venice imports **Luigi** and **Federica Marangoni** (the artist who donated an incredible raffle prize); **Andy Habib** with **Anny Kazanjian**, channelling Chanel (of course) in black lace; **Jocelyne** and Hydro-Québec pinnacle **Michael L. Turcotte**; **Nicolo Rossi di Montelera** with **Mariangela**; gorgeous **Sophie Desmarais**, who, along with good pal **Nancy Bloomfield**, wore a spectacular gossamer beaded goddess gown by Alberta Ferretti for Serge and R  al (yes, they were there, too); delightful **Shirley** and **Edward Quantz**; and a slew of political powerhouses that included Minister of Public Works **Michael Fortier** (with **Michelle Setlakwe**), **Michel Audet** (with **Francine Girard**) and debonair Health Minister **Philippe Couillard**.

Finally, rounding out the Daff A-listers were: **Dr. Janet Takefman**, sensational in St. John, with her hubby (and my boss o' bosses) Gazette publisher **Alan Allnutt** (who, as always, was beyond dashing! Now, about that promotion); **Gretchen** and Alcan president **Dick Evans**; **Dominique** and sanofi-aventis president/CEO **J  r  me Silvestre**; **Gordon Echenberg** and Halston honey **Penny Echenberg**; awesome **Andrew Grove**; **L  on Simard** with daughter **Rosanne**; gorgeous **Jessica Morrison** with

Arie Benchetrit, plastic surgeon to lotsa locals (even if they don't tuck and tell); **Leonard** and **Sandra Schlemm**, in Vera Wang and Delmar delights; **Chantal Carrier** and National Bank Financial president/CEO **Louis Vachon**; **Socrates** and **Julie Goulakos**, irresistible in Paco Guiven (who also created a stunner for **Louise Courey Nadeau**, there with **Andr  **); **Claire** and **Peter Krut**; Interinvest chairman/CEO **Dr. Hans Black** with wife **Janet** (tantalizing in Thierry Mugler); **St  phane Le Bouyonnec** and **Isabelle Courville**, president-Enterprise, Bell Canada; **Carolyn** and **Richard Renaud**; **Peter** and **Andrea McConnell**, glam in sequined Vera Wang and dreamy-dangly Cartier; **Liz** and **Joseph Yermus**; **Diane Vachon** and RBC Capital Markets managing director **Vincent Joli-Coeur**; and Canadian Cancer Society officials including national president **Ren   Gallant**, Quebec division president **Louise Labrie** and executive director **Suzanne Dubois**.

Bellissima forever moments:

- The moving tribute to amazing Canadians lost to cancer, including Jackie Simard, a founding member of the ball committee.
- Co-chair Elman's electrifyingly X-rated reminder to give generously.
- The servers' authentic gondolier T-shirts imported from Venice. (The fact that the first shipment blew up is another story.)
- A certain social columnist's almost fatal slip (on a daffodil, no less) as she dashed for farewell smoked meat.

See you in 2007.

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