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Charity Ball rocks Woodbury

2:31 PM By Erica Marcus



Photo credit: Newsday/Erica Marcus

If all the short ribs served at last night's Long Island Hospitality Ball had been lined up end to end, they might have spanned the Crest Hollow Country Club's Olympic-sized pool complex. Certainly the amount of high-end liquor on offer would have displaced most of the pool's chlorinated water. (It was the kind of evening that inspires exaggeration.)

The ball attracted "well over 2,000 people," at \$100 a person, according to Daria Carioscia, director of special events for the American Cancer Society, and raised \$220,000 for that organization. This was \$50,000 more than was raised at last year's inaugural event, at Carlyle on the Green in Farmingdale, she said.

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The 2011 ball, held in March, was a cramped affair that seemed to occupy every cranny of the Carlyle. This year, the organizers, led by nightlife promoter and restaurateur Keith Hart, decided to throw the party in June when, if the weather cooperated, it could take advantage of Crest Hollow's vast, terraced grounds. The weather cooperated, emphatically. It was a perfect June evening, and the exhibitors — 80 restaurants, 10 bakeries, 67 spirit / wine distributors — set up tables all around the pool. The food was fine, though there was, perhaps, an excessive reliance on short ribs, sliced filet mignon, seared tuna and truffle oil — elements that tended to be stacked on top of tortillas, flatbread, naan. There were also many trays of baked pasta. Food standouts included a lovely pea soup from Rein at the Garden City Hotel and moist chunks of roast pork loin accompanied by a superb creamed spinach from Pace's Steak House (Port Jefferson and Hauppauge).

Serious drinkers were extremely well served. Lithe libation bearers beckoned with boundless shots of such splendid spirits as Hendrick's gin, Hudson whiskey, Tito's Handmade vodka.

In addition to raising money for the American Cancer Society, the ball honored three men : nightclub owner Anthony "Tony" Greco, spirits magnate Larry Romer and Steve Haweeli, founder and president of WordHampton Public Relations.

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