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Bollywood fans mingle

By SHELBY HODGE Copyright 2009 Houston Chronicle

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Dave Rossman

Dr. Devinder Bhatia and Gina Bhatia, gala chairs, were joined by Indian television idol Mohammed Iqbal Khan, right, at the Indian Film Festival Celebrity Gala held at the InterContinental Houston.

East met West in a show of international dynamism when more than 400 celebrants gathered at the InterContinental Houston for the inaugural Indian Film Festival Celebrity Gala.

Actors, writers, esteemed directors and musical talents from India mingled with Houston social

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glitterati and members of the local Indian community. The crush of young autograph-seekers flocking around pop singer **Sonu Nigam** provided visual testament to the level of talent assembled.

Three cheers for **Sutapa Ghosh**, founding chair and director of the film festival, who pulled off the evening that featured, among others, Indian television superstar **Mohammed Iqbal Khan**, who served as emcee along with Houston radio personality **Meena Datt**.

Joining Ghosh in leadership roles were gala chairs **Anna and Thomas Au, Deborah and Bill Colton, Gina and Dr. Devinder Bhatia and Duni Hebron**. **Carolyn Farb** served as honorary chair along with a host of others that included **Joanne King Herring**, Harris County Judge **Ed Emmett** and wife **Gwen** and Indian Consul General **Sanjiv Arora** and wife **Chhaya**.

The event raised an estimated \$350,000 with proceeds supporting the film festival and MediSend, an international effort supporting hospitals in developing countries with a focus on improving community health. That was good news to **John Tsacrios**, national development director for MediSend, and a film festival advisory board member.

The guests, many in traditional Indian attire, included **Yasmin** and **Satish Gupta, Farieda** and **Behram Irani, Franco Valobra, Margaret Williams** and **Jim Daniel, Nino Shbeeb** and **Edward Silliman** with **Margaret Smith**.

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A swell 60th

What better way to celebrate a milestone birthday than with close friends in the underground wine cellar of a luxe River Oaks mansion? Just ask the youthful **John Scott Arnoldy** (Scotty to friends), who was feted by **Rosalie** and **Billy Hitchcock** and **Veronica** and **Mike Curran** in the Hitchcocks' home.

As past president of River Oaks Country Club, the Coronado Club and YPO, Arnoldy has loads and loads of friends, but the wine cellar holds only 30. So it was really just the nearest and dearest who celebrated with the birthday boy and wife **Jana**.

Among those joining the party and feasting on Jackson & Co. fare were **Kay** and **NedHolmes**, **Patti** and **Richard Everett**, **Nancy** and **Jack Dinerstein**, **Susan** and **Dick Hansen**, **Debbie** and **Vidal Martinez**, **Alice** and **Philip Burguieres** and more.

Closing shop

Say it isn't so. The venerable Carlton House is shutting its doors after more than 50 years of serving the silver, crystal and china needs of brides and hostesses from its tony River Oaks location. Owners **Laura Gilbert** and **Katherine Moore Jones** are turning their interests to their families and their growing children.

The store remains open until the official closing date of Dec. 31. The markdowns began Thursday.

Helping homeless

That would be **Alan Helfman**, River Oaks

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Chrysler Jeep honcho, and **Georgia Provost** of Provost Photography, who chaired the fifth-annual benefit for 1000 Hills Ministry International Inc., held at St. John the Divine Episcopal Church. The duo spearheaded fundraising that totaled \$200,000 for the organization that feeds the bodies and souls of the poor and the homeless. (Learn more about the grass roots charity at www.1000hills.org)

Artful gathering

The first exhibition in 40 years to focus on the art of the late South American avant-garde artist **Joaquín Torres-García** cqdrew a colorful crowd to the Menil Collection Tuesday night. **Sofia Adrogué** and **Brad Bucher** chaired the evening that included music at the grand piano by **José-Miguel Yamal** and spicy bites from Jackson & Co.

Mari Carmen Ramirez of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Menil director **Josef Helfenstein**, curators of the Joaquín Torres-García: Constructing Abstraction with Wood exhibition conducted gallery tours. The crowd included Menil board president **Harry Pinson**, **Adelaide de Menil Carpenter**, **Bill Hill**, **Pablo Henning**, **Linda** and **George Kelly**, **Tere** and **Eduardo Aguirre**, **Celina Hellmund** and **Carolina** and **SergioWeitzman**.

High seas

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came true recently when husband **Patrick Cohan**, MES Solutions president and COO, organized a major birthday cruise of the Greek and Turkish isles with friends aboard the Sea Dream I.

SeaDream Yacht Club president **Bob Lepisto** handled special details of the trip that included a private cocktail party at the magnificent ruins of Ephesus on Pam's birthday topped off with a private concert by the Aegean Chamber Orchestra, performed under the stars against the backdrop of Ephesus' stunning Celsus Library.

Joining the birthday girl in the celebration that then featured a six-course birthday dinner back aboard the cruise ship were **Patricia and Wilson Griffith, Roxann and Tim Neumann, Vicki and Steve Weyel and Melanie and Mike Weir.**

Sight 'ems

Ashley Wehrly celebrating her 39th at RDG + Bar Annie with a lively happy hour hosted by **Jared Kearney, Lisa Lee** and Wehrly's On the Mark Communications cohorts **Mark Sullivan, Jeremy Little** and **Irena Hixson**. A score of friends joined the party ...

Tacia Servos, Minnette Carrabba and **Becky Demeris** of three of Houston's notable restaurant families putting Danton's to the test at an early dinner. The ladies raved about the food, particularly the white chocolate bread pudding of which they ordered extras to go for their families ...

A mixed bag of notables lunching at La Griglia at various tables including attorney John White, University of Houston regent Nandy Berry, political whiz Sue Walden, Sen. **Kay Bailey Hutchison's** regional director **Jason Fuller, Nancy Kinder** and **Cindy Clifford**.

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