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OWC Hosts 23rd Annual Festival of Trees

By Andrea A. Firth



Mayor Sue Severson Photo Tod Fierner

The Orinda Woman's Club (OWC) 2009 Festival of Trees was a day filled with food, fashion, and fundraising. The 23rd annual benefit luncheon and fashion show held at the Blackhawk Museum on November 17th attracted 475 attendees and raised almost \$30,000. Following a lunch of chicken or vegetarian salad, guests were treated to a fashion show featuring women's clothes from Helen Lyall of Vallejo and men's fashions from Bartlett Baron in Walnut Creek. According to Lyall, the fashion staples for this season are leggings with tall boots. "Glamour pants are back, and skinny pants are in," added the fashion guru.

Professional models walked the raised runway alongside volunteers from the Woman's Club and Orinda civic and business leaders, including Mayor Sue Severson and Chamber of Commerce President Keith Miller. For over an hour, the twenty plus models paraded the walkway and made several quick changes to display an array of smart casual clothing, chic apres skiwear, attractive after-five attire, and elegant evening wear. Black was the dominant color of the catwalk with splashes of red, green, and purple intermingled. Daywear was accessorized with fur collars and vests, sporty hats and caps, and cool, dark shades. Evening apparel was jazzed up with shimmering silver and gold accents, and there were several fun, flirty versions of the "little black dress."

The models strutted their stuff to dance club mixes of pop rock singer Pink's anthem So What and Patti Labelle's disco hit Lady Marmalade. The throb of the music had toes tapping and some swaying to the beat in their seats and mouthing the lyrics. While the novice models were a bit reticent to start, they quickly found their

groove and soon one could not distinguish the amateurs from the pros.

Mayor Sue made a comfortable transition from the meeting room to the runway and complimented each of her outfits with her warm smile. Wearing a black skirt and top with colorful beading and silver jewelry along with black and red leather boots and a cowgirl hat, she looked the part of a ranch owner from Orinda's early days. Keith Miller, an OWC show veteran, was also at ease on the walkway, waving to the crowd and giving the thumbs up. He epitomized chic casual sporting a black button down shirt with contrasting patterned cuffs and designer jeans.

The fashion show wrapped with the models adorned in scarlet red and emerald green silk gowns carrying candles and parading to a holiday tune mix.

Proceeds from the OWC Festival of Trees will go to the Contra Costa County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the California Youth Connection (CYC), and individual scholarships to improve the lives of women and families in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.



Marianne Aude



Patty Camras

Photo Tod Fierner

Reach the reporter at: andrea@lamorindaweekly.com

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