

The André Sobel River of Life Foundation's *The Pearl of Havana*

THE ELEGANCE OF A CUBAN NIGHTCLUB, complete with white evening gowns, Panama hats, and crystal chandeliers and entertainment from the Tropidanza dancers. Diva Niki Haris and the fabulous Desi Arnaz Jr. on congas brought guests at The Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation's Pearl of Havana to a bubbling titillation at the gala fundraiser. It was the Foundation's Santa Barbara coming out party - replete with numerous locals and stars and supporters from Los Angeles - all of whom were gripped by the touching and sincere stories of Foundation beneficiaries - desperately ill children and their families.

"The Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation enables single parents of children with life-threatening illnesses to care for their children full time by relieving financial burdens when other resources are exhausted or unavailable," explained founder Valerie Sobel. "This is done in the hope that no child should die alone," she continued.

As she looked out over the over 500 guests, entertainers, and volunteers she shared, "This room is wonderfully littered with my life," melting the hearts of most in the room before the entertainment even began to heat up the enormous tent.

Releasing guests to the ongoing revelry, Sobel quipped, "This event took two villages."

Members of part of the village included the owners of the Nesbitt Estate & Polo Fields who opened their home to the influx of guests and many local celebrities.

For more information on the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation visit online at www.andreriveroflife.org.



Lylze and Sharon Waggoner with Kevin O'Callaghan



Niki Haris



Francois Pelikan, Valerie Sobel, Chrysta Olson, Simone Sobel

Photo by Debra Olson



Bernadine Bednarz, Gene Sinser, and Patty De Dominick



Dr. Steve Rifkin and DeeDee Barrett



Patty and Jimmy Connors



Photo by Debra Olson



Milt and Arlene Larsen with John Palminteri



Alan Harrison and Johnatha King



Andrew Klausmeyer and Melissa Lubbers



Terrance Ryken and Tommie Pitts



Erika Brunson and Molly Maloy



Analia Lenchantin and Ken Carlson



Scott Johnson, Oksana Badrak, and Tom Coultas



Rick and Melissa Havard



Virginia Felcher, Linda Moore, and Francine Matas



India Oxenberg, Veronika Judish, and Emily Pacheco



Kim and Simona Farrise, Richard Simms, and Henry Brown



Desi Arnaz Jr. performed on drums and bongos.



Josephina Franceschina, Dr. George Primbs, and Salada W. Alotta



Photos by Kerry Melfner / CASA Magazine