

AVENUE

JANUARY 2012

TRACY'S HOUSE

House of Lavande's
Tracy Smith talks
jewelry, collecting and,
of course, Palm Beach

Liz Taylor's Gems

Kelly Killoren
Bensimon's Crushes

PLUS:

Peter Brant Jr.,
Simon Doonan,
Richard Dupont,
Aerin Lauder,
Aby and Samantha
Rosen, Steve
Schwarzman and
the rest of the
Palm Beach A-List



Tracy Smith, owner of
House of Lavande

From Paris With Love

New Yorkers set honor worthy causes and jet-set to Paris for a taste of *la vie en rose*

Muffie Potter Aston at the ABT Opening Gala



Sharon, Ashley and Lauren Bush at the FEED Bears designer auction at J. McLaughlin



Maggie Norris and Dr. Robert Grant at Cornelia Guest's bag show



Bambi Sloan at the Saint James Hotel



Elaine Sargent at the French Heritage Society Gala

Lauren Bush Lauren and her mother Sharon Bush auctioned off FEED Bears dressed by Douglas Hannant, Nicole Miller, Cynthia Rowley, Rachel Roy and Zang Toi at J. McLaughlin. Proceeds went to sustain malnourished children around the world (www.feedprojects.com).

Muffie Potter Aston co-chaired the American Ballet Theatre gala at the beautifully restored City Center. Guests included Mary-Louise Parker, Pace Gallery's Andrea and Marc Glimcher, Isabella Rossellini, Joanne de Guardiola, Fe Fendi, Blair Husain and Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia.

Margaret Russell, the glamorous editor of *Architectural Digest*, unveiled the new AD100 list of the top architects and interior designers in the world at the Guggenheim Museum. Making the cut were designers to the rich and richer Tony Ingrao and Randy Kemper, Peter Marino, Bunny Williams, Campion Platt, Mario Buatta and others of that ilk and stripe.

Bambi Sloan, the madcap English designer, has done up the Saint James Paris in a cheeky style that seduces you the moment you enter the only grand chateau hotel in Paris (www.saint-james-paris.com). The Great Room, with its cascading "chaos chandelier," panther patterned carpets and boldly trimmed black and white walls, puts you in a Parisian state of mind even before you're whisked to your sumptuous suite. Each of the 48 rooms are unique. My favorite is John Steed's Den; *The Avengers*-inspired room with faux parquet carpeting that feels like sheared mink, rich navy blue taffeta curtains and a pair of bowler hats that conceal lights suspended over the bed.

The Saint James doubles as a private club and its old Etonian mahogany paneled library and bar, gourmet dining room (order from the wondrous Truffle Menu) and fitness center is only open to members and hotel guests.

CNN's savvy Felicia Taylor calls it "the best hotel in Paris" and I'm inclined to agree. The hotel, whose sister club is in London, sits on what was the city's original hot air balloon field which explains why two enormous balloon shaped pavilions have landed amidst the lush foliage in this achingly beautiful private garden in the city of light. The Saint James is both romantic and memorable.

The most inspired food in Paris is at Le Cinq, the two-Michelin-starred restaurant in the George V. Chef des Cuisines Eric Briffard does things with white truffles that make you cry with joy; try them shaved onto pasta or layered over a savory broth. You'll never forget the fragrance when the charming wait staff (ask for Julian) lifts off the silver domes of the gold leaf lined bowls. The tantalizing *amuses-bouches* keep arriving and the main courses of veal, rack of lamb and scallops melt on the palate. Ask the sommelier, Thierry Hamon, to pair everything with wines from Le Cinq's distinguished wine cellar Bon Appétit!

CeCe Black and Jean Shafiroff co-chaired the French Heritage Society Ball at the Metropolitan Club. François Delattre, the French Ambassador greeted Sandra McConnell, Chris Obetz, Susan and Jon Nagel, Michele Gerber Klein, Christine and Stephen Schwarzman (www.frenchheritagesociety.org).

Cornelia Guest launched her line of cruelty free bags at Bloomingdale's. Snapping up the chic and affordable collection made of pleather were Mark Badgley and James Mischka, Julie Hayek, Sabina and Lorraine Belkin, Karen Klopp, Cassandra Seidenfeld, Rachel Ehrenfeld, Ashley Turen and Leesa Rowland—whose new horror film is *Slaughter Daughter* (corneliaguest.com).

Suzanne and Woody Johnson and Gillian and Sylvester Minitier were among the co-chairs of the Central Park Conservancy dinner dance. On the dance floor were Alexandra Lebenthal, Coco Kopelman and Janna Bullock. The night raked in \$1.1 million. Who else would tell you these things? ♦



Cornelia Guest, Larry Wohl and Leesa Rowland at Cornelia Guest's bag show



Marcel Goodman at Cornelia Guest's bag show



Gillian and Sylvester Minitier at Autumn in the Park



Jessica White and Arik Kisin at the launch of the supercar Zenzo at the Gansevoort



Jean Shafiroff, Margo Langenberg and CeCe Black at the French Heritage Society Gala.