

Popularity With A Purpose

A while ago, Suzanne Rogers decided to take her late father-in-law's advice and make the philanthropic most of her photo opportunities

Presented by



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"I'm not the kind of girl who goes to the opening of an envelope," elucidates Suzanne Rogers.

She is, though, it occurs to me, the kind of "girl" who might get people to come watch her wield a letter-opener. The calendar says 2009, after all, and I'm in the presence of a social queen-in-the-making. Every age in any great metropolis has a vacancy for one of those, and Suzanne looks like she might enjoy the position.

She looks like money. She likes to raise it, too. Her hair is drama. Brigitte Bardot may be jealous. Majestically coiffed, as if she has a lady-in-waiting or two, she comes to me as a non-drab vision in Chanel white.

Lately, I've been seeing a lot more of the Hungarian-extracted missus of Rogers scion Ed. And, by all accounts, we'll be seeing even more. She's a "get" at some of the better parties in town, whether it's lunch with Michael Kors or cocktails with Bill Clinton. "My kids are older now," she says of the three she has at home. Indeed, the more she says and the more she spiels, the more it seems clear to me: This is one socialite who is not to be underestimated.

Speaking of Clinton, plans are afoot for a 100-person fundraiser chez Rogers, with the former U. S. president in attendance during the filmfest. It'll benefit One X One, a go-getter charity that counts her as one of its founders. Also up her designer sleeve? A fashion bonanza, come 2010, that will feature one of the biggest names in the biz, and that aims to be the sort of thing never staged in this town. That affair, she says, will be for HealthyKids International, a new initiative of the SickKids Foundation.

And then there's the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario's gala (she was the honorary chair this year!) or Scrubs in the City (she's an organizer!) or the Mistletoe Ball and Silent Auction for SickKids (ditto!).

Why this social exertion? It's a natural question. The thirtysomething Suzanne -who's a BlackBerry kind of girl, and hasn't taken up with the iPhone (too hard with her nails, she laughs) -- tells me it was her father-in-law, the dearly departed Ted, who inspired her. He once told her, "You're going to be photographed anyways" because of your name, so why not do something with that privilege?

Did she ever think she'd be in this position when she accompanied the son of one of Canada's top

families to the prom all those years ago? (Yup, she's been with Ed for that long!) No, probably not. Curiously, "what did you wear to the prom?" I ask the gal who can now be in the front row of the show of any big designer she likes in Paris, Milan or New York.

"Oh, just a dress," Suzanne smiles. "It wasn't Oscar or Karl."

SCENE! HEARD! - Rob Lowe, in town these days, got his carb intake at Cafe Diplomatico the other day. The actorly Dorian Gray, who's currently fending off new-old dirty laundry c/o of ex-girlfriend Melissa Gilbert, has also been seen at Prince Arthur's Opus. - The acclaimed British spinner of adult fairy tales such as Stardust, Neil Gaiman told a Luminato crowd gathered Monday on Front Street that, though he's a mad Twitterer, he actually writes his stories "longhand, in a leather-bound notebook ..." - 60 Minutes ingenue Morley Safer, here getting his just desserts at Tuesday's Canadian Journalism Foundation gala, wandered over the next morning to the Art Gallery of Ontario, on Dundas. A personal tour was had.

THIS! THAT! - Hot pants-possessing pop sensation Lady Gaga, cited recently for "indecent exposure" by Chicago cops -- "It's fashion!" she rebutted -- is booked here for a party happening at Ultra. It's during MMVAs weekend. - Canada's Bachelorette, Jillian Harris, mentioned to eTalk that singer-songwriter-Lothario John Mayer isn't her kind of guy, but someone like Michael Buble? Yum. - Surfer-ish Aussie chef Curtis Stone -- the cook behind TLC's Take Home Chef -- is stopping by Dish Cooking Studio, on Dupont, for an invite-only dinner next week. The People's "sexiest" list-maker promises that it will be "intimate" as well as "interactive."

SHINAN'S BOLDFACE INDEX

Our man was in Venice this week, for the 53rd Biennale. Herewith, all the boldface you can squeeze into a gondola - At a party unravelled by gazillionaire Francois Pinault for his museum of the chic new wave there was Charlotte Casiraghi. Meanwhile, at a yacht party to celebrate Bruce Nauman were French Vogue editor Carine Roitfeld, and her Italian counterpart, Franca Sozzani. - Seen popping in and out of boats, over bridges and down canals on the first few days? Naomi Campbell, Yoko Ono, Fiat heir Lapo Elkan and Marc Jacobs. - Miuccia Prada, pictured, didn't let it rain on her parade--or party. When the skies cleared, she was joined by the likes of Rem Koolhaas, Philippe Starck, Carine

Roitfeld, Roman Abramovich, Patrick Demarchelier and Bianca Jagger. - As the waters got higher at the end of the week, Shinan

flocked to The Bauer, running into gallerist Jay Jopling, Dazed and Confused founder Jefferson Hack, designer Giambattista Valli, fashion darling Margherita Missoni and head-scarfed literary luvvie Zadie Smith.

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