

Stars draw out the big bucks for oceans

There were no stars in the sky. A thick marine layer hugged the coast, blanketing the Villa Di Sogni, the spectacular coastal estate of **Karen and Bruce Cahill**. While there were no stars in the heavens, there was a multitude of stars on land. Hollywood stars, that is.

It was the second annual SeaChange summer party benefiting Oceana, one of the world's preeminent ocean conservation organizations with global headquarters in Washington D.C. and offices around the world.



SHIRLEY AND PAL: Penny Marshall ("Laverne and Shirley" co-star) and Mark Porterfield turn out in support of ocean conservation.

and founder of INC Pharmaceuticals, were among the high-profile supporters of Oceana. Also front and center for the event was the dedicated **Julie Hill**, who served as honorary co-chairwoman of the evening.

The party began at dusk as the crowd sampled hors d'oeuvres and selected beverages from bars constructed of massive carved ice blocks. Silent auction items were lined up parallel to fountains on the Cahill property.

The Oceana committee worked tirelessly soliciting donations from merchants, contributing to the financial success of the event. Some of those involved included **Nancy Cristiano, Diana Martin, Tricia Berns, Michael Hall and Ariela Shani**, both of Neiman Marcus, **Stacey Nicholas, Teddie Ray, Joan Irvine Smith, Paula and David Wilhelm, Twyla and Chuck Martin, and Jennifer and Anton Segerstrom**. Major donations came from **Lugano Lear**, and Newport's own **Milena and Milan Panic**, former prime minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia



STAR POWER: Orange County philanthropist Eve Kornyei with honored guest Morgan Freeman at the summer event of 2009 on the California Riviera.

Boyd, wearing an elegant aquamarine silk dinner sheath, adorned with spectacular world-class pearl and diamond jewelry, Toyota, international designer **Zac Posen**, **Neiman Marcus**, **Pelican Hill Resort**, **Christian Dior**, **Harry Winston**, **David Yurman**, **Fashion Island**, **South Coast Plaza** and an unbelievably long list of donors offered fabulous items that went up for bid in both the live and silent auction.

The party was unquestionably glamorous and first-class, but the real story is about Oceana. This is perhaps one of the most important causes that citizens of the Orange Coast should endeavor to find out more about and get involved with its programs. Our lives are totally intertwined with the ocean environment, and whether we realize it or not, the health of our community, and in fact the health of each and every one of us, literally depends on the health of the ocean. **Jim Simon**, executive vice president of Oceana and an attorney based in Washington D.C., flew out for the event to address the large crowd prior to dinner service. Enormous video screens were erected on either side of the dais where Simon stood. A compelling video explained the Oceana purpose, void of political point of view,

followed by the Simon address. With passion and without emotional pull, Simon explained to the crowd what is happening worldwide, creating havoc in the ocean environment.

"How many of you are aware of the fact that the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Newport and Laguna Beach were once one of the most important sardine habitats in the world?" Simon asked. "Most of the sardines feeding people worldwide came from this region. By the mid-1950s, excessive fishing without any control for replenishing the sardine population totally exhausted the sardine catch, and it was no more."

Simon went on to explain that the clear and present danger of over-fishing worldwide will impact the entire human population, a large percentage of which depends on food from the sea for nourishment on a daily basis. Oceana has been working closely with governments from around the world to help make this vital issue a reality. Another part of their purpose is to protect ancient coral reefs, which are essential habitats to important sea life, being destroyed by careless fishing tactics that could be avoided without harming the economic bottom line of the fishing industry.



FRONT AND CENTER: SeaChange Co-Chairwoman Valarie Whiting with honored guest Glenn Close and Co-Chairman Ted Danson at the second annual summer fundraising.



DRIVEN: Oceana board Chairman Keith Addis with Tricia and Michael Berns.

The enormous audience was rapt listening to Simon's address. In a huge crowd, it is highly unusual to have that kind of silence. While the crowd had come to mingle with the stars and dine in the glamorous Cahill setting, a large majority of the donors paying \$2,000 a ticket and more came because they are truly concerned about how we humans are abusing our oceans.

Dinner service began with summer melon, fresh figs and roasted grapes in a salad that was topped with white truffle honey. Platters of seeded flat bread with cumin cheddar cheese were passed at long rectangular tables seating 14 guests. Honors were bestowed upon Freeman and Close, and speeches were brief and eloquent as an entrée of beef tenderloin in a Cabernet sauce was served to the crowd. Perhaps most passionate of all

was Danson, who made his presence known throughout the evening both at the microphone and wandering through the crowd and speaking one-on-one to many of the guests.

As dessert was served, featuring a Zaya reserve rum almond cake, guests including **Bette and Wylie Aitken, Deborah and Larry Bridges, Maralou and Jerry Harrington, Sandi and Ron Simon, Mindy and Glenn Stearns, Adrienne Brennan, Harriett and Sandy Sandhu, Debra Gunn Downing, Don Crevier and Laurie Krause, Eve Kornyei, Mona Nesseth, Sally Crockett, and Herbert Bedolfe III** shared personal thoughts on the importance of ocean conservation both in California and in other vital areas worldwide.

THE CROWD runs Thursdays and Saturdays.



B.W. Cook
The Crowd

An enormous crowd turned out to honor the celebrity guests fronting the party, **Glenn Close and Morgan Freeman**, both recognized for their tremendous support of the Oceana cause. By the end of the summer evening, a remarkable \$900,000 was raised from star and star-watcher alike. The funds will be used to support political action aimed at saving the world's ocean environment.

Paparazzi en masse clicked away as guests arrived at the Cahill mansion. Mingling with the local crowd were the likes of **Harrison Ford, Jeff Goldblum, Penny Marshall and Ted Danson**, who actually co-chaired the party with the dedicated **Valarie Whiting**.

The list of celebrity support is impressive. **Robert Redford, Cheryl and Ron Howard, Sting and Trudie Styler, Tom Cruise, Dustin Hoffman, Sam Waterson, Keely and Pierce Brosnan, Mary Steenburgen, Paul Hawken, Keith Addis and Keri Selig, Jake Gyllenhaal, Lyn and Norman Lear**, and Newport's own **Milena and Milan Panic**, former prime minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia