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# Soiree takes on a worldly flavor

By SHELBY HODGE Copyright 2009 Houston Chronicle

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Dave Rossman

Pretti and Umesh Verma.

Hotel ZaZa rocked to an international beat Saturday night when the Greater Houston Partnership took over the hotel's main floor and the second-floor pool area for its annual World Trade Soiree.

Close to 600 notables, beginning with honorary gala chair and Houston Rockets president **Tad Brown** and event chair **Karen Love** of PFK Architects, poured in for the largest soiree by the partnership to date. Special guests included **Jing Yao Wang** of China, Miss Congeniality at the 2009 Miss Universe pageant, and representatives of 30 consulates.

Performing arts groups representing cultures from around the world included Ballet Folklorico Azteca de Houston, the Brazilian Arts Foundation, Uzori Russian Folk Dance Ensemble and Kuumba House. At the pool, casino games entertained the international coterie of guests.

Greater Houston Partnership chair **Dan Bellow**, partnership president and CEO **Jeff Moseley** and partnership COO **Tracye McDaniel** were home team leaders making the scene. Among the consular corps on hand were Australia's honorary consul **Nana Booker**, Japanese Consul General **Tsutomu Osawa**, British Consul General **Paul Lynch** and Italian Consul General **Cristiano Maggipinto**.

## Swell salute

**Ed Smith**, the toast of Houston retailing for 37 years as special events and PR guru with first Foley's and then Macy's, was the center of attention last week at the Plaza Downtown where more than 100 friends gathered to celebrate his remarkable career. The *Ed Sullivan Show*-themed evening included Sonny and Cher impersonators singing *We Got You Ed* and Outsmart magazine exec **Tom Fricke** tap dancing as a Foley's shopping bag.

The crowd included **Jay Jones**, **Terry Wayne Jones**, **Jackie Martin**, **Saundria Chase Gray** and **Jerome Gray**, **Shari Koziol**, **Lisa Benitez**, **Elsie** and **Les Smith**, **Susan Bischoff** and **Jim Barlow**, **Joe Nelson**, **Cherri Carbonara** and **Sara Selber**.

## Moving on

That would be Consul General of the People's Republic of China **Qiao Hong**, who is leaving Houston to join her husband in Helsinki, Finland, where he will serve as the new Chinese ambassador.

Sending her off in style with a farewell dinner at Hotel Granduca were **Lily** and **Charles Foster**, **Y. Ping Sun** and **David Leebron**, **Maria** and **Neil Bush**, **Joella** and **Stewart Morris Sr.**, **Lisa** and **Jerry Simmons** and **Lei** and **Shawn Guo**.

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## Sight 'ems

Designer **Trina Turk**, in town for a trunk show at Tootsies, making a beeline for Cheeky Vintage, the by-appointment vintage women's clothing shop on Richmond. She picked up several pieces dating from the '40s and '50s, explaining that vintage clothing provides inspiration for her retro designs. Turk called owners **Denise Hazen** and **Tina Davis** the next day and had them send her a vintage **Victor Costa** tea-length black taffeta gown that had caught her fancy. ...

Austrian crystal czar **Georg Riedel** of Riedel wine glass fame entertaining 70 wine devotees with a Sommelier Tasting Experience at SoVino. Among those sampling wine from the prized Sommeliers stemware were **Laura** and **Carlos Valencia**, **Heather Pray**, **Valerie Palmquist**, **Audrey Wray Cochran** and **Brandon Cochran** and hosts SoVino owners **Elizabeth Abraham** and **Manfred Jachmich**....

**Anita Smith**, **Eileen Lawal** and **Docia Rudley**, wife of Texas Southern University prez **John Rudley**, and others head-huddling at Julia's Bistro, where they discussed plans for the Oct. 1 "TSU Honors" evening at Wortham Theater Center. Smith and Lawal chair the event honoring famed TSU debate coach and new Honors College dean **Thomas F. Freeman** and Freeman's former student and Grammy Award-winner **Yolanda Adams**. ...

**Joe McDermott** and **Ray Childress** lunching at Grotto 610.

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