

## The Crowd: SPIN gala set for Hilton in H.B.

August 19, 2011 | By B.W. Cook



STAR CHEF: Chef Alessandro Pirozzi will help to create... (Daily Pilot)

**Jean Wegener**, the closest thing in Costa Mesa to the "unsinkable" **Molly Brown**, announced this week that her beloved Serving People In Need, otherwise known as SPIN, has firmed up Nov. 5 at the Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort, Huntington Beach, for its annual gala gourmet food and wine event.

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Hotel Executive Chef **Jeff Littlefield**, who has been a long-standing friend of SPIN, will join local star chef **Alessandro Pirozzi**, owner of the popular Cucina Alessá in creating a spectacular Italian-themed evening. Pirozzi was recently named Chef of the Year on the Orange Coast. He supervises three Italian bistros: one in Newport Beach, Huntington Beach and Laguna Beach.

Funds raised will benefit SPIN's programs that assist in homeless housing, substance-abuse recovery, meals, job training and more. Contact Kim Frazier at SPIN for more information at (714) 751-1101 ext. 19 or write [KimF@spinoc.org](mailto:KimF@spinoc.org).

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The O.C. Barons' League presented the 2011 USO Tour of Hope on Aug. 13 at Santa Ana Country Club. The annual gathering is all about assisting the American Cancer Society. Over the years, the group has helped raise a remarkable \$5 million in the fight against cancer. Funds go to research,

education, advocacy and vital patient services.

This season the organizers chose a World War II vintage theme and asked the crowd to come in 1940s patriotic attire. The Navy, Army and Marines turned out in full regalia — as did the WACS and WAVES. Coordinating all the fun were Chairwomen **Carol Wilken**, president of the O.C. Barons, and **Kay Burra**, vice president.

Guests arrived for a VIP reception to the sublime sounds of an Andrew Sisters cover band. **Ed Arnold**, TV anchor at PBS SoCal, handled the master of ceremonies duties and the auction. Donations came from Pelican Hill Resort, Sony, Montage Laguna Beach, Montgomery Jewelers and individual donors **Jeanie and Frank Gibson**, **Carol and Kent Wilken**, **Marian Mapes**, **Lillian Lee**, **Jared Fox** and **Mark Moore** who arranged for a 1941 Army Air Force open cockpit biplane trip out of Corona Airport.

A wonderful dinner — featuring a 1940s-inspired American buffet with prime rib and seafood thermidor entrées, accompanied by a massive selection of "classic" dishes — delighted the crowd, who included **Nancy and Bob Johnston**, **Bobbitt and Bill Williams**, **Doug and Sandi Jackson**, **Jodi and Vince Ferragamo**, **Debbie and Gary Douglas**, and **Karla and Ken Caley**.

Also supporting the Barons were **Dick and Sandy Waitneight**, **Nella Webster and Kevin O'Grady**, **Judy and Ray Brandt**, **Robert and Esther Miller**, and **Julie and Bill Moore**.

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Earlier this summer season, one of Newport's most philanthropic couples, **Marta and Raj Bhathal**, opened their swank, French-inspired Big Canyon estate on behalf of Girls Inc. The late afternoon summer soiree on the Bhathal terrace and garden set above the canyons of the expansive Big Canyon golf course was a prelude to a Girls Inc. upcoming fall event being billed as "Wonderland;" it's set for Oct. 28 at Newport's Island Hotel.

Hostess Marta joined **Ariela Shani**, general manager of the Neiman Marcus at Fashion Island, and her super-fashionable sidekick, **Michaele Hall**, public relations manager at the retail giant, in creating a "wonderland garden party." The party featured the colorful, whimsical furniture and home accessories designed by **Rebecca Proctor**, creative director of MacKenzie-Childs.

Major Girls Inc. donors include **Harriet and Sandy Sandhu** of the Newport Coast, **Marion Knott** and the Bhathals. By the end of the afternoon, more than \$115,000 in underwriting for the fall event had been raised.

Guests nibbled hors d'oeuvres by Antonello Ristorante and toasted with chilled La Crema chardonnay from Sonoma County. Spotted in the upbeat crowd were **Lucy Santana-Ornelas** of Girls Inc. O.C.

Some 5,000 young women in Orange County are assisted by this organization, which inspires girls to be "strong, smart and bold." For more information, call Elizabeth McKibbin at (949) 999-2921.

**THE CROWD** runs Thursdays and Saturdays. B.W. Cook is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.