



Clockwise from top left: Jeremie Scott and Renee Muller at the Plan B opening; Summer Lea Kress at the Marchmain benefit; Rachel Sehl (new resident DJ at OPUS Bar) and Noel Steen at OPUS; Tammy Preast and Isabel Given at Marchmain; Elmira Jones at OPUS; TopTable restaurants owner Jack Evrensel and 24hrs' Michael Schratte at Blue Water; Miriam Melanson and Kirsten Pederson from Flaming Angels at Taboo.

TABOO GETS SEXY, PLAN B OPENS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RAJ TANEJA

TABOO – THE NAUGHTY BUT NICE SEX SHOW

Vancouver's Convention and Exhibition Centre at Canada Place took the term exhibition to a whole new level on Jan. 10, with the Taboo Naughty But Nice Sex Show. Lasting all weekend — similar to what some of the supplements on sale at the show claimed — the upscale consumer trade show had hundreds if not thousands of toys and tools along with their respective dates (and friends) on display. Dedicated to romance and self-improvement and possibly the opportunity for self-romance as well, the main attractions of the event included fashion shows, main stage presentations, product demonstrations, seminars, celebrity visits, autograph sessions, educational workshops and a dungeon presented by *leash* magazine. Taboo, which also tours through Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer and Regina, returns for the Abbotsford Sex Show on March 28.

BLUE WATER CAFÉ WINE ROOM LAUNCH

Eating steak is one thing — devouring a whole steakhouse is another. In the fall of 2000, Blue Water Café + Raw Bar took Yaletown up a notch by invading the space, formerly known as the Century Grill, on the corner of Hamilton and Helmcken. Seven years later, the café absorbed the adjacent Vancouver Cigar Company, at 1093 Hamilton. The result: a large wine room that doubles as an enhanced private dining area with its own entrance. Adorned with thousands of bottles of wine, the room is also said to house Canada's largest champagne collection. On Jan. 15, the owner of Top Table Restaurant Group (which also owns Cin Cin on Robson, Araxi in Whistler and West on South Granville), **Jack Evrensel**, along with executive chef **Frank Pabst** and raw bar chef **Yoshi Tabo**, invited members of the media and Vancouver's endless supply of foodies to check out the new digs. The food, accompanied by champagne, matched the surroundings perfectly. Simply exquisite.

OCULUS AT HAMILTON STREET GRILL

Chef **Neil Wyles**, famous for hosting monthly wine pairings and tastings at Hamilton Street Grill, outdid himself for his January

tasting. It was so popular he needed to hold two separate sold-out events on Jan. 14 and 15. The secret? Mission Hill's Bordeaux-inspired big gun, Oculus, and a departure from the standard three-wine format to five wines, paired with Wyles's legendary appies. **Joan Harvie**, Wyles's better half and partner, and über-publicist **Cate Simpson** were spotted among the guests enjoying what is quite possibly one of B.C.'s best wines. On a similar note, the Mission Hill Family Estate recently received accolades from *Travel + Leisure* magazine, which named their Terrace Restaurant in the Okanagan Valley as one of the top five winery restaurants in the world.

PLAN B OPENING PARTY

Glenn Cormier's Plan B, the restaurant that magically materialized next to Brix in the former space of the ever-popular Soho billiards, held a launch party on Jan. 26. The 'B' in Plan B, which should stand for something like 'blessing' or perhaps 'bloody horseshoes,' was coincidentally discovered by Cormier only after he had tossed in the towel on negotiating a lease on another space. The opening event, outside of attracting the neighbourhood's usual suspects, brought funder and silent partner **Julius Simon**, who was originally involved with Azure in the Plaza of Nations then, after being dealt the demolition clause, purchased the former Sonar, now Fabric, in Gastown. The restaurant's menu, designed by executive chef **Ryan Zuvich**, promises to bring locals in to enjoy tapas-style share plates and affordable wines in a style that was originally pioneered in the Bin restaurants, 941 and 942 respectively.

VANCOUVER LOOKOUT OPEN HOUSE

Vancouver Lookout — on the lower deck of what held the crown as B.C.'s tallest building, measuring a total of 177 metres high, even taller than the 150-metre One Wall Centre, until the whopping 201 metre Shangri-La on Alberni Street was built — was originally inaugurated in 1977 by **Neil Armstrong**, the first man to ever walk on the moon. On Jan. 24, **Steve Bickerdike**, frontman for the Lookout, relaunched the venue after renova-

tions to accommodate a new gallery space that will host a new exhibit each month. The opening event didn't disappoint. Ask a Woman Enterprises' **Tammy Preast** was spotted in the crowd enjoying the canapés provided by Glowbal Catering, while the Vancouver Green Film Festival's **Lindsay Nahmiache** mingled with friends and enjoyed the majestic views, swordfighting by Academie Duello and live jazz.

GOGH'S RELEASE YOUR INNER ARTIST EVENT

On Jan. 24, OPUS Hotel invited VIPs to release their inner artist by sampling Vincent Van Gogh's Espresso-flavoured vodka. At the event, one could have sworn Republic's resident DJ, the bubbly and energetic **Kate Matthews** — who was entrusted with providing the music to shape the evening's experience — was equally inspired by the espresso in the vodka shots. But as we learned later, Van Gogh's is all about the flavour and is devoid of any trace of caffeine. On scene and indulging: **Rachel Sehl**, the OPUS Bar's new resident DJ **Noel Steen**, the OPUS Bar's former resident DJ, publicist and gala event producer **Julia Watt**, and filmmaker **James Upton**. At the event, we learned that the OPUS Hotel in Montreal will launch a 6000-sq.-ft. club before summer, and that construction for the OPUS Hotel's rooftop patio in Yaletown starts soon.

MARCHMAIN HOUSE BENEFIT FOR CANUCK PLACE

Marchmain House, the philanthropic organization launched by **Reza Mohammed** of Aries Resource Corp. and publicist **Malinda Allansan** (née Poe), created a Monte Carlo-style casino atop the grand staircase on the Robson Street side of the Vancouver Art Gallery on Jan. 25, for a fundraiser benefiting Canuck Place Children's Hospice. The evening, emceed by media maven **Catherine Barr**, featured a fashion show by JC Studio, a diamond show by Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery, live and silent auctions and high-stakes casino play, all of which raised more than \$10,000 for the charity.