

A GLAZA gala for the jet set

Zoo's Beastly Ball fundraiser lavishes supporters with animal-inspired treats.



Canele, represented by Chef Corina Weibel (left) and Manager Jane Choi (right), shown with media preview MC Carolyn Hennessy, actress/animal rescue advocate/GLAZA supporter ("True Blood," "Cougar Town," "General Hospital") (center), is among some of L.A.'s most popular restaurants generously donating their cuisine for dinner at the Ball, which honors animal advocate Heather Mycoskie and Tom Mankiewicz Leadership Award recipient Ken Ziffren. (Photo by George Stoneman / June 5, 2014)

Project Runway (tv program) By Lisa Dupuy

June 13, 2014 1:00 p.m.

If there were a Yelp site for fundraisers, the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Assn.'s Beastly Ball would probably rank five stars. The event, a casual nighttime affair taking place in different locations around the Griffith Park zoo, is known in social circles as one of the most enjoyable ways to raise money for a good cause. This year's 44th Annual Beastly Ball on Saturday at 6 p.m. promises more of the same safari-tinged adventure. And, as always, there will be gourmet food stops throughout the zoo's botanical gardens hosted by top Los Angeles area restaurants — a veritable food lover's paradise.

Donating time, expertise and ingredients to the million-dollar fundraiser will be a number of restaurateurs, some of them from our own neck of the woods. A media event was held last week at which a dozen culinary friends of GLAZA offered their wares for preview. Like an episode of "[Project Runway](#)," participants were challenged to create a dish inspired by an animal at the L.A. Zoo. The results were as delicious as they were amusing.

Canelé, the outstanding farm-to-table cafe in Atwater Village, served a lively Dande-Lion Salad in honor of the zoo's new feline power couple. Gorgeous, tender green leaves, fresh Parmesan, homemade croutons and celery shavings were freshly tossed in a lemon vinaigrette at the table. I started and finished my food tour with this salad.

Jersey Mike's Subs in La Cañada (and elsewhere) is a longtime supporter of the zoo's conservation and education efforts. This year Jersey Mike's presented Hammy the Hippo, a large loaf of bread baked in the shape of one of the zoo's resident lake loungers. If you attend the Beastly Ball, a slice of Jersey Mike's sub would be a welcome pick-me-up after hoofing it around the hilly grounds.

All the fresh air would also allow you to indulge, guilt-free, in the sweet treats offered by Yummy Cupcakes of Burbank. At the preview, a line of bright pink, yellow, and chocolate black Cupcake Truffles snaked along the table in homage to the Los Angeles Zoo's beautiful coral snake. The new Rainforest of the Americas exhibit, which will be on display at the Ball, was the inspiration for their Rainforest Cupcake Parfaits.

Not all restaurants will serve the same items at the Beastly Ball as they did at the preview, but if you're lucky you'll get to try Celestino Ristorante's Raviolini alla Quattro Stagione con Mascarpone e Salvia. Inspired by the vibrant facial colors of the zoo's mandrill, this plate of multihued homemade raviolini stuffed with vegetables has an exquisite creamy sage sauce. If you're really lucky, you'll score a piece of Golden Lion Tamarin Cake from San Marino's Garnish Cafe. A truly perfect chocolate cake, not too sweet, not too flimsy, it's topped with orange segments dipped in dark chocolate.

Veteran restaurants and longtime zoo supporters El Coyote and Taix French Restaurant are still serving exquisite food after all these years (83 and 87, respectively). El Coyote's Green Corn Tamales, made in honor of the emerald tree boa, were uncommonly moist and flavorful. Taix chose to salute the Mexican slider turtle with a refreshing watermelon and tomato confit gazpacho.

The Beastly Ball will also play host to popular restaurants El Cholo, Maison Akira, Sam's by the Beach, the Federal Bar and Hard Rock Cafe, among others.

So come for the food but stay for the animals, the entertainment, the silent auctions, the stroll under the stars or simply to support GLAZA's efforts in protecting wildlife. Tickets to the 44th Annual Beastly Ball are \$1,000 and tend to sell out.

What: Various restaurants at GLAZA's Beastly Ball

Where: The Los Angeles Zoo, 5333 Zoo Drive

When: Saturday, June 14, 6 p.m.

Price: \$1,000

Contact: (323) 644-4753; <http://www.lazoo.org>

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<http://www.glendalenewspress.com/entertainment/tn-gnp-et-0614-dining-20140613,0,2801847.story>