



Desirée Rogers Welcomes the Public Hotel and the Pump Room to Chicago

Vogue

September 22, 2011

Last night, in the heart of Chicago's downtown Gold Coast, neighborhood resident and Chicago doyenne **Desirée Rogers** threw a double welcome fete for **Jean-Georges Vongerichten's** reinvention of the iconic Pump Room restaurant and boutique hotelier **Ian Schrager's** newest venture, the Public Hotel.

"We wanted to make the brand accessible; it's for everyone. Instead of being elitist, it's inclusive. Which is a complete reversal for me!" joked Schrager of his new hotspot.

Flutes of Moët & Chandon were served in the private dining room of the restaurant, which was once a watering hole for Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland. Now a narrow gallery with citrine-yellow velvet banquettes, the private space overlooks the rest of the dining room and provides an eye-level view of "the constellation" (a web of resin globes suspended from metal rods at varying lengths, creating a planetary lighting system). In their uniforms of black henley shirts and matching Chuck Taylors, waitstaff kept the tone casual yet cool.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel made a stealth entrance to the private dining area and, before greeting Rogers, genially chatted with guests. Among those in attendance were **Nora Daley Conroy**, local arts patron and daughter of longtime mayor **Richard Daley**; **Steve Stoute**, music entrepreneur and author of the acclaimed *The Tanning of America: How Hip Hop Created a Culture that Rewrote the Rules of the New Economy*; Chicago businessmen **Neal Zucker** and **Marko Iglandza**, who, by the way, was wearing a fierce pair of plaid trousers; actor **Troy Garity** (in town filming *The Playboy Club*); Hudson Group president **Joe DiDomizio**; and architect **Marvin Herman** and his wife, **Karen**, Rogers's longtime neighbors.

The response was unanimous. Despite the fact that the hotel and restaurant had only been open for a little over a week, almost everyone in the group had dined there at least once (a surprising number seemed to already be on a first-name basis with the maître d').

Following the cocktail reception, the group traveled en masse to an intimate dinner party at Rogers's apartment, just across the street from the hotel. There, 20 guests filled two tables garnished with white orchids and sampled a Pump Room-created five-course menu of egg caviar toast, caramelized beef tenderloin, and crème fraîche cheesecake.

Rogers was ever the elegant hostess in an embellished black silk Lanvin blouse, baby-pink silk Céline tuxedo pants, and glittering Tabitha Simmons heels that looked like chandeliers on her feet. "I think these are going to be my go-to party shoes," she said smiling, her pixie cut artfully mussed. The former White House Social Secretary began the meal by introducing all of the guests to one another and then thanking Schrager for bringing his trademark expertise to Chicago: "We all live in

this neighborhood, we're always in this neighborhood, so we are very grateful that you have now opened our favorite watering hole—until one of us gets thrown out; just kidding!”