

Closet Ball 91

A Lesson in Glamour

by Doug [redacted]

Over 200 people attended Caribbean HEAT's first annual Closet Ball and Community Service Awards celebration on Monday, October 21 at Club Vogue (formerly Souvenir) on Fernandez Juncos Avenue.

Although the show started a *typico* hour and a half late, hosts Antonio Pantojas and Kate Garrity kept things moving at a hilarious pace. Throughout the evening, entertainer Renny [redacted] performed as a hauntingly better-than-real-life Diana Ross, with hunky dancers adding to the fun.

The evening's main attraction was a contest to see who could make the most convincing transformation from a man into a woman.

Judges for the event were HEAT columnist Aixa [redacted] actress Alba Raquel Barros, Jessica [redacted] Dr. Talin Ramos, artist Abnel [redacted] activist Jorge [redacted] and former Miss Souvy and Gay Pride Parade Queen Christina [redacted]. The judges had the difficult task of scoring the contestants—both before and after their transformation—on face, hair and makeup, costume, poise and walk, and voice.



Hosts Antonio Pantojas and Kate Garrity interviewing the contestants.

Roberto [redacted] sponsored by the Village, led off the contestants' first promenade, wearing a stylish tuxedo and alluring five-o'clock shadow. José "Chi Chi" [redacted] sponsored by Bachelor, opted for a colorful shirt and pants outfit. The third contestant, Lime's John [redacted] strutted his stuff in a tuxedo shirt, purple tie and cummerbund and jeans. José [redacted] sponsored by designer Eddie Guerrero's fashion boutique Vittima Della Moda, looked fittingly chic in a dark purple jacket and coordinating slacks and tie.

As each contestant completed a

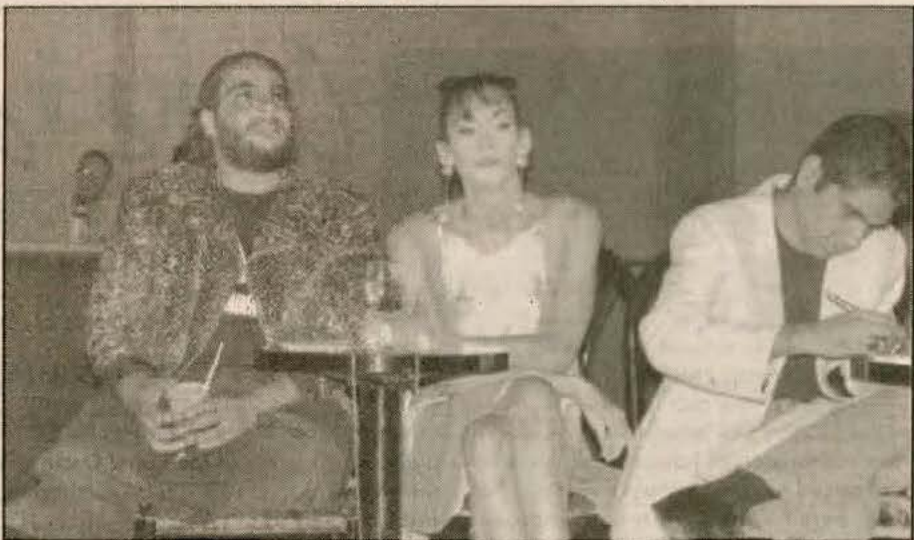
promenade down the runway to show off his/her wardrobe and poise, he/she was interviewed by Garrity and Pantojas.

While the contestants were making their transformations, HEAT publisher Martin [redacted] and editors Hannibal and Doug [redacted] presented the Caribbean HEAT Community Service Awards (see page 7), with top honorees receiving a plaque and a certificate from Café Del Mar at the Atlantic Beach Hotel.

As Garrity, Pantojas and [redacted] entertained the crowd, backstage became a flurry of excitement. The



A look that says, "I'm a winner!"



Judges performing their duties, l. to r.: Jorge [redacted] (admiring), Christina [redacted] (critiquing), Abnel [redacted] (calculating)



Closet Ball contestants / l to r: Tara Wells Trump, Luzbella, Johanna Morris, and Venus Simercia

contestants and their beauty consultants rapidly applied makeup and hair and donned what each hoped was *the* most womanly ensemble.

Full-length black evening gowns were the style of choice for the first three contestants.

Luzbella (néé Roberto [redacted]) wore a dramatic black cape, high neck, beaded black gown and teased black hairstyle (and a real beauty mark).

Tara Wells Trump (néé Chi Chi [redacted]), strolled out in a low-cut, high-slit black gown, making the most of her legs and cleavage, and sporting a blonde, Peggy Lee hairstyle.

Johanna Morris (néé John [redacted]) featured a black velvet gown with gold epaulets and a smart shoulder-length hairstyle. During the interview session, Johanna captured the crowd's hearts by naming Vieques as her dream destination—because the Navy's there.

Departing from the formal evening gown trend, contestant Venus Simercia (néé José [redacted]) stood out as a crowd favorite in a silver lamé and black minidress, elbow-length gloves and a shocking retro/space-age bouffant flip hairstyle.

Each of the contestants had her own cheering section, which made the anticipation all the more palpable as the scores were tallied.

In the end, Tara Wells Trump took top honors, along with \$100 and a dinner for two at Panaché Restaurant. Luzbella captured second place, Johanna scored third, and Venus, fourth, each receiving a bottle of champagne.

The final scores were only a few points apart, reflecting what a tough choice it was for the judges. But they all agreed that with such a sense of glamour, all the contestants were winners. ▽



Renny [redacted] thrills the audience



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