

David Patrick Columbia's

## NEW YORK SOCIAL DIARY

### Lunch with James Cameron; Dinner with the Astors



Looking into the Metropolitan Museum of Art's The Temple of Dendur. 10:45 PM. Photo: JH.

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*February 18, 2010. Mild winter's midweek in New York.* The skies to the north looked like snow and by late afternoon the weatherman was saying more was on the way. Nope. Most of it has missed Manhattan this year, as it has done for the past several years.

*The Hostess with the Mostest in New York* yesterday was **Peggy Siegal**. Down at Michael's she was beating the drum for **James Cameron**, the filmmaker whose latest is the largest grossing film in history, "Avatar." The film has nine Academy Award nominations and Peggy, the indefatigable, was giving a luncheon for him right in the

middle of the front room. One long table and four or five other ones. There must have been about forty guests but we were all packed in together – guests, non-guests, that it was hard to tell the difference.



Dr. Ruth with James Cameron.

Mr. Cameron was there at the round table in the bay along with **Les Moonves, Lyor Cohen, George Stevens Jr., Jean Doumanian, Jane Rosenthal, Jacqui Safra, John Esposito** and probably someone I've left out.

Mr. Cameron is tall, like this writer, and has a full head of hair that is almost white, like this writer (although he has more), and has a very pleasant persona (like this writer, no?). When I was there,

along came **Dr. Ruth** who wanted her picture taken with the director. So Jane Rosenthal was chosen to do it. Dr. Ruth had to get up on a chair to create the desired effect. It was done. As you can see. Thanks to Jane Rosenthal and her Blackberry.

After I got a picture of Mr. Cameron, Mr. Stevens and Ms. Rosenthal, I then moved on to another table and took a picture of **Ellyn Burstyn**. The photo came out fuzzy and I regret it because Ms. Burstyn not only has a beautiful face but a lovely nature behind it – at least that's what it looks like (remember, actors are also actors). She may have been bored stiff by the whole rigamarole of the moment but she'd never show it. So we're running it anyway.



The luncheon scene at Michael's.

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I then went to take a picture of **Parker Posey** with **Michael Hausman** and **Donald Rosenfeld**. Ms. Posey got up from her chair to shake my hand and congratulate me when she saw me, and to tell me how nice it was to meet me. It was a pleasure although momentarily puzzling since ... why me? what? Then I realized Ms. Posey had mistaken me from the other tall white-haired man in the (also) blue jacket, the Master Director up for 9 nominations. Ms. Posey was a pleasure for me to meet, however.

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James Cameron, George Stevens Jr., and Jane Rosenthal.



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Peggy Siegal lunches aside, Michael's was doing brisk luncheon business yesterday with many of the likely suspects (familiar faces?) such as **Matt Blank** with **Rob Tobey**, the **Imber-della Femina-Greenfield-Bergman-Kramer** lunchers minus Mr. Kramer; **Charlie Scheips** with this writer; **Herb Allen III**, **Anne Keating** with **Alexandra Tower**, **Bob Friedman**; **Joan Gelman** and **Susan Gallin**; **John Sykes**, **Paula Wagner**, **Wayne Kabak**, **Jim Abernathy**, **Gerry Byrne**; **Randy Jones** with **George Green**; **Dr. Ruth**, **Kathy Lacey**, **Maurie Perl**, **Suzi Halpin**, **Nick Verbitsky**; and scores more just like 'em.

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Felicia Taylor



Alfred Uhry and Dana Ivey



Ken Burns and Julie Taymor



Caroline Stevens and Joe Armstrong



Parker Posey, Michael Hausman and Donald Rosenfeld



Ellyn Burstyn



Rob Tobey and Matt Blank of Showtime



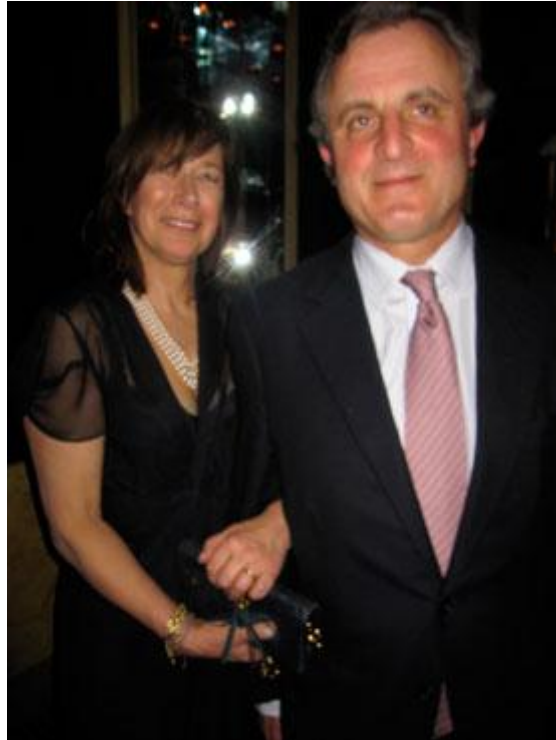
Liz Stevens and Richard Cohen

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*Then last night over at the Carlyle, Peggy gave a dinner for 60 in the restaurant for **Annabel and William Astor** a/k/a **Viscount and Vicountess Astor**. He is the 4th Viscount Astor. The first, also named **William Waldorf**, was the nephew of the Mrs. Astor back in the 1890s. He loathed his aunt **Lina** so much he tore down his brownstone mansion on the corner of 33rd and Fifth and put up the Waldorf Hotel so that Auntie Lina could carry on her esteemed social position living next door to a*

hotel. Very downmarket in those days.

William Waldorf then left town and moved to England where he outdid all the American Astors including Aunt Lina; and eventually became Viscount Astor. Now, a hundred fifteen or twenty years later, his great-great-grandson is the toast of the (New York) town feted by Peggy Siegal, a 21st century jet-age version of Mrs. Astor. Or something along those lines.



Annabel and William Astor

Peggy brought together a very eclectic and interesting (at least to the rest of the guests) guest list, from all walks of media, show business, society and occasional tomfoolery, a group that could only be assembled in New York, and only by a New York sensibility.

In listing I'll occasionally add something to give you an idea of the mix: Designer/retailer **Tory Burch** with **Lyor Cohen**, head of Warner Music Group; novelist **Ariadne** and Italian financial journalist **Mario Calvo-Platero**; hotelier **Andre Balazs**; media investor **Geoffrey Leeds**, Writer/social historian and senior member of the Warhol establishment, **Bob Colacello**; film producer **Jean Doumanian** and her businessman/partner/husband **Jaqui Safra**; international interior designer **Mica Ertegun**; industrialist **David and**

**Julia Koch**; **Cathy Graham**, wife of theatrical producer and professor **Stephen Graham** of the *Washington Post* family, **Sandy Lerner** who with her now ex-husband founded Cisco Systems and now resides on several thousand acres in Upperville, Virginia and on a property outside Bath, in England; social hostess and New York real estate heiress **Louise Grunwald**; private investor **Avie and Gigi Mortimer**, Jets owner, **Woody Johnson**; socialite **Marjorie Gubelmann**; **Susan and John Hess** of Hess Oil; **Lynn Wyatt**, that little ole Texas girl, fashion acolyte, international hostess; **Jay McInerney and Anne Hearst**; **Barbara Walters**, Sotheby's **Tobias Meyer** and his partner, art adviser **Mark Fletcher**; former television newswoman, now full time student **Perri Peltz**, film producer **Jane Rosenthal**, **Susan Gutfreund**; *New York Times* editor **Stefano Tonchi**; socialite **Allison Sarofim**; **Mort Zuckerman**; *Men's Health* editor **Dave Zincenko**; AMNH executive **Peter Lyden**; **Bob Pittman**, *Vanity Fair*'s **Vicky Ward** and her businessman husband, **Matt Doull**; **Dan Abrams**; fashion designer **Zac Posen**, **Euan Rellie and Lucy Sykes**, children's clothing designer; interior designer **Celerie Kemble** and her husband, hedge fund investor, **Boykin Curry**; **Anne Prevost**, an American living in London; **Lee Radziwill**; *International Herald Tribune*'s **Suzy**

**Menkes; Brad Comisar, and Katie Couric.**

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Peggy Siegal, Katie Couric, and Jane Rosenthal

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*The guests of honor have a lot of American friends.* Bill Astor, as he is known to his friends, holds an influential position in the House of Lords and is very active behind the scenes in British politics. **Annabel Astor** has a well known home furnishings design business in England called OKA Direct. Her daughter, **Samantha**, by her first (brief) marriage is the wife of British Tory party leader **David Cameron**, who many believe will be the next Prime Minister.

Mr. and Mrs. Astor are very un-stuffy in their graciousness, and quite friendly folk. Both seem to be people with many interests and very congenial company, far from the image that the Americans have of the family whose great fortune was made in New York real estate (buying low and never selling) in the 18th and 19th centuries. The American branch of the name died with **Vincent Astor** (also named **William V.**) who had no children and also discontinued the family financial tradition of primogeniture. Vincent's father's cousin Waldorf, who moved to England, flourished away from his homeland, and made a place for himself and his descendents in British publishing and politics where they remain influential in England today.

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Cathy Graham talking to Vicky Ward



Anne Prevost



Annabel Astor and Euan Rellie



Peter Lyden and Susan Gutfreund



Susan Hess talking to Anne Prevost with Jacqui Safra looking on



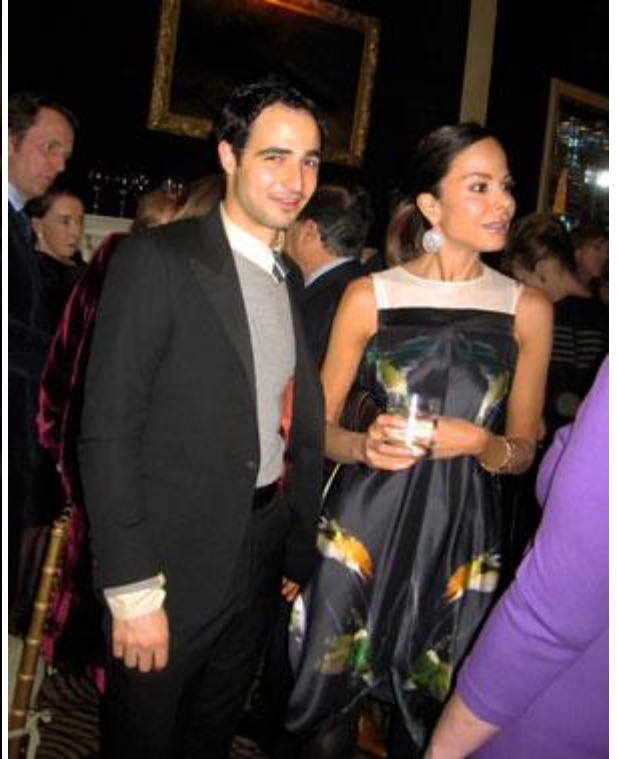
Anne Hearst and David Koch



Perri Peltz



Stefano Tonchi and Tobias Meyer



Zac Posen and Allison Sarofim



Louise Grunwald, Tory Burch, and Lyor Cohen



Sandy Lerner and Cathy Graham



Susan Gutfreund and Suzy Menkes



Vicky Ward and Brad Comisar



Susan Hess and Peggy Siegal