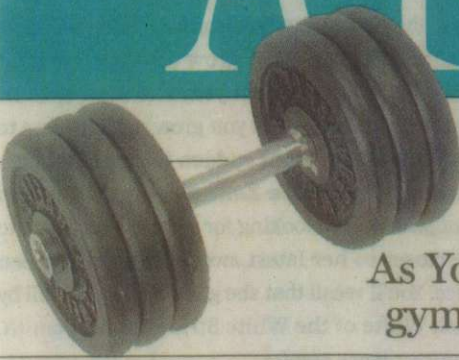




ALI

NATIONAL POST, TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2005



FIT FIGHT

As Yorkville Club opens, the city's gym wars heat up. *Govani, AL3*

UMA'S ULLA

Thurman on singing and dancing her way into Producers role. *AL6*

Sweating, but not the small stuff

The claws come out as local gyms seek to make the fabulous people fit



SHINAN GOVANI
Scene

The ritzy Yorkville Club inside Hazelton Lanes opened officially with a big dumbbell of a bash last Thursday, and the line for the pasta bar in the gym? It couldn't have been longer.

Proof that the Atkins craze is finally winding down? Oh, maybe. More likely that partygoers in this town, even the ones watching the scale, will sacrifice anything for some free grub. Well, it was delicious. But definitely odd. "It's like having your car spray-painted at the car wash," I told a friend as we both smacked our lips, stairmasters all around us, waiting impatiently in a line to pad our plates with carbs. "It's demand and supply," my very smart friend replied mysteriously.

The tony turn-out at the party — men in pin-dot ties, women with the latest Louis Vuitton shoulder furniture — oohed and aahed about the club. So clean, even Howard Hughes might approve. So spacious, even Kirstie Alley could get into it. And how 'bout those hotel-level concierge services it offers? The ones where, while you perfect your downward dog or, say, work up a Ganges River around your pits, its staff are ready and willing to run your ring-around-the-collars to the nearby Dove Cleaners, or madly fill your buggy at Whole Foods. Absolutely brill.

And, really, we didn't know what was more interesting: the sight of fabulous hairdresser Jie being mobbed like he was Bono in Dublin, or the native dude who'd been brought in to bless the place and chant for all these frosted Yorkville-ites. Maybe even more interesting was when the very well-ab'ed Yorkville Club owner Mark Kehr, a former finalist for Mr. America, told me that about 60% of his clients are women. "It's the opposite at most clubs," he added.

How fabulously fit! The party also prompted me and some others to have a laugh about the round-up of gyms that's included in the current *Toronto Life*. The various freaky fitness types at the

different clubs are quoted towards the end of the piece — and, boy, they sure do exercise their right to be competitive and even a little catty!

George Chaker of downtown-cool Diesel Fitness is in there saying, "Both our clients and Yorkville's have money, but ours are relaxed about it. They don't cry if something goes wrong." Meanwhile, Devon McGregor of St. Clair spot Balance, makes a point of saying, "Diesel's clients are the employees of the companies that our clients own."

Garth Sinclair, the membership director at the Adelaide Club in First Canadian Place, and Justin Penaloza, the sales and marketing director at Totum on King, also go a fun round together. Says Sinclair about Penaloza, "I trained Justin at Totum. He's a friend, but I think his club is kinda sterile, don't you?" Says Penaloza about Sinclair, "Garth says Adelaide gives their staff \$200 for clothes? That's funny. For us, that's one tie."

All's fair in love and warm-ups?

I SEE, I HEAR...

■ That the stock price for health czar George Smitherman, the most out-there of McGuinty Ministers, has skyrocketed — at least according to a charity auction held at the recent, colourful Midnight in Moscow ball in aide of Casey House. Lunch with Smitherman took in a total of \$1,600, compared to the approximately \$600 bid fetched last year for the same ministerial munch ...

■ That industrious porn star Ron Jeremy was at This is London nightclub two Saturdays back, where he party-hardied with such pals as local non-stop PR



Sandra Oh: who got the brains?



PETER REDMAN / NATIONAL POST

Yorkville Club owner (and former Mr. America finalist) Mark Kehr dishes out a fancy fitness experience. No word yet on clients who cry.

girl and press-release sender Danielle Iversen ...

■ That DJ Stretch Armstrong, who regularly plays at New York's celeb-infested Marquee club, is coming in to spin at tonight's hot, very hot Diesel fashion event downtown. Who you might also see there: Top Model Eva Pigford, Ford male model of the moment Brad Kroening, and, well, y'never know who else ...

■ That *Sideways* star Sandra Oh — who has a place in town, did y'know? — recently told Jay Leno that she's the only actor in her family and, actually, the only one who doesn't have a Master's degree ...

■ That horse-groupie and TV sleuth Nicholas Campbell stopped in for some Nepalese at cheapo Kathmandu restaurant last Thursday, according to those ne'er-do-wells at www.torontoist.com. In a report titled "DaVinci's Ingest," the watchful Web site further describes: "After ordering take-out — 10% discount! — Campbell headed outside, lit up a cancer stick, and disappeared down Yonge" ...

■ That Heather Reisman has apparently secured tickets for Thursday's massive Bruce Mau exhibit-related party at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Also said to be flying in for the roof-raising bash is the mesmeric, Vancouver-based gallerist Monte Clark and, from New York, designer Karim Rashid, the so-called "Da Vinci of the disposable age" ...

■ That sapphic smartass Maggie Cassella is emceeing the Heritage dinner tomorrow night for the premier and his band of loyal Liberals ...

■ That sage hip-hopper k-os is characteristically philosophical when it comes to Internet piracy, telling *Exclaim* magazine recently, "I stole so therefore I will be stolen from."

National Post

sgovani@nationalpost.com



THE
YORKVILLE
CLUB