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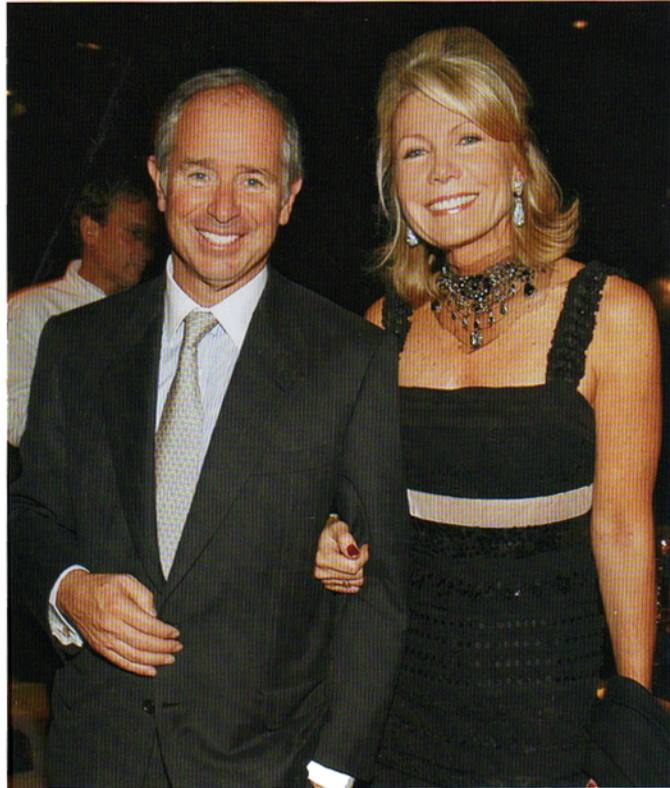
THE QUEST

On to urban escapades. What was the party of the decade? The answer is easy: the blast **Christine and Steve Schwarzman** threw to celebrate his 60th birthday at the Armory right on Park Avenue and 67th street. What makes it stand out? Let me count the ways! First and foremost, it was nonstop fun from start to finish; you could just feel the buzz as you walked in. The space was transformed by the brilliant **Philip Baloun** into what looked like a stage set of their very glam digs at 740 Park. There were huge renderings of the apartment as backdrops, plus some extra large replicas of their real live treasures strategically placed around the room. You could spot a Twombly here, and a priceless antique grandfather clock there; the setting was so very clever and glam in every possible way. Even the bars were cool and clever, illuminated by hurricane candles with glowing flames.

Into dinner, escorted by handsome young cadets, to find a red theater with round tables on tiers surrounding a stage. Dinner by Glorious Food was perfection, starting with "lobster supreme," with tarragon sauce, mâche and cucumber salad with Louis Jadot Chassagne Montrachet, 2004, then tournedos of beef, "21" sauce, and roasted root veggies with Chateau Magdelaine, St Emilion Grand Cru, 2003, and baked Alaska washed down with only the best, Cristal champagne.

The entertainment was a quadruple-header, kicked off by a roast by comedian **Martin Short**, followed by songwriter **Marvin Hamlisch** accompanied by chorus line dancers, then **Patti Labelle** backed by a huge choir, and best of all, the one and only **Rod Stewart**. Dancing till the wee hours of the night followed. Wow! Amongst the partygoers were Goldman Sachs's **Lloyd and Laura Blankfein**, **Stan O'Neal**, **Leon and Debbie Black**, **Joanne and Roberto de Guardiola**, **Pete Peterson** and **Joan Clooney**, **Arthur and Eileen Newman**, **John and Carmen Thain**, **Tom Quick**, **Deborah Norville** and **Karl Wellner**, **Barbara de Portago**, **Veronica Hearst**, **Tiffany Dubin**, **Pauline Pitt**, **Peggy Siegal**, **Chris and Grace Meigher**, **Allison and Leonard Stern**, **Gigi and Adrienne Vittadini**, **Jackie and Rod Drake**, **Debbie and Billy Bancroft**, **Alfred Taubman**, **Peter Gregory**, **Mario Nievera**, **Parker Ladd** and **Arnold Scaasi**, **Leonard and Evelyn Lauder**, **George and Libby Pataki**, **Patty and Gustavo Cisneros**, **Silas and Celia Chou**, **Avy and Gigi Mortimer**, **Lauren and John Veronis**, **Mike Bloomberg** and **Diane Taylor**, **Don and Catie Marron**, **Alex and Charles Stevenson**, **Serena Boardman**, **David and Julia Koch**, **Jackie and Eugene Williams**,

DAVID PATRICK COLUMBIA



Birthday boy Steve Schwarzman with wife Christine at their star-studded Park Avenue bash.

Jennifer Creel, **Matt and Marisa Noel Brown** (she danced on the stage with **Rod Stewart**), **Don and Muffie Miller**, **Audrey and Marty Gruss**, **Richard LeFrak**, **Pepe Fanjul**, **Liz Smith**, **Mark Gilbertson**, **Lally Weymouth** and **Frank Petito**, **Pierre and Sylvie d'Arenberg**, **Jamie and Lee Niven**, **Bruce and Claude Wasserstein**, **Dana Hammond** and **Patrick Stubgen**, **Sherrell and Muffie Aston**, **Donald and Melania Trump**, **Earle and Carol Mack**, **Byron and Anita Wien**, **Jeannie Lawrence**, **Boaz Mazor**, and more. ♦

BY HILARY GEARY

Meanwhile, a few blocks down the avenue on this same night at the Seventh Regiment Armory at 67th and Park, financier **Stephen Schwarzman** was staging a 60th birthday party for himself in the presence of 600 or so guests with a roster of entertainment which included **Marvin Hamlisch** and his *Chorus Line* chorus, **Patti LaBelle** (with her own chorus), **Martin Short** the comedian, and **Rod Stewart**.

The Schwarzman party had been much talked about since the plans for it were first speculated on several days before in an article by **Landon Thomas** in the *New York Times*.

Although Mr. Schwarzman does not seek publicity (there were only a handful of select media present at the Armory on his birthday night—and a number of media names were over at the Carlyle for **Judy Collins**), he creates news in the columns and popular press with his business deals and his personal lifestyle (mainly about his multimillion-dollar residences).

The original speculation had 1,500 attending the party, which some estimated to cost as much as \$15 million. Only Mr. S knows the bottom line, however. Although **Rod Stewart's** fee for a private performance is (as it is with some of his peers) said to be \$1 million for an hour's work. The specially designed interior

resembling a nightclub like the old Copacabana, alone (the evening was designed by **Philip Baloun**) was also said to have cost \$1 million.

It wouldn't surprise me to learn it was even more than that because although seven-figure parties—weddings, bar mitzvahs, debutante parties, birthday parties—are not commonplace in our world today, they're not rare either. And the entertainment—the **Rolling Stones**, **Rod Stewart**, **Elton John**—command seven-figure fees for their hour or two. Someone told me that **Don Henley** of the Eagles gets \$2 million for 90 minutes.

Whatever the cost, it was a spectacular and lavishly appointed affair and those attending left feeling they'd been to one of the great parties of their lifetime.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2007



Bill Cunningham/The New York Times

The financier Stephen A. Schwarzman and his wife, Christine.

Turning 60, and Doing So With 1,500

By LONDON THOMAS Jr.

Not every Wall Street titan can celebrate his birthday in a place that holds 1,500 people. Unless, of course, that titan is Stephen A. Schwarzman, who is on the verge of clinching the biggest buyout deal ever.

Then this would be the moment to try.

On Feb. 13, many hundreds of his friends, admirers and followers will gather in the drill hall of the Park Avenue armory to celebrate the man on the night before he turns 60. Those who are coming include Lloyd C. Blankfein, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, and James E. Cayne, the chief executive of Bear Stearns, as well as Peter Martins of the New York City Ballet and Cardinal Edward M. Egan of the New York Archdiocese. Among the invited dignitaries who have declined to attend are Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr.

Rod Stewart, who is known to charge \$1 million for private parties, is rumored to be the surprise headline act.

For Mr. Schwarzman, a billionaire several times over, an active Republican do-

On the verge of the biggest buyout deal ever, a party for all those close friends.

nor and chairman of the Kennedy Center in Washington whose influence reaches deep into the worlds of finance, politics and the arts, there could be no better time.

The co-founder of the **Blackstone Group**, the private equity and hedge fund giant, he has been at the forefront of today's frenzy of buyout deals. Just weeks before his party, he is battling for control of **Equity Office Properties**, a deal that, at more than \$38 billion would surpass the record set by his rival Henry R. Kravis and perhaps cement his legacy as the new king of Wall Street.

The party itself represents a more delectable coronation for Mr. Schwarzman, especially as it comes in an arena where Mr. Kravis, a man who has moved easily in New York's arts and social scene for more

than 20 years, has traditionally reigned. (An assistant to Mr. Kravis said he would not be attending the party. She said she did not know if he had received an invitation).

The guest list, which is a closely guarded secret, appears to be deep and wide. It includes those who are friends like Leonard A. Lauder, the chairman of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

"We love Steve," said Mr. Lauder, who will be donning his black tie for the affair. "He is everybody's poster child."

The list also includes those who are not, like the former Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell.

"The general has a high regard for Steve," said his assistant. "But he is not a close friend." Mr. Powell would not be attending, she added, although he did do his bit by recording a brief salute on the video that has been sent to invitees.

At a time when a crashing wave of capital is minting new billionaires each year, who is a close friend and who is not is less important to a man like Mr. Schwarzman

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Turning 60, and Doing So With 1,500

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than his ability to compile such an expansive birthday list.

"There is no ladder to climb any more: he is there," said Nelson W. Aldrich Jr., the author of "Old Money." "This party fits the new formula, which is that social life is a way of making money by other means or holding on to money by other means."

New York social history is rich with grand celebrations that have defined a moment in time for those who threw them. Truman Capote's Black and White Ball in 1966 came in the wake of the triumph of "In Cold Blood."

In 1988, Saul P. Steinberg's wedding party for his daughter at the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was his last and most glorious public offering.

Some view such lavish displays as a bleak omen, not least those who are being so honored.

"Honey, if this moment were a stock, I would short it," Mr. Steinberg said to his wife, Gayfryd, at an equally lush party in 1989 for his 50th birthday. For Mr. Steinberg, in the years that followed, there was a stroke, his daughter's subsequent divorce, the bankruptcy of his company and the subsequent sale of his apartment in New York's most prestigious co-op, 740 Park Avenue, to none other than Mr. Schwarzman in 2000.

Still, the practice continues — and in this heady era, it need not be a 10-year milestone that prompts a fancy exultation.

Last spring, the wife of David Boies, the corporate lawyer, chartered two jet planes to fly friends to Las Vegas for an all-expenses-paid weekend at Steve Wynn's hotel and casino on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

"It was special — there was wine tasting on the plane," said Georgette Mosbacher, the Republican fundraiser who attended the Steinberg affairs, but who did not get an invitation from the Schwarzmans. "What is frivolous for some is memorable to others. It's a party for your friends and family. When you reach 60 and you have succeeded in your goals, you want to show it off."

John Ford, a spokesman for Blackstone, said that Mr. Schwarzman did not think it appropriate to take up the matter of his recent accomplishments and his approaching birthday.

"Steve really is a modest person," said Jacqueline Weld Drake, a society friend and author who is planning to attend.

The party is largely being masterminded by his wife, Christine Hearst Schwarzman, an intellectual property lawyer who has organized many of Mr. Schwarzman's previous celebrations, from his 50th at the St. Regis, where Patti LuPone sang, to his 59th last year at the Four Seasons, where a Marilyn Monroe imitator crooned "Happy Birthday, Mr. Chairman" to Blackstone's chairman and 100 friends.

But it is the couple's annual Christmas function at 740 Park that has secured their party-making bona fides. One year the interior of their 24-room duplex became a replica of Mr. Schwarzman's favorite beach, La Voile Rouge, in St. Tropez, where he has a home. Another year they turned their living room into a giant Las Vegas casino. Last month the



Barton Silverman/The New York Times

Truman Capote was host of a Black and White ball in 1966. One of his guests was The Washington Post's publisher, Katharine Graham.



The Schwarzman Christmas party featured a James Bond theme.

theme was James Bond, with Mr. Schwarzman done up in a suave tuxedo and model Bond girls circulating among a crowd.

"Steve does not like little things, whether it's deals, Christmas parties or his own homes," said Roland W. Betts, the chief executive of Chelsea Piers who was at Yale with Mr. Schwarzman.

Indeed, organizing such a party has been as complex and sensitive an undertaking as one of his deals. Rumors abound among his friends regarding the opening musical act. Rod Stewart? Mick Jagger? (After all,

the Rolling Stones played at the 60th birthday of David Bonderman, a buyout rival of Mr. Schwarzman's) How about Michael Bolton — Mr. Schwarzman is a fan, they say.

A staffer, equipped with a video camera, has paid a visit to the office of many of the invitees to film suitable tributes and roasts. A large book has been circulated in which they have recorded funny stories and remembrances — but please, no presents.

"Steve, I always knew you were going places, I just did not know you would end up owning them all," wrote Jane Stanton Hitchcock, a novelist and an old friend of Mr. Schwarzman's.

Who is on the guest list and who is not has become a topic of speculation among his friends and associates.

"I told Steve if you have me on the list, you must have invited your 1,000 closest friends," said Daniel W. Lufkin, a founding partner of Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette, where Mr. Schwarzman got his first job out of college.

As tightly held as the guest list is what the evening will be. Philip Baloun, the society florist and party facilitator, who has orchestrated some of New York's biggest parties as well as many of the past celebrations of the Schwarzmans has been charged with decorating the hall — a cavernous 35,000-square-foot expanse that has the feel of an airplane hangar.

"Steve likes big things," Mr. Betts said. "I'm sure no expense will be spared. I just don't want to get the bill."

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April 14th, 2007

Also Saturday night not far from the Waverly, as the crow flies, **Marisa Noel Brown** was celebrating her *Big Three Oh* at the Brown duplex loft in Soho. The theme: "American Idol." And 100 of "the hottest most gorgeous New Yorkers" (obviously I wasn't there) all-singing-all-costumes.

And there were judges, just like the show (I've never seen): **Dennis Basso**, indefatigable, party-boy-billionaire **Steve Schwarzman**, now dressed as a record producer (**Rod Stewart's?**), in pink shirt with matching tie and lots of bling in bracelets and rings (**Arnold Stiefel?**)

There was **Christy Turlington**, **Ed Burns**, **Lance Armstrong**, **Tory Burch**, **David and Danielle Ganek**, **David Arquette** (someone said he was "crashing"?) who sang "Celebrate" with Lance; **Eleanor and Jon Ylvisaker**, **Colina and Rebekah McCable**, **Christine Schwarzman**, **Pierre d'Arenberg**, **Rena Sindi** who just can't get enough of New York. **Mariah Chase**, **Bridie Clark**, **Lindley Pless** and **Alexandra Wilkis** sang "Bad Girls" (Harvard girls). **Ayla Farnos**, **Stephanie Douglass**, **Kristina Loverro** sang "Dontcha" (pussycat dolls). **Urica Lanaro** and **Charlotte Assaf** sang "Hot Stuff" a la **Donna Summer**. **Christine Schwarzman** and **Kalliope Karella** sang "Girl From Ipanema," **Peggy Siegal** sang "I Love the Nightlife" (no kidding Peg). Manhattan babies don't sleep tight, until the dawn. As they used to say.



Marisa Brown

AVENUE

OCTOBER 2005

Sayonara Summer

CAPPING OFF THE SEASON IN STYLE

FALL IS UPON US. SHADOWS ARE LENGTHENING, KIDS ARE BLEARY-EYED FROM READING ALL THEIR ASSIGNED BOOKS IN ONE WEEK, AND THE CITY INVITATIONS HAVE STARTED TO MOUNT. BUT BEFORE WE COMMIT TO TWEEDS AND TAXIS, LET'S REMEMBER THE LAST HURRAHS OF SUMMER.

The biggest hurrah of the East End summer was, without a doubt, the birthday bash given by Harrison and James LeFrak for their father, Richard. Amazingly, with 350 dinner guests and 200 after (the youngsters), no one leaked the surprise. And as Richard entered the drop-dead chic Philip Baloun-designed tent/lounge, it seemed to take him a minute or so to realize that the all-white-attired crowd of best friends from near and far were there for him. He turned to Karen with raised eyebrows, and she simply nodded.

Richard had been told he was going to a NetJets event featuring Warren Buffet and Billy Crystal. In his remarkably funny, extemporaneous remarks, Richard said he was sorry he wasn't going to be able to ask Mr. Buffet about the real estate bubble. He also told us we were all such good liars, and that we should start our own hedge funds. His sons clearly got their funny genes from their father. Harrison told us the party was adapted for an older crowd—the bathrooms were all on one level, the napkins were extra large and the delectable Glorious Foods dinner servings were pre-cut. James anticipated the question, "How did they pay for all this?" by letting us know that the party was underwritten



by Pfizer and that our attendance constituted the release of our images for use in a Viagra ad.

And if the comedy wasn't enough, the lights lowered, the spotlight focused, and out came Donna Summer, belting out "Bad Girls" and luring us all onto the dance floor to let our inner bad girls out. The crowd was a fabulous mix of politics, finance, real estate . . . and tennis clinic (the toughest of all those fields). I'd venture to say that almost everyone reading this column lives on a block owned by

someone at the party. The real estate royalty included: Beth Rudin DeWoody, Billy and Ophelia Rudin, Pam and Ed Pantzer, Jonathan Tisch, Ben and Linda Lambert, Daryl and Steve Roth, Henry and Nancy Silverman, Allison and Leonard Stern, Abby and Howard Milstein, Julie and Ed Minskoff, George and Marianna Kaufman, Mia and Sheldon Solow, and Donald and Melania Trump. Other friends, family and moguls, included: Debra and Leon Black, Christine and Steve Schwarzman, Georgette Mosbacher, Hilary and Wilbur Ross, Judith and Rudy Giuliani, Patty and Marty Raynes, Senga and John Jay Mortimer, Veronica and Raymond Kelly, Gail Hilson, Soledad and Bob Hurst, Charles Gargano, Peter (whose birthday was also toasted) and Brooke Cohen, Emilia, Pepe and Alf Fanjul (all of whom were, happily for us, sailing our seas this summer), Zena and Dick Gilbert, Heather and Steve Mnuchin, Barbie Bancroft, Anne and Keith Barish, Sharon Handler and Ambassador John Loeb, District Attorney Jeanine Pirro and Al Pirro, Maria and Raymond Floyd, Charles Stevenson, Andrew Saffir and Daniel Benedict, Wendy Carduner, Cynthia



Daniel Benedict and Andrew Saffir



Heather Mnuchin



Emilia and Pepe Fanjul

and Dan Lufkin, and Frédéric Fekkai (engaged!). And, of course, proud grandmother Ethel and loving wife Karen rounded out the list of revelers. I'd tell you more, but my digits are weary. I think you get the picture. It was one great party. Hope there'll be one for Karen (maybe a poodle theme?).



Gail Hilson and Jeanine Pirro



• Rudy and Judith Giuliani with Jeanine Pirro



Rand Araskog



• Karen and Richard LeFrak, Howard Lorber, and Melania and Donald Trump



• Karen and Richard LeFrak

White Night Guests dressed in their coolest summer whites celebrated Richard LeFrak's birthday at a surprise party thrown by his sons Harrison and Jamie. After a delightful summer dinner, Donna Summer had everyone grooving on the dance floor.

HAMPTONS

The Best Party of
the Summer

CRAZY FOR YOU



Melania Trump at Richard LeFrak's surprise 60th birthday party.

The Best and Most of Summer



Best All Around Party:

Harrison and James LeFrak's surprise party for their father, Richard LeFrak's birthday. Three-hundred and fifty white-clad pals in Philip Baloun's chicest white lounge tent, fed by Glorious Food, serenaded by Donna Summer (LIVE!), and brought to tears (both by laughter and sentiment) by the boy's toasts, and Pop's hysterical, spontaneous retort.



Joanne de Guardiola and Julia Koch at Richard LeFrak's surprise 60th birthday party.

I always pay extra attention to an engraved

invitation. It's a clear signal that your hosts have planned ahead and that you're in for a special treat. The top of this invitation was stamped **TOP SECRET**, a witty touch that instantly made you an accomplice to what promised to be an intriguing evening. We were instructed to wear all white, with no jackets or ties. And, even though it was a birthday party, we were asked to bring no presents.

Harrison and **James LeFrak** were requesting the pleasure of my company at a surprise birthday celebration for their father, **Richard LeFrak**, at Southampton College. I didn't waste any time in saying yes, as I, along with everyone else who knows the LeFraks, love the LeFraks. They don't come any better than **Karen** and Richard LeFrak, period. Although the whole town was there, Richard was genuinely surprised. He was also the only person at the party in a blue shirt. Karen got him to the college by telling him they were going to an economic symposium led by **Warren Buffett**, which would be followed by a performance by **Billy Crystal**. A clever ruse, which worked. When Richard thanked his sons for giving the party and the guests for coming, he also pointed out the large number of people who had lied to him all day about what they were doing that night. His witty remarks were some of the funniest off-the-cuff comments I've ever heard. Among those I saw laughing were Richard's mother, **Ethel LeFrak**, former Mayor **Rudy Giuliani** and his wife **Judy**, **Melania** and **Donald Trump**, Police Commissioner **Ray Kelly**, **Anne Eisenhower** and **Wolfgang Flottl**, **Jamee** and **Peter Gregory**, **Mai** and **Ridgely Harrison**, **Kathy** and **Rick Hilton**, **Marty Richards**, **Andrea** and **John Stark**, **Allison** and **Leonard Stern**, **Wendy Carduner**, **Jessie** and **Rand Araskog**, and **Anne** and **Keith Barish**.

When I arrived at the college, Harry LeFrak was out front greeting the guests, a very classy welcoming gesture. I entered the first of the two enormous white marquees that had been set up on the lawn. These were the very same tents **George Soros** had used the week before to celebrate his 75th birthday, though all com-



Jamie LeFrak and Caroline Bierbaum at Richard LeFrak's surprise 60th birthday party.

parisons between these two parties end there. Richard, by the way, was celebrating his 60th birthday with a nod to his and Karen's 35th wedding anniversary as well. A great party needs an enchanting setting, and **Philip Baloun** had created two all-white interiors that were nothing short of magical. The décor was inspired by the all-white décor of the LeFraks' beautiful Southampton home. The cocktail tent had been draped in white linen and dotted with comfortable canvas-covered sofas and ottomans.

The women looked amazing—especially Karen, who glowed in a white cocktail dress and pearl-and-diamond earrings. Other standouts included **Joanne de Guardiola** in a pair of semi-scandalous leather-and-lace pants by **Valentino**; **Julia Koch** in a goddess gown; **Princess Yasmin Aga Khan**, **Barbie Bancroft**, and **Audrey Gruss**, who wore a knit peekaboo dress. Everyone came in white attire except Richard LeFrak and **Donald Trump**, who both wore blue blazers; the

Donald marches to his own drummer.

The dining tent was draped in white gauze and laced with tiny firefly lights; the ceiling was strung with a forest of gigantic white balloons of different sizes, which cast a flattering glow on all the guests and made the room appear more intimate. The balloons were anchored with silver ribbons to centerpieces of orchid-filled crystal cubes that were tied with more silver ribbons, like presents. **Glorious Food** served grilled shrimp followed by steak, French fries, and corn salad; the dessert was vanilla ice cream and chocolate cake, yummy. Seating a dinner party intelligently is a nightmare, but this one was done right. My hats off to **Polly Onet**, the event planner who helped pull this fabulous night off.

After dinner, the curtains on the 50-foot stage parted to reveal the night's biggest surprise: a 20-piece orchestra fronted by **Donna Summer**. The room went wild; everyone jumped up and danced as Donna sang her greatest hits.

I saw **Tinsley** and **Topper Mortimer**, **Wendy Vanderbilt Lehman**, **Alfy Fanjul**, **Tiffany Dubin**, **Jonathan** and **Somercia Farkas**, **Charles Stevenson**, **Patricia Patterson**, **Ralph Destino**, **Gail Hilson**, **Jacques Leviant**, **Sharon King Hoge**, **James Coleman**, **Beth Rudin DeWoody**, **Marina** and **Francesco Galesi**, **Howard** and **Lynette Gittis**, **Michael Gross** and **Barbara Hodes**, **Harry Platt**, **Cornelia** and **Martin Bregman**, **Bettina Zilkha**, **Harry** and **Linda Macklowe**, **Sandra McConnell** and **Christopher Obetz**, **Jamie Niven**, and many more of this ilk and stripe on the dance floor. A blizzard of white balloons and confetti rained from the ceiling after Donna sang "Happy Birthday" to Richard. Around 11:30, everyone moved back to the lounge, which had been turned into a discotheque and filled with 200 of the hosts' friends. I swear I saw Karen LeFrak dancing on a banquet so she'd be eye-level with **David Koch**—priceless! When I left around 1:30 a.m., the party was still in high gear. Kudos to Harrison and Jamie LeFrak, who gave the Party of the Summer: a job well done. Their parents are very proud, and rightly so.