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A Night Out: Smithsonian Young Benefactors Polo Cup Kick-Off Party

By Emily Leaman



All photographs by Chris Leaman.

What: Kick-off party for the Smithsonian Young Benefactors Polo Cup fundraiser in September. The party marked the beginning of ticket sales for the event and raised funds for the Smithsonian Associates' educational programs.

When: Thursday, June 5, 7:30 to 10 PM

Where: Embassy of Argentina at 1600 New Hampshire Avenue, Northwest

Ticket price: \$40 for members; \$60 for non-members

Attire: Most of the women turned up smartly clad in cocktail attire, the men in suits sans ties, or slacks and blazers. The dress code wasn't specified, but an unspoken mantra—dress to impress—seemed to rule.

Who: Overall, boldface names were hard to spot, but a few notables popped up here and there. Socialite blogger and polo

cup host-committee member **Pamela Sorensen** made an appearance, as did current and former **Miss DCs Kate Grinold** and **Kate Michael**. We saw tech entrepreneur **Michael Saylor** making the rounds, and nearby we spotted our old pal **Fletcher Gill**, whom we met earlier this year, of the veterans nonprofit Luke's Wings.



Miss DC 2008 Kate Grinold and Miss DC 2006 Kate Michael

[Link](#)



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Food and drink: Windows Catering took good care of hungry guests—the food was plentiful and delicious. Of the several trays of hors d'oeuvres and desserts passed around, our favorites were the spicy beef empanadas, chimichurri sirloin bites (cuts of beef on wheat toast rounds), and fried mashed potatoes with gorgonzola dipping sauce. Pours of five Argentinean wines were available to sip, and there was a fully stocked bar of booze and mixers. Also making the rounds were cranberry gin martinis, a dangerously delicious concoction of orange and cranberry juices with a hint of piney gin in the aftertaste.

Scene: A sold-out, mostly under-40 crowd turned up at the Argentinean Embassy on the promise of wine, food, and a chance to tango. The party was held in three impressive rooms on the second floor of the embassy. Two of them housed wine bars, high tables, and plush lounge chairs, quieter places good for conversation. The third, oval-shaped room was where the real party was: A bar with booze and mixers occupied one side, while a deejay spun dance tracks on the other. At 7:30, couples trickled in and gravitated mainly to the wine rooms. But by 8:30, all three spaces were packed, though few in the oval room took the opportunity to dance. The only disruption to the festivities was a brief and obligatory round of thank-yous to the host committee and sponsors and a pitch to buy polo cup tickets. As for the tango, well, it turns out that DC's not a town of tangoers. Organizers shipped in a pair of professional tango dancers to get the party going, but most guests were content so stand around and watch.

Boldface names: 1 out of 5

Swankiness: 2 out of 5

Food and drink: 2 out of 5

Overall exclusivity: 1 out of 5

Total: 6 out of 20