

Pack of Cards

By Madame Sososttris

Last week, I had a chance to be star-struck many times over when I walked into Jounieh Restaurant in the Shagara complex, the likes of which the old sycamore certainly never saw, not even in its salad days, when the place was the favourite haunt of a much less distinguished crowd. Hosted by the dynamic Naguib Sawires, chairman of the Egyptian Renaissance Cinema Company, and Sherif Fanous, its CEO, the dinner dance was a celebration to remember. And what was this beau monde celebrating? Simply the launching of the new cinematic complex, Renaissance Wonderland, which has opened on Abbas El-Aqqad Street in Madinet Nasr. I am sure you don't expect me to say more, knowing from experience as you must, what a Renaissance Cinema has to offer over and above non Renaissance cinemas. I shall, however, make you green with envy and give you an idea of who I was rubbing shoulders with that night. Laila Eloui, Athar El-Hakim, Salah El-Saadani, Mahmoud Abdel-Aziz, Mahmoud Hemeida, Daoud Abdel-Sayed, Khairi Bishara, Es'ad Younis, Safiya El-Emari, Rania Mahmoud Yassin... these brilliant stars were but a few of those I managed to glimpse.



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As distinguished, albeit a tad more subdued, was the garden reception held by Ambassador and Mrs Christian Falkowski on the occasion of the European Union



National Day. Members of the diplomatic corps were present and, as I made my way across the manicured lawn, exchanging smiles and nods galore, I noticed Secretary-General of the Arab League Esmat Abdel-Meguid, Ibrahim Fawzi, head of the General Investment and Free Zone Authority, Ambassador Fathi El-Shazli, assistant foreign minister for European affairs and, last but of course not least, German Ambassador Peter Dingens, whose country, incidentally, currently holds the EU presidency.

Like a bee sampling the nectar of many flowers, I filled my next chalice at a ball fit for a king, launched in style by my dear friend, perfect host Maged Farag, who welcomed his guests in a white tuxedo jacket and red tarboush at the Mohamed Ali Club (which, incidentally, he is transforming into the most sought-after venue in Cairo). I am really not at liberty to tell you all the wonderful things that made this evening so extra special, because Maged told me that those



who did not turn up as prescribed did not deserve to know. Well... maybe I can cheat a little and share a few tidbits: The ambassador of Sweden, His Excellency Christer Sylven, was wearing a tarboush in the colours of his country, blue with a yellow tassel, Ambassador of Norway Mette Ravn did not stray off the beaten track and neither did Nader Riad, chairman of Bavaria company, but His Excellency Daniel C Kurtzer, ambassador to the United States, opted for the less provocative, tarboush-less look, while Her Excellency Kongit Sinegiorgis, ambassador of Ethiopia, wore the loveliest white ensemble with bright trimmings imaginable; impeccably elegant as ever, the problem of the tarboush never arose with her of course. Arbiter of elegance Naguib Abdallah arrived in a gold embroidered frock coat to go with his classical tarboush and was accompanied by a mysterious and gorgeous woman in a stunning long dress; elegantly understated as usual, veteran diplomat and former ambassador to the US, Ashraf Ghorbal sported a no nonsense dark suit and standard tie with his tarboush. General Saadeddin El-Shazli looked absolutely thrilled when his old friend and brother-in-arms Major-General Munir Shash walked in, apparently an unexpected and pleasant reunion. That is all, dears: enough is enough. From now on, mum is the word.



Before we part, I want to tell you that we at *Al-Ahram Weekly* are quite proud of our correspondent in Lebanon, Zeina Khodr, editor-in-chief of Future TV's English

Newsdesk, who won the award for best feature story in a competition organised by CNN in Atlanta last week. Khodr, who is 28, was among 300 correspondents for CNN World Report who entered the competition. She won the award with a feature on a traditional wedding in Baalbek, Lebanon.



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