

The Houston Gala

Contributed by Pat Krause
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The Jim and Jackie Lee Houston Estate

Story and photos by Pat Krause

The Annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Gala was held at the Houston Estate for the sixth time, Sat. Jan. 17, 2009. Tickets to this event are usually sold out weeks in advance. Jackie Lee Houston always has just the best parties. Valet service greets visitors as they arrive. Attendees enter this unique home to a tunnel of lights into the party area.

Huge white tents with small lights as sky adorn the ceiling. Beautiful flower centerpieces are on each table. Another tent is filled with different types of salads and sandwiches. The salads are in a wine glass and appealing to the eye. I tasted a small crepe with different types of meats in the center. The chicken and beef with a mushroom sauce were my favorites. Other sandwiches were being grilled at tables adorned with flowers.

Everything Jackie Lee does is so beautiful and in such good taste. A dessert table with fruit was near the entrance. Assorted sauces to put on the fruit were so varied. An then there was an ice cream machine for those who wanted that on their fruit or just ice cream alone. Waiters walked among the guests with other finger foods. The bar area was filled all the time and you could order just about any drink you desired.

All this to the music of Yve Evans who played her piano and sang. It was a time for the guests to mingle and enjoy each other's company.

About 8 p.m., the waiters removed the centerpieces from the table so guests could get a good look at the entertainment. Extra chairs were put up in rows so everyone could be seated. Jim Houston got on the stage to announce the evenings entertainment, which is always a surprise at the Houston Gala. He had the audience laughing with his wit. Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet got on stage to thank the Houstons for their nonstop support for the Festival and their generosity. He thanked the Festival Chairman Harold Matzner for making this the best Festival yet. The guests clapped loudly for each thank you. Festival Chairman Matzner also thanked the Houstons for their total support year after year, not just in Palm Springs but the whole Coachella Valley. He also thanked Agua Caliente Tribal Chairman Richard Milanovich, Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack, all the volunteers and others. He said that the Festival shattered revenue records for both the Gala and box office, which is huge in this economy. The Cities cafes, hotels and stores were full. We really get a big bang for our buck with this Festival.

The entertainment began. This year is was a mini-Broadway production that featured songs from movies. Music from "Oklahoma," "Sound of Music," "Grease" and "Titanic" among others were performed.

Songs were sung and dances were danced to the delight of all the guests. The cast was extremely talented. The players came from a group in San Diego.

What a party, and I will be looking forward to next year's extravaganza!

Special thanks to Jackie Lee and Jim Houston for all their efforts and cooperation.

For more photos of the Houston Gala by Pat Krause, [click here](#).

For more information about the Palm Springs International Film Festival, [click here](#).