

EYE ON O.C.



By Anne Valdespino

OVER THE MOON

COOLEST AUCTION ITEMS

1. Gourmet crab dinner for 10
2. Telluride, Colo., getaway
3. Private dinner for 16 at Playground restaurant in Santa Ana
4. Baja, Mexico, getaway
5. Corum watch
6. More than 100 bottles of fine wine

A '60S RETRO THEME IS PROVING POPULAR FOR FRIENDSHIP SHELTER'S ANNUAL GALA.

When the Friendship Shelter gala committee hit on a "Mad Men" theme for their bash this Friday night, they knew it would be a success - 400 tickets are quickly selling out. The subtitle is a perfect fit with the group's mission, said chairwoman Keiko Sakamoto. "It's 'Fly Me to the Moon' and what the fundraiser does is launch people," she said, explaining that the Laguna Beach program helps homeless adults throughout the county become self-sufficient, with services from job counseling to dental care and transitional housing.

The evening includes dancing to Alec Milstein and his Mad Men, an eight-piece band; dinner; and a live auction. Guests are encouraged to wear '60s chic. Tickets are \$225. Friday at 6 p.m. at the Balboa Bay Club & Resort, 1221 W. Coast Highway, Newport Beach, 949-494-6928, friendshipshelter.org.



COURTESY OF FRIENDSHIP SHELTER

The gala committee members planning Friday's annual fundraiser are, from left, Paul Fenner, Jerri McKenna, Cyd Swerdlow, Rebecca Skolnik, Faye Hezar, Bano Pozin, Keiko Sakamoto and Wendy Tenebaum.

- A.V.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RESORT AT PELICAN HILL

Cushy seating keeps festival-goers comfy at the Festa dell'Autunno at The Resort at Pelican Hill.

IN THE DETAILS

THE FEST IS ALL ABOUT FOOD. HERE ARE OUR FAVORITES FROM THE LAVISH SPREAD.



Braised veal with penne and plenty of Parmesan.



Gelato made even more luxurious with olive oil.

FALLING FOR ITALY



Michael and Tatyana Fawz take in the scene.

AMID A SUNNY EURO-VIBE, PELICAN HILL'S AUTUMN FEST AIMS TO STIMULATE THE SENSES.

Flag twirlers imported from Faenza greeted festival-goers strolling the lanes of The Resort at Pelican Hill on Saturday during the Festa dell'Autunno. Except for the enormous golf course and oversize architecture, you might have been at a village fair in Tuscany, given the brilliant sunshine and abundance of delectable Italian cuisine.

A cheese booth with fontina and truffled pecorino, a pizza station, pasta buffet, dessert bar, olive oil and wine tasting were the big draws. But the sights and sounds of Italy were also beguiling, including mesmerizing lyric coloratura soprano Anna Schubert, singing "Caro nome" from Verdi's "Rigoletto"; street chalk drawing; and new this year, artists from the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association.

Lest we forget we were in Orange County, a row of Italian sports cars gleamed in the sun and guests were pampered with posh surroundings: cushy lounge furniture, an outdoor espresso bar, fresh floral centerpieces, and every dish served on Villeroy & Boch china. How did it stack up next to Italian American street festivals? "No comparison," said Lorraine Russo of Palm Desert in an East Coast accent. "This is pure elegance."

- A.V.



Wines including a lively Prosecco and a mellow chianti.



Local flag twirlers? Not authentic enough. This one was flown in from Faenza, Italy.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PELICAN HILL

Delicate and not-too-sweet amaretto macarons.