

Get ready to BALL YOUR EYES OUT at what you missed.

Bob Hardwick Featured At The Top Galas



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Sometimes, a ballroom is the kind of place where, wherever you're standing, it's wrong.

You're in the way of the socialite. The server. The society photographer.

But it can also be a world where everything seems right.

The caviar and crème fraîche. The glow of

candlelight on wine-flushed faces. The folks who shell out hundreds of dollars and slip into their finery to help fight diseases, protect kids or preserve a town's history.

From wherever you're standing, there's little wrong with that picture.

To celebrate the local social season, I peeked inside the rarefied world of Palm Beach balls. Here is some of what I saw . . .

Decadent dining

Foie-gras mousse served in Lilliputian ice-cream cones, bite-size cheeseburgers and dots of Brie on toast. The appetizers at the Heart Ball weren't exactly heart-healthy — but at least the servings were small!

The Preservation Foundation based its menu on threes. The entrée was a trio of herb-seared veal medallion, grilled lamb chop and beef short rib with a cabernet reduction (served with pea-tendrill puree in artichoke bottom and cheddar-cheese grits timbale). Dessert was a miniature trio of a petit chocolate shake, buttermilk toffee square and strawberry shortcake, served with chocolate and crème fraîche, and strawberry coulis.

At the inaugural gala for the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, guests nibbled on a cheese course before tucking into Ice Cream Martini Decadence, topped with a 24-karat gold sugar shard



BRUCE R. BENNETT/Staff Photographer

The dangerous dessert buffet at the Diamond Constellation Ball: iced cookies shaped like moons and stars, cheesecake and carrot cake, and a fountain of melted chocolate with marshmallows, strawberries and pretzel rods for dipping. The truffle-strewn trough caused such a feeding frenzy that a ball official grabbed the mike and announced, 'The desserts will be here the rest of the evening. They will not be taken away.'



GARY CORONADO/Staff Photographer

A record made of chocolate? Sounds good! Charity for Children's Bandstand 1959 Ball at the Four Seasons carried its prom theme through its food, from the french fries as appetizers to this petite platter of a dessert.



CAROLY PACE/Staff Photographer

At the Heart Ball, guests toasted Valentine's Day with soup in shot glasses. Flavors included carrot, tomato and tarragon, and strawberry with a splash of champagne. Cheers!