

Wines, Tigers & Beers

A Roaring Success!

On Saturday, June 18, 2011, the first celebration for the lions, tigers and bears of ARK 2000 was attended by more than 200 enthusiastic guests who strolled through the park surrounding the animal habitats, sipping wine and beer, and devouring the incredibly delicious and diverse appetizers.

The Colton tigers cavorted through the tall trees, watching the visitors with great interest, and Mookie, one of the females, rested under a tree displaying her beautiful dark stripes and bright orange coat with obvious vanity for all to admire. Her companions, Quiggle, Ginger, Alka and Patty, moved gracefully around the pools enjoying the action which they probably thought was designed especially for their enrichment. Bo and his all male group watched in dignified silence enjoying the unusual activity.

Since ARK 2000 is seldom open for visitors, these events are not disruptive for the animals, and the size of the habitats enables them to remain under cover if they choose. Keepers and volunteers patrol the protective fence lines imparting information on the animals and their unique, individual personalities while explaining the plight of captive wildlife and the need to protect wild species and their habitats.

The male Bolivia circus lions — Daktari, Bambek and Simba — were obviously bored, sleeping in one huge lump of black manes in the shade of an oak tree. Occasionally, one disheveled, maned head would pop up to peer sleepily at the curious crowd, then drop back into the tangled mass of fur to continue his peaceful sleep. Male lions, in the wild, sleep most of the day, leaving a majority of the work of survival to the females, and this group clearly understood the science.

The female lions, Sheba and Camba, watched the celebration engrossed in the unusual movement of the humans, bounding up and running to the fence line to get a better view, then returning to watch from the cover of the thick brush.

On the black bear side, good buddies Boo-Boo and Winston, wandered down to the front of their habitat and munched on special treats served by their keeper, as the enrapt audience watched from behind the protective fence. Sampson and Cinnamon remained at a distance, visible peering through the cover of the trees.

Special bus tours to visit the elephants were escorted by PAWS' founders,

Ed Stewart and Pat Derby, and Brian Busta, ARK 2000 manager and elephant supervisor. Guests sipped wine and tasted crackers and cheese as their tour guides provided historical information about the facility and the individual elephants who followed the buses as they passed. The African elephants were particularly vocal as the buses passed slowly past their habitat, trumpeting their greetings to the delighted visitors. Nicholas, the sweet young bull elephant, followed each bus as the passengers peered out the windows. Nicholas has a particular affinity for large vehicles which usually bring loads of hay and special treats.

Everyone, including the animals, had a wild time, and the evening was a roaring success!

Thank you to all our dedicated keepers; PAWS volunteers who prepared and donated so many wonderful hors d'oeuvres; and everyone who donated food, wine and silent auction items. It was a beautiful evening at ARK 2000.

See you next year!











THANK YOU

We sincerely appreciate each and every volunteer who created and served unique and delightful food and beverage pairings for the event. Guests enjoyed the fun and delicious offerings.

And a special big Wines, Tigers and BEAR-HUG goes to Jannelle Kessler who was a wonderful volunteer food and beverage coordinator.

We also want to thank those folks who really are the backbone of the behind-the-scenes efforts to create PAWS events. The good-natured and committed volunteers assigned to gate and parking duties, security patrol, the PAWS gift shop, and those who secure auction donations.

Quite simply, without each of them, we would not be able to host our events. . . and the events would certainly not be as much fun!

