



EVENT REPORT 06.23.08 3:45 PM

Fair Ladies

The Parkways Foundation's annual Garden Party entertained a mostly female crowd with bubbly drinks, millinery eye candy, and colorful decor inspired by the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

Thursday's Garden Party, a benefit for the Parkways Foundation, was held for the second year in a tent on [Northerly Island](#). Attracting 650 mostly female guests—many of whom were prominent local philanthropists or corporate women who bought tables for their staffs—the luncheon was held to raise funds for a new artificial-turf soccer field in Tinley Park.

Now in its sixth year, the event typically follows a theme inspired by a particular style of garden design. "But this year, we took a break from that and decided to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair," said Brenda Palm, executive director of Parkways Foundation, who produced the event with co-chairs Susan Davis Heisler, Diane Kelley, and Kathleen McCreary. In addition to the party's new atmosphere and look, this year's break-with-tradition theme also played into the venue: Northerly Island was one of the primary locales for the 1933-1934 fair.

To help bring the theme to life, the ladies tapped [Kehoe Designs'](#) Vince Hart. For inspiration, Hart looked toward art from the World's Fair, ultimately basing his color scheme on a poster from the era featuring hues of red, yellow, and turquoise. The colors carried over into everything from floral centerpieces arranged in antique urns to silky teal linens that covered the tables. Collages of vintage fair postcards decorated the riser beneath each floral arrangement.

But despite all his decor, Hart says that the most prominent visual feature of the annual event is the hats guests wear. Also known as the "hat luncheon," the Garden Party looked like a sea of ornate hats once guests were seated, and toppers ranged from elegant to whimsical to kooky: One hat looked like an upside-down, pink flower, and another looked like a plot of grass topped with a shovel and a wagon. On the morning of the event, Hart finished his decorating duties by adding freshly-cut flowers to some of the guests' hats.

The homage to the 1930s fair continued during the cocktail reception, where specialty drinks were made with St. Germain liqueur, which comes in an Art Deco-style bottle that was displayed on the bar to give it an old-fashioned look. For dessert, waiters circulated with mini orange Dreamsicles and root-beer floats, which—according to the event program—were popular treats at the fair's soda fountains. — *Jenny Berg*