



For photos, interviews, etc. contact:
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations
510.647.2917, tkeane@berkeleyrep.org

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BERKELEY REP'S NARSAI TOAST NETS A RECORD \$485,000

Celebrity Chefs prepared Exquisite Meal at Annual Gourmet Gala and Wine Auction

MAY 1, 2006 – At the end of Berkeley Repertory Theatre's annual gala on Friday, more than 480 satisfied guests pushed back their chairs in the ballroom at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco. They had dined on five exquisite courses prepared by eight celebrity chefs, savored a prestigious selection of Northern California's finest wines, enjoyed a delicious musical treat from the renowned singer/songwriter known as **Stew**, and outbid each other to win exclusive collections of vintage wine and culinary adventures around the globe. But, most importantly, these philanthropic gourmards had set a new fundraising record for Berkeley Rep: the annual **Narsai Toast**, a gourmet gala and wine auction, netted an astonishing \$485,000 for this Tony Award-winning theatre, bringing the 13-year total for the event to an incredible \$3 million.

"As a founding trustee, it has been amazing to witness the growth of Berkeley Rep over the past three decades," said **Narsai David**, the local culinary expert who has hosted the Toast for 13 years. "Like a fine wine, the Theatre just gets better with age! It gives me great pride to support Berkeley Rep in this way, and we're still doing this event because of the generous and enthusiastic participation of our supporters in the arts, business, and culinary communities. I am particularly grateful for our wonderful chefs and for the volunteers who donate their time to make the Toast a success year after year."

"The Narsai Toast is glamorous, delicious, and elegant," remarked legendary actress **Rita Moreno**. "I love attending this event, and the only thing that could possibly keep me away from Berkeley Rep's benefit is performing on Berkeley Rep's stage." Ms. Moreno missed the event as she is starring in the Theatre's production of *The Glass Menagerie*, which has been extended through June 18.

"I am so impressed by the record-breaking success of this year's Narsai Toast," added **Susan Medak**, managing director of Berkeley Rep. "Many people don't realize that our theatre is a nonprofit organization. This gala is our major fundraiser, and we rely on the generosity of our guests to continue bringing world-class theatre to the Bay Area. We truly appreciate their ongoing contributions to support our artistic excellence, educational programs, and community outreach."

Over the past 13 years, the **Narsai Toast** has become the epitome of gastronomic excellence showcasing the talents of the country's leading chefs and thrilling the palates of local culinary connoisseurs. In previous years, the Toast presented the cuisine of celebrated chefs such as **Traci Des Jardins, Thomas Keller, Paul Prudhomme, Wolfgang Puck, Jeremiah Tower, and Charlie Trotter**. This year's event featured a delectable menu prepared by an incredible team:

- **Hors d'oeuvres by Jean-Pierre Dubray of the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco**, such as Seared Foie Gras with Harvest Apple Salad and Toasted Hazelnuts, served with the 2002 Brut Vintage Sparkling Wine from Domaine Carneros, the 2004 Conundrum from Conundrum Wines, and the 2003 Sonoma County Merlot from Simi Vineyards
- **First course by Laurent Manrique and Peter Armellino of Aqua**
Poached Alaskan Halibut with Asparagus and a Morel Mushroom Ragoût paired with the 2003 Napa Valley Reserve Chardonnay from Raymond Vineyards

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1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

- **Second course by Sean O'Brien of Myth**
Spring Agnolotti with Ramps, English Peas, and Preserved Lemon in a Parmesan Broth paired with the 2004 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley from J Vineyards & Winery and the 2004 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley from Merry Edwards Wines
- **Entrée by Bridget Batson and David Gingrass of Hawthorne Lane**
Spring Lamb Two Ways with Artichoke Mousse and Crispy Artichoke Chips paired with the 2002 Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon from Raymond Vineyards and the 2002 Ellen's Block Syrah from Russian Hill Estate Winery
- **Dessert by Stuart Brioza and Nicole Krasinski of Rubicon**
Wild Anise Chocolate Mousse with Espresso Shortbread and Fleur de Sel Caramel; Vanilla Bean Chèvre Mousse with Almonds and Rhubarb Soup; and the 2005 Essensia, an Orange Muscat Dessert Wine from Quady Winery
- **Musical treat by Stew and Heide Rodewald**
The acclaimed singer/songwriter and his longtime collaborator – known for their solo work and their recordings with a band called The Negro Problem – played a short, tasty set, which served as an appetizer for *Passing Strange*, the new show that will have its world premiere at Berkeley Rep in October

Auction winners went home with a priceless array of wines from private collections and from Northern California vineyards, as well as several extraordinary **culinary adventures**: a seven-night trip to Provence for ten guests, including accommodations at L'Ancienne Poste and a private tour of Domaine de Pegau in Chateauneuf du Pape; a seven-night stay in the medieval village of Anghiari, Italy, including accommodations for six in a 500-year-old farmhouse and airfare from American Airlines; a seven-night trip for two to Marrakech, including a stay in a luxury *palazzo*, along with meals and cooking lessons at the renowned Rhode School of Cuisine; a ten-person tour of Staglin Family Vineyard, including a private tasting with Winemaker **Luc Morlet** and an *al fresco* luncheon prepared by Chef **Peter Hall**; dinner for ten at the home of Narsai and **Venus David**; and more.

The 2006 Narsai Toast was supported by lead sponsor Fossil and four event sponsors: American Airlines; KCBS All News 740; the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco; and Sharper Image. This year's event was chaired by **Rich Edwards, William T. Espey, Dugan Moore, and Wayne Wilson** and made possible, in part, by the generosity of Citigroup Private Bank; DFS Group, Ltd; Rick Hoskins and Lynne Frame; Jefferies and Company; Macy's; Merrill Lynch Private Banking and Investment Group; Meyer Sound; the Roda Group; and Wells Fargo. Sponsors also include Steve Cassidy and Marjorie Randolph, Chevron, Foley & Lardner LLP, the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts, Goldman Sachs, Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Sarah McArthur and Michael LeValley, the Mechanics Bank, Peet's Coffee and Tea, Reed Smith, Sonnenschein Nath and Rosenthal LLP, and Michael and Sue Steinberg. All proceeds from the Narsai Toast support Berkeley Rep's mission to set a national standard for ambitious programming, engagement of its audiences, and leadership within the community.

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