



Princess Ubolratana is welcomed on arrival by (left) Jumbhot Chuasai, member of the executive committee of the Swiss Red Cross Ball 2006, and Thai Ambassador to Switzerland Pradap Pibulsonggram.



Princess Ubolratana with Ambassador Pradap Pibulsonggram and TAT Governor Jutamas Sirivan.

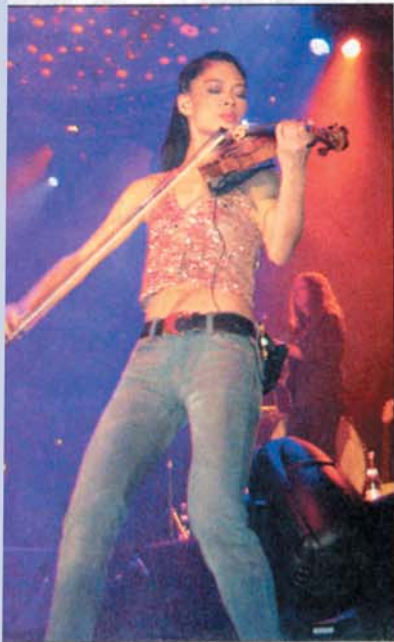


Princess Ubolratana with Prof Rene Rhinow, president of the Swiss Red Cross.

THAI NIGHT IN GENEVA

Swiss Red Cross Ball 2006 looked East for inspiration

IN THE **Limelight**
USNISA SUKHSVASTI



Vanessa-Mae in concert.



Patara Sila-on with Frank Eiamamornphan, guest of event sponsor Omega.



Somchainuk Engtrakul and Vasing Kittikul of Thai Airways International, one of the main sponsors of the event.



Varaporn Polla, MR Charuwan Rangsit and ML Nandhika Varavara of Bangkok Airways.

The Arena exhibition centre in Geneva, normally an impersonal mix of cement, steel and glass, took on a distinctly warm, sumptuous and exotic look when it hosted the recent Swiss Red Cross Ball 2006.

Organised under the theme "Night of the Orchids", the Red Cross gala dinner — arguably the highlight of Geneva's social calendar — looked East for its 2006 concept, and as a result, the entire Arena and Hall 7 had been transformed into a huge fuschia and purple fantasyland, the colours of the exotic orchid.

Thailand was a major player in this year's event, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Switzerland and Thailand, and the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne. The numbers game extended also to the 140th anniversary of the Red Cross for which Geneva can claim to be the birthplace, and also the 140th anniversary of the Hotel Beau Rivage, one of the major sponsors of the annual Swiss Red Cross gala dinner, which is in its 5th year.

As such, Thailand made its presence felt, most prominently by the attendance of Princess Ubolratana, who herself was born in Lausanne, Switzerland. She arrived to a barrage of camera flashes, elegant in a contemporary Thai gown in purple and fuschia by Pichita, and jewellery from Van Cleef & Arpels, both sponsors of the event. The Arena had been transformed into a greenery of hanging orchids and lush tented pavilions where guests greeted each other in their finest designer gowns and jewellery, and enjoyed their Moët&Chandon in ultra long-stemmed tulip glasses or meandered over to the special bar by Ciageo.

At 8pm guests had moved through



Panphen na Nakorn, Jacques Mayer, Pichitra Boonyarataphan and Ketsuda Raiva.



Amaret, Patara and Vitoon Sila-on.

the orchid tunnel to their respective tables. A fusion dinner menu had been prepared by the Hotel Beau Rivage in association with Patara Fine Thai Cuisine, which has become one of the landmarks of Thai fine dining in Geneva. The menu consisted of such Thai-infused delicacies as "Vichyssoise de crevettes au lait de coco" — an unusual cold *tom kha kung* which actually turned out beautifully refreshing as an item on the appetiser plate.

The main course was a *panang* curry of Bourgogne guinea-hen, while the dessert offering included mango sorbet and mousse of black chocolate and ginger. This was washed down delicately with wines offered by HSH The Prince d'Arenberg.

Then it was time to sit back and enjoy the stage programme, which began with a fashion show from Pichita, designed by Thailand's own Pichitra Boonyarataphan. A selection of top Thai models showed a collection of stunning outfits, all made from Thai silk from Her Majesty the Queen's Support Foundation. These

were accessorised with jewellery by Van Cleef & Arpels and watches from Omega, two of the event's sponsors.

The richness of the colour and brocade of the collection only served to whet the guests' appetite for the next part of the programme, the eagerly awaited charity auction. Conducted by Christie's Francois Curiel, the auction rapidly disposed of such jaw-dropping items as a signed tennis racket from Roger Federer, a custom-made electric Mini Cooper Cabrio in hot metallic orange, a Harley-Davidson painted with a Chinese Dragon motif, a Netjet flight to Barcelona to meet Ronaldinho with tickets to a match of your choice, a photo op with the man himself, as well as a signed T-shirt.

The highlight of the auction was two first class tickets on Thai International to Bangkok and three nights at the Baan Thai Wellness Resort with treatment at the Baan Thai Spa in Bangkok thrown in for good measure. After getting fitted for a gown from Pichita, the trip continues to Phuket and a five-night stay at the Amanpuri. And to complete the luxury

trip, the package also included a travel set from Louis Vuitton.

Other auction items included a necklace and ring set by Van Cleef & Arpels and a trip from Omega to attend the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

With the excitement of the auction over, it was time to relax and enjoy a special concert by Vanessa-Mae. She dazzled with her personal brand of classical, jazz and pop adaptations, and delighted the crowd with her perfect enunciated French.

It was almost midnight by the time Vanessa-Mae wound up her live performance, but party-time had just begun. With music from The Goldsinners, the dance floor soon filled to maximum capacity. Those who couldn't find a spot on the floor were content to boogie at their tables.

A total of 700,000 Swiss francs (2 million baht) were raised that evening for the Swiss Red Cross's Victims of Forgotten Disasters Campaign, but donations are still being received, so the grand total is expected to be somewhat higher.



Miss Switzerland Lauriane Gillieron on the custom-painted Harley Davidson VRSCR Street Roadster with a 'Chinese Dragon' motif.