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Easing the Tension

The socialite and songwriter **Denise Rich** played the part of glamorous maître d' at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday night, her trademark décolletage buried under ropes of diamonds as she greeted guests at the Angel Ball, a benefit for her cancer foundation.

“For once you look dignified!” her friend **Richard Turley** — “a Bronx socialite,” he told us — said to her. The singer **Natalie Cole** embraced Ms. Rich, a longtime friend.

“We’ve been buddies” for years, Ms. Cole said. “I mean, we’ve slept together.” Mr. Turley interjected to clarify: what she meant was that they had both slept on Ms. Rich’s boat.

Patti LaBelle performed before a crowd that included **Solange Knowles**, sister of Beyoncé. Ms. Knowles wore a stunning one-sleeved, columnar white shift dress dotted with pearls. She had planned to wear it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s costume ball in May, she said, but en route from London it was ensnared in customs.

Desirée Rogers, former social secretary at the Obama White House, sat, wearing a cloud of pink feathers, next to the model **Naomi Campbell**. We asked Ms. Campbell and her boyfriend, **Vladislav Doronin**, about a green house we had heard was being built for her. Ms. Campbell’s eyes flashed. “You’re not asking about the stupid eco-friendly house, are you?” she said. “It’s not true; this guy is just using my name to sell property. My lawyers are dealing with it right now.”

We worried that we had angered her, but Mr. Doronin saved us, showing us pictures on his BlackBerry of the Zaha Hadid-designed house he is actually building, in a forest near Moscow. The master bedroom was elevated, Seattle Space Needle-style, several stories above the rest of the house.

“How do you get up there?” Ms. Rogers asked.

“Elevator,” Mr. Doronin said with a smile.