

The Greek Gods & Goddesses Party was an Ode to Grecian Glamour. International celebrities came from everywhere, and some took the dress code very seriously. Della herself, surrounded by glorious Gods wearing little loin clothes and showing that fab abs, was dressed as a Goddess. Diamonds and Gold jewelry were on display on many great plunging necklines. Apart from the speeches, there were men who played huge drums stationed around the perimeter. Men and women dancing the Syrtaki, and a fireworks display that wowed the crowd.

Among the New Yorkers making the trip were Ivana Trump and her recently announced fiance, Rossano Ribicondi...famed interior designers Geoffrey Bradfield and John Barman, Michele and Larry Herbert, Stephen and Louise Kornfield, Donna and Dick Soloway, Lucia Hwong Gordon...on and on and on into the night and day. From Turkey via New York was Ender Mermerci and her beautiful daugh-

ters Tansa and Yosun and their handsome husbands.

Sunday brought a party on the beach, and the wining and dining went on for another four hours. We needed a rest.

Monday the exodus began. For hundreds, if not thousands of years, the Turks and Greeks have been at war, their enmity is deep. But, with the rising of Islamist Turkey, many Turks are now turning a wary eye to a foe of another kind. In any case, Della and Ender bridged the eternal gap in the world's most international City - New York, where they became fast friends. With so many friends being in Greece, Ender extended the party to Turkey, and the trek to Istanbul began on Monday. Of course, planes being what they are, one arrived and left on time, the connecting flight didn't so a boring day was had in Athens airport - and there is little to commend that destination.

ISTANBUL - even the sound of it is exotic and romantic, where East (Asia) meets West (Europe), where Sultans ruled Empires for centuries. Where the three major world religions - Christian, Jew and Muslim meet at peace. It is a land of the past, that is having a hard time determining its future. Whether it will remain a secular (non-religious) state, or move towards Islamism and a more religious outlook was everywhere around us - and before us on the barges and advertising boats that went by on the Bosphorus. The national election was held the day after we left - and the Muslims carried the day, to the great pain of the opposition. Now they have to sort out what their future will be, how they will fit into the world. Their need and want to be in the EU seems further away now, as having a radical Muslim country in the midst of once Christian Europe doesn't excite too many Europeans.

But, we were there to have a good time - and that was so easy. Ciragan Palace is the home of the last Ottoman Sultans. The ancient palace has been restored and used for great and grand events. The hotel is of similar size and replicates some of the features of the ancient. But the infinity pools seemingly reaching into the Bosphorus...the exotic resort atmosphere, grand sweeping lobbies, breakfast buffets with 100 items to choose from (you could have breakfast from almost every culture). The Ciragan Palace is an oasis of calm, tranquility, beauty and a 21st century business center. I think it's the only place to stay.

Istanbul was a whirling dervish round of entertainment - including an evening trip to see those famed dervishes do their mad dances. Ender spared no expense to entertain her guests - and several hundred others all along the trip. From islands in the middle of the Bosphorus, fashion shows and music sponsored by Chopard, to glamorous trips down the Bosphorus in the Sultan's barge (which raises quite a few eyebrows - especially the ancient way boatmen are clad!).

One glamorous luncheon and next evening's dinner was at the magnificently restored Les Ottomans Hotel. The elegance, discreet wait service, pools that float into the river, exquisite dining, superb wines, these were days to remember. The evening to remember was at the Ottoman's Hotel, nestled at the edge of the Bosphorus, this candlelit dinner could have been in Venice, Monaco or any other place of great beauty, romance and gracious hospitality. This was the ultimate



Ivana Trump, Francesco Vitali and models at the Ivana Fashion Show - Mykonos

evening of glamour, all the women were beautiful, and all the men were handsome, the food and wine was delectable, and gentle water breezes kept everyone cool. It was a Night to Remember.

Ender also laid on a riverboat ride from the Ciragan Palace, thank heavens a more relaxed evening on a large and stable boat which sailed up river then down river and it was fascinating to see this beautiful city from the water. It's hard to imagine a major city which is so spread out. Nor one that straddles two continents - Europe and Asia. We saw more of Europe than Asia, but it is definitely a non-European capital. The Grand Bazaar captivated everyone for distracting periods of time. Some chose to sightsee, some to sunbathe, some to work, most to play. Many famous Turks joined us and were gracious in their welcomes to the visiting Yanks. Famed Turkish designer Atil Kutoglu joined the revelries at different parties, as did many VIP Istanbul residents.



Bosphorous cruise: Albert Khodara, Fay Bachman, Suha Yusuf, Catherine Saxton and Marisa Bonano

TIME TO GO HOME ...yes there does come that time. For me it was back to New York. For others it was St. Tropez for their round of major parties...others to Capri...others to Israel, back to Greece, home to London, and on and on and on.