

Hillary House Ball: Now in Glorious Black and White

By Brock Weir

There's a reason classic films are often presented in glorious black and white.

The combo is, by definition, monochrome but it's anything but monotonous.

Truman Capote knew it when he threw his legendary Black & White Ball in 1966, and, 53 years later, the Aurora Historical Society knows it too, as they put the finishing touches on their eighth annual Hillary House Ball.

The Hillary House Black & White Ball will take place October 26, 2019 at the Royal Venetian Mansion on Industrial Parkway South, something of a homecoming for the Hillary House Ball, which celebrated its first event at the space before a long run at a King Township golf club.

Last year's Ball was a sold-out affair and organizers are aiming for this year's Ball to be bigger and better than ever.

Our goal this year is fun, fun, fun, says event chair Patricia Wallace. One of the key words from the feedback we got last year was that it was a fun Ball, it wasn't stodgy, and it wasn't the same old thing, so we want to build on that. We're back at the Royal Venetian Mansion, which is really exciting and it means we can welcome more guests, which is fabulous. Our vision is to give as many people as we can fit into that room a fun evening and let them know why they are there, what they are supporting and how important that is to the fabric of Aurora.

Why they will be there and what they are supporting is Hillary House, the Yonge Street landmark, built in 1862, which is Aurora's only National Historic Site, and one of only three National Historic Sites in York Region. Located on 2.5 acres of lawns and gardens and owned by the Aurora Historical Society, Hillary House gets some funding from all three levels of government, but it is just a little bit. The rest of the House including indoor and outdoor upkeep, events, and educational program is primarily run via grant funding and fundraisers such as the Ball.

The reality is we need those donor dollars, says Ms. Wallace. We need the donor dollars to keep this place operating as a museum that is open to the public and with a house of this age, grounds that are significant, it is not a cheap venture. There's restoration and there's just the general upkeep of any house you would have. It is important that people have an opportunity to support Hillary House as a heritage site and at Hillary House you can put your money where your mouth is; people have a chance to put their money towards something that really matters to the Town.

?The don't just do it blindly, either. We're an open book. You can see what your money goes to here and you can target your money. You can target giving to the new nursery we hope to restore, you can target giving to landscaping projects, exhibit projects, programs for children ? it is not just bricks and mortar you're donating to solely, it is programs and education.?

Opportunities to give through the Hillary House Ball are not just limited to ticket sales. The event itself will include the chance to ?adopt an artefact?, that is, putting money towards the upkeep of specific objects housed at Hillary House for the year, a silent auction, and more.

One of the most wildly successful items in last year's silent auction, An Evening at Hillary House, which offered the winning bidder a private, catered evening at the house, with live entertainment and more, will be back this year ? offered at different scales for different prices.

As patrons contribute to a worthy cause, they will do so to the sounds of live music, presented by Soul Benefit, while their magic moments ? including their black and white wardrobe (suggested, but not required) is captured by Glenn Rodger Photography.

?We just want to have fun and celebrate bringing the Ball back to Aurora,? says Ms. Wallace. ?It is a beautiful place and we thought we would just keep it simple with our Black and White Ball ? although you might see a pop of red or silver somewhere, with a little bit of sparkle ? actually, we will have a lot of sparkle to make it fun ? throughout. As it is a Black and White Ball, guests can come in anything from their favourite little black dress, to a tuxedo, or anything black and white you have in your closet that you can have fun with. We don't take ourselves too seriously.

?We want you to be comfortable, have fun dressing up, have your picture taken, whether candid or a portrait, by the wonderful Glenn Rodger, and dance to the music of Soul Benefit.?

Tickets to the 2019 Hillary House Black & White Ball, which will take place Saturday, October 26 at the Royal Venetian Mansion, are on sale now for \$155 per person, \$145 for Aurora Historical Society Members, or \$1,450 or a table of 10. For more information, call 905-727-8991 or email community@aurorahs.com.