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DESIGN UNDER THE PINES

rda gala.com

RDA's 2000 gala honors BMC Software

BY LINDA L. SYLVAN

A SLIGHT NOVEMBER CHILL in the air didn't keep the Rice Design Alliance's 14th annual fundraising gala from being the hottest event in Houston last fall. The 2000 version of the gala, dubbed RDAgala.com and held "under the pines" on BMC Software's beautifully landscaped west Houston campus, once again broke all records in terms of attendance, underwriting contributions, and auction receipts. More than \$400,000 was raised to support RDA programs, among them *Cite*, in the new millennium.

The evening honored BMC Software for design excellence in a workplace environment. Tables for dining were set up outdoors in a venue that reminded many guests of a European park setting, while California heaters and a tent that covered items being offered up for a silent auction provided warmth for the gala's attendees.

graphics by CORE Design Studio/CORE Design Studio 2000

Concern about possible rain showers led W.S. Bellows Construction, which is working on two new buildings for BMC, to prepare an entire floor of one of their under-construction towers to house the gala's guests in case of a downpour. The worries, though, turned out to be unnecessary. The Saturday, November 4 evening was cool and crisp, but it was never wet.

More than 900 guests were welcomed to BMC by gala chairs Kimberly and James Burnett, along with RDA president Tom Bellows and underwriting chairmen Marilyn Archer and Bill Donovan. Burnett, a landscape architect who has long admired the landscaping at BMC, was among those who first decided that outdoors on the company's campus would be a perfect location for the RDA Gala. RDA president Bellows then clinched the deal with then-BMC president and CEO Max Watson. At the gala, Watson was presented RDA's design excellence award, a "Magnolia" Steuben glass bowl donated by Neiman Marcus Town & Country.

The gala's setting was the heart of BMC Software's 25-acre campus, which offers the company's employees opportunities for recreation to go along with their work. One of the primary goals of BMC's building and campus design was to create a facility that would attract and retain talented personnel, something vitally important in the highly competitive software industry. The corporate headquarters complex features two high-rise buildings, Phase I by Keating, Mann, Jernigan & Rottet and Phase II by DMJM Keating. Phases III and IV of the complex, designed by DMJM, are under construction. When completed, they will double BMC's current facilities. The campus grounds contain mature live oaks and pine trees, granite fountains and sculptures, slate walkways, and herb and flower gardens. BMC employees enjoy state-of-the-art facilities in addition to amenities such as a basketball court, a fitness center, outdoor recreation areas, and two restaurants with four resident chefs.

Environment chair Larry Lander was assisted by Rebeka Johnson in designing the "high-tech, high-touch" theme that had been specified by the Burnetts for the gala. The pines were hung with cascading flowers on candelabras, while the centerpieces on the dining tables featured orchids, lilies, and natural grasses in bamboo containers. Fiona McGettigan and



Photo by Phyllis Beard

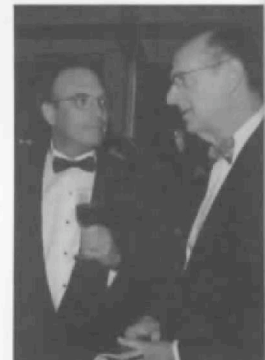
Alan Krathaus of Core Design designed the gala invitation and program as well as the graphics for the gala's environment, graphics that included a colorful "RDAgala.com" logo projected on the BMC parking garage that acted as a beacon for the gala's guests.

The crowd of architects, design professionals, and urban dwellers bid hotly on more than 200 items featured in a silent auction organized by Dee Ann Rogers and her talented committee. Interior designer Joan Miller, artist friend Pam Johnson, and her husband Carl lent their designer touch to the presentation of the auction items. Among those items was a fine selection of furniture gathered together by Andrea Crawmer from the lines she carries at the ofis by Powell. Some of the more popular items up for bid were getaways to Puerto Aventuras, Mexico, Steamboat Springs, New Orleans, Big Bend, Galveston, and any one of the Omni Hotel resorts. Rice architecture students assisted in setting up the silent auction and acted as spotters at the brief live auction of works by artists Jesús Bautista Moroles and Edward Lee Hendricks.

Both artists are represented in BMC's art collection. Moroles' sculpture, *Chinese Ocean Mist*, was snapped up by Max Watson for his company's new campus, and Audrey Marnoy was the winning bidder on Hendricks' kinetic sculpture, *1999 XVI*. Gallery owner Robert McClain of Robert McClain & Co. facilitated the artists' generous donation of artwork.

Jackson Hicks of Jackson & Company supervised the delicious dinner for the guests, which began with a steaming bowl of cream of mushroom soup. Yvonne Washington and the Mix provided the evening's entertainment.

The RDA board of directors would like to thank all of the gala committee chairs and volunteers as well as the RDA staff for making the 2000 gala such a success. We would also like to recognize our underwriters, contributors, and auction donors for their generous contributions.



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