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# Montecito

# JOURNAL

*The Voice of the Village*

**WEEKLY**

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# STATE STREET SPIN

by Erin Graffy de Garcia



## Jazz at the G



Jessy J plays her smooth sounds on the inaugural night of "Upstairs at the G" (photo by Chad Sands)

So the buzz is out...that new performing club at the Granada was a hit out of the ballpark.

"Upstairs at the G" – the brainchild of **Sarah Chrisman** (board president of The Granada) and her husband, **Roger** – was the name given to the Founders Room re-visioned as a tony nightclub.

A curious but excited group of about 100 crowded in for the inaugural night, which featured the up-and-coming young jazz artist, tenor sax player **Jessy J**.

The room is already stunning, and the setup with cabaret tables and small candles provided the perfect setting. Around the room, I saw **Mary Ellen Tiffany**, **Jennifer Jimmerson**, **Betty Stephens** and **Lindsay Fisher**, **Stefanie** and **Chuck Slosser**, **Kourtney Darr**, **John Demourkas**, **Elsbeth Kleen** and **Ken Clements**. **Adele Rosen** and **Sybil Rosen** invited us to join them at their table, and we all ordered some appetizers from the Marquee Restaurant, which was catering light fare for the evening.

Great concept.



Ms Graffy is author of "Society Lady's Guide on How to Santa Barbara," is a longtime Santa Barbara resident and a regular attendee at many society affairs and events; she can be reached at 687-6733

After winning national awards as a talented teen pianist, **Jessy J** graduated USC in jazz studies playing tenor sax. She did studio work, played jazz festivals and toured prior to her recording career, which began after producer-guitarist **Paul Brown** listened to her demo and gave her a spot on his own tour. Her first major solo performance was at the Catalina JazzTrax Festival in 2006, where Sarah and Roger first heard her, I believe.

Jessy opened her set with several contemporary jazz numbers before launching into her hit, *Tequila Moon*. Working through the program she also shared several original compositions. Her tone was certainly reminiscent of John Coltrane, and when my hus-



Jessy opened her set with several contemporary jazz numbers before launching into her hit, "Tequila Moon" (photo by Chad Sands)

band (also a woodwind player) spoke with her afterward, Jessy said she was indeed influenced by Coltrane. She was also a great admirer of Sergio Mendes and his *Brazil 66*, to wit, she sang "Mas Que Nada." More hits from her albums followed including "True Love" and "Tropical Rain."

Jessy J oozes jazz. She looks stunning, she moves sexy, she sings smooth and she can really handsomely honk her horn; what's not to like? On top of that, she had a gifted and talented backup band. (Talk about multi-tasking! The dexterous drummer was playing congas a-mile-a-minute with his left hand while keeping the set going with his right hand – how'd he do dat?)

As the music got hotter, the room steamed up. Up came the dancing girls – they were not on the program but definitely were part of the entertainment.

Somebody launched a Santa Barbara Conga Line, and people were dancing through the room. But here's a twist: Jessy herself joined the end of the line.

Well, by then all happy hell had broken loose. The audience was ready to hear anything and everything. The band went full blown Latin jazz. "Oye Como Va" ...we all sang along! They performed a medley of "La Bamba," then incorporated "Guantanamera" and segued ultimately into "Twist and Shout."

Jessy's father was there, and to add to the fun, it was his birthday. Naturally we all had to pitch in and sing...some with more pitch than others.

Wow! Great evening, great launch. We all swore that those of us in attendance should have first right of refusal on any future performances. Sarah and Roger foresee more jazz, as well as Broadway, comedy, magic and other appropriate entertainment.

It'll be happening... Upstairs at the G.