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## 21C museum hotel debuts, exploring the art of partying

Folks were jammin' amid performances

By **Christa Ritchie**  
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The Courier-Journal

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Tickets to see Cirque du Soleil at Louisville's trendiest hotel: \$1,000 a pop.

The cost to check out a who's who of Louisville folks partying on Main Street in their pajamas: Priceless.

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That was the scene at the 21C Museum Hotel last night as a couple of hundred partygoers, most decked out in silk PJs and nightgowns, celebrated the contemporary art hot spot's grand opening celebration.

"This is the hippest party going down this weekend," shouted artist Dan Dutton of Somerset, Ky., who turned heads in an ivory linen nightshirt



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A Cirque du Soleil performer swept Cheryl Goodin of Versailles, Ky., off her feet at the grand opening celebration of the 21C Museum Hotel last night. The two-night event benefits the 21C Museum Foundation, which runs the hotel's art museum. (By Michael Clevenger, The Courier-Journal)

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from Berlin, a silk Chinese-print smoking jacket and lime green lace underpants.

"What could be more of a celebration than partying in your pajamas on Main Street, having a cocktail and watching the circus?" he asked.

Steve Wilson and Laura Lee Brown, owners and developers of 21C, also wore bedtime attire to the cocktail party that began the festivities on

the sidewalk at Seventh and Main streets, in front of 21C.

"We're so excited, the whole city has gotten into the spirit," Wilson said.

Wilson definitely caught some eyes over the glittery silver shoes he paired with his black silk pajamas. "I got these from Michael Jackson's garage sale," he cracked.

Many passers-by may have wondered why a pajama party was going on, but Brown had a quick answer. "What better place to have a pajama party than a hotel?"

The entertainment included an art show courtesy of rock 'n' roll artist Brian Olsen, who used his paint-covered fingertips, palms and elbows to create portraits of John Lennon and Madonna -- while dancing to their tunes.

The Cirque du Soleil show was to begin at 11 p.m.

Some revelers wrote messages to Lexington artist Lauren Argo, who has been living in an 8-by-5-foot window space at Proof on Main, the restaurant at the hotel, the past seven days.

Just before 7 p.m. a chandelier created by Austrian artist Werner Reiterer that will hang outside 21C was unveiled. It has multiple color changes and a device that lets it make breathing sounds.

Louisville attorney Jack Conway arrived wearing black tie. "I'm walking through here and everyone's wearing pajamas, and I feel so lame."

Conway was among the many who talked about how great a place like 21C is for Louisville. "It's like a little bit of SoHo has been transplanted on Main

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Street."

Congressional candidate John Yarmuth agreed. "This is the image Louisville should be portraying ... a daring, exciting, innovative community."

At 7 p.m., guests headed indoors to Proof on Main for a five-course meal with such dishes as braised bison and rainbow trout wrapped in country ham-fennel. Even the centerpieces on the tables were works of art -- bright pink, orange and purple cotton candy configurations in pots surrounded by flowers.

The grand opening celebration is a benefit for the 21C Museum Foundation, the nonprofit organization that runs the hotel's art museum.

The celebration continues tonight at 21C with Olsen offering free performances of his painting beginning at 7 p.m.

Reporter Christa Ritchie can be reached at (502) 582-4144.

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