

Moroccan party transforms zoo parking deck into 'Casbah'

LANA MIRO
STAFF WRITER

"There's never been an experience, or an event, like this in Detroit."

Strong words, entrepreneur Dante Di Miro knows. But the public party he's planning is so grand and unique he knows it'll be a conversation piece for quite some time. His events are always big.

Di Miro's company, Gemini Entertainment, is transforming the Detroit Zoo's rooftop parking structure into a colorful Moroccan Casbah underneath a grand exotic tent on Friday August 30.

Rock the Casbah runs 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. at the zoo, located at Woodward and I-696 service drive. General tickets are \$35. Tickets for the VIP reception that starts at 7 p.m. are \$75.

Dancing, fire eaters, Moroccan and techno music from a huge 45,000 watt sound system, Egyptian henna tattoo artists, rich velvet lounging furniture, big colorful pillows from exotic fabrics, torch jugglers, Moroccan belly dancers and American dancers, people walking on glass, hors d'oeuvres, stilt walkers and more will fill the parking structure.

'I've fallen in love with events like this.'

Dante Di Miro
Gemini Entertainment

Think North African and Middle Eastern sights, sounds and ambience.

Rooftop parties are en vogue in Los Angeles but Di Miro, of Livonia, doesn't like to imitate the west coast.

"This is unique. What we're doing is taking people halfway around the world and dropping them at their doorstep."

And just because it's rooftop, do not expect it to look like one. Gemini Entertainment is known for attention to details — last year's MTV party at Tonic nightclub in Pontiac is still being talked about, as is the pool party thrown at the Ponce de Leon rooftop this summer.

Expect a grand Casbah. For example, guests at this party will be treated with elegance. No "Port-A-John" restrooms here. Instead, Di Miro will have executive bathrooms brought to the rooftop on a crane. Tissue-flame

style torch lamps and perhaps even giant large video screens will add to the Casbah fortress that will be seen from Woodward and I-696.

"I've fallen in love with events like this," Di Miro said. "I know how to give people what they want and they want something different."

Artists Francis Sims and Cherine Abdalla, who co-owns The Henna Room in Detroit, are excited about Rock the Casbah.

Both women will be there creating temporary, detailed and elaborate henna art on patrons. She calls it body jewelry. Colors range from rust to black cherry.

At Rock the Casbah, each guest pays \$7 for painted henna art on their bodies which normally costs \$20 or up. The Henna Room is a traveling henna business attending private and corporate parties upon request.

Even The Clash's 1980s hit *Rock the Casbah* was been re-mixed just for the event. Di Miro said partygoers will also hear a few other 1980s hits re-mixed as well too — all with danceable beats. The structure floors will be renamed for the evening "Oasis Level" and "Sahara Level."

The reason Di Miro has given his

heart to Rock The Casbah is that proceeds will benefit not only the zoo, but also the families of Michigan police officers. His best friend, Kenny Dittmore, who is recently deceased, held a personal concern for Michigan families of law enforcement. In Dittmore's honor, a charity was formed called Kenny's Angels to help those people. Di Miro plays a key role.

Rana Kozouz of the Detroit Zoo said she hopes the event will reintroduce young professionals, between the ages of 25-40 to the zoo.

The energetic Di Miro has been hosting parties since his days at Marygrove College where his dorm room parties were attended by students from MSU, U of M, Wayne and more.

"I was the doorman and the security guard back then," he laughed.

For Rock the Casbah, companies like Fox 2, Clear magazine, Verso entertainment, Zodiak Vodka and more have jumped on board to assist.

"The only regret people will have is if they don't come," Di Miro said.

With sultry music and entertainment under Moroccan tent all for a good cause, he may be right.



A fire-eater lights up the night with a cloud of hot, bright flames. Fire-eaters, dancers and more will entertain at Rock the Casbah on Friday, Aug. 30.

Characters, confusing plot overshadow prose in debut novel

THE EGG CODE

by Mike Heppner (Allred A. Knopf, \$25.95)

BY VICKI DIAZ
CORRESPONDENT

OK. Begin in Washington D.C. on Inauguration Day 1989. Next, let's switch to London toward the end of the Second World War. Then, it's 1998, and we find ourselves

near an unknown lake with autumn in the air. Then, a self-help seminar in St. Louis in 1980; then a party at a palatial Michigan mansion eight years earlier; then a family argument over lamb steaks circa 1989.

Jump ahead nine years to a September afternoon in a place called Big Dipper Township. Proceed to 1998, and a dinky furniture store called Living Arrangements. Next, we're on

the Internet, visiting a site reached via www.eggcode.com.

In addition to these highly diverse locations and time periods, over the course of this doorstopper-sized novel we drop in on a young dancer's dream, a psychiatric examining room, the Kellogg Corporation in Battle Creek, a strange tower in the middle of a lake. And on. And on.

Moving in and out of all

BOOK REVIEW

these spots are enough characters to populate a Russian novel — and most have names that would fit nicely in the funny pages. Kay Tree is a cryptologist. Bartholomew Hesse, a prosperous United States publisher, is a descendant of Johann Gutenberg. Simon Tree-Mould is the young, strange grandson of Kay Tree. Derek Skye is a slavishly admired motivational speaker/author who doesn't believe his own speechifying. Steve Mould is the blithery father of the aforementioned Simon.

Olden Field is a handsome loner who fools around with a "Reduced Instruction Set Computing Processor, far more elegant than the high-profile Pentium." *Scarlet Blessing* is a kind of butterfly-brained dancer who catches his eye. Cam Fee, born in Southeast Asia, is the CEO of Living Arrangements. Gray Hollows is an ad man with a "talent for understanding the underlying crassness at the heart of any new marketing campaign." And the list goes on. And on. And on.

Wait—you can't be confused yet. We've not even touched upon plot.

While I'm not totally clear

on it myself, it all appears to do with the printed word and the electronic word down through the ages. More specifically here, we're dealing with a router called the Gloria 21169, which is a part of the Gloria Corporation, based in Ann Arbor. Let's just say that Gloria is up to no good, and that its "intentions" affect, in ways large and small, just about every one of the characters in this novel (which, by the way, might put you in mind of *The World According to Garp* or *2001*, or both, or neither).

The Egg Code is so titled for at least three reasons. The term

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