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by Alan Peppard

Alan Peppard: Can you FIG it?

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While cobwebs multiply in the Apparel Mart, downtown's Fashion Industry Gallery (FIG) is at the epicenter of the Arts District/Uptown/Victory boomlet. It is host to five annual trade shows for high-end specialty and department stores.

Next Thursday, FIG kicks off its June market with what looks to be a very hip evening of jazz and cocktails with designer Chan Luu, who's jetting in from LA. Channel 11 entertainment reporter Christina McLarty will conduct a Q&A with Chan.

FIG occupies two floors of Southwest Plaza, the once-neglected modernist masterpiece on Ross Avenue, between the Fairmont and the DMA, by architect George Dahl. Developer John Sughrue and his company, Brook Partners, rescued the building and Stephan Pyles restaurant is their most high-profile tenant.

Weighty issue

Husband-and-wife moguls Ed and Lee Bailey own more than 60 McDonald's franchises - the elegant ones with exotic woods and chandeliers - and recently purchased Patrizio restaurants from Dallas businessman Jack Knox. (Actually, they bought 90.42 percent of public company Sixx Holdings, owner of Patrizio, from Jack.) What surprises could be left for a duo with this much experience? "Did you know that one has to list their weight on a liquor license application?" a shocked Lee asks. "That's what I call a deal breaker."

Tech and real estate partnership

Saturday night, real estater Denny Alberts and techie titan Cynthia Comparin celebrated a significant merger, their marriage. As president of Crescent Real Estate Equities, Denny is the laird of Uptown. He's building the luxury Ritz-Carlton condo and hotel complex where chef Dean Fearing will open his new restaurant. Cynthia is CEO of Animato Technologies. They just returned from a honeymoon in Portofino on the Italian Riviera, and friends gathered Saturday night to toast them at a party in Arlington Hall at Lee Park. Among the guests was a friend from a past life. When Denny was president of Rosewood Property Co., he made Mansion on Turtle Creek managing director Atef Mankarios president of Rosewood Hotels. Atef now runs the Mankarios Partnership hotel consulting firm.

About-townners

Speed-skating world champion and Spring, Texas, native son Chad Hedrick was spotted dining with friends at the hip Café Toulouse on Knox Street. ... Boxing champ Evander Holyfield dined at Rafain Brazilian Churrascaria while in town for an outreach service at Covenant Church in Carrollton.

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