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JESSICA BRINTON

PEOPLE LIKE THEM

*** MOTHER FIGURE**
 At dinner parties up and down the country, people are asking what, in these new times, is to become of that reliable consumer of baby cashmere and designer buggies, the yummy mummy? This week PLT can reveal the arrival of her warmer, cosier, much less annoying replacement, the "mother universal". It wasn't the unveiling of the Smythson sewing kit (below right) that prompted this revelation, nor the arrival of Sheherazade Goldsmith's new craft book, though these both have Women's Institute written all over them. It was a jumble sale hosted by Camila Batmanghelidjh, founder of children's charity Kids Company (middle). Who should be trailing Batmanghelidjh, but yummy-mummy nonpareil Gwyneth Paltrow (right). "We're a bit overwhelmed," admitted the Kids Company PR. Seeing Gwyn vigorously nodding away to a dance performance by some of the kids, it was clearly the other way around.



TOTTY DE BOUVIER

PEOPLE LIKE ME



Where were you when Barack Obama became president-elect? The irrepressible socialite Nona Summers told me that she was propped up in bed in her Knightsbridge flat, cigarette in one hand and celebratory drink in the other, but most people I know used the election as an excuse to get out, stay up late and party.

The hunky actor Josh Hartnett went to the big bash at the American embassy in London, which was all decked out in stars and stripes. Over in LA, the place to be was Courteney Cox and David Arquette's house. They hosted an Obama victory party, with Jennifer Aniston, John Mayer, Isla Fisher and Sacha Baron Cohen for company. David was so excited that he even shared his champagne with the paparazzi who were camped outside. As for me, I'd have loved to have been at Grant Park in Chicago, mopping Oprah's tears, but it wasn't to be.




*** WONDER WOMAN**
 To the Mayfair launch of Diane "inventor of the wrap dress" von Furstenberg's latest collection, Wonder Woman. The shop was full of her friends, including Erin O'Connor and Erik Wachtmeister, founder of asmallworld.net. Of course, the main topic was wonder women and how to be one. There was universal agreement that it has nothing to do with age. "It's the confidence to accept you're different," said Erin. At the back of the shop, regally receiving guests, was DVF, and she agreed. "Yes, it's all about self-belief," she said. And given that she is a princess married to a billionaire and heads up a multimillion dollar fashion company, one was inclined to take her word for it.

*** HEAD SPACE**
 Jo Wood launched two organic fragrances at House of Fraser on Oxford Street. Oh how PLT loves Jo, inasmuch as we relate to her suffering and are rendered awestruck at her grace and resilience in the face of her bloke behaving like such a ponce. I asked her how she was. "Women are stronger than men, but we must look after ourselves," she said serenely. "I go out a lot these days, but I always make a pot of organic soup for when I get home. I have great girlfriends, and I'm good at standing on my head. At home, I often feel the need to do something, so I do that for five minutes. I'm so busy concentrating, I can't think of anything else."





*** LEVEL PEGGING**
 And a word from the Esquire magazine Man at the Top awards, on how everyone is coping with the, you know, challenging economic conditions. Optimism and jollity were very much the order of the day. "As an investor, I've not seen such low prices for years," said James Caan from the BBC's Dragons' Den. "It's been rebalancing — quite an uncomfortable feeling, very raw and challenging to the mind. But there are plenty of opportunities, if one is brave," said Elle Macpherson. Only the bloody-minded Simon Pegg broke rank. "People are laughing slightly more," he said. "But they've also become mercilessly hateful."

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