

# Parties: Boho-toffs descend on Merriscourt for Flora Fairbairn's private view

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Last weekend, 600 boho-toffs and their famous friends – including willowy model Saffron Aldridge – converged on the Oxfordshire hamlet of Merriscourt for the private view and party of London's über-connected art curator, Flora Fairbairn.

Of the 50 artists showing at the viewing – held at the farmhouse of aristocrats Tom and Clarissa Astor – one was Lucian Freud's son, two were John Betjeman's grandchildren, and another was Augustus John's great-grandson.

As their fellow artist Orlando Mostyn-Owen explained that his oil painting was of a "post-coital minotaur", he revealed he and self-confessed "film-maker turned whore" Nicholas Barker (Zoë Heller's cousin) were bonding as fellow bull fanciers.

The Astors' neighbour, the journalist Rebekah Wade, soon snapped up Tim Betjeman's painting on glass for £3,000, while locals Peter Soros (George's nephew), *Top Gear's* Jeremy Clarkson, impressionist Rory Bremner and rocker-turned-farmer Alex James were heard among the cow parsley competing over what to buy.

The actor Rhys Ifans revealed his inner critic, explaining that Ian Monroe's black geometric painting "mocks order, like reading the 10 commandments in bad Braille". He didn't buy, though, citing the recession, but Dan Macmillan (designer and great-grandson of the former Prime Minister Harold) seemed keener, singing the praises of a work by Paul Archer as "great credit-crunch art".

Not everyone was happy, though; some guests grumbled at the £3 deposit for plastic glasses, others at the £3 hotdogs. Hotdogs? Would Tatler allow such concessions?