



SHELBY HODGE

Dinner party dishes out praise, humor

FEW at the Hotel ZaZa dinner Friday night could have anticipated the entertaining barrage of praise, humor and gentle barbs continually lobbed at artist **John Alexander**.

It was, after all, a celebration of his remarkable career, a dinner for 135 that seemed absolutely intimate after the crush, estimates of more than 1,000, that poured into the Museum of Fine Arts,



See more photos of the art world crowd that turned out for the John Alexander dinner at Hotel ZaZa at chron.com/life

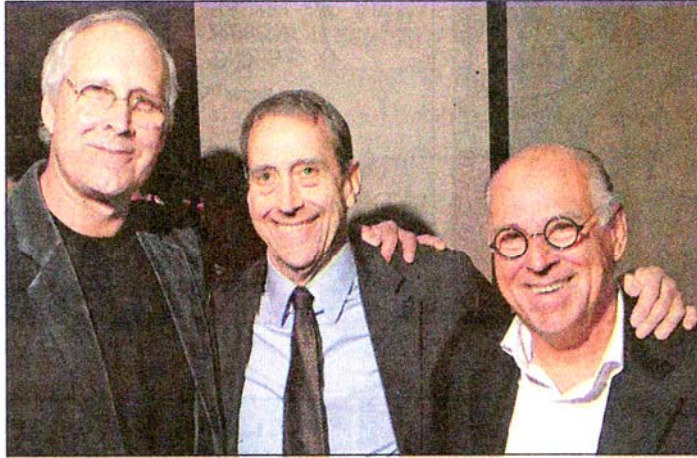
Houston earlier in the evening for the opening of *John Alexander: A Retrospective*.

Humor ruled at the dinner thanks to the continuous stream of remarks from Alexander collectors and pals such as **Chevy Chase**. Who needed time for table conversation, with Chase taking the microphone on three occasions (stumbling forward each time in his classic bumbling shtick) and with a host of other Alexander chums with something to say.

David Berg launched his playful tribute by introducing himself as **Jimmy Buffett**, the real star seated at a nearby

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HODGE: The laughs just kept coming, coming



DAVE ROSSMAN: FOR THE CHRONICLE

ARTFUL FRIENDSHIP: Collectors Chevy Chase, left, and Jimmy Buffett, right, joined artist John Alexander on Friday night at the Hotel ZaZa dinner that followed the opening of his retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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table.

Among the many taking turns toying with Alexander's image and/or praising him were Buffett, artist **James Surls**, collector **Marilyn Oshman**, *60 Minutes* reporter **Steve Kroft**, MFAH director **Peter Marzio**, and **Timothy Eaton**, who represents Alexander through Eaton Fine Art in West Palm Beach, Fla. Of course, Alexander responded several times, his relaxed and jocular nature adding to the fun.

The guest list included a heady mix of museum patrons, Alexander friends (many from his native Beaumont) and collectors as well as **Jane Livingston**, who wrote the exhibition catalog, and catalog contributor and MFAH curator **Alison de Lima Greene**.

Adding to the colorful tableau were **Nancy Kienholz**, **Sharon** and **Gus Kopriva**, **Mary** and **Roy Cullen**, **Kathy** and **Marty Goossen**, **Marjorie Horning** and **Jack Tausend**, **Cynthia** and **Robert McClain**, **Cyvia Wolff**, **Carolyn Farb**, **Janie C. Lee** and **David Warren**.