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On The Scene: Sailing Heals, Couturier Maggie Norris and Rene Ruiz host 'Cocktails and Couture'

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By [Benjamin Schmidt](#)

Hosted an exclusive yacht club, Sailing Heals partnered with Maggie Norris and Rene Ruiz to present an evening of "Cocktails and Couture".

Sailing Heals is a noble and elegant proposition: set sail with loved ones and their caregivers for an opportunity to relax on the open sea. For many, the sea is an escape, a space of relaxation and a moment of solidarity with memories. Designed for those who are undergoing treatment for cancer or dealing with the effects of a serious illness or injury, the day at sea can be a healing experience.

In their first foray into New York City fundraising, Sailing Heals partnered with couturier Maggie Norris and couturier Rene Ruiz to have an evening of "Cocktails and Couture", an opportunity for New York to explore the organization and some haute fashions at an exclusive yacht club in NYC. In addition, a silent auction took place with a vibrant variety of items, everything from two cases of Malbec to unique pieces of art and clothing.

The fashions were truly unique: Norris offered an elegant South-of-France-inspired collection, both modern and classic in execution. Relentlessly reminiscent of Victorian and Colonial cuts, Norris' couturier skills were on full display, tidy silhouettes with occasionally billowing details offered in seersucker and Bengal stripe were thoroughly seaworthy. Tidy sunglasses and elegant handbags added a unique detail, not to mention shoes by Converse gave an air of youth. Paired improbably- but successfully- with exposed corsets and a top hat in straw or weave, the collection was couture deconstructed and rebuilt in a curated collage. Norris' unflinching attention to detail approaches obsessive, but is ultimately deeply satisfying- and endlessly covetable for their timeless quality. Find Maggie Norris on [Facebook](#).

Guests were also treated to the designs of Rene Ruiz, who offered painterly expressions and slim fits, the pencil skirts and gilded dresses in seafaring tones of blue and coral, as well as venetian patterns in dusty vanilla and even some sleek black sequined items to round out a versatile and wearable collection. See more at his [website](#).

The evening was charming and relaxing, comments by Sailing Heals' main hosts Trisha Boisvert, Jon Ollwerther and Helen Miller offered a glimpse into what it took to get the event in motion. A brief speech by Boston Marathon bombing survivor Heather Abbott helped frame the importance of Sailing Heals: she shared her story of how rejuvenating an afternoon at sea can be for those experiencing a serious injury or illness. Moreover, she even walked in the couture show in celebration of overcoming her illness. Guests in attendance included Jean Shafiroff, [Jane Scher](#), and Barbara Regna (who also walked in the show).