

Livin' La Vida Lotion

Barbed Wire

By **Rube Lomax**

Those lusty lads at Lavish threw a rather lavish bash Saturday afternoon to welcome Clarks Summit's M.J. Dougherty and his soon-to-be-opened wine bar, Dionysius Downtown, to their Scranton neighborhood. While a variety of varietals flowed, yours truly got more than a bit lathered up thanks to the en vogue emporium's vast supply of slippery soaps, lubricating lotions and all things anti-aging related.

Lavish owners Jon Chernes and Matt Drace certainly rubbed me the right way as they handed out samples of their precious wares, which smelled so scrumptious I began dipping the snack table's Williams-Sonoma gourmet crackers into my \$28 vat of L'Occitane Olive Oil Face Scrub Mud.

Tres delish!

Behind the swinging store's makeshift bar, Francene Dudzic poured an assortment of chardonnays, sauvignon blancs and cabernets to outstretched hands, allowing customers the chance to sample the plentiful brands M.J. will be offering when his wine bar overfloweth in early May on Penn Avenue. Francene, by the way, is set to open her very own chic boutique in Clarks Summit called Monogram Muse where finicky folks can get their initials emblazoned on almost anything and everything. Why, you could almost say she'll be serving up alphabet soup.

Back at the Lavish soiree, I found that noshing my \$18 seaweed foot soap was just not sating my hunger, so I beseeched the gathered crew to join me at Vida for some tapas and sangria extraordinaire. Fab photographer Rob Lettieri agreed to make the trek with his gorgeous gal pal, Mary "The Slamanizer" Slamas, in tow. Jon, Matt and M.J., as well as Firefeatures creature Elena Colombo, also came along for some gourmet grub that was perfectly prepared by uber chef Rick Thompson, whose culinary creations were met with ravenous raves. From there the eclectic entourage headed over to Martini Bar and Grille for a nightcap but only after crank calling The Bog and trying to bribe them into opening their doors earlier than 8 p.m. Ornerly bartender Bill Orner basically issued a stern: "Sorry, no Bog for you!" If I wasn't more pickled than a baby gherkin, I would have headed over and kicked him in his dilled cornichons.