

The Great Life

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"Nothing gives a parent greater pride and more pleasure than admiring the work of a son or daughter." Documentary filmmaker Charles Guggenheim, winner of four Oscars and nominated for 14, was acknowledging the artistry of son Davis Guggenheim, who helmed "The Art of Norton Simon" documentary that Charles produced with daughter Grace and which premiered at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena. The evening inaugurated the 290-seat Norton Simon Museum Theater, designed by the Gensler architectural firm that will enable the museum to present a wide range of programming. Candice Bergen introduced the Guggenheims, who thanked Jennifer Jones Simon for her support of the documentary and for her encouraging suggestions. We should remind that the museum recently reopened with its lauded renovation of the galleries by Frank Gehry and the gardens by Nancy Goslee Power, who designed a 79,000 square-foot sculpture garden inspired by Claude Monet's Giverny estate in France. Gregory Peck narrates the documentary, which was preceded by a video featuring NBC's Tom Brokaw, who remained in the East to assess the daily news confronting the presidential election, and Tom noted that Norton spent the latter half of his life immersed in the beauty of the enduring masterpieces that fill the museum.

Born in Portland, Oregon, in 1912, Norton attended UC Berkeley for four weeks, before dropping out and telling his father he wasn't learning anything. A whiz at math and numbers, he could roll the dice with mind-boggling expertise, and as the documentary noted

(1) Jennifer Jones Simon with Elisabeth Shue and husband Davis Guggenheim, who helmed "The Art of Norton Simon" documentary during film's premiere at Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena



(2) The film's narrator Gregory Peck with wife Veronique; (3) Candice Bergen; (4) The film's producers Charles Guggenheim and daughter Grace; (5) The museum's director of art Sara Campbell



(6) Amy Brenneman; (7) Author Scott Berg; (8) Celebrity hairstylist Yuki Takei with Paul Arrelano, assistant to Mrs. Simon



Pierce Brosnan with MGM's Jamie and Chris McGurk, recipients of Spirit of Hope Award, during H.E.L.P.'s 25th anniversary dinner at Beverly Hilton

(1) "Vertical Limit's" Chris O'Donnell and Bill Paxton during Columbia's premiere at Loews Century Plaza Cinemas; (2) The film's Robin Tunney; (3) Sony's Jeff Blake; (4) Director Martin Campbell and ICM's Martha Luttrell; (5) The film's Izabella Scorupco; (6) Sony's John Calley, Mel Harris and Ken Lemberger

he was intrigued by the art of the deal. It wasn't just the hooking of the fish, we're told, it was the excitement of reeling it in slowly — that was his genius. Buying into a bankrupt scrap metal firm for several thousand dollars, he soon developed it into a thriving canning and packaging company that became Hunt Foods, and years later bought his first Cezanne painting at a time when the public was seduced by collecting modern art. Captivated by the masters and their powerful range of creativity, Norton collected works by Zubarán, whose still life of grapefruits and lemons at the museum is considered among the greatest in the world (a painting so revered that experts say "one falls on one's knees before it"), Rembrandt, Watteau, Bassano, Raphael, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, Monet, Manet, Degas, Picasso, Braque, Klee, Kandinsky, Rodin, Giacometti, Maillol, Brancusi, the sculptures of India and South Asia. For a man who stayed away from the media, he began to explore a run for the Senate that brought him into the public spotlight, and more than 20 years later bought and assumed the multimillion-dollar debt of the Pasadena Art Museum to house his treasures, a magnificent legacy for our City of Angels. The documentary will be screened at the museum, noted Jennifer Jones Simon, who was hailed for her unstinting support by the museum's Walter Timoshuk and Sara Campbell, David Guggenheim and wife Elisabeth Shue (infanting their second-born), and by the evening's guests that included artist Ed Moses, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Scott Berg, Veronique and Gregory Peck, Terry Stanfill, James Galanos, the theater's consulting interior designer Phillippe Oates, celebrity hairstylist Yuki Takei, Jennifer's assistant Paul Arrelano with screenwriter Jennifer Robinson, Anne and Karl Fleming. It was Karl, we learned, who introduced Jennifer Jones to Norton.

That same evening, reports producer Brad Jenkel, Destination Films sneak-previewed Dewey Hicks' "Slackers," starring Jason Schwartzman, Devon Sawa and cover girl James King. "We had a huge response from the crowd," says Brad, with Destination's Jay Burnley describing the movie as "a raucous college sex comedy that's a howler . . . and a winner."



(7) The film's Scott Glenn with wife Carol

