

Glittering pageant



Ada Matthews, Soraya Omar and Fatima Goodman at the pageant



Jay, Tarik and Nisha Singh at the pageant



Aneesa Singh, Shivani Singh and Faiza Moola at the pageant



Selvie Goverder and Veena Goverder-Moir at the pageant

GOLD Reef City's Lyric Theatre was the venue for the inaugural **Pride of India** pageant, which was billed to the hilt as an event which promised the glitterati of Bollywood. I swanked in at 6pm to find a busy lobby with guests queuing up at the bar in anticipation of the event. I headed into the main hall and was livid (but not really surprised) to find out that the pageant, headed by *Scandal* actress Sorisha Naidoo, was running late and would start only at 7pm. By 6:45pm the venue still wasn't very full — so much for an event which was supposed to be pageant of the year.

FINALLY: Eventually, the event started with the dashing Jonaid Carrera, dressed to impress in a Nehru suit sans shirt, (showing off his six pack) — a designer masterpiece — by Haroun Hansrot — who tried to grab the audience with a bad joke. Naidoo made her entrance in a glittering black ensemble and some very funky shoes (which Carrera said he liked so much that he wanted a pair for himself).

OOPS OF THE NIGHT: Vivian Reddy, Naidoo's husband, who was sitting at the far end of the front row, was unfortunately a sitting duck for some of the more inebriated guests. They taunted the high roller, who ignored the insults and jokes about the age-gap between him and his wife and maintained his decorum.

TOP CLASS: A star-studded line up of judges were introduced, including radio personality Alan Khan, Lotus FM's Avin Moorley, Hansrot, actor Sello Mlake Ncube, 5fm DJ Sureshnie Rider and dancer Kajal Maharaj.

SHOW OFF: The male and female contestants introduced themselves to the audience (with many doing their best to hide their nerves) to backing music and performance by *Idols* contestant Lendel Moonsamy.

OUCH: Naidoo, who seemed slightly preoccupied, clearly upset Rider by constantly referring to her by her maiden name — despite being corrected. I thought Rider was going to have to resort to violence (even though it's not in her nature) but the situation was smoothly sorted out.

TALENTED: The talent segment, which usually accounts for the length of most pageants, was cleverly edited. Unfortunately, between the distance of where I was seated and the booming acoustics, I gave up eventually. Judging by the audience's reaction to the segment, it was ambivalent.

ENTERTAINMENT: Between the breaks for the segments, we were "wowed" by performances of Bollywood routines by Anusita Pillay's dance troupe, who seemed to try their very best to stay in-synch with each other, despite the flying hair extensions and bits of costume.

TOP NOTCH: The fashion show from Hansrot's signature store, 75, could have been compared to what fashionistas attending the Kolkata-



YASANTHA NAIDOO and NAUFAL KHAN

CITY
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ta Fashion Week would have seen. Both male and female designs were stunning!

WHAT A PRIZE: The event came to a quick close with the announcement of the winners of **Pride of India** — Verushka Chetty and Jatli Nana. Both contestants secured holidays to Mauritius and India which was clearly the most sought-after prizes. At 9:45pm the event ended on a high note and I was left wondering why more people didn't attend. Nevertheless, the winners were clearly jubilant and the after-party was awaiting anxious family and friends, who seemed eager to celebrate and unwind. I, however, opted for a late dinner and movie. — NK