

Xaviera Hollander's Newsletter August 2006

PHILIPS OPEN HEART SURGERY

Dear friends,

Just came back from a wonderful two weeks stay in Marbella, having left Philip back in Amsterdam, as his heart was giving him severe troubles and he was waiting for a call from the hospital so he could be hospitalized for open heart surgery. He had been postponing this operation for a year now and it was high time to get it done as he was getting more and more tired and started showing general signs of wear and tear.



While in Marbella for the first time without my man Philip it was time to catch up with some good old friends, like Joris, Dutch designer of 45 whom I have known since he was barely 25. He not only is a great artist but also a talented flautist. Then there was Chantal, who owns several jeweler shops in Andalucia. Most of the time I did all the errands I usually had Philip do for me and managed amazingly well achieving those tasks I always thought only men could do. It was super hot and especially parking in underground parking lots with over 40 degrees Celsius was near murderous.

So a few improvised garden and pool parties took place both in my own house as well as with friends up and down the coast. I met a lovely dutch couple Ellen Brusse and her man Andre. She was once a famous TV announcer for many years in Holland and now, much like me, is making her houses work for her.

There was the lawsuit I finally won from my ex John Drummond. All witnesses showed up, like James who came all the way from Granada. My lawyer then announced that John Drummond was giving up on this case as he was too ill to make an appearance. Where he suffered half a year ago from prostate cancer and miraculously survived that ordeal, he now apparently has gone down with Pancreas cancer and he had pleaded with my lawyer to give him a last amount of euro 2.500 to shut him up and get rid of the entire case. With this hand out he would manage to fly back to England where he will probably undergo his final operation. He said he had little hope in making it alive.

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During the two weeks that I spent in Marbella, Joris had moved in with me to look after me and the house and assist me with some of the parties and my gardener/poolman John Dunningham looked after the pool and the garden.



I also had arranged a lovely outdoor luncheon, mostly for good old time friends of John Drummond and myself. It was great listening and swapping tall tales of the past, even from days before John knew me in his period as a second hand vintage car dealer as well as artist in Chelsea and also our first turbulent but most adventurous years down the coast of Andalucia .

The best words I heard in a long time were from his good friend Charles Omalley who said as he was leaving “

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John Drummond and Xaviera

Oh, by the way, John has called me to thank you profusely for the money you have given him last week.“ Now. Who would have thought that he would ever say THANK You to anybody, most of all ME???.

I wish him well and even if he really makes his final exit I have herewith forgiven him all the sorrow he has caused me over the years and this Feel Good Luncheon only shows that in life one better think back of the GOOD TIMES rather than be miserable remembering the rotten moments.

Well, Philip has finally made it through a pretty scary ordeal of an open heart surgery . It started on Tuesday, July 25 at the OLVG hospital in the waiting room with three other future “victims,” all men well in their seventies, while Philip was the Junior with 53. We were all sitting around the big table, quietly sipping our drinks and talking about the various heart

operations each and everyone had to undergo.

Suddenly in walked a noisy man in his mid sixties with his entire family. Within moments he was telling out loud how he had undergone a similar open heart surgery in January this year... and how soon after, the doctors discovered he had been infected by the so called hospital bug and that now.... and he almost wanted to show us his enormous scar on his chest... he still had an open wound after all these months, that just would not heal. So here he was back again, more than a half a year later to undergo yet another massive heart surgery.

Then there was the young giant man in the corridor pushing a trolley with all sorts of tubes and wires and his one arm in an enormous cast, his hand was red hot and seemed twice its normal size. We shared the elevator and I asked him:” you must surely have broken your arm pretty badly, judging from the enormous casket that surrounds it.” “ No.. he said with a miserable expression on his handsome face... I have cancer, and this is the result of chemotherapy that went wrong and look what it did to my arm and hand: they are practically on fire, burning up on the inside.. and I have been shuffling around with this THING.. pointing at the enormous cast and all the tubes.... for the last 3 months and still it is like my arm and hand are in flames.”

Well.. so much for a fun start in Philips new hospital.

This was all on Tuesday. Tuesday night Philip called me several times, just before he was taking his final sleeping pill he sounded groggy as they had given him a heavy tranquilizer which made him sound more stoned than he ever was with a joint. It was an emotional evening for the two of us, and of course Philips family , brothers, mother, father and kids were all very worried about the operation. His Mom and I have been in daily contact and Philip insisted that I, as his “wife” would be the only contact person for any news about him. In the beginning he insisted not to have anyone else visit him but me until he has regained some of his strength, which should be by the weekend.

Well. Some news I have!!! He went to the operation chamber at 8 a.m on Wednesday morning and the surgeons started to cut him open and repaired his leaking valves in the next 5 hours. It was apparently quite a massive operation. At 1 p.m. I received the phone call that all was well and I could come and visit him in the intensive care department in an hour where he should by then be coming to his senses again and wake up.

I got this phone call while I was at my bank. Called his mom right away and we both had a good cry . When I rushed over to see him, I had taken my scooter as it was about 38 degrees C. and that way I did not have to be held up in hot underground garages, I could just see his face above the sheets, looking paler than the sheets even.

Apparently he had come out of the anesthesia for just a little while, opened his eyes for a few moments and then things went haywire.... About 8 doctors and nurses and the surgeon rushed him back to the operation chamber as... he had suffered a massive heart attack. It seemed the echo showed that some of his arteries were suddenly blocked and it was going to be a tricky second operation where they would put some stints (?)in to deblock the arteries. Another three hours he went under anesthesia and finally round 8 p.m. I got the message that he was finished and about to wake up again.

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And then I rushed back to the emergency room again where I found poor Philip hooked onto half a dozen if not more tubes, drainage wires and a blood drip. His mouth and nose were also filled with all sorts of wires and of course he was still heavily sedated and semi awake. He could not speak but when I asked him to give me some signs with his eyes, one wink is yes and two is no.. we managed to have a short conversation..

Philip after his operation

He was NOT in pain but was very tired and happy he made it. And yes he loved me very much and was happy I was there for him.

I took some pictures of him. As that is what we discussed the day he was checking into the hospital. He did not mind if I did that , so... here is my updated newsletter with a picture of Philip right after his operation.

He will probably be very weak for days to come and it may take well over a month for him to recuperate sufficiently to start traveling. No carrying of luggage, no car driving, no carrying me over the threshold:> there will be weeks and weeks of massive physiotherapy and exercises for him to get back his original strength and a few more months of relaxation before he has to go back to work. I think I will take him to Spain in September when the weather is gorgeous and then, with a bit of luck, we intend to still get married somewhere round that time and go to New York for our honeymoon end of September , early October. It should be great then with the usual Indian Summers and Philip hopefully as strong as a bull once more!

I will give Philip everybody's best wishes in a few hours time, when he is hopefully speaking again, though I was warned that after such a long operation and anesthesia he may be quite confused and forgetful for several weeks.

Meanwhile I keep strong and healthy, as I just got back from Spain, rested and fit, so I could be there for Philip when he needs me. My house in Marbella is rented as of tomorrow for the end of July and the entire month of August.

My number one man in life is PHILIP.... And he is the only one that counts so - - - - on to happy days with Philip again soon.

P.S. this weekend he will come home !!

P.S. my Villa Caprice in Marbella is finally ready to go on the market as a rent villa.

Please check my webpage www.xavierahollander.com/sleeper where you can find both my Dutch B&B which has been booming now for the last few months as well as the virgin Villa we all worked so hard at to give it a total make over .



So looking for a lovely hideaway that sleeps up to 10 people easily, with a private swimming pool where you can all go and frolic around naked, if you wish so?? Do come and look up my [Villa in Marbella](#).

Love from Amsterdam

Xaviera Hollander aka Florence Nightingale