

Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce Dinner

Welcome and after dinner speeches

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The Welcome

Thank you Sam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to the National Liberal Club on this beautiful summer evening. Our friends from Houston, it is an honour to have you visit our City. Distinguished ladies from the United Kingdom, it is a great pleasure to have you here tonight. You will see on your menu that the theme for tonight is, "*The Rise of the Business Super Women*".

What does this mean? Well, this is a historic night. If you had a chance to read the biographies, I am sure you will agree with me – I don't think there has been a gathering of such a sensational group of business women ever before. You are the *Business Super Women* – in fact we are in a room named after one such woman; but more of that later.

We are here to make new connections. Connections that will lead to new opportunities:

- Opportunities for you, your business, your City.
- Opportunities too for the next generation of great business women.
- I want you to enjoy tonight
- BUT please make those connections!

We will hear about two magnificent programmes that are making a difference, and hear about the work that the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce does. These are practical, business focused initiatives that deliver tangible results. They are sensational.

To help you make connections, can I set you a small task over dinner? Introduce yourself to everyone on your table. Go around the table saying, who you are, what you do and what is your next business initiative that is really exciting you?

It is now my pleasure to welcome Carol Rosati from Harvey Nash, the sponsor of this dinner, to tell us a bit about their sensational Inspire Programme.

Thank you to sponsors and looking back to the future

Kerri, Thank you for that fabulous insight into the Harvey Nash Academe. I would also like to thank all those who made this event possible:

- **Harvey Nash plc** and Paul Smith for such tremendous support!

- **Wilson James** - for providing perfect chauffeurs and most conformable cars for our visitors – your team is exceptional! If only every journey ran so smoothly.
- **DWF** - for the flavoursome lunch and inspirational introductions.
- **BUPA, Marks & Spencer, City of London Corporation** for hosting insightful visits.
- **The National Liberal Club**, and our waitresses tonight for their fabulous hospitality
- And – MY Today Translations’ team for their outstanding organizational skills.
- and our American MC Sam, for making tonight run so smoothly.

BUT WHAT'S NEXT?

The groundbreaking, innovative work we have heard about tonight – from Houston, Harvey Nash and the City of London, is surely evidence that, *The Business Super Women are well and truly on the Rise!*

And the Superwomen from a bygone era – pictured on the walls around us. They are watching over us. They would be proud of what we are doing!

- Lady Violet Bonham Carter, a highly political woman in an era when this was not encouraged. A close friend of Churchill – in the 1930's she was a passionate anti-Nazi campaigner supporting anti-appeasement. How relevant it is today! An executive of the League of Nations Union and later patron of the United Nations Association.
- Baroness Robson, President of the Women's Liberal Federation and later President of the Liberal Party in 1970. She was instrumental in creating the rescue package that saved this grand old National Liberal Club from bankruptcy.
- Baroness Seer of Paddington one of the most popular Liberals of her generation. An intelligent, witty, warm lady with practical expertise and skill that made her a hugely respected figure.

In this room here tonight we have business women who are super achievers in every sector.

- Government & Charity
- Entrepreneurs
- Professional services
- Energy
- Health
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- The Arts
- Television and Media

But what is it that distinguishes them from other women – and from men? The answer I believe is in these 5 table names.

1. *Strength in adversity* – keeping a cool head!
2. *Forty year planning* – caring about people - for the long-term!
3. *Fixing but creating* – fixing problems but innovating too!
4. *Just turn up* – not finding reasons not to attend or do things.
5. *The world begins today* – not yesterday, tomorrow or the week after!

Of course, some great men possess these virtues too. These contributed to their greatness – and I immediately think of Sir Winston Churchill, and Texan born President Eisenhower ...

– Each of whom was ably supported by a great woman. Eisenhower actually fell in love whilst stationed in Texas!

Our duty is to find and nurture these attributes And to help the current and next generation of business superwomen!

My proposal tonight is that this event should sow the seed for a great partnership – a fellowship of business superwomen. I believe it is time that London established a Women's Chamber of Commerce along the lines of Houston.

I would love to hear your views on this.

I also believe The World Begins Today – if we want it to.

To remind us all of this defining attributes – I commissioned this gift which I would like to present to each of you. It contains those vital words and as Today's the day – and that is the inspiration behind my business, we have included the Chinese symbols within it. Please be proud to wear them!

Thank you for listening and most of all, thank you for making a difference. I now have the pleasure of handing back to our most talented MC, the sensational *Mr Sam Haughton, David Adams and Rachel Crisp* – *who are not all you think they are...*

Sam, over to you...