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Blogging from Potter land

Author J.K. Rowling's much-loved novels spring — like magic — to 3-D (and possibly 4-D?) life Friday when The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, the newest addition at Universal Orlando Resort, makes its official debut.

But you can get a sneak peek at the eagerly awaited theme park experience in advance via Jill Schensul's blog, Open Road. Jill is at Universal to check out the situation. She'll be interviewing the new park's creative team, getting the lay of the Wizarding World land and experiencing the park's newest features first hand.



To read visit blogs.northjersey.com/blogs/openroad

Do you have a comment, story idea or suggestion? Let us know. Call us at 973-569-7079 or e-mail us at features@northjersey.com.

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TRIVIA

Which of these is the name not of a real psychedelic rock band, but of a book by Tom Wolfe about Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters?

- A) Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test
- B) Moby Grape
- C) Strawberry Alarm Clock
- D) Vanilla Fudge

Previous answer: Punta Arenas is in Chile.

Send the trivia questions you've always wanted answered, or original TriviaBits ideas of your own, with your full name and hometown, to Paul Paquet at paul@triviahalloffame.com or visit him online at triviahalloffame.com.

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15 MINUTE CHEF®

Between a spice rub and a finishing glaze, lamb is elevated to the next level in this grilled dinner, which also features figs. Grilling eggplant and serving it with orzo and Greek yogurt rounds out the meal. — **Bill Pitcher**

Grilled lamb and fig skewers with mint-pepper glaze

For mint-pepper glaze:

- 2/3 cup apricot preserves
 - 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon red pepper flakes
 - 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest (from about 1 lemon)
 - 1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped
- For lamb:
- 1 tablespoon whole cumin seeds
 - 1 tablespoon whole coriander seeds
 - 3 pounds boneless leg of lamb, fat trimmed, cut into 1-inch cubes
 - 12 fresh figs, halved vertically
 - 1/4 cup olive oil
 - 2 medium cloves garlic, minced (about 2 tablespoons)
 - 1 tablespoon kosher salt
 - 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

To make the glaze, in a small saucepan over moderate heat (use the side burner for your grill, if you can), stir together preserves, vinegar, red pepper flakes and lemon zest. Bring to boil, then lower heat to low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool 5 minutes. Stir in mint and set aside.

While the glaze is boiling, in electric spice mill or clean coffee grinder, combine cumin and coriander seeds. Pulse several times to coarsely grind. In large bowl, toss together lamb, figs, and olive oil. Add garlic, ground cumin and coriander, salt, and pepper, and toss gently to combine. Thread lamb cubes and figs onto skewers.

Arrange skewers over a medium-hot grill. Cook lamb to slightly less than desired doneness (cubes will continue to cook after being removed from grill), turning once and brushing with glaze during last 30 seconds of grilling on each side, about 4 minutes per side for medium-rare.

Servings: 8.

Per serving: 361 calories, 12 grams fat, 4 grams saturated fat, 109 milligrams cholesterol, 27 grams carbohydrates, 36 grams protein, 629 milligrams sodium, 2 grams fiber.

Adapted from: Epicurious.com.

SHOPPING LIST:

- Apricot preserves
- Fresh mint
- Boneless leg of lamb
- Figs

FROM YOUR PANTRY:

- Red wine vinegar
- Red pepper flakes
- Lemon
- Cumin seeds
- Coriander seeds
- Olive oil
- Garlic cloves
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

MEAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Grilled lamb and fig skewers with mint-pepper glaze
- Grilled eggplant
- Orzo
- Greek yogurt with honey

FASHION

Its appeal is clear to see

Lucite returns as season's go-to material for accent pieces

By **ELIZABETH WELLINGTON**
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

From Prada heels to Chanel bags, it's time to welcome Lucite back as a see-through sensation. Whether you go designer or costume, the transparent accessories are clearly the statement pieces of the season.

R.J. Graziano, of Home Shopping Network fame, tinted his pearl-shaped earrings with soft blues and peach for a lovely, icy effect. And then there's Brooklyn-based jewelry designer Alexis Bittar, jewelry's modern-day Lucite king. His elegantly carved bangles are available in pastels as well as primary shades.

But the ultimate stamp of approval comes from our best girlfriends: Carrie, Miranda, Charlotte, and Samantha, who are wearing the clear jewels — as well as clothes by Prada, Venexiana, and of course, Oscar de la Renta — in "Sex and the City 2."

"It can be worn with anything, with any color, and any time of year," said New York-based jewelry designer Kenneth J. Lane, whose Lucite pieces are sold at stores including Anthropologie. "It can be worn in the winter on black and in the summer on white. I just love mixing it with baroque pearls and chains. The beauty is you can wear a lot of it and not look overdone."

So how did the pretty plastic take over the jewelry world?

Known scientifically as polymethyl methacrylate, the synthetic polymer was developed in the late 1920s and marketed by Rohm & Haas in 1935 as Plexiglas; around the same time DuPont developed a similar product that it named Lucite,



PHOTOS BY AKIRA SUWA/THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Lucite was developed in the 1920s by DuPont. Here it is used in high heels, bangle bracelets and a necklace. Right, the see-through plastic is known for its durability, shine and ability to accent other colors. It enjoyed a memorable fashion run in the bauble-loving 1970s.

which became the more popular name in the 1950s. (Since then, it's been sold under many trade names including Polycast and Oroglass, but people often refer to any clear plastic as Lucite.) The clear polymer made for a wonderful ingredient in car hood ornaments and was also used in furniture and china.

But it is Lucite's appearance and durability that make it perfect in the jewelry world. After designers such as Cartier started mixing glass with diamonds in the 1920s for particularly rich-looking brooches and chains, artists picked up on Lucite, and its opaque cousin Bakelite, because it had the same effect but was shatterproof, Lane said.

Actress and fashion icon Gloria Swanson used to wear "those stretch Cartier bracelets, and I did a version that was much bigger and used Lucite," Lane said of the early-1960s pieces that helped start his career.

Then Lucite and Bakelite became part of fashion's big-bigger-and-biggest bauble obses-



sion of the 1970s, when use of costume jewelry was at its height. The 1980s became more about the real thing — the precursor to early-'90s minimalism and then early-millennium bling.

Bittar, who started selling hand-carved Lucite on the streets of New York in the early '90s, gave the transparent accessory its modern comeback. Once he started selling to Barneys, the collection grew as fashionistas and fashion directors noticed how the pieces added oomph to their magazine spreads.

Michael Kors showed an

oversize beaded necklace for his spring 2010 collection in February. And R.J. Graziano's icy Lucite grouping does well on HSN.

Gary Rose, chief executive officer of Robert Rose jewelry, worked with department stores this year to develop a private-label clear-jewelry collection. Now Macy's is marketing it as its Lucite collection, part of the store's must-have looks for spring.

"I think it's a great palette cleanser," Rose said. "It mixes well with chains and metals, and it's the perfect accessory for a strong pastel color story."

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