

Literary Toronto celebrates launch of Hamish Hamilton

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Back row, from left: Author and Penguin Canada publisher David Davidar, author Reif Larsen, author Lee Henderson, author Michael Winter, author Colin McAdam, with (front row, from left) author Damian Tarnopolsky, Editor of Hamish Hamilton Canada Nicole Winstanley, author Kim Echlin, and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Penguin Group John Makinson. (Aaron Lynett / National Post)

Update: More photos added after the jump

It would've been a bold move during healthy economic times but Penguin Canada's decision to launch Hamish Hamilton, a Canadian twin to the venerable British imprint in the midst of an economic downturn was the kind of morale boost that Toronto's literary community needed. True, many of the layoffs and rumours of financial demise have swirled around south of the border., but Canada and Toronto's publishing community haven't been immune to the bad news.

Dozens of authors, publicists, journalists, booksellers and other members of Toronto's literary community came out to Queen Street West's Nyood for the launch of Penguin's new imprint. They were joined by a number of out-of-town guests. John Makinson, CEO of the Penguin Group, flew in from London for the event and pointed out that It's been over 30 years since Penguin Canada launched its Viking imprint and 19 since Random House launched Knopf.

Makinson also compared this current economic situation to the 1930s, which he pointed out was a golden age for British publishing. Both Penguin and Hamish Hamilton were launched in the midst of the Great Depression. "We should take some comfort in that," he said.

Jet-setting editor Nicole Winstanley gave an effusive speech which thanked virtually everyone in the room, including Hamish Hamilton Canada's list of impressive authors. Brooklyn's Reif Larsen, whose debut novel *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet* got a

reported [six-figure advance](#), chatted about his great love of Canada (he once took a train trip from Toronto to Vancouver). Vancouver author Lee Henderson, author of *the Man Game*, also graced us with his presence. And it'd be tough to miss Toronto's Michael Winter, who ducked out early, baby in arm.

More photos after the jump:



The room at Nyood on Queen Street.



Nyood.



Penguin publicist Ashley Burns, left, with Lisa Myers, Bookseller Ben McNally Books.



Hamish Hamilton Canada editor Nicole Winstanley, middle, is the woman of the evening.



Jared Bland, Walrus Magazine, left, with author Lee Henderson.

[Party photos by Ron Nurwisah/National Post]