

Partying With Hobbits

An Oscar diary: living like the stars, and celebrating with the "Rings" family

By Dish Diva
MSN Entertainment
March 1, 2004



Liv Tyler's librarian glasses were a big hit among men celebrating at the "Lord of the Rings" post-Oscar party.

Watch video from the party

"So, what party are you going to after the Oscars?" she asked as she tilted her head and arched my brows at the Anastacia Salon in Beverly Hills last weekend. "I don't know," I said "I'm thinking the 'Lord of the Rings' party." What a good decision that was! While the 76th Academy Awards broadcast was tame and the audience was dappled with flawless glowing stars, it was a night made to order for the Peter Jackson lovechild "Lord of the Rings." So how did we land in Middle Earth on Oscar night?

It was one of those perfect sunny, sparkling, cool L.A. days where a big break lies just around the corner -- the kind of day that draws naïve girls named Amy from the Midwest to believe they're destined to become a star here. When we flew in on Thursday to interview Johnny Depp for his new film ("Secret Window" -- fantastic, by the way) I was determined to see what it takes to live like a star. So I hit the newsstand, sipped a triple latte nonfat sugar-free vanilla no whip, tipped my sunglasses low and read "Variety" like any good starlet would.

With just four days to get ready for Oscar I went to the best source for information -- the hotel concierge, in this case at the Regent Beverly Wilshire. Best known for being the "Pretty Woman" hotel, "the Regent" is a second home for stars who crave plush attention. Colin Farrell was there on Thursday night having drinks with his sister. Even with an arm and a leg in casts, Colin was being Colin. "I (blank) love you guys," he said as he handed my girlfriend the tweed Hanna cap off his head. And yes, we did what any red-blooded girl would do. The cap smelled good. 'Nuff said.

According to my sources, to get ready for Oscar, I needed a dress worthy of the Academy Awards, diamonds (the "Oh my God where did you get that?" kind of diamonds), a Jennifer Lopez tan glow, brilliant white teeth, Botox, a trainer, a makeup artist, a hairstylist, a manicure/pedicure and, oh yes, the perfect little evening bag which would say so much about who I am. Really? Um, OK, if you say so. I had four days. It's really amazing how Oscar can motivate you.

It was 4 p.m. on Oscar night. With the dress hanging in the steaming bathroom and Crest strips on my teeth, I had no idea that history was about to be made. The Academy Awards is not just about a gold statue. Beyond the crowds screaming for the stars to glance their way, beyond the Versace and Dolce and Prada, beyond the limos and the diamonds (oh, the diamonds), this night is about celebrating movie-making. On Saturday I was in Nordstrom's buying strappy little shoes, and a woman overheard that I would be covering the Oscars. She looked at me and said, "My cousin is here. She is up for an award for Best Documentary Short Subject -- 'Chernobyl Heart.' We're all so excited for her. Will you wish her well?" I said I would. She won. My heart leapt for her. That is what the Awards are about -- the pure love of filmmaking, of storytelling. It is all about moments precisely like this one.

As the Awards began, my amazing tux-clad cameraman and I thought, "Oh, God, please let 'Lord of the Rings' win at least a few awards." We'd gambled on covering the New Line party, not the Governor's Ball or the Vanity Fair party. "Lord of the Rings" just had to win at least two or three, right? So we watched and they won one. And another. And another. We were thrilled for Sean, Tim, Renee. Charlize and Sofia. but as "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" started

to rack up four, five, then six awards, we started to get giddy with anticipation. "Oh, my God, they're going to sweep the categories," someone said. As we headed over to the Pacific Design Center for the party, we wondered to what we owed this great karmic gift.

As we approached the third floor past the Annie Liebowitz exhibit we heard the music, and felt the energy -- so full of anticipation you felt like you were approaching Middle Earth itself. The venue hushed as the final awards were being televised. Peter Jackson's name was announced. The crowd of friends and industry insiders roared. Then what happened will go down in history as Steven Spielberg said, "It's a clean sweep." There was a millisecond of quiet as it dawned on us: "That's 11. They won 11 awards. They won them all." Then the heavens opened, the crowd cheered, the Perrier Jouet flowed and glasses clinked.

I spotted Andy Serkis, who will go down in history as the extraordinary character of Gollum. He was wild-eyed with glee. "Andy," I said, "the last time we saw each other, you were in a bathrobe in the elevator at the Four Seasons." He laughed. "You're right." I should explain that it was the junket weekend for the cast of "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" and he and his wife were glowing, having just come from spa treatments. The interesting thing is the devotion that the cast has toward Peter Jackson. Directors don't have always have the rapport that Jackson has with his cast and crew. John Rhys-Davies (Gimli) said they would gladly have given back all their awards if it meant Peter Jackson would win for Best Director.

We caught up with Sean Astin, who blew a kiss and sent his love to the fans. When I asked Kevin Sorbo of "Hercules" fame which "Lord of the Rings" character he loved best, he smiled for a moment as if remembering something and said, "Oh, Miss Tyler (Arwen)." There seems to be an extraordinary number of men last night who went weak at the knees for Liv Tyler and her glasses. Something about a librarian fantasy. Very fetching, Liv.

Billy Boyd had just finished joking with us when he became a human sandwich, as he was plucked off the ground in a bear hug by some of his very large New Zealand pals. J.R.R. Tolkien's great-grandson Royd, a Hugh Grant lookalike, seemed in awe of the evening. John Noble (Denethor) was so excited about the evening that he kept leaning in to me until I thought, "Any closer, and I'm going to need an Altoid." It was a night of gorgeous happy people, of little conversations about the costumes and the special effects and the moments of "Oh my God, I've missed you so much. Remember that time in New Zealand when we ..."

We spoke with composer Howard Shore, who won two awards, for Best Score and Song. When I asked him what Oscar felt like, he thrust one in my hands. It was an unexpected, amazing moment and I looked down in awe. It's heavier than you would expect and extraordinary the way your hands curve around his cool shoulders. I'd imagine it would be terribly hard to put it down during that first week.

It was late, very late when I looked around and we laughed at the thought that here we were. This is what it was like, to share in a small glimmer of Peter Jackson's world. Middle Earth, Hollywood, whatever you want to call it, it's a very very good place to be. Peter, here's looking to "King Kong."

[Email This Page](#)

Try MSN Internet Software for FREE!

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#) | [Search](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)

©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) [Advertise](#) [TRUSTe Approved](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#) [Anti-Spam Policy](#)

Machine Code: D04 - Date: 2004-03-03T10:07:31-08