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Oscar glitz thrives



Freida Pinto



Kate Winslet

REFINED but unapologetically glamorous, Hollywood's biggest stars strode the red carpet at the Oscar awards on Monday, with white dresses, bold necklaces and one-shoulder gowns among the night's top trends. Despite an economic recession that has many Americans pinching pennies, stars didn't pare back their finery, delivering the glitz for which Hollywood is known.

"If I turn my head, I don't see any change," designer Valentino said on the red carpet, adding that any toning down of Oscar style would be "very, very bad".

Style experts called the night a return to clean, sophisticated Hollywood style, saying actresses such as best actress nominee Kate Winslet and *Slumdog Millionaire* star Freida Pinto went for classic looks.

Winslet achieved her retro look in a grayish-blue one-shoulder gown with black details by Yves Saint Laurent, which she told reporters was "quite comfortable," a swept-back hairstyle and diamond earrings.

Pinto donned a darker blue, beaded, one-sleeved gown by John Galliano.

Winslet and Pinto stood out for the choice of blue, as many actresses favoured white and other light colors. Penelope Cruz, who picked up the best supporting actress Oscar for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, and her fellow supporting actress nominee Taraji P Henson of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* wore voluminous, strapless white gowns.

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In the face of hypocrisy

MATE
 Mark Wilson



ON Wednesday as Queenstown's late summer sun finally emerged from days of murk, I made my way down to the two-four to grab a thickshake. Ninety-seven per cent fat, full of sugar, made from some sort of gelatinous substance that probably doubles as an industrial lubricant, these magical creations of artery-clogging goodness may bring me closer to the grave but they taste so good and cool for the engine on those armpit pond-inducing summer days.

The two-four is a place where parents struggle to keep their children's greedy little hands from snaring the smorgasbord of non-Heart Foundation tick treats that clutter the shelves.

One child in particular caught my eye as he darted with great precession for a Snickers bar. In mid-flight his old man performed the sort of intercept act that would have a rugby winger proud. In one move he skilfully directed his son's outstretched arm away from the calorie-packed treat and pulled him in close for a lecture on how, if he eats food like that, he would end up very rotund and unhealthy - just like his dad I was thinking.

This was great advice, I thought. However, as a role model this father was being slightly hypocritical, tipping the scales at a powerful triple-figure number I would imagine and didn't look like he had ventured into a pair of running shoes since fluro stobbies went out in the late '80s and only now occasionally reappear on diehard long distance runners in the wee small hours of the morning and are gone before daylight.

After his words of wisdom had been digested - and I suspect travelled through one ear and out the other - he preceded to get for himself a rather large and waistline-expanding puffed white, berry flavoured muffin which, if I was to hazard a guess, contained at least a pie equivalent of one golf ball of fat. Either he was blissfully unaware of his hypocritical behaviour or he banked on the fact his young son wouldn't have yet obtained the necessary worldly knowledge that 24 muffins were just as bad if not worse than a Snickers bar.

Now I'm the first person to say "do as I say not as I do" when setting examples so should possibly not be throwing stones in glass houses, but crickey this was an hysterical display in such an unexpected setting.

From one paradoxical situation to another, I'm in the land of rioting students for an Ice Blacks training camp, building fitness as thousands of rowdy scarfies conduct an experiment in primal mating behaviour and liver cell degradation, achieving the exact opposite. I can't say I'm not excited to bear witness to this great event for the ninth time in my life. O-Week special times. I'd say that this time, however, my participation might be limited to watching with nostalgic lament.

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