

Hollywood's War Of The Gift Baskets

by Diane Clehane

(NAPSA)—If you think that Hollywood hotshots get all the breaks, you may be right. Everyone knows that celebrity stardom means fame and fortune, but did you know that it also means being treated to exclusive luxury gift baskets distributed at posh entertainment industry events.

No one's exactly sure who started the whole gift basket trend, but the contents of these baskets just keep getting more and more extravagant—as if the P.R. people who put them together are trying to outdo each other in some kind of undeclared war for the glitterati's attention and the public's fascination.

The hottest designer clothes. The most luxurious jewelry. The newest high-tech toys. Some of them are bestowed on celebrities at high-profile award shows and movie premieres before they're even in the stores for the rest of us to buy.

Such was the case at the recent Emmy Awards, where A-list presenters, show producers and ATAS (Academy of Television Arts and Sciences) VIPs received an exquisite timepiece that hit stores in October. The exclusive 18-karat gold-and-stainless-steel Ebel 1911 watch featured a diamond-encrusted bezel and mother-of-pearl diamond dial.

The five-star Emmy Presenters gift basket was packaged in a custom leather and canvas weekend travel bag, and included such luxury items as: Nacre, the newest fragrance from the renowned French fragrance house of Jean Patou—which created the world's most expensive perfume, Joy; a special invitation to a private consultation with the master per-



This diamond-encrusted watch was the centerpiece of the recent Emmy Presenters Gift Basket.

fumer, or "nose," of Jean Patou in Paris to create a one-of-a-kind customized couture fragrance; and a sterling silver gift card entitling the bearer to special private shopping services at Bergdorf Goodman, the world's most exclusive specialty store.

Suzanne Gutierrez, director of corporate relations for ATAS, who together with her staff greenlights each item, says she was "deluged" with submissions for this year's collection.

"We were looking for items that were uniquely high-end and top brands that would mean something to the extremely discriminating men and women that receive the basket," she says. "These are people who are regularly exposed to the best of everything."

Reaching the Hollywood elite in such a specialized way is key, says Dennis Phillips, president of Ebel. Having the 1911 timepiece debut as this year's Emmy basket centerpiece, he says, was "both a tribute and affirmation of Ebel's status as a fashion and style leader in luxury watches."

Diane Clehane is a contributing editor at TV Guide. Her work has also appeared in People, US Weekly, Newsday and other national publications.