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Entertainment

## Globes Show Canceled, but Not the Swag

Golden Globes Now a News Conference Because of Writers' Strike, but Gift Suites Go On



Jewelry designer Maggie Ferrari prepares for the start of the SHM Golden Globe Red Carpet gifting suite, Thursday, Jan. 10, 2008 in Beverly Hills, Calif. Despite the downgrading of the Golden Globe Awards from a swanky dinner party to a no-frills press conference, gifting suites timed to the show remain in full swag. (AP Photo/Gus Ruelas)

By SANDY COHEN AP Entertainment Writer  
LOS ANGELES Jan 12, 2008 (AP)

Despite the Golden Globe Awards being reduced from a swanky dinner party to a no-frills news conference because of the writers' strike, gift suites remain in full swag. At least five freebie-filled events beckoned nominees Friday.

And since the show is off, vendors hoped their wares -- which included jewelry, evening gowns and climate-controlled pet carriers -- might take center stage. A few wondered if gifting was appropriate this year, but most decided stars need their swag.

"Even though there's a writers' strike, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be honoring actors for their accomplishments throughout the year," said Gavin Keilly, who organized a gift suite in Beverly Hills. He's donating a portion of its proceeds to the Writers Guild Foundation, he said.

Still, a few of his usual vendors canceled.

"They didn't feel comfortable because of the strike," he said. "They didn't think people would come."

Under threat of union picketing and a boycott by nominated actors, Sunday's Golden Globes switched from a live ceremony filled with stars to a news conference at which winners simply will be announced.

But gift spots were bustling as though there was a big event around the corner.

"We were afraid no one was going to show up ... and we almost backed out, but it really paid off," said Cindy Lott, who was touting Xtreme Lashes eyelash extensions at another event in Beverly Hills. "There were more RSVPs because people aren't at their stylists."

"I knew the actors would still be supporting the gifting," said Susan Setz, who was showing her Wild Rose Tattoo Shirts at a gift suite in Brentwood, a neighborhood known for its high celeb quotient. "I looked at it as a wonderful opportunity."

Besides, stars might have extra time on their hands since they're not preparing for the show and many aren't working because of the strike.

They might also need the publicity, said Barbara Moore, who offered T-shirts and books at a Beverly Hills lounge.

"People are going to want to have their picture taken since they're not going to be on the red carpet," she said.

Press coverage of the strike and Golden Globes cancellation brought more attention to surrounding events another plus for people with products to promote.

"We're getting more exposure from people wanting to know what we're doing and why we're here," said Matthew Miller, who was giving away appetite-suppressant lozenges at the Brentwood suite.

Like awards shows, gifting is a Hollywood tradition. Maybe the Golden Globe suites are proof the industry hasn't entirely shut down.

"Stars want to come and celebrate," said vendor Niels Christiansen. "They support the writers, but they still want to have fun."

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