



Working like a dog to look ravishing for Oscars night

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 LOS ANGELES

FOR first-timers and old-hands, the Academy Awards present a mammoth personal challenge.

On top of dealing with nerves and a hectic schedule of pre-Oscars appearances, there is the need to look ravishing on the red carpet in front of one of the biggest television audiences in the world, at the ceremony in two weeks.

The pressures and excitement of preparing for the entertainment industry's most prestigious and glamorous awards night was a recurring topic at the Oscar nominees lunch this week, where 15 of the 20 actors up for awards gathered at a Beverly Hills hotel alongside those nominated in other non-acting categories.

Hollywood's awards season provides a major boom in business for those

in the cosmetic industry who provide an array of services including botox, liposuction, injectible fillers, quick weight-loss programs, teeth whitening, hair extensions, tanning and make-up.

Fun is a word not often used about the pre-ceremony madness on the world's biggest red carpet - which is lined by hundreds of photographers, camera crews and reporters from around the world, all yelling and vying for the attention of the evening's A-list nominees for interviews and picture posing.

Stars generally spend about two hours on the red carpet, making their way through the throngs of fellow attendees and the voracious media before heading into the three-hour ceremony and then on to

the rounds of post-event parties.

Marisa Tomei, who is nominated for best supporting actress for her role as an ageing stripper in *The Wrestler*, said her awards season experience had taught her plenty of practical tricks to cope with the long night.

"I've learned to put a little snack bar in my purse because you get very hungry at a certain point," she said.

Supporting actress nominee Penelope Cruz said the constant travel and promotional commitments for awards season left her reeling.

"I wake up and I really don't know which city I am in. I got off the plane two hours ago and went to find the clothes (for the lunch), iron the clothes, have a

shower, have hair done and make-up and then come here," she said.

Kate Winslet - who is nominated for best actress for *The Reader*, after going home empty-handed on five previous occasions - said her 13-year experience at the Oscars did not make it any easier to prepare for the stresses of awards season.

"I get very emotional about these things, I discover," she said.

"I'm not cut out for this. I'm too emotional to lose and I'm too emotional to win.

"And no-one can teach you that, either. I wish there was some lessons in how to cope with awards season because even though I've gone through it so many times, it always feels like the first time."



PETA HELLARD
OSCAR PICKS

BEST PICTURE
Slumdog Millionaire

BEST DIRECTOR
Danny Boyle,
Slumdog Millionaire

BEST ACTRESS IN A LEAD ROLE
Kate Winslet, *The Reader*

BEST ACTOR IN A LEAD ROLE
Mickey Rourke, *The Wrestler*

BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE
Penelope Cruz, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*

BEST ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE
Heath Ledger, *The Dark Knight*

Scene from *Slumdog Millionaire*

Kate Winslet and David Kross

Heath Ledger

Penelope Cruz