

restaurant, zip code, other search term Site



Best of LA



Offers & Benefits



LA to Z Guide

Popular Shortcuts

- [Home](#)
- [Best of LA](#)
- [The Guide](#)
- [LA to Z Guide](#)
- [Ask Chris](#)
- [Current Issue](#)
- [Promotions](#)

Blogs

- [The Digest](#)
- [The Chic Leak](#)
- [The Spyglass](#)
- [The BuzzCut](#)

Services

- [Newsletter Sign-up](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)

Archives

- [Features](#)
- [Restaurant Listings](#)
- [New Restaurant Reviews](#)
- [Store Openings](#)
- [Street Smart](#)
- [Past Issues](#)

Cut OSCAR MORTIS

Winning an Academy Award enlivens some careers but leaves others on life support. Is the gold statue to blame?

By Gina Piccalo

Los Angeles magazine, April 2010

The day before Jeff Bridges received his fifth Academy Award nomination, for his role as grizzled country singer Bad Blake in *Crazy Heart*, the 60-year-old actor took a moment to ponder what he called the "mythology" of Oscar. "I don't want to take anything away from getting the nod," said the man most fans still associate with The Dude from the Coen brothers' 1998 comedy, *The Big Lebowski*. "It's in the mythology that we all live under as actors. It's ingrained in there. But at the same time it's show business.... It's really an opportunity for all the moviemakers to herald their movies."

He wasn't being blasé. He didn't sound jaded. It's just that he'd been through this before, having been nominated for *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974), *Starman* (1984), and *The Contender* (2000). Here's what those accolades taught him: They "really didn't mean much as far as changing anything."

How much does an Oscar matter? The question is posed every year as the "For Your Consideration" frenzy mounts. Without a doubt, getting some love from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences can translate into dollars. Movies that were all but forgotten at the box office before a win can, afterward, earn back their budgets in a weekend. Salary quotes for even the highest-paid celebrities get a bump.

Then there's the legacy factor. Give birth or get arrested, hospitalized, or sent to rehab, and the adjective before your name in every news report will most certainly be "Oscar winner." Being honored by the Academy does leave a lasting mark. "There has to be, in every pursuit, some sort of holy grail," says longtime Oscar campaign consultant Tony Angellotti. "This has been the designated one." But Oscar is fickle; he can change a life and reboot a career or merely complicate and overwhelm both.

For established actors Hollywood's most prized award isn't so much a career catalyst as a garnish to an already-sumptuous feast of opportunity. In fact, Oscar can stall a career—at least temporarily. When Kathy Bates won in 1991 for her portrayal of a psychotic fan who kidnaps a famous novelist in *Misery*, no one blinked. She was an accomplished actress, with Broadway chops and a weighty résumé. The surprising thing was what happened after she was anointed Best Actress in a Leading Role: Her phone stopped ringing. For an entire year. Suddenly filmmakers seemed to think she was too famous (or too expensive) to be approached.



Photograph courtesy Ampas



What's Rosa?
LA's new buzz.



ROSA MEXICANO
RESTAURANTS
Rosa Mexicano at L.A. Live
800 W. Olympic Blvd.
213.746.0001



Current Issue

[Preview](#) | [Subscribe](#)

“The other side of all this hoopla is the reality: Well, where’s the next job coming from? And when is it coming?” Bates told this magazine in 2003, when she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *About Schmidt*. “You just hope it’s coming soon. It’s tough. It’s the underside of all this emperor’s-new-clothes, walking-down-the-red-carpet kind of stuff.”

The experience can be more exhilarating for unknowns in that Oscar shines a light where none has shone before. The town swarms the latest “discovery.” Anil Kapoor, unrecognizable in the United States but a big star in India, wasn’t nominated for an Oscar for his portrayal of a game show host in *Slumdog Millionaire*. Still, after the film swept the 2009 Academy Awards, he received standing ovations just for walking into Koi restaurant in Beverly Hills. A short time later he landed a role as a diplomat on Fox’s hit drama *24*.

When Julian Fellowes won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *Gosford Park*, Robert Altman’s 2001 period piece, the Brit had no name recognition here. Oscar’s afterglow provided him a bonanza of job opportunities. He was offered high-profile screenwriting gigs, novels, directorial debuts, musicals, even a U.K. game show. The result: He wrote the screenplay for Mira Nair’s 2004 costume drama, *Vanity Fair*, wrote the book for the West End musical *Mary Poppins* (which recently ended a run in Los Angeles), hosted the BBC game show *Never Mind the Full Stops*, published his clever best-selling novel *Snobs*, and directed his first film, *Separate Lies*, which earned Best Debut Director from the National Board of Review in 2005 and starred Tom Wilkinson and Emily Watson. “No sad tales here,” says Fellowes, who also wrote last year’s *Young Victoria*, which nabbed three Oscar nominations (for makeup, costumes, and art direction).

Fellowes’s publicist and veteran Oscar campaign consultant Ronni Chasen says an Academy Award win “will open a lot of doors. You have to make sure you walk through the right ones.”



1 2 | Next

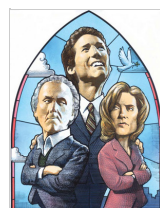
New Features



Oscar Mortis



What Gives?



The Guide



Get L.A. : The Final Eight

