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Aid for AIDS foundation

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IT was a grand event that kicked off with a cocktail reception and ended with a showcase of Chanel's "Fall/Winter 2000-2001 Luxury Ready to Wear Collection".

The "Black Tie, Red Ribbon Gala" held recently at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, was a success in every sense, drawing together 600 guests and collecting a little over RM2 million in donations.

The gala is the premier fund-raising event of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation and is held biennially.

Guests were entertained by several events, including an auction of exclusive items and dinner entertainment in the form of a 19-piece jazz orchestra.

The orchestra, Emergency Break Ensemble, was led by Greg Lyons.

The patron for the night was Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Guests were beguiled by emcees Ahsa Gill and Chacko Vadeketh. Gill played an instrumental role in coaxing guests to purchase a chance to win a prize in a raffle, going from table to table to promote the cause.

Another prominent figure, Farah Khan, who was part of the organising committee, charmed the guests during the auction.

Despite the lack of excitement, all items, which included a Satria GTi, were sold.

The item that attracted the most bids was an RM10,000 gift voucher from Aseana.

Following that, 11 Red Ribbon Media Awards were presented to members of the local media.

They were chosen for their exceptional work on HIV/AIDS in the print and broadcast media, and the arts.

Winners were presented with an Award by Bvlgari, a cash prize of RM2,500 and a Certificate of Excellence by the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali presented the prestigious Dr Siti Hasmah Award to Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia in recognition of its outstanding contributions to the HIV/AIDS issue in Malaysia. The winner was awarded a Certificate of Excellence.

"The Red Ribbon Media Awards is our way of acknowledging and honouring the vital role played by the media in HIV/AIDS education," said Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, president of the Malaysian AIDS Council. "It is our way of thanking the media for their invaluable help in disseminating HIV/AIDS messages to the public."

She said she hoped the awards will encourage the media to present accurate facts to the public.

Principal sponsors of the gala were Chanel, Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur, Bvlgari and Malaysia Tatler.

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