



King Roger, Prince Charmingly

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May 14, 2007

It's The Insider's world and Roger King just lives in it.

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Oh, sure, he was ostensibly the reason that hundreds of folks donned black tie (or not) and converged on the Waldorf-Astoria. The International Radio and Television Society Foundation was going to give Mr. King, a man known as much for his Midas touch as his flamboyance, the Gold Medal treatment.

Mr. King, who sold King World to CBS for the piddling sum of \$2.5 billion in 1999 and now reigns as the CEO of CBS Television Distribution, played the honoree well.

He worked the indoor "red carpet" area energetically early in the evening, when CBS Corp. President and CEO Leslie Moonves zipped though on the way to a CBS development dinner. Mr. King let folks he has made into stars and kajillionaires thank him. Chatty chef Rachael Ray also thanked him for teaching her how to make the perfect tuna sandwich but didn't share the secret with the crowd. Other speakers included Lara Spencer, in a tight, bright red dazzler, Mark Steines, representing the "Insider" and "Entertainment Tonight" crowd, and "Inside Edition" anchor Deborah Norville in a gunmetal gray beaded sparkler. Oprah Winfrey, the mega-jewel in the King World crown, sent a videotape in which she reminded Mr. King that she had received the IRTS Gold Media before he did (in 1996).

Dr. Phil McGraw was chosen to present the Gold Medal. "Wouldn't you know I'd get an award from a psychiatrist," said Mr. King, one of whose signatures is big parties with performances by huge musical guests. Patti LaBelle got the crowd on its feet with "Lady Marmalade" and proved that a caftan is not a cover-up-at least when it's beaded and brightly backlit.

While all this was taking place The Insider was prodding poor "Access Hollywood" co-host Billy Bush for the real reason he was patrolling enemy social territory. And she was catching up with King World alumnus Dan Gasby and wife B. Smith, the doyenne of domesticity who has a new furniture line coming out.

Sister seamstress Norville, with whom The Insider goes all the way back to Georgia, will spend her summer whipping up curtains and other essential finishing touches to her country home, which is scheduled to be featured in a photo layout next fall in Traditional Home magazine. "Half the stuff in the house I sewed," she said. Fall also will bring the publication of her book "Thank You Power: Making the Science of Gratitude Work for You."

Hearst-Argyle Television's Dave Barrett, one of the co-chairs of the Gold Medal dinner, said he's taking his wife, Beth, on a three-day trip to celebrate her birthday, so he'll miss the networks' upfront presentations this week. Other station-group executives taking care of more important business this week include Post-Newsweek Stations' Alan Frank (another co-chair) and Cox Television's Bruce Baker.

Dinner found The Insider sharing a great bad table with husband-and-wife agents Richard Leibner and Carole Cooper and Hallmark Channel President and CEO Henry Schleiff, who poked fun at his own reputation for being press-friendly by dictating that anything he said that would be quoted should be accompanied by "he said charmingly comma." But what made the table talk so much fun was that none of it can be repeated if The Insider ever wants to eat a Gold Medal dinner in this town again.

There was a perfect nightcap with "Judge Joe Brown" executive producer John Terenzio, who gave The Insider a new TV resource by introducing her to CBS Television Distribution executive John Nogawski, and who has great taste in tuxes and neighbors (Timothy Olyphant). Former TelevisionWeek colleague and current CBS Television Distribution communications director Leslie Ryan, who earlier that day had lunch with "Inside Edition" spokesperson Donna Dees (the mother of The Insider's fabulous goddaughters), was there looking very Mischa Barton-ish.

The Insider could say she was very envyish, but she'd rather say "Roger Who?"