

Santa Barbara International Film Festival Kirk Douglas Award For Excellence In Film Quentin Tarantino, Honoree

By **ROBERT F. ADAMS** / Special to CASA

THURSDAY NIGHT WAS A GLITTERING EVENING at the recently revitalized Four Seasons Biltmore Coral Casino on October 22nd. The event was held to honor writer/director Quentin Tarantino, whose new film, *Inglourious Basterds* has been making waves at the box-office and with film audiences around the world.

A cocktail reception was held on the Casino's shoreline plaza, with a wicked sunset and glamorous Santa Barbara International Film Festival supporters. Bartenders served elegant Chopin Vodka martinis, and a special pink citrus concoction called "Pulp Fiction." Festival Director Roger Durling welcomed festival board members, staff, and guests including Arnold

Kassoy, Candance Scherhorn, Andrew Firestone, Steve Cushman, and humorist Dennis Miller, among others.

The guests encountered members of the cast from the *Inglourious Basterds* including the lovely Diane Kruger (who plays the charismatic Bridgett Von Hammersmark), Samm Levine (one of the Jewish-American soldiers in the film led by Brad Pitt), Lawrence Bender, the producer (*Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill I and II*). Film mastermind Quentin Tarantino mingled with guests and finally, Kirk and Anne Douglas arrived, exchanging greetings with many admirers.

Jeffrey Barbakow (President of the SBIFF Board of Directors and former MGM/UA head), started the gala dinner by saying he "appreciates the support from Kirk Douglas, our honoree

Quentin Tarantino, our sponsors and benefactors." An exciting montage of film clips from Tarantino's body of work was screened and everyone raised a toast to this special evening, a film-buff's delight. Festival

Director Roger Durling at the podium cited "the magic that Quentin Tarantino creates with his films" quoting Tennessee Williams along the way. Ninety-two year-old Kirk Douglas appeared onstage in the ballroom and discussed, with his unique humor, the significance of this award. With a "I am thrilled to have this award given to me by Kirk Douglas," Mr. Tarantino accepted a beautiful glass award. Both men have directed,

acted, and produced, and both have taken on interesting projects over better paying work, successfully establishing careers outside of the Hollywood mainstream. Incredibly enthusiastic, Quentin is an expert in film history and genres: Kung Fu, low budget car chase movies, Spaghetti Westerns, and animation, and all of these qualities are reflected in his ground-breaking and sometimes controversial cinematic works. "Kirk Douglas has worked with the most interesting directors of the 50s and 60s, including Raoul

Walsh, Howard Hawks, and John Sturges," Mr. Tarantino was quick to point out. The honoree graciously thanked everyone and the crowd gave Mr. Tarantino a standing ovation.



Beverly Jackson; Anne Douglas; and Kirk Douglas



Bill Sarvis and Ann Sarvis



Bruce and Vicki Algra and Pat Nesbitt



Tom Marshall, Susan Eng-Denbaars, and Steven Denbaars



Pete Hammond; Carol Marshall; and Jeff Wells



Bennett Barbakow, Codi Kitchen, Maxwell Barbakow, and Margo Barbakow



Sheila and Steve Cushman



Karen and Eric Woosley



Timothy Gustie, Cindy Racco, Tiffany Gordon, and Kevin Speer



Roger Durling, SBIFF Executive Director and Quentin Tarantino



Quentin Tarantino and Tamara Diamond



Dennis Miller and Ali Miller



Quentin Tarantino with guest Cindy Mah



Bennett Barbakow; Quentin Tarantino; Maxwell Barbakow; Jeff Barbakow, President, SBIFF Board of Directors



Karen Earp, General Manager, Biltmore and Timothy Gustie



Nina Terizon and Diana MacFarlane



Corinna Gordon, Tracy Bollag, Quentin Tarantino, and Lisa Loiacono

Red Carpet Encounters with the Talented Team of *Inglourious Basterds*

An open and enthused group of stars met the media at SBIFF's annual Kirk Douglas Award event. Most were eager to share how honored they were to work with the evening's star, Quentin Tarantino.

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"The film has been game-changing for my career," shared **SAMM LEVINE**, who played one of the "Basterds" (the Jewish-American soldiers led by Brad Pitt). "I felt as if I had won the lottery by getting to work with Quentin... We (the cast) researched our roles by watching the German films of the WWII era with Quentin... I loved the opportunity to work on *Inglourious Basterds* with this master. It was an incredible experience."

DIANE KRUGER, who plays Bridgett Von Hammersmark in the film, was both engaging and stunning in black Prada. The German-born actress had flown in from the Vancouver area to attend. Ms. Kruger related, "I researched the leading female stars of the 1930s historical

German and Hungarian cinema" to prepare for her starring role in the film. For her the experience was "intense." "I am not jumping into any future film roles right now," Kruger shared, but she hopes to chart a course based on the success of this attention-getting role. She has been a model and played Helen of Troy opposite Brad Pitt in *Troy*. Kruger was "delighted beyond description" to have won her pivotal character role in *Basterds*.



Actor **Samm Levine**, *Inglourious Basterds*

In a quiet chat, Quentin Tarantino's producer, **LAWRENCE BENDER** mentioned that "the preparation for the film was extremely short. We had 13 weeks for casting and shooting at various European locations."

The production team, including Harvey Weinstein, wanted the film to be ready for Cannes Film Festival, so there was an "intense deadline" facing the

production. Bender, who assisted with casting explained, "We lucked out to find our amazing actors in Berlin, especially Christoph Waltz," who plays the charming but deadly Nazi official, Colonel Landa. Bender also produced the award-winning *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Pulp Fiction*.



Actress **Diane Kruger**, star of *Inglourious Basterds*

QUENTIN TARANTINO told a few of us that "I feel very lucky to be in this position. The fact that I have persevered and stayed in the game led to this success." Tarantino's film has earned upwards of 280 million at the international box office and has generated early Oscar buzz. In filmmaking, he said "The story and script come first in filming." For this project, he worked on the script for over a decade. Tarantino is very careful as far as casting, sharing, "I would not start shooting *Basterds* until we found the perfect actors" for the characters

he created in the script.

Mr. Tarantino was accompanied by the attentive Cindy Mah, an aspiring filmmaker, whom he is currently mentoring.

"I am astonished to be honored by Kirk Douglas," the enthused Tarantino shared. "If someone had predicted this moment in the early stages of my career, I would not have believed it."

Tarantino has a generous and large personality, loaded with enthusiasm and film genre knowledge that is fully realized in his movies. He makes enormous efforts finding and watching movies that most film-buffs have never even heard of.

Mr. Tarantino has promised to attend the upcoming 25th Santa Barbara International Film Festival (February 4-14th, 2010) and may be programming lesser-known Kirk Douglas films from the 60s and 70s. If so, he will be welcomed back with open arms, based on the enthusiasm seen this night.



Lawrence Bender, *Inglourious Basterds* Producer