



Pictures: DAVE BENETT  
The incandescent Naomi Campbell, in a gold lame evening dress

Will Linda smile? Does Naomi eat? And will Helena demand a smorgasbord?

## Those £1,000 a minute questions

CAMERAS flash and the fashion world applauds while eating cheese straws and drinking Lanson champagne. These are the British Fashion Awards — the Oscars of the designer rag trade.

It is all taking place in the tented world of the Duke of York's barracks. The audience wears black and glitter and off-the-shoulder creations and looks as if it could swap places with the catwalk folk.

And then there are the proper models, the 34-22-34 ones who say they won't get out of bed for less than \$10,000 and earn up to £1,000 a minute, eclipsing their designer bosses. Naomi Campbell, Helena Christiansen, Tatjana Patix and Linda Evangelista to be precise. This evening they appear swan-like, sometimes carrying poodles. Without them, any show would lack lustre.

Princess Michael of Kent, wearing a glamorous nun's habit of non-English design, announces that Vivienne Westwood has won the British Designer of the Year title for the second year running. "I want to say thank you to these models, who are worth every penny," says Vivienne.

The women with pouting lips are seated. Their fees have quadrupled in as many years and they expect to be flown first-class while sales of clothes are falling in these recession-hit times. Is it true models don't speak, have no way of projecting their personalities and push lettuce leaves around their plates? And will Helena Christiansen demand a smorgasbord?

Linda Evangelista, with pimento hair, lights up a Marlboro. And the divine Vivienne Westwood, in a dress printed with Fragonard cherubs, tells me the girls are super. "Naomi is charming," she says. "They're all professionals, always on time, not prima donnas. They've got a marvellous theatrical sense. It costs £5,000 to advertise in a glossy magazine, but with a show you get all this free publicity."

"When I saw Linda wearing my pink, my heart was beating. To see your clothes on this dream, this dishiest of dishes... but if I saw any of them in jeans, I wouldn't think them that great."

Princess Michael holds court, later on little clusters of *beau monde* gather around her. Many of the models weren't keen on meeting the Royal. "Just not interested. They wanted to go back to



by  
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their hotel," said one of their entourage.

Boy George whirls around. His comment? "Beauty fades, but talent lives on."

Will he meet Linda Evangelista? "I definitely won't talk to Linda. I have a fear of beauty."

I meet a supermodel in a Rifat dress. Naomi Campbell, serene and incandescently beautiful, is enjoying a successful evening and a cigarette.

London is almost finished as a place to show fashion, but she likes it here. "I hope fashion will come back to London again," says this girl who is developing an American accent with a speech coach.

"No, thank you," she says to pudding—but the waiter has beaten her to it. How does she keep her stunning figure? "I eat whatever I want. I ate the chicken like everybody else." She also works out, she says, and goes to dance classes. She earns a reputed £1m a year. Should models be paid so handsomely? "I don't want to remark on the press comments. I don't want to get drawn into it."

Nearby Linda Evangelista looks bored. She smokes cigarettes. When you look like that, you don't have to do anything. She thaws. "I came as a favour to British Vogue and to support British designers. My services were free," she tells me. And what is she wearing? She gives the frostiest of frosty looks. "Armani".

It's 12.30. People are starting to leave. And, suddenly, the supermodels have gone. Do they need beauty sleep?

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