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IMAGE

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SCENE & HEARD

A LOVE FOR L.A.



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LUPUS LA: Honoree Melissa Joan Hart, top, is flanked by Edyta Sliwinska, left, and Natalie Coughlin. Janice Arouh is with Jesse Metcalfe.

A far-from-silent auction

Friendships formed on “Dancing With the Stars” don’t always end with the eliminations, as evidenced by the dancers who came to applaud one of this year’s stars, Melissa Joan Hart, when she and Janice Arouh, a vice president at Crown Media, which owns the Hallmark Channels, received 2009 Woman of Achievement awards at the Hollywood Bag Ladies Luncheon to benefit Lupus LA.

Far from the usual award ceremony, the Nov. 18 event at the Beverly Wilshire Four Seasons Hotel came complete with a Versace fashion show and a silent auction of 200 handbags. On scene were Lupus LA chairman Adam Selkowitz of Waterfall Films, Rosanna Arquette of "Northern Lights," Jaime Presley of "My Name Is Earl," Phill Lewis of "The Suite Life on Deck," Jesse Metcalfe of "Desperate Housewives" and four of Hart's former dance competitors: Olympic swimmer Natalie Coughlin and professional dancers Chelsie Hightower, Anna Trebunskaya and Edyta Sliwinska.

"I don't know why this is called a silent auction. It's anything but silent," said event host Dorothy Lucey of "Good Day LA," referring to the sound volume generated by 575 guests caught up in the bidding.

Co-chairwomen and sisters Michelle Kaye and Claudia Resnikoff, along with their mother, Marianne Berman, filled 14 tables. The net proceeds, which reached \$250,000, will be going for research to prevent, treat and cure the autoimmune disease, which remains little understood.

As honoree Janice Arouh put it, "Most people don't know anything much about lupus except that they don't know anything much about lupus."

Following the awards, Hart — formerly the star of "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch" — confessed that she hadn't been so nervous since she danced on TV. "After I finished my first dance, I felt great. Then 30 seconds later, I came up against the judges and everything changed," she said. "I don't think anybody is meant to take such pressure."

By contrast, the only pressure at this luncheon was to outbid other guests.