

Look-alikes ready for their close-ups

Make-up artists vie in Joan Crawford contest at Alex Film Society's screening of 'Mildred Pierce.'

By Deborah P. Nathan
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Glamour, glitz, rolled hair and shoulder pads all graced the stage of the Alex Theatre Saturday night.

The Alex Film Society's screening of "Mildred Pierce" (Warner Bros., 1945) was rendered an even more stellar tribute to the motion picture icon by way of a Joan Crawford look-alike contest. A pre-show reception gave contestants the chance to strut their stuff before a distinguished panel of judges and guests.

This classic film's story pivots on — to put it politely — a difficult mother-daughter relationship.

But fate was smiling on mother-daughter team Linda Silva, model, and Jessica Silva, designer, who were announced

the winners.

"The contest is a great opportunity to show off my craft," Jessica Silva said. "I was happy I won. I was excited. By the time they identified the second and third runners-up — and our names had not been called, I was hoping that it would be me."

Linda Silva came a long way to support her daughter's work.

"I drove up from San Diego to participate in the contest," she said.

The designers were students of Make-up Designory, the Los Angeles School of Make-Up Inc., based in Burbank. The vocational school for professional training of makeup artists offers courses in beauty makeup, effects makeup, wardrobe and more.

Their models were classmates, neighbors, cousins and unsuspecting mothers persuaded by these designing women to take part the event, only to be swept up in the Joan-mania.

The idea for the contest originated with Ron Bonk, Alex Film Society board member and

contest organizer.

"I even had fun shopping for the tiaras," he said. "Linda Silva had the right eyebrows and particular bone structure of Joan Crawford . . . and she never cracked a smile . . . she captured that serious Joan Crawford expression."

Second runners-up Frederique Barrera, designer, and Sheri Watson, her model, are neighbors.

Barrera was surprised at how much she loved the research.

"It was an intense exercise in how to accentuate and pull character out of someone's face," she said.

Third runner-up, model Kassie Knecht, is a big fan of the 1940s.

Her makeup designer, Niza Juarez, also liked working in the 1940s style.

"To work in that period and achieve the specific look that belonged to Joan Crawford . . . combining both was a task in

See LOOK, Page A10