



AMY COOPER



Brendan Moar and Jacinta Tynan.

LOWDOWN

FORGET the Logies or Fashion Week – the ASTRAs are much more fun. Just think about all those TV channels under one roof: there's the Discovery crowd and its preoccupation with bloodthirsty predators, the History Channel folk who air non-stop war documentaries, and those Hallmark sadists with their arsenal of three-hanky movies in which children and nice people always die.

There's no doubt about it – pay TV's awards night of nights is a recipe for top-quality aggro.

I was at the next table from the Lifestyle Channel crowd, including Peter Evans, Shannon Fricke and various renovation-friendly types. You have to be careful how you treat this lot. Mess with them and they'll come round and paint your cornices a nasty shade of mauve. As well as being the evening's host, their flagship presenter, Brendan Moar, was up for several gongs.

Constant gardener Moar is an ASTRAs veteran with more awards under his belt than anyone, so he attracted the evening's first bout of good-natured ribbing. "He just digs holes," yelled Laurie Daley as the nominees for favourite male personality – including Moar and James Mathison – were announced.

Mathison scored the award. "The relentless gardening had to be stopped," he said. "And it might as well be me that stopped it." Then he dedicated his ASTRA to his body corporate, which won't allow cable TV in his apartment building.

Those of us who love the Weather Channel know it's about more than sunshine and showers, and I was delighted it won an award for its investigation into the water crisis, *Running On Empty*. Sky News won channel of the year – particularly impressive when you consider it beat Fox Sports and Lifestyle, those guardians of our national obsession with balls and real estate.

We moved next door for the after party. The buffet was a chocolate spectacular: cake, ice cream, pancakes and lolly jars groaning with Lindt balls. Either the Disney and Nickelodeon crowd had been in the caterer's ear, or this was a ploy to keep everyone sweet. It seemed to work. No one attacked Moar with shovels and everyone smiled all the way to the after after party at Hugo's Lounge. The revelry, it was reported, was still going strong at dawn. With stamina like that, these pay TV folk are definitely worth the subscription fee.

PARTY OF THE WEEK
ASTRA Awards
Hordern Pavilion, Moore Park



Maude Garrett and Natalie Sparke.



Brendan Cowell and Hollie Andrew.



Asha Kuerten and Maya Jupiter.



Yumi Stynes and Chit Chat.



Indira Naidoo, Kobya Pamquama and Andrea Jonson.



Nathan Sapsford.



Erika Heynatz.



Rebecca Gibney.



Sophie Falkiner.