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## 2008: A year to remember for Latinos

BY ROBERT DOMÍNGUEZ  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

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Don't be fooled by the recession, wars and crisis headlines, 2008 was a pretty good year — if seen through the prism of Latino culture.

Here's a look back at the good that outweighed the bad — and one very ugly hate crime that came to symbolize the anti-immigration hatred that is still all too common in [America](#).

### THE GOOD

#### BEST 'HEIGHTS' SCHOOL

The Great White Way took on some much-needed color when "In the Heights" snagged four Tony awards, including Best Musical. New Yorker [Lin-Manuel Miranda](#), creator, composer and star, capped a memorable Tony ceremony by rapping his acceptance speech. Looking to 2009, we see good things in store for Cuban/Canadian teenage dancer [David Álvarez](#), who has been wooing critics with his "Billy Elliot" on Broadway.



Bedder/Getty  
Lin-Manuel Miranda after his "In The Heights" won the Tony for Best Musical.

#### BEST 'OSCAR' WIN

Dominican-born, New Jersey-reared writer [Junot Díaz](#) won the [Pulitzer Prize](#) for Fiction for his first novel, "The Brief Wondrous Life of [Oscar Wao](#)," a flashy, touching work that explores the Dominican diaspora. Díaz is only the second Latino to win U.S. literature's top prize.



Bedder/Getty  
Pulitzer-prize winner Junot Díaz.

#### BEST CRUZ CRAZE

[Penélope Cruz](#) finally showed American audiences why she was a star in her native [Spain](#). Cruz wowed critics with her raptorous performance in [Woody Allen's](#) "Vicky Cristina [Barcelona](#)" — and sparked talk of an Oscar nomination.



#### BEST WORKAHOLIC THREESOME

It seemed like you couldn't go to the movies or switch on your TV without seeing a trio of Latino actors vying for the title of Hardest Working Person in Show Biz. [John Leguizamo](#) appeared in five movies — including "Miracle at St. Anna" and the upcoming "Nothing Like the Holidays" — and he'll pad his résumé further next year with

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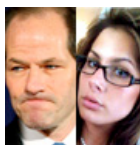
#### [Perv in missing woman case assaulted me, too](#)

The disappearance of Laura Garza brought back painful memories for another pretty brunette attacked by the same man.



#### [Can Paltrow save marriage?](#)

Gwyneth Paltrow and her husband, Coldplay rocker Chris Martin, are holed up in their London home.



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You think the Illinois Gov. is bad? He's just the tip of the political dirt iceberg.



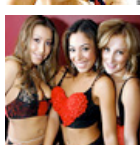
#### [Mets get closer J.J. Putz](#)

One new closer apparently isn't enough for the Mets. Mariners reliever J.J. Putz is headed to New York in a three-team deal involving Cleveland.



#### [Cover controversy?](#)

Stars naked on covers may sell magazines, but can it still stir up controversy? Not likely. But there's little stopping these celebs.



#### [Scores goes bust!](#)

It's the last lap dance for Scores, the strip club empire whose comely babes attracted A-list celebs and money-burning execs.



#### [Biggest contracts in baseball](#)

You think C.C. Sabathia made out well? See who's raking in the most bucks in baseball.

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another five films. The **Queens** actor, however, cut short all his goodwill by co-starring in the critically-ravaged revival of "American Buffalo" on Broadway. New Yorker **Melonie Díaz** also starred in six films, including "Be Kind, Rewind" and "American Son" — and also became the first Latina named Queen of Sundance. **Mario López**, meanwhile, became a host on "Extra," starred in Broadway's "A Chorus Line," hosted two competition shows on **MTV** and has a recurring stint on the **FX** series "Nip/Tuck."



Bedder/Getty

Oscar De La Hoya ended year under a barrage of punches he couldn't return.

**BEST 'Y TU MAMÁ' SPEECH**

After Spain's **Javier Bardem** chilled movie audiences with his performance as a killing machine in "No Country for Old Men," he showed his tender side at the **Academy Awards**. Bardem, who won for Best Supporting Actor, delivered part of his acceptance speech in Spanish — thanking his teary mother sitting nearby.

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**Dee321** Dec 10, 2008 6:14:45 PM [Report Offensive Post](#)  
 This certainly has been a memorable year for Latinos. However you are not representing it well. Granted, there have been some well deserved acknowledgements for the accomplishments of many Latinos. That, however does not "equal out" all of the reported and unreported Hate Crimes and Racial Profiling that are being imposed upon the majority of Latinos across America. The Nativists and the Hate Groups have mounted a successful campaign. They have brainwashed many young people across America to HATE Latinos. Innocent Latinos live in FEAR of crossing the street, afraid, someone will attack them for no reason! This is the result of the Nativists and HATE Groups that have incited HATE across the internet as they recruit new members across America to ATTACK innocent Latinos or anyone that "Looks Mexican"! These HATE CRIMES MUST STOP!!! We all have to be aware about what is happening and move to stop the HATE!! We Must hold all perpetrators of these Hate Crimes Accountable! We have to Stop th

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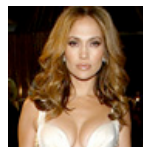
**Necky** Dec 11, 2008 6:24:37 PM [Report Offensive Post](#)  
 \* have to disagree with the propaganda comment on the dress below. That was the worst dress ever! Many of my friends thought it was horrible. Yes it was that bad, with all the affordable choices she had at hand, why that ugly dress at a night like this? It looked cheap and twisted around her hips. It was the wrong dress on a special night. She would have done better choosing a JC Penny dress for less than 200. "BEST LADY IN RED Most fashionistas sniffed at the over-the-top, red-and-black frock that new First Lady Michelle Obama wore on election night. We didn't love it either, but the daring dress was the creation of Newark's own Narciso Rodríguez, proud son of Cuban immigrants."

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**White hot stars**

Stars are lighting up red carpets in stylish white. Who's the fairest of them all?



**Cuffs in fashion? FIT students nabbed selling cocaine**

Two aspiring fashionistas were busted for selling cocaine outside their pricey college dorm, police said.



**Hello budget cuts, goodbye FDNY class**

Mayor Bloomberg's knife is cutting deeper - pressing agencies to cut another \$1.4 billion from next year's budget.



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