

Dressing the Part

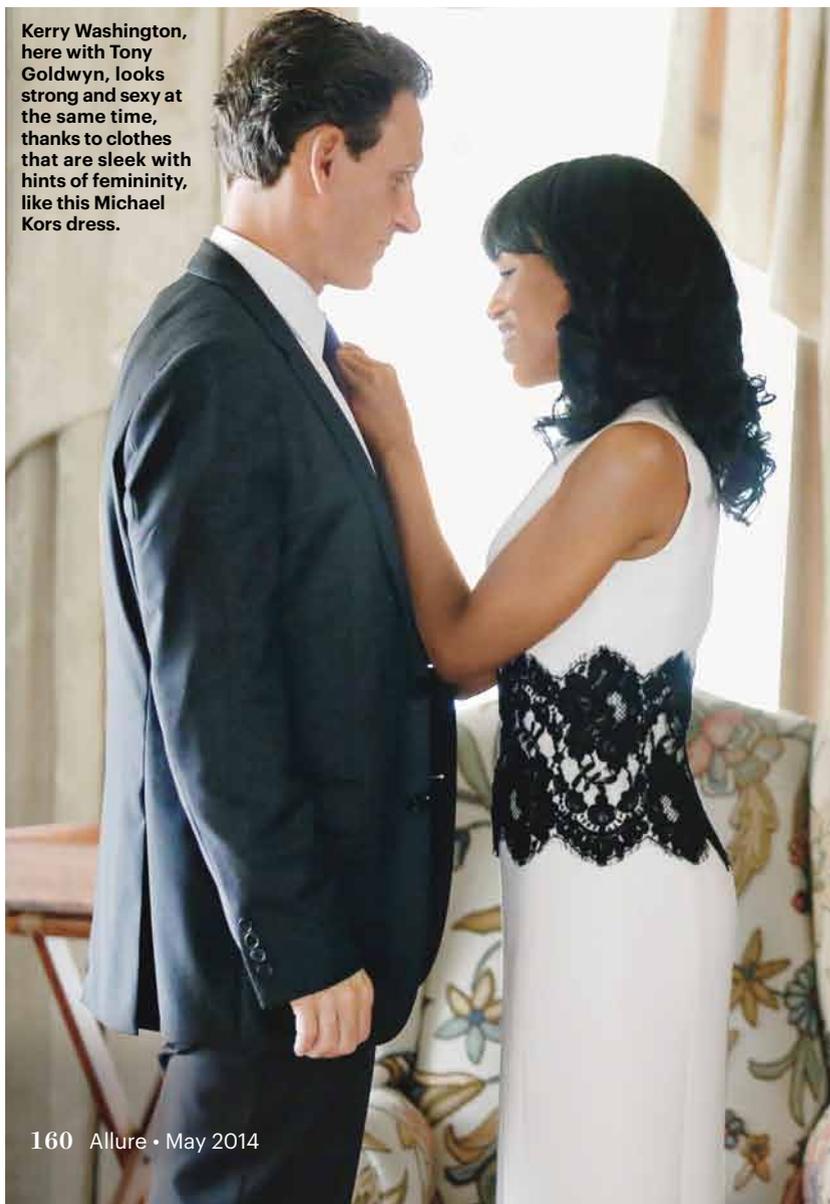
Soon, maybe tonight, you'll spot inspiring fashion—but not on a runway.

Some of the most exciting trends are on your television set. TV's chicest costume designers explain how to give your look character. **By Hannah Morrill**

Some stylists find a single flattering look for their client that suits the event and photographs well from the front. Others dig up hundreds of dresses that flatter dozens of clients from all angles. That's the difference between being a celebrity stylist and working in the costume department of a tele-

vision series. "I love my job, but it really never stops," says Lyn Paolo, the costume designer for *Scandal*. You might say that Paolo and her ilk are the overachievers of the styling world. The top members of this group share their best tips—leaving you plenty of time to catch up with your DVR.

Kerry Washington, here with Tony Goldwyn, looks strong and sexy at the same time, thanks to clothes that are sleek with hints of femininity, like this Michael Kors dress.



SCANDAL

How to Look Powerful

When Paolo first read the script, she imagined Olivia Pope in skirts. "I was obsessed with her looking exceptionally feminine. Then I saw how Kerry [Washington] walked in pants. She was commanding but sexy," she says. "Now our goal is for her to look quietly in charge."

- **Choose a palette.** "When all the men are in black and navy, lighter tones make a statement of strength," says Paolo, who outfits Washington in warm whites and neutrals like fawn and dove gray.

- **Ignore trends.** Showing up in a peasant skirt on Monday and Hervé Léger on Thursday doesn't exactly project a clear vision, says Paolo. "In her leadership role, Olivia maintains a consistent look—trousers, pumps, jacket—that is reassuring," she says.

- **Skip suits.** Paolo instead pairs discrete pieces, like a Dior jacket and Armani pants. "It takes something basic and makes it feel custom," she says, noting that while colors can differ, the fabrics need to match to keep the look streamlined.

- **Make an understatement.** Olivia's signature piece is a dusty pink Ferragamo coat. "It's memorable, but it's not loud. There's a difference," says Paolo.



Robin Wright, here with Kevin Spacey, wears dark colors.

HOUSE OF CARDS

How to Make Minimalism Interesting

House of Cards producer David Fincher gave costume designer Johanna Argan a strict challenge: With few exceptions, Robin Wright, who plays the opaque Claire, must wear deep, muted tones and unadorned styles. “The subject matter is dark and austere, and the clothing reflects that,” says Argan. “Claire wears her clothing as a suit of armor.”

- **Reveal skin tastefully.** “I show off the slenderness of her wrists and forearms with three-quarter-length sleeves or highlight her delicate collarbones with a bateau-neck dress,” says Argan.
- **Avoid draping.** “Because our palette is subdued, structure keeps the look visually sharp,” says Argan. Heavier fabrics, like wool, poplin, and twill, hold their shape.
- **Focus on the waist.** A blazer with a nipped waist, a tailored sheath, a thick belt: Argan makes sure Wright’s waist is never hidden. “When you’re not wearing floral, it’s a way to subliminally reference femininity.”
- **Wear killer heels.** Wright wears the same two pairs of shoes in almost every episode: round-toe Louboutin pumps in black and nude. “They disappear into your outfit but are shamelessly sexy,” Argan says.

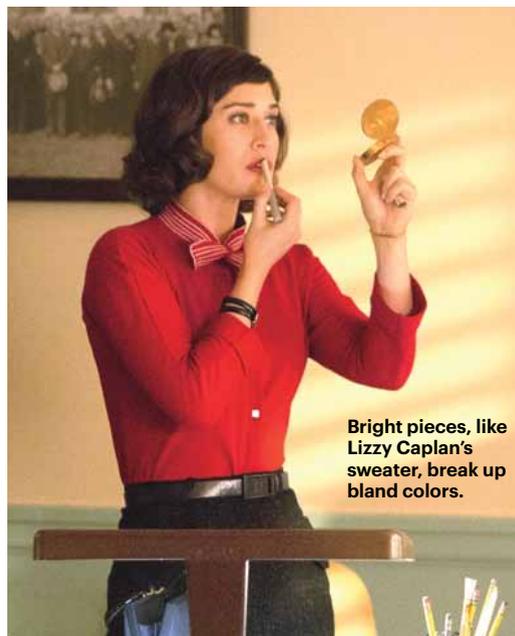
“Because our palette is subdued, structure keeps the look visually sharp.”

MASTERS OF SEX

How to Make Vintage Sexy

Costume designer Ane Crabtree makes *Masters of Sex* actress Lizzy Caplan look heart-thumpingly hot—even in the scenes where she’s not using a vibrator. “The first step is avoiding polyester,” she says.

- **Forget what you’ve heard about clothes being too tight.** “Much to Lizzy’s chagrin, I make her skirts and sweaters as tight as possible,” says Crabtree, who adds that because vintage clothes tend to be constructed from heavier fabrics, you don’t run the risk of looking vulgar. “The best thing is to have your tailor add a lining in a slippery fabric, like silk viscose,” she says. “Dresses and skirts should slide and glide.”
- **Punctuate with black and white.** Crabtree breaks up the decade’s drab tones by finding pieces with contrasting accents along the cuffs, collar, and seams. “It’s a way to frame your face and body,” she says.
- **Say yes to belts and bows.** A skinny leather belt at the trimmest part of your waist creates the illusion of an hourglass figure, says Crabtree, who likes ones from Zara and J.Crew. “I had so much hesitation about bows because Lizzy’s character is so not frilly,” she says. “But bows were everywhere in the ‘50s”—so Caplan wears bow-neck blouses.



Bright pieces, like Lizzy Caplan’s sweater, break up bland colors.

FROM TOP: NATHANIEL BELL/NETFLIX; MICHAEL DESMOND/SHOWTIME

GAME OF THRONES

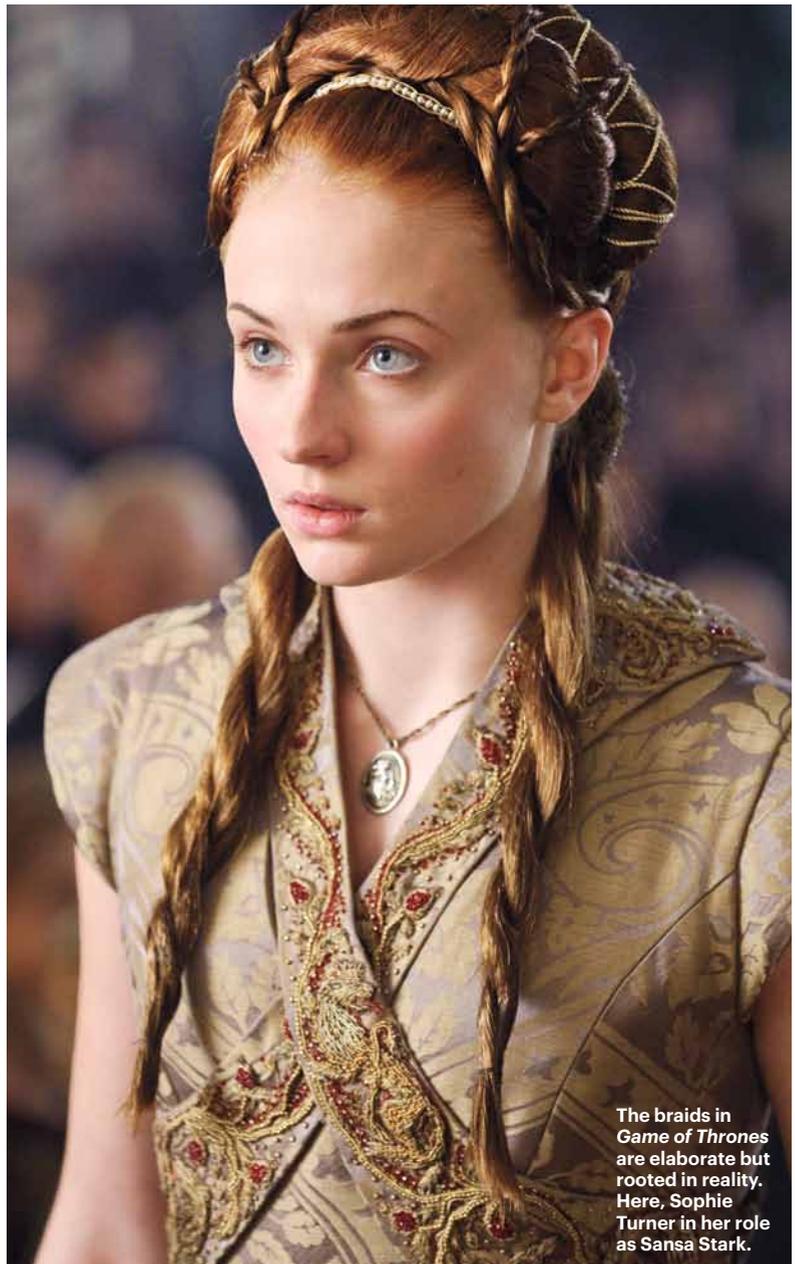
How to Create a Beautiful Braid

Game of Thrones isn't meant to be realistic. Except for the hair. "What would you do with your hair if you were standing in a brothel or in the rain? Or riding a horse through the desert? You'd tie it up and knot it back," says the show's head hair designer, Kevin Alexander. "All the braided styles came from a place of practicality." But there are a few ways he messes with the standard plait.

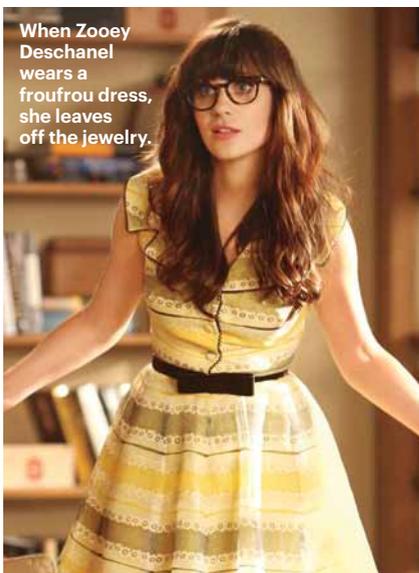
- **Start with uneven sections.** If you're an American Girl doll, the sections of your braid should be equal, right down to the last strand. Otherwise, keep one thick and the other two teeny, or weave together small, medium, and large pieces. "By keeping them uneven, you create this knotty, imperfect shape," says Alexander.

- **Skip around.** "I'll drop one section of the braid, twist together the two others, and then pick it up again on the other side," Alexander says. "That way, you're seeing texture, not a mechanized weave pattern."

- **Don't finish the job.** Let's say you try one of those cool French braids that start along the hairline and cascade to the back of the head. Rather than taking it all the way to the base of your neck, stop halfway down the head. Or, really, wherever you feel like it. "My only complaint with braids is they're usually too tight," says Alexander. "We like to leave a lot of hair down and loose. There's a lot of beauty in that contrast."



The braids in *Game of Thrones* are elaborate but rooted in reality. Here, Sophie Turner in her role as Sansa Stark.



When Zoey Deschanel wears a froufrou dress, she leaves off the jewelry.

NEW GIRL

How to Look Girlie, Not Cutesy

Here's something you probably already know: Zoey Deschanel is really, really cute. Costume designer Debra McGuire keeps her *New Girl* character from looking like a cupcake with a few guiding principles.

- **Choose the right undergarments.** Not only will your clothes fit better, but suitable underpinnings adjust your posture, too, says McGuire: "A great support bra tugs the shoulders back and the chest up."

- **Be a little adventurous.** "We'll do stripes, polka dots, and a few subtle prints," says McGuire. Deschanel's character occasionally wears Marc Jacobs. "He does whimsy really well," she says. McGuire also dresses

Deschanel in saturated shades. "From the beginning, the whole Crayola crayon box—I love her in really vibrant colors."

- **Minimize accessories.** A statement necklace gives something to boyfriend jeans and a leather bomber jacket. But that same necklace only detracts from your look if you're wearing a pink fit-and-flare dress. "Accessories are like icing, and her outfits just don't need it," says McGuire.



The *Newsroom* costume designer sews a tiny clear snap between the buttons on Emily Mortimer's silk tops.

THE NEWSROOM

How to Sex Up a Silk Blouse

Check out *The Newsroom* for commentary on the state of cable news; keep watching for the way Emily Mortimer makes a silk button-up look as a sexy as a lace chemise. Costume designer Hope Hanafin breaks it down.

- **Go for color.** “Your blouse shouldn’t be a brighter white than your teeth or eyes,” says Hanafin. To flatter Mortimer’s “English-rose complexion,” Hanafin usually sticks to autumnal tones, like hunter green, maroon, and plum. “Go into a fitting room without makeup and see what makes your face smile. The best colors complement the skin but don’t match it exactly.”
- **Trim the tails.** If you’re tucking in your shirt—and Mortimer always does—the shirt-tails should hit about four inches below your waist; additional fabric just looks bulky. Hanafin trims Mortimer’s blouses with pinking shears, but don’t try that yourself. “Have a tailor keep the front and back long, going slightly shorter above the hips,” she says. “It’s made more elegant when you don’t have that sharp, straight-across line.”
- **Keep it simple.** Avoid studs, lace panels, or adornments. “Silk blouses are innately sexy because the fabric reveals the contours of the body when you move,” she says. “Embellishments just distract the eye.”

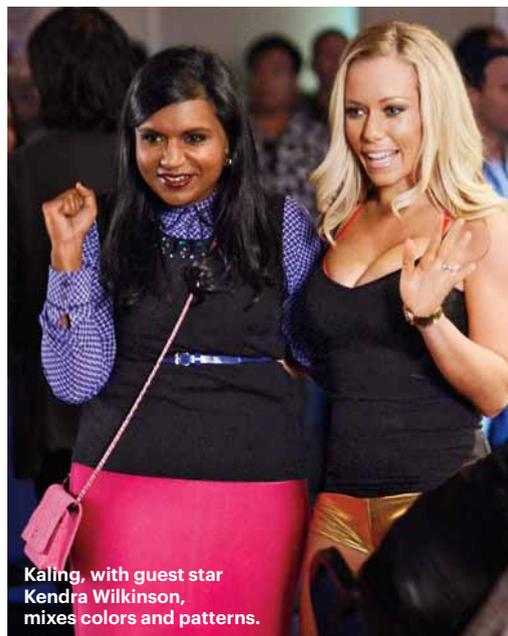
“Silk blouses are innately sexy because the fabric reveals the contours of the body.”

THE MINDY PROJECT

How to Mix Patterns

Does your ob-gyn wear wrap dresses, sequins, and chandelier earrings? We didn’t think so. “Mindy breaks the mold,” says *The Mindy Project* costume designer Salvador Perez of the doctor Mindy Kaling plays. “Her style should, too.” Here’s how he keeps Dr. Lahiri’s look adventurous:

- **Mismatch patterns.** “Matching prints, like two polka-dot items, looks too cutesy,” says Perez, who starts with an anchor color, like navy blue, when he mixes prints. “Then let’s say I do a pink shirt with little blue birds; a sweater with navy, beige, and gray stripes; and a navy lace skirt. The outfit works because navy has a grounding effect.”
- **Wear sleek silhouettes.** “If you’re embracing color, pattern, and embellishments, you’ve got to keep the cuts pretty clean,” says Perez, who likes Kaling in clothes that show off her legs and streamline her torso, such as pencil skirts, long-sleeved minidresses, and sweater vests.
- **Mix high and low.** Perez and his ten colleagues in the wardrobe department shop constantly: “We’ll do J.Crew and Kate Spade and C. Wonder, then go to Barneys and Saks.” When Kaling ends up onscreen in a \$2,000 dress with Steve Madden shoes, “I know I’m doing my job.”



Kaling, with guest star Kendra Wilkinson, mixes colors and patterns.

FROM TOP: MELISSA MOSELEY/HBO; JORDIN ALTHAUS/FOX